

(see LA Free Press 31 Oct 69 version, attached)

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food fashions family furnishings

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To Relax a Bit, C.I.A.'s Chief

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON — When Richard McGarrah Helms, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is home, he's still not too far removed from cloak-and-dagger work. He and his wife like to relax in their Chevy Chase apartment by reading spy stories to each other.

"No, my husband doesn't criticize them," the red-haired Cynthia Helms said with a smile, "but they often are a bit far out, aren't they?"

Mrs. Helms, sitting in the pink, comfortable armchair in their apartment the other day, said that Mr. Helms reads at work all day, "so when he comes home, he likes to read something light."

"His son, Dennis, a New York lawyer, sends him espionage novels," Mrs. Helms said. "We like to read to each other. He finds it restful. We both keep three or four books going at once; I carry a book around with me."

But reading doesn't take up all of Mrs. Helms' time, although she insists that they lead a "rather dull" routine.

"We don't go to cocktail parties. We pop in and out of receptions. We never stay late at dinner parties. We're always the first out the door—I tell my husband we have to watch out, so as not to leave before the guest of honor. One night we almost left before the French Ambassador."

Early Morning Phone Calls

Mrs. Helms said that they are invariably home by 11:15 P.M. and often are interrupted by telephone calls at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. ("When it rings he's got to be in a fit state to make a decision; it's always a crisis").

Mrs. Helms has embarked on a career of her own. She has just signed a year's contract with the Smithsonian Institution as one of the two members of the Radio Smithsonian staff.

"Our first show was broadcast on Sept. 7," said Frederick Phillips, who heads the Smithsonian's office of public affairs. "We are always talking to the educational network, Voice of America and Armed Forces Radio about using our tapes after our weekly show."

"Cynthia is great. She has a nice voice, with just a trace of her English accent. Her varied background and great interest in everything makes her perfect for interviewing everyone from a scholar who has been studying elephants in Ceylon to the costume cura-



The New York Times

Mrs. Richard Helms

tor talking about women's bathing suits to British Ambassador John Freeman presenting a Hawker Hurricane to the Smithsonian."

Mrs. Helms said she went to work at the Smithsonian because "I wasn't any good at ladies' luncheons. I never could find any clean white gloves. Now, when Dick comes home and says he has a good story, I say, 'Just wait until you hear what I've learned about the blue whale.'"

"His life is full of Government. It's all serious, so it's nice for me to have something different to talk about."

The Helmses were married last Dec. 15. Mrs. Helms was married before to Dr. Allen McKelvie, a Washington surgeon. They were divorced in early 1968. Mr. Helms and his previous wife, Julia Bretzman Shields, were divorced last September.

Mrs. Helms' oldest son, Roderick McKelvie, is now a teacher of retarded Inner City children in Chicago ("He has gone through periods of opposing the Establishment, but Dick is terribly good with him"). Another son, Allan, "is blonde, handsome and majoring in girls at Hobart College," Mrs. Helms said. Her older daughter, Jill, is an economic researcher and lives in Georgetown and another daughter, Lindsay, is a freshman at Ohio Wesleyan College.

Mr. and Mrs. Helms live in a high-rise apartment that has a sliding glass wall in the living room. There is also a dining area, a kitchen big enough for a small round table and two chairs, two bedrooms and a study. Similar apartments in the building rent for about \$500 a month.

"We don't have to do much entertaining," Mrs. Helms said. "We can only have six here. When we entertain foreign guests, we do it someplace else. But I try to have a small dinner here for friends once a week. I have the most marvelous man to serve; he's been helping me for years."

Crepes a Specialty

"Yes, I like to cook. I do English, French and recipes my diplomatic friends give me. Right now, I like to do beef bourguignonne, with French bread and a salad."

"My poor husband has had crepes three times in a row. I've just learned how to make them. My older daughter said, 'Mother, you've got to learn how. They're so elegant.' So I bought myself a crepe pan and learned how to do the whole bit, including the flaming."

"Now we have crepes stuffed with lobster and crepe desserts and crepes all over the kitchen tap. They're nice because you can make them ahead."

Mrs. Helms' dining area has a glass shelf (it serves as a buffet) that runs the length of the mocha wall. Pictures, mostly prints, and a golf-leaf oval mirror hang above the shelf. The six dining chairs are plaid. A wrought iron and brass baker's shelf holds plants and divides the dining area from the entrance way.

"I am having bookcases made to hold my mineral collection," Mrs. Helms said. She has taken geology courses, she explained, "at most of the universities in the area."

"When I told Dick, he said, 'Mineral collection!' But then he met an Amer-

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ican Ambassador who collects too, so he thinks it's all right."

The living room has a charcoal brown velvet sofa. It matches the border on a Japanese print that was sent to Mrs. Helms by a friend who painted her portrait, which also hangs in the room.

"Yes, I do like design," said Mrs. Helms, looking about the room. "I bought the furniture at Thieves Market [a warehouse of shops in Alexandria, Va.]. I like having my clothes made, for the same reason. I pick out the fabric — I've bought two pieces this year at the G Street Remnant shop—and take it to a woman who has sewn for me for years. She can copy anything. I do have a Chester Weinberg, but even in the

expensive dresses, you see yourself all over again everywhere. So I like to have at least my evening things made."

Mrs. Helms doesn't wear pants suits. "My husband doesn't like them. I never wear anything very out of the ordinary. My husband believes in a low profile, so I don't wear things that will attract attention. I don't need a lot of clothes. I haven't been in a department store for six months. But I do like good-looking clothes."

The Helms play tennis at the Chevy Chase Country Club, St. Alban's School or public courts. They sail from their cottage at Lewes, Del.

"I built our sailboat myself," said Mrs. Helms. She laughed. "It's a wonder

I got through it. The directions said countersink, and for a moment I thought they were talking about the kitchen sink."

During World War II, in her native Britain, she was in the WRENS, the British equivalent of the United States Navy's WAVES.

"I went straight from school. We felt the country couldn't do without us. I was under 21, so I couldn't get a commission. I was a crewman, first on a casualty boat and then on the Admiral's Barge—that was a bit more elegant—in Plymouth Harbor. Yes, it was rather hair-raising. If you've ever steered a boat in perfect darkness—the blackout was on—you know what I mean."