

dear mother and dad,
i just spoke to you on the phone today and want to write now before i get involved with other things and get shipped off somewhere. the staff meeting was exhausting. 250 people is a very unwieldy number to make decisions, and we believe we should do things here by consensus. this means we throw out parliamentary procedure and voting, and try to talk about things until everyone has kind of come to pretty much the same conclusion. all i can say is that it takes a long time, but it mostly works.. you really go through things very deeply because you can't call for a vote and end the whole mess till everyone has had a chance to consider the issue fully. once again i must repeat that it really tires you out, and that staff meetings drag on and on. the story on the ascs election was that i stood inside the store they used as a polling place, and was the official pollwatcher for the election. this meant that i was authorized by the county agent of the ascs to be there. when people who came in and couldn't write wanted to vote they asked for me to help them. then me, and one of the committeemen from last year, and the voter went into a booth together and i asked them who they wanted to vote for. they told me and i showed them where to make the X. once they were inside i couldn't advise them about who to vote for, but there was someone stationed outside to remind them how to do it and who to ask for. they really were scared, but very brave. they stood in line and when the men tried to tell them they couldn't vote they just stood there and quietly asked to challenge the voting lists. they didn't run away and it was really nice to see. there was a good lafge turnout. in my county we only won in one community because they tampered with the election and the disqualification of voters. but anyway we have enough material to invalidate the election. what happened with me was i was there doing my job when the sheriff and deputy sheriff came in and told me to leave the store and stand outside. they said i could watch from there. i went outside where another one of us was standing with a walkie talkie that was connected to our base radio in canton. he called and told canton that i was kicked out. meanwhile i went up to one of the committeemen and told him he was foolish to kick me out because this would ruin the election. he agreed and told me to come in and not to worry about the sheriff. five minutes later he came up to me and told me that in the course of the last ten minutes we had already called washington and they had called them, and now it was only fair for me to call back and tell washington they had let me back in again. i did this and was happily back at work when the sheriff and deputy came back. the men who ran the election tried to persuade the police not to kick me out, but the police argued that they may take orders from washington but the police didn't. this was very good because it showed a split or helped make a split between the local man and the police. anyway, the sheriff came back to me and told me that this time it was a police order that i leave, and if i didn't i'd be arrested. he asked me if i knew why nad i said i didn't. he told me that he was responsible for keeping the peace, and that if some white boys came in the store and roughed me up he'd be responsible, and so i'd stay outside. i asked him why he thought i'd be safer outside than inside and he said because i could run if i was outside. i told him i wasn't a very good runner, but i le i called base again and the car with jesse and george, the people in charge, came by. they told me to go back inside and get arrested, and that they'd get me out ~~xxx~~ that r or the next ~~xxx~~ day. i went back in and in about a half hour they came back and took me off to jail charged with investigation. another girl came in the next hour from another community. then george came in. the three of us talked, and were pretty much okay, except for being bored and a little hungry. the next morning they released us on bail. that's about it. jail was in some ways just like it is supposed to be in the south, with people playing harmonicas and singing every once in a while. the county jail is one large room, with a staircase in the center leading upstairs to an upper level. on one side in the bottom there are three cells, and that's where i was, but you are really only confined to one corner of a room. most of the other people, 23 of them, mill around in the room most of the time, except they were told not to speak to us. anyway, though it might not have been bad, i don't intend to go back. it was not bad because i knew why i was there, but it would have been awful if i had just been put there for as little reason as some of the people there.

Love
Clay