

December 27, 1968

Dear Bob:

Thank you for being such a patient shepherd to huide me through the intricacies of wine from vine to table. My day at Napa Valley was a joy, and I am grateful to you for making it so.

After the crush of Christmas packages are gone from the Post Office, I asked the good Brothers at the Monastery in Gethsemane, Kentucky, to mail you a round of cheese and I hope you will enjoy it with some of those fine Mondavi wines as I have.

With best wishes for a New Year filled with all things good.

Sincerely,

Bess Abell
Social Secretary

Mr. Robert Mondavi
7801 St. Helena Highway
Oakville, California



NO OTHER CORRES. REC'D. IN SOCIAL FILES

BA:pr

WHSF Alpha

Box 1484

MONCRIEF

J. L. Tyler

The Couple Who Now Reign Over Official Society in the Capital

By JUDITH AXLER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30—"By the end of this Administration, I have worked with four chiefs of protocol," Bess Abell, the White House social secretary, mused. "Three of them I liked very much, and one I am in love with."

That fourth United States Chief of Protocol is Mrs. Abell's 36-year-old husband, Tyler, who was sworn in today as the successor to Angier Biddle Duke in an unusual family air. The oath was administered by Mrs. Abell's father, George Abell, who is the State Department's assistant chief of protocol, while Mrs. Tyler held the Bible.

"I wonder what the consequences of the United States would be if you two had a fight," Under Secre-

tary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach jested during the ceremony.

He was referring to the fact that the Abells now hold the nation's top protocol posts—the first husband-and-wife team to tackle the two main social positions in official Washington. Between them they will be the final arbiters on correct protocol and entertaining in a capital that is acutely sensitive to both.

Mrs. Abell is a 5-foot 8-inch frost-blond with a high forehead, a flat Kentucky accent (her father, Earle C. Clements, is a former Governor of Kentucky and United States Senator)—and a bundle of energy.

Only the multicolored tropical fish in the 30-gallon tank move languidly in her office. Even the clock above the door is kept five minutes fast to speed Mrs. Abell on her night-and-day chores at the White House.

It's "still a big question mark," Mrs. Abell confessed, whether she will be able to break away from her own duties to accompany her husband when he travels to greet visitors.

One thing it means, she added, is "getting up earlier and taking extra vitamins" so that she can take on the added workload that goes with being the wife of the chief of protocol. The protocol chief's wife is expected to be a charming, bright decoration at his side as he welcomes foreign heads of state and assists the President at state dinners.

Mrs. Abell, a size 12, loves clothes with simple lines that are easy to get into. "I call them my 'live alone and like it' clothes—for when there's no one around to hook that awkward hook," she explained.

She prefers American designers, scarves (she has two drawers full) and Kenneth Jay Lane jewelry.

Mrs. Abell has masterminded entertaining at the White House since President Johnson took office. Her husband's job calls for him to oversee all State Department entertaining, to coordinate all visits from foreign heads of state and to handle the delicate relations between the State Department and Embassy Row.

His predecessors in the post during the Johnson Administration were Angier Biddle Duke, who has been named by the President as Ambassador to Denmark; James Symington and Lloyd Hand. Mr. Abell gave up his private law practice to accept the post.

Mrs. Abell sees one definite asset to the problems of protocol being a husband-and-wife operation.

"For one thing, I'll get to see Tyler more, because we'll be working on things together," she said. "But I don't think we will see so much of each other that we can't bear to have dinner together at night."

Dinner is always a family affair with the Abell sons, Dan, 9½, and Lyndon, 8, at 7:30 P.M. ("Later than Dr. Spock would approve of") in the four-story house on a tree-shaded street off Massachusetts Avenue's "diplomatic row." The young Abell boy was named after President Johnson, who promptly put aside a heifer for him at the LBJ Ranch in Texas.

The Abells have known the Johnsons for many years. In fact, while he was a Senator he and Mrs. Johnson gave the wedding party for the Abells after they eloped on New Year's day in 1955.

"Nobody thought it would last,"

Mrs. Abell said. "But we had to be as sure and determined as people who go through a big wedding. We went from town to town looking for an open town hall or a justice of the peace."

Although Mrs. Abell has been working for Mrs. Johnson since 1960, when she was a part-time private secretary, she's looking forward to spending more time "being Mrs. Tyler Abell."

In their few times together as private citizens the Abells like to entertain ("our house is absolutely ideal for eight people for dinner"), to sail, to bicycle with the boys, and to take turns on the backyard trampoline.

"Tyler and the boys are marvelous on the skateboard, but when I see that asphalt coming up at me, I am a real fraidy cat."

A B

C

Tyler Abells Honored At Bellins' Rock Dance

By ENID NEMY

Once upon a time, not too long ago, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Bellin of New York were invited to many White House parties.

"We weren't important, and we couldn't be asked to everything," said Mrs. Bellin, the former Countess Christina Paolozzi. "They asked us when they could—I guess when they wanted a pretty face."

"They," in this case, were Mr. and Mrs. Tyler Abell, who were, respectively, President Lyndon B. Johnson's Chief of Protocol and Mrs. Johnson's social secretary.

Last night, "in gratitude," the Bellins honored the Abells at a Rock Dance for about 300 friends.

The party was originally scheduled to be held in the hosts' 14-room (counting bathrooms) Park Avenue apartment, but the other tenants complained. They apparently thought that listening to the rock music that emanates nonstop from the apartment on normal days was quite enough. The locale was switched to the Four Seasons restaurant.

Cash Was Acceptable

"They told me it would cost \$9,000," Mrs. Bellin said. "I pulled out 10 crisp \$100 bills I had drawn from the bank and said that was what I was going to spend, and they said, 'All right, we haven't been paid in cash in years.'"

The restaurant itself neither confirmed nor denied the figure, but a spokesman said, "We feel it's worth the investment to pay the difference. Many restaurants have similar promotions."

Mrs. Bellin, whose mother is the former Alice Spaulding of Boston (Otis Elevators, United Fruit and General Electric stock) and whose father, according to his daughter, "would have been richer than my mother if he hadn't traded his interest in Bayer Aspirin for a Porsche and a seaside villa," considered the party one of the last of its type that she could have.

"We'll never get away with this kind of thing the minute

The two-year estimate is based on the time required for Dr. Bellin, a resident at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, to complete his studies in plastic surgery.

"He was a square interne when I met him," said his wife. "Now he's a square doctor."

Pre-Establishment Gypsies

Square or not, Dr. Bellin entered into the mood of things last night. The invitations read "Dress style: Peasant or Gypsy," and Dr. Bellin resembled what one might call gypsy who had made good.

His pants were of turquoise velveteen and his vest was turquoise and purple velveteen, trimmed with gold braid. The ensemble was sashed in a bold print.

Mrs. Bellin wore a long gypsy dress by Geoffrey Beene. She said it was worth \$2,000 and she had paid \$100 for it. Mr. Beene said it was worth \$450 and wouldn't say how much she had paid for it. No matter Mrs. Bellin thought it was "terrific," despite a few drawbacks.

"It's all closed up," she moaned. "And I wanted to look sexy."

Mrs. Bellin, who had received regrets from some of the best names (Tricia Nixon, Mr. and Mrs. Stavros Niarchos, Mayor and Mrs. John V. Lindsay, Senator and Mrs. Charles H. Percy, Mrs. Marjorie Merriweather Post) said, "I'd almost rather give a party for the people who regretted." Nevertheless, she did think the people who accepted were "superfantastic."

The list included Senator and Mrs. Jacob K. Javits, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lanvin of Paris, Mr. and Mrs. Neil McConnell, Mrs. Jeanne Murray Vanderbilt, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gardiner, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Adler, Mr. and Mrs. Guedaliahou Shiva, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Johnson, Mia Farrow and Norman Mailer.

The sound was provided by three groups: an English one known as The World of Arthur Brown; a quartet of young women who call themselves The Enchanted Forest, and a quintet named The Chil-

TRIPS TAKEN BY MRS. JOHNSON DURING THE PRESIDENCY

1	Trip to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania	1/11/64
2	New York Trip (opening of Lincoln Center)	1/20-21/64
3	California Visit (including meeting with the President Lopez Mateos of Mexico)	2/19-21/64
4	Visit to Greece (to attend funeral of King Paul)	3/10-12/64
5	Huntsville, Alabama (George C. Marshall Space Center)	3/23-24/64
6	Cleveland, Ohio Trip	4/21/64
7	Chicago, South Bend, Pittsburg, and Huntington Trip	4/24/64
8	Atlanta, Georgia Trip (Communicable Disease Center, Emory, and Atlanta Art Museum)	5/11/64
9	Kentucky Trip	5/21/64
10	Michigan Trip (speech to American Home Economists)	5/24/64
11	Western Trip - Montana, Wyoming, and Utah	8/14-17/64
12	Campobello and Vermont Trip	8/20/64
13	Akron and Columbus, Ohio Trip (campaign trip)	9/17-18/64
14	New England Trip (campaign trip)	9/28/64
15	Whistle Stop	10/6-9/64
16	Flying Whistle Stop	10/24-27/64
17	Salute to Spring - New York	5/7/65
18	Landscapes and Landmark Tour - Virginia	5/11-12/65
19	Virgin Islands	6/2-7/65
20	Project Head Start - Newark Trip	8/2/65
21	Jackson, Wyoming (also stopover in Denver to dedicate University of Denver gardens)	9/7-10/65
22	Buffalo and Syracuse, New York Trip	10/1/65

23	"Keep American Beautiful" - New York	10/7/65
24	University of Alabama (conference on "Women in the Changing Community")	2/25/66
25	"Trails through Texas" Trip	4/1-5/66
26	Dedication of Riis Plaza, New York City	5/23/66
27	Philadelphia Trip (Society Hill and 18th century garden)	6/10/66
28	Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska Trip (history and beautification tour)	6/15/66
29	"Faces of the West" Trip	9/20-23/66
30	Far Eastern Trip	10/17-21/66
31	Far Eastern Trip - Korea	10/31-11/2/66
32	"Adventure in Learning" Appalachia Trip	3/13-15/67
33	"New England Now and Then" New England Trip	6/9-12/67
34	"Crossroads USA" Midwestern Trip	9/20-23/67
35	Visit to Yale University and Williams College (including visit to Hancock Shaker Village)	10/9-10/67
36	Crossing the Trails of Texas Trip (Hemisfair opening)	4/5-9/68
37	Hudson River Trip	5/16-19/68
38	Charlotte, North Carolina (Polk Home) Bicentennial Trip	5/20/68
39	Phoenix, Arizona Trip	5/28/68
40	Portland, Oregon Trip (American Institute of Architects)	6/26/68
41	Central American Trip	7/6-8/68
42	Louisville, Kentucky Trip	10/5/68
43	Keep America Beautiful Awards lunch, Biltmore, New York City	11/19/68
44	Last Hurrah Trip (also know as "This is Our Country")	11/22-27/68
45	El Paso, Texas (meeting of President of Mexico and President and Mrs. Johnson)	12/13/68

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EXECUTIVE
FG 140/A ①+



Office of the Postmaster General
Washington, D.C. 20260

December 23, 1963

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The President
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

X
Mr. Tyler Abell, aged 31, is presently Associate General Counsel (Legislation-Mailability) for the Post Office Department. Mr. Abell originally came to the department on February 5, 1961 as Special Assistant to the Postmaster General working under Michael Monroney in the field of legislative affairs and Congressional liaison. He has held his present position since May 10, 1963.

A native of Washington, D.C., Mr. Abell attended St. Alban's School in that city and graduated from Amherst College in 1954. He received his law degree from The George Washington University Law School.

While attending law school, Mr. Abell worked with Covington and Burling, one of Washington's largest law firms. Following graduation, he served as law clerk for Chief Judge Wilbur K. Miller of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Mr. Abell was one of a small group of lawyers employed by George Washington University to review, bring up to date and suggest changing, where necessary, the laws regarding requisition and management of real estate for the General Services Administration. Management was one of the particular studies made by Mr. Abell.

Mr. Abell served in the United States Army from 1955 - 1956. He is married to the former Elizabeth Clements, daughter of former United States Senator from Kentucky, Earle C. Clements, and is the step-son of newspaper columnist Drew Pearson.

*Nomination as Asst. Postmaster General
To Senate 1/14/64*

BESS ABELL

Daughter of Earle C. Clements, Representative and Senator from Kentucky.

Her first connection with Lyndon Johnson was because of her father, when Senator Clements was assistant Democratic leader while LBJ was Senate Majority leader. The two men were very good friends, and Bess Abell says in her oral history that "Mr. Johnson was always very nice to my mother" also. The families often had hamburgers in the backyard of the Johnsons' home when Lynda and Luci were small and Bess Abell was in college.

Just before he went in the service, Bess married Tyler Abell. The Johnsons gave them a reception when he returned from basic training. (It appears this was sometime between college and 1955. She worked for her father (1957-1958) while he was executive director of the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee and continued to have contact with Lyndon Johnson since he worked closely with her father.

In 1960, Tyler Abell quit his job to go to work for the Johnson campaign. After the convention, Bess took a part-time job at the Democratic National Committee, working as a typist in Charles Murphy's speech-writing group. During her work for the committee, she started writing letters for Mrs. Johnson and the girls, even though Mrs. Johnson probably is unaware of this.

When Tyler Abell went to work for the Inaugural Committee and the Parade Committee, he asked Bess to be his secretary. When Mrs. Johnson called her one day to locate an address, they talked about how much work there was, and Bess volunteered to help out a couple of afternoons a week. In her oral history, she describes it as a part-time job that grew like Topsy.

After the assassination, Mrs. Abell became social secretary to Mrs. Johnson.

Assistant to Mrs. Johnson, 1961-1963
Mrs. Johnson's Social Secretary, 1963-1969

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CAPITAL LIVING

Washington political couple celebrates 50th anniversary

Bess and Tyler Abell, a Washington power couple, are happily celebrating 50 years of marital bliss.

Bess is the daughter of former Democratic Kentucky Gov. and Sen. Earle Clements. Her own career in politics ranged from chief of protocol for President Lyndon Johnson to press secretary to Vice President Walter Mondale's wife, Joan Mondale.

Though Bess has supervised many state luncheons and dinners, the Abells' wedding was no formal affair. Instead, she and Tyler, a former assistant postmaster general and stepson of the late syndicated columnist Drew Pearson, eloped.

The couple celebrated their anniversary with a trip to Nevis, an island in the Caribbean.

Sen. Frist likes to think staffer's dog is his own

As the saying goes, if you want a friend in Washington, get a dog. Well, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) seems to have adopted a different philosophy: If you want a friend ... borrow someone's else's dogs.

Amy Call, who works in Frist's press office, owns a King Charles spaniel named Pepper. Another office dog is a Sussex spaniel named Grace. The dogs have periodic play dates in the office. Another Frist staffer said the senator loves animals but has no dogs of his own.

"It's amazing," Call said. "We'll bring the two dogs for a walk around the press galleries, around the Capitol. People love seeing them. It really brightens their day."

FEBRUARY 23, 2005

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**PREVIOUS
ISSUES****Last Six****Rep. Thompson's firing and hiring bonanza**

Rep. Bennie Thompson's (D-Miss.) recent promotion to ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee hasn't been without some drama. Over the course of the past month, he has fired two staffers and three others have resigned.

So what's happening? "He reevaluated," said Lanier Avant, Thompson's chief of staff. "He's still in the process of re-evaluating. When it's all over, he'll make sure that the Democratic Homeland Security staff is one of the most talented, diverse staffs on the Hill."

Avant said the two staffers who were fired were given the opportunity to resign their posts, but chose to be fired instead. He added that all the changes are not out of the ordinary for a new ranking member. "There's a new sheriff in town," he said. "This is what typically happens when a member takes over a committee."

Avant explained that once Thompson evaluated the staff, he found deficiencies and took actions to correct them. "The congressman wasn't seeking to fire anyone," he said, adding, "Bennie Thompson is not the first to fire a staff that he inherited."

Last year, Thompson was highly critical of his predecessor, then-Rep. Jim Turner (D-Texas). Thompson felt Turner had not hired enough minorities to work on the committee. At the time that Thompson came on board the committee, there was only one African American working there.

In the meantime, Thompson has hired three new aides — two of whom are African American — and expects to hire as many as 10 more, depending on the budget.

King, Hagel and Williams use status to lure young voters

Coretta Scott King, U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) and Washington Mayor Anthony Williams (D) will launch a youth voting project today. It's called Generation Engage, and the venue is the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

While many youth voting projects have surfaced in the past year, this one promises to be different by "hiring a network of young leaders and employing them in their hometowns." It also promises to be bipartisan in nature. In the 2004 presidential election, 42 percent of voters age 18-24 cast ballots.

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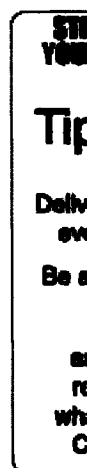
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Capital Living needs your help
Do you know of a Capitol Hill staffer or employee who travels to exotic places on his or her own time, runs marathons, arranges flowers or moonlights on the side for a charitable cause? Be it an interesting hobby or life story, Capital Living is looking for unique people to profile. Please e-mail betsyr@thehill.com.

Edited by Betsy Rothstein.
Tips, complaints and sightings: Betsyr@thehill.com.
Elana Schor contributed to this report.



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LBJ: REMEMBERING THE SIXTIES



Taylor Johnson/AA-S

Last week's 'Legacy of the Sixties' symposium at the LBJ Library brought together a range of luminaries to share their experiences. Gathering for a dinner Friday were Lady Bird Johnson (sitting left) and Liz Carpenter (sitting right), along with (standing, from left)

Tom Johnson, Lynda Johnson Robb, Larry Temple, Harry Middleton, Walt Rostow, Bess Abell, George Christian, Bill Moyers, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Tyler Abell, Richard Godwin, Joseph Califano Jr., Hugh Robinson and Arthur Schlesinger Jr.



Flashback

■ Three decades have passed since Lady Bird and President Lyndon Baines Johnson, far left, worked at steering the nation through a war with itself over the turbulent domestic and foreign policy issues of the time. Joining them in the effort then, and returning to the LBJ Library last week to talk about it, were, clockwise from upper left: Bill Moyers, George Christian, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Joseph Califano Jr.

ONLINE

*Letter to Bess
Commendation*

Mr. Meadows

MESSAGES
REC'D. LBJ DEATH

February 7, 1973

Dear Bess,

There is no virtue Lyndon treasured more than loyalty. Your loyalty, Bess, has been particularly comforting to me all through the years ... especially at this time.

One of the great marvels was the immediate "coming together" of our beloved Washington clan. Lynda, Luci, and I will never be able to say thank you enough times or in enough ways to show you how we truly feel.

Our days are greatly strengthened because of you.

Love,

LB/CTJ

CTJ:mt:jpmc
Mrs. Bess Abell
1830 - 24th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Enc "LBJ" watch

I always knew I'd be
(or might be) calling on
you for just this - but you
came before I ever called.
Tyler's letter was so dear too.
That little watch is end of way.

MESSAGES
RECD. LBJ DEATH!

February 6, 1973

Dear Tyler,

Lyndon was a man who loved his friends. How fortunate, indeed, he was to count you among them.

Your very kind words of encouragement are certainly a comfort at this time. I appreciate your taking the time to tell me how you feel.

Lynda and Luci join me in sending our biggest thanks to you for sharing Bess with us one more time ... a time of great need for us and she was here to give solace.

and work - of such unique and tender skill
We all hope that you will never stop coming back to Texas to be with us.

Affectionately,

KBG/ctj

CTJ:MT:vah

Mr. Tyler ^{*}Abell
1830 Twenty-fourth St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

LJ-7C

October 11, 1974

Dear Bees:

I could see your expert hand in evidence at every turn, from the staging of the Grove event to the luncheon and on to the dinner in the Rotunda at Columbia University. I knew it would all be beautiful, but even my expectations were happily exceeded!

Lots of talent, ability, charm, tact and just plain hard work go into making success stories like these. I was just as proud as I could be to be a part of them...and even prouder of you.

With worlds of appreciation and affection,

Mrs. Tyler ^{*}Abell
1830 24th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

LB/ctj

CTJ:BT

June 24, 19.

2
did not let me
know how much I
would owe you for
this large piece of May
so in my eagerness to
pay everything and get
it behind me I am
enclosing my check for
May 6-24. I ~~counted~~
~~just~~ counted six days
per week except the
last Sunday which was
about 24 hours for
all of us! Thank you



Stonewall, N.Y.

Dearest Ben ^{*At}

A whole month
has passed since we
were all staggering with
fatigue after the debate
and I hope by now we
are thoroughly rested &
having a satisfying
happy summer. Best, &

Once more, Thanks for
ingenuity, graciousness,
and speed and for
two absolutely delightful
parties and a fun day
on Sunday!

Love

Lady Bird

PB-8-E

DIST. 74

Bell

For Bass - who decked our later halls
with boughs of Holly - love - and the
best of a creature, thoughtful heart -
Christmas 1973
Lady Bird

Filed in
UNCLASSIFIED MAIL
CTJ signature

August 13, 1970

Dear Bess:

How sorry I am that you weren't with me in New York--I needed you every step of the way. I beamed with pleasure and laughed when your bouquet of flowers arrived along with the two Milky Way bars. How well you know me--there is no better pick me up after an exhausting day of shopping in New York!

C.R.'s party was delightfully small and cozy and again you were missed.

With love to you and Tyler,

Mrs. Tyler Abell
c/o Mrs. Drew Pearson
Rockville, Maryland

LB/cj

CTJ:HL

July 24, 1970

Dear Bess:

No doubt you will be hearing my voice on the phone before this letter reaches you, but the galleys are spread like snow all about me and I don't know if I will be able to dig my way out!

Since asking you to hold the weekend of August 29th, I have changed plans and am now having my awards luncheon on Friday, October 2nd with houseguests probably arriving Thursday. Would you be able to come down here, say on Monday and stay through the weekend? I so want this to be a production with the Bess Abell touch!

With love to you and Tyler,

LB/af

Mrs. Tyler Abell
c/o Mrs. Drew Pearson
Rockville, Maryland

HL

Filed in
UNCLASSIFIED MAIL
CTJ signature

March 9, 1970

Dear Bess:

Your dear note gave me a moment of happiness during the long hospital day! Lyndon has had several good nights now and we hope that the uneventful passage of time will permit the blood vessels to grow and expand and get additional blood to the heart.

Spring has come early to San Antonio and Lyndon has been able to sit in the sun a bit on the tiny deck off his room-- it provides a lovely break in the day for him.

We miss you and thank you for your concern.

Affectionately,

LBJ/cfj

Mrs. Tyler Abell
1830 Twenty-fourth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

HL

June 4, 1969

Dear Bess:

Helene showed me your letter and we are happy to sign a photograph for Sherry Thomas--she should receive it in a few days.

In regard to the other matter, I do remember Mrs. Barry and our pleasant association. However, at this time, I do not know of anybody who wants a portrait of me. (I mean not \$1500 worth!)

Thank you for your report on Lynda and Chuck-- I do so hope that they will eventually get settled and be able to enjoy themselves in Washington.

With love to you, Tyler and the boys,

We miss you - how's your house-keeper? Will you ever come to help me out on anything big and gay?

Mrs. Tyler Abell
1830 24th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Love -

LB/ctj

CTJ:HL

May 2, 1969

Dear Bess:

Before I had a chance to write and thank you for all you did for me while I was in Washington, I was off on another trip! I've just gotten back and actually feel rested and ready to catch up on my correspondence--which is reminiscent of a rabbit--it just keeps multiplying!

I enjoyed cocktails at your house Sunday night and what a relief to find Mr. Per there. Monday was a joy--not only getting to see Washington looking its springtime best, but having the chance to get together with some of the people who have done so much work on all those beautification projects. And Bess, the refreshments on the bus were delicious--you've spoiled me for all future bus rides. You and Liz were dear to plan such a perfect evening and I appreciate all the hard work that went into it.

Bess, I hope that your benefit went off well, With you at the helm, I have no doubt that it was done with great ~~glor~~ ^{glor}.

With love to Tyler and the boys, and to
your Dad and mother --
LB/cj

Mrs. Tyler Abell
1830 24th Street
Washington, D.C. 20008

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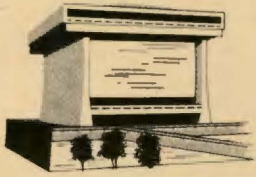
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ISSUE NUMBER XXXIII, MARCH 15, 1985

Among Friends of LBJ

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LBJ LIBRARY



DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS PRESIDENT IS? See page 6

LIBRARY HOSTS EVENING WITH BESS ABELL

A highlight of the Library's Christmas season was "An Evening With Bess Abell." Mrs. Abell, who served as Social Secretary in the White House during the Johnson administration, delighted the audience with an account of entertaining during those years and in Washington generally.

Following are excerpts from her remarks.

... Parties in Washington are serious business. On any given night in Washington, there are dozens of them. Diplomats entertain to create contacts and goodwill for their countries, lobbyists entertain to create contacts and goodwill for their clients and columnists to build goodwill with news sources, corporations to create contacts and goodwill for their business. All this mingling is serious and useful because in Washington things are made to happen. The need to communicate is as compelling as hunger and thirst and sex. And in Washington, parties seem to combine all those drives. Hunger and thirst and, sometimes, a little sex, and the need to communicate into one activity—to party with a purpose. All those dressed up politicians in ballrooms and dining rooms aren't just being frivolous... those folks in black-tie and velvet... they're working overtime.

Entertaining to make things happen in Washington has been going on since before Washington even existed. George Washington never really served there, but he really invented the Washington party. He'd been wise enough to marry an heiress and he entertained with pomp and style. He didn't shake hands, he just bowed. Later in the 1880s, when the city of Washington became the capital, it wasn't really much; it was the White House and a few public buildings and streets that weren't even paved. Congressmen lived in frame boarding houses clustered around the capitol, and their social life was a little more than five or six chairs pulled up around the fire in the evening. But from the start, social life in Washington was looser and more open. It was easier to crack. It was younger... was quicker than other cities to accept someone new.

Socially it has been said that in Boston the important commodity is brains, in Philadelphia it is family, in New York it is money—and in Washington it's power. But power shifts and each election changes the cast of characters. Many who come to Washington with fancy titles believe that all that attention and all those gilt edge invitations are due just to their charm and their good looks—and it's a dreadful shock when the title is gone to find the mailbox is not quite so stuffed, and that the phone doesn't ring as often. One hostess called an attractive Washington bachelor and said, "If that story is true about your getting that important promotion, come for dinner next Wednesday. But if it is not true, and you'll still just be in your assistant secretary's job, come in after dinner for dancing."

The real stars at the top of the social ladder always, are the occupants of the White House. And White House parties almost always have a purpose. President William Howard Taft was quite frank about using his dinners to win support in Congress. Sometimes he served two kinds of wine: he poured vintage wine for guests whose support he was courting... and he poured cheap table wine for everybody else. White House style dictates the city style sometimes to perfectly ridiculous degrees. Guests at the White House watched President Grover Cleveland carefully pour his coffee and then his cream into his saucer... and they followed suit. They carefully poured their coffee and then their cream into the saucer. And then they watched very care-



fully as the President leaned down and put his saucer on the floor for his dog!

When I worked as Social Secretary in the Johnson's White House, the President and Mrs. Johnson always reminded me that, for many people, their party at the White House would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. They wanted it to be a wonderful memory, and for the most part I treasure all those wonderful memories, but I also remember the disasters.

Like the time Robert Merrill, the great baritone from the Metropolitan Opera, came to the White House to sing for the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The day before the dinner my phone rang and it was Walt Rostow. He said, "You can't be serious. You can't sing for the Prime Minister, who's ending British presence east of Suez, 'On the Road To Mandalay!' And you can't sing for the President who just devalued the British pound, 'I've Got Plenty of Nothin!'" Well, the British and the American press were already having a field day with the story. And as it happened, the first negotiations between the President and the Prime Minister were about whether or not to change the program. They finally decided that would be even more embarrassing, and so Robert Merrill added an encore to his program: he sang "It Ain't Necessarily So." And I re-learned an old and very important lesson that in the White House, *everything*, even opera, is political!

The Johnsons' hospitality reached out to include all sorts of guests... children, diplomats, friends, democrats... Mrs. Johnson even had a party for Lassie when Lassie was the poster dog for the Anti-Litter Campaign! And long before the days of Women's Lib, Mrs. Johnson honored women of achievement at White House luncheons—writers and bankers, scientists, politicians, and an occasional old friend. To one, she invited her pal of many years, Claudia Marsh. And just before that lunch, Mrs. Johnson came up to me and asked me, "Who's that lady in the beige hat?" I said, "Why, Mrs. Johnson, that's your friend, Claudia Marsh." She said, "It's not *my* Claudia Marsh!" Well, I'm sorry to say, it wasn't the only time that we invited the wrong person. But I am glad to say—they always had a grand time!

Among our most successful parties were the White House



Country Fairs, complete with a ferris-wheel and a merry-go-round, cotton candy and a fortune teller's tent. I called a company in New York to rent a crystal ball, and the man taking the order said, "Where do you want me to send it?" I said, "Send it to the White House." There was a long pause, and then he said, "Lady, I'll send it, but you tell the President it won't help him a bit!"

The years pass and the names and faces change, but the rules in Washington stay very much the same. The White House sets the tone, but the same groups still share power—the old families, the cave-dwellers, the rich and nouveau riche, diplomats and public officials; but now two new groups have been added—lobbyists and journalists. Today in Washington they lead the pack. Money and background count, but merit and power and ambition and personality count more. Still it is often a surprise who makes it in the social swim—what about that short stout German professor named Henry Kissinger? If he had arrived in Washington married, it never would have happened. Hostesses adore a single man—especially a single man who works in the White House.

Diplomats come and go, some stars flash and vanish. Ardeshir Zahedi, who made the Embassy of Iran the "place to be" on the party circuit—today his Embassy is on the auction block and he's in exile in Switzerland.

For all the changes, Washington is still a town of parties. I suppose there will always be stories like the one about the late Senator Theodore Francis Green, who was seen one evening at a party studying a list on a little 3 by 5 card, and someone came up to him and said, "Senator, trying to figure out your next stop?" He said, "Hell no, I'm trying to figure out where I am now!"

Well, it may seem frivolous but I think Washington's social life does in a way help tell us where we are. One night at the White House I found that great black jazz singer, Sarah Vaughn, who had just finished a concert in the East Room. She was standing all by herself and tears were streaming down her face. I asked her, "What's the matter?" She said, "Nothing is the matter. This is just simply the most wonderful evening of my life." She said, "When I first came to Washington, I couldn't even get a hotel room, and tonight I sang at the White House and I danced with the President."

The Johnson's brand of hospitality was unique. After the Johnsons had put on two large, highly publicized weddings for Lynda and Luci, Fannie Flagg, the comedienne, added a line to her impersonation of Mrs. Johnson and she said, "We're having



Mrs. Abell greets White House friend Bob Hardesty

just a small, intimate wedding—only the immediate country!" Well, in a way, it was true. For President and Mrs. Johnson, it was not out of character to include the immediate country—to invite everyone—to open doors. I think it is accurate to say that that idea to include "everybody" is the very essence of their contribution to our country. The way they entertained was the way they were.

They were Americans, and so their parties were as exciting as America. They were Texans, and so their parties were big, like Texas! And, they were most of all, themselves. And so their parties were warm and easy and enjoyable, like Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson.

**National Archives and Records Administration News Release****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****December 4, 2000****Foundation For The National Archives
Appoints New Members to its Board**

Washington, DC. . . Lawrence F. O'Brien, President of the Foundation For The National Archives announced today the names of five new members of the Board of Directors of the Foundation. The new members are: Michael Beschloss, William R. Harman, Philip Merrill, John E. Sheehan, and John H. Zentay.

In making the announcement, Mr. O'Brien said, "I'm delighted to welcome such a distinguished group of individuals to the Foundation's Board. They all share a demonstrated commitment to history and education, and each of them brings unique qualities and expertise that will enhance the very important work of the Foundation. I look forward to working with them on major projects which are key to the mission of the National Archives and Records Administration."

Archivist of the United States, John W. Carlin described the Foundation for the National Archives as "playing a vital role in helping the National Archives bring our nation's documentary heritage to the American people in innovative ways." He went on to say that "the Foundation is currently engaged in a capital campaign, raising funds to enhance the major renovation of the National Archives Building in downtown Washington, DC. These funds will create a new permanent exhibition that tells the story of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights and help build the new Constitution Avenue Theater, offering daily programs about the Charters of Freedom and other Archives treasures. Private support also will restore the deteriorating Rotunda murals that have welcomed and inspired millions of Americans. I want to thank our five new Board members for agreeing to donate their time to support these efforts."

Short bios of the new members follow:

Michael Beschloss, who was hailed by Newsweek as "The nation's leading Presidential scholar," has written five major books focusing on the presidencies of Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. He has also published works on the Cold War and the relationship between President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev. Mr. Beschloss is a frequent contributor to the "News Hour with Jim Lehrer" and has also served as a network analyst, commenting on American-Russian relations, the failed Soviet coup of 1991, the Clinton inauguration and the recent political conventions.

William Harman is currently Vice-Chairman of the US Spain Council and an Advisory Director of Morgan Stanley. He has had a long and distinguished career in international business. In 1968 he served as the Deputy Transition Representative between the Nixon and Johnson Administrations. He joined Morgan Stanley in 1972, and organized the Government Relations Department, becoming a Managing Director. He has served as its

General Counsel, served as Director of the US Russia Business Council, the Business Council of International Understanding, and the American Council on Germany.

Philip Merrill is chairman of the board of Capital-Gazette Communications, Inc., which publishes The Washingtonian magazine, The Annapolis Capital, four other Maryland newspapers, and operates the Capital Investment Company. Combining publishing and public service throughout his career, Mr. Merrill has served in Brussels as Assistant Secretary-General of NATO, was a member of the Department of Defense Policy Board, and was Counselor to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. In 1988, the Secretary of Defense awarded him the Medal for Distinguished Service, the highest civilian honor given by the Department. Mr. Merrill has represented the United States in various negotiations and is a former Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State. He has served in five administrations.

John Sheehan is the Chairman of the Board, CEO and founder of GlobalLIFT Technologies, which is a private, U.S.-based holding company whose operating subsidiaries design, manufacture, market and service lifting products. Mr. Sheehan has served as a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve. His prior experience includes positions as President and C.E.O of a subsidiary of Corning Glass Works, Vice President and General Manager of Martin Marietta's Cement & Lime Division, and as a management consultant with McKinsey and Company.

John Zentay is currently a member of the board of Verner Lipfert Bernhard McPherson & Hand. As one of the first petroleum energy lawyers in Washington, Mr. Zentay has represented oil marketing and refining companies and trade associations before Federal agencies and the Congress for more than thirty years. In addition to energy, his practice includes legislation, environmental law, and export-import regulations. He served as a legislative assistant in the office of Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri and as a member of the Legislative Presentation Staff of the Agency for International Development, Department of State.

Including the newly elected members, the Foundation for the National Archives has 19 members of the Board of Directors. Officers include Lawrence O'Brien, President; Vincent Dole, Vice President; Charles Guggenheim, Vice President; Mary Lynn Kotz, Secretary; and Bess Abell, Treasurer.

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