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Capital Capers

Official Parties Intriguing

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 17—A

good percentage of this town goes to a party not because it's going to be gay, mad and amusing. They go because they can't stand to miss seeing who showed up and who stayed away and comparing notes later.

It's a drawing room game that intrigues the men as much as the women. They want to know who's got an "in," and that means with the administration in power.

Washington is still talking about who went to Senator McCarthy's wedding and who among the Eisenhower appointees and "White House family" braved the long wait in line to greet the bride and politically controversial bridegroom. When anti-McCarthy friends of some of these people ask about this apparent White House blessing, they shrug their shoulders and say, "What else could we do? To have stayed away would have looked like a boycott."

IT PIQUES the local interest to see who attends parties given by Gwen Cafritz and her millionaire realtor husband, Morris. Though no avowed Democrat, Gwen rose to hostess fame when Vice-President Barkley and the late Chief Justice Vinson frequented her large, luxurious, modern house, along with top figures throughout the past administration. Would Republicans flock there in the same numbers? was a favorite question on the cocktail circuit last Winter—but that was too soon to tell.

The fact is the Republicans are still being very cautious about attending parties outside of official ones. Whether because of political reasons, or because no human being can stand the strain of taking in all official alone private ones—I wouldn't know.

But at the Cafritzes' annual season-opening cocktail party Sunday, the only members of the new administration present were Secretary of the Navy Robert Anderson, and Mrs. Anderson; Mrs. Walter Williams, wife of the Under-Secretary of Commerce, and Secretary of the Senate Mark Trice, and Mrs. Trice.

The sylph-like hostess, dressed in a decollete floor-length sheath of burgundy satin topped by her emerald and diamond necklace, served her champagne to former Democratic officials and old-time unofficial friends on both sides of the political fence.

ALL THESE party trends and nuances made the local gentry impatient for the return of famous party-giver Perle Mesta. The former minister to Luxembourg recently wrote her successor, Wiley Buchanan, a letter of congratulations on his appointment and tipped him off to a few of the pitfalls—i. e., there are no kitchen utensils in the American legation in Luxembourg and very few pots and pans. This is a sorry state of affairs and one unbecoming the rich "Colossus of the West."

Having put little Luxembourg on the map, Perle was toasted by new Minister Buchanan at one of the scores of farewell parties in his honor. All present stood and raised their champagne glasses, with one exception. Rival Hostess Gwen Cafritz remained seated.

CHIEFLY DEMOCRATS also turned up at the reception given the other day by Mrs. Dwight Davis, Democratic widow of the late Republican Secretary of War and Davis Cup donor. One of Washington's conservative social leaders and frequent hostess to President Truman, she was a consultant on the decorating of the rebuilt White House. It's a foregone conclusion, however, that it was not her taste that dictated painting the paneled walls of the State dining room a tearoom green.

A notable Republican at her party was Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The head of the government's hush-hush department says he has 90,000 words written on his book about America's part in the conspiracy on Hitler's life—to be entitled "Operation Sunrise."

Assistant Secretary of Defense Frank Nash has been receiving letters from unknown women proposing holy matrimony—as the assistant secretary told him as an eligible bachelor that appeared in this column.

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