

# ABC's Greenfield captivating

**BRECKENRIDGE**  
— A note to ABC News executives:

The next time you consider leaving a political convention to air 23 minutes of a "Hart to Hart" repeat, turn this time over to Jeff Greenfield.

Greenfield's political and media commentary is much more absorbing than "Hart to Hart" or "Hart to Mondale" or most of the other network programs on the schedule.

Ask any member of the Colorado Broadcasters Association who heard Greenfield speak in Breckenridge on Saturday night during the banquet that closed the organization's annual summer convention.

**GREENFIELD**, A newspaper columnist who also provides regular commentary for ABC on "Nightline," "Good Morning America" and news-oriented projects such as last week's Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, serves up marvelous food for thought for political junkies.

Greenfield probably could talk on the political careers of Martin Van Buren and Millard Fillmore and keep his audience interested.

So, obviously his comments about Mondale, Hart, Jackson, Ferraro and other members of the Democratic cast kept his listeners captivated.

There was a gentle touch of an adversarial situation surrounding Greenfield's appearance in Breckenridge. Greenfield, whose varied background — PBS, CBS — is sprinkled heavily with liberal Democratic philosophy (he once was a speech writer for the late Robert Kennedy) gave an entertaining, non-partisan talk on the media and politics to a group that is heavily Republican and whose members are card-carrying advocates of the Let's Dump Tim Wirth Society, since the Colorado congressman disagrees with most of the philosophy of the Colorado broadcasters.

**AT ONE** point during the dinner meeting, Toney Brooks, outgoing CBA president, noted there were two Democrats in the organization. The remark, made in a facetious tone, got a few chuckles. But Brooks was probably close to the truth in his count. Brooks even offered a "best of luck" comment to Republican Mike Norton, Wirth's congressional opponent in November, who was at the dinner.

But Greenfield, who obviously breathes, sleeps and eats politics, had the broadcasters in the palm of his hand as he recounted the events of San Francisco and provided opinion about the upcoming campaign.

Dick Mallary, Channel 9 news director, summed up Greenfield's appeal while introducing him to the broadcasters. "Greenfield talks to me. . . . He has a common touch that makes all of us interested in what he has to say," Mallary noted.

Part of Greenfield's charm is his self-deprecating style of humor.

"I'm on the air mostly when people are getting up ('Good Morning America') or going to bed ('Nightline').



on. My biggest audience is dental nurses in bondage."

On a serious level, Greenfield didn't defend ABC News' decision to leave the convention Tuesday night for the start of a "Hart to Hart" rerun when the address of the Rev. Jesse Jackson was delayed.

"It was a snafu," Greenfield said. "It was a backstage mistake, a foul-up in communication. I think a lot of people were embarrassed by it."

(ABC, after starting the "Hart to Hart" repeat, left the audience hanging after 23 minutes and returned to the convention floor.)

Earlier in his address, Greenfield indicated that the marriage between politics and television is "obviously here to stay."

"We do this (conventions) for eight days every four years. Of course it's worthwhile to present our political system in action, even if the action is slow at times."

Some of Greenfield's comments about the political scene:

● "I think it's fair and accurate to say that Hart lost the nomination more than Mondale won it. Hart's advisers say it was 'that close,' and it probably was.

**"BUT SOMETHING** happened between New Hampshire and Super Tuesday. His campaign blossomed too soon. Hart really did have something that could have made a difference. But he had trouble moving between 'New Ideas' bumper stickers and 50-page policy statements. And he couldn't get a handle on things.

"Hart's speech to the convention had an eerie tone. He was still seeking delegates. And did you note that strange music? A mixture of 'The Marlboro Man' and 'Chariots of Fire' — everything but break-dancing."

● On Walter Mondale: "He's taking a gamble with Geraldine Ferraro, and he knows it. But it's a good gamble. He's behind, so what does he have to lose? I don't mean this in a derogatory sense, but she may be a better political candidate than he is.

"There's also a lot of caution in the Democratic camp about Mondale and Ferraro when they appear together. At the convention, a memo went out saying how they should stand, etc. They were not to hold hands, etc. There seems to be a lot of caution about all of this. This will be fun to watch."

● On Ronald Reagan: "His presidency reminds me of the scene from 'The Wizard of Oz' when Dorothy criticizes the wizard and he replies, 'I may be a bad wizard, but I'm a good man.' Reagan makes some blunders, but people perceive him as being 'a good man.'

**"HE DOES** have the image as a rich man's president, and that hurts him. So this fall, you'll see more of a common man image. He may bowl a lot of lines and even go to stock-car races."

● On Jesse Jackson: "His impact at the convention will be felt for years. Just think of the countless black youngsters who, for the first time, saw a black man elevated to the same level as white America. Jackson will have a major influence on their lives. 'If Jesse can do it, I can do it.'

"Research and ratings show that Jackson's speech actually gained viewers, rather than losing them. In politics and on television, that's remarkable.

ting up ('Good Morning America') or going to bed ('Nightline').

**"I'M EITHER** seen before or after 'Sermonette.' Most of my viewers don't have any clothes

ing them. In politics and on television, that's remarkable.

**"Jackson's** appearance and input at the convention was of great historical importance."

**... IN PRIME TIME**