

VIP

By Maxine Cheshire

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Strictly

Vaudeville:

Abzug's

Astro

Vasectomy

Routine

The occasion was Rep. Bella Abzug's (D-N.Y.) 53d birthday, so NASA officials will probably forgive her for not checking her facts before writing a "humorous" presentation on the prospect of vasectomies for astronauts.

Actually, it could have been worse. She was planning to make the same remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives in collaboration with Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.).

The two lawmakers had worked up a kind of vaudeville routine on the topic and were saving it to deliver in Congress the next time their male colleagues started discussing sterilization and abortion.

Their dialogue, previewed privately at a recent birthday party in Rep. Abzug's honor, was funny enough to have made racy reading if it had gotten into the Congressional Record.

But the whole premise was in error.

"I hadn't bothered to check it," Rep. Abzug admitted afterward. "I had just heard that the astronauts routinely have vasectomies because of the radiation problem in space and that NASA has sperm banks for them."

There is "no such NASA program," said a spokesman who checked into Rep. Abzug's assertions after word of them leaked from the party. "The radiation levels in space have never been high enough to be a problem."

Otherwise it was a routine party. Ms. magazine sent flowers. Sears, Roebuck and Co., which always remembers the birthday of every member of the House and Senate in the same fashion, provided a red-white-and-blue cake.

Calling the firm's cake "graffi," Rep. Abzug ate a slice anyway, but promised the 75-or-so guests present

that "this will be the absolute end of my corruption while I am in office."

A half-dozen of Rep. Abzug's congressional colleagues were present, but only Rep. Schroeder gave her a gift. It was a floppy hat, an Abzug trademark, decorated all over with toy tanks and missiles and war weapons, the kind of thing the congresswoman opposes so vocally.

Potpourri

Sen. Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy (D-Mass.) obviously wasn't trying to be inconspicuous after he left a party at the Irish Embassy last week. Driving an open convertible with a noisy muffler, he was spotted maneuvering in and out of slower traffic up Massachusetts Avenue. Sen. John Tunney (D-Calif.), who was following behind in another car, was having trouble keeping up . . .

Watergate figure Jeb Stuart Magruder, who was originally asking \$500,000 for his memoirs, was unable to find a book publisher willing even to discuss that amount and has lowered his asking price. He will take less money, he says, but he won't tell as much. It will be the story of a "bright young man full of idealism who comes to Washington and is corrupted" . . . Meanwhile, Magruder has signed up for the lecture circuit with New York agent W. Colston Leigh and the publicity flyers are already in the mail for fall appearances . . .

Los Angeles Rams player Lance Rentzel, who has had his share of problems with the law in the past on morals and drug charges, dates a woman friend of Mrs. John W. Dean III. While he was in Washington recently to see his friend, he was told: "You'd better be careful that they don't blame Watergate on you while you're here."

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