

Jim Johnson

September 25-28, 1974

September 25

2:30 Walking the streets in Aspen  
5:00 Visit with Oerst Jerbaz  
7:00 Dinner with Johnsons and Casteels in Glenwood Springs

September 26

10:00 Rifle - Radio interview with people who dropped in  
12:00 Meeker - Lunch on Cafe with Charles Bloomfield - *visited*  
newspaper, community center  
4:00 Craig - handshaking on Main Street, radio interview  
7:00 Dinner at Cogsgroff, meeting in Rainbow Room after supper

September 27

11:00 Dinosaur National Monument  
12:30 Rangeley - lunch, visit to Chevron office, Homecoming Parade  
5:30 Grand Junction - Football game (Grand Junction vs. East  
Denver), wedding party

September 28

9:30- Four interviews with TV and radio  
12:00 stations  
12:00- GOP Barbeque, Main Street  
3:45  
4:30 Wayne Aspinall's house  
6:00 Party and dinner with Friends

Don talked about casualness of campaigning here and it is--low key.

JJ said he wasn't disappointed in Aspen. "We might have done a little more handshaking in the business district. But Mike Strong doesn't like to do that. It wouldn't make any difference there anyway. I've done it before and it hasn't helped. I've never been able to figure out any correlation between the amount of handshaking I do and the number of votes I get. People want to know that you've been around. Sometimes there's a story in the paper.

Neutralization  
via then  
hopping

They don't expect to see you but they'll know you were in town. Even if people disagree with you, you can disarm them so that they won't be against you. Over in the eastern counties where I run strong I'll beat the towns and handshake everywhere." (But, the implication was, you couldn't do that on Western Slope.)

Chick Casteel ("My minority representative 'Chico Casteel'") was 4th District Chairman for Democrats for many years. Ran vs. Aspinall in 1960 when the candidate backed out 30 minutes before the convention. (He was only candidate to travel to all counties (including Hinsdale with 50 people-- which has Lake County City where 5 men were trapped and one man ate 3 of his companions. When he was sentenced the Judge said, "There were 5 Democrats in this county and you ate 3 of them").

JJ says of Chick. "He kept the Republican party alive in the 4th district all those years. The real function of the party is to have someone to meet the candidate for congress when he comes into a strange town. You don't know anybody. And you don't walk up to the first person you meet on the street. You look for the Republican in town to tell you what you need to know and introduce you to people. Chick kept that network going so that in 1966 there were Republicans we could go to when we hit each town. I couldn't have run in 1966 and would never have won the seat if Chick hadn't kept the 4th District organization going all those years."

He talked about running vs. Aspinall. "I remember talking to some fellow over in Cortez for half an hour. We were getting along fine and he told me he would support me. Then he asked who I was running against. I told him Aspinall. He Wayne?  
said 'Old/ I can't vote against old Wayne. He saved my farm'. I said

'We know each other pretty well and that's bull shit. A Congressman can't save your farm.' Well, by the time he got through explaining it, I decided Wayne had saved his farm! I could tell I was going to lose. Everywhere I went, all I ran into was 'Old Wayne'. He was a living legend, and you can't beat a legend."

Re Pitkin County. "Last time I lost it 3-1, this time it might be 25-18."

Western slope. Lost by 2500 votes last time--makes up 30% of district.

(Check this--Don said 18% later)

Will he come back after this trip? "Probably not. What the hell could I do if I did come back--walk up and down a few main streets? The towns are so far apart that it's not easy to reach people. If we haven't reached them in the last two years, there isn't much we can do now. We have two offices here and have given a great deal of service to the Western Slope. We have gotten two water projects going that had been hanging fire for 10 years. We've gotten two wilderness bills started to keep Denver from diverting more of our water. We have sent out 9 reports into every home, and people mention/<sup>it</sup>to us everywhere we go. I've been back here and made speech after speech after speech. If all that hasn't done it, one more trip to the Western Slope won't do it." But Don wanted him to do it once more.

He talked a lot about the intensity of the feeling over water--which I first felt with Mrs Jerbaz. Denver Water Board owns a lot of the water on Western Slope under "appropriation" system, i.e., first person that puts water to beneficial use has claim to it. And people buy and sell water rights. He talked about jealousy between western and eastern slope. "You could see what a difficult decision it was for me to come out in favor of

the wilderness areas that will prevent Denver--for the time being--from diverting the water from the western slope. Actually Denver has a water sufficiency till the year 2000. Western Colorado ought to have water to help them develop too. Denver isn't in my district--but actually my area will be more interested in diverted water. And under the bill if at some time the President decides there are thirsty people on the eastern slope, he can order the water diverted. That's a national policy decision, whether or not we should develop the oil, shale and coal deposits on the Western Slope." Now--by supporting the wilderness areas which include water and will keep Denver from stepping in--which has the effect of letting water flow onto Western slope--he helps both slopes and environmentalists.

"Flattops and Eagles Nest are home of two wilderness areas. Eagles Nest is the controversial one. Jim is only one of Colorado delegation to favor it in present form. Subcommittee won't move till Colorado agrees. If they enlarge boundaries, effect will be to have federal government overriding Colorado law.

West Divide Project--he favors it but some people in Western Slope (environmentalists) say that they'd rather have water go to eastern slope than into oil shale development. I heard a couple of Western slopers say that--with incredibility and bitterness.

On the interview in Rifle--lots of interest in getting some of the money which oil companies paid for oil leases back to Colorado for use in planning for development--37 1/2% per year of lease money goes to state. As of now the money (25 million for Colorado) can be used only for schools and roads. And he has amendment in to free up that money so it can be



used for planning. This was big, good news to constituents.

A "do"--a function, i.e., "They are going to have a "do" in Craig tonight."  
The Western Colorado equivalent of an "affair" or a "function" or a "doohingy." *or "a time"*

JJ to Charlie, the Republican County Chairman in Meeker. "I've never campaigned in Adams County. How can you? It's not a community. The people who work there don't live there. They have no shopping center where everyone shops. They have no rotary clubs or groups like that. It's just a bunch of houses. I went to a picnic there once and they said, 'You haven't been here before.' I said I know it. I know I don't represent the Denver suburbs very well."

*more papers of Rep. ... but they have own lack of ID*

There's an issue orientation to Jim that's fairly strong. He talks issues --particularly about the issues that interest each one of the towns we have been in. But he also tries to tell them that there are other interests. He told cattlemen that dairymen were much worse off. He told people who want Western Divide project that people worried about a dam flooding some beautiful county had a point. He tells the Western Slopers that the Denver Water Board must have some reasonable people on it and so forth. He is quite outspoken. He does not demagogue. And, as he keeps saying "If the people like the job I've done, they'll send me back. If they don't, they'll send somebody else. And that's the way it should be." He does not have a heavy investment in the job--and Nancy has less than I thought at first. He tells people "I don't like Washington, but Nancy does."

In his talk at the motel he said "We rural districts are in the minority now." Everywhere he went he sought ID with Western Slope--e.g., the family trip to Flattops.

Also "If I represent Larimer and Weld well enough, I will be reelected." And next thing he said was that he was trying to give rural areas a better break.

At one point he called Fort Collins and Greeley "city folks". "They don't know what REA is and they don't care."

"I chose to get on the Agriculture Committee to see if I could help the rural parts of the district. If I had gotten on Education and Labor, the people of Larimer and Weld Counties would have felt better represented. But I believe the rural interests need a better shake than they've been getting."

"I see now what Wayne Aspinall's problem was. He was back in Washington working as committee chairman. He was a national and international figure. He had lost touch with the home folks. We never saw him here on the eastern slope. It wasn't that he didn't care about eastern slope problems. He was too busy doing his work." Said this several times.

Worried all the day in the Glenwood-to-Craig trip whether the Birchite candidate would get on the ballot. "It won't help me. He'll probably take a few thousand votes. He thinks the Republican and Democratic party are in a conspiracy to turn the country over to the Communists. I've been fighting those sons of bitches ever since I've been in public life." *He died later in the campaign in a plane crash.*

Has raised 20,000 so far (7500 from Mesa County). "If I thought the race was <sup>a</sup> more serious one for me, I'd be sweating the money more than I am." Said he'd get 7500 from Larimer, 4000 from party.

In Craig, the gang went out to Bob Sweeney's house. He owns 12 papers in the Northwest area of the state. He's a big backer of JJ's, went down to

Inauguration in 1972 as a guest of the Johnsons. He was the first person I saw Nancy kiss and one of the very few. They felt they had to go back to his house. As Nancy said, "We've got to keep him on our side." But I went to bed after the motel meeting with the 8 or 10 people in the Rainbow Room.

He said he did not do too well in the "Grand Valley" which is the Grand Junction to Vail along the Colorado River. This is Democratic territory, he said.

He said they depended on local people to distribute leaflets, have a telephone call system, etc. Said he hadn't the time to do any door to door stuff.

Lee Arnold (who did scheduling for JJ in 1972) and Don and I had cokes in a cafe while Jim, Bob Sweeny and Nancy toured the Craig <sup>street</sup> Sheds. Lee said there were 2 problems with JJ. (1) He was not a sufficiently energetic campaigner, too casual. (2) When he campaigns on Main Street, he campaigns among bankers and elites and not in front of Safeway.

At dinner in Craig, Jim Ross, a real estate man, said many major oil and coal companies owned huge parcels of land--from 5,000 to 20,000 acres--for oil and coal. Especially he mentioned the strip mining going on in the area. There's a lot of coal and that's what's the source of power for the new electric plant which has come to Craig and caused its growth.

"Here we are driving through the mountains 50 miles from one town to the other. In the eastern part of the district we drive 50 miles from one town to the other across the flattest land you ever saw. There's no communication between them and they don't understand each other's problems. I'm their only

link. The same thing is true within the west and the east. Rifle doesn't care much about Craig and Fort Morgan doesn't care about Julesburg. Each town is interested only in its own problems. That's what makes it so easy for an incumbent. He can provide services for each of the towns. If something disastrous happens to him in one town, it won't hurt him anywhere else. In Denver, one issue--bussing could defeat Pat Schroeder. But if Meeker had a problem with bussing, the people in Rangely could care less. That's how Aspinall did it. He never came home. He didn't have to. Once you get by the first reelection, I don't see how they can beat you."

Very conscious of the rhythm of congressional career. "I'll have to go back there pretty soon and start to work."

His supporters sometimes made cracks about Pat Schroeder. And he would say, "She's really a pretty nice gal."

Everywhere we went, Jim asked his contact in town how things were going and they all said, essentially, the same thing, that things looked OK. By which they really mean, no anti-talk was apparent. For example, in Meeker, in the back room of the Cafe he had this interchange with Charlie Bloomfield--Republican County Chairman: JJ:"How's it look?" CB: "W-e-ll, pre-tty go-od, I gu-ess." JJ: "No problems?" CB: "I have-n't hea-rd of any." JJ: "That's about what we're hearing everywhere we go." DB:"Thaats ju-st the fee-ling I get." And so on throughout the district. Charlie went on to say that there were other races where he'd heard rumors that hurt Republicans--that Ted Pollak was an unsuccessful businessman and that Mike Strong was not supporting TEd for State Representative. (I think he's running for Mike's seat in the Colorado House.)

Re Aspen (Pitkin County), which JJ loses, Nancy said vehemently every time the subject was mentioned. "They brought all those hippies in for 32 days so they could register and they voted for Mersan. They sczaped them off the streets and brought them here. They didn't understand anything about the situation, but they were told Wayne Aspinall was the bad guy." In our conversation with Oerst Jerbaz and his wife, they were terribly upset about the Aspen situation. They talked about the "kooks," "hippies" and "long hairs" that had taken over Aspen--and who wanted to lock up the land so tightly as to keep landowners from doing anything with their land. They see the environmentalists as kooks and as the enemy. Mrs. Jerbaz kept saying "It makes me furious."

Oerst was County Commissioner in Pitkin for 32 years, is a leader of the older faction, was a Democratic County Chairman, whd broke with Aspinall over Frying Pan, Arkansas and went to Washington to testify against it several times. He is a real tough, raucous, storytelling landowner who is, says Don, a millionaire. He's one of early settlers of the area--a rancher--whose family was originally miners from Leadville, He's Italian, they say. A terrific character. His wife told story of campaigning in a home with sow walking through it and wife who pulled her dress up over her head (without a stitch on) to show Mrs. Jerbaz her operation scar. Then Oerst told story about how he came home after long night of campaigning, wife had moved the bedroom furniture, and he threw himself on the floor where the bed used to be. Great hilarity and knee slapping story telling.

The day I arrived we went to the two Aspen newspapers. Aspen Today greeted him with kind of flustered pleasure. Aspen Times editor, Bill

Dunaway greeted him coldly and uncooperatively. Mike started by saying "Jim says you hate his guts." Dunaway protested. Jim said "I said you don't print my stuff." Dunaway said they printed nobody's stuff, that only Aspen News interested them. Ingenuously he said they supported Jim in 1966. They would support "a yellow dog (Nancy)" against Aspinall. But they were very strongly pro-Merson in 1972. Then they said they'd do an interview with Jim, but their best reporter "had just left." There were plenty of other people who could have interviewed Jim, but they didn't want to, clearly. Very hostile territory. Afterward, Mike Strong (who was escorting JJ around) said, "I pricked Bill Dunaway deliberately so he would talk to you, get a dialogue going." Jim sat there as a supplicant looking quite uncomfortable---not giving an inch but not comfortable. He reminded them of his opposition to the war, but it didn't help. They all had a long lunch of Mexican food and a litre of Margaritas in Aspen. Very casual.

By contrast, his interview with 8 or 10 of the main street group at the Chamber of Commerce office in Rifle, or his interview with the radio station in Craig were very different. These people were his supporters and said so, quite frankly, off the air! The Craig man said "I really don't have any hard questions for you. I save all those for the Democrats. Why don't you just say whatever you want." And he threw him a few cream puffs.

Re Glenwood Springs. "I never have carried this town and I never will. It's full of John Birchers and I'm not conservative enough for them."

Stegosaurus Freeway and Brontosaurus Boulevard in Dinosaur, Colorado. An intersection in the middle of the moonscape outside the Dinosaur National Monument Headquarters.

"Is a congressman like the district he represents. I'd say there's a lot to that. I'm no cowboy. But I was born on the flat plains and I feel a lot better in the plains area of my district than the mountain country. I don't know what it is. As much as I like Charlie Bloomfield, I'm still not completely comfortable with him. I'm no cowboy. But when I'm out there on that flat land with those ranchers and wheat farmers standing around trading insults and jibing and telling stories, I feel better. That's the place where I click. Maybe as you ride through an area like this you say to yourself 'I sure wouldn't want to live there and the people there sense that feeling. Now, Barber Conable couldn't campaign in any part of this district. He's too reserved, too cool. He's a prince and when you get to know him, he's got a good, dry wit. But he'd be too standoffish out here. I suppose he's like his district; is he?' He feels more at home in east because it's like his home in Muleshoe, Texas. Just as I left Nancy said, 'if I came East I'd find JJ talking "you-all" instead of cowboy talk.

"In 1966, I was the first eastern slope congressional candidate whoever campaigned on the Western Slope. I would walk up to shake hands with people and they would just shake their heads. I'd say 'You don't know me.'" They would say "You are that eastern slope fellow running against our Wayne Aspinall. There's no way you're going to get my vote." Then they would say, the Western slope has never had a governor, a senator, a lieutenant governor, any state-wide official--and they would always end the same way by saying "We have never even had a regent of the University of Colorado." And I had to agree with them. You can see why I have taken the position I have now. Those

people have had the short end of the stick for so long. Their schools aren't as good, their roads aren't as good. And the people in Denver hardly consider them a part of the state. You can't blame them for feeling as they sometimes do more a part of eastern Utah than western Colorado. Several proposals have been made to take everything west of Glenwood Springs and attach it to Utah."

*why it takes time in strange ones I don't need to run twice*

Hostility in Grand Junction. Didn't like town in 1st campaign. Jim sat 45 minutes 3 or 4 times in editor's waiting room and editor would never speak to him. Nancy said she'd rather lose than go into that town. In 1972, Holiday Inn said Welcome Jim Johnson and that was turning point. Now they love the town. Jim says he'd seriously consider going into law practice there if he had it to do over again. "It's a great town." But it was Aspinall's home town and closed to Jim in 1966--and till after the 1972 primary--till guys like Sam Suplizio switched allegiance.

Story re Congressman. Nancy. "When we went back to Fort Collins last year, everybody commented on my new fur coata But I'd bought it the year before and no one had said a word to me about it then. I told Jim I thought this was peculiar. He said 'Last year you weren't the wife of the congressman.'"

Lot of talk about how Denver papers don't pay attention to him since "I don't represent Denver."

Re Sam Suplizio. I asked if he was his man and not party man. "He doesn't have anything to do with the party. The party is no damn good. That was Gordon Elliott's problem. He relied too much on the party. They can't organize and they can't raise money. We give money to the party instead



of them giving it to us. This year they asked us for money to do a state poll. I don't believe in polls. I told them--no money for a poll in my district. So they did it for the rest of the state. They have their function. They give you a vehicle to run on. And they help you to get out the vote. If they can help get out the vote they are doing their job.

I don't have anything to do with the party organization for two reasons. One, they are dominated by the wing of the party I don't agree with. Second, they are so Denver-oriented. They don't know there's anything going on out here. Little things: For example, if you want the endorsement of the Denver Post, they summon you to Denver for an interview. They have opposed me before, but I'll probably get it this time. Their rule is to support the incumbent unless they are mad at him. If there's no incumbent, they usually support the Democrat. The Rocky Mountain News is really going after Dominick and <sup>city man</sup> Butz~~man~~ this time. They may not do it editorially but they don't give you any newspaper space and give it all to your opponent."

In interviews, he always says "We in Western Colorado."

He keeps asking the TV and radio people whether they have received the item that he told of his "watchdog of the Treasury" award. He told man at KREX TV "It's a very prestigious award." "15% of us got it."

On KQIL radio interviews, he said he was for cutting spending, but that people had to understand that he would vote for water projects and vs. mass transit and that other people in the county will take the other view. He's very conscious of balancing interests and other interests. And it keeps him from demagoguing.

On Radio: Are you an environmentalist? "Oh, no, I'm not a member of the Sierra Club and things like that." Environmentalists have been good and bad. Problem is balance. "I've come down on both sides. I voted for the Alaska Pipeline. I voted vs. the land use planning. I voted for the strip mining bill. Anyone who votes straight down the line with any interest group ought to be examined." My job is to balance interests and make judgments, etc.

"As you can see, I'm skeptical of just about everything we do in a campaign. I don't know whether anything we do does any good. Maybe in a close campaign it makes a difference. I think it did last time--not with me, but with Merson. People pretty well knew me. But he picked up a lot of votes with his campaign. He had a knack for PR."

He often speaks of this area as "dry county". The Superintendent of Dinosaur National Monument said "I'm a dry land man." JJ speaks of "dry country problems." Also this area thinks of itself as "Colorado West."

Re Republican party. "It's always in danger of degenerating into a social club. That's what's happened in my home town."

"You have to walk a very thin line. You don't want people to say the congressman is always out drinking and partying. But you can't just leave these people and not go to their homes and talk with them personally. You have to let them know you are a human being. You can't come to their meetings, stay from 2-4 and leave. They want to know you as a human being. They want to feel they are your friend."

Nancy picked up this theme. "They not only want to party with you, they want you to stay in their houses, sleep in their beds, and use their

bathrooms. I don't want to let them hear my toilet flush, but they will feel hurt if you don't. After they have done all that work on the barbeque, they will be discouraged if you say 'so long kids.' They want to be your friend. They want to say, 'The congressman is my friend.' 'The Congressman and his wife slept in my house! We don't want to do it always, but we have to.'

2500 chicanos in the district and he has little contact with them.

On the trip to Wayne Aspinall's House--Aspinall said about his current work. "I work for just about everybody except the extreme environmentalists. I don't work for them. They didn't defeat me, though. It was the redistricting that did it. They took away half my old district and gave me some new parts I didn't know. I'd never dealt with those people before. And I didn't have the time."

He said, "Tell your wife this lava-lava is from a fan of yours along the Colorado."

"You were fair to me in your book" he said and later on, he said, "You came closer to understanding what I did and was trying to do in this Committee than most people who write about me." JJ asked "Were there any better?" and WA said, "I can name two or three who were worse!"

Re the Interior Committee, he said, "When I left we had 18 staff. They have 43 staff and they aren't getting half the work out we did. And when they do get it out they have trouble. Their bills are being written on the floor. They don't have any leadership."

At Bob Brown's party, Jim was talking about knowing your district. "Keith knows Grand Junction but you take him 15 miles outside of town and he

doesn't know what's going on there. Who does know the district? Chick doesn't. Bill Cleary knows a lot of it, but he doesn't get around to all the towns. I'm the only one who knows the district. I'm the only one who can know it. Each district has a ~~district~~<sup>new</sup> character to it. I believe that and I believe that each congressman represents <sup>7</sup>for district. Senators--they represent areas, not people. That's what the old timers in the House say anyway. I'm not sure I believe it completely, but there's a lot of truth in it."

Re his opponent. "That poor devil; he's out there running around the district and he doesn't know where he's going. And when he gets there, nobody will be there to meet him. Can you imagine how hard it would be to come into one of these communities without knowing people to start with. I know. I've been there."

At Brown's, JJ took his tie off. Sam and Connie Suplizio, Bob and Barbara Brown, Keith Mumby, were the ones I remember best. We went to a restaurant later where I had beef and most of the others had Mexican food and they teased me all night.

On the way to Aspinall's, JJ said, "We've convinced our eastern establishment friend that if you mine the oil shale and fill up these canyons, you aren't going to spoil the environment. You could fill all these barren canyons and no one will ever notice. In fact it will look better when the oil companies leave it than it does now." Then everyone in the car jumped in with idea that people from east come and look once in their lives and don't want anything touched and how bare and stark and un-pretty most of the area is. A few cracks at the Sierra Club--JJ told how Wayne Aspinall

would make Sierra Club toe the line in hearings. When Brower would say he represented "the public," Aspinall would make him tell how many members he had. Finally, he'd say, "All right, now we understand. You don't represent the public. You represent 44,000 members of the Sierra Club." At dinner, Connie Suplizio said "The Sierra Club is the most hated organization in this area." Talk of how east and west coast people have no idea of the problems of the west.

On campaigning, Jim said at one point that he didn't like to do a lot of handshaking, but preferred to talk to people individually for a while. "It doesn't fit my temperament to handshake without stopping to talk with each person. Then I feel like I can understand them and they understand me. Like that pharmacist in Craig. He disagreed with me on a lot of things and gave me a hard time. But after we talked he said, "You've got a tough job. I wouldn't want your job."

And it is one of Jim's campaign hallmarks that he regularly passes up chances to handshake--that Frenzel would not pass up--on the street, in public places. "Some people go up to people while they are eating and shake hands. I couldn't do that. Brotzman is like that. It takes him half an hour to move thirty feet. It doesn't suit my temperament." He'll go into a group--even in a restaurant--if a local person will take him.

The importance of the local contact, the local person was brought home to me very strongly in rural areas like Rick Nolan and Jim. If you hit an isolated community, you can't hit it cold. Finding the right network inside the community--like JJ has in Grand Junction or Rangeley (with Cecil Lollar) and like Nolan has in Jackson (with the girls at Mr. G's Supper Club) is absolutely essential and cannot be done easily in one race. That's

why so many segmented districts need to be attacked twice. Studds and Nolan and JJ are alike in this way. They took two years plowing the ground and capitalized on it the next time around. In a party dominated district, you can make it all at once, perhaps. But in a segmented district--in which political units are somehow separated from one another--you need networks in each segment. And that takes time--all other things being equal. JJ has district that is diverse and segmented; CT less segmented.

Almost as soon as we met and even after on the trip, he played on the theme that it was hard to get in/his district and hard to be defeated. He started in pushing the theme with respect to the newspapers--after his experience with the Aspen Times. "You can see how hard it is to defeat an incumbent through the newspapers. This paper won't print my stuff. But the papers that support me will black out my opponent. We'll kill him that way in the East."

He thinks he'll have most all the papers in the district this time--and he named one in the east he probably wouldn't get, but which has been neutralized since 1972. "He says we'll both make good representatives. He won't come out for either one of us. He's a Democrat and was against me last time."

A couple of anti-city boy comments I picked up. (Jerbaz) "He hasn't sowed enough oats to feed a night mare." (Weber) "Just because you've raised cane and sowed some wild oats doesn't make you a farmer." These are the reverse of ID--comments made about people with whom the local folks cannot identify. There is identification and strong non-identification. Like

the Chevron engineer we ate lunch with at Rangely who opined that the man who takes time to visit Rangeley would get its votes and then reversed himself. Merson, he said, visited Rangeley last time and JJ did not yet JJ won. Why? "The people here didn't want Denver University professor representing them." I.e., strong non-identification.

Nancy--"I got so I want to eat meals with a knife and fork. Your hands get so dirty shaking hands that you hate to eat a sandwich."

Jim and Wayne Aspinall noted that--relative to power of incumbent--that there had only been 4 incumbents in 4th district. Taylor, Rockwell (who ran off with son's wife), Aspinall and Johnson.

JJ--"The first term is the hardest. If you win election the second time, you're in for quite a while," He mentioned Evans, Brotzman and Rogers and then noted that people tend to start with small vote margin, build it up and then a decline sets in. He's very conscious of the rythms of congressional careers.

In Aspen, Mike Strong said that some districts were issue-oriented and some constituent-oriented. And he said issue-oriented ones were "better" but made job harder. Jim said "This district is set up best for constituent services."

As we moved from one town to another, he would note what they'd be interested in and that each would be different. In Meeker, the main subjects were cattle industry, cattle prices, protection vs. coyotes, problems of development connected with oil shale. Projected growth is from 1500 to 20,000. On way to Craig--"Now theâr interests will be different. They are coal-oriented and have just built a big new electric plant." On way to Rangeley,

"Meeker and Rangeley struggle to dominate Rio Blanco County. And they don't speak to each other. Meeker is more catt; Rangeley is all oil."

From time to time he would bring up the various people who had run against Wayne Aspinall and even said he wanted to get them all together for a party. I don't remember each of them and the stores that went with them. But I do remember Bill Gossard, who ran in 1970, because we went out to his wheat ranch to see him (a big contributor to JJ) and ran into his wife Carol. The Johnsons pointed out a couple of times that Gossard would not campaign at night and would just leave functions in the evening and go up and watch TV. The point was that people wanted more from you--the kind of thing we did in Grand Junction. And they brought him up in connection again, with the "fine line" between "partying" and letting people "know you as a human being."

He said the "game" among Republicans all those years was to try to figure out when Aspinall planned to retire, then run the election prior to that so as to be in position to claim the nomination. They did not believe Aspinall could be beaten by a Republican, and he wasn't! It was a kind of musical chairs in which waves of challengers hoped to be in right spot when empty chair came up.

It was my impression (confirmed pretty much by Don) that the campaign is decentralized, without much direction from the center. I think I heard who his campaign manager was, but he was a totally insignificant figure. Jim picks one person per town and lets him and his local network handle everything. It's a decentralized organization for a segmented, dispersed district. And candidate-oriented.



It is an ingrained way of discussing issues that Jim points out that other groups have problems too. Diverse district = balancing politics = appreciation of diverse interests = discussion of such interests = lack of demagoguery.

He talked about how tiring it was to work the 1966 district which went from Julesberg out across to Rangeley, down the entire west slope and around the bottom somewhat. "We were in Durango once when this friend of mine told me we just had to be back in Ft. Collins that night for a very important meeting. We drove half the night and when we got there, it was all our old friends, people who were supporting us anyway. I was so mad." The normal problem of trying to find "new people" is exacerbated by distances. That is, if Frenzel had been called across town to the kind of reception JJ travelled hundreds of miles to get to, he wouldn't be as angry and frustrated. (Nancy told same story)

He spoke of how tired he was at the end of the 1966 campaign-- that a TV station in Sterling had staged a lost weekend program to help him. "While the other candidates were speaking, I just sat there with my head hanging down. When it came my turn, I could not remember my name. The next day, they were to have a TV show in Denver. I said I was too tired to go. I was completely exhausted"

He talked at length about his decisions to run, and I cannot remember most of it. But the gist of it is this: In 1966, he was against the war, had been against the Korean War--in which he served. He went

on a tour of all 36 counties of the old 4th to see what sentiment there was. He was very strongly against the war and that was nearly his only disagreement with Aspinall. He said he had tried, in 1964, to get the then Republican candidate, Ed Lamm, to take a stand against the war and he would not. In 1966, he found that no one else was going to run and that there was not much anti-war sentiment. Eve Homeyer (later mayor of Aspen) helped him in some way I can't recall. He said about his 1966 race--"In essence the '66 campaign was the primary for 1972.

He seriously considered running again in 1968 but decided against it--noted that his first campaign had cost him \$30,000 of personal money, considering cash he put in and opportunities he lost. He noted, with regard to frinance of first campaign that "I did the legal work for Aqua Teck. That's how I was able to run for Congress the first time." (Aqua Teck is a local Fort Collins company that is a Xerox kind of basement to riches story. They make a water-type vibrator for your gums and teeth.) The comment he made re 1968 was that a respected reporter (Gavin) told him "There aren't as many doves in your district as there are lobster pots."

Re 1972. "Once you have run for Congress and lost, you never get over it. (Whereupon Nancy chimed in and said, 'It was the only thing he had ever failed at in his life.') I had always, as a little boy, wanted to run for Congress or the Senate. And when I looked at my docket for September and October, it was clear. I had no cases lined up. Besides, the district had been changed, cutting off half the western slope and adding more counties in the east and around Denver."

In 1972, he ran a very casual primary on the theory that if it worked, OK; if not OK--spent \$2000 for one "sweetheart" ad which they put in the papers showing himself and Nancy. His opponent spent \$30,000. "Everywhere we went, we saw his posters." He was a conservative--Dal Berg. JJ won--an basis of 1966 campaign. Nancy talked about this 1972 decision, also, in a very casual way--that it was a low risk kind of thing with an opportunity to, perhaps, win--or, if not, be in line if Aspinall retired.

Re 1972, they figured that Aspinall would win and that the students and environmentalists would come over and support him in the general election to defeat Aspinall. What happened, of course, is that Merson won the Democratic primary, the students and environmentalists supported Merson and the Aspinall Republicans and some Aspinall Democrats came over and supported Johnson!

"The congressional race is a bastard race. No one cares about it. The local papers are interested in the local races. The statewide papers are interested in the statewide races. The Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News are even less interested in my race because I don't represent Denver."

Aspinall likes JJ--their relations have been cordial since 1966--when they exchanged friendly letters. JJ hired Bill Cleary of Grand Junction, Aspinall's AA. But JJ's opponent's father was a lifelong supporter and benefactor of Aspinall. Who should Aspinall endorse? He tells Carroll he'll give him an endorsement provided he says nothing bad about Johnson and that if he does, he will withdraw the endorsement." So Carroll can't say anything bad about me or he'll lose the endorsement. He'll just

have to talk about the issues--and who cares about the issues. I had to laugh when Carroll announced he was going to run a clean campaign and only discuss the issues--no personalities. Politics is a silly business."

"I'll be the most surprised person in the USA if I lose. Last time we lost the Western Slope by 2500 votes. This time we should at least break even. We should get a majority of 3700 out of Larrimer, 3000 out of Weld. That should offset the loss in Adams, Carroll's home territory--which could be from 5,000 to 7,500. And we should carry the eastern counties heavily. Carroll is not charismatic. If Merson were running, it would be a close race." But Merson, after checking around, was told JJ couldn't be beaten and he tried for Senate seat.

Re AMPI, he mentioned David Bowen, whose campaign debt of 35000 was wiped out by AMPI--after he was on dairy subcommittee. He says no one listens to Bowen now when he says anything about Dairy industry--credibility is gone. JJ talks to Butz and tells him his few dairy farmers are really hurting. Thinks Butz believes him--as opposed to Bowen. JJ has taken no AMPI money.

JJ used hairspray to ride in Rangeley parade!

On Friday, we started from Craig about 9:30 and went to Rangeley. "The only reason to do what we're doing is to go to Rangeley. I've never been here before--it's so out of the way." We drove about 3 hours to get to Rangeley and about 3 have to get from Rangeley to Grand Junction. All to visit a town of 2500 people! All the rest of the time there was nobody. No voters. It was desolate sand and sage brush hills to Rangeley

and out of Rangeley to Douglas Pass--which was lovely with yellow Aspens and green evergreens. Then more moonscape till the Mesa country around Grand Junction came into view. Just outside of Grand Junction there's an irrigation canal and there's farm land. But it was a day devoted to 2500 voters!

Nancy: "Jim says if you could flatten out this district, it would cover Alaska and Texas combined." That is it is not only huge but all up and down.

Said he had no trouble voting for strip mining bill--only hopes new bureaucracy will not be cumbersome.

Spoke of Chick making 500 calls so that farmers and ranchers could get gas allotments during the energy crisis and how "That has to help."

Spoke of going to speak at a graduation for 6 people in a remote farm area of the eastern section. "There were 6 graduating seniors, and about 200 friends and relatives from all over the area. And the editor of the Fort Morgan paper drove out to cover it. He figured if I could come from Washington, he could go from Fort Morgan. He's a friend of mine."

He says he thinks Congressmen run against congress. He brought the idea up--not realizing that he too did it--on his watch dog of the treasury statement.

But he's not a demagogue. He is opposed to rest of Colorado Delegation and he won't blast them. He won't say "I this" or "I that."

Re votes. "People don't care about my votes. They are indifferent. It's amazing to me. We had a series of very dramatic votes on the Cambodia bombing and on aid to Southeast Asia. There was no interest in the mail or in the papers. There was a hullabaloo about my vote against aid to Israel, but not on the substance of the issue. The mail started coming in from the pro-Israel groups talking about anti-Semitism. Then that generated an anti-anti-Semitism mail. It looks as though they'll let you do anything you want on international issues if you take care of local problems."

Will Larrimer and Weld feel as though you have been partial to the West? "No, the people in the Platte Valley will be aware of it. But they will be disarmed by other things--the Narrows Dam for instance."

How about Ft. Collins and Greeley? "No, the last time I went on the radio, the guy asked me what I wanted to talk about." At this point, Ft. Collins and Greeley are not interested in the water problems of the West since their water supply is not immediately affected--or so I think. They, too, are a little resentful of Denver.

Re Adams and plans to campaign there. "We'll try to hold some coffees there this time. I don't know what else you can do. We have a good young guy who is organizing for us there. I was in Adams County only 3 times in the last election."

A memory. Nancy's name book into which she logged names as we left each town and from which she rehearsed Jim as we approached each town.

On the business of wives (or family) being more suspicious than

his honor, story of Nancy Johnson standing behind me while I was trying to fix a tire and pumping me on who else I was travelling with--"Who else-- who else," etc. is a good one.