

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “Downs, Maria - Book, "Mostly Wine and Roses" (2) (unpublished)” of the Maria Downs Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Mostly Wine and Roses - 67

Guess Who's Coming To Dinner The Guest List

In putting together a guest list for the approval of the President and the First Lady, I had to be reasonably sure to invite people who should be invited, try to soothe those who were not invited - but think they should be - and not include people who shouldn't be invited.

And at the same time bring together an interesting and colorful coterie of invited guests.

Sounds a bit difficult? It is!

A White House invitation to any social gathering is basically intended to create good will and if you create a lot of bad will by not inviting people who should be invited, and worse, inviting those who should not be - you are in deep trouble.

The "Socially Watchful" of which there are many, are quick to let you know when they think you have erred.

Sally Quinn of the Washington Post wrote of Rita Lachman, former wife of Revlon founder Charles Lachman, guest at our State dinner honoring the French President and Madame Giscard d'Estang:

"The entire French and American ~~social~~ community in Paris, Washington and New York is up in arms over what they consider to be an outrage that Mrs. Lachman should be invited. Stories from Paris had Mrs. Lachman even more amazed and impressed than her detractors who consider her declasse. According to one very good source she was so impressed with her invitation that she put it on a chain and wore it around her neck to lunch at Maxim's so everyone would see it.



"Then she brought along from Paris her hairdresser from exclusive Alexandre's. Her escort at the White House was none other than rich New York bachelor and roue Bo Polk.

"How did she get invited? Nobody could figure it out. Finally it was explained. She "works for the American Hospital in Paris", said the White House. But, of course, everyone suspects there's more."

About the same lady and the same dinner - this time from the French Ambassador, His Excellency Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet:

"beyond any doubt, the most elegant woman there." Again reported in the Washington Post, this time by Maxine Cheshire.

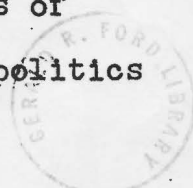
Who's to say who is right and who is ~~wrong~~? No apologies were necessary for any of our guests! There was reason behind every invitation. In Mrs. Lachman's case? Yes, and more reason other than her generous contributions to the American Hospital in Paris.

Too, one suspects there was more than met the eye behind the outrage expressed by certain members of Washington, Paris and New York society. Their reasons too, shall remain secret.

It brings to mind something I read in Alan Jay Lerner's (interesting) beautiful autobiography, "The Street Where I Live."

"The heart may have its reason of which the reason knows nothing, but reason all too often has no heart."

In compiling a guest list we would strive to make it as interesting and colorful as possible by inviting a cross section of people from different fields. This included representatives of Congress, government, the world of art, business, sports, politics and academia, to mention a few.



Most of the time our efforts were appreciated. Donnie Radcliffe of the Washington Post wrote of the French dinner -

"The guest list was a virtual who's who of French and American officialdom ranging from Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Sauvagnargues and Minister of Foreign Trade Raymond Barre to Vice President and Mrs. Nelson Rockefeller; House Speaker and Mrs. Carl Albert, Secretary of State and Mrs. Henry Kissinger, Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell, several Cabinet officers and members of Congress.

Among the guests invited for dinner were dancer Ray Bolger, actor Clint Eastwood, actress June Allyson, baseball star Mickey Mantle, dancer Judith Jamison and fashion designer Adele Simpson.

There was a sizable contingent from business and industry as well and the 1976 Olympics had three medal winners present.

President Ford took care to invite some of his campaign lieutenants. And from Paris came Rita Lachman once married to the founder of Revlon cosmetics."

From the Washington Star Isabelle Shelton and Joy Billington, covering the same dinner -

"The White House pulled out all the stops to make last night's White House affair a spectacular event.

"Dress was White tie and the guest list included an interesting mix of people from the worlds of politics, journalism, sports, business and the arts."

Indubitably, there were a few stories by the press which were not exactly complimentary. Some with reason, for we are only humans. However, we always did our best to please.



Both the President and Mrs. Ford took special interest in the guest list and were great about input. Being an avid sports fan and a athlete himself, the President compiled a list of sportsmen whom he wanted included in social events. He feels sports are very important to the American way of life, contribute to our health and well being, are part of our heritage and an integral addition to our economy.

Sports figures certainly had their innings at Jerry Ford's White House. Some were old friends of the President's such as Tom Landry, Woody Hayes, Joe Paterno, Dean Beman and George Allen.

Many became fast friends. President Ford is a man's man, so it was only natural for a comraderie, an esprit d'corps to develop. He is the kind of person equally at home with a Sonny Jurgensen, the German Chancellor or my old friend Fred (Jeff) Jefferson.

Jeff was frequently asked to assist with personal dinners or parties the Ford's hosted in the family quarters. On one such occasion the President let it be known to Mrs. Ford that he wanted the dinner over in time for him to watch a world series game being telecast from the West coast.

Jeff and the other butlers were busily clearing the dining room and could barely hear the broadcast of the game coming from the President's den. Jeff, an ardent sports fan, could stand it no longer. He quietly tiptoed into the room to learn the score. The President looked up at that moment, saw him and invited him to sit down and watch the game with him. A mighty proud Fred Jefferson told me all about it the next morning. According to Jeff, a betting man, no wagers were made that evening.



Speaking of sports and baseball in particular reminds me that at one time we had the corner on the baseball catcher's market. Joe Garagiola, Carlton Fisk, Johnny Bench and Yogi Berra were all on our team.

These four men campaigned hard for Jerry Ford's election in 1976. I believe it was the first time any of them became actively involved in politics. That campaign was a first for many athletes. Most did not wait to be asked - they volunteered!

As in the case of other guests, we invited athletes who had mutual interests with our guest of honor whenever possible. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was most pleased to see his fellow countryman and tennis champion John Newcombe and Mrs. Newcombe at his State dinner. He commented to Mrs. Ford how thoughtful it was to include them.

His Majesty, Juan Carlos, the King of Spain and Cale Yarborough, auto racer, are another example. The King, a well known sportsman, is particularly interested in auto racing and sailing. He and Cale discussed different formula racing cars, pit crews, tires, etc. Many times their language sounded like a foreign lexicon.

The visit of Juan Carlos and Sofia was their first State visit to any country. They had been to Washington several times before but this was their first time as King and Queen. On their way in from the airport they told Jessica Catto, they could hardly believe that this time they were here as the royal heads of state.

They were given not only a formal but an genuinely warm welcome. A 21 gun salute, White tie dinner, address before a joint session of Congress, a lot of speeches and dedications with applause and sirens galore in the background!

Among the guests attending the Spanish State dinner were Seantor Barry Goldwater and Mrs. Goldwater, Maestro Mistlav Rostropovich, Andrew Heiskell, Chairman of Time, Inc. and Mrs. Heiskell; John Ulbricht, painter; Harry Reasoner, television personality and Mrs. Reasoner; Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and Robert Mitchum, actor and Mrs. Mitchum.

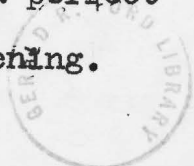
The following evening my husband and I attended the reciprocal dinner hosted by Their Majesties for President and Mrs. Ford. It was one of a handful of social invitations we were able to accept during my tenure as Social Secretary and I was really looking forward to it. I guess you could compare it to a busman's holiday. Since Sofia was a Greek Princess before she became Queen, this visit generated a lot of national pride in me, too.

It was a lovely evening and I was having such a good time. The warmth and friendship of our hosts, their friends and countrymen lit up the lovely summer night. I was quickly brought back to reality and reminded of my duties to God and country by one of Washington's better known Cave Dwellers (old family Washingtonians), also a guest at the dinner.

"Why in the world would you allow the likes of Robert Mitchum in the White House - let alone extend an invitation to him? I was horrified by his actions at the White House dinner last night - how crude - how crass."

Before she went any further and gathered an audience around us, I interrupted, saying:

As far as the White House was concerned Mr. Mitchum was a perfect guest - both he and Mrs. Mitchum added immeasurably to the evening. And that she must be mistaken about him."



In an unusual account of the same White House dinner, David Braaten of the Washington Star wrote of the first State dinner he ever covered:

"And there's the inevitable disappointment. Robert Mitchum, wearing tinted glasses and looking like John Wayne (albeit a little younger) sipping champagne, sucking unaccountably on his left index finger (maybe sampling the last of the macadamia nut souffle?) and dancing in relaxed dignity with his wife. Surely he could have been counted on to sock somebody, or put on a lampshade to enliven the proceedings? No such luck."

It certainly wasn't Mr. Mitchum's day. To my knowledge Mr. Braaten never covered another State dinner. Whether that was his decision or the editor's after reading the unusual account of the dinner, I do not know.

As for the Cave Dweller, the greatest disappointment, in a life fraught with disappointments, was that of being omitted from the White House guest list! To her credit, she fought like a bobcat - down to the wire - to the last few hours before the dinner.

By way of explanation for the rude remarks about Mr. Mitchum, let me say this. Cave Dweller may have heard a story that was making the rounds at this time. It was about a Hollywood celebrity attending Henry Kissinger's luncheon for Juan Carlos and Sofia. The star apparently was in his cups. He kept trying unsuccessfully to extricate himself from the grasp of a notorious bore. Finally in exasperation and with great pomp he announced for all to hear:

"Madame, if you don't shut up and let go of me, I shall fall my pants." (Obviously, I've cleaned that up a bit.)



I would not be realistic or candid if I claimed all White House guests were sans peur et sans reproche. People are people - base qualities will come out - even at a baptism! Fortunately for me, we did not have many baptisms at the White House.

A close call came during a reception we gave for members of a major association holding their annual convention in Washington.

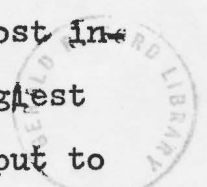
One of the gentlemen had apparently imbibed generously before his arrival. My attention focused on him when I heard our usually calm and composed John Ficklin loudly admonishing. "No sir, please sir, don't sit on the table - it will break and you will hurt yourself."

John was extremely upset and rightfully so. The inebriated guest, a man in his mid sixties, was trying unsuccessfully to boost himself onto one of the antique gilded eagle console tables. In his vain attempt he had almost fallen flat on his face.

Instead of being grateful to John, whose main concern was for his safety - not for the irreplaceable furnishings - he became hostile and pugnacious.

John ever the wise gentleman - retreated. With the help of several social aides we escorted our visitor to another room, quieted him down and got some black coffee into him. During this process he proceeded to tell us about his upcoming retirement, how he resented it - the unfairness of it all and the many good ideas and programs still waiting to be placed in motion by him.

We had learned quite a bit about him before we felt sufficient time had lapsed to call him a cab and send him homeward bound. He was a rather nice person whose frustrations overcame him at a most inopportune time. Actually it was quite sad. I hadn't the foggiest notion my childhood ambition to become an analyst would be put to



use as Social Secretary.

There were humorous incidents too - during one holiday season, a colleague caught up in the joys of the hour and overbrimming with "spirits" placed a robust love pat on the derriere of an unsuspecting senior Congressman's wife.

"Colleague's" boss looked on in horror! Aside from the propriety of it all, the Congressman headed a powerful Committee which was at that time considering a major piece of legislation sought by the Administration.

The Member was rather put out about it all but his wife, a much better sport, laughingly tossed it aside with - "Gee, I haven't had anything like that happen in years."

The aforementioned legislation breezed through the Committee. Could it have been lobbying from the Congressman's wife?

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Back to putting together a guest list

The President expressed a desire to have more young people attend White House dinners. He was particularly proud of our United States Olympic competitors and suggested we include them whenever possible. Bruce Jenner, Dorothy Hamill, Sheila Young, Coleen O'Connor, and James Millns were guests during the Bicentennial year. Dorothy Hamill attended the dinner honoring Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip which was telecast by Public Broadcasting Service. As she was making her way through the receiving line the commentator (who should have known better) exclaimed:

"And here comes a charming young lady with a Dorothy Hamill haircut." What price fame!



Both Jack and Susan Ford were good about pitching in and helping out at social events. They were the only Ford children to live in the White House for any length of time. Mike and his wife, Gayle were in Massachusetts where he was studying for the ministry and Steve was working on a ranch in California and studying veterinarian medicine.

Either Susan or Jack made it a point to be on hand for the State dinners. I'm sure there were many times they would have preferred to be elsewhere but also many times when they enjoyed playing the role that had been thrust upon them. It could be compared to a love-hate relationship - one which alternately fascinated and repelled them. Nevertheless they ^{too} were good sports about it.

It was difficult to think of them in terms of their age. Susan was then seventeen, attending Holton Arms School. She had the interests of any seventeen year old girl with other things on her mind besides State dinners and official entertainment.



Susan never put on any airs. Like her or not, you were getting the real thing. I came to like her very much.

There were times during those years when I couldn't quite understand her rationale - particularly when I viewed her as the daughter of the President and the First Lady but when I looked upon her as Susan Ford she got pretty high marks. I felt she gave the most and tried the hardest of all the Ford children during their White House years.

Susan and her mother are very close, more like friends than mother and daughter. Mrs. Ford once told me that the 60 Minute program on CBS would haunt her forever. That was the interview in which Morley Safer asked her what she would do if her daughter came home and told her she was having an affair with a man.

I agreed completely with her response which was that something like that could happen. Susan was a normal healthy girl of 18 with human feelings and if she chose to continue with the affair she would counsel and advise her on the subject and want to know as much as possible about the young man.

There were many who disagreed with that answer.

The First Lady interpreted it to mean she would not condone an affair but wouldn't kick her daughter out of the house for having one.

Some disagreed with that, too.

At first, the reaction to the interview was overwhelmingly bad. The letters, wires, phone calls mostly negative. Then the tide turned. The mail began pouring in in support. People didn't like the notion but wrote that quite honestly they would do the same thing and felt it could happen to them.



This was the first indication of the influence of Betty Ford - the appeal of her candor - her straight forwardness. Her popularity in the opinion polls climbed to near 75%.

She is not one to seek self aggrandizement and remarked to me that she only wished the 75% popularity rating were her husband's instead of hers.

I feel she paid a high personal toll for this popularity and that she still regrets that part of the interview and any concern it may have caused Susan or the family. Susan being Susan weathered this all quite well.

The interview flashed across my mind on several occasions when I was upstairs with Mrs. Ford and Susan would drop by either on her way out for a date or an evening out with her girlfriends.

Mrs. Ford would go into her speech about how careful she must be and all the preachments mothers advocate to daughters. I knew that Susan had heard the sermon so many times - she knew it by heart. In fact, I think I could still pretty well recite it myself. It was vaguely familiar of the lecture my mother use to deliver to me.

How I wished Morley Safer or some of those who criticized her of espousing free love could have been around to hear her.

Jack seemed to warm up to the social side of the White House after awhile. Hopefully, he even enjoyed himself a few times. He began to make suggestions to me for the guest lists. Some were good ones. By the time it it was all over, he had joined the ranks of the "Socially Watchful" and let me know when there was someone on a guest list he did not approve of - but that wasn't often.



We always held out the promise to Jack that at some time he would be called upon to make the supreme sacrifice and play host to Princess Caroline of Monaco. Susan kept threatening she would call Steve into action when that time came. Unfortunately it never materialized and Caroline married another.

At one time Jack was the off court interest of tennis queen Chris Evert. The press made much of their romance and when Jack brought Chris to a State dinner they were beseiged with comments and questions about their friendship.

They both complained that the close attention given to their dating cramped their style. Chris summed it up best saying - " I think the press can ruin a relationship by writing too much about it."

Susan wasn't about to let the press or anyone else dictate her romantic interests. She usually showed up with a different date for every state dinner she attended. She knew this was when the press would zero into her personal life - when she felt she was on display - fairgame for all. She tried to make the "pairing off" game as difficult as possible.

On the whole the Ford children managed to adjust to the White House and to the glare of publicity reasonably well and to even maintain some privacy. Like putting together the guest list - it wasn't easy!



Mrs. Ford's suggestions for the guest lists were varied and fascinating; many from the world of fashion, design or the arts. She included many women on the guest lists - women of merit - invited because of their own accomplishments not those of husband or family. Sarah Caldwell, Louise Nevelson and Ann Landers were among them.

Betty Ford had an insatiable appetite for reading. Several times when I asked her why she had suggested someone as a guest it was because of something she had read about the person which had led her to believe he or she would make an interesting guest.

Her many years in Washington and in public life gave her a wisdom both politically and socially that she did not bandy about.

The only time she became a bit miffed with me was when I told the President she had suggested Burt Reynolds' name for a guest list. He teased her unmercifully. She retorted she was only getting him ready for the evening Cary Grant would appear on the scene.

And appear on the scene Cary did. and he and Betty Ford became fast friends, a friendship which continues to this day.

Both Fords have a great sense of humor and love to kid each other about "celebrities". Her's include Fred Astaire, Gregory Peck and Bob Hope --- - his, Vicki Carr, Polly Bergen and Phyllis George.

Mrs. Ford said she would begin to show concern about the President when he stopped looking and dancing with pretty girls.

They can well afford to joke about beautiful people - they have one of the best marriages I know of.



The Fords usually submitted the name of a personal friend for each dinner. The President kept his own record of these requests in a notebook he carried with him. He could tell me in a moment who had been invited to what dinner and when. He was prompt with their suggestions and most considerate when a dinner was oversubscribed - offering to remove the friends name to make room for someone else. An offer never taken advantage of, I may add.

You probably think it strange the President not having the "luxury" of including a friend in a dinner, but the White House is much smaller than most people realize. Lack of space creates many limitations thus many problems. The State Dining Room seats only 120 people. When you take into account the President and the First Lady, their honored guests, the official party and Administration officials such as the Vice President, the Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor you find yourself limited to inviting only 45 additional couples. When you start considering people who should be there and those who would insure for an interesting and exciting evening, 45 couples did not provide much leeway.

The President and the First Lady were considerate about not insisting that certain people had to attend certain social events. Much more so than many members of their senior staff. There was the constant harranging that if a certain person were not included in a specific event, we would lose the war - much less the battle.

The facts of life relative to the guest lists were brought home to me early. I had only been "on the job" two days when I began getting calls from colleagues, former colleagues and friends requesting that the name of a certain oil company executive be added to the

Sadat guest list.

This posed no great problem to me - at that time. He was a logical candidate, his company had major business interests in the United Arab Republic. He was a member of the United States-Egyptian Business Council, had much in common both professionally and personally with our guest of honor and in addition to that had the strong endorsement of many people whose opinion the President respected. The only minus was that he had been a State dinner guest before during the Ford Administration.

All seemed to be going well until the proposed guest list was returned to me from the President's office, with his name deleted.

What to do?

Since this was my first time at bat, I proceeded cautiously. Had not so much support been expressed by so many I would not have thought twice about his name being omitted. My assistant Pat Howard, who had been in the Social Office for several years said the situation had never occurred before. As a matter of fact under many of the other Administrations the Social Secretary was not involved in the compiling of the guest list, only the issuance of the invitations. She also added that she had never seen such pressures applied for one particular request.

The push was on! By this time I had received several calls from each of those who had originally proposed our friend's name - each wanting a status report - some becoming quite irate even nasty!

I certainly wasn't about to tell any of them the President had scratched their candidate's name - just as one might scratch a thoroughbred horse from a major stake. At this point, I was comparing many of those concerned and pestering me to a different part of that noble

animal's anatomy.

Even though I was a rookie at guest lists, I knew where the buck stopped - the question was how to proceed.

Dick Cheney called. He said he understood I was getting a lot of heat about someone's name not being included in the Sadat guest list.

We discussed the pro's and con's - and what to do. Actually as previously mentioned our friend had attended a state dinner and many other White House events. He had not been neglected. The President knew this, too.

Of course, his intermediaries said this was the one that counted. They were always the "one that counted." To me - they all counted! Even though we had a record number of State visits and State dinners to celebrate our Bicentennial year, a State dinner invite was still the most sought after, coveted invitation of all. President Sadat's visit was especially important as it was the first of this very powerful Arab leader.

After my conversation with Dick, he submitted the request to the President again, giving him all the options and asking him to reconsider.

Since this is not a kiss and tell book, the outcome of this episode shall remain unknown except to those directly involved.

To me it was a real lesson in human nature. I realized it was going to be a long, lonely two years.



Behind the festive exterior of the social scene, the important business of government goes on - information is gathered - opinions exchanged - powerful connections made and appearances upheld. Obviously for these reasons White House invitations are the most important the most sought after in the nation's social whirl.

The Carter Administration was greatly criticized for soliciting contributions from major corporations in return for White House dinner invitations, particularly to the Begin-Sadat peace treaty signing dinner dinner to which 1200 people were invited. A criticism justly deserved.

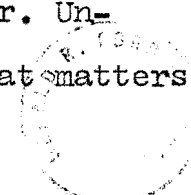
Contrary to denials, it had never been done before and set a very inelegant, cheap precedent. Extremely bad taste.

An invitation to a White House dinner is something special, an honor and a privilege. An affair of dignity and elegance - not something to which a price tag is affixed - or something to be hawked on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 16th Street much as the Washington tour guides hawk their sightseeing trips.

The only reason for inviting 1200 people to any White House dinner is for purely partisan political purposes. Not to honor or pay homage to any person or achievement however great they may be.

Many White House dinners, most in fact, are seasoned with politics - some more than others. I will not deny that we practiced it as freely as any Administration. Politics obviously plays an important role - that's the name of the game. But what most people resented, myself included, about the Carter's dinner was the prostituting of the White House by selling dinner invitations for \$500. per person.

There was no need to invite 1200 people to that dinner. Unfortunately for them they have not learned it's quality that matters not quantity.



Another practice the Fords initiated at the White House was that of allowing their guests to bring escorts to social events. Prior to this a White House invitation to an unmarried, divorced or widowed person was for the guest alone. The Fords change of policy was certainly appreciated by the guests but did not eliviate the numbers game.

This custom could also have unfavorable repercussions as we did not have anything to say about who our invited guests chose to bring as escorts, In most instances we were very fortunate.

Mrs. Ford realized the risk involved but came down on the side of trying to accomodate her guests and making the evening a more enjoyable experience in every way.

Those good intentions came home to haunt us recently - several years after we had left the White House.

Upon answering my phone, I was surprised to learn the gentleman at the other end of the line was an agent of the FBI. He was inquiring about one Barry Landau, the man who has alleged that Hamilton Jordan, President Carter's Chief of Staff, tried to make a cocaine connection through him at Studio 54 in New York city.

It seems one of the ways Landau was trying to reinforce his status and credibility was by "crowing" about having been one of the few select guests at the White House dinner honoring Queen Elizabeth during the Bicentennial.

I quickly set the record straight. Mr. Landau was not an invited guest but rather the escort of an invited guest, actress



Hermoine Gingold who had been suggested to us as one of Her Majesty's favorite entertainers. There was a difference, quite a difference, socially speaking between being invited and tagging along as an escort!

One of my colleagues really made life unbearable with his numerous requests. Not only did he ask for himself and his wife but they always managed to have out of town guests visiting about State dinner time. Guests, of course, were always close friends of the Fords from Michigan and they couldn't think of going off to a State dinner and leaving guests at home. Exasperation set in one day and I told them I thoroughly agreed. I thought they should stay home and entertain their guests. Since the out of towners were such good friends of the Fords, I was certain their name would eventually come to me from the President's little book - and besides I could use their two dinner seats!

In fairness I must say it was an overly aggressive wife who created this problem. I had the feeling she thought she should have been First Lady. The man himself was a decent enough chap. On several occasions we had more guests than chairs just hours before a dinner because of this particular and peculiar situation. But God really does watch over fools and drunks and after my experience I'll add Social Secretaries. Somehow it always worked out - usually a last minute cancellation because of illness or travel problems.

Both the President and Mrs. Ford were aware of this problem that I could have solved once and for all, but as I mentioned earlier in the book - friends are very dear to the Fords.



Speaking of friends and the problems of space limitations brings to mind an interesting incident which occurred at one of our State dinners. Russell Armentrout on my staff, approached me and inquired as to whether the late Rogers C.B. Morton, ^{then} the Secretary of Commerce, had been invited to the dinner. I responded in the negative and Russell said:

"Well, you may not think so, but he certainly does."

There as big as life and he was a biggie in all ways, physically at 6'6" and personally as well was Rog - better known as our Jolly Green Giant.

There was no way of knowing for certain what happened. An educated guess is that he was invited to the reciprocal dinner the following evening and somehow the invitations became confused.

Rog Morton was not a gate crasher or a pusher. He was one of the President's favorite people - one of the most popular figures in Washington. Proof of that was the fact that none of the people on duty questioned his being there. If Russell had not had an eagle eye and spotted him we would not have been aware of what was happening.

Perhaps the President invited him and forgot to mention it to anyone. A possibility, although it had never happened before. Well, with just a few moments to spare before seating our guests for dinner there was a bit of scurrying. We decided on an extra setting at the President's table (He was always understanding about things like that) a place card was written, a place setting was set, the extra chair squeezed in and we were home free - once again relaxed, watching the guests being received by the President and the First Lady and their honored guests.

Back came Russell. This time not confused but harried looking. He had just received a telephone call from Capitol Hill - an invited



Senator, delayed because of a late vote in the Senate, was unable to attend until after dinner. Back to the State Dining Room - by now filling up with our guests. Off goes the extra place card, place setting and chair from the President's table. Mr. Secretary's place card replaces Mr. Senator's place card and we were once again relaxed and watching the guests enter the State Dining Room.

Such situations would be considered by some as crisis. To us they were just part of an interesting evening. Many ask, why didn't you just leave an extra chair?

That's not the way it's done at the White House.

Several years later Jack and I visited Rog at his beautiful farm Presque Ile, on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

We were the proud owners of a Bay built skipjack named the Theodora Eliopoulos, pursuing a vagabond life of leisurely sailing the 3,000 mile shoreline of Chesapeake Bay.

Rog after fourteen action packed years in the Nation's Capitol where he served as a member of Congress, Chairman of the Republican Party, Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Commerce and Presidential Counsellor had "officially retired" from government.

His years of service to his country and the toll of a recurring cancer had not dimmed the steady flame by which he lived. He was blessed with a panoramic insight into human nature, a sense of humor in keeping with his stature and a felicity of touch that accounted for his popularity wherever he was.

He still delighted in doing things - exuded confidence and enjoyed the high gamey flavor of a challenge.

Albeit, the handsome, genial giant had embarked on another ambitious career - building boats.



Rogers Morton had gone from Cabinet member to cabinetmaker! He had succumbed to the captivating call of Nature that beckons one to return to childhood haunts - to one's beginning.

Rog's love for boats stemmed from a boyhood as exciting and as adventuresome as that of Tom Sawyer and Huckelberry Finn. He grew up at his grandfather's place in Eau Gallie on the Indian River in Florida where his first boat was a flat bottomed skiff. He smilingly recalled that day - " I had to keep caulking her with road tar to keep her afloat."

He was an expert woodworker, a hobby taught him by his father. Many of the woodworking tools he showed us in the converted cow barn serving as a workshop and office belonged to his father, some going back two generations.

Rog enjoyed building boats. He prided himself on doing much of the hammer and saw work and the mechanical work, leaving the finishing touches for his partner, Peter Hersloff and the two shop workers.

He wasn't in the business to make money. He use to say - "We can turn out a superior boat, and the prospective owner can have just as much fun watching us build it for him as we ourselves are having doing the job. And that's what it's all about."



We will always treasure the memorable afternoon we spent with Rog reminiscing about politics, old friends - about hunting, fishing, boating and sailing. And when we spoke of duck and goose hunting, of blinds, blue-bird weather, decoys, favorite shot-guns and goose loads, "Moonshine", Rog's jet-black Labrador Retriever bitch, stretched at his feet, seemed to listen attentively as she lovingly gazed up at her master; her tail thumping the hardwood floor from time to time as if agreeing wholeheartedly to a statement of fact her fond owner had just made.

We had seen Rogers Morton in many a public setting; appearances in Congress and the performances of duties wedded to other important positions and assignments previously mentioned, but in the delightful surroundings of his boat building offices - ringed about by mementoes of another life, another time; photographs of prominent statesmen and czars of the business world adorning the walls - we will always remember him best. It is a most happy memory of boyish, contagious enthusiasm as he addressed the affairs and problems of the world and the lusty, unselfish, enjoyable life he had lived and was now living. And speaking of his life since retiring from government, he had grinned and said:

"And believe you me, it's a hell-of-a-lot more fun than politics!"

That's how Jack and I will always best remember our friend Rogers C.B. Morton. Sadly enough, ourⁿ visit with him in his office at Presque Ile was the last time we had the pleasure of his company



Much has been said about the great and the famous in this chapter. Obviously because they are of interest to most.

Inconsequentiality was a horror we tried our utmost to triumph over in the inviting and seating of guests at White House events. Ordinarily many of the invitees were escapees from the big corral of the common herd. Contestants with insatiable appetites for power in the highly competitive fields of big business and national and international politics. Products of a harsh, relentless grind that sharpens wits and dulls sensitivities. Members of a worldly society at ease in any gathering.

But often, almost hidden by the glitter, the pomp and ceremony, there would be a guest here and there who most certainly was not at ease - not having a good time - a small fish in a big pond. In many instances, appearance and personality-wise, the poor fellow - and almost invariably it was a man - didn't seem to have anything to offer in such an aggressive assemblage. But once you engaged him in conversation - and we did seek them out - they more often than not proved to be interesting, exciting people!

Giving me cause to remember that it's the unpreposing, lack-lustre oyster, that hatches the pearl



The Social Secretary's concern about putting together a good guest list did not always end with the issuing and acceptance of an invitation. This part of my story would not be complete without the saga of getting Terry Bradshaw and JoJo Starbuck to the State dinner honoring the Prime Minister of Israel and Mrs. Rabin. It could be a chapter in itself but I hope to do it justice in just a few paragraphs.

The President had let me know that he wanted Terry to attend one of our dinners. This was an opportune time to do so. The football season had just come to an end with the playing of the Super Bowl several days earlier. A game in which Terry had participated. Soon after the invitation had been extended we received acceptances from both Terry and JoJo (at that time Terry's fiancée, now Mrs. Bradshaw).

JoJo was a star in her own right. A former Olympian turned professional and now starring and touring with the Ice Capades.

A few days before the dinner I received a call from Herb Klein, former Director of White House Communications and then an executive with Metromedia Corporation.

Herb was always the one to help others find a solution to their problems. This time he had one of his own.

Metromedia sponsors the Ice Capades. JoJo was intent she was coming to the White House dinner with Terry. The only problem was she had an Ice Capades performance at the Capital Centre (outside of Washington, D.C.) that same evening.

Jo Jo who had never missed a performance in her career, didn't care what they would do to her. They could fire her - sue her - fine her - shoot her!

She was coming to the White House with Terry!

Herb wanted to know if I had any suggestions.



Well, everybody loves a lover!

Especially Abe Pollin and the people who run the Capital Centre. They rearranged the program so that JoJo could perform at the beginning of the show. A car was waiting to whisk her from the Cap Centre to the White House, a good thirty minute drive. I must admit we dragged our feet a little with the reception but everyone was having such a good time they didn't mind. JoJo arrived just as the receiving line was coming to an end.

In the meantime, Terry looked and acted like a nervous bridegroom. He paced up and down the corridor waiting for JoJo. We tried to persuade him to come upstairs to the East Room for the reception and promised to bring JoJo up as soon as she arrived. No, he would wait in the Dip Room, the entrance used for dinner guests.

Ann Watwood took on the task of baby sitting Terry. A self imposed exile, one both she and Terry seemed to enjoy tremendously. They exchanged sport stories and she introduced him to the other guests as they arrived. He became an unofficial greeter!

Can you imagine the surprised expression on Dallas Cowboy's coach, Tom Landry to be welcomed to the White House by Terry Bradshaw, his formidable foe of a few days earlier! Kind of a Super Bowl Tuesday!

As always, on and off the field, both men were champions and great sports.



Earlier I spoke of heart and reason in relationship to compiling a guest list. On the Ford's part there was a lot of heart put into many of the White House guest lists.

Take the case of Marty Allen, the comedian. Marty had recently lost his beautiful wife of many years to a terrible bout with cancer. He had withdrawn from society and was literally destroying himself. Friends, family - no one could penetrate his shell.

Mrs. Ford, who had met the Allens during one of her West Coast visits heard of the situation and asked me to invite Marty to one of our dinners.

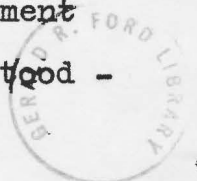
She felt he would not refuse a White House invitation and that it might help to ease his sorrow. The invitation was accepted but at the last moment - he did not appear.

Mrs. Ford said - "try again." This time a mutual friend, Ray Caldiero got him to the airport and Ray even arranged his business so that he could make the trip to Washington with him.

The particular dinner Marty attended was honoring President and Mrs. Tolbert of Liberia and took place two days before the President's first national television debate with Jimmy Carter in Philadelphia. Originally the dinner had been scheduled for the night before the debate but at our request the Liberian government graciously agreed to a change of date.

That evening, understandably, the President's mind was on the upcoming debate. After several dances he was about to whisk the First Lady upstairs to their quarters calling it an early evening.

Mrs. Ford asked for a chance to visit with Marty for a moment first - the visit took the form of a language they both understood - the dance.



A ten minute solo dance performance by the First Lady and Marty ensued as the Marine band played a fast paced rock version of "I Felt the Earth Move."

Later a much happier Marty told me that during the dance the terrible pressures, the frustrations he had been suffering for many months, were suddenly released!

A catharsis - dancing pent up emotions away!

How interesting to look back at the Ford guest lists - to recall and marvel at their rhyme and reason - to remember the late night calls from the President and the First Lady while they were mulling over the proposed guests - their questions and comments. To receive an approved list back, bearing the initials GF, with the President's personal notations and thoughts handwritten in the margins. And best of all - to reminisce about the days I have come to look upon as "Mostly Wine and Roses."



Musical Chairs

The Seating

Who - Where and Why

Protocol, as defined by Webster, is a code prescribing strict adherence to correct etiquette and precedence.

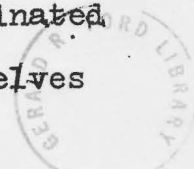
In Washington, D.C. protocol is a measure of status, of power and taken very seriously. For this reason the seating of a dinner takes on monumental importance and has to be given very careful consideration.

This chore was done by me in my office behind a closed door. My staff will testify that there was a lot of agonizing but also much laughter..

Fortunately for me, the Fords chose to use round tables for most of their luncheons and dinners. Enabling us to break away from the strict protocol one finds in formal table seating arrangements - those time honored rules of protocol which dictate whose bottom fills what chair!

Mrs. Ford's preference for round tables was based on several reasons. It made possible an interesting group at each table, tended to make conversation easier, gave us the opportunity to seat women in more prestigious positions and, most importantly, in Betty Ford's own words "so people won't have to worry who sits above and below the salt."

In other words, by using round tables we virtually eliminated the possibility of offending anyone because they found themselves



seated below someone else. When an occasion called for a formal E shaped table we adhered to the rules of protocol and seated by rank, but we were also flexible when necessary. Protocol is intended to remove all possible obstacles to useful and friendly situations but when rules present problems, rather than solve them, it is time for the willow to bend with the wind - not to break - just to bend.

Let's say someone of great accomplishment, but with little or no official rank is a guest at a formally seated dinner. It could be a James Michener, Helen Hayes, Billy Graham, Margaret Meade or Ayn Rand, all of whom were White House guests at one time during the Ford Administration. Certainly common sense tells you they cannot be relegated to the middle or lower part of the table.

Protocol is simply common sense and good taste. Those were the ground rules I set for myself in solving most protocol problems. Often simply making a decision solved the problem.

The task of reflecting the new role of women or men, who are married to official spouses in relation to protocol, created situations ranging from comic to rancorous! Depending on which end of the table you are viewing it from.

Times have changed and so has society! It's manners, mores, values and definitions. There are more women of achievement today than ever before. More women included in White House guest lists on their own merit than ever before. And more protocol problems arising from these situations than ever before.



Example: Protocol demanded that Helen Bentley, then Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission be announced as Mrs. William Bentley when she arrived for White House functions with her husband. Helen, one of the hardest working and most respected Administration members didn't like that one bit - and rightfully so. She had worked hard to become Maritime Commissioner, was accepted and respected in a very male dominated field and expected to be given the courtesy of being introduced by a title rightfully hers. We had no problem in bending the willow in that case.

Example: Charlie Black is one of the nicest people I have ever met. However Charlie sure ruffled a lot of feathers around town. Not because of anything he did, but as the spouse of Ambassador Shirley Temple Black there was no choice, according to the rules of protocol accept to award him her rank and seat him above other men of official power - but men with less rank than Ambassador Black. This procedure was usually never questioned when the spouse was female.

There were complaints. Many people take rank very seriously in Washington. In public, they may be ashamed to be hard nosed about something as "superficial" as where one sits, but in private and to the Social Secretary it is a different matter.



"Emotions that normally dwell in sub~~ter~~terrenean caverns rise to the first layer of skin."

Shortly after I became Social Secretary quite a controversy arose about the discrimination in the official rules of protocol and what should be done about it.

What happens if a man has his own title but it is lower than his wife's? Let's take the Carla and Rod Hill s' situation - a case in point - one of many. Carla Hills was Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and a member of President Ford's cabinet. Her husband Rod Hills was Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, no inconsequential position either.

Does Rod assume Carla's rank as in the Charlie-Shirley episode and go to the head of the table or is he to be banished to the philharmonic sounds of the kitchen?



Fortunately the Hills' both ^{have} a good sense of humor. They needed it! They were exposed to every possible form of social phenomena and rationale in their situation.

The Green Book, Washington's Social Register, and the State Department's Protocol Office disagreed on procedure. The Green Book said they should be seated according to the individual's rank. State Department said no! A spouse takes on the rank of a higher-ranking spouse.

Another case in point was the situation facing Senator Robert Dole and his wife former Federal Trade Commissioner Elizabeth Hanford Dole. If they attended a formally seated dinner (and most official dinners were) she would lose her rank as a Senator's wife and, if there were other ranking men there, would be outranked by all their wives, taking the lowest seat in the house even though she was the only official woman there.

Nobody wanted to start changing the rules. It was and is a pandora's box of the most sensitive nature.

Sally Quinn of the Washington Post called one day. She was working on a story about the new role of women in protocol. We discussed the problems in social procedures brought about by the changes in our society and specifically the seating issue.

She said it had been suggested to her that the solution was at the pleasure of the White House and wanted to know what did I think?

I laughingly said --- thanks a lot. I was laughing not to cry! I immediately began extolling the virtues of round tables and the logic behind our choice of using them.



Sally being the good reporter that she is, did not back off.

I finally opted for the spouse taking on the rank of the other spouse - after all, what's good for the goose is good for the gander!

Again, the Ford's use of round tables alleviated many of the problems and provided a more relaxed atmosphere. The seating of a dinner has enough of its own built in complications without creating more problems.

Usually the seating of a dinner begins the night before the event. Two portable tables were set up in my office displaying twelve circular charts (one for each table) positioned exactly as they will be in the State Dining Room. There is a color coded name tag made up for each guest arranged by protocol and in alphabetical order. Red for the official party, white for men, blue for women and green for Congress.

The basic seating was usually done at this time. First the President's tag is affixed to chart number ten. The First Lady's tag goes to chart number nine. The Fords sat at separate tables to enable more people to share their company. The head of state was then placed to Mrs. Ford's right and his spouse to the President's right.

Next a host was assigned to each of the remaining tables. The host was always a guest of prominence and usually a member of the Administration. We felt, since everyone could not be seated with the President or the First Lady they could still be given their own very special dignitary such as Henry Kissinger, Happy Rockefeller, Susan or Jack Ford, Bill Simon, Anne Armstrong, Don Rumsfeld or Bill Coleman.

The official party is divided around the room, giving each table at least one or two of our visiting guests. Administration officials



are seated at tables hosting foreign guests with corresponding duties and interests i.e. Earl Butz with the Minister of Agriculture and Ron Nessen with the Minister of Information. I must say Earl Butz was the one who always got the highest marks from his dinner partners.

The remainder of the seating had to wait until the afternoon of the dinner day. I learned, the hard way, that one or two changes in a guest list, depending on who they are, can cause you to have to reseate a major part of a dinner.

With everything there was to do that afternoon, time would usually slip away, so in order to get the job done, I would close myself in my office asking not to be interrupted until I was finished. My staff, too, had much work to do after I had completed my part of the seating.

At such times, of course, a crisis would likely occur. One memorable afternoon Pat Howard knocked on the door and frantically exclaimed:

"Maria, you have got to help Mr. Graves!"

Mr. Graves being the actor, Peter Graves, who with his wife were to be dinner guests that evening. They were at Dulles Airport having flown in from California especially for the dinner. They arrived but their luggage didn't!

It was 5:30 in the evening, they were broken-hearted and ready to board the next plane back to California. We persuaded them to get into a taxi instead and for Peter to stop at Scogna Formal Wear Rental Store which we had contacted for him. Although it was past closing time, the owner of the store consented to wait for him.



We didn't know what we were going to do about Mrs. Graves - but we had faith and knew that something would work out. We asked her to call us as soon as she arrived at the hotel. Mind you, Dulles is an hours drive from the White House and we were getting a little nervous.

I was just about to call my husband and ask him to bring in one of my dresses when Mrs. Ford called to go over any last minute details. When I explained our dilemma she said:

"You have enough to do, leave Mrs. Graves to me. Have her come upstairs and I'll have several dresses waiting for her to try on."

Well, I'm getting a little bit ahead of myself, but Mrs. Graves couldn't have looked lovelier than she did in the gown the First Lady loaned her.

Back to the seating charts - this is where the laughter came in - my chance to mix and match - to look at the big picture - to fit together the pieces of the jig saw puzzle and occasionally to play cupid, too. I must admit my matchmaking never bore fruit as far as I knew.

Sometimes I inadvertently played cupid too. I remember one evening catching holy halleluiah from the wife of one of our State Department officials for telling her husband the name of a very attractive young lady seated at his table. This of course was at his request. Apparently she knew his security checks were not always in the interest of our country only.



Seating a dinner is very time consuming. Some may wonder why I didn't let my staff do it. First of all, selfishly, it gave me a great sense of satisfaction to know we had gone this extra mile to try and make the evening as memorable as possible, even insuring interesting dinner partners. I knew many of the guests, their backgrounds, interests, personalities- who would make for lively conversation - who was shy and would be overpowered by the company they were in - and who was compatible or combatable with whom. There were times I knowingly put people who had disagreements at the same table - it made for an interesting evening and perhaps even eased their disagreement.

A tribute to the extra care given the many small details came in a letter to me from J. Paul Lyet, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Sperry Rand. He and Mrs. Lyet had been guests at the State dinner honoring the German Chancellor and Mrs. Schmidt.

He wrote: "Dear Mrs. Downs:

Mrs. Lyet and I came away from the White House dinner last Thursday evening with a deep appreciation for the contribution you made to a most successful, interesting and well arranged program.

Having had some experience in such matters, I was greatly impressed by your planning and execution of the complicated logistics involved. As I remarked to someone, I think you have a more difficult job than I do."

Mr. Lyet must have been talking to General Scowcroft! Now the two of them could form the nucleus of the "Your job is harder than mine Maria Downs, fan club."



Seriously, I am not making light of the praise. It was greatly appreciated, especially coming from people like Paul Lyet and Brent Scowcroft.

I had occasion to call Mrs. Lyet for help one frantic weekend shortly thereafter. Our diplomatic Bicentennial concert was upon us and a last minute change in program created a great problem. I was trying to locate Benny Goodman to ask if he could assist us.

Our White House telephone operators usually could track down the devil when he was out to lunch but this time all the numbers they rang, including Mr. Goodman's home phone, did not answer. As luck would have it we were again searching for someone during a weekend when business phones were not being answered.

I recalled that Mr. Goodman had been Mrs. Lyet's dinner partner at the aforementioned dinner. She told me how much she had enjoyed his company and that although they were neighbors they had never met before. She said they had many mutual friends which they discussed. The call to Mrs. Lyet gave me a clue as to where I could reach Mr. Goodman or friends who might know where he was. Half an hour later I had him on the line.



Julie Harris and Charles Nelson Reilly were two more likely candidates for the Maria Downs fan club. I am not being braggadocio, there were too few members for that - but they were select. And count Prince Phillip among their numbers, but more about that later.

Julie and Charles were two of the most observing guests I encountered. They paid heed to every tiny detail - nothing got past them.

They were White House guests on two occasions during the Ford Administration. The first time they were performing locally at the Kennedy Center and could not attend the dinner but came for the entertainment and dancing. Mrs. Ford and the President liked both of them so much they asked me to again invite them, when their schedules would permit. They came to the dinner honoring Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip.

If you can love strangers - I love both Julie and Charles! Interesting and interested, both were delightful guests; both genuinely inquisitive as to how in the world a State dinner was staged. "And with such apparent ease!" (Appearances can be deceiving, can't they?) They posed many questions -

--- How do the Social Aides get from their honor guard position to the East Room before the guests? "We just left them in the Rose Garden a moment ago."

--- Who was responsible for the beautiful floral arrangements?

--- Where did you find such gracious butlers?

--- And who chose the delicious dinner menu?



But again, Charles and Julie were genuinely interested - not noseey or seeking some aspect to criticize. Which brings to mind a certain Senator's wife who approached me at one of the many festivities surrounding the Queen's visit.

She said: "The flowers, last night, were just breath-takingly beautiful. You certainly must have had Mrs. Mellon's help with them - no one else can do flowers like that." (Mrs. Mellon being Mrs. Paul Mellon whose lovely arrangements, reminiscent of Flemish flower still lifes, became a trademark of Kennedy Administration dinners.)

I sensed her great disappointment and disbelief when I informed her, the arrangements were not Mrs. Mellon's. I have a feeling that Senator's wife will go to her grave believing Mrs. Mellon and not Betty Sherrill and Jim Goslee were responsible for the lovely bouquets gracing the tables for Queen Elizabeth's dinner.

Mrs. Mellon was a guest at the dinner and being the gracious, artistic lady she is, expressed a wealth of warm praise for the floral arrangements.

Julie and Charles were never formally introduced to me and the evening of the Queen's dinner did not leave me much time to seek out guests. Charles however, singled me out and said:

"you, you're the one - the one who makes everything work. When things go this well someone is very responsible. Julie and I looked around and decided you had to be the one."

Later I wondered if the concerned expression on my face had given me away!



When Julie returned to Washington to star in "Belle of Amherst", she kindly invited Jack and I to be her guests at one of the performances. After watching her magnificent portrayal of Emily Dickinson, where she alone was responsible for captivating the audience for the entire $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, I could not believe in any-way "my job was harder than hers."



As we have mentioned, there are always exceptions to the rule and the seating of the dinner was no exception. Remember Terry Bradshaw and JoJo Starbuck and the saga of Super Bowl Tuesday? Well, when the Social Aide handed Terry the escort envelopes with their table numbers indicating where they would be seated for dinner, they were crushed! They had not realized they would be seated at separate tables.

It was not our policy to seat husband and wife or guest and escort together. We wanted people to intermingle and to enjoy other guests. Most took it in stride and felt it added to the enjoyment of the evening.

I remember overhearing actor Robert Stack's parting advice to his wife upon entering the State Dining Room "Okay darling, you're on your own - good luck!"

But back to Terry and JoJo. They had not seen each other for weeks. Since she was on tour with the Ice Capades for another month it would be quite awhile before they could be together again. Couldn't we please make an exception? Again - the willow bends!

When we needed to expand on the number of guests invited to State dinners we would place four tables in the Red Room adjacent to the State Dining Room. This was not a new idea it had been done several times before in other Administrations. The first time we expanded was because of popularity. We had so many acceptances to the dinner honoring German President and Mrs. Scheel that we overflowed into the Red Room.



When we found it necessary to use the Red Room we would ask the Vice President or Henry Kissinger if they would be seated in that room. Explaining that in such distinguished company folks would not feel excluded or left out of the festivities in the State Dining Room. The guests seated in the Red Room could hear everything that was going on and see the exchange of toasts between the two leaders.

Henry got to liking the Red Room so that he wanted us to rename it the Kissinger Room. It reminded one of King Arthur and his round table - holding court.

Dr. Kissinger and I had a running dialogue about who would be seated at his table. He had a standing request for several of the prettiest women attending each dinner. Of course, in many instances there was no way of knowing what the physical attributes of our dinner guests would be. There were times I would not do well by Henry in purely somatical terms - but never intentionally. To his protests I would jokingly respond - Dr. you can understand that the pretty girls want to be seated at hte President's table or with General Scowcroft. Besides you are Secretary of State and should mind the store. This for you is business - not pleasure!

This was what I called kidding on the square. No matter how times and values change beautiful women still play an important part in your guest list. This brings to mind the State dinner for Dr. Uhro Kekkonen, President of Finland. This dinner was one of the last to be held in the Rose Garden tent. The Rose Garden dinners featured a small head table composed of our President and First Lady, the official visiting dignitaries and pertinent members of our Administration. All others were seated at round tables. Dr. Kekkonen, a widower up in years, is in excellent physical condition, quite an athlete with a well known eye for a lovely lady. The smile never left his lips that evening as he gazed upon Buffy Cafritz, one of Washington's loveliest and better known hostesses.



Buffy was strategically seated directly in front of President Kekkonen. He was so taken with her that he was heard asking who she was.

Another instance of a beautiful lady being singled out was done in the press coverage of Juan Carlos' dinner. Rounding out that not too complimentary story about the dinner, the reporter ended his article by saying:

"A few minutes later, the President exercised one of the few perquisites of the night making the entire thing worth while. He danced with the most stunning woman there, the red haired wife of Donal McAdams, the California rancher who employed Steve Ford last summer." End of quote - end of article!

The President chuckled at that one! The McAdams' are Ford friend of many years. Kena McAdams had been Steve's "den mother" all the time he had lived in California. Unlike the coverage he gave Robert Mitchum, this time the reporter was correct in his facts about Mrs. McAdams - she is one stunning lady!

Reporters often tried to make something of the ladies the President danced with or why a certain beauty was seated at his table for dinner. Usually it was because we thought he might enjoy it.

Seating plans were not made available to the press. The simple reason why was explained earlier. They were often changing up to the last moment and an incorrect list wouldd have caused confusion and invited more questions. The press corps believed however there was some sinister reason behind withholding these plans and were continually after us on this score.

The only glimpse they had of our guests seated at dinner was during the exchange of toasts between the President and the visiting head of state. At that time the photographers and television mini-cam crews were brought into the State Dining Room to record the remarks and take their pictures.

This was quite a production in itself! Bill Roberts, Assistant Press Secretary and veteran Washington newsman, was in charge of shepherding and chaperoning the photographers and crewfolk known as the photographic press pool which numbered about thirty. Bill had the right disposition for this part of his job. The press liked and respected him and usually behaved well when he was in command.

On several occasions we tried to use a member of the First Lady's press office staff for this chore, but that group ran rampant and did as they pleased instead of staying in the area reserved for them. Their idea was to get the picture regardless, and if it meant stepping on a guest's toe or getting an elbow in his Baked Alaska, they couldn't care less.

Bill's part of the evening usually followed along the same lines for every dinner. The Air Force Strolling Strings were brought into the State Dining Room to play for the guests after they had been served their desert and just before the exchange of toasts. The musicians and butlers had worked together often enough so that their roles went along with the precision of a military tattoo.

While the Strolling Strings were serenading and after the butlers had cleared off the tables Bill would bring the photographic pool to the State Floor from the Press Room.



They were a good group! Many, like Walter Oates of the Washington Star and George Orteiz of I.N.S., are veterans who have seen Presidents and heads of state come and go - literally. They are the hard core news photo getters. They were in the business long before it became the glamorous profession of the Candy Bergen's, Lord Snowdon's and Dave Kennerly.

The "pool" was predominantly male but did include women. One, Nour Hzyam an attractive, petite, talented "shooter" looks like she belongs on the cover of Vogue or Harper's, but is pure professional who more than holds her own with the pack. There are times when the equipment Nour totes around weighs more than she does. Recently Nour has been supplementing her income by performing as a wing walker in the local flying circus. What an interesting, unusual and adventure-some breed these "shooters"!

The "pool" was decked out just like the guests, in black tie or white tie depending on what the occasion called for. The only reason you could tell they were working was because of the light stoddard they were holding, the forty pound back-pack battery they carried or the Sunny's Surplus canvas bag overflowing with cameras and film.

Their antics and remarks while waiting to enter the State Dining Room should have been put on film and recorded for posterity. a CBS cameraman for instance, possessing the gazelle-like grace of a Fred Astaire, waltzing with his minicam to the refrains of the Blue Danube overflowing from the dining room.

As the Strolling Strings departed from the State Dining Room still playing their beautiful melodies, the "pool" at Bill's command



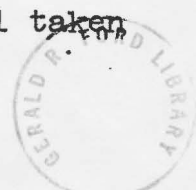
would move into action. Sometimes the bass player, the last ~~to~~ member of the Strings to leave the dining room, with his little portable chair would be caught in what, to him, must have resembled "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

At this juncture our lovely mood of Wine and Roses, created by the many hours of hard work, extra effort and the nostalgia of the music was dispelled. Lost, for the time being, in the glare of the ever prying television lights. One could almost hear the groans of our guests, as they braced for the onslaught.

However, the lighting used for television coverage is an interesting story in itself. Without changing the decor of the State Dining Room, Richard Nixon had installed into the existing panels along the walls, banks of revolving lights. These lights were set prior to the dinner and in the turning of the panel were operational in a matter of minutes rather than the lengthy period usually needed for adjusting such things. Looking back Richard Nixon introduced many innovations which made the job of press coverage easier and more professional .

Upon the brightening of the lights, the President would rise from his chair and begin his remarks and offer his toast. The honored guest would then respond and raise his glass in cheers.

The exchange of toasts is a very important part of a State dinner. It is the continuation of the serious dialogue which the two leaders have been engaged in all day. It is necessary for the press to have access to this part of the dinner. At the same time we felt a responsibility to our guests to insure that they have an enjoyable evening and not have someone watching each mouthful taken during a dinner.



Bill had his friends well trained. They usually cleared the room moments after the toasts. Their route back to the press room had been mapped out in advance and the State Floor returned to normal. Well for a few moments at least - following the dinner the writing press was brought in to intermingle with our guests.

Once in awhile we would get a guest who was not pleased with the seating arrangements and was adamant about sitting where he wanted and not where we had placed him.

It happened at the dinner for Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser which was also being held in the Rose Garden.

It was a lovely evening and the guests had left the reception in the East Room and were entering the Rose Garden to be seated for dinner. Jimmy Connors, the tennis champion was a guest at the dinner that evening.

People had detained him along the way - wanting to meet him - asking questions. By the time he entered the Rose Garden tent it was quite full. When he arrived at his table Frank O'Connor, the husband of author Ayn Rand, had commandeered his chair and refused to budge. O'Connor wanted to be seated at the same table as his wife. One of the butlers observing what was happening came to fetch help.

Jimmy Connors could not have been nicer; with the help of a Social Aide he secured from Mr. O'Connor the number of the table he was meant to be seated at and quietly joined the guests at that table.

It was all taken care of before we could come to his aid. It makes one wonder when you hear or read reports of Jimmy Connors bad manners and ill temperament both on and off the court. He was a real champion that night.



The President's eagle eye had taken in all the Connors-O'Connor action! When we told him what had happened he said he wanted to invite Jimmy back to the White House for a personal visit and a chance to use the pool or tennis courts. Jimmy asked the President for a game of tennis but had to settle for a swim instead as the President's knee was acting up at that time.

Uppermost in my mind while seating a dinner was the salmagundi of guests we were playing host to. What a wonderful opportunity for people to meet, to share in dialogue and to enjoy themselves.

We tried to provide an admixture which would make for an interesting time - and satisfy most - whatever their desires. The President's table at the dinner honoring French President Giscard D'Estaing was a good example.

To the President's right, of course, was Madame Giscard D'Estaing; Senator Mike Mansfield; Jane Engelhard, philanthropist; Mickey Mantle, baseball superstar; Dr. Marjorie Chambers, President, American Association of University Women; Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Sauvagnargues; Sheila Young, Olympic Gold Medalist; Samuel Newhouse, publisher of Newhouse News Service and Ray Bolger, actor.

Remember playing "Musical Chairs" when you were children? How often I thought of the game while in self imposed solitary confinement working on how best to seat some of the world's most influential people --- how I wish it would be as much fun and as uncomplicated as "Musical Chairs."



Attached are two segments from "The Talk of the Town" chapter on the Americans theme. This portion of the book will describe the decors chosen for many of the social events as well as interesting anecdotes about each.

It will cover twelve State dinners as well as the Medal of Freedom celebrations (recipients include: Martha Graham, Arthur Rubenstein, Arthur Fiedler, Lady Bird Johnson, James Michener, Catherine Filene Shouse, Norman Rockwell, General Omar Bradley, Joe Di Maggio and Ariel and Will Durant). Also included will be the Governor's dinner, Professional Athlete's Prayer breakfast, Senate Ladies luncheon and the Judiciary dinner to mention a few.

Each of these descriptions can be illustrated by a photograph such as the enclosed of Mrs. Ford viewing the Farragut presentation piece used for the Liberian dinner or Secretariat gracing the President's table at the Irish State dinner or other pertinent pictures.

Menus and programs from each dinner can also be included as part of the descriptions.

I don't know if cost would prohibit the use of many photographs but there are a wealth of situation photos available and Mrs. Ford has kindly offered the use of any pictures from her collection.



On the occasion of the visit of
His Excellency
The President of the Republic of Liberia
and Mrs. Tolbert

The handwritten card identifying the centerpiece on the President's table the evening of the dinner honoring the Liberian Head of State and Mrs. Tolbert read:

"Presented to Admiral David Glasgow Farragut by Commander Charles Hunter and the officers in the crew of the U.S. Steamer Montgomery - 1863"

The Museum of the City of New York had loaned us it's private collection of 19th century silver presentation pieces for the dinner. All of the pieces were created by American manufacturers in the late 1800's. Silver presentation pieces came from the custom of giving a piece of silver to an individual in recognition of service or in appreciation of accomplishment.

The pieces included a trumpet ornament presented in 1850 to J.V. Meserole, Foreman of Engine Co. No. 8 by it's members as a token of their esteem.

A loving cup presented to Anton Seidl, conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in 1887; made by the Gorham Mfg. Co.

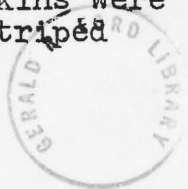
A teapot presented by the Directors of the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb to Elizabeth Reynolds Budd, 1845. This was in appreciation for her appearance before the Albany Legislature where she pleaded the cause of the Institution so successfully that the full amount of money requested by them was voted by acclamation.

A hot water kettle presented by George Peabody to Cyrus W. Field on the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable in 1866, made by Gorham Mfg. Co.

A pitcher presented to Colonel Abram Duryee on his retirement from the Seventh Regiment National Guard in 1859. Made by Tiffany and Co.

Another pitcher presented by the Board of Aldermen to their President, Morgan Morgans, 1850-1851; made by William Forbes for Ball Tompkins and Black.

The silver presentation pieces were encircled with flowers of all seasons and greens such as Boston ivy, pink cabbage roses, eucalyptus, pink lillies, gerber daisies and mums. The napkins were accented with a pink lilly tucked in the green and white striped grosgrained ribbon.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

Special tablecloths were made for this dinner and donated by the Quadrille Fabric Company. The design called "Bagatelle print" is a hand screened print of blended multi-colored flora of muted reds, oranges, greens and yellows and provided a beautiful background for the silver pieces.

Joan Peck, talented New York designer and contributing editor of House and Garden Magazine volunteered her services and coordinated the decor. She enlisted the assistance of Renny Reynolds of "Renny's of New York" with the flower arrangements.

This was a very upbeat dinner. It was to be the last State dinner until after the election. Perhaps that was the reason for the high spirits. We may have unknowingly been psyching ourselves for the tough campaign ahead. Whatever --- an intangible feeling of joy prevailed.

The guests included heads of major corporations with business interests in Liberia such as Firestone Tire and Rubber Company's Richard A. Riley and Mrs. Riley, Liberian Iron and Steel's Walter H. Saunders and Mrs. Saunders and Seaboard Mining Corporation's Richard G. Myers and Mrs. Myers.

Author Alex Haley whose "Roots" was just beginning it's national ascent was there as well as Charlotte Curtis, Associate Editor of the New York Times, Olympic Gold Medalist Bruce Jenner and Mrs Jenner, television sportscaster Jim McKay and Mrs. McKay and actor Ernest Borgnine and Mrs. Borgnine.

Ernest Borgnine was like a kid in a toy shop at Christmas. He couldn't get enough of the White House. He wanted to know everything - see everything - asked question after question and didn't seem to want to leave even though it was getting quite late.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

This prompted me to offer to take them on a late night tour of the White House. Offer accepted - and off we went.-- the Borgnine's, Marty Allen, Ray Caldiero and tour director, Maria Downs.

We began at the top with the President's office. While viewing the Oval Office I noticed that the door to the President's private office was open. I hesitated about entering his private sanctuary but temptation proved too great. If it had not been 2:00 in the morning, I probably would not have been so brave, so bold.

This was his retreat - the place he went to be alone -- to work - to think. I felt a sense of guilt in invading his last bastion of privacy. In the morning I would tell Mrs. Ford but tonight let them enjoy themselves.

From there we went on to the press room where we found Isabelle Shelton of the Washington Star writing her account of the dinner. She was a bit surprised to see us at that hour. Isabelle's story reflected the mood of the evening - she referred to it as "gungho and upbeat all the way."

Halfway back to my office in the East Wing it occurred to me that we had locked Isabelle in the press room when we left. Back to the West Wing I raced. There was Isabelle still working away, unaware of her fate. My cohorts jokingly insisted my concern was in losing a good story not over Isabelle's well being. Not true!

From the East Wing we adjourned to AnnaMaria's Italian Restaurant for pizza. It had been quite an evening --- or should I say morning!

I do not want to leave the impression that the life of a Social Secretary includes revelling till dawn with beautiful people. This was an exception, albeit a very pleasant one. There was one other

Mostly Wine and Roses -

exception however and that was luncheon with Omar Sharif.

It took place the day after the Sadat dinner and when I returned to the White House I found a message to call Mrs. Ford. She had called to tell me how pleased she had been with the State dinner - how beautifully she thought all had gone.

When I told her where I had been - and with whom - she responded:

"Wow - well, there have to be some fringe benefits to the job."

It was a year later when I drummed up the courage to tell my husband I had been to lunch with Omar Sharif!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Transfer/Disposal Sheet

ITEM ID 00478

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM MOVED . . 4 color White House photographs (8" x
10") of White House state dinner table
settings. (Great Britain, Ireland,
Liberia)

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 025700007

COLLECTION TITLE MARIA DOWNS PAPERS

BOX NUMBER 1

FOLDER TITLE Downs, Maria - Book, "Mostly Wine and
Roses" (1)-(2) (unpublished)

ACCESSION NUMBER 92-NLF-016

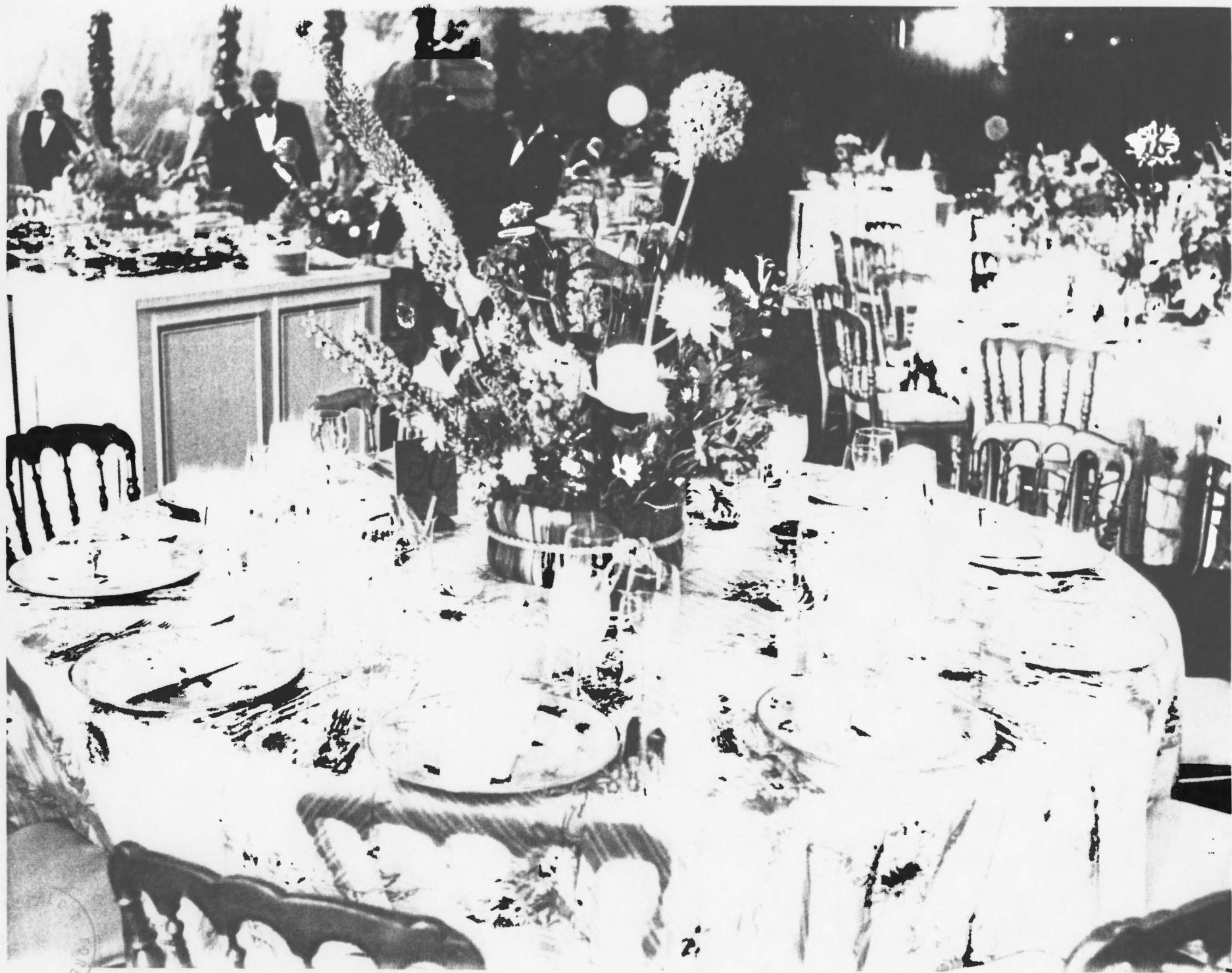
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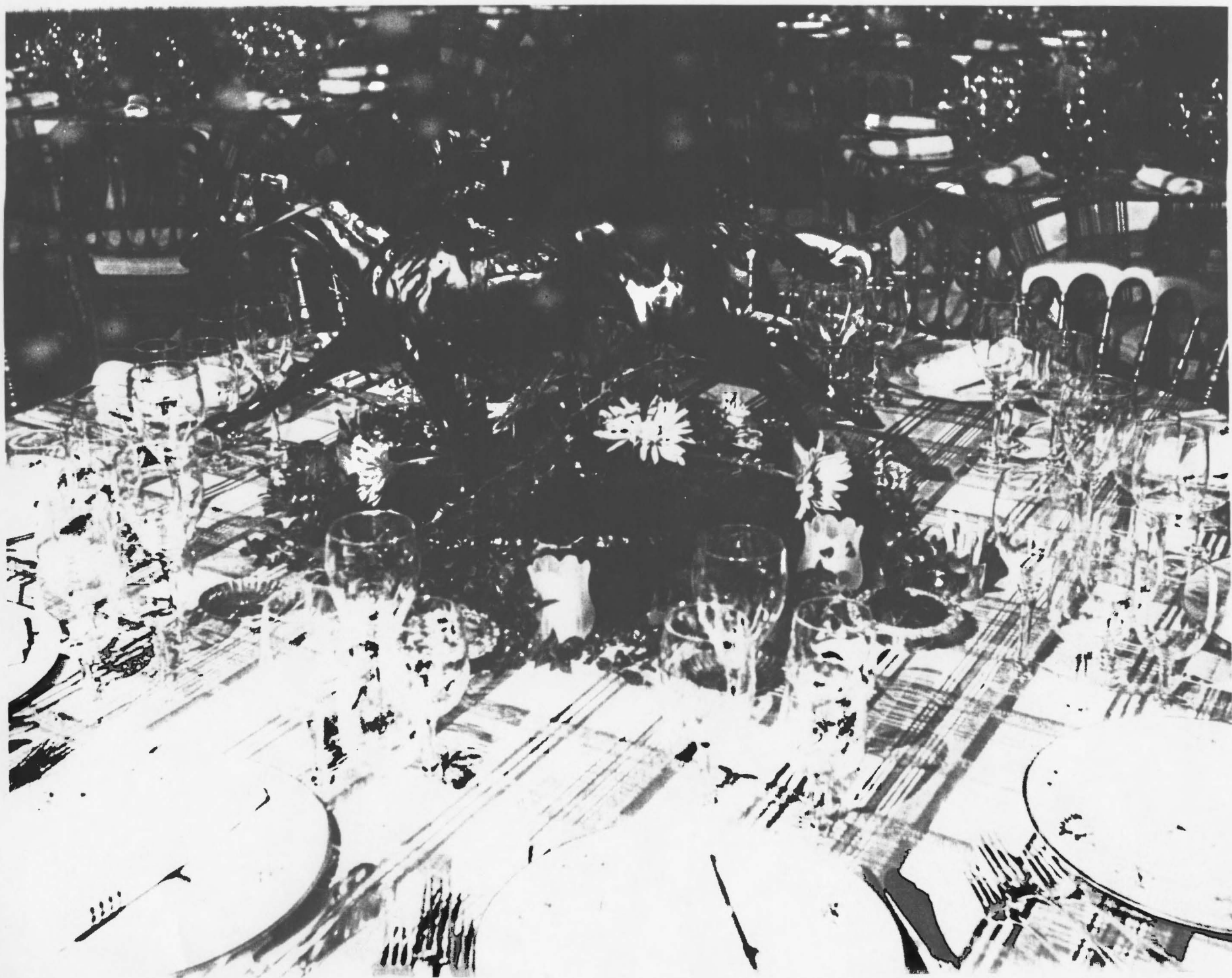
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On The Occasion Of The Visit Of
His Excellency
The Prime Minister of Ireland
and Mrs. Cosgrove

Everybody was Irish at the White House the evening of the State dinner honoring the Prime Minister of Ireland and Mrs. Cosgrove which just happened to fall on St. Patrick's day.

The President, sporting a healthy sprig of shamrocks in his lapel welcomed the Prime Minister as "a kinsman, very distant in genealogy, but very close in affinity." He said: "I am partially Irish in heritage and fully Irish in spirit."

Spirits were especially high at the dinner as the President had just won a sweeping victory in the Illinois primary the night before. Columnist Ymelda Dixon reported the next day - "Sure and they kept the cold and the wind out of the White House last night - the executive mansion was insulated with blarney, shamrock and the wearing of the green by many of the guests."

The guest list abounded with celebrated Irish names such as Pat O'Brien, Senator Edward Kennedy and Justice William Joseph Brennan and some not so Irish names as Gregor Piatigorsky, Diane Von Furstenburg and Eddie Arcaro. The famed former jockey was astonished when he was asked if his name was Irish - "No - it's not O'Arcaro - it's Arcaro - Italian, he replied.

Everyone went all out - even the Secret Service agents wore green carnations in their lapels. The Baked Alaska was flamed with Irish Mist and the demitasse was replaced by Irish Coffee.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

John Ficklin was especially pleased to use up some of the Irish whisky still in stock from the Kennedy Administration.

From the Prime Minister these words: "I know that St. Patrick in his most optimistic and spiritual moments did not ever think he'd be commemorated as he has been here tonight."

Besides St. Patrick's day the theme running throughout the evening was horses. The Prime Minister is a devoted horseman, a master of the hunt and the proud possessor of fine horese and a pack of hounds.

"The Winner's Circle" was the theme Mrs. Ford chose for the evening.

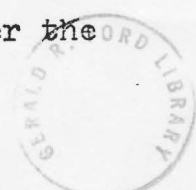
Bronze sculptures of such Derby greats as Zev, Twenty Grand, and Gallant Fox were loaned to us from the Kentucky Derby Museum of Churchill Downs.

From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon came The Chaser: Sergeant Murphy by Herbert Haseltine - winner of the Grand National in 1923 which graced Mrs. Ford's table that evening. The First Lady's dinner partner, the Prime Minister, knew much of the history of the Chestnut Gelding.

The President's table was adorned by Secretariat, the first Triple Crown winner in twenty-five years.

Co-ordinating the decor for the Irish dinner were Robert King and Michael Bonnet, two very talented Washington designers who volunteered their services.

The tables were draped with cloths of green and white cotton plaid with a ruffled border and the horses were placed on beds of natural bark covered with moss and embedded in the moss were shamrocks, ferns and ivy. Flowering white quince gave a tree effect. It really did look like a "Winner's Circle" and quite appropriate after the Illinois primary victory.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

As I mentioned earlier it is customary for the two heads of state to exchange gifts during an official State visit. At one time - and quite recently - official gifts were quite extravagant. Fortunately, times have changed. The Ford's feeling was that a gift need not be extravagant to be meaningful.

NASA had just concluded the flight of a communication's satellite which had orbited the earth photographing and recording on a reconnaissance mission.

The photographs taken while over Ireland were breathtakingly beautiful in natural color shades of green. Lighter tones depicting the rural and agricultural areas and darker shadings for the urban areas.

When framed, the pictures looked like a beautiful abstract painting rather than a photograph.

A leather bound description was made up and our President presented it to the Prime Minister as our State gift.

I am told it is proudly hanging in the Prime Minister's office - a gift no one but America could give to our Irish cousins.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Must finish —
Lib page + more



Mostly Wine and Roses -

On The Occasion of the Visit of
His Majesty Hussein I
His Majesty Hussein I
King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
and
Her Majesty Queen Alia

A colonial American theme was featured for the State Dinner honoring Jordan's King Hussein and Queen Alia. Antique metalware used in American homes during the 18th and early 19th century served as centerpieces for the tables.

Fruits, vegetables, breads, nuts and spices accented the housewares of cast iron, brass, copper, tin and pewter. Protia, gardenias, blue delphiniums and cream and brown lillies were also used.

The historic uses of the housewares were linked with the decorations; thus, a copper teapot was trimmed with tea, oranges, cloves and berries. A flat iron was accented by cotton thistles. A tin chestnut roaster with chestnuts adorned Susan Ford's table. Upon seeing it Mrs. Ford jokingly quipped "nuts for the nutty." A popcorn maker was accompanied by ears of corn and a copper milk pail with asparagus and eggs.

The President's table featured a pewter wine measure with a glass bottle. In the 18th century all wine bottles were hand blown and consequently of varied size, shape and thickness. A sealer of weights and measures could not verify the true weight of a bottle of wine by mere visual examination. He had to uncork the bottle and pour it out. This very unusual pewter wine measure accomodated an open bottle turned upside down. Circumferential lines inside the measure indicate to the sealer whether the bottle was of full measure. The antique wine container was surrounded by grapes and berries as well as flowers.

Mostly Wine and Roses -

Washingtonians Robert King and Michael Bonnet coordinated the decorations using blue, brown and white as the dominant colors. The round tables were covered with an overlay of blue and white rope design combed cotton. To follow through with the color theme napkins were tied with brown, blue and white grossgrained ribbon made into a bow.

The Johnson china, Monroe vermeil flatware and Morgantown crystal were used for the dinner as was generally the case. They were the only services we had in adequate quantity to accomodate a State dinner. The Truman china was often used for smaller luncheons.

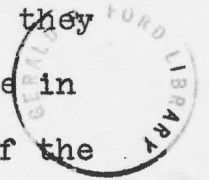
The antique metalware pieces were loaned to the White House by the museum houses of Historic Deerfield in Deerfield, Massachusetts.

The King's two very attractive sons

were attending Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts at that time. We thought having our centerpieces come from Deerfield would prave significant to our honored guests. We did not realize until I spoke to Donald Friary, Executive Director of Deerfield, just how significant.

Mr. Friary was quite well acquainted with Prince and Prince . Both boys were actively involved with the museum and did quite abit of volunteer work there. The King, through his two sons knew more about Historic Deerfield than we did.

accompanied their parents to the White House for the welcoming ceremony. Unfortunately, they were unable to attend the dinner and did not see the metalware in this unique display. Because of security reasons no mention of the



Mostly Wine and Roses -

Deerfield connection was ever made public.

The Washington Post described the Jordanian dinner as "A Royal Assemblage, A Champion Crowd." And that it was boasting several princesses, the Princess Alia, daughter of the King and the Princess Basmah, the King's sister as well as a bevy of champions.

The champions included "the champ", world heavyweight champion, Muhammad Ali; champion stock car racer Richard Petty and jockey Bill Shoemaker, who had just recently won an unprecedented 7,000th horse race. King Hussein is an avid horse fancier with racing stables of his own. He and "Willie" had much to discuss. Muhammad Ali was unusually quiet - perhaps my "Wondrous strange feeling" had gotten to him. After dinner he was queried by reporters about his conversation with the President at whose table he had been seated. He said they had talked on "quite a few subjects" but declined to discuss them "out of respect to Mr. Ford." He said however he considered it a "blessing and a real honor" being with us at the White House that evening.

This was a memorable evening in the life of Joe Garagiola too - he met and became fast friends with Jerry Ford - and danced with Mrs. Garagiola for the first time since their wedding day. Mrs. Garagiola told me recently he hasn't danced again since that dinner.

Joe campaigned his heart out for Jerry Ford, the first time he actively participated in politics. The Fords thought so much of them, they gave them one of Liberty's puppies. (MOSES)
Guests like the Garagiola's, the Charlton Heston, the Wyatt Rogers (Glenn Van derbilt) lingered late that evening - no one seemed to want to go home.

The beautiful, gracious Queen Alia was to die a fiery helicopter crash shortly after this dinner.





National Federation of Republican Women

310 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003 (202) 484-6670

Do more on Dany's
decision & also add
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person brought in by the
quilt list etc —



Mostly Wine and Roses -

On The Occasion of the Visit of
His Excellency
The Prime Minister of Israel
and Mrs. Rabin

They danced a hora several times in the marble foyer with First Lady Betty Ford joining in. The traditional Israeli circle dance was not planned as part of the festivities at the White House dinner honoring the Prime Minister of Israel and Mrs. Rabin but nothing could have been more appropriate - and fun. That evening the dancing went on - and on - and on. It was a party night.

Malcolm Moran's sculptures were employed as the theme for the dinner. The First Lady had visited his studio in Carmel several months earlier and was impressed with his work which was inspired by the world of rocks and wind blown cypress and ocean around his California home.

His sculptures are executed in bronze and combined with semi-precious rocks - using chunks of everything from jade to amethyst relative to the terrain.

His designs are distinctly American and fall mainly into two groups - children and nature.

The collection Malcolm chose to exhibit for the Israeli dinner were one of a kind pieces that had been sculpted for a particular purpose or person.

The Bing Crosby's loaned three of their pieces, "Large Christopher Robin with Birds" which depicts its title. The piece had been presented to Bing Crosby in appreciation for all his efforts in putting on the Bing Crosby Golf Tournament, a yearly event at Pebble Beach whose proceeds go to charity. His "16th Hole at Cypress Point" actually portrays the 16th hole - the landscape and terrain of the

Mostly Wine and Roses -

golf green are mirrored in the sculpture done in bronze. Malcolm Moran created this sculpture to especially commemorate the occasion of a hole-in-one made by his close friend Bing. "Large Jade with Tree" the third of the Crosby pieces is a tree done in bronze and mounted on a piece of jade. This sculpture was presented to him by "Bing's Boys" recipients of Crosby charities such as those for homeless boys or other boys who need help.

Owners of other pieces displayed at the Israeli dinner were Clint Eastwood, John Glenn, Eddie Carlson, President of United Airlines, engineer-designer William Scott and President and Mrs. Ford whose "Gulls in Flight" was moved from the Family Quarters to the State Dining Room for the occasion.

I would be remiss if I did not say a few words about Malcolm Moran personally. Free spirit would best describe him - a handsome child of a man. After meeting him it is easy to understand the success of the childrens sculptures he is most famous for - the whimsical charming creatures that evoke delightful childhood memories in all of us. Malcolm Moran was not one to get behind in his fun. He was a delight to work with.

Prior to coming to Washington Malcolm had collected the sculptures from the various owners and personally packed and brought them with him on the airplane from California. He unpacked them in the Family Dining Room and worked with us in the State Dining Room as to where to place which piece.

Even as carefully cared for as they had been - several pieces were broken and had to be soldered again.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

We were assisted by Washington designer Danya Pelzman who volunteered her services and co-ordinated the decor using spring flowers tucked into little nooks and crannies around the base of Malcolm's sculptures. The effect was natural and beautiful.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

It is a custom for our President and First Lady to exchange official gifts with the visiting head of state. The Ford's chose to present the Rabin's one of Malcolm Morna's sculptures as a state gift.

Long after the dinner, one of my White House colleagues, Bobbi Kilberg visited Israel and met with the Prime Minister. He sent his regards to Mrs. Ford and told her he would long remember the truly creative and beautiful decor for their state dinner. He said, they were enjoying the Morna piece immensely and (thought) it's presence served as a daily reminder of their American friends.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

In Honor of
The Governors of the States and Territories

"The Peaceable Kingdom" was the classical folk art theme chosen by Mrs. Ford for the dinner honoring the Governors of the fifty states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States Territories of Guam, the America Samoas and the Virgin Islands.

Much of the inspiration for the decor came from the painting of Pennsylvania artist Edward Hicks, which depicts the Biblical concept of unity - wild and domestic animals living together in tranquility. In his paintings he often integrates the idea of the peaceful co-existence of Western civilization with native American Indians.

Hand crafted animals and birds were used as centerpieces. Each an American antique. The carvings were made of wood, stone, metal and fabric and were supplied by the Museum of American Folk Art in New York city. Many came from private collections. The carved marble lamb and the carved stone lion were loaned by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Kahn. The wrought iron goat came from the collection of Bruce Johnson, the brilliant young director of the Museum of American Folk Art who was killed in a tragic motorcycle accident shortly after this dinner.



Mostly Wine and Roses -

The Governor's dinner was held on the eve of the New Hampshire primary, the President's first venture into national politics. Given the nature of the guest list, everybody's mind, of course, was on the primary - on politics.

Jack Bangs, the very talented gifted New York designer had donated his services and was coordinating the decor for this dinner as he did on many occasions. He labored long and hard and was doing a magnificent job when he came upon a stumbling block. Jack, about as political as one of our antique animals he was so beautifully placing in a natural setting of multi-colored spring flowers wanted to know where to place the donkey and the elephant - good question!

The First Lady had purposely chosen this theme to avoid offending any one region or state by showing preference to items akin to one certain part of the country. Even the wines served that evening were chosen to represent several parts of our country spanning from the West coast to the East coast with a champagne from a vineyard in the Midwest.

Each table would have guests from both political parties. We certainly did not want to show favoritism along partisan political lines. Well, we decided to practice what we preached - after all the theme for the dinner was "The Peaceable Kingdom." The cloth elephant from the collection of Myron and Patsy Orlofsky and the donkey from the collection of Paul and Judy Lenett shared honors on the same table.

The eve of the New Hampshire primary became the day of the New Hampshire primary as the Governors and their ladies danced in the marble foyer. The returns from the New Hampshire community of Dixville Notch with its 23 votes was the first to come in shortly

Mostly Wine and Roses -

after midnight --- Mr. Ford 11, Governor Reagan 4 and Georgia's
former Governor Jimmy Carter 6!

