

Leaving the scene. CBS's *Face the Nation*, which has been a Sunday morning staple for almost 30 years, is to be canceled and replaced with a public affairs program with a different format. While there have been rumors for some time that the network was going to cancel the show, the recent ratings gains made by ABC's *This Week With David Brinkley* may have been the straw that broke the show's back. Comparing ratings for the first 11 weeks of this year with the same period last year shows *Brinkley* rising to a 4.2 rating/13 share from a 3.9/13. *Face the Nation* dropped from a 3.3/11 to 3.2/10, while NBC's *Meet the Press* dropped from a 4.7/15 to 3.1/10. Gene Mater, CBS News senior vice president for communications, announced that CBS White House correspondent Lesley Stahl will host the new program. George Herman, moderator of *Face the Nation*, will continue with the network as a Washington-based general assignment reporter. The network has not set a date for the exit of *Face the Nation* or the introduction of the new program.

not "sorted it all out," but estimated the loss of between 500,000 and 600,000 of WOR-TV's five million cable homes.

In an effort to postpone Black Tuesday, NCTA, which appealed the CRT decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, and TBS asked the court for a stay pending the resolution of the NCTA appeal. The court, however, dashed the cable industry's last hope for at least temporary relief from the new rates by denying the stay requests last Monday just hours before the new rates went into effect.

Three days earlier the Copyright Office turned thumbs down on another effort by the Community Antenna Television Association and some cable attorneys to circumvent the rate hike through various interpretations of the CRT order, the Copyright Act and the FCC rules (BROADCASTING, March 14). The argument of some cable operators, said Register of Copyrights David Ladd in a "letter of opinion," that "specialty stations never carried, even though 'permitted,' may now be replaced by nonspecialty independent stations and paid for at less than the 3.75% rate is inconsistent with the intent of Congress and [the Copyright Act]."

Partially because of the vagaries of the Copyright Office's letter and partially because of its negative opinion of cable's arguments, Ellen Adams, CATA's assistant to the executive director, said the association "is looking to take it to court to get a declaratory ruling." Such a move would please the Copyright Office. In the letter, Ladd "expressed the hope that issues regarding interpretation of the CRT rate adjustment will be

brought to the attention of the court, and that the court will provide guidance."

The loss of distant signals upset many cable subscribers deprived of favorite television shows. And the tactic of the cable operators has been to redirect their subscribers' outrage toward Capitol Hill, where it can be used to push through legislation overturning the rate hike. NCTA reminded members of Congress of Black Tuesday and the harm it was doing to cable and its customers by sending them a novelty—a small black cardboard television with five black pencils imprinted with "March 15, 1983: Black Tuesday for Cable Viewers" stuck through holes in the top—that just might be odd enough to be effective. □

New contract a boon for UPI

United Press International, which was in severe financial shape last year and was rescued by a new ownership team, received another boost last week. Members of the Wire Service Guild approved a three-year contract under which, UPI said, the company achieves "substantial monetary gains and contractual givebacks."

Among the concessions granted by the union to UPI were reduction of sick leave payments by 10% in the first two years of the contract; greater employee contributions to health and welfare coverage; reduction of two paid holidays for the first year, turning them in the second and third years into float-

ing, rather than fixed, days; reducing overtime; abolition of health and welfare coverage for probationary and temporary employees; payout of severance pay rather than a lump sum, and the ability to retire employees over 70.

Under UPI's three-year contract, the highest paid employees will earn \$27,514 in 1983, \$28,918 in 1984 and \$31,633 in 1985. A Wire Service Guild spokesman said this amounted to an increase of \$138 per week over the three years. □

CPB continues efforts to retain funding

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting asked a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee last week to maintain funding for the corporation's fiscal 1985 and 1986 budgets at \$130 million. CPB Board Chairman Sharon Rockefeller and CPB President Edward Pfister asked the subcommittee to reject administration attempts to cut CPB's 1985 budget to \$85 million, down 35% from \$130 million authorized for FY 1986.

Rockefeller's and Pfister's plea was met by a responsive subcommittee. Senator Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.) commended public broadcasting for "doing an outstanding job," and indicated that there is Senate support for maintaining the corporation's \$130 million appropriation. Weicker also noted that he saw little value in commercial programming for children and stated that public broadcasting provides the central source of cultural programming for the nation.

Fellow subcommittee members Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.) and Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) sided with Weicker in supporting CPB's funding level. Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), a member of the full committee, and Senator Charles Percy (R-Ill.) voiced strong support for public broadcasting. Percy said that without public broadcasting, the rest of television is "literally trash." (Percy is the father of CPB Chairman Rockefeller.) □

Wirth staff takes umbrage at Summers remark

Relations between the National Association of Broadcasters and the House Telecommunications Subcommittee—and its chairman, Tim Wirth (D-Colo.)—have been known to be cool at times. They appeared to be even colder last week as the result of alleged comments by the NAB's executive vice president and general manager, John Summers.

According to a letter to NAB President Eddie Fritts from the subcommittee's chief counsel, David Aylward, Summers "characterized the NAB's planned effort on Radio Marti as palling beside the lobbying efforts your organization would use to 'roll Tim Wirth on broadcast regulation—which we fully intend to do.'"

Summers, who refused to comment on what he calls a "personal letter," has responded to Aylward in writing. Fritts defended Summers to BROADCASTING and said the comment was not made in the context characterized by Aylward's letter. He maintained that the remark had been "blown out of proportion."

The NAB denies, said Fritts, that it has any plans to "roll Tim Wirth."

He noted that the comment, which was made during a Radio Marti strategy meeting, was in relation to remarks by representatives of state broadcasting associations, who met in Washington this month, and left feeling frustrated with Wirth's subcommittee.

Despite Aylward's letter, Fritts remains confident the incident won't have an adverse effect on their negotiations on broadcast deregulation and other communications issues. But, Fritts says, he has requested to meet with Wirth as soon as possible, to discuss communications issues and to clear the air.

The Aylward letter takes a stern position: "I suggest that [those of] your staff who still share Mr. Summers's misconception be more discreet in the future. Second, as you are well aware, we have worked, and continue to work closely with you on many issues including Radio Marti, and cable copyright questions such as 'must-carry.' We have repeatedly indicated that this cooperation and working relationship will continue in the future, hopefully extending into other areas."