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POLITICS

Texans flock to inaugural celebration

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Thousands of Texans have flocked to the nation's capital to celebrate the inauguration of the first Democratic president in 16 years.

They're sightseeing and partying and shopping.

Some of them also are desperately trying to scrounge tickets to Wednesday's swearing-in ceremony, inaugural parade or to one of the inaugural balls.

And they're turning to their Texas congressional offices — even the Republican ones — to get those prized tickets.

"It's pretty busy," said Ray Sullivan, spokesman for Rep. Sam Johnson, R-Dallas. "There's lots of horse trading going on with

Some party, shop, sightsee while others try to scrounge tickets to the ceremony

swearing-in tickets and ball tickets and so on."

"We're getting a lot of panicked phone calls from our fellow Texas offices asking for spare tickets."

Phil Duncan, chief of staff for Amarillo Democrat Bill Sarpalus, agreed.

"It's been just sheer bedlam," he said. "Everybody's calling everybody else looking for tickets."

"It would be funny if it weren't so desperate."

Staffers in the state's 32 congressional offices were busy Tuesday greeting the hundreds of constituents dropping by, camera in hand, to meet their representative,

grab a cup of coffee to ward off the cool temperatures, or score some inaugural tickets.

"We are kind of on a continual open house basis, with coffee and cookies for any constituents that come through," said Scott Sutherland, spokesman for Rep. Ron Coleman, D-El Paso.

Members of Congress sometimes got involved themselves in the never-ending ticket hunt.

A Gonzales couple turned to Rep. Greg Laughlin, D-West Columbia, for inaugural ball tickets after flying to Washington and finding nary a ticket in sight.

"They came up here in a panic and Greg made a couple of phone

calls and I guess they were at the right time, the right place, to the right people," said Laughlin's spokesman Donze Lopez.

The staffers may be tired, but spirits are high ... for Democrats.

"It's a nice feeling," said Elaine Lang, press secretary for Lufkin Democratic Rep. Charlie Wilson.

"There's a real thrill in the air." Texas Gov. Ann Richards, in town since Sunday, pronounced the mood "euphoria" — a feeling not shared by all.

"There ain't no euphoria here," grumbled a staffer for one Texas House Republican, speaking on condition of anonymity. "That's for sure."

Euphoria wasn't the word when Richards had an early appearance Tuesday on CBS "This Morning."

Baird apologizes for hiring illegal immigrants

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Attorney-general-designate Zoe Baird apologized Tuesday for hiring illegal immigrants and said she acted as a mother instead of a lawyer when she broke federal law to obtain care for her young son.

"It was a violation of the law," Baird told the Senate Judiciary Committee. "Our decision to hire the couple was wrong and I deeply regret it."

Baird recounted for the panel her difficulty in finding the babysitter she wanted for her child. She repeatedly asserted she was offering explanations and not excuses.

"I was acting ... more as a mother than as a person who would be sitting here designated as attorney general," said Baird, 40, the \$500,000-a-year general counsel of the Aetna Life & Casualty Company.

She and her husband, Yale law professor Paul Gewirtz, paid a Peruvian woman and her

husband, who served as a driver for the family, a total of \$2,000 a month plus free room and board, she testified.

Since being named by President-elect Clinton to head the Justice Department, Baird has paid back Social Security taxes and \$2,900 in civil fines for hiring the couple.

She asked the committee to consider the violation in the context of her overall career.

Committee chairman Joseph Biden, D-Del., said he would have opposed the nomination had she not come clean.

"Everybody does not do it," Biden said. "It is not technical."

"I think ... people are fairly questioning whether there is a class of people who hold themselves above the law," he said. If she had given excuses such as they were just following a lawyer's advice, Biden said: "I would certainly be opposed to you."

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, the panel's top Republican, said the episode would not stand in the way of Baird's confirmation by the full

Senate. "I think you've put it behind you," he said.

"You repented for doing wrong?" asked Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C.

"Yes sir, I did," she replied.

"You won't do it again?"

"You can be sure of that."

Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, asked how she could enforce the law that she herself broke.

Baird said she could tell people "not to do what I did" and that she didn't see the contradiction he did. "I recognized that I did something that was wrong," she said.

Baird was more general when pressed about the policies of the still-forming administration.

One of the first priorities, she said, would be passage of a comprehensive crime bill in Congress that would make good on Clinton's promise to put 100,000 more police officers on the beat and a waiting period for handgun purchases.

Swarming issues

Continued from Page 1

issues during his campaign. Not only did he promise to tax the rich, but Clinton also talked about cutting the military budget.

Clinton will not cut back the military as much as he initially said because of the recent military involvement in the Persian Gulf, Lewis said. The new president will have to follow in George Bush's footsteps in regards to Saddam Hussein, he said.

Edwards agreed, "Clinton will

ask for less cuts than the liberal Democrats would like.

Clinton knows that Saddam Hussein will challenge him and that he [Clinton] will have to hang tough."

James said, "Clinton will continue to make military cuts no matter what the situation with Saddam Hussein."

Other expectations of the Clinton White House are that it will have a completely different personality than the Bush White House did.

Lewis said that the Clinton administration will stress style over substance.

"The Clinton White House's strong point will be public relations and communications, while Bush was not good at tooting his own horn but got the job done," he said.

James said the biggest difference between the the two administrations is attitudinal.

"Clinton will have more diversity of ethnicity, economic background and viewpoints," he said. The Bush White House is like a "country club."

Edwards said Clinton is an activist and has a bigger public

agenda than Bush did. "Clinton sees the government as an agent to improve the lives of Americans," he said.

While both Republicans and Democrats hope to see an improvement in the state of the nation, Edwards said that attitudes toward the new president will be performance driven.

"For the sake of the country, the Republicans want to see Clinton do well," Lewis said.

James said, "We are excited about the prospect of the new president. He's not a doctrinaire; he wants to make things work in reality, not theory."

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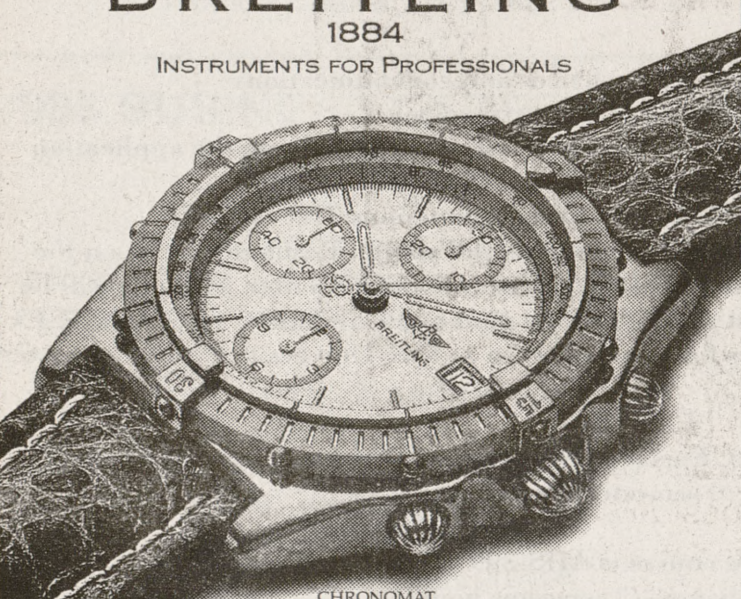
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