

A69

PMS BUDGET

MRS JFK LETTERS (450)

BY JOY MILLER

AP WOMEN'S EDITOR

NEW YORK, NOV. 24 (AP)-"EVEN NOW WE ARE SO VERY INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW YOU AND THE CHILDREN ARE GETTING ALONG," THE LETTER SAID.

"I SUPPOSE THAT SO MANY OF US FEEL THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP PROTECT YOU FROM ANY MORE HEARTACHE, TO KNOW THAT YOU AND THE CHILDREN ARE SAFE AND WELL, WITHOUT INVADING UPON YOUR PRIVACY."

THE LETTER, FROM A WOMAN IN NEW JERSEY, LAY ON TOP OF A STACK OF THE DAY'S MAIL DELIVERED TO THE MRS. JOHN F. KENNEDY OFFICE ON THE 14TH FLOOR OF A PARK AVENUE OFFICE BUILDING.

"WE RECEIVE AN AVERAGE OF 400 LETTERS A DAY HERE," SAYS PAMELA TURNURE, WHO WAS THE FORMER FIRST LADY'S PRESS SECRETARY AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

"GENERALLY THEY WANT MRS. KENNEDY TO KNOW SHE IS STILL IN THEIR THOUGHTS AND HOW THEY FELT ABOUT HIM. SOME CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOHN F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND SOME TALK ABOUT THE TRAVELING EXHIBIT OF HIS MEMENTOES.

"OTHERS TELL HER ABOUT A MEMORIAL PROJECT THEY'RE PLANNING AND ASK IF SHE CAN PARTICIPATE. SO FAR SHE HASN'T DONE SO. BUT IT'S ALL EXTREMELY TOUCHING."

MISS TURNURE SHARES ONE OF THE OFFICE'S FOUR ROOMS WITH NANCY TUCKERMAN, FORMERLY MRS. KENNEDY'S WHITE HOUSE SOCIAL SECRETARY.

OVER MISS TURNURE'S DESK HANGS A LARGE OIL PAINTING OF THE LATE PRESIDENT AND MRS. KENNEDY SAILING. IN THE FOYER ARE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS OF MRS. KENNEDY AT HER DESK, A PORTRAIT STUDY OF HER HUSBAND AND COLOR SHOTS OF MRS. KENNEDY TAKEN ON HER TRIP TO INDIA IN 1962.

MORE)

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NEW YORK--FIRST ADD KENNEDY LETTERS DJT (A69) XXX IN 7562.

THREE OFFICES AND THE ROOM WHERE THE MAIL IS HANDLED OPEN ONTO AN L-SHAPED HALLWAY. NEXT TO THE LARGE TURNURE-TUCKERMAN OFFICE IS ONE OCCUPIED BY HELEN LEMPART, FORMER SECRETARY TO WHITE HOUSE AIDE KENNETH O'DONNELL, WHO NOW TAKES CARE OF PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD MATTERS FOR MRS. KENNEDY. THE THIRD OFFICE, KEPT LOCKED WHEN NOT IN USE, IS RESERVED FOR MRS. KENNEDY. SHE COMES IN SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK TO GO THROUGH THE MAIL AND HANDLE THOSE REQUIRING HER PERSONAL ATTENTION.

"WE HAVE THREE REGULAR FULLTIME VOLUNTEERS," SAYS MISS TURNURE. "OTHERS COME IN PART-TIME. ALTOGETHER THERE ARE 15. THEY OPEN AND SCREEN THE LETTERS, DIVIDING THEM INTO CATEGORIES. SOME CAN BE ANSWERED BY A CARD OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT; SOMETIMES FORM LETTERS WILL DO; OTHERS REQUIRE MORE INVOLVED ANSWERS.

"THE FIRST DAY WE WERE HERE THE DOORBELL RANG AND PEOPLE SAID 'WE HEAR YOU'RE OPENING AN OFFICE AND WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP MRS. KENNEDY.'"

THE FIRST VOLUNTEER TO RING THE DOORBELL WAS BILLIEJEAN (ONE WORD) HODGSON, A PONY-TAILED BLONDE WITH EARNEST BLUE EYES WHO COMES IN EIGHT HOURS A DAY, FIVE DAYS A WEEK. SHE THINKS IT'S THE MOST INSPIRING WORK SHE'S EVER DONE.

"SOME SEND IN ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL POEMS THEY'VE WRITTEN," MISS HODGSON SAID. "A LOT OF THE POEMS COME FROM TEEN-AGERS. AND A LOT OF OLDER FOLKS SEND IN PAINTINGS THEY'VE DONE OF THE PRESIDENT. SOME WRITE 23-PAGE LETTERS, HONEST. AND WE JUST GOT ONE FROM A WOMAN WRITTEN ON HER 85TH BIRTHDAY."

FOREIGN MAIL MAKES UP ABOUT 20 PER CENT OF THE CORRESPONDENCE. MULTI-LINGUAL VOLUNTEERS DO THE TRANSLATIONS.

THE KENNEDY CHILDREN, CAROLINE AND JOHN JR., WHO WILL BE 7 AND 4 RESPECTIVELY LATER THIS MONTH, GET THEIR SHARE OF MAIL TOO.

A TYPICAL COMMUNICATION: "DEAR CAROLINE: MY NAME IS..... I AM 9 YEARS OLD. MY TEACHER TOLD US TO WRITE A LETTER TO SOMEONE AND I THOUGHT I'D WRITE YOU...."

MANY CORRESPONDENTS CAN BE ANSWERED BY ONE OF THE 23 FORM LETTERS. THEY ARE PRINTED ON BLACK-EDGED STATIONERY AND ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPES WITH BLACK BORDERS BEARING MRS. KENNEDY'S FRANKING STAMP. THE FORM LETTERS INCLUDE THIS CARD: "MRS. 5 (3, 386 8' .9'5 & 4-53

WITH BLACK BORDERS BEARING MRS. KENNEDY'S FRANKING STAMP. THE FORM LETTERS INCLUDE THIS CARD: "MRS. KENNEDY IS MOST GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR REMEMBERING HER AND HER FAMILY AND DEEPLY REGRETS NOT BEING ABLE TO PERSONALLY RESPOND TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SO THOUGHTFUL."