

In Brief

Landmark Communications Inc. has agreed to purchase KNTV(TV) San Jose, Calif., for price said to be in excess of \$12 million. Seller is Gill Industries (Allen T. Gilliland), which also owns cable television system in San Jose. Largest stockholders of buyer, publisher of daily newspapers in Norfolk and Roanoke, both Virginia, and in Greensboro, N.C., are Bessie G. Marshall and Leonard R. Sargent Jr. Frank Batten is chairman, and William Gietz is president of broadcasting division that includes WTAR-AM-TV-WKEZ(FM) Norfolk. KNTV is ABC affiliate on channel 11.

Board of directors of **Cowles Communications Inc.** voted unanimously Friday to **liquidate company** and to distribute assets to shareholders. Principal assets are 2.6 million shares of common stock of The New York Times Co. (approximately 23%) and WESH-TV Daytona Beach, Fla., and KCCI-TV Des Moines, Iowa. Under announced terms of liquidation, shareholders receive .655 shares of Times stock for every one now held. Stations will be transferred to new company, Cowles Broadcasting, which presently exists as subsidiary, and shareholders will receive one share on it for each share held in Cowles Communications. Marvin C. Whatmore, chairman and chief executive of Cowles, said arrangements are subject to favorable tax ruling, FCC approval of station transfers and stockholder approval. Present corporate officers are expected to retain "comparable" positions with new company. John Haberman is president.

Trading was halted last week in stock of **Starr Broadcasting Group Inc.** amid rumors that largest stockholders—William F. Buckley Jr., Jim Long and Thomas Merriman (who hold approximately 40% of outstanding shares)—were attempting to sell their holdings. Company's board was considering situation at regularly scheduled meeting in San Francisco late Friday.

Representative John Moss (D-Calif.), whose curmudgeonish manner and championship of consumer rights made him unpopular with broadcasters, announced last week he **plans to retire** at end of this year after 26 years in House. As member of House Commerce Committee, he became known to broadcasters for his participation in investigation of TV quiz scandals and of corruption at FCC in late 1950's. Since then he has developed **reputation as regulatory agency-balter**, often butting heads with FCC for among other things: over-regulation of cable television, nonregulation of major networks, weak enforcement of equal employment rules in broadcasting industry and failure to award attorneys fees for citizen groups' participation in license rulemaking proceedings. He is also champion of openness in government having been father to law requiring government to open files to public. In 1975, he led movement on Commerce Committee to wrestle Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee from full committee Chairman Harley Staggers (D-W.Va.). Mr. Moss was then elected chairman, secured biggest budget of any Commerce subcommittee, and began aggressive oversight and investigation of regulatory agencies. When he retires at 63, vacancy may be filled by another senior Commerce Committee Democrat, but some observers think it's more likely Mr. Staggers will take back subcommittee chairmanship.

Broadcast industry representatives were given preview at White House meeting last week of **suggestions for promoting minority ownership of broadcast properties** that Carter administration is expected to submit to FCC later this month. List was disclosed by **Henry Geller**, who is serving as consultant to Commerce for telecommunications and information. It is said to include proposals that applicants in comparative hearings be given credit for minority participation, that requirement that applicant for new station show resources, exclusive of advertising, to keep station on air for 12 months be reduced to six months, and that licensees facing renewal or revocation hearings be allowed (as suggested by Congressional Black Caucus) to sell property at reduced price to minority group. List also contained suggestions for encouraging banks to provide station financing (banks would be permitted to move in faster than they can now to assert control when station runs into serious financial trouble), and for promoting use of time brokerage, under which minorities would have access to more time. Mr. Geller also said **administration would support NAB**

suggestion that licensees who sell to minority groups be given tax certificates. Meeting was called by presidential aide, Martha Mitchell, to hear what industry and administration are doing to increase minority ownership of broadcast properties. Vincent Wasilewski, president of NAB; Bill Leonard, of CBS, member of NAB task force working on problem, and Thomas Schattenfield, counsel for National Radio Broadcasters Association, were among those participating in meeting.

FCC Chairman Charles D. Ferris is instituting **experiment in scheduling meetings.** Instead of weekly agenda meetings and special meetings either squeezed in on agenda days or held on another day, commission **will hold two-day agenda meetings every other week**, with special meetings normally held in alternate weeks. New schedule starts this week.

National Association of Broadcasters executive committee approved **revised budget of NAB staff** at meeting in Washington last week. Over-all income for 1978 fiscal year (beginning in April) is projected at \$5,638,750; expenses add up to \$5,501,575, yielding surplus of \$137,175. Budgets, broken down by department: station services, \$1.2 million; government relations, \$538,450; public affairs, \$315,030; legal, \$264,920; TV code, \$727,900; research, \$263,880, and general administrative, which is largest of departments, \$1.8 million. Among major sources of income are: TV dues, \$2.2 million; radio dues, \$1.9 million; associate member dues, \$235,000; building rental \$185,000. Radio code dues, which under proposal before joint board would be combined with general fund dues, are projected at \$243,750. Final approval of budget is up to full NAB board meeting in Puerto Rico, Jan. 17-20.

FCC has granted application for new station on UHF **ch. 24 in Memphis, Tenn.**, to Delta Television Corp., 80% owned by **Petry Television Inc.**, rep firm, Arthur E. Muth and Martin F. Connelly (10% each), executive vice president and president, respectively, of Petry. Call is expected to be WPTY(TV), and Petry is aiming for Aug. 1 on-air date.

Louis Harris Survey dealing with confidence in leadership of major institutions shows **30% of U.S. population expressed "great confidence" in those running television news**, up from 28% in 1976 but down from 41% in 1973. TV news leaders trailed those in medicine, higher education, organized religion, U.S. Supreme Court and military establishment but led those in White House and executive branch, major companies, and local government. Survey revealed that confidence in leadership of press in general slipped to 19% in 1977 from 20% in 1976 and 29% in 1966. Report also showed that **leaders in advertising are at bottom of list** of six institutions, with 11% "high confidence" rating, up from 7% in 1976 but down from 21% in 1966.

Another television-newspaper **crossownership was dissolved** last week with announced \$1.7-million **sale of WSEE(TV) Erie, Pa.**, CBS affiliate on channel 35, to **George N. Gillett**. Transfer, subject to FCC approval, will cause ninth break-up of TV-newspaper crossownership in past 12 months (BROADCASTING, Dec. 12, 1977). Mead family of Erie, 33% owner of station, also owns *Erie Morning News* and *Times*. Broker: Ted Hepburn Co.

ABC Evening News Co-anchor **Harry Reasoner** last week said he **"expects" to exercise June 1 option out of network contract**, but added that letter of resignation had not been signed and his leanings could change. Mr. Reasoner explained he's been contemplating move for several months, claimed changes proposed early on by ABC News and Sports President Rooney Arledge did not seem to leave him much to do. He would not discuss where he might go after ABC. There also was speculation that Mr. Reasoner's on-air partner, **Barbara Walters**, **might have change in store**, perhaps moving from network news to upcoming ABC News magazine show. Departure from ABC News, however, is definite for **Marlene Sanders**, vice president and director of television documentaries, who **will join CBS News** Feb. 6 as producer and correspondent on documentaries. Miss Sanders, who is expected to be replaced by ABC News producer Pamela Hill, said she anticipates being "more comfortable" with CBS, citing a "certain restlessness" in terms of her administrative work at ABC and changes by Mr. Arledge. She will be working on **CBS Reports** with correspondent Bill Moyers, who, in yet another possible job switch, is understood to be considering move back to public television community.