

# Cable Plan Unveiled

## *Will Santa Cruz accept 60 channels?*

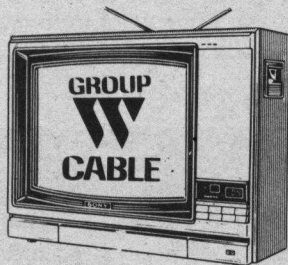
GROUP W CABLE TV this week offered Santa Cruz a 60-channel system including three community programmed stations in its bid for the area's contract which expires in 1984. Group W currently provides 13 channels.

As proposed the new service would cost \$9.35 per month for 27 channels and \$12.95 for 60 channels. Service to outlying areas such as Bonny Doon would cost an additional \$4 per month. Other capabilities including home banking and library access could total \$76.

Group W plans to provide an estimated \$170,000 in equipment, two full-time staff and an annual grant of \$250,000 to help finance "community access" programming. General manager Stuart Butler promised to take a "hands-off" approach to local programming on three channels. The company also proposes a channel to air its own productions of local events.

The 27 channel service includes 20 broadcasting stations, the three com-

munity access channels and Group W's programming station.



The 60 channel service provides additional cable programming including Satellite News, CBN Cable Network, MTV: Music Television, Nickelodeon, Nashville Network, ESPN, Cable Health Network, and a weather channel. This service also has channel capacity for paid programming: Showtime, HBO, Cinemax, Bravo! and others. No X-rated programming would be available because it's against Group W policy, according to Butler.

Reaction to Group W's proposal was lukewarm. Tom Karwin, the city and county's media consultant, called it "extremely moderate." He had earlier prepared a study that recommended a 108 channel system with a capacity for increasing community programming at a low subscription rate.

"Group W has to provide at least 20 more stations (in addition to the present 13) just to meet FCC regulations," Karwin said.

In return for improved cable service, the FCC granted Group W control of its San Jose broadcasting station despite its purchase of the cable system in nearby Santa Cruz, a situation that could be considered monopolistic. The city and county have not solicited other bids for a cable system and have been waiting for Group W to submit its proposal for upgraded service. Butler hopes to begin negotiations April 26 when the community's consultant is expected to report back to Group W. If the company's proposals are implemented, the new service would begin operations within 9-24 months, according to Butler. •

### **5-Day Forecast**

After a brief respite Friday, rains will move into the area this weekend. Expect scattered showers and cooler temperatures. Predicted highs in the 50s, lows in the 40s at night. •

*2/24/83 And Times*