



agreement (The Community Title Proposal) to return 10 percent of all revenues before taxes to a community controlled Office of Access Support. These funds would be used for the three required access channels as well as for a scheduled and programmed public access channel, if there is one, and for non-profit community-leased channels. Support would include a salary for a co-ordinator and equipment for a community TV workshop on the model of the ATV project in Reading, Pennsylvania; an agreement to return 1 percent of all revenues before taxes to a Public Information Fund for promotion and publicity of programming on access channels; an agreement to distribute a manual, e.g., "How to Use This Media," to all subscribers, which manual includes (a) an explanation of the various access channels, (b) instructions about how to gain access or time on the cable, (c) instructions about how to use half-inch VTR equipment, (d) information about services and opportunities provided by the local Office of Access Support, (e) a bibliography of books on the potential of cable and the problems of public policy related to this potential; an agreement to provide channel space for the three FCC required access channels in all cable systems owned and not just in the 100 largest markets. In every location where cable franchises exist or are being bargained for, these rights should be demanded. Cox-American will be second in size only to Teleprompter. Will they try harder?

Probably not. In an article written for the *Bay Guardian* by Thomas Brom and researched by Elliot Evers entitled "How Bay Area Cities Sold Out the Public's Airwaves," Brom says,

The major TV and radio stations in the Bay Area are already controlled by outside media conglomerates: no minority ownership at all. But with cable it gets worse. The selling out of cable franchises in

fact has brought many more conglomerates to the Bay Area than there were before.

The *Chronicle* won out against four competitors and got a cable franchise in San Francisco from the San Francisco Supervisors, but in the six years since it fought the 21 year bargain for \$2,500, Western TV Cable has never developed a cable system. San Francisco's other cable franchise went to Viacom International, a spin-off of the CBS empire, for a token payment of 5 percent of the gross receipts.

The best solution for cable TV, as for other utilities, lies in city ownership. This is the route taken by San Bruno which used profits from its water system to finance initial cable construction. Public ownership, of course, raises the danger of political censorship of free speech and it will be important when cities own systems that there are solid statutory provisions for free community access to several of the system's channels.

In San Francisco Roberto Esteves of the Public Library's Bay Area Reference Center is developing Video Task Force to gather the opinions of various groups and individuals and using these various opinions to try to influence City Hall to acknowledge its responsibility to the community need for open channels. Esteves has set up a cable workshop for this purpose, with the first program bringing together a representative of City Hall and a former cable company management executive who is now a cable consultant in a symposium, for all practitioners of video whatever their orientation. Esteves also hopes to convince the San Francisco Public Library that it should, as the center for public information, begin to build a library of tapes and a public production center with an orientation toward educational uses of video. In the librarians' journal published by the Bay Area Reference Center titled *Synergy*, Esteves has said,

Where does the library come into cable focus? Both as an educational institution and a clearinghouse of community information (it is, isn't it?), the library is in an excellent position to opt for free time on either the education or community access channel. Natroba County Library in Casper, Wyoming, has already demonstrated the success of video reference service and other libraries are beginning to experiment with inventive video programming to make cable TV the "Branch" of the future. What better way to have outreach programs than to reach into people's homes? The real difficulty is getting your city to award a franchise stipulating the free access channels. The library as a community information center must realize the tremendous importance of acting for the community now while cable casting is still in its infancy.

Allan Frederiksen of Santa Cruz has tried to impress his community and other communities in California with the same ideas. He is a veritable David against Goliath but it seems that a few small stones are not going to open up any public access in Santa Cruz or anywhere else that has already made a franchise agreement which excludes public access. In a letter to the Cable Goliath, Allan has said,