

FYI

"The assassination community"—that's how the tenacious tribe of JFK assassination researchers was described when

the Assassination Records Review Board, which (finally) was sworn in by Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, held its first public meeting on April 12. The five-member board (see *FYI*, March 15), commissioned by Congress to try finally freeing still-secreted JFK documents, met at the National Archives in Washington. The Archives press office faxed out announcements of the meeting to all Washington media, but only one reporter showed up—me. That was probably because there is no apparent way, yet, to make a Whitewater connection.

The JFK board will be chaired by John Tunheim, the deputy attorney general of Minnesota. The board began operations with a stopgap \$250,000 grant from the White House discretionary fund, but its members approved a more formidable first-year budget request of \$2.4 million. That must be (and is expected to be) approved by Congress. Because of the 18-month delay in getting the panel started—not its fault—the board also asked Congress to legislate an extension of its lifetime to April 1996 and to allow it to add a third year if required.

Chairman Tunheim invited "scholars and others who have studied this matter for years" to "communicate fully" with the board at the temporary address given below. Another member, Anna Nelson, a history professor at Washington's American University and a public records specialist, said, "We should open ourselves to people around the country who have something to put before us."

Until an executive director and staff are hired and moved into downtown Washington office space, the board's temporary mailing address will be a building on the University of Maryland campus, where the 2- to 2.5-million pages of JFK archives—and more to come—have now been relocated. The address for now:

The Assassination Records Review Board, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 90740-6001.

But Congress Already Is a Talk Show—We told you about the new Jim Hightower weekend talk show on ABC Radio starting May 14 (see *FYI*, April 1). It's one of the few liberal examples of the ilk. Now we'll have to hope for the best—that Hightower will become a candidate. It's becoming the pattern.

Not counting Howard Stern, the foul-mouthed New York broadcast talker who says he's seeking the Libertarian Party nomination for governor there, nine talk-radio right-wingers who claim to be candidates for Congress this year have been found by the Washington political journal *Congressional Quarterly* and the *New York Times*. The seven states with the honor are: Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan and Oregon. Two talk-show women are going all out—for U.S. Senate seats.

Ronna Romney, a former daughter-in-law of George Romney, a Michigan governor who was a Republican presidential candidate in 1968, is talking up a race for the Republican nomination, to run for the seat being vacated by the retirement of Senator Donald Riegle (D-MI). Janet Jeggellian, a hard-core conservative talkist, wants Republicans to choose her to face off with Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA).

The talker-candidates' rolemodel is one of the most combatively rock-ribbed reactionaries in the House, Rep. Robert Dornan (R-CA), an ex-talker from Orange County. Dornan, who came to Congress in 1976 based on his broadcast recognition, and occasionally sits in for Rush Limbaugh.

The *Times* estimates that there are now 800 talk radio stations in the country, up from 200 a decade ago. It cites a poll finding that 42 percent of Americans tune in to them at some time. The kudzu-like growth of talk-show candidates reflects the near collapse of our political parties due to citizen disenchantment with government and disengagement from the political process. The baleful trend is encouraged by poor or absent press coverage of Real Washington. State and local parties can't get their few most promising candidates to run.

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

COMPARABLE WORTH:

37 Million Poor Americans—If They Don't Know Their Place, They're Learning It

Reagan's curse on Clinton	1
Comparable worth	2
Possible solutions	3
FYI	4