

The original documents are located in Box 300, folder “West Virginia Furor” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

11/6

~~CENTRAL FILES~~

~~ANY PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE~~

To: Connie Derrard
Here's mine story
& copy of Ltr. we have
used re. A. Va.
Comments. Let me
know
what
Ron wants to do re.
this. I send over what
O.F. has when I get it

LIZ O'NEILL
ROOM 161
EXT. 2890



RECEIVED THE DATE BY THE EDWARDS AND THE

D A

NESSEN 11-6

DAY LD

WEST LIBERTY, W. VA. (UPI) -- YES, WEST VIRGINIA HAS TELEPHONES NOW, AND EVEN INDOOR TOILETS.

AND SOME WEST VIRGINIANS HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT THE REMARKS PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY RON NESSEN MADE ABOUT THEIR STATE.

SCRIPPS-HOWARD'S WASHINGTON BUREAU HAD QUOTED NESSEN AS SAYING, "YES, I THINK THE PHONE HAS REACHED THERE. THEY EVEN HAVE INDOOR TOILETS DOWN THERE," DURING A NEWS BRIEFING ON PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT TO ELKINS, W. VA. LAST MONTH. "WE FEEL NESSEN OWES US AN APOLOGY," SAID DEBORAH A. COLLEY, EDITOR OF THE WEST LIBERTY STATE COLLEGE TRUMPET.

TWO OF THE NEWSPAPER'S STAFF WRITERS, CRYSTAL ALLEN AND CINDY NELSON, WROTE AN OPEN "DEAR RON" LETTER WHICH WAS PRINTED IN THE TRUMPET'S OCT. 30 EDITION.

"THAT 15-WORD REMARK OVERSHADOWS ANY GOOD FEELING THAT MAY HAVE COME FROM THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT," THEY WROTE. "IT PROBABLY COST FORD SOME VOTES."

"EVER SINCE JOHN DENVER'S SONG, 'COUNTRY ROAD,' THE SONG WHICH COINED THE PHRASE 'ALMOST HEAVEN, WEST VIRGINIA,' A RENEWED FEELING OF STATE PRIDE HAS SWEEPED W. VA.," THE LETTER CONTINUED.

"WE ARE FED UP TO OUR MOUNTAIN PEAKS WITH THE STEREOTYPE THAT ALL OF US ARE NOTHING BUT ILLITERATE, BARE-FOOT RIDGE RUNNERS, CONSTANTLY FEEING FROM 'REV'NOORS.' AND COMMENTS SUCH AS YOURS PERPETRATE THESE MISCONCEPTIONS," SAID THE LETTER.

NOTING THAT PRESIDENT FORD WOULD BE RETURNING TO WEST VIRGINIA TUESDAY FOR A SPEECH AT THE CHARLESTON CIVIC CENTER, THE AUTHORS URGED THE PRESIDENTIAL PARTY TO VISIT THE COLLEGE'S CAMPUS IN THE NORTHERN PANHANDLE OF THE STATE.

"FOR YOUR FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT, WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO ARRANGE AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF OUR INDOOR PLUMBING FACILITIES," THE LETTER SAID.

UPI 11-06 05:03 AES



RN-16

Re: Elkins, West Virginia, visit
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 29, 1975

Dear /s/

Thank you for writing following President Ford's trip to Elkins, West Virginia. The President enjoyed his visit and was deeply grateful for the warm hospitality extended him.

When the trip was announced, a reporter jokingly asked the ridiculous question as to whether there were telephones in Elkins. Unfortunately, I responded, in jest, with the comment to which you refer. I certainly did not intend my remarks to be interpreted as a criticism of Elkins or of West Virginia. In fact, I worked for a radio station in Martinsburg, West Virginia, for several years early in my career and have warm memories of a wonderful state and its wonderful people. I, too, enjoyed having the opportunity to visit the fine city of Elkins, and I hope you will accept my apologies.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Ron Nessen
Press Secretary
to the President



/s/
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cut - 10/28/75 - pav
proofed - pav/pt

RN:EMO:/s/

(Rec. 10/30/75)

RN-16

Tucson Republic Editorial Page
Sat Nov 15, 1975

A GOOD WAY TO GET VOTES
WEST VIRGINIA FOR FORD

NOV 18 1975

CH-1

The Martinsburg Journal

MARTINSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA

FRI., NOV. 14, 1975

Paul Buxton Martin

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Ron Nessen's Slight

Ron Nessen, the presidential press

made the House his real name

Ron Nessen's Slight

