

THE FAMILY OF GOD FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED

Diary #34

July 1974 - June 1975

BOX 347

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94701

I have so much ground to cover in this Diary that it might more properly be called an annual report. I was hard put to decide whether to cover only the highlights of the past year or to include a little more detail. My final solution was compromise. I have highlighted many of our activities, reported more fully on others, and enclosed a large number of items. Having done this, I leave the rest to you. Read in peace.

JULY 1974. When last I wrote I reported on the World Invocation Day Festival of Goodwill held in Boulder in June and enclosed copies of press coverage. We learned of an interesting spin-off in July when Vern received a long-distance call from Los Angeles. The young man on the line had just read a wire service story based on the Boulder article. "Traveling Religionist Teaches God's Love" was the title of this article, which was message-oriented rather than Vern-oriented (Yay) and the caller was very interested in these teachings. He and Vern talked for a long time about the spiritual status of humankind in the universe.

-- Vern received another telephone call from a listener -- a mother whose teen-age son was in Juvenile Hall in San Jose. She wanted badly for Vern to see him while he was in that situation, which Vern did. He spent more than an hour talking with the youth, who was initially somewhat uncommunicative but who slowly opened up to Vern. Since Vern's manner is not the stereotyped ministerial approach often portrayed in media -- serious, unctuous, mild-mannered -- the youth was startled and surprised more than once at Vern's mirth and attitudes, but eventually was drawn to respond in kind and then a good talk ensued. His problems aren't solved, but he has some new ideas to ponder.

-- KEST, a San Francisco radio station emphasizing old-time radio shows and classical drama features a half-hour program each noon-hour called The Noon Newsreel. Vern scheduled an appointment with the producer, and "On Campus" was added as a regular feature.

-- The FOG crew spent many, many hours this month jurying the prototype 5-minute programs. to decide which programs should be incorporated into the regular series and which programs were not up to standard. As in most juries, some programs were accepted, some programs were flatly voted out, and some jury sessions ended up hopelessly deadlocked.

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AUGUST 1974. This month was devoted to maintenance of correspondence and stations while storing up energies for the year to come. The main news to report comes from our last meeting in August.

One of our regular institutions around FOG Headquarters is our Monday evening dinner. This is the one meal a week we have together; after the meal we have a weekly meeting to discuss business, to hear some of the listener mail, and to hear about progress in our various Departments. August 26, 1974, was such a meeting during which two far-reaching decisions were made.

-- KFAX, our home station in San Francisco, had been sustained on a daily basis since 1969 when we contracted for an excellent commute-hour time slot. For some weeks we had been discussing the relative merits of retaining this contracted slot, or of reallocating the funds to travel and other related categories of expense in order to expand our coverage nationally. Both sides of the issue had strong points, but at this meeting we determined to cancel the contract with KFAX and use to funds in a different way.

-- This second decision is really a reaffirmation of a goal first set in 1968 in the Prospectus and established, during this August 26 meeting, as a firm goal:

# By New Year's Eve of 1975 we want the broadcast to be on a station #  
# in every State of the Union. #

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SEPTEMBER 1974. As a direct result of our August 26 meeting, the Media Relations Department began work on what we call "The Fifty States Campaign." Theirs was the first step in the swirl of activity which is to stretch over the next sixteen months. At this point the broadcast is on fifty stations in twenty states, as well as Radio Sri Lanka (India), MANX (British Isles) and 4AK (Australia). The Media Relations crew worked on preparing a list of stations, by State, based on an established set of criteria, and worked on an audition package to go to each selected station. By the end of the month the mailings had begun.

-- At the same time our international coverage received a big boost. We received a letter from a donor couple who wish to contribute each month the cost of a weekly program over Radio Sri Lanka. This act doubles the coverage of the broadcast in India, Pakistan, and Malasia.

-- After the results of our August 26 meeting were known, Rich Keeler's comment was, "Hit the road, Grimsley," and he did. Vern spent two weeks in New York and Washington, D.C., meeting in New York with network executives of CBS, NBC, ABC, Mutual, and Pan American Broadcasting and in Washington, D.C. with representatives of American Forces Network.

One item of business was investigating possibilities of the "On Campus" broadcast being carried by one of the large national networks. Vern soon learned that any network carrying the program would stipulate that it be the only outlet in the market areas it covers. Interestingly enough, for us that would mean we would have to reduce our current coverage; for example, in the San Francisco area alone we are carried on 9 AM and FM stations. If one of the networks sent our program down the line, we would have to drop all stations but the local affiliate. For our purposes, the national network syndication is not as satisfactory in coverage as our own independent syndication.

A CBS executive listened to several short tapes and asked if CBS could buy the series to sell to a sponsor (which we do not wish to do). Frank Reeves, President of Aerial Communications, listened to tapes and said, "This is the sort of thing the world needs." He gave Vern much valuable assistance. Vern was also in touch again with Radio Free Europe. There are no possibilities for the broadcast to be used regularly, but the executive did say to Vern that the Family of God Foundation is one of the very few religious groups to have had a profile-documentary done over RFE (Spring 1971).

-- While in New York Vern spent a day speaking and talking to the crowds outdoors at Rockefeller Plaza. Many passers-by stopped to listen and participate in the discussions. A young woman who is a student at Smith College passed on her way to a musical concert elsewhere; she stopped to listen and ended up staying from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. She was a serious truth seeker and was very interested both in listening to the speaking and in conversing with Vern. (She never did arrive at the musical event.) A security guard in the Plaza, a native of Ireland, listened with interest and spent time in discussion. Vern also noticed, to his surprise, that there were no hecklers during the entire day.

-- Vern flew on to Washington, D.C. for several days of meetings with the American Forces Network. There is, he reported to us later, interest in the broadcast and a chance, a slight chance, that AFRN might carry "On Campus."

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OCTOBER 1974. Barbara Newsome arrived in Berkeley this month. She moved to California to join us in this work and we are delighted to welcome her.

Connie Aller also returned to Berkeley from her home state of Connecticut and began job hunting and working with us, which also delights us.

On October 30 Vern participated in a memorial service at Pacific School of Religion for Georgia Harkness, the famed poet and theologian.

During October our music group (guitars, banjo, washtub bass, vocalists) performed on the ward at Herrick Hospital. Vern billed us as The Spiritual Renaissance Ragtime Boogie Bluegrass Band. When refreshments were served a sheet cake was brought out and there,

on the top of the cake, was the full name of our group spelled out! The Activities Director told us that she had many times in the past ordered a cake from the kitchen with a special message (Happy Birthday, etc.), but that this was the first time she had actually received the requested decoration. We decided it must have been too much of a challenge for the cook to ignore.

-- As a result of response to the audition packets mailed in September, and as a result of Vern's interviews with network executives while in New York, we prepared a NEWS RELEASE with authorized quotes from station managers, program directors, and network heads, and refined and simplified the audition packages sent to stations. Using the new material the Fifty States Campaign was put into full operation alphabetically. Alabama was mailed. Alaska went next, and then still later Arizona.

We had estimated that if, at the end of six months after each state mailing had been sent, we were to have added two stations per state to our radio log we would be doing quite well. And we were correct; that would have been very satisfactory response indeed. However, response was a bit more speedy. At the end of ten days from mailing Alabama we had added three stations. Alaska response began coming. In fact, Alaska response was marked, and small wonder, because we had a secret ingredient in Alaska, a secret ingredient by the name of Julia Fenderson. Those of us who know Julia know she is a marvel. In Alaska she and Tuckey Hayes contacted many radio stations in person or by phone. As a result 5 stations in Alaska added the program either weekly or daily. Arizona had been mailed about the time Alaska response started to come in, and response began to come from Phoenix and Tucson.

Julia flew from Alaska directly to Hawaii. (Can't you just imagine her packing problem?) She proceeded to contact stations there and very soon a flow of requests for the series or for audition tapes started. By now it was November, and the response to the combination of direct mail and Julia was staggering. During the Monday meetings a regular feature had been mailed reports from Julia. Now Vern had an even better story: Julia had telephoned from Hawaii with information about one station where interest was so high that she did not even want to wait for the mails. During that evening we went so far as to talk about the advisability of sending Julia a wire: GO DIRECTLY HOME. DO NOT PASS GO. DO NOT COLLECT \$200. AND BY ALL MEANS, DO NOT, REPEAT, DO NOT GO NEAR ANOTHER RADIO STATION. We didn't do it, but our light bantering had a serious tinge to it.

Adding a station to the radio log is a complex procedure and must be done with great care. There are many factors: how many times a week, is it AM or FM, when does it start, where in the series shall it start, how many tapes need to go air mail or first class to cover the gap before a bulk order by the slower sound recording rate will arrive. The calendars must be coded to alert the Mail-Out crew when to mail again. Each station mailing receives a full double check by a second person. Every new station added must go through this process, while the stations already on the log must also be sustained with regular, timely supplies.

Response to the "Fifty States Campaign" caused one of those famed "redirecting cataclysms". Mail-Out Division, up to this time, had been on one 3'x7' table in the office. In November we moved Mail-Out to a separate new office on the first floor and established a whole center devoted to the process. The Mail-Out crew worked valiently and absorbed the overwhelming increase in work-load without any major foul-up and with amazingly few smaller problems. A primary difficulty was that most of the stations selected a starting date that gave very little lead time for the order to be processed and the first tapes to reach them in time to go through the station's own logging procedure. Mail-Out rose to the challenge and by far the majority of these stations had their tapes to start on the date desired.

Another area to feel the immediate impact of this success was David Gray's Tape Transcription Division. David is fully in charge of maintaining an adequate supply of each program transcribed and labelled into the system. Suddenly the demand had leaned, and so did David, right into the middle of the fray. He did it, too. He met the demand.

-- Announcing another international outlet: Radio Swaziland in Africa. Celestial Seasonings Tea Company is contributing the funds to put the broadcast on the air. We shall be interested to see the mail response from Africa.

Now we are again at January and there is another milestone to report: this month our log hit 100 stations! We doubled our station coverage in four months (and lived to tell the tale).

January 20, 1975, we had our biggest day ever. The mail that day (it happened to be a Monday and hence our meeting day) brought SEVEN new stations added to the log and three requests for audition tapes. By the end of that week FIVE additional stations had been added, bringing the total for the week to twelve. Wow.

David in Tape Transcription and the Mail-Out crew were back to operating at peak capacity. Dave made a career of transcription, or at least that was my impression because most often when I passed by the transcription studio, David was there industriously producing the labels for the tapes that were being run off on the whirring machines. A benign competition developed. David would fill up the tape shelves by dint of great industry. His satisfaction at the sight would be short-lived, however, for somebody of the Mail-Out crew was sure to pop up and create a hole. One Monday, after David had spent most of the week-end dubbing, Mary Echlin came by in the afternoon to work on some station orders. When I got home from work, I came across David re-filling the freshly created holes with freshly dubbed tapes. He chortled to me that he had had the shelves filled to capacity for the Monday evening onslaught of workers, and the if Mary thought she was going to slip in and upset the symmetry, he had foiled the plan. I laughed with him and admired the nice rows of tapes. I happened to be in the Mail-Out Office at the end of the evening, and those shelves looked as if a swarm of locusts had descended. The mail sacks were bulging with packaged tapes. And, I might add, David rejoiced as much as any of us over the amount of work done.

It is still the case in this work that all the labor is done by co-workers and volunteers who receive no pay at all for their time. None of us receive a salary. The whole work is made possible by a great crew who, taken together, put in 175-200 hours of work each week.

-- One evening in January the FOG crew attended a pot-luck supper with members of the North Congregational Church in Berkeley, after which Vern was the featured speaker.

-- We also received an interesting report of a candid comment about the "On Campus" broadcast from a Stanford dorm discussion. The conversation had swung to religion. One of the students recounted a recent experience. He had been listening to music on one of the Bay Area stations when a religious program came on. "It really made me mad that the music was interrupted," he said, "but I started listening almost accidentally and got interested." He went on to describe one of the "On Campus" broadcasts.

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FEBRUARY 1975. There was action on two fronts this month. Vern spent the entire month of February on the road. For the first two weeks he was in Chicago where he had many business meetings. He taped several broadcasts outside on the campuses of De Paul and Chicago University (and he said it was cold!). He spent one entire morning in the studios of ABC Network with Paul Harvey. He said it was fascinating to watch an old pro in the field of live broadcasting work; he was interested in such things as the way Paul Harvey handled paper to avoid rustle and the way his notes were timed and laid out to allow for last minute switching. Many good meetings and talks occurred in Chicago.

Vern flew on to Oklahoma City and again had good meetings with the group there. He also taped broadcasts outside on the campus of Oklahoma City University. He arranged appointments with radio stations. At KOMA he learned a great deal from the engineers on the technical aspects of taping programs on the road and transmitting them with minimal loss of fidelity to home base. Two newspapers published interviews, which are enclosed. We particularly like the one which appeared in The Oklahoma Journal for its message-oriented content.

-- Meanwhile back in Berkeley our street teams went each week to the campus. Bettina, Sara, Fred, Terry and Jeff are fast evolving into seasoned speakers. Each session on

campus is different from the last; some are good and some stormy. There are generally hecklers, one or two of whom may be hostile. Hecklers are useful, in a way, because the interaction invariably draws a crowd. But their usefulness is sometimes overbalanced by their disruption. When a heckler will engage in dialogue genuinely, great things can happen. Some hecklers, however, simply want to silence, rather than discuss, and they will not stop shouting long enough for the speaker to make a counter point. One such scene recently was de-fused by Connie when she stepped up to a particularly loud, uncooperative heckler and engaged him in conversation/debate on the side. This created an opportunity for the speakers to continue unhampered.

Experience is a great teacher. All the street speakers are learning how to cope with hecklers. They are even learning such simple tactics as to arrive and start speaking by 11 a.m. since the hecklers tend to sleep late and don't arrive until closer to noon!

All of the speakers have had very interesting private conversations to relate which have come about after the public speaking was over. Two of them -- Sara and Fred -- have had particularly interesting experiences and I have asked each of them to write a resume for inclusion. (Even if you skip over most of the enclosures, I do recommend that you read these two.)

-- Julia spent part of the month of February in New Mexico. I doubt if it is really necessary for me to relate that we promptly started receiving orders for tapes from New Mexico stations.

-- During this month the broadcast also started over 4SB in Kingaroy, Australia. (Our earlier outlet in Australia at Toowoomba had revised its programming format and had eliminated all religious programming.)

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MARCH 1975. Mail response from India continues to be very heavy and very intriguing. Most of those who write include their own thoughts about the content of the broadcasts, as well as questions. A brisk flow of correspondence goes both ways across the ocean. Bettina and Vern between them are the main FOG correspondants, with Bettina handling the bulk of the letter answering. I will enclose a copy of one of the more notable examples of letters received from Indian listeners.

Another of our listeners offered to translate our pamphlets into one of the Indian Dravidian dialects, Tamil. He completed translation of "Getting to Know God" and sent the manuscript to us for approval. I found it fascinating to see and cannot resist enclosing a copy of the first page for you. At the same time he wrote to ask for help in proper translation of phrases in another pamphlet. Vern had used the phrase "so rich he had an unlisted zip code number," and the question put to us was what is an unlisted zip code number. Another question had to do with reference to a new child in the neighborhood who had just moved on the block. What, our correspondent asked, does "moved on the block" mean. Interesting problems. To Bettina fell the task of explaining.

-- At the first of this month several of the crew flew to LA for the week-end meeting at which David Gray was the featured speaker.

-- Scott Forsythe and Carol Engel came to Berkeley for a week-end with us. Their wedding is the middle of March and Vern is to perform the ceremony.

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APRIL 1975. Sometime in the Spring our total number of stations increased to 150. Quite frankly, we were so occupied in servicing the stations already on the log and absorbing new ones into the log, we lost a running count and didn't notice precisely when it occurred! In approximately six months, we have grown from 50 stations to 150, and many of them carry the broadcast 3 or 5 times a week. The mailing pace for the Fifty States Campaign is still holding steady and on schedule.

-- Our Spiritual Renaissance Ragtime Boogie Bluegrass Band performed twice. We went again to Herrick Hospital and also were asked to play for the formal opening of a new wing for the Intensive Care Unit at Children's Memorial Hospital Center in Oakland. We ended up with two washtub bass players for some of the numbers because one of the CMHC surgeons had brought his own washtub and joined us for a few numbers, dressed in full medical whites.

-- The Berkeley group flew to LA again in April for the April Celebration organized by FUSLA. It was a marvelous week-end; it was one of those times where you are refreshed and exhausted at one and the same time.

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MAY 1975. Every weekend this month was fully occupied. The campus ministry street teams continue to go every Saturday. The first weekend of each month is also the Sunday that members of the Family of God Foundation alternate in presenting the service at the Matilda Brown Home for retired women. Mutual admiration prevails with these dear elderly ladies; they like us and we like them.

-- The next weekend the FOG crew made what is becoming an annual retreat for us. We went to Yosemite, to the Big Trees, for two days. It was glorious. Snow was still all over the ground (a treat for us Berkeley-ites). The snowball fights were fierce; it almost seemed as if the brotherhood of man ideal was null and void for a day. No neutral zones were honored, not even those clearly proclaimed to be non-combatant by the occupants. Any target in sight was pelted without regard for rules of warfare or considerations of mercy once the person had armed himself or herself with a snowball. I am amazed to report that no harm to life or limb was sustained.

-- Next some of the FOG crew went to Rogue River, Oregon, meeting Julia there, for a conference organized by David and Rose Clearwaters. Julia and Vern both spoke to the group assembled. Everyone who went agreed that the weekend was a fine experience. The outdoor setting was lush, verdant and beautiful.

While the rest of the Berkeley crew returned home, Julia stayed on for a few days. Yep. You guessed it. Two more stations in Oregon are added to the broadcast log thanks to the work of Julia and David Clearwaters.

-- Vern flew in from Rogue River Sunday noon and flew out the following Monday morning for Denver. He contacted radio stations there (one of which added the broadcast later) and then, on Tuesday he went on to Boulder for a variety of events. By Thursday evening another seven of the Berkeley FOG group had arrived in Boulder, as well as Francyl Streano and Richard Keeler from San Diego. That evening Vern and Mo both spoke to the Colorado group assembled from Boulder, Denver, Canon City, Golden and other cities by Mo Siegel. The evening was wholly pleasurable; after the speaking (which included the spice of humor) music and visiting commingled until midnight.

Friday there was a Food Fair in a Boulder Mall. Francyl sang and the Boogie Band (without washtub bass, which doesn't pack well) played. Saturday the event of the day was on the Boulder Campus in a small outdoor amphitheater. Again the Boogie Band played, then Francyl sang, then both Mo and Vern spoke to the audience assembled in the Colorado sunshine. Later that day we had a Rocky Mountain treat -- a hike and an escorted herb lecture with Mo into the mountains above Boulder. We finished the evening watching the eclipse of the moon from the deck of Peggy and Mo Siegel's home.

Sunday we drove into Denver for the World Unification Day at Red Rocks Theater -- a mammoth amphitheater built into the red rocks of the Rockies. The day was a succession of music groups and speakers. Francyl sang with Vern providing guitar accompaniment and the crowd, which had much to distract its attention, applauded in appreciation. Francyl and Vern have worked out a finale -- a powerful, rock-and-roll-rhythmed version of "Peace and Harmony Man" that is absolutely a show-stopper by the time Francyl has built the excitement vocally up to a smashing final delivery. It is really something to hear.

Vern spoke next, and again the crowd laughed and applauded. I was wandering up and down the grandstand while both the music and the speech was going on and I enjoyed the crowds' enjoyment. Francyl and Vern make a very good team, in my opinion.

-- The last weekend of May was a big first for Berkeley. The Berkeley Interfaith Council sponsored a Spiritual Renaissance Conference. The Family of God Foundation is a member of the Interfaith Council; Bettina is the secretary. Bettina and Vern attend the meetings regularly and had both suggested and fostered the idea of a Spiritual Renaissance Conference. The speakers included Sister Christine Athans, a Roman Catholic with extensions into Judaism; Yogi Bhanjan, the Western Hemisphere Leader of the Sikh religion; and Vern. (The fourth speaker could not attend.) Music groups associated with each of the organizations with a speaker on the program also participated. Francyl, with Vern as accompanist, sang well and beautifully. Her finale drew the appreciation it deserved again. The Khalsa Theater, a music group from the Sikhs, also performed marvelously. The Ananda Ghandarvas, associated with Swami Kriyananda of Ananda (who could not attend to speak) also sang and also did well.

The Conference was a real success. The speakers were powerful and were advocates, not only by words but also by attitude, of unity without uniformity. The audience, made up of all sorts of people, responded warmly to each speaker impartially. After lunch the audience was broken down into discussion groups composed of a mixture of the different religions present. These discussions were a very positive experience for everyone I talked to afterward. The music groups finished the day.

The cumulative effect of the speakers, the discussion groups and then the music was a real experience of unity without uniformity. The speakers and the words of the music emphasized the importance of the spiritual path. One noticed the similarities in loyalty to and love of the Father, by whatever name he was called. The fruits of the Spirit were in evidence in all of these groups; one who had eyes to see, could see.

-- Also in May one of the seeds planted in February bore results. While in Chicago Vern had been in touch with all 44 radio stations in the area in an attempt to purchase a sustained time slot. The market was absolutely full; radio is staging a strong comeback. In May, however, a time opened up on WEAW so we are happy to announce a regular weekly air time in the Chicago area, a long-time goal.

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JUNE 1975. Our crew of regular associates was increased by five this month.

Bob Blackstock moved to Berkeley from Los Angeles.

Brian Cox moved to Berkeley from Palo Alto where he had just graduated from Stanford.

Gard Jameson moved to Berkeley from Palo Alto where he also had just graduated from Stanford.

Jim Blessing, a third Stanford graduate, did not move to Berkeley only because he already lives in the area.

Penny Poole, a June graduate from U.C. Berkeley, commutes now and will move soon.

We welcomed them, one and all, with joy. Their arrival brought our regular number for Monday night supper meetings to 21, which generated a minor crisis of sorts, one which I had been foreseeing: my system of one dining room table, two card-tables and a long door stretched between them became not only archaic but inadequate. So, when Mark Turrin quietly said into my ear that he would build some tables to specification I was almost, but not quite, speechless with delight; I had both breath and wit to accept. He and Grandpa Turrin set to work and ten days later those tables arrived through the dining room window. My specifications had been: adequate table surface, don't worry about looks because I will use table cloths, if possible the legs should fold. Well, these tables not only met these specifications, they were beautifully stained and had a sturdy finish of varathane. Now we can easily seat 34, more with a little juggling. (Mark delivered them the day Vern and I celebrated our 15th wedding anniversary; if anyone had told me that day that on our 15th anniversary tables to seat 34 would arrive and I would be overjoyed to receive them, I hardly know what I would have thought.)

-- The Family of God Foundation officially appointed its second National Extension Executive: Barbara Newsome.

We gain a National Extension Executive by losing a Berkeley Associate because Barbara is moving to Chicago to accept a very important post. We sent her with love and good wishes.

-- In Los Angeles our first National Extension Executive, Julia Fenderson, directed a fund-raising campaign among members of FUSLA to raise money to put the broadcast on the air in the LA area for a year. Within three weeks of the start of the campaign they had done just that -- raised about \$3000 in contributions and pledges.

Now the second step begins. Vern is in steady communication with Station Managers in the area for air time. As in Chicago, the market is full and there simply is no good time available. We are used to this type of waiting game, however, and know that it will pay off; Vern has the "first refusal" agreement with several stations for any prime time slot that becomes available.

-- June was also the month when the big story broke -- American Forces Radio Network accepted the "On Campus" program. Since the Special Edition of the Diary, we have had one further development. AFRN will break precedent and allow us to give our mailing address at the end of the broadcast. This opens up the possibility of receiving mail from our greatly increased audience. The AFRN addition to our log starting this fall has put a prompt pressure on Vern in the Editing Studio and will, in a delayed reaction, make itself felt in the Correspondence Department headed by Bettina.

-- The Fifty States Campaign is in the 10th month of a 16 month schedule and is progressing normally. The Ms have been mailed, and we have already added stations in Maine. Media Relations is ready to go with the Ns.

*Nancy*  
Nancy Grimsley