

TALK, from 1A

for the day. Just a little insight from the White House. Right now, let's check out some traffic and weather."

Dissent from Baltimore

Zoh Hieronimus of WCBM, the only Baltimore talk show host attending, read from the "Federalist Papers" and told her listeners she believes health care reform "is just more fascism."

Pat McMahon of KTAR in Phoenix said most of his callers thought the president's plan sounded terrific — but also too good to be true. "It's

White House plugs into talk radio to turn up volume on health care

By Susan Baer
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — It may be remembered as the day Tommy and the Bull of WNOR met Al Gore, the day Barbara Carlson of KSTP asked White House spokesman Mark Gearan if he'd like to see her tattoo, the soggy day in September when radio talk show hosts invaded the White House lawn and a new chapter in Bill Clinton's talk show democracy was born.

Looking like some 21st-century phone-in government (the result of a Rush-Ross ticket?), the White House turned over its front yard yesterday to nearly 60 talkmeisters

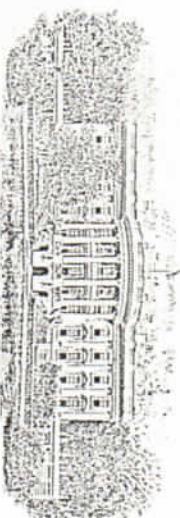
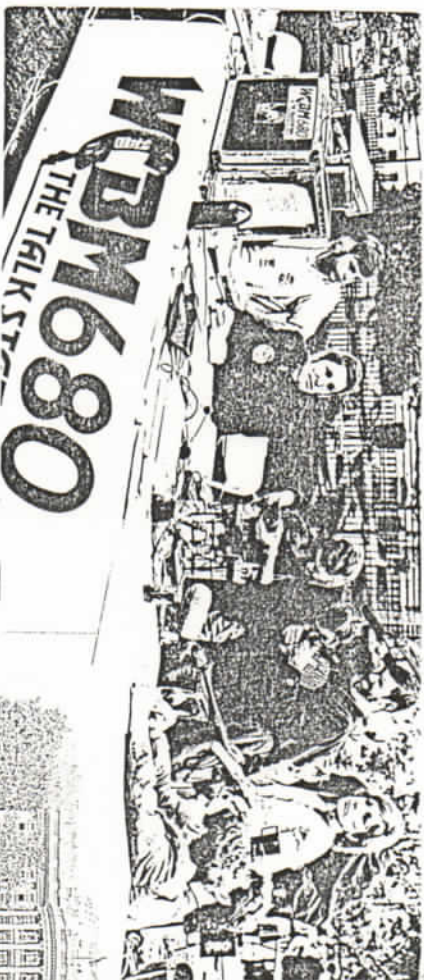
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from around the country who proudly broadcast from rickety wooden tables and folding chairs.

We're live at the White House lawn! Let's go quickly to your calls.

At these talkmeisters' beck and call was a steady stream of officials such as Vice President Al Gore,



Chief of Staff Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty and political strategist James Carville, who sound-bit their way around the country — from WFIG in Atlantic City, N.J., to KPOW in Powell, Wyo. — spinning the tale of health care reform from dawn to dark.

"It looks like a flea market," said White House aide Skip Rutherford, looking over the landscape of wires, mikes, headphones and wisecracking guys in baseball caps and loud shirts.

The White House had set up 200 phone lines, paid for by the radio stations, to take its case to the

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Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala goes on air with Ray Dunaway of WTIC in Hartford, Conn., as station and health department officials look on.

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