

Barbara Schwartzbaum letter:

Your request that we write a paper on our projects and our gripes leads me mostly to complaints and frustrations: Failure to train properly the new people working in the state. Take Waveland's education institute as an example. This was a great opportunity to learn a lot had the discussion been more controlled and had there been less modesty on the part of the resource people and more direct leadership from them. I believe there is great utility in drawing away from the class method of teaching, but when you let it inhibit you from imparting the body of knowledge you have to give, you are not properly doing your full job. I have been working in Hattiesburg almost half a year and have worked in other areas of the south before Hattiesburg, and still do not know the fundamentals of organization. How do you open up a new area, what really should go into a mass meeting, etc. ?

Why are volunteers coming in on such a short term basis? What is the point of sending someone out to organize the MSU in Palmers if it will take him a month to make any kind of acceptance into the community and then he leaves. Does it do more harm than good? Why, if SNCC can afford \$125 a week for New York apartments and the like can it not afford to pay higher than the \$9.64 a week for local Mississippians with families to work full time with the movement and still make a living wage. We might take in a lot more people this way and save wear and tear on the community from transient summer or fall or Easter vacation volunteers.

Why is there still a moratorium on direct action? Now I am not saying that it, even if successful, fundamentally changes anything. But the bull has been "law" for a good while now, and we in Hattiesburg are actually in the position of holding young people back, or at least not taking advantage of the opportunities to organize ourselves and do something about that damn theater, library, park, etc. And I can't say I even know why. During the summer we were told that at least one reason was that we couldn't chance interrupting the Freedom School and Community Center Program as well as the danger. Testing appears to have been touched upon in McComb, so why don't we try it in Hattiesburg?

More gripes: We were told that the staff meeting in Hattiesburg was to have been at the end of November. Then it was changed for the first part of December. The houses that had signed up to take in people had to be checked with again. This is a tiny thing all in all, but Jackson has so many times told us one thing one time and another thing an hour later that one really tends to take one's time when Jackson says jump (after all, they may change their minds in the next few minutes and often do.

Here in Hattiesburg I have very few complaints of the kind that I hear are prevalent. As long as I'm not starving and sleeping in the streets, I do not care whether or not I get my check (and I cannot help but wonder why so many people, especially so many new ones, feel that this is of paramount importance). It makes me wonder about the people coming into the state. I also wonder why particular people are left in projects long after their project directors have complained and complained about them. There's one volunteer on the coast who apparently has been on his way home for six

months, but somehow never makes it past Biloxi. What role does the personnel committee play in this?

And how can we let local people stay in jail for months on end because there's no money for bail and then turn around and buy a building for \$160,000. Maybe I'm wrong, but I really feel that if Charles Glenn had been in Moss Point all summer and not in the Forrest County jail, the situation on the coast might now be much better than it is. His project was running very well before he was taken from it (from what I've heard) and I can't help but think that what happened generated a lot of resentment in people. It also makes me remember last summer in Albany when young kids spent the whole summer in a filthy pig-pen of a stinking jail because there was no bond money. I know it sounds terrible, but since I heard about that building I can't help but wonder whether there really was no money for that bail.

So I wonder. I think about the ways in which money is raised in New York (the "ritzy" people you sometimes have to associate with to get it, etc.) and then think of some of the things it's spent on. I remember Julie Prettyman with two small children and an old but warm house and a husband who never saw her waiting for her lousy check and never getting it and Miss Sutherland, and just wonder about where we are going. I know we're out of the closet at 5 Beekman St., but where are we going?

Please excuse the tone of this letter. These probably aren't the kind of gripes you wanted to hear about, but that's what's on my mind.

Barbara Schwartzbaum