

By AMY CHOZICK

There's one diplomatic disaster the new administration may be able to avoid: women arriving at an inaugural ball in the same dress. Andrew Jones, a Stuart, Fla.-based consultant, recently launched DressRegistry.com, a Web site that lets users register their dresses, free of charge, and check to see what others are wearing. With roughly 100 inaugural balls in the Washington area over four days, chances of duplicates are high, and about 400 dresses and 65 events have been registered so far, Mr. Jones says.



Associated Press

Barbara Bush chose a blue velvet and satin gown by designer Arnold Scaasi for the 1989 inaugural balls.

Women have already claimed: an ankle-length royal blue gown with a plunging neckline and empire waist by BCBG Max Azria, a black Ralph Lauren silk ball skirt with a white puffy-sleeve blouse, and a hot pink Nanette Lepore floor-length number for Mr. Obama's Home States Inaugural Ball at the Washington Convention Center.

Mr. Jones got the idea for the site when his wife was shopping for a dress for a local charity gala. He publicized

[DressRegistry.com](http://DressRegistry.com) by sending direct mail to members of Congress, lobbyists,

Washington bloggers, and event planners. It could even help the First Lady. In 1989, Barbara Bush chose a navy blue gown with a fitted velvet bodice and a square neckline by designer Arnold Scaasi.



News, photos and background on key players and issues in the Obama administration's first 100 days from the WSJ and across the Web.

- [The Inauguration](#)
- [The Economy](#)
- [Advisers](#)
- [Foreign Affairs](#)
- [Personal Life](#)

The problem: Mr. Scaasi had sold the same dress to New York socialite Brooke Astor and William Randolph Hearst III's wife Margaret. Mr. Scaasi says he called those customers and made sure they were not wearing the blue gown to the inauguration. "I told to go with a red, slimmer dress since it's easier to move around in," Mr. Scaasi says. His scheme worked. He says, "My God, can you imagine if someone arrived in the same dress?" A year later, Ms. Astor did wear the dress, accessorized with a brooch making it look a little different to the NAACP Legal

Defense Fund Benefit at the Plaza Hotel in New York. Showing up in the same dress on the red carpet has long been fodder for celebrity gossip columnists. Stars pay professional stylists to keep tabs on who's wearing what so they can avoid this fashion faux pas. Stylists research past star-studded events to ensure a client doesn't wear a dress that has already been photographed on another starlet. The dress registry site has its limitations. Many women enter descriptions short on detail, making it hard to identify their dress. And many don't take advantage of a feature that lets them post a photo of their dress.

That said, the site does offer a sense of the styles to expect at the inaugural events with registered dresses running from Chanel to last year's Banana Republic.

"There's an element of fashion voyeurism," Mr. Jones says.

Entries for Jan. 20 inaugural balls include:

#### THE YOUTH BALL:

Designer: Phoebe Couture, Color: Black, Length: Ankle, Neckline: Strapless. White top, empire waist, black skirt, strapless with a decorative bow/strap on one side.

Designer: Badgley Mischka, Color: Black, Length: Ankle, Neckline: halter. Black velvet Platinum Label dress w/lace detailing.

THE STARS AND STRIPES BALL: Designer: Alyce Designs, Color: Silver, Length: Ankle, Neckline: Full. Has a bow in tieback, very unusual.

Designer: Cameron Blake, Color: Brown, Length: Ankle, Neckline: Full. Dress is really the

shade of cocoa. Really looks great with my skintones.

Designer: Tadashi, Color: black, Length: Ankle, Neckline: Plunging.

OBAMA HOME STATES INAUGURAL BALL:

Designer: Chanel, Color: Navy, Length:Ankle, Neckline: full. Navy, embroidered duchess satin gown

Designer: Nicole Miller, Color: Silver, Length: Ankle, Neckline: Strapless. Strapless stretch metal gown with side tucks, combo band at hem and fishtail train.