

January 5, 1965

Hello, Outside World!

Most of the staff is in D.C. with about 50 local people participating in the FDP congressional challenge. We spent a hectic eleven hours and about \$500 of project money getting them all off. The Plymouth and VW filled and left early. Later in the morning Her Majesty (our affectionate name for the gas-guzzling '55 Imperial) was on her way back from the shop where we had spent \$160 to put her in shape for the trip, when she skidded off the rain-slick highway and flipped down a 25 ft embankment. The seatbelt saved Howard Jeffries from injury but the car was completely wiped out. What to do with the people ready to leave in Her Majesty was just another in the series of logistics problems that made up the day.

We say that the car situation is desperate in each newsletter and it just seems to get worse. Smokey, our '56 Ford, is broken down (for the 5th time) somewhere out in Benton Co. In the last 3 weeks, we have spent over \$1000 for car repairs (\$300 of which we still owe). Let's face it, an old car is no bargain in our kind of business. 100 to 200 miles a day on dirt roads is hard enough on a new car, let alone a 10 year old model. Her Majesty was an exception in being one of our more reliable vehicles. Which makes her demise doubly sad. We now have Smokey (when it's fixed again), the SNCC '64 Plymouth, Marjorie's VW, Aviva's Corvair and Kathy's Corvair. That means we can effectively work four or five of our seven counties. Last week in desperation, Frank bummed a ride out to Tate and spent a couple of days walking the muddy roads in the cold, eating and sleeping with local people.

You don't have to be very perceptive to notice two recurring themes in the above paragraphs. Cars and Money. We're hurting for both. This has been about the most expensive month since we've been in operation. The car repairs and the challenge trip took care of all the money we had in reserve and the stamps for this mailing will just about break us. Someone has commented that the struggle in Mississippi is costing an incredible amount. Thousands of dollars a month. On the other hand, the so-called "advisory" role of the U.S. in South Viet-Nam runs \$1,500,000 a day...but then, there aren't too many similarities between the two operations. Another one of the differences is that we are dependent upon your contributions--not your taxes.

Personnel changes every other day. Several old timers are leaving us. Larry Rubin has returned to Antioch but will be back again in a few months. Gloria Zifaras accompanied the 20 or so Marshall and Benton kids who went to NY to perform the play SEEDS OF FREEDOM. She will be going home from NY. Kathy Dahl will be leaving in a few days for Calif and marriage. (Money Orders, checks, etc., should now be addressed to new office manager Bobbi Dearborn.)

Several people went home for Christmas and more came to spend their vacations with us. Most of these people were new to us but some were old friends from the summer: Larry Wright, Harry Malm, Dave Kendall, Bob Feinglass, Woody Berry and Bob Fullilove. We were delighted to see all of them and kept them quite busy while they were here.

The volunteers who come down for more than a couple of months contribute more than just their time and work. All volunteers are expected to support themselves, either with their own money or by being "adopted". They are expected to pay their own fines and bail. Also, many

brought down cars which cost them several hundred in repairs--if indeed they ended up with a car at all. Rubin and Cieciorka each junked a '60 and '61 Lark respectively at the end of the summer. Wright and Cummings each lost a '55 Chevy. Kendall and Merrill put new engines in their VWs as a result of the summer's work, and Aviva paid for extensive repairs on her Corvair. Now Kathy Dahl is finishing six months on the project by donating her Corvair to us.

The people still here--just to keep everyone up to date--are: Cleve Sellers, Bob Smith, Frank Cieciorka, Aviva Futorian, Marjorie Merrill, Fred Meely, Diana Roberson, Howard Jeffries, U.Z. Nunnally, James Batts and Bobbi Dearborn. One of these days we'll send you a breakdown of who-all does what and maybe some biographies so that these names will mean something to those of you who've never met us.

Some of you may have heard about Carpenters for Christmas--the Oberlin group which came down to rebuild Antioch Baptist Church in Tippah Co. That's the church that burned down a few hours after Freedom candidate for Congress Fannie Lou Hamer spoke at an FDP rally there in Oct. The group of about 30 students stayed with families in the area and put in long, hard days. When they asked us if they could come down to build the church during Christmas vacation, we almost didn't let them because we seriously doubted that it was possible to do the job in two weeks. Our doubts were unfounded and when they left there was only finishing work to be done. The first function of the completed building was (natch) an FDP rally with Freedom Congresswoman-elect Annie Devine as guest speaker.

We still need many of the same old things:

NEGRO HISTORY BOOKS (we are trying to set up libraries in each county and Negro history is probably the most important subject to include)

FLASHLIGHT BATTERIES

MIMEO INK & ALL SIZES MIMEO PAPER

TYPEWRITER RIBBONS (Royal and Smith-Corona)

ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER (small portable e.g. Smith-Corona--for typing stencils)

STENCILS

SCISSORS

16mm SOUND FILM PROJECTOR

BOOKS: art history; Russell Why I am not a Christian; Russell, Unpopular Essays; Trumbo, Johnny Got His Gun; anything by Richard Wright; Camus, The Stranger; White, Organization Man; Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem; Wilson, To the Pink and Station; Lewis, Main Street; any and all dictionaries.

Incidentally, Woody and Fulli will be down for the whole month of Jan. They are working on Colgate's new independent study program in which the student is allowed to pick and deal with some topic which interests him. Our ex-staffers are reviewing the changes that have taken place since the summer and are trying to reach some conclusions about the direction and development of the movement in the state.

Hope to hear from y'all--soon!

Yours for a FREE New Year,
The Gang
100 Rust Ave., Holly Springs, Miss