

THE FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT COMING OF AGE IN THE 1960s

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Chapter: The Wee Small Hours, pages 200-201

Early on the morning of October 2, my grade-school buddy **Janis Zimdars** and I sat on the bricks around Ludwig's Fountain, talking about what we were doing and marveling at our surroundings. She introduced me to her new roommate, **Pam Mellin**. **As it turned out, Pam became fairly important in the FSM, since she worked in the dean's office and could get us copies of everything that passed through there that was of any importance.** We got some embarrassing inside dope and put the administration on the spot a few times. Why they failed to figure out where the leak was, I can't imagine. It could have been her looks. She was a slender, severely attractive blonde who wore those awful black "harlequin" eyeglasses that make anyone look like an angry cat; just the sort who really does fit your idea of a conservative secretary if she wants to.

Chapter: Hello Central, pages 256-258

Printing Central was my baby. At the beginning, **Jack Weinberg** was printing the leaflets, then he trained me how to do it, and I took over. Usually I worked alone, but I would occasionally draft people to help me. There wasn't really any person I could totally trust to be in charge, because it called for being awakened at every conceivable hour of the day or night and working solid until the job was done. I ran off the longer-run leaflets on a fast, **fancy Gestetner mimeograph machine located in Ruth and Hal Draper's basement**; we paid them a small rental for the use of their machine. Often I also lettered the headline. To prevent confusion of one leaflet with the next, we used a different color of paper every day. Merely printing the leaflet was not enough; as soon as the leaflets were done, I would call for my ride and one or another of the small crew of faithful, self-appointed taxi drivers would drag himself out of bed and give me a lift from Oakland back to the campus. At seven-thirty every weekday morning, a half-dozen dedicated leafleters would be awaiting the daily ration of FSM propaganda, and would share out the five thousand leaflets among themselves, dashing to the four corners of the campus to hand them out to the hordes of eight o'clocks. **Peter Israel**—slight, ginger-bearded, chipper—was there every day. **Patti Iiyama** and her inseparable companion **Stephanie Coontz** set up shop at Sather Gate each weekday morning; one on either side passing out leaflets as fast as they could. Getting the FSM line out was not a problem: people snatched them from the hands of the pamphleteers. The art of distributing them was to keep enough in reserve so that there would be some available for the next wave of students at nine. They were always all gone by ten. If something big was in the offing, I would print ten thousand. Leaflets never ended up in the trash or on the ground. This was exciting war news, to be read and passed along until ragged and illegible.

Dunbar Aitkens, publisher of the student science journal Particle, had revived an old **Multilith 2066 offset press** that had been bought in the early 1960s to print the student journal Root and Branch. On this he and **Deward Hastings** managed occasionally to get out the FSM Newsletter which gave a four-page analysis of the FSM position on an important topic.

Shorter-run leaflets and other mimeographed communications were run off at all hours at **Press Central, located in Tom Irwin's basement on Milvia**. Since it was part of a house, to avoid disturbing the residents we ordinarily entered and left through the basement windows.

Tom Irwin ran the press liaison with the help of a couple of other people, but mostly single-handedly, throughout the entirety of the FSM. It was a relatively miserable task because no one knew or cared what he was doing, and he was always being neglected. People wouldn't tell him what was going on, and he would have to rely more or less on leaflets and bits and pieces of information. He was always screaming for more information. His job was all responsibility and very little thanks or praise. He was never in the public eye, he missed almost everything by being in his basement all the time. But without him we would have had an even more violently distorted view coming from the press. The press did report our releases, and whenever we were going to do something we'd prime the press for it via Tom.

Chapter: Hello Central, page 264

Each night, after the evening Executive Committee meeting adjourned and the general tone of the next day's sentiment agreed upon, the elite politicians would hammer out the wording for the new leaflet between midnight and four a.m. I would sleep until awakened by whoever had **typed the stencil (usually Pam Mellin)**, call for a ride, and get to the basement mimeograph by four in the morning. The slightly giddy, mildly nauseated sensation due to extreme lack of sleep was a normal part of my life.

The absolute dependability and unfailing fidelity of the people who had appointed themselves to each task was something that I came to rely on as I did the sun's rising in the east and setting in the west. For everything that needed to be done, small or great, there was a person or group of people who materialized at the exact right moment, saw the job out to the end, and then went back to whatever they had been doing before, only to come back the next day and do it all again: at eleven-thirty the monitors were ready and waiting; at a quarter to twelve I went to Telegraph and Bancroft, and there as sure as Death and Taxes was a small coterie of fellows who went with me to get the sound equipment; the leaflet was always typed up on time, the door to the basement housing the mimeograph machine was always unlocked; my rides were always ready when I needed to go to Oakland and came promptly to take me back to campus, where the leafleters were always hot to get at it before their classes began. Whatever was needed was provided; each person who felt the justice of the Free Speech Movement's goals gave time, money and energy in "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." [5]