

**Too far to walk?** President Jimmy Carter disappointed the 6,000 delegates to the National Association of Broadcasters convention held in three hotels a mile or so from the White House last week. But the President sent a message that both congratulated radio and television "for their vigor, dedication and creativity in serving the American people" and called on them to do better in their service to the public.

"Radio and television have become the town hall of our nation—our best insurance that this country will continue on its course of open, participatory government," he said. "The American people depend more and more on broadcasting to keep them informed on issues that affect their well being and to bring them a fuller enjoyment and appreciation of our nation's vast cultural resources."

He saluted broadcasters for the "ingenuity and innovation" they display in serving their audiences. "At the same time," he said, "I call upon you to strive constantly for greater depth in your coverage of current events, greater quality in your entertainment programming and greater service to the needs of minorities."

**Another prize for ABC.** The convention was not totally devoid of administration glamour, however. Vice President Walter F. Mondale visited the ABC hospitality suite Tuesday night in the company of (at left) Frank Befera of WDDU-TV Duluth. Mr. Befera is an old friend from Minnesota who travelled with then-Senator Mondale in the final days of the campaign last fall (BROADCASTING, Jan. 3). James E. Duffy, president of the ABC television network, has the Vice President's attention here, while Jack McWeeny, of WREX-TV Rockford, Ill., listens in.



radio in return for abolishing the fairness doctrine (BROADCASTING, March 28). Privately, Mr. Van Deerlin suggested after his speech to the radio group that he had put them to sleep. Some broadcasters suggested, however, that the proposal (which would permit up to 450 new low-powered, short-spaced FM frequencies) is unrealistic.

The broadcasters also heard the first rumbles of reaction—from Mr. Van Deerlin (page 41), from the FCC (page 26) and in a broadcast-pay cable debate (page 77), to the U.S. circuit court of appeals overturning of the FCC's pay cable rules.

They also felt the emotion of the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Harold Krelstein, Plough Broadcasting, Memphis, former radio board chairman, who is suffering from cancer (page 45).

And they heard their last address from Richard E. Wiley as chairman of the FCC. He leaves the commission June 30.

There was some disappointment that the man in government everyone wanted most to see, President Jimmy Carter, did not show up. Disappointment is too nice a term for the reaction of some: One Georgia radio broadcaster was heard to say that he helped get Mr. Carter elected, voted for him, too, but that he would not do it again. Vice President Walter Mondale was seen briefly, however, and the President sent a message by letter (see above).

All the government contacts didn't happen in the convention hotels. NAB reported 19 state broadcaster associations held breakfasts, receptions or dinners with their congressional delegations.

There were some changes in the convention format from previous years. One that was introduced with little hoopla was the scheduling of minority citizen activists in the program (page 50). The ab-

sence of any of their number brought protests from blacks at last year's convention in Chicago, but no conciliation from NAB. One NAB spokesman said their inclusion this year was "not really a conscious effort by NAB under pressure."

When all was said and done last week, however, NAB vowed not to return to Washington in the near future. For those who stayed at the Sheraton Park, it's just as well. Those broadcasters involved in the misunderstandings there report the hotel was nondiscriminatory in its ill treatment of the guests. Four NAB board members were among those that had to go begging elsewhere for rooms, and NAB President Vincent Wasilewski, who took two of the roomless broadcasters into his suite, was among those complaining about poor room service. The association reportedly is thinking of suing the hotel, and at week's end last week the Sheraton Park had offered to write any injured broadcasters and shoulder all the blame.

But the Sheraton Park isn't the only reason for the dissatisfaction with Washington. The association's officials say they won't schedule another convention there until the city builds a convention center.

Next year, NAB returns to its favorite convention center, Las Vegas, which in its opinion offers the ideal configuration and attractions for a meeting the size of the broadcasters'.

The NAB likes Las Vegas so well that it has scheduled three conventions there in the next six years—in 1978, 1981 and 1983. And the feeling is mutual; the Las Vegas convention bureau threw a lavish cocktail reception for the NAB's board at the start of its winter meeting in Hawaii in January (BROADCASTING, Jan. 31), when the board decided tentatively to extend the convention program from three to five or six days—from Sunday or Monday through Friday. "Those Las Vegas people

really know how to handle a convention," one NAB board member said last week.

Such an extended convention would further segregate radio from TV. Radio would meet by itself for two days (probably the last two), as would TV, and the two would meet jointly for a day in between. (If Sunday is included, it would be devoted to exhibits and perhaps a joint opening session.)

Those 12,939 who attended last week's 55th annual meeting included 6,176 registrants (broadcasters, associate members, students, reporters), 3,119 exhibitors and 3,644 exhibitors' guests and others. The numbers were high, but not as high as NAB's record year four years ago in Washington when there were well over 6,000 broadcasters.

## WMAL-TV fetches \$100 million, trading record

**Sale to Combined Communications involves swap of KOCO-TV and \$65 million in CCC stock; KRLD owners double their money**

Joe L. Allbritton, the Texas financier who is chairman of Washington Star Communications Inc. (WSCl), has turned necessity into a substantial profit. Required by the FCC's crossownership rules to divest himself of all but one of his media holdings in Washington, he has reached an agreement in principle to dispose of WMAL-TV that city to Combined Communications Corp. for \$65 million in CCC preferred stock and CCC's KOCO-TV Oklahoma City. The total value of the compensation has been estimated at up to \$100 million, which would make it by far the largest sale of a single station in the history of broadcasting. No value was assigned to KOCO-TV in the announcement, but another VHF in Oklahoma City, WKY-TV (now KTVY(TV)) was sold for \$22.5 million in October 1975.

The biggest previous single-station sale was that of WBAP-TV (now KXAS-TV) Fort Worth in 1974.

A joint announcement by Mr. Allbritton and Karl Eller, president of CCC, put to rest any doubt about Mr. Allbritton's stated intention to hold on to the ailing *Washington Star* rather than the television station. And the complicated transaction (word of which had surfaced last month ["Closed Circuit," March 21]) will produce cash needed to aid the *Star*. The afternoon newspaper, which competes with the morning *Washington Post*, was said to be losing \$1 million a month when Mr. Allbritton acquired control of WSCl in 1975, but the losses are understood to have been reduced substantially since then.

Mr. Allbritton acquired control of the newspaper in 1974, when he bought 10% of the stock in WSCl, and he gained control of the parent company and its broad-