

Travel Itinerary
Mac Collins (R/GA) - October 23-24, 1998

Friday, October 23:

- Elementary School Drug Day, McDonough
- "World Court" group, Holiday Inn, Griffin
- Burger King Pac gift, Jonesboro, Campaign Office
- Office hours in Jonesboro (2 visits)
- Flaunders Barbeque, Pike County

Saturday, October 24:

- Panel discussion at Retirees Day, Ft. Benning, Columbus

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- Fred Chitwood picked me up at the airport and drove me to Jackson and Days Inn. Called Mac, got Julie, Mac called back ("you at the Jackson Ritz-Carlton?"). Picked me up at 7:15 and we started off. Got back at 8:30.
- The highlight was an 11:00 visit to Holiday Inn at Griffin. Same table of "the boys" sitting around having coffee; but different boys. "Let's see, who's at the world court today." They greeted Mac, not with surprise, but as if to say, "Well, here's our congressman, he often comes in like this, pull up a chair." They kidded him with anti-Clinton jokes and with various expressions of distaste for Clinton and hopes that he would soon be gone. There was racial banter directed at John Lewis and Cynthia McKinney, inquiries about how they were doing. Mac laughed at the idea that either of them might lose. The content of the conversation was much more political than before.
- There were five elderly men, all dressed in some kind of open shirt and a lighter windbreaker of some such. One was smoking a cigarette, one a cigar. One was the former mayor of Griffin. Said one, "he had to retire because of a health condition." "They got sick of me," said the mayor. Everybody laughed. Then someone said, "He blamed us. He kept saying, 'you don't understand the program.'" More laughter. He wasn't as bad as Henry Callan. He ran seven times and lost every time. One year, they roasted a rabbit for his victory party and half of it was left over. More laughter. Mac told them I was writing a book. "He says he's writing a book, but I think he's either working for the CIA or Bill Clinton. Can you imagine anyone who takes six years to write a book!" Laughter. Then one guy says, "when you get the book published, you'll hve to put one copy right in the middle of this table." And the ex-mayor piped up, "then you'll have to come down and read it to us." Much laughter.
- When we left, Mac said, "the man on my right is very wealthy." I said, "I'll bet they are all pretty well off." He said, "they aren't all wealthy, but they are pretty well heeled!" They seemed to me to be quick-witted, smart, bigoted good ole boys. Mac says there's always some group at that table!
- But what made the meeting the highlight was that, for the first time in my four trips, there was a little talk of Jack Flynt. And, with one exception, he came off just the way I

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picture him. (The exception was that they got into his automobile problem and Joe Akin a little.) This is what each said about Jack:

1. "Jack Flynt would help you. Why he'd bring Washington down here if he had to, to help you."
 2. "That's why I liked him."
 3. "One time I was having trouble with the way they were shipping propane when I talked to every state official, including the governor, and I would not get one bit of help. I went over to Jack's house and told him about the problem. In three days, he had it done. Jack Flynt was a personal friend of mine. He just got out of the hospital, but if you see him, tell him he still owes us for the church building fund. He may be a cheap guy, but he's our cheap guy."
 4. "Jack would do you a favor. He always put a five dollar check in the collection plate so we'd know he did it."
- One guy said that Jack leased Ford his land to store cars on to make money and he gave Ford "a vote" in return. "You know what that was all about don't you--a vote." But another guy said no, that Jack got no money for it and there was nothing wrong with it. And a that guy said Jack got a normal, customary leasing fee. And another guy said Ford was on strike and had to have a place for the car, hence no vote was involved. What's interesting is that Newt Gingrich blasted Jack for that as unethical since he voted vs. clean air which helped Ford. And Newt's attack left an impression on those men--even though they couldn't agree on the facts.
 - They also kidded about Joe Akin, being on the government payroll and managing Jack's farm. "Why he drove Jack all the way to Washington just so he could claim to be on the payroll." Idea was that Jack cut corners ethically. They laughed at that. But there was a memory of Jack that was not wholly favorable. Nonetheless, it was his personal contact that they remembered--nothing about policy certainly.
 - I asked Mac whether he thought the conversation was favorable or unfavorable to Jack and he said, "I think it was mostly positive. If you called Jack Flynt, he would always answer your call."
 - I saved my policy/personal till our last lunch at

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the Longhouse Restaurant in Muscogee County--after the Ft. Benning show. He did not handle it crisply because its really my category and he didn't fit easily. The policy category didn't compute. "It's a complicated thing. It's important that I'm not high falutin or high toned, that I'm just Mac Collins RFD. I have a reputation for talking common sense. I talk strongest and I don't talk down to people. Populist is the best way to describe it, I guess. It's access. It's listening to what people have to say. It's letting people see that you are one of them. Part of it is what my staff does, part of it is Ms. Reno." (Smiled) It had to do with his intercession for two hospitals! And he ended, "It's a lot of things." A perfect Jack Flynt answer!!

- So I said that populist can refer to policy or personal relationships. But that didn't bring any thing more.
- Then I tried party, asking him if he could guess what percent of his votes came just because he was a Republican. "I honestly don't know and I couldn't possibly guess." I then went on to ask him who carried his district for President and we talked about that. But that answer was the same as his idea that they "don't wear uniforms." My conclusion: I have to create the policy category.
- You wouldn't think he was conscious of party from a comment like that. But he's given over \$100,000 to local candidates and the Republican party locally. In Spalding County, for the first time, he's even done an ad because there's a key seat to protect and the chance to pick up another, and because he wants to help the Republican governor candidate, Guy Milner. He's also given \$60,000 to the NRC for House candidates.
- A policy related story turned up to add to the five I have already, when I asked him what his accomplishments were for three Congresses.
- The way that question emerged in the first place came out of an innocent question I asked re Nathan Deal and whether people looked any differently at him because he'd been a Democrat. (Mac was talking about the delegation and how well distributed they were across committees--all except Transportation.)
- "Nathan Deal is a lost soldier. He was President Protem in the State Senate--very powerful and in on everything. In the

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House, he's just there-like I am." After this most self-deprecating of all his comments, I said, "Well you aren't just there; you've done a lot. I should add. Do not underestimate me. He is smart and tough. Self-deprecation is all style. It has nothing to do with substance. This is a man who wants responsibility. He'd love to be Chairman of Ways and Means, and says so. He worries all the time about leadership, like Mr. Archer. And then I moved into the "what are you most proud of question.

- He first mentioned that he had spent the most time in '97 on the airplane fuel tax and then emphasized that "we've spent the most time on the transportation task force" and how they had no report. He also talked yesterday about how the small airlines were hurt by their adjustment in the ticket tax and how SW Airlines fought hard, but Valujet did not. Then he mentioned APLAC and how he helped them with the word "duplicate."
- Then he said that "we worked hard on the child support recovery provision in the welfare bill--requiring that the non-custodial parent be responsible for child support payments to the custodial parent. On one of my visits to Fort Benning, I learned that the Army garnished the wages of soldiers when they learned that they owed custody support. I liked the idea and I thought maybe businesses should do that, too. But when I thought how Republican businessmen would resist it, I said nothing about it. I went home that night and said to Julie--who does all the bookkeeping for our company--did you know that the military takes child support out of soldiers pay. She said, of course, that's what we do in Georgia already. For every new person we hire, I have to send their name to the state so they can cross check to see if that person is delinquent on child support. She had been doing it all along and never told me. There was one day every month she had called "mother's day." Now I know it was the day she subtracted child support from some of our workers. When I thought about it, it made sense. She saw it as something very natural--one woman helping another woman. I took that idea into the committee and they bought it. Two or three others joined me in working out the language. Since then, several people have told me how much they appreciated that portion of the welfare bill. It was the most heart-warming thing I've done." That was why the people at Maximus in Columbus (?) Were so grateful to him at their open house! And it should be

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added to the others somehow. MC did not rank it high because it was done and, to him, going some place to get thanks is not a big deal.

- Sprewell Bluff Dam could have helped Albany in a couple of floods. Carter killed it. Many environmentalists. "There are some environmentalists in the district--thankfully not a great many. I respectfully disagree with them." (On to discuss Jackson Lake, his home in a creek that runs into it and pollution that comes via three rivers from Atlanta. Better he says, but don't fish the other river!)
- He was pleased with Ft. Benning. "I love doing what we did today. I don't look forward to driving all the way, but when I got there, I got into it. I like listening to people answering their questions. Listening is most important. You pick up information and you learn how best to say what you want to say--answer their questions in a manner that puts you on their level. I hope the Veterans Administration lady on the panel didn't get too upset when I said we needed to focus on health care and not bricks and mortar. But I meant it. It was a good stop, very good stop. And it was different from anything we had done before--one more issue for you." Shirley said Mac's talk about no money was typical "straight talk"
- I think what Mac really "loves" is dialogue. That's when he's at his best--listening, giving and taking in a spontaneous way. Still, he does not like the town meeting format especially, because of "the kooks." No kooks in the Ft. Benning setting. He loves the back and forth banter of the "world court," too.
- All the health care problems, he says, "are pushing us into national health care. Medicare, Medicaid, veteran's health care are already national health programs. Only thing holding us back is that people want their own doctor." He thinks Medicare will come to that "if you're under 65 and have no health insurance where you work, you are SOL under our system."
- In Muscogee, we drove up to Krystal's Restaurant. "Let's drive up here to see if the 'Mayor of Krystal' is here. There's a good bunch that meets here--another world court." We drive through the parking area, didn't see his truck and drove out. Then on the way out of town, he said "There's a

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big group here in town, 120-130 or so who call themselves 'the fish club.' They are the good ole boys of Columbus. The head of it is a former superior court judge. You have to be invited, you just can't go. I was invited, and I've gone several times. A lot of the hifalutin, deep pockets of Columbus want to join, but can't get in. The members are all RFD people and they have a lot of fun. I took Bob Livingston (Chairman, House Appropriations) with me once. He had a great time--he wanted to know how I found such a good group. Point is, Mac likes these good ole boy gatherings. He likes to hang out, like Flynt.

- Incidentally, earlier he told me, "I thought we had a leader in Livingston, but I hear now that he's kept most of the Appropriations staff that worked under the Democrats and that he had let them make some important decisions. That's not good." Later he seemed to think Armey would be the best leader, if NG leaves. He is not high on Newt as a leader--ethics business weakened him, and he tends to get up in the clouds, and "what you usually hear from Newt is what the last person he talked to said to him. He wants to please everyone and he wants everyone to like him. You can't lead that way!"
- Re big military influence on the district. "We have Ft. Benning in the South, Ft. Gillem in the North, Ft. McPherson just over the border in the North and Robins Air Force base in the South--both of which have a lot of people living in the district. And at the airport, you have a lot of people who have come out of the Air Force--pilots and mechanics.
- At Ft. Benning, the commanding officer thanked Mac for staving off the attack in the School of the Americas one more time. He did it again when he introduced Mac to the retirees. "They're coming to protest again. I hate to see it, but their leader is out of jail and it's their right." Mac said, "Well Judge, we'll kick him right back into jail if its any more than talk. He won't stand for any trouble."
- Speaking of "old wealth" in Newman, I asked Mac if the old family Democrats were still Democrats. "On the national level; they are Republicans, but on the local level, many of them are still Democrats. But a lot of them have died." Then to Ellis Arnold and how he met a waiter in Mobile where Arnold used to visit and he and Mac carried a napkin from "Becky" to Arnold! Ok him really.

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- To add to my MSS account of hospital visit, "No one understands the billing process. You will remember the distinctions I drew there about health care and domestic care."
- Friday PM, he had two office visits. He spent a lot of time with each.
- A guy who runs a company that watches over diabetic patients, monitors, etc. He wanted one hour-- Mac got him what he wanted--a meeting with HCRA.
- A woman whose husband is bed ridden and sick and is having his home health care threatened. He gave them time.
- "I'll bet I spent an hour with that woman whose husband needed home care. They threatened her they would take it away so she would come to see me--telling her it was "regulations." I've seen it before, they leverage the patient against the Congress, against the policy. She didn't know that, of course. She was hurting. She wouldn't have been there if she hadn't needed help. She was well prepared and she had a strong case. I listened to her because I could pick up hints of information about how these things work. That will help me understand the problems that our committee has to deal with. I like to listen and learn. Listening comes first. That hour was not a waste of time--for her or for me. I don't know that people are screened.
- During our conversation about the district and my discussion of Newt leaving the 3rd and the 6th, he intervened. "Newt wasn't redneck enough for this district and I am!" Great laughter at that.
- On the way to Flanders Barbeque, "We've been taking calls on impeachment in the district office--1,400 want him impeached, 200 said no. Nobody says drop it. They think impeachment will get him out of there hunting lodge.
- Re the boys at the Barbeque on the 3,600 acre tree farm: "They are good folk. They are very acceptant of me." Guy had 29 deer heads mounted on the wall, all with antlers. (Yes, I thought of Rosemary!)
- To Mac, "Are you a hunter?" "Nah. I did a little when I was a boy." "Are you a golfer?" "The only time I play golf is at

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some special outing. I bought some clubs the other day so I'll have one set here and one in DC. No, I get all my recreation working the yard, fixing up houses. Wednesday, I fixed up the lake house. Yesterday, I mowed the grass at my daughter's house and tomorrow I'll cut the grass and plant flowers in my own yard." Sounds like a man with no campaign.

- He said he never heard any talk about a prospective opponent. And the only time he offered an idea why he had none--except the obvious--"I credit the work of my staff with a lot of the reason why I had no opponent this year." Lisa got one guy's super public endorsement at Ft. Benning!!
- This stemmed from my comment that so much of his activity at home and in DC involved health care problems. He said he had two people dealing with veterans problems, one-and-a-half on social security and medicare (soon to be two), and that he paid one staffer \$30,000. He thought that was a lot, but worth it. Shirley, I guess.
- "My colleagues don't know I still own a business." I tried lamely to ask how his business experience affected "everything" and it bombed.
- Re the Ft. Benning tape of Mac answering the question, "We had a contract that after 20 years we would have a pension and life time health insurance. The contract has been broken. Why are our benefits going the tube?" Mac: "That is the most asked question I get. I hesitate to use the words surplus. We have a positive cash flow. (Go to tape.)
- Re relations with blacks: Mac talked about the breakfast--started by Richard Ray, then Bishop and knew Mac. Says they had settled on Evander Littlefield for this year till they found out he had fathered nine children by four to five women. Now they are scrambling. "I'm not real happy with it because I feel the tension--that they would rather not have me there. I'm there because I'm the congressman. And I know they'll nearly all vote against me. I'll keep going, of course. I have tried some outreach--going to the South Columbus Hospital, going to build at Habitat for Humanity. But I'm still a Republican to them. It's hard to break the ice."
- I get the sense that he basically sees the black minority as a hopeless cause and he can't do a lot to change it, so he

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accepts it. It's almost like he sees that they don't want him around. And, like all politicians, he wants to be liked. And, unlike many politicians, he's not comfortable with partisan labels. But his policies give the blacks little to use as an opening wedge.

- He said Mimi Woodson was a contact (a "beachead," I said) and so, too, "a retired colonel who is also a preacher he's helped."
- "Mimi got that park of hers opened and I went down for the celebration. I praised her effusively."
- He again told the his Talbot County visit.
- He says that blacks have not stepped up their use of his office. "Ted helps a little." But Lisa put it better. "More blacks come to the office now than came to our old office, but not a huge amount more. That's too bad. We have some spectacular success in some cases--with the IRS and with social security. Still, I think more go to (Dem. Senator) Max Cleland's downtown than come to us nearby. I wish the word would get around, but it hasn't."
- Re camp. finance: I never got off. He has idea that when one person has private money over a certain limit (he used \$500,000), the opponent ought to have his/her campaign contributions (indiv. and PAC) increased--plus total, prompt disclosure. This says more about his low income concerns.
- When I asked about polls, he told me to ask Wanda, but he didn't have any idea where they might be.
- He did say that they helped in a couple of cases. He said that in 1992, "our poll told us that Ray was vulnerable; and the NRA decided to put in some money. Before that, no one thought we could win. One thing that surprised us was how large Ray's pension was and how much it bothered people. I renounced my pension; and I knew it would play well. I don't believe public officials should have pensions. It makes a career out of the job." "Do you favor term limits?" "No."
- In 1996, he said that his polls showed that medicare was going to be the big issue. It's not clear whether he did anything special as a result. I could look at his material.

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- Saturday morning on the ride to Columbus, he talked about a couple of trips abroad he took with Sonny Callahans, For. Ops. Subc. In each case, (I recall Egypt, Israel & Morocco) he was the heavy in the sense that they all wanted AIO. And after the App. guys talked about how little money there was, they'd turn to Mac, who would emphasize how little new revenue there was--no taxes to help. Lots of good humor.
- The first morning we went to his trucking yard for coffee at a house that looks like the downstairs is an office and upstairs is where one son lives. His business has been divided in two--his sons haul finished products and Mac hauls unfinished loads (or vice versa). Mac says he has 35 employees--at least that's the number Julie keeps the books for. They are going to build another house next door. All I saw was a lot of yard, a truck or two and garages. It was early. The first floor office has a lot of MC memorabilia; plus a couple of guns. The hallway outside the office has a lot of early-part-of-the-century logging pictures. And there's an axe that belonged to his grandfather, Henderson Collins, an axe he used to split wood for railroad ties. In the back room where we made coffee, it was just a kitchen.
- He once ran a Chevrolet dealership--for about 20 years--on the side. He sold it to his brother for very little, brother did not do well, wanted to sell it back to Mac for a big sum--no deal. Mac wishes he hadn't sold it. But said it was object lesson on problem of absentee ownership. He and a friend also went into the grocery business. Had half-dozen stores. Gave that up after ten years. Lots of entrepreneurship.
- Re CATS, "I thought I might like to join. I was invited to one of their meetings. I just sat there and listened. They wanted to lay down a mark. I didn't think they had done much research to back up what they were trying to do. I didn't go back. I don't join many groups."
- "When you are in the majority, you have to govern. When we were in the minority, I voted against foreign aid. Now it's the Republicans who have to appropriate for foreign aid. Israel and Egypt and some other countries need the money. We are reducing the amount. So I'll bend; and I'll support foreign aid. Some Republicans don't understand that yet."

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- Re PACS, He never refused them in 1992. "PACs give to incumbents. We had very few in 1992. In 1994, the ones that gave to my opponent in 1992, gave to me. Now the PAC money just keeps coming in. I held one fund-raiser this year--in Washington. (Do you mind raising money?) No, with individuals. I do most of it myself. It's not a big problem for me."
- He's not keen on the moderates either. Talked about a speech in conference given by Mike Castle who complained about this and that, that weren't going right. He said he got up later and, without mentioning names, said that what was really wrong was that there weren't enough Republican voters. Said that, "with 20 more Republicans, we could solve all Castle's problems." I guess the thought was that with 20 more Republicans, Castle and the moderates would be shut out! That's Jim Greenwood's fear.
- Talked quite a bit about a Real Estate Investment Trust that had a favorable provision in the tax law, that allowed it to compete unfavorably with Hilton and Marriott in buying ITT Sheraton. I forgot the details, but Mac took it to the W&M Committee. Someone told the head of the REIT--called Starwood--and the CEO said, "We aren't going to worry about one little congressman." Says Mac "That's one comment he wishes he never made. I got their provision removed in our bill. When I got up to speak for the bill on the floor, I said, 'I know I'm just one little congressman, but that unfair advantage was wrong and it's gone.' Very pleased with that.
- I asked re conservative coalition. "There's a Bible belt that kinda runs through the district from Clayton to Fayette to Coweta. It's not a negative thing. I don't identify with the conservative coalition. I have no problem with them; and they gave me a 100% rating. People look at that and say, 'you are a loyal follower of the conservative coalition.' I tell them my 100% rating comes about because I follow my own views on the issues and they happen to agree with the conservative coalition. I do not follow the conservative coalition. I don't fly banners. I don't fly a banner for any group. The only banner I fly is the one that says, 'tax relief for every working person without regard to age or income or anything else.'"
- When I told him that Fred said of the district, Mac is perfect

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for the Third District. It's a working class district. And he's a world class guy." Mac agreed that "working class" described the district.

- I asked him if he supported the tobacco tax. He said no. First of all, he doesn't support any tax increases. Second, "who do you think that tax hits the hardest? Lower income working class people are the heaviest smokers. That's the worst kind of tax."
- Given the fact that you have no opposition, do you feel that you have put your stamp on the district now? "You never feel that way. That's trouble. You can't be complacent. That's way I thought it was time to do some town meetings--that it was time to wade into the people. I haven't done one for a couple of years. So I'm going to spend the first two weeks in January doing town meetings. It's a chance for people to question me. It will bring out some kooks--two weeks for the kooks. I lost one county, Meriwether, in 1996. That's another reason to get out and visit these places."
- Re trade and fast track dispute. "I voted for fast track this time. But it is not about the companies--Ford or IBM or Xerox. They can get up and move to another country. It's about the individual working person. That person can't move. It's the working person that gets hurt."
- Appropos of what I DK, but he said, "I like some programs." Maybe it was in connection with the budget agreement. He voted vs. it. I tried to get him to characterize the no vote. But I could get how most of leadership people--party, committee, subcommittee voted for it. But a few (Hyde) didn't. He ended up saying that the anti's were "a mixed bag." His argument was that the budget "busted the budget caps by \$20 million and disguised it as an emergency. Should have taken money from other programs."
- "If there's a right and a hard right, then I'm a right. I'm more a populist than a Republican--Bubba Republican."
- Re NF&B, he said something to effect that he kept in touch with them, but didn't trust them to do all they said they would do. Not a ringing endorsement of the sort I thought I would get. Had some less than stellar experience before he got to Congress, I think.

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- He likes school construction and smaller classes, but he wants local discretion.
- He had some discussions with Bill McCollum on some issue (education, I think. Money for smaller classes and lots of local discretion) and Mc says no, "it's revenue sharing and we can't have that." He didn't think Mc was consistent.
- Japan doesn't care about IMF. They want to lend money to Asian companies and when they go broke, buy them up and control their economies.
- On trust, not a good question for him. "I don't think that way. I think people naturally want to question what you do. Your job is to answer their questions."
- His state senate district: Butts, Henry Clayton (pt).
- He talked about his 1988 run against an incumbent state senator. He ran twice for that job before he got it. "In 1982, I ran and lost to a woman who retired after one term. In 1986, it was an open seat. I ran again against a former Superior Court judge. It was a hard battle and I lost--49.3% When he was judge, he had opposed the death penalty. He had ruled according to the law, but he said that it bothered him so much that he couldn't sleep thinking about the death penalty. When he got to the State Senate, he got on the Judiciary Committee and got a law passed providing that no one with an IQ less than 70 could be sentenced to death. (Soon after) seven members of a family were murdered by three prison escapees. They were caught and pled guilty and were sentenced to death. But when they scored below 70 on the IQ test, they escaped the death penalty. That didn't sit well with folks. Everyone told me I couldn't win against an incumbent. But I focused on what he focused on--crime. I emphasized his record on crime and I won."
- He talked about how the Third District was rigged to keep his house out of the district and his most likely primary opponents' house in the district. "But we know that Collins moved and then dominated his "most likely opponent," 1992 primary was against guy named Brown--had been married four times, had run in 1990, had a lot of residual support. His slogan, "Put a doctor in the House," or something like that.

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There was a right to life group in Fayette County that opposed him and gave me good support." Mac didn't talk like it was a hard race.

- Toughest race was against Richard Ray. "Ray miscalculated. He thought he had a lot more support in the northern part of the district, Fayette and Coweta and Clayton, than he did. I carried all five northern counties."
- I asked him if being an ex-Democrat has had any effect on anything? "No. I just went after the same issues as I always had."
- AFL-CIO target? "They put out one letter tieing me to Milner (governor candidate) in 1996. They never targeted me. I got support from union members. I got good support from the air controller union."
- Who are the independents in your district? "Those are people who vote both parties from time to time. They are people who don't understand the first vote in every Congress." Not a good question. Mac does not think sociologically or group-wise. Black-white, yes; "suburbs," no; income level, yes and no; gender, no. Well, he does mention all these things; but he doesn't move to them in answering a question.
- When we first met, he praised Georgia Governor Miller for "picking the right issues--budget, taxes, education--got my Republican support to pass them and even groups with 85% approval rating." The idea was that if you have the right issues, "you'll get wide support."
- When we first met, he praised Georgia Governor Miller for "picking the right issues--budget, taxes, education--and giving Republican support to pass them and ending up with an 85% approval rating." The idea was that if you have the right issues, "you'll get wide support."
- He talked about his term as Chairman of the County Commission (1977-1980). "When we took over, the county had no money--enough for one payroll. The roads were in terrible shape and it was the dead of winter. Do you know how the good old boys made up the county budget? They just added 10% to the previous years budget. I was very aggressive on budget, spending and roads. One rainy day I went out to check on some

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road work and I found them all sitting inside having coffee. They said they didn't work in the rain. I told them that in my trucking business, we always work in the rain, and they would in the county, too. I made one mistake; but it was something that had to be done. We got rid of the fee system whereby the county clerk and the judges got a percentage of the fees they collected. It was a system that had long outlived its usefulness and had possibilities for wrong doing. I was defeated in the next election. It was a 'get even' vote."

- "In my first race for the State Senate, I lost Butts county. There were still bad feelings because of the changes I made in the county. In my second race, I just barely carried the county. You just could not get those people to vote Republican. My third race finally had a good margin in my home county." Good on change.
- He told story, again, of how he became a Republican. "A friend come by one day and said we're going to have a meeting to organize a county Republican party. Why don't you come along. I had voted for Ronald Reagan in 1980 and I had voted against Jimmy Carter in 1980. I had voted for the only Republican who had ever run for state representative in Butts County. I went to the meeting and, sure enough, they elected me Chairman." (Here's place to put ex-Democrat question.)
- "Clayton County is a funny place. It's changed and yet it hasn't. It has two Democratic leaders who have been in office for 40 years. One recently died and the other is finally retiring. Soon a majority of the county will be minority. I could not carry it if John Lewis didn't represent a large number of the blacks in the County."
- MC is a quiet guy--not a publicity hound. It's almost like he enjoys being out of the limelight until such times as he wants to speak up. He talked about the media--esp. TV.
- "I'm not controversial enough for TV. I stay away from it on purpose, because I don't want to do that stuff. The Herald people called me and I said, "no, let Bob Barr do that. He likes it." When I come out of (the party) conference, media people ask 'what went on in there?' I say 'we had a meeting.' They ask 'was Newt upset?' But I say 'He didn't look upset.' I tell them to ask someone else. 'You know you won't get

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anything out of me.' I don't need it. It's good for exposure; but you tick off as many people as you please. Why risk that trouble when you don't need it. I have no problem with it. If they call me about an issue, I will talk to them about that issue. I just don't talk about behind the scenes stuff in Congress. I don't get excited about Atlanta TV. Once in a while I will go on CNN at drive time--but only on the issues."

- This comment was triggered by my question that if he ran for Senate or Governor, he'd have to get a lot more media than he gets. He agreed. His comments also are a nice way of showing how strong his policy (issue) orientation is.
- Re Maximus: The fact that he didn't rank it high on the list--and yet his help to them was one of his most important legislative accomplishments--indicates how little he cares for glory. That shift was over and the meeting was just a chance for them to say thank you. That, for him, is no big deal. It's over and done, part of the job.
- He would like to get on Budget Committee next term. Has talked to Archer about it. W&M sends three people to the committee and there's one vacancy. He's trying to figure out his chances. And he's doing the same thing with respect to replacement in 2000 when Archer has to give up W&M Chairmanship. I tried to argue that Newt will not be able to juggle seniority very much that time and therefore Bill Thomas will be Chairman. MC says Thomas wants it bad, but is "too partisan." In comments like this, Mac shows he is not a strong partisan as such.
- When he left me at the airport, the three last things he said were: "If you need to come back, you're welcome." "I hope you'll remember my lecture on supplies and cash flow." "I'm sorry you haven't seen Julie this trip." I ended my visits with sense that he's a good guy, and that he just might become a more important guy in the years to come.
- In talking about the omnibus budget, he made the point that he had no "extras" in the budget to win his vote. He was hopeful (and had heard, but wanted it checked) that a diabetes care initiative he had put in "was still in." It was kind of typical that he didn't know, that he wasn't tracking it. Shirley called to ask him if he knew whether it was in or not.

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"I asked Bo to check." Then he said, "We don't test our horn, we just get results. We don't want publicity, just get the job done."

- Re counties: "There's high tech in Fayette, warehouse and distribution in Henry, manufacturing and textiles in Coweta, textiles, military retirees and financial in Muscogee. CB&T Bank is one of the biggest in the South. In two counties--Fayette and Coweta--there is concern for ethical and moral issues.
- Who are you thick and thin supporters? "Fiscal conservatives, dollar and cents people, supportive of tax relief." It's an issued-based view of strongest supporters.
- I asked him who were the white Democrats. "Many Democrats who vote Republican at the national level still vote Democratic on the local level. They are friends of their local legislators. They identify with their local legislators and they listen to them." He spoke of this residual effect a couple of times. People--like MC--start voting Republican at national level and then it leaks down slowly--slower in some places (suburbs) than others (rural).
- One of the long stories he told was the sequel to my hospital story. He wrote a memo to Reno re Fraudulent Claims Act and another hospital, put it in her hands and asked her "to red it personally" and get back to him. He waits and calls to see what happened. Eventually she gets back to him. Says something like "when members of Congress intervene directly at the top--especially non-lawyers--it sometimes disturbs the normal process." "I'm one of those non-lawyers Ms. Reno, and I think there's a major problem with the administration of the "False Claims Act." She gets back to him and tells him that the hospital is ok and has no problem under the "False Claims Act." A district level Justice Department attorney writes MC telling him that he should be person that members of Congress should contact first.
- Some time after, Reno goes to hospital over night. "The next day I called her office and told her secretary I just wanted to let Ms. Reno know I was thinking of her." "Why don't you tell her yourself," says the secretary. "Ms. Reno came on the phone and I told her I'd heard she was in the hospital and that I hoped she was feeling better and I'd been thinking of

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her." "That's one of the nicest things that's happened to me all day. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it. Thank you very much Congressman Collins." As I say, a good guy.

- Re closure on the Henry County EPA deal: "the county had to give a little and the EPA gave them the permit. It was a good negotiation."
- He puts the % of blacks in the district at 23%.
- When he had partial counties, he split every one with a black member of Congress--McKinney, Bishop, Lewis. The split counties were the result of the creation of districts carved up to insure a black majority. The boys around the table called it "Cynthia McKinney redistricting." "John Lewis and I worked well together and I work well together for Atlanta. I never saw Cynthia McKinney down there (in my partial counties).
- Going down to Benning he said a couple of times that the veterans would be out in force complaining about loss of some health coverage. They were upset, said the government had violated their contract. Mac said there was no money for them and that government had gone back on its word. No law re vets benefits. There is a law re social security and that comes first.
- I have a little talk (taped) at McDonough elementary school by Mac--telling kids to "get smart, don't start."
- And I have some of his comments on budget and veterans health, on tape, from the Ft. Benning questions.
- On getting the news, MC reads the Washington Times, New York Times, front page and politics page of Wall Street Journal. (New York Times he gets there, I think). What's interesting about this is that he ostensibly leaves out the Washington Post!

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