

CLASSIC COMPUTERS

Working & Playing With Yesterday's Systems

TI-99ers In The '90s

Classic Computer Column
by Barry A. Traver

Work In Progress: A "Cyc" From Mike?

"Cyc" is short for "(en)Cyclopedia," the Mike is Mike Wright, and the project is (in my opinion) a very exciting one: nothing less than a full encyclopedia of all types of information relating to the TI-99/4A!

We are talking about more than a "dream" here. As I am writing this column, I have with me (in WordPerfect format) a preliminary version of "Mike's Cyc," and I have to admit that I am very impressed with what he has accomplished. It should be of interest to anyone who wants to know more about the present status or (especially) the past history of the TI-99/4A.

Like any encyclopedia, this "Cyc" will be receiving continual revision (and expansion, for Mike expects that the work may become five times as large as what I have on my hard drive on my PC at the moment), so in a sense it will always be a "work in progress." Such a work or project, of course, can never be fully "complete" (and there will be always people who will complain that such-and-such an item of information was not included), but I have tried to encourage Mike not to let this deter him from making the Cyc (created as a result of his own personal interest) accessible to others.

What's The Cyc Like?

The Cyc itself is alphabetical in format, with cross references where appropriate. To show you what the Cyc is like, here is a short sample taken from the beginning of the section for the letter W:

- Wafertape Drive for Hexbus. See HX-2000, Wafertape Drive for Hexbus.
- Wagon Wheel. 1222. See Appendix, 99/4 IUG Programs.
- WaldoBall. See Not Polyoptics.
- Walk in the Woods. 1223. See Appendix, 99/4 IUG Programs.
- Wall Street. See Futura Software.
- Wall Street Challenge. See Image Computer Products.
- Walt Disney
- Agreements signed with
- HCN 83:Final:1
- Peter Pan.
- HCN 83:Final:1
- Pinocchio.
- HCN 83:Final:1
- Professor Ludwig von Drake
- HCN 83:Final:1
- Winnie-the-Pooh.
- HCN 83:Final:1
- Walter Wilson

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TRS-80 Column

Classic Computer Column
by Michael W. Ecker, Ph.D.

"Neither a borrower, nor a lender, be."

In these days it is hard to live with this advice. So, given the number of borrowers in the market, many individuals and vendors have written loan amortization programs in the past decade. Their purpose is to calculate your constant monthly payment, given the amount of loan (principal), number of years (term) and nominal annual interest rate.

It was with anticipation that I looked at the offering of good reader William Gibbs, who has written in twice before to this column over the past year. At my invitation, he sent me a review copy of his loan program. It is called, appropriately enough, Loan, and put out by his company, Synergy Systems (2518 Camahan Street, Eldorado, IL 62930). Bill evidently puts out other products as well. Given his programming skills, I would have loved to see them.

I received a single self-booting TRS-80 disk and two to three pages of information. The pages and disk suffer just a tad by a shortage of information and spelling errors that mar the effect. The disk is supposed to boot on a Model 3 or 4, but I got an error message when I tried it on my Model 4. So, I confined my testing to the Model 3. Forget any studying the listings of this BASIC program, however. Gibbs has not only made the files invisible, but has protected against listing, as well as disabled the Break key. Also, since I received no information about Loan's price, I will have to comment without reference to value. However, most other programs are \$2 each; a few are \$10.

Loan will allow four choices from its menu, including loan amortization, interest on savings, variable deposits or investments, and return on investment. Based on your input of the time upon booting, you will see either the time of day or the elapsed time since booting in the upper right corner of the screen. There is also supposed to be a screen-saver built in.

In testing loan amortization, I used my own mortgage and found Loan to be accurate. However, I had to guess what to use for term (years, not months) and interest rate (10.25 and not .1025). This is a deficiency even more serious than the glaring spelling errors ("do" for "due" and "there" for "their" on the sheets, and "intrest" on screen repeatedly). If you don't mind this, you can use the program output to screen or printer. I found these options okay, but the disabling of the Break key is infuriating when you display details of payments to screen and have to wait if you change your mind.

This is a straightforward little program. I saw no other options, such as calculating other

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T/S News

Classic Computer Column
by Bill Ferree

Here we are again to bring you news of the latest developments in the world of T/S computers. We hope you are finding plenty to do with your computer, and in this column we hope to share ideas with you to further enhance your enjoyment of the computer.

Will Casey Kasem Call?

To start out this month, we would like to tell you about a recent project we were contacted to do for a local radio station. The top-rated station in our area was getting ready to play a countdown of the top songs of 1991. While most stations would play songs determined by a national survey, this station wanted to do a local countdown.

The problem was they had over 175 songs to choose from, and wanted someone to rank the songs for them. Enter our trusty T/S2068.

The station provided us with a stack of weekly countdowns they accumulated throughout 1991. We proceeded to take the top 25 songs from each week's list. We gave the #1 song 25 points, the #2 song 24 points, and so on until the #25 song got one point.

As we determined the number of points to give each song, we entered it into a T/S spreadsheet (OmniCalc II). It was easy enough to have the computer total the points and give us a score for each song.

We then transferred the title of each song with its score into the Pro/File database program. The title of the song was entered on Line 1, and the corresponding score was entered on Line 2.

Finally we had Pro/File sort the file by Line 2 and print the list out from lowest scoring song to the top song of 1991.

The station was quite impressed with the result and has already contracted to do it again for 1992.

Let us know if you have found ways to utilize the computing potential of your T/S computer. I love to amaze people with what can be done with a \$200 computer!

P.D. Software Update

We are currently still working on the initial tape/disk of public domain software. We will have details on contents and how to acquire it in the April issue.

New T/S1000 Newsletter

We recently received a copy of a new newsletter for T/S1000 and ZX-81 users called "ZX-91." It is published by Andre Baune completely on a T/S1000 with the Word Sinc II word processor and a T/S2040 printer.

The first issue is six pages long, and contains program listings, graphics, a dealer

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SANYO 55X News

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listings are listed from A to I as follows:

- A) DISKMEN2 (Second menu)
- B) POKER
- C) SKETCHV2
- D) RUNROUND
- E) TYPING (tutorial)
- F) BUG
- G) BBOARD (math tutor)
- H) BASIC
- I) MS-DOS (Quit Sanyo BASIC to the DOS prompt)

To run the DISKMEN2 program I will include a batch file so you can run Sanyo BASIC and the DISKMEN2.BAS program from the A:\ prompt on your computer. All you do is type: MENU then press the RETURN key. The batch file will run Sanyo BASIC and then run the menu program. I wrote the batch file to simplify running these BASIC programs. You may see the same program name on another one of the menus (not included on the disk). If you have your own Sanyo BASIC program you would like to see on a menu, you can substitute its name in one of the menu's lists by deleting the program name you want to change.

COMMODORE Corps

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last word on the line of your monitor and moves it at the next line. This prevents splitting words in two. Also, almost everybody wants a word processor that contains a spell checker to locate typos, if nothing else.

Additional desirable word processing features may include the ability to right justify. The computer automatically balances out the number of spaces and characters on each line. The last letter of every line on every page lines up vertically on the right margin. This gives your document a professional look.

Another advanced word processing feature allows you to create headers and footers. These are words and phrases that appear at specified locations on every page you specify. For example, you might have a header in the right hand column that says EDWARDS/ WORD MAGIC/PAGE #. You might also want a word processor that will let you type footnotes and will automatically insert it onto the same page as the reference. Footnoting is a wonderful feature for students!

You may need the ability to mail merge. Also, some of you would need a word processor that contains a thesaurus. You can also buy add-on enhancements to word processors such as a thesaurus or even a style or grammar checker. There are some grammar checkers to help you simplify your language.

For word processing with Commodore 8-bit computers you will need a C64/128 computer, a monitor (TV screen), storage (preferably a large disk drive), a printer and word processing software. Next month's column will deal only with software.

To all readers...if you have ideas on how word processing has changed your life or other tips to share, send me a letter describing them. Write to Gary Edwards, care of *Computer Monthly*, P.O. Box 55886, Birmingham, AL 35255. You can also contact me through CompuServ mail, ID# 73520, 2674. See you next month!

ADAM News

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off, turn it back on, load the text into SmartWRITER, and then move the desired text. Now save the revised text, load Showoff II and print the text as you normally would.

If you would like to communicate with me, my address is 411-B North Sea Lane, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548. I appreciate comments from my readers. If you would like a reply, please enclose a legal-sized SASE.

TI-99ers In The '90s

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- Software packages available. HCN 81:3:3
- Wampus. 1052. See Appendix, 99/4 IUG Programs.
- Wampus #2. 1049. See Appendix, 99/4 IUG Programs.
- Warfish. 1201. See Appendix, 99/4 IUG Programs.
- War Games
- Review of movie and book 99er 2:9:53
- Warl. See Prometheus Software.
- War of the Worms. See Prometheus Software.
- Warpout. 1368. See Appendix, 99/4 IUG Programs.
- Washington DC Area 99/4 Users-Group
- Began in 1980. E99 1:1:33
- Watt, Daniel H.

Logo: a computer language as a learning environment. 99er 1:1:58
 (As you can see, the Cyc makes use of abbreviations to standardize the format and save space: 99er for 99er Magazine, E99 for Enthusiast 99, HCN for Home Computer Newsletter, IUG for International Users Group, etc.)

I've shown you examples of some shorter entries. Here is an (abridged) example of a longer entry (in case you wanted to know more about Wall Street Challenge):

Image Computer Products.
 1313 West Randolph, Chicago, IL 60607.

Mind Masters. Classic strategy game where the computer designs problems and results of each guess. Multiple players may compete against the computer and each player may select level of difficulty to match his skill. Ability and patience required. Also contains formula for solving logic problems — create an answer and watch the computer use deductive logic to discover secret code. For ages 10 and up.

Strategy Pack I. Two strategy games including Roman Checkers and Frame Up. Roman Checkers is based on the traditional game. Frame Up is a game of wit and strategy where a player tries to outwit an opponent or the computer. For ages 10 and up.

Wall Street Challenge. Computer simulation of stock exchange. A challenging game that allows investments in both speculative stock and blue chip stock, charts and the Dow Jones show the trends. For ages 13 and up.

Wildcatting. Simulates hidden oil deposits which you will try to find. Select a location on a map using geological survey data giving probability of striking oil below that spot. An estimate of cost per meter to drill is also given. Different oil deposits created in each game. For ages 10 and up. Review: 99er 1:1:36.

Caution: some of the companies included in the Cyc may be no longer in business (I suspect that may be true of Image Computer Products), but one hope that I have personally is that the release of Mike's Cyc may lead to some answers to the "Whatever happened to...?" questions that we need to ask if we are to rescue important parts of our history before such is irretrievably lost.

Let me expand on that. As Tiers, we may be encouraged by the many new examples of software and hardware being released for the TI-99/4A in the '90s, but we should not allow the fine products that were released in the '80s to disappear. True, some companies have "moved on" to other things, but even here it is often possible to persuade them to re-release their earlier products (at least in the case of software) as public domain or shareware. (The Wycove Forth version of Space Station Pheta is one example of a fine program in this category.)

Mike's Cyc is an excellent resource especially to remind us of our past history (and even of "what might have been," in the case of the Walt Disney programs, for instance, which were apparently developed but never officially released).

Incidentally, as you may have observed, the Cyc also includes as appendices additional reference sections that are "mini-cycs" themselves. These include a large annotated book list (expanded from the list I originally put together for the Genial TRAVELER), a copy of the official 1983 TI product/price list, and sections relating to various magazines that have contained material relating to the TI-99/4A (e.g., the appendix relating to 99er Magazine itself is 44 pages long!)

Well, that's it for this month. Until next time, keep on compuTn'!