

# Air time up for grabs

## Eugene community makes own TV shows

By Julie Kurilo  
Of the Emerald

In between the Humphrey Bogart and Ginger Rogers movies shown on Eugene's cable channel 11, cable subscribers can see a snowballing idea in motion called public access.

Simply put, public access television offers free air time to the community. Teleprompter — the local cable franchise — provides air time without charge to individuals, groups, or institutions of the community who are interested in producing a local program.

A portable equipment package is available to check out without charge from Teleprompter, including color camera, video tape recorder and lights. The producers have to provide filming tapes and the taping location.

Public access in Eugene shares cable channel 11 with KOZY, a commercial station that shows mostly old films. Teleprompter provides the public channel under the franchise agreement between the city of Eugene and Teleprompter.

Although one needs basic production skills to produce a show for the channel, community members wishing to use public access don't have to be experts.

"The concept of public access is that it's not professional — it works like a community soapbox," says Joe Weiner, who started "Winds of Change," a 2-year-old weekly public access program.

Weiner represents public access production groups on a 21-member cable advisory panel named by the Eugene Metropolitan Cable Television/Translator Commission to help create a nonprofit center for public access programs.

"On public access, you can advocate a point, you can be extreme, liberal or conservative, as long as you are not promoting a product or being obscene," Weiner says.

Brian Sullivan, Teleprompter's local general manager, says there are minimal requirements for a program to be aired on the community channel. Min-

imal technical quality, no obscene material, and a set of regulations approved by the cable commission are the guidelines. Parties interested in using the channel would need to contact Paul Halford, the coordinator of public access with Teleprompter.

Plans are underway for a community television class this spring through Lane Community College's Adult Education Program. Diana Abernathy, who also is on the public access advisory panel and involved with the production of "Winds of Change," will instruct community members in the basic concepts and production skills of shooting cameras and editing video tape.

Teleprompter's recent subscription rate increase has raised the hackles of some cable access activists who say the service received doesn't merit the increase.

Teleprompter, which recently was granted a \$1 monthly rate increase in their basic subscription rate (to \$7.95 a month), currently is undergoing a

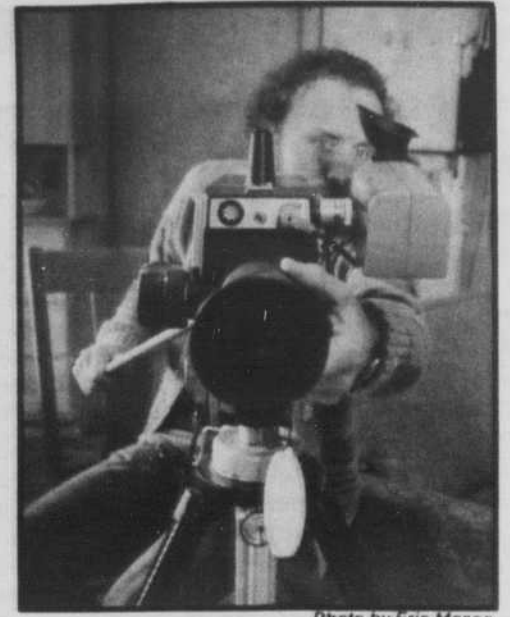


Photo by Eric Mason

Cameraman John Kielas takes aim.

three-year review of its franchise with local governments. To meet community public access demands, Teleprompter has committed \$140,000 for the next three years for equipment purchases, has agreed to provide to public access users a staff member trained in video technology and has leased the former Shelton-Turnbull print shop at 352 W. 12th Ave. as a production studio for community programs, Sullivan says.

But public access supporters say Eugene and Springfield are getting only a fragment of what they should be getting for public access.

There are only four shows currently being produced on available air time through public access, and supporters blame lack of equipment, insufficient funds and lack of available training for the low number of programs. Abernathy says that despite the small amount of public access use, the demand does exist in the community. She cites the 100-person turnout for a community television workshop held in December as proof.

"But there's so much to overcome in producing a program," she says. The equipment provided is poor and lacking editing facilities, she explains.

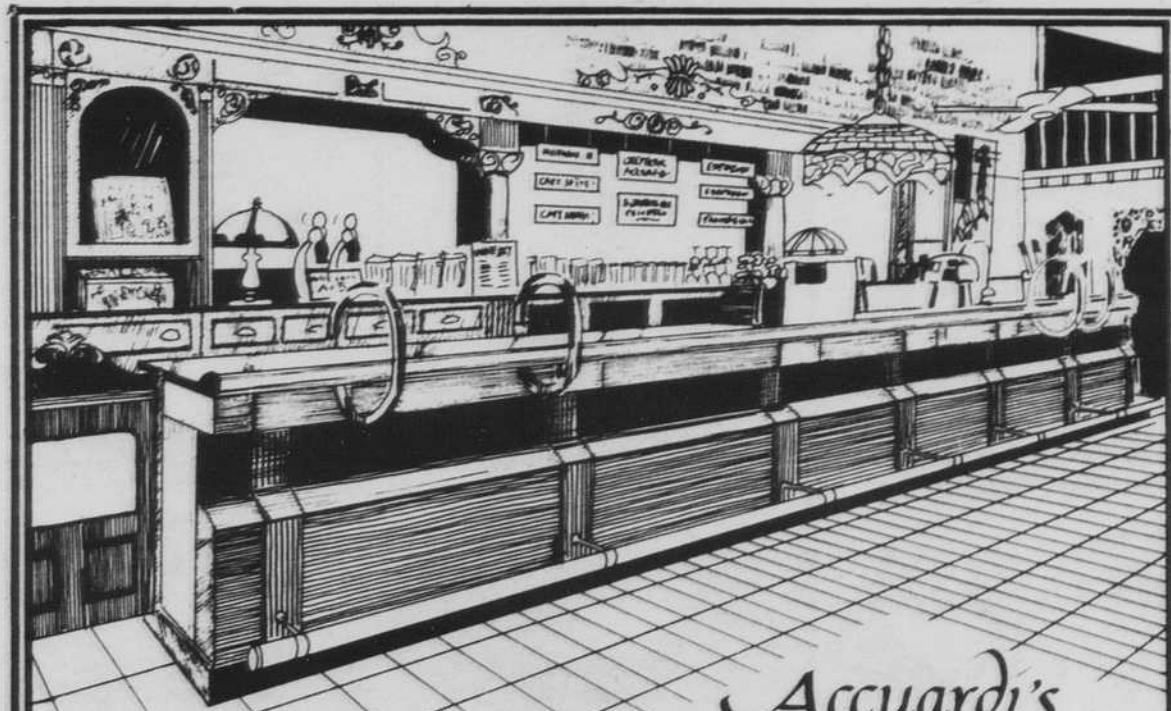
With the Teleprompter amendment to the franchise, Abernathy says "we got less for three years than we asked for to cover one year's budget."

The Eugene City Council will be reviewing and taking public comment on the franchise amendment tonight at 7:30. Of the three jurisdictions that need to approve the amendment, Springfield has approved, with decision set for Eugene tonight and for Lane County Wednesday night.



Photo by Eric Mason

Cameraman John Kielas films Joe Welnes interviewing gubernatorial candidate Jerry Rust.



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