

ANN PRIDE

February 2, 1982

We talked about the press operation. "We have one of the loosest press operations around. We don't give up lots of press releases."

They are "committed to a column "The Journal" once every two weeks."

They send out 1 1/2 general newsletters per year. Their mailing list = 180,00 now; but only 6,000 of them aren't on one of the special lists. 90,000 of the 180,000 are farmers. So they hit nearly everyone on their list several times.

In the weeks they don't do a column they try to do something--perhaps radio and TV. "I think people are fed up with the regular paper-type press releases. But they love radio and TV. The radio and TV people will take all we give them.:

They have a system where David goes to TV studio and talks to a newsman back home on an open line. Then they send the tape to the newsman and he can use it throughout the week and it will look like a live interview.

Then they have 70 radio network stations to which they send tapes of DP talking and then 60 stations where they use a two-girl service. DP talks to two girls and they send it back via watts line to small stations. They editorialize and DP talks back and forth or they do it all themselves. Big hit in these 60 radio stations--when they sign off its This is Katy Smith for WEVA, Russellville, from Washington. Sounds like direct reporter relationship.

Ann talks about Little Rock and "out of Little Rock" as two key categories. What I've talked about so far is "out of Little Rock". The Little Rock media want a direct line to the Senator. They may pick up a story from something we send them, but they'll insist on coming in and hearing it from him. Whenever they ask to see him, we'll let them come. And if we could get a Memphis station to come, we'd serve coffee and doughnuts. They cover the whole NE corner of the state, but they aren't interested."

We talked about the things that have given him publicity so far. "Consultants get some; we get some from Nerve Gas; some from the Titan missile; a little from MX and defense... We'll go up in the national press galleries a little more this year. But that's a hard nut to crack. You go up there and you may get one person to come or thirteen. You sit there and say 'here I am,' but maybe no one will come. If one kind-hearted person comes, you are so grateful."

I asked if they had planning session to decide what to emphasize this year. "No, our issues have developed so naturally that it's obvious what we'll be talking about: defense--of course our consultants get us into that--agriculture, ageing and now federalism. That was dropped in our lap. I think you'll see him a lot more active in ageing. He'll be a leader in saying that you can't roll back nursing home standards. We've got a few people who follow us on these things. All but agriculture. I don't think anybody cares about agriculture! The other day the Post ran a big front page story on agriculture and John Block had said. DP was holding a press conference in Little Rock, so I called our Agriculture man and told him. He said the same story had been given two inches on the sports page in Little Rock."

She talked about where she sits in the office. "I used to be in the back room. I didn't care how far away from the front office I was so long as I could be near Bruce Lindsay. I could see the AA's desk and Bruce and I had a running dialogue all day. Where I am now I can run in to the legislative people. And I can pick up what's going on from the reception room. As people come through to pick up messages or greet constituents, they'll stop by and tell me what's up. Our staff is not so big that people can't wander into each other's offices and ask 'what's up'. My special contribution is not so much the press as it is that I'm supposed to know everybody. If there's a problem with people and they come in I can straighten it out. Or I can say hello to people.

Bumpers once put his press secretary across the street. He could write beautiful copy, but he had no idea what's going on."

Who has access to David? "Everyone. Dan and Knox are good about sharing the credit. If it's one person't issue, even if they revise it, they'll take the person in with them when they go in to see the Senator."

"The media people wander around theoffice so much that we sometimes have to remind them. It's very loose--and that reflects the Senator's style. I don't feel I'm the only one who can talk to the press; but I do need to know what's being said to thepress. If it's a particular issue they are interested in, I'll send them to the person who knows that issue. On important matters, it will be Knox or Dan or I who will talk to the press."

When I got in there today, some woman from Little Rock who "went way back with Dan" was in there "taking over the office". No one knew who she was, except a friend of Don's He introduced her to everybody. He wanders around the office talking a lot. He showed her down the hall. A "too friendly" office.