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Valley inauguration festivities

By CATHERINE BAUM
Staff Writer

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Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Barack Obama's inauguration as the 44th president of the United States is expected to set records from coast to coast Jan. 20 as Americans witness the swearing in of the first African-American to the nation's highest office. Four million people are expected to flock to the capital for ceremonies, parades and balls. Closer to home, thousands of people in the Pioneer Valley plan to congregate in town halls, hotels and other venues for poetry readings, televised screenings, parties and round-table discussions.

Following is a list of what's planned here.

In advance

Saturday, Jan. 17

Presidential Inaugural Dinner, Elmer's Store, 396 Main St., Ashfield, 5 to 8:30 p.m. Dinner by reservation. Call 628-4003 or visit www.Elmersstore.com.

Presidential Inaugural Ball, Ashfield Town Hall, 412 Main St., 7:30 p.m. Music by The New England Swing and Soul Orchestra, conducted by Theodore Wirt. \$20. Dress code fancy. Coat check will be provided.

Dancing for Victory, Hampshire College Red Barn, Amherst, 8 p.m. to midnight. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and can be purchased at the door. All proceeds go to the Northampton and Amherst survival centers.

Monday, Jan. 19

Inauguration trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Springfield Democrats. Bus departs at 7:30 a.m. from Big Y on Boston Road, Springfield. Participants will attend the swearing in and a parade on Pennsylvania Avenue. Two nights at the Mount Vernon Hotel in Baltimore. Return to Springfield 6 p.m. Jan. 21. Contact Vera O'Connor at 783-9824 or veraoccon@verizon.net for information, reservations.

Inauguration Day

Tuesday, Jan. 20

Televised screenings of inauguration ceremonies

· Academy of Music, 274 Main St., Northampton, 11 a.m. Northampton Mayor Clare Higgins will make opening remarks. All advance tickets have been distributed, but 200 will be available at the box

1 2



JERREY ROBERTS

The Academy of Music on January 3rd, 2007.



Popular stories

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- Glass adds to exodus of Minutemen underclassmen
- Chesterfield firefighter goes it alone
- Brush fires, bike trail incident keep crews busy Tuesday
- Ritz shop to close, Northampton location remains

office beginning at 10:15 a.m.

· Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz St., 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Ceremonies to be broadcast on a large-screen television followed by an informal discussion. Seating for 200. Participants may bring food or purchase lunch in the FSB Bistro. Coffee and tea will be provided. Free and open to the public, donations appreciated. Call 587-1228.

· Rafters Restaurant, 422 Amity St., Amherst, 10 a.m. Doors open at 9 a.m. Events will be broadcast on multiple wide-screen TVs.

· Hampshire College Main Lecture Hall, Franklin Patterson Hall, Amherst, 11 a.m. Open to the public, free.

· Student Union, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 11 a.m. Lunch will be provided. RSVP to Kevin at klibby@student.umass.edu by noon Jan. 16.

· Greenfield Public Library, 402 Main St., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Video streaming of ceremonies, Amherst Cinema Arts Center, Inc., 28 Amity St., 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Open only to members of the Amherst Cinema. Doors open 10:40 a.m. Tickets are free. Call 253-2547.

Historical Inaugural Celebration of the 44th U.S. President, Barack Obama, Sheraton Hotel, 1 Monarch Place, Springfield. Seating is at 10:50 a.m. with lunch at 11:30 a.m. Live-feed large-screen televisions will broadcast events from Washington, D.C. Lunch is \$25.95. All proceeds go to Open Pantry Community Service Inc. Call 737-5355 for reservations.

Rebroadcast of the inauguration, Academy of Music, 6 p.m. Tickets now available weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the mayor's office in City Hall.

Inauguration Ball, Leverett Library, 6:30 p.m. Guests are encouraged to bring ball-shaped goodies to share such as meatballs, cheese balls and melon balls, but treats of all shapes are welcome. Ball gowns and black tie optional. Hosted by the Leverett Democratic Committee.

Obama Inauguration Celebration, American International College, Springfield, 7 to 11 p.m. Dancing, cash bar. Open to the public, free.

Greenfield Inauguration Party, Hope & Olive restaurant, 44 Hope St., 7 p.m. Hosted by the Greenfield Democratic Town Committee, featuring the inaugural speech, live music, a cash bar and light snacks. Donation of \$10 encouraged but optional. Call Susan Worgastick at 772-2170 for reservations by Jan. 19.

Open Poetry Reading, The Yellow Sofa Cafe, 24 Main St., Northampton, 6:30 p.m. Poets are asked to write an inauguration poem celebrating the election of poetry buff Barack Obama and read it at the event. No previous writing experience necessary to participate. Sign-up will begin at 6 p.m. Hosted by Northampton poet Laureate Leslea Newman, The Florence Poets Society and the Northampton Arts Council.

For more information visit www.poetrynewscalendar.com or contact Leslea Newman at 552-3865 or leslea@lesleakids.com

Afterward

Saturday, Jan. 24

Paradise Ball, Northampton Center for the Arts, 17 New South St., 7:30 p.m. Tropical theme, music to the R&B beat of "Love Bomb." Creative catering and a cash bar featuring the center's signature "Artini" and the new "Cosmobama." Tickets \$25. Contact the center at 584-7327 or ncfa@nohoarts.org to reserve.

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