Norman Wain, Metroplex Communications. NRBA has "always been a member-driven organization that was basically almost on a voluntary basis, where members made policy and carried out policy." The NAB, Wain said, "has relied very heavily on its professional staff over the years," which he said sometimes doesn't "have the dedication and the insight . . . to do the kind of job we need done." Wain said it is his "great hope that with an injection of NRBA-type people into the existing board, we'll have more of the member-driven spirit we've had at NRBA."

The NAB board unanimously voted in favor of the plan at its board meeting on St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, last month (BROADCASTING, Jan. 20). If the NRBA board ratifies the plan at its board meeting this week, NRBA would disappear as a political entity; those members who want to join NAB may do so at reduced rates for the first year. Twelve NRBA directors would join the NAB radio board—four for three-year terms, four for two-year terms and four for one-year terms. All such NRBA directors would "sunset" at the end of their first terms, although each could then run for office under standard NAB policies. One NRBA director would be added to the executive committee's radio team for at least three years.

If the unification is ratified, the board will select the NRBA's 12 representatives to the NAB board and decide whether ratification of the agreement by the NRBA full membership is also necessary.

Another voicing caution was a former NRBA president, Jim Gabbert of KOFY-AM-TV San Francisco, who is scheduled to address the NRBA board in Fort Lauderdale. He thinks the idea of unification "good" but believes the board should be cautious. Among his concerns are whether in the new organization, the NRBA "will be independent enough." He said that if the NAB's structure is "not basically changed, then what happens is all you did was eclipse NRBA" and got "rid of a competitor" to NAB. As for separating radio from television within the NAB, Gabbert said that proponents of the merger "say that 'times have changed, we'll get in and we're going to change the NAB,' and my word of caution," Gabbert said, "is that you don't get married to somebody with the intent of changing her. If we're not changed going in, you could be selling radio down the river." □

Deal approval. The $6.28-billion sale of RCA to General Electric was approved by the former's shareholders at a meeting last Thursday. The company announced that roughly two-thirds of those shareholders entitled to vote approved the $66.50-per-share cash offer, which is expected to be completed by the second half of this year. At the three-hour shareholders meeting RCA Chairman Thornton F. Bradshaw (l) reiterated what he saw were the benefits of the merger, including the financial reward to RCA shareholders and the added competitive strength the merger would give to RCA's operating units. Sitting to Bradshaw's left is RCA President and Chief Executive Officer Robert F. Frederick.

GE/RCA go for it at FCC

In FCC filing, it requests 18-month waiver to divest combos; says NBC will operate as separate subsidiary

General Electric last week asked the FCC to approve its $6.3-billion acquisition of RCA.

The big news may be that GE seeks no major favors from the commission. In its transfer applications, it is requesting 18 months to break up NBC's grandfathered radio-TV combinations in New York (WNBC-AM-TV-WYNY[FM]), Washington (WRC-TV-WKYS[FM]) and Chicago (WMAQ-AM-TV-WKQX[FM]). The application said that the radio stations will go.

GE also offered assurances that NBC and its stations would be insulated from the nonbroadcast interests of the company.

In its application, GE said three RCA board members will be added to GE's current board, with the individuals to be named later. That board, according to the filing, will constitute the complete boards of GE, RCA and NBC, which GE said it intended to make a separate, wholly owned subsidiary of the company.

GE said it intended NBC to retain a corporate identity, with NBC's business conducted by NBC's operating and staff executives and employes. The chief executive officer of NBC would report directly to the chief executive officer of GE, "and there would be no other company executive between NBC and the General Electric board," the filing said.

"It is General Electric's plan that NBC's corporate structure will enable NBC, its networks and owned stations, to conduct broadcast operations independently of General Electric's nonbroadcast interests," GE said. "Thus, NBC advertising and programing policies will prohibit any use of NBC's networks and stations for the purpose of favoring the nonbroadcast interests of General Electric or for disfavoring nonbroadcast interests of any entity which competes with General Electric. A central component of this overall policy will be that the content of NBC's news and public affairs programing may not be influenced by the nonbroadcast interests of General Electric.

"It is the intention of the company to maintain NBC's independent and autonomous operation, subject only to such broad oversight as is necessary to exercise ultimate responsibility for the subsidiary."

GE also is seeking permission to retain two members of its board of directors—Barbara Scott Preiskel and Frank H.T. Rhodes—whose media interests might result in conflicts with FCC ownership restrictions. Preiskel, according to the filing, is also a director of the Washington Post Co., which owns the *Washington Post* and broadcast and cable properties. Rhodes is president of Cornell University and a director of the Gannett Foundation, which has an 11% voting interest in Gannett Co., owner of newspapers and broadcast properties.

According to the filing, the addition of GE's KCNC-TV Denver to NBC's five TV stations (GE said it was "expected" that the management of KCNC-TV would come under the aegis of the NBC broadcast operation) will give the merged entity the ability to reach 20.94% of the country's television households. □

Outlet sues King World

Block booking of syndicated shows is at center of controversy

The much discussed but yet unproved practice of "block booking" of syndicated television programs is getting a public airing in a $10-million antitrust lawsuit filed by Outlet Communications Inc. against King World Productions Inc. In U.S. district court in Florida, Outlet is suing King World for breach of contract and fraud on the grounds that King World would not renew its highly successful *Wheel of Fortune* game show unless Outlet agreed to pick up two other King World game shows, *Jeopardy!* and *Headline Chasers*. All three shows are Merv Griffin productions.

Outlet filed the suit on Nov. 8, 1985, several weeks after the start of the 1985-86 television season and after it had lost *Wheel of Fortune* in its access time period to a competing station that Outlet said also took the two other game shows.

The suit centers on Outlet-owned, CBS affiliate WCPX-TV Orlando, Fla., which originally negotiated to pick up *Wheel of Fortune* from King World in the spring of 1983. In its suit, Outlet claims that when WCPX-TV negotiated to renew *Wheel of Fortune* for a second season, King World conditioned the renewal on the purchase of *Jeopardy!* and *Headline Chasers*. When Outlet rejected the other two, King World proposed a price that "was not economically viable given the pos-