

VIP

Dita Beard: Flying Problems

By Maxine Cheshire

Columnist Rowland Evans can attest to ITT lobbyist Dita Beard's health problems. Enroute to a governors' conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, two years ago, Mrs. Beard suffered a seizure in the small eight-seat plane in which she and Evans found themselves fellow passengers. After Evans revived her with bourbon and an emergency oxygen tank, she confided that her doctor had forbidden her to fly in unpressurized aircraft because of her heart condition . . .

At a VIP showing of "The Godfather," Motion Picture Association director Jack Valenti told the audience there were only four persons present who would really understand the Mafia characters in the movie. Valenti identified three as himself and two others of Italian ancestry, former LBJ aide Joe Califano and the White House's general counsel on telecommunications, Nino Scalia. The fourth was criminal lawyer Edward Bennett Williams, who has had his share of Cosa Nostra clients . . . Michael Viner, director of special projects for M-G-M, amused guests at a Sunday brunch by playing his company's newest recording of political satire: "The Presidents," which features Laugh-In's Gary Owens speaking against "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The spoof compares supposed "similarities" between the lives of Abraham Lincoln and Richard M. Nixon. Examples: "President Nixon had a dog named Checkers, President Lincoln liked to play checkers; Mrs. Nixon likes to eat bananas, Mrs. Lincoln went bananas." . . .

When the French Ambassador and Mme. Charles Lucet leave Washington next month, Italian Ambassador Egidio Ortona's wife will be able to wear her new black-and-red Dior to parties without worrying. Mme. Lucet owns the same gown. They both hung the dresses away in their closets after turning up twins at a dinner dance . . . President Nixon won't be red-faced if the Russians don't roll out the red carpet for him when he visits Moscow in May. Air Force I now reportedly carries a long length of plush scarlet pile by Edward Fields, bought for the trip to Peking because someone suspected correctly

that the Red Chinese might not make the colorful welcoming gesture themselves . . .

With everything Chinese now the vogue, Turkish Ambassador Melih Esenbel's wife sticks antique chopsticks through her high-piled coiffure as ornaments . . . One observant Jackie-watcher at the trial of her litigation with photographer Ron Galella, reports that Mrs. Aristotle Onassis is now smoking strong Turkish cigarettes. But she is trying to cut down and deliberately keeps only a few in her purse at a time . . .

Commerce Secretary Peter Peterson thinks Nixon administration officials could use a more mod image and sent his wife out to Saks Fifth Avenue to buy him a more "with it" dinner jacket. Alongside Treasury Secretary John Connally, who wore a black velvet jacket and black velvet bow tie to Perle Mesta's party, Peterson complained that he still felt staid and stuffy . . . At the Mesta party, the most understated jewelry was worn by Mrs. Perry Bass of Fort Worth, whose oil-rich husband was once Connally's law partner. With a high-necked, long-sleeve black dress, Mrs. Bass wore a length of inch-wide "ribbon" looped casually around her neck and hanging loose like a scarf. But instead of being made of grosgrain, the tailored adornment was fashioned of large diamonds . . . Rita Tazi, wife of the World Bank official, was wearing enough gold the other night to solve some of the world's monetary problems. Her waist-length 24-karat bib, with matching four inch cuffs for her wrists, was made by a jeweler in Athens from a design of Mycenaean antiquity . . .

Rita Dallas, who was the late Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy's nurse through eight historic years, has signed to do a book for Putnam's, with a ghost writer from Indianapolis . . . In between singing "Happy Birthday" and "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow" at Assistant Secretary of State William Macomber's birthday party here this week, Jordan's King Hussein promised his hostess and some of her female guests that he will bring his British-born wife, Princess Muna, on his next visit.