



**Benjamin L. Hooks**

Final comments are due at the Federal Communications Commission by October 3rd concerning a Notice of Inquiry into whether it would be desirable to require a licensee to give a 45-day public notice of its intent to sell a broadcast station.

The issue, first raised at a two-day meeting of minority broadcast owners at the FCC this spring, turns on whether this would be a means of increasing minority ownership of stations in this country.

Presently minorities own less than two tenths of one percent of the nearly 9,000 (blacks own about 56 radio stations and only one television station that is currently on the air) broadcast properties, including more than a thousand television stations.

This is a very important proposition. I am gratified that the FCC adopted my idea on July 27, 1977 and issued a Notice of Inquiry in its respect. I would, however, have preferred the Commission to have issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking along with the Notice so that when the questions and comments were finally in, the Commission could have moved into effectuating the concept should it have been found to be meretorious.

However, now after the comments are in on Oct. 3, a 30-day period must transpire to permit the filing of replies to the comments and then, hopefully, the Commission after finding the public in favor, will move to the necessary rulemaking.

I would urge all consumer groups, all civil rights leaders and groups, all those who know in their hearts that blacks and other minorities and women have suffered egregiously from blatant historic institutional and personal racism and exclusion in broadcasting to join this opportunity to do something; to concern themselves in positive ways.

They must determine what comments are being made (because a number of enemies of the idea have certainly got their licks in) so they may file strong and meaningful replies to them.

Let me make this as emphatic as I can: the FCC will be swayed by arguments -- pro or con. So those who are interested in opening one more window to democratic change in broadcasting must be sure they present their arguments as strongly, as forcefully, as cogently as possible.

Already, the National Association of Broadcasters has made a counter proposal, one that it calls "the first realistic" solution to the problem of too few minority owners in broadcasting. This powerful organization of broadcasters has petitioned the FCC for a declaratory ruling that would, it believes, increase minority ownership of broadcast stations, without the imposition of rigid governmental standards on the industry.

They have asked the FCC to issue a tax certificate to any broadcaster who sells a broadcast property to a minority buyer. The certificate would enable the seller to avoid capital gains taxes if he buys similar property within a requisite period. I am not opposed to this suggestion. The NAB is fearful, and rightly so of the government intervening and imposing a heavy hand in the sales of property.

Well, so am I. And a lot of other people. No one wants the government to enter private transactions between individuals. But the selling of broadcast properties is not in the same category as selling, say, one's home, or place of business. The owner of a broadcast license is the possessor of a right to operate a precious and limited segment of the electromagnetic spectrum. And because it is something that is in very limited supply (only a few of our millions of citizens can own a TV or radio station), the government has rightly declared that this spectrum space cannot be owned by any individual citizen. It can only be granted by the government in limited amounts to persons who will operate their franchises for the benefit of all of us -- in

the public interest.

The 45-day pre-sale notice is no panacea. Like the NAB proposal, it has its limitations. It is, however, like the NAB proposal, one more means of tackling this vexing problem.

I believe the 45-day notice will increase the number or potential buyers of broadcast properties, thus enhancing its value in respect to the seller. I believe this public notice, enacted will increase the number of minority owners of properties even if this belief were based on the cynically pragmatic view (it's not, of course) that minority ownership is so far down it has no where to go but up.

I believe the owners will further benefit just as all America ultimately will, by the increased introduction of these diverse voices in the communications market place.

And I believe all this will happen especially if good and interested citizens will let the FCC know loud and clear that they want this rule to come into being, and back this desire with persuasive and compelling comments.

**"D" ST. PLUS**

CULTURE IN MOTION  
"SEPARATE BUT EQUAL?"

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Lecture and slide presentation by Ben Hazard. Open to public. Refreshments will be served.

Thursday, Oct. 20, 2 p.m.-5 p.m.  
Seminars at Operation Life's Health Center

- A. Harriet Wright, Dr. Corrine Casselle, Freewin Ohsteen, Cochise Couyette
- B. Operation Life's Health Center Malachi Andrews, Dr. Tony Miranda, Mechelle Yates, Ronald Amie
- C. West Las Vegas Library Claude Clark, Dr. Thomas Wilson, Beni Casselle, Melvin Carter.

6 p.m.-9 p.m.  
Workshops at same locations; participation open to public

Friday, Oct. 21, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Operation Life's Health Center

- A. Harriet Wright, Dr. Thomas Wilson, Yvonne Cooper, Beni Casselle
- B. Operation Life's Health Center Malachi Andrews, Dr. Corrine Casselle, Pat Davis, Cochise Couyette
- C. West Las Vegas Library Claude Clark, Dr. Tony Miranda, Bobbi Troutman, Ron Amie

2 p.m.-5 p.m.  
Craft Workshops as on Thursday  
7-p.m.-10 p.m.  
Public Forum on pluralism at Library

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Blacks have a great awareness of brand identification and tend to frequent the better hotels and restaurants in far greater proportions than whites.

Blacks tend to finance pleasure trips far more than whites.

Blacks are leaving the country on vacations in ever-increasing numbers because they are better accepted and hence more comfortable at destinations in the Caribbean and southern Europe. Blacks travel to liberal Canada more than anywhere else.

"Like any group, you really have to be serious in wanting to help blacks have a successful convention by meeting their needs," says Chris White, director of national sales for Fairmont Hotels.

"You don't do this by soliciting their business with a form letter. You do it by sitting down with them and having a beer. I started by getting to know local black leaders in New Orleans and other cities and I was able to convince them of Fairmont's sincerity in their business.

"A number of our sales people are involved in the black community on their own and we as a company are a regular contributor to the United Negro College Fund."

Sheraton has involved itself in the black community by contributing to vocational training programs. "It means a lot to the community," says John Dixon, a black, who is manager of sales coordination for Sheraton Inns.

"If you treat them right, the percent of repeat convention business is fantastic, but the potential of the black transient market is incredible," says Mr. White.

The high repeat factor for black groups should not be surprising. They have been ignored, abused or patronized for so many years by the lodging industry they are highly likely to return again and again to a place which genuinely wants them and performs for them.

Becoming involved in the black community means more than an occasional nickel and dime advertisement in black media and more than the hiring of a black assistant manager.

Hal Peterson, associate advertising manager of EBONY magazine, says no lodging chain is consistently advertising in black media. Therefore, he feels that the first one to do so would have an extremely high impact, considering the strong brand identification blacks are known to have.

And, obviously, if you're trying to sell blacks, a black salesman has an edge.

John Dixon of Sheraton Inns recommends these steps to establishing better relations with the black community:

Bank at black banks and savings and loan associations.

Buy goods and services from black businesses.

Advertise consistently in publications directed to the black community, publicizing but not exploiting your property's involvement.

Casino owners would do well to go personally and see the blacks in those casinos mentioned above, and realize what advertising in the VOICE has done for them. Over 50% of their trade appears to be black. Call the VOICE 648-2615 and chat with their advertising department - You will be surprised.

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