

CAFRITZ

1954 SWIMSUITS: ANYTHING GOES

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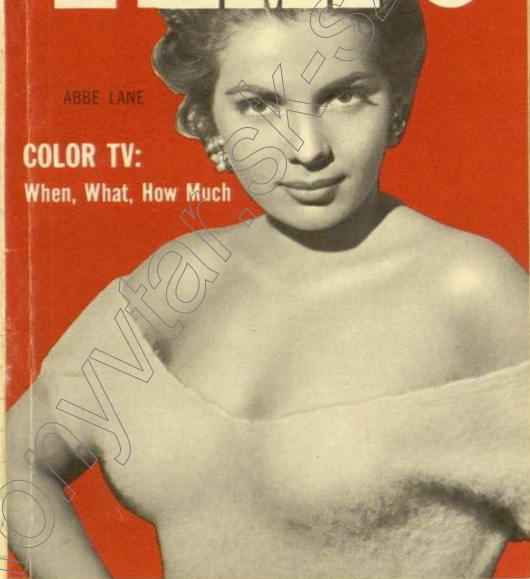
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# TEMPO

ABBE LANE

**COLOR TV:**

When, What, How Much





**Social battle...** Glamorous Washington party-giver Mrs. Gwen Cafritz has tried to become the No. 1 hostess...

**On the Potomac,** instead of Mrs. Perle Mesta, lively ex-envoy to Luxembourg. But Perle is returning and a battle royal is due.



1903: Orville Wright steers plane as brother Wilbur runs alongside.

### **Birthday Gift to Airpower**

On powered flight's 50th anniversary, air historians pinpointed the nation's first airplane hangar at Kitty Hawk, N. C., where the Wright brothers made their historic flight (above) on Dec. 17, 1903. The hangar—rusted nails and spikes under a sand dune—will be reconstructed by the Government.

### **Hail, not Farewell**

Puerto Rico made clear it liked the present commonwealth tie-up with the U. S. Its home-elected Gov. Munoz Marin hailed the offer of complete independence, made at the U.N. by U. S. delegate Henry Cabot Lodge (still guarded against assassination by island nationalists), as doing "honor to the U. S." But the loss of trade and protection, Marin added, would bring "independence of the graveyard."

### **Lost Chance for Last Chance**

For the first time in its history, brothels were shuttered in Helena, Mont., as officials cracked down to give the town a "better name." "Last Chance Gulch" (Main St. to strangers), with its Victorian "mansions," took a hefty business beating. But a tougher reconversion problem faced Helena's shady ladies. "I guess," sighed one veteran, "I'll never change my habits, good or bad."



## SOCIAL BATTLE ON THE POTOMAC

WASHINGTON (from TEMPO's bureau)—There's not a sprig of Baker fern in the White House this year. The favored centerpiece for what seemed like every dinner in the 20 years of Roosevelt and Truman, that leafy greenery has gone into the ashcan. But, with the Eisenhower Administration remaking the social atmosphere that surrounded its Democratic predecessors, Baker fern hasn't been the only casualty.



Mrs. Cafritz, Veep Barkley, Bess Truman bids adieu to Mrs. Mesta

Another is the ambition of Mrs. Gwen Cafritz (*above, l.; inside front cover*), the raven-haired, jeweled wife of a Washington real estate tycoon. A rival who long ago crossed champagne glasses with Mrs. Perle Mesta (*above, r.*), Gwen Cafritz has poured out barrels of cash on sirloins and mint juleps to win the "Hostess with the Mostes" title from the lady who was undisputed social queen in Truman's Washington, and his Minister to Luxemburg. But Mrs. Cafritz couldn't do it under Truman ("I never invited him when he was a senator

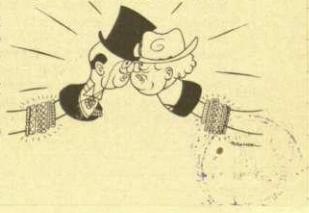
—which was my mistake") even when Perle Mesta had been shipped overseas, and she still hasn't made it.

Hungarian-born, Gwen Cafritz speaks seven languages and coins her own bizarre brand of English idioms (a favorite phrase: "You're so strategic!"). She lives in a Washington showplace where, surrounded by her lavish Egyptian murals and dazzling with some of her million-dollars worth of jewels, she has given two parties since this fall's social season began.

### I Hear Music, But There's No One There

The most recent soirée was held on the night of Washington's first snowstorm of the year. Almost no one came. She was only slightly luckier on the first party, attracting a clutch of Truman-vintage officials who hadn't left town, but few from the "New Crowd." Not one member of the official Cabinet made it, although Mrs. Cafritz had taken the precaution of phoning the household of Vice-Pres. Nixon, for example, three or four times to make personal appeals. All this is somewhat difficult for Gwen Cafritz to understand since she and her husband are Republicans. Morris Cafritz, in fact, furnished rooms in one of his buildings free of charge to house Ike's Inaugural Committee. Now the cocktail circuit is buzzing with gossip about Mrs. Cafritz winding up a wallflower. There's talk that Pres. Eisenhower, himself, may have turned an official thumbs-down on her.

(Cont. next page)





Hostesses-apparent Talbott



... and "Bazy" Tankersley

The most likely explanation, however, is that Ike has passed down the word to his aides not to build up a partying reputation such as some big shots had under Truman. The idea is that work and play don't mix.

A worse hazard is now in store for Gwen Cafritz. After sunning in Spain following her tour of duty and a visit to Russia, Perle Mesta is back in town—and some mammoth parties are expected in the new house she'll tenant.

#### Call Her Madam

Mrs. Mesta again has the jump on Mrs. Cafritz in that she has entertained the Eisenhowers in Washington and in Luxemburg, when Ike was NATO commander in Europe. "I've known him ever since he was a major, or something," she recalls. (But

because she's a Democrat, Ike replaced her abroad.)

Among new GOP contenders for the hostess crown (above) three stand out: Mrs. Harold Talbott, popular wife of the Air Force Secretary, whose Georgetown home is the scene of small but elegant parties; Mrs. Robert R. McCormick, wife of the *Chicago Tribune* and *Washington Times-Herald* publisher; and her niece, Mrs. Ruth ("Bazy") McCormick Miller Tankersley. But the contenders are shying away from the main event. They're happy to let Mmes. Cafritz and Mesta fight it out, down to the last canapé.

