



Photo courtesy of Playboy magazine

Paula Parkinson, lobbyist turned Playboy model: "Some congressmen are panic-stricken when I walk in."

Harassment on the Hill?

Lobbyist's nude debut makes reps sweat

By Karen Feld

WASHINGTON — The careers and reputations of several dozen congressmen may be in the hands of a blond, busty lobbyist named Paula Parkinson, who appears in nothing but garter belt and stockings in the November issue of Playboy.

When it hits the stands Monday, these members of the House will be pretending they don't know her — and hoping the publicity-hungry Paula won't name names.

The Playboy spread is called "Women in Government," and Paula discusses sexual harassment on Capitol Hill. She has been invited to appear in another layout next year and husband Hank is delighted. The two of them form the lobbying team of Parkinson and Associates, Hank working the Senate and Paula the House.

Paula describes in graphic terms how she has been propositioned by more than 100 members of Congress and that more than half of these offers

were in direct exchange for votes ("I'll vote for your bill if").

Paula says "favors" never were granted.

ON THE OTHER hand, she concedes that she may have invited at least some of the sexual overtures.

"I'm a toucher," she says, chain-smoking. "I'm normally very friendly. I'll take 50 per cent of the blame."

Paula, 29, was introduced to Washington last year at a poolside party at the home of Sidney Yudin, editor of "Roll Call," the congressional weekly. The party's high point was when Paula decided to show off her recently augmented breasts by stripping down to the thinnest of leotards. The assembled congressmen and administrative assistants were impressed. Paula became a welcome visitor at Capitol Hill offices and parties and at the Capitol Hill Club (the Republican club).

Because of the Playboy spread, however, the reception she gets is changing.

"Some congressmen are panic-stricken when I walk in," she says.

One congressman confirmed the fears: "A lot of guys are sweating it." Several congressional friends of Paula declined comment — and wouldn't even let their names be used with a "no comment."

During the shooting of the photo layout, one congressman, Rep. Paul Findley (R., Ill.), agreed to have his picture taken with Paula on the Capitol steps for use in Playboy as a contrast to the garter-belt pose. Ironically, Findley was one congressman she had never even met.

When Findley got a ribbing from his colleagues, he had second thoughts. With the help of Sen. Charles Percy (R., Ill.), he succeeded in getting the picture killed. (House Republican photographer Jim Moore had shot the same picture. When asked for a print at the House photo lab, Sal LaCapria

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Lobbyist's debut in nude has Congress in a sweat

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said: "We wouldn't touch that with a 10-foot pole. Findley has everything.")

PAULA, THE FOCUS of all this hoopla, was an Air Force "brat." She lived on every air base in the South during her childhood. The incessant moving stopped when she was 11, when her parents divorced. Her mother remarried, to an internist in Wichita, Kan.

Paula married right out of high school, and it lasted less than a year. She worked as a Playboy bunny in New York and Kansas City, Mo., and reluctantly turned down an offer to be the centerfold because of parental objections.

AT 21, SHE married a radiologist 10 years her senior, "but he was boring." Paula began putting on weight and in 1½ years added 50 pounds. She tried nearly every kind of diet and diet pill, at one point requiring a hospital stay.

Then, with the help of an appetite suppressant, she lost 52 pounds in 14 weeks and has kept it off ever since.

Her second marriage ended in divorce, and last March she married Hank Parkinson, a political consultant and direct-mail expert. They set up Parkinson and Associates, and one client is the Committee for Equitable Crop Insurance, which is trying to block passage of the Federal Crop In-

surance Act of 1979. The House bill currently is in the Appropriations Committee.

PAULA IS confused and bitter about her life as a lobbyist. On the one hand, she says, "I'm selling Paula Parkinson, a physical thing, not my knowledge." Then she adds: "They don't take me seriously on the Hill. I used to come home and cry. I know my product. I know about crop insurance."

She attempts a "superconservative" look in her working hours — a suit with a sweater (but never a bra), up-swept hair, and horn-rimmed glasses: "that I don't need."

She has never lobbied a congresswoman. "I don't know if I could articulate to the women. I'd be petrified. ... If you make a mistake with the men, you can get past that."

"Paula likes to think of herself as a sex symbol," Hank says. "It doesn't bother me at all. I'm not proprietary."

Hoping to parlay the Playboy publicity, Paula and Hank have formed a corporation to market the appetite suppressant to which Paula attributes her weight loss.

Paula now awaits the November Playboy. "I'm really excited," she says. "It's a fabulous ego-booster."

Her friends in Congress await it with other emotions.