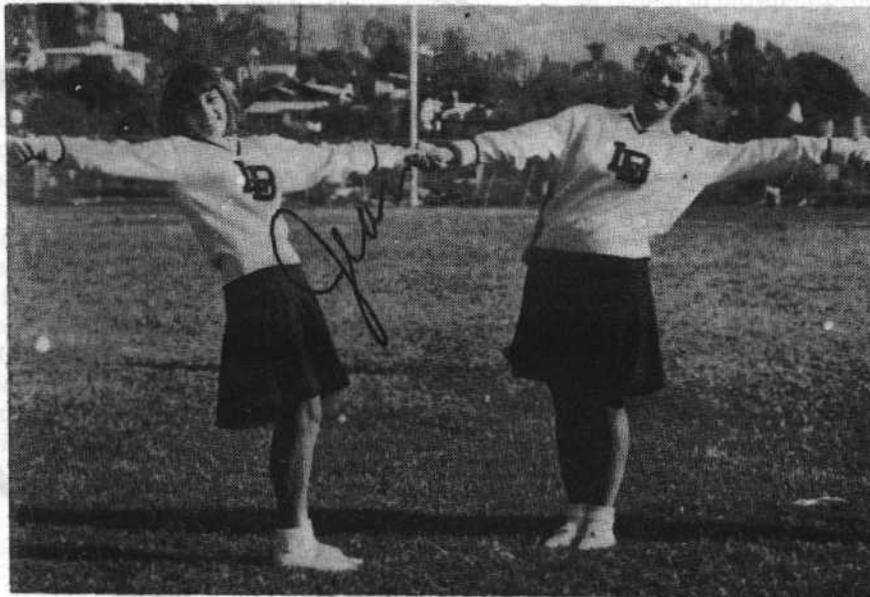


high school



Danne Borgogno, Hillsdale High School television student graduated into teaching assistantship: *Don't stick that mike at me.*

Sukey Ginsberg, TV production teacher and Video Free American: *Well, was it the TV class that turned you on at first?*

Danne: *No, it was the equipment. I wanted to get into film. When I was a junior I talked to a guy who said I might like the TV class because I could play with cameras and maybe get some techniques down. My counselor said that I shouldn't take it because only one girl had taken it and she'd dropped out because she couldn't handle all the males in the class. He told me to take typing instead.*

But I got into the class anyway, and then found out that almost everyone else was taking it just to get credits. But I didn't care. We split up into crews and worked on assignments. We worked on a VW commercial, hauling all that Ampex 1" equipment outside, and we did a kiddies' show and a junior CBS newscast. We made up our own stories and did semi-scripted shows; it was like a drama class almost. None of the tapes we made were shown anywhere.

We were given mimeographed sheets at the beginning of each assignment and we had a deadline to make or we'd flunk the class and lose our credits; but it was fun being in that class. I used to cut school and come back for that class. It was mostly the equipment I liked. I guess it was an ego trip as much as anything else. You know, "I'm in charge of this. I'm running this piece of equipment." More of an ego trip than a fantasy trip.

Sukey: *Is it still?*

Danne: *Partly, but the Ampex equipment was more complicated to run than the Sony stuff, so it's easier to feel big while you're doing it. Also after a year and a half of working with the equipment, the novelty has worn off. I'm having fun; it's still an ego trip, but now there's a lot of thinking to be done about what I'm going to do with it.*

If you hadn't come I'd still be back there with dreams of CBS floating around in my head. I was going to be the only girl CBS cameraman. The TV teacher even got me the NABET code book. I was going to have a really fine job on one of the crews for a weekly serial or maybe the news so I could travel around and be rich. I thought of working for a TV station as a 9 to 5 job with my other trips on the side; I never thought of incorporating them. It's different now, a lot different, because I think I can integrate my life with video, by living with it and exploring myself and the people and things around me.

When I took a portapak home overnight once, I taped my room, panning all the objects in it about six times to get into each thing and see how I related to it. I'd like to do that with people instead of just objects.

If I can save enough money from being a T.A. at Hillsdale next year, three of us want to put in about \$1500 apiece and buy first a portapak and then whatever good equipment is on the market at the time.

You and your attitudes changed me a lot.

High school students, as a group, have perhaps the greatest access to video equipment of anyone today.

TAPES TO EXCHANGE FROM THE SCRIPPS HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO-WORKSHOP

"Juvenile Justice" — a probe into the relationship between juveniles and the law: juvenile hall, the police, parents, the high school, 30 min.

"Ilios" — View of a school-within-a-school program, 15 minutes

"Pacific" — "the most radical high school in America", a personal view, 15 min.

"The San Francisco Peace March" — April 24, 1971, 30 minutes

CONTACT: Media Access, 1115 Merrill Street, Menlo Park, Ca. 94025.

CORPS TV

Twelve months ago we began a "Training Program" for poor teenagers (mostly high school dropouts) in a rural part of New Jersey under the sponsorship of the local Community Action Program (O.E.O. funded anti-poverty organization).

We started out with what seemed to be all the right ingredients — Department of Labor approved the purchase of \$3,000 worth of video hardware, a local church donated space, local CATV system seemed cooperative and we could pay Neighborhood Youth Corps enrollees \$1.60 per hour to work in the project. We stated some lofty objectives: developing marketable skills for poor kids in the growing field of CATV and video cassettes, giving the poor access to the information system in their community, using VTR for community organization, public relations and individual feedback.

Since starting, we have made some changes and many mistakes.

Hardware — One Sony portapak, one AV 5000 and one monitor was not enough equipment for six to ten kids at any one time. There was too much dead time. After four months of much use and abuse, the equipment was non-functioning about 25% of the time. To get the equipment repaired we had to travel 50 miles, wait about five days and usually had to bring the equipment back a second time to have it working correctly. Total cost for repairs — \$500.

Software — We began "producing" tapes on organizations and social services for CATV origination. Since the homes of the kids did not have cable, the wider community reacted well, but

not the kids. As we became less protective with the equipment and allowed the kids more freedom, many of the kids reacted well. They would take the portapak and RF unit for the weekend and involve family and neighbors in shooting and playback.

CATV — We originated fifteen hours of tape during the first six months. This included a debate between mayoral candidates, a public hearing of main issues of the campaign, inventory of social services and some sports events. Then some media barons bought out and merged the local CATV systems and are now cablecasting. The new owners are concerned with professionalism — clean edits, title boards, lighting, etc.

Methods — Our main mistake was "overkill". We tried to train production crews of 6-8 kids to work 30 hours a week. We had kids specializing in graphics, sound, camera and editing. It became too much like work and the kids became sick of role playing.

We are now in the process of buying more equipment and revising the program. We are going to expose all the Youth Corps kids, not just those in the video project, to the equipment. The VTR will be available to anyone individually and in groups to shoot, erase and edit if and when they want.

Most of the success of the project has involved the community at large. Town fathers, industry and local organizations have been investing in information by purchasing tape and cataloguing it. People are becoming aware of the possibilities of portable video and cable access.

Ken Ryan

The Scripps High School Video Workshop

At 7 a.m. we rise to phone calls from kids — they want a portapak, or the one they have doesn't work, or the police department won't let them tape the juvenile holding cells. After school, kids shuffle into the workshop because their teacher heard about the possibility of their using our equipment. We spend about twenty minutes showing them how to use the camera and recorder — and send them off to the Safeway or McDonald's around the corner. They come back excited and chattering. After all, they just made a twenty-minute film of some old codger at the Salvation Army who didn't like the length of their hair. They rewind the tape, turn on the monitor and watch their creation play back over the TV screen from which Walter Cronkite, Laugh-In and Bronson usually vibrate. Some of the kids get so excited they show up the next week with five friends and a six-page script; some of them never come back again; some of them work for six months putting together a powerful document on juvenile justice.

This tape opens with an outside shot of juvenile hall and follows a fifteen-year-old, busted for the third time, as he goes through the booking process, gets weighed, receives hall clothes and bedding, and is locked into a bare cell for twenty-four hours. Episodes are interspersed with police officers talking about their manner of

dealing with juvenile offenders. A public school dean describes how he busts kids in the classroom and a thirteen-year-old, arrested twelve times, encounters her psychiatrist father on their front lawn.

Most of the shooting was done in the last three weeks and editing took a day and a half, round the clock. It was produced, directed, shot and edited by eight high school students from the S.F. Mid-Peninsula. They are now beginning to take the tape around to high schools, showing it to kids in classes or after school, and talking about how they made it.

Energy levels shifted up and down and sometimes they went a month without shooting any tape. During the editing period, they hassled over their personal definitions of content, audience expectations, and editing bias. And they ended up producing a tape which suffers in spots from video rollover, poor lighting, and the audio idiosyncracies of the Sony 3650, but which is of extremely high value in terms of content and credibility. About half of the kids in the project are going further with tape: one girl is working with her Women's group; another is going to play a major role in producing a tape on high school kids and drugs.

Shelley Surpin and Pat Crowley