



Karen Feld

Capital folks on vacation

The Marion Barry trial is over; the verdict is in. War in the Mideast goes on, but the president and first lady gathered family and friends in Kennebunkport. Marilyn Quayle was spotted waiting in a very short line at a neighborhood pharmacy with her children, but beyond that, most Washingtonians are gossiping elsewhere.

Congress has recessed, and legislators and diplomats have fled to cooler climes. Many senators and representatives are off on so-called fact-finding missions around the world. Taiwan and East Germany are popular spots.

Art Buchwald is holding court on Martha's Vineyard. Sally Quinn and Ben Bradlee and Mort Zuckerman are basking in the sun at the Hamptons. Some of the mayor's former supporters have fled to Nantucket.

The social scene won't gear up again until September but some unanswered questions of the season remain: Why on earth does Effi Barry stay with the D.C. mayor? How did Pat Kluge, the estranged wife of America's richest man, ever think she could show up at a NAACP convention with Virginia's first black governor, Doug Wilder, and not be noticed? And doesn't Supreme Court nominee Judge David Souter have any fun? Did his last romantic relationship really end when he was in law school? What will be his stance on Roe vs. Wade, or anything else for that matter?



While Washington wags are pondering the above, here are a few of my favorite stories, which remind us that even people at the highest levels of government savor gossip. "After all," said columnist Rowland Evans, "gossip makes life livable" in Washington, a one-industry town.

A Senate wife was at the newsstand at the airport when she spotted the National Enquirer with Donna Rice and Gary Hart on the cover. She could hardly wait to read the story but was embarrassed to pick the paper up because someone might see her. She waited until the last boarding for her flight, looked all around, saw the coast was clear and reached over for a copy. Just then, an arm reached over her shoulder and grabbed the very copy she was about to take. She looked up and was surprised to discover that it was none other than former Vice President Walter Mondale.



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The longtime female companion of a very married Cabinet secretary in the Reagan administration moved from London to Kalorama, a ritzy Washington neighborhood. This posed a dilemma for the very proper society ladies who were friends of both "wife of" and "mistress of." One asked: Do I host a welcome tea in honor of "mistress of," and do I invite "wife of"?

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A senior member of the West German Parliament told a U.S. congressman about his recent trip to the Soviet Union. Every place he went, he asked to be introduced to a real Communist so he could have a discussion with him. After several days of fruitless search, a Russian official told him: "You won't find any true believers here. You need to go to Frankfurt, New York or Boston to find someone who truly believes in communism."

As for this columnist, I'm in Maine, where fresh lobsters are as abundant as scandals in Washington. But if you ever thought that Bloody Marys were just for drinking, I've learned otherwise. When my dog did battle with a skunk in the woods, the country folk advised bathing him in tomato juice to neutralize the odor. Now, I bet George Bush already knew that.

These are the Capital connections.