

# Good Old Days Before Watergate Recalled at a

By JUDY KLEMESRUD

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 8—In what may have been one of the bolder events of the Washington fall social whirl, a group of former workers for the Committee for the Re-election of the President got together last night to drink, dance and reminisce about the good old days before Watergate.

It was, of course, exactly one year since President Nixon's 1972 landslide victory, and that was the major reason for the soiree. But there were others, too.

"Let's face it, we don't live in some shell," said George Mehocic, a 28-year-old former field services worker for the committee, who organized the party, held at the George Washington University Faculty Club. "We know there's controversy in town, but does that mean we have to stay home

and sulk and not have any social life?"

Apparently not. The smiles, laughter and the frenetic rock dancing seemed to indicate a genuine gaiety among the 150 partygoers, most of them young and single. They were the workers who, for the most part, performed the "trench" type work — typing, stuffing envelopes, lower-echelon organizing — for the re-election committee, sometimes facetiously referred to as "CREEP."

Although reporters were at first banned from the party, they were later allowed to mingle freely with the guests — on the condition that the reporters would not badger guests who refused to identify themselves. That seemed to be almost everybody; "paranoia runs high now," one tight-lipped guest explained.

The partygoers included Robert C. Odle, the committee's office manager and the

first person to testify at the Watergate hearings; Frederic V. Malek, deputy committee director; Myles J. Ambrose, former Assistant Attorney General in charge of drug prosecution, as well as an assortment of White House staffers and a crew-cut pilot who described himself as "John Lynch, the world's sexiest fighter pilot, and that isn't the whisky talking."

One 28-year-old man in a mustache, who refused to give his name, said passionately: "We're not sinners. I'd hate to think that everybody who worked on the committee is put in the same category as all those jerks from Watergate."

He then mentioned some of the better-known members of the committee—John N. Mitchell, Jeb Stuart Magruder, G. Gordon Liddy, James W. McCord Jr. and E. Howard Hunt Jr., all of whom have since had their troubles with the law. None attended the party, but they seemed

to be on a lot of partygoers' minds.

"I loved Gordon Liddy. I thought he had the best sense of humor of them all," said Biba Wagner, 24, a former committee secretary who was wearing red, white and blue suspenders with the slogan "President Nixon, Now More Than Ever" written on them.

"He [Liddy] was crazy, he was fun," she added. "He once gave me a life-size poster of himself standing by a car with a bullhorn and a gun in his hand."

The guests paid \$5 each to cover the cost of the refreshments—popcorn, pretzels and potato chips. Drinks were extra. And even though the spread wasn't elegant, the women dressed in their party-going best: long skirts or gowns, or elaborate evening pajamas. The men seemed to favor gray pin-striped suits with American flag pins in their lapels.

Most of the guests stanchly defended President Nixon, and became irate when asked if they thought he should resign.

"He's probably one of the greatest Presidents we've ever had," said Mr. Odle, who now works for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. "We feel the same way about him as we did last fall."

About halfway through the party, a rumor spread that Sally Harmony, a former committee secretary who gained celebrity status when she testified at the Watergate hearings, was coming to the party. But she didn't show up.

"We didn't invite everybody," Mr. Mehocic explained. "More than 400 people worked for the committee, and we only asked about half of them."

He said he had received only one "heavily negative reaction" to the invitation, from a committee worker who thought the party "was

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## Party for Nixon Workers

just not appropriate at this time."

None of the partygoers seemed particularly demoralized by politics as a result of the Watergate affair. One young woman in pink evening pajamas, who described herself as "an aspiring young nonfeminist," commented:

"I love politics; I don't think it's a dirty business. I'm reading 'Washington Pay-off' [the controversial book by Robert N. Winter-Berger, a former lobbyist] now, but

I've never seen money change hands. But then, maybe I'm naive."

Toward the end of the party, Mr. Odle gestured at a group of young Republicans dancing to the rock music of the Dan Hart Trio and said, rather dramatically:

"Look at all those nice people out there. I don't think it's right to suggest they're creepy. But just because they worked for the committee, everybody calls them 'CREEPS.'"