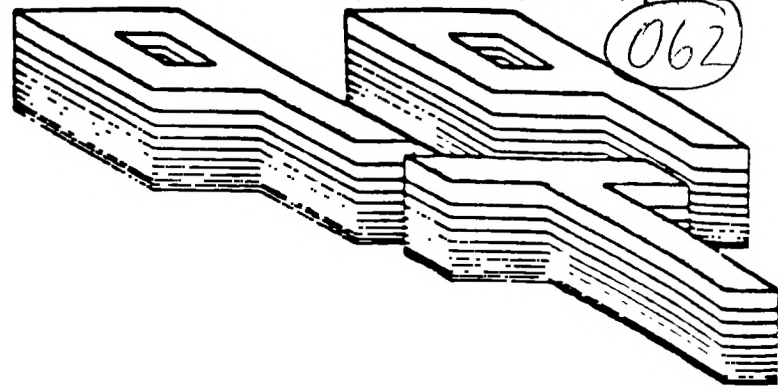


NEWSLETTER 9T9

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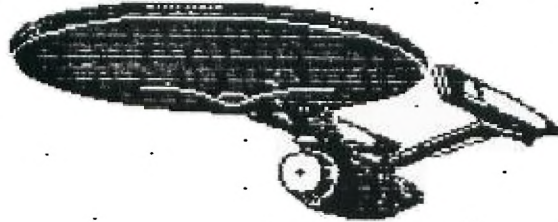


Texas Instruments
USERS GROUP
TORONTO

FOR THE TI-99/4A COMPUTER

JANUARY 1987 ISSUE

"WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE"



FROM:

NEWSLETTER 9T9
15 KERSDALE AVE.
TORONTO, ONT.
M6H-1C9
CANADA

*changed
March 2/87
PH*



TO:

Edmonton UG
Box 11983
Edmonton, AL T5J 3L1

PO

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FULL MEMBERSHIP \$30.00 / year
NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION \$20.00 / year

All memberships are household memberships. A newsletter subscription is only for those who do not wish to attend meetings, but wish to receive our newsletter and have access to our library. You are welcome to visit one of our general meetings before joining the group. If you wish more information contact our president in writing at the club address on the front cover or call and leave a message with his answering machine.

NEXT MEETING

The meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month. The next will be held at the York Woods Public Library in Downsview, starting at 7:30 pm. The library is at 1785 Finch Ave W just west of Keele St. The entrance to the library is on Finch Avenue. See meeting schedule, elsewhere in this issue.

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Any business wishing to reach our membership may advertise in our newsletter. The rates are as follows. (width by height):

FULL PAGE	(9" x 6")	\$40.00
HALF PAGE	(4 1/2" x 6")	\$20.00
QUARTER PAGE	(4 1/2" x 3")	\$10.00

Please have your ads camera ready and paid for in advance. For more information contact the editor.

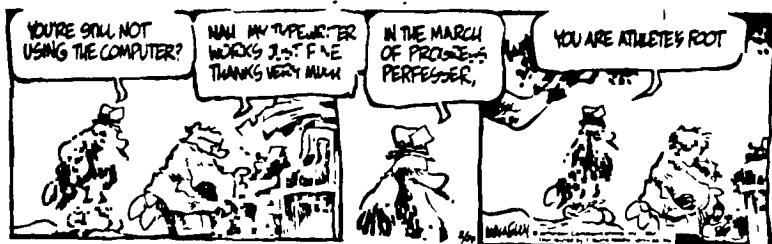
Don't forget, that any member wishing to place ads, may do so free of charge as long as they are not involved in a commercial enterprise.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Members are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter in the form of articles, mini programs, helpful tips, jokes, cartoons and questions. Any article may be submitted in any form by mail or modem. We welcome the reprinting of any article appearing in this newsletter providing credit is given to the author and 9T9. If more information is required, call the editor. The names 9T9 Nine-T-Nine, Newsletter 9T9, 9T9 Users Group, and Nine-T-Nine Users Group are Copyright, (c), 1987 by the 9T9 Users Group of Toronto, Canada, all rights reserved.

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The following is a paid advertisement:

THIS ISSUE OF NEWSLETTER 9T9
PUBLISHED BY:
DOUBLE Q COPY CENTRE
2949 BATHURST STREET
TORONTO - ONTARIO
787-5291

Regarding the Geneva:

20)Category: GENERAL_INFORMATION
Subject: GENEVE
From: TI972@
Posted: 25 NOV 1986 6:03 pm

<N>ext.<PD>st, or Return for more:

The Geneva is in full production (Finally) the Gate Array chips were received from Mitsubishi, and they will be shipping out units in a week or so to dealers. The software it comes with is nearly bug free, and the machine REALLY exceeds all expectations! Not only is it 2-3 times faster than an IBM PC XT (even with faster CPU), it has better graphics than a Commodore Amiga and more software compatible with it than an Atari ST. It will retail for around \$400, and will include BASIC, TI-Writer, Multiplan, a small drawing program, and some other things. It is truly a bargain at the price, and THE BEST personal computer on the market! D.C. users can buy them direct at Community Computers in Dec from Lou himself, who will be demoing the machine -- Chris B, Asgard Software

***** SYSTEM FOR SALE: *****

-----HARDWARE:

TI-99/4A (EXTRA KEYBOARD)
SPEECH SYNTHESIZER
RS 232/2 INTERFACE/STAND-ALONE
TI EXPANSION SYSTEM WITH CONTROLLER CARD;
TI DISK CONTROLLER WITH 55/50 DISK DRIVE
DATA SET (INCLUDES FILE AND 2 CARTRIDGES)
BELL 212, 1200 BPS MODEM, (NOT INCLUDED)

CARTRIDGE SOFTWARE:

EXTENDED BASIC
TELETYPE EMULATOR II
K2
ZAP LEARNING FUN
MATH MANAGER
DISK MANAGER
NUMBER MAGIC
SPEECH EDITOR

DISK & TAPE:

TEACH YO : FILE EXTENDED BASIC
CURRENT
STRANGE ODYSSEY
DRAW POKER
PFDGE BIDDING I
MATH SKILLS TRAINING
LEADS/PURCHASE LOCATIONS
CROSSWORD
BEST OF 99-ER/MISC PROGRAMS;

MISC:

BOOKS
MAGAZINES
DISKETTES
PRINTER STAND

SYSTEM IS SOLD ALL TOGETHER...NO PARTING FOR THE BEST-OFFER OVER \$900

CONTACT: LOUIS 427-7654(PICKERING)

***** SYSTEM FOR SALE: *****

Hardware:

TI-99/4A Console
TI Expansion System (with Quiet Biscuit Fan)
TI Console and 2 DS/SD Half-Height Drives
RS 232C Interface
32k Memory Expansion Card
300 BPS, Manual

Carte: Software:

TI Writer Module

ASKING PRICE: \$720

CONTACT: BOYD 703-3761(MISSISSAUGA),EVENINGS

***** ALSO FOR SALE:*****

GENTLY USED GEMINI 16X PRINTER. INCLUDES PARALLEL CABLE WIRED FOR THE TI RS-232C

ASKING PRICE: \$200

CONTACT: BOYD 703-3761(MISSISSAUGA),EVENINGS

Steve's Tid Bits #5

(c)1987 -by Steve Mickelson, Source TI6780, CIS 76545,1255

You probably have noted a new look to the Newsletter 9T9; namely the compressed look. After some experimentation, I finally got around to reading the manual for the new printer. The net result is a little utility which produces compressed type. Then by setting the TI Writer format commands so as to set the left margin at 16 and the right at 136, with adjust and fill commands. The net result is a type which may not have the near letter quality of the previous font settings. This is a trade-off which produces columns in 120 character width. This new width, plus the reduced spacing between lines, enables me to compress an article which would normally take five and half pages to just short of three. This should give you more newsletter value for the dollar. I would appreciate some feedback about such changes.

The new compatibles are in production. Geneve and the MG/Triton adapter are described elsewhere in Newsletter 9T9. Also included is the last Randy's Rumour Rag. I printed it for a few reasons. First, as it is the last issue I think it is interest, as Randy reviewed and commented upon the state of the TI Community. Secondly, I was somewhat worked-up by his remarks to TI users, that I fired off a reply, which Randy did reply. To understand where I was coming from, the Rag was reprinted. Thirdly, his comments have some bearing on the new hardware for the TI-99/4A. On the matter of the Geneve, rumour has it that a review will appear in an up-coming issue of Byte Magazine, (possibly the March issue).

We have, in this current issue some ads. Like the big fry say, support our advertisers or least keep them in mind if you need their services. Any Newsletters exchanging with the Newsletter 9T9 PLEASE NOTE: Make sure you have our new address, on the front cover. If there is any problem on our end, send us a line.

Also, a note of thanks to Blair Macleod, who has come onboard as Associate Editor. His help in transcribing this letter is reflected in the current issue.

There is not much to report on changes in policies or new directions of the club until the January elections take place.

I did not in one newsletter, from Texas, that there were some un-released software for the TI; namely Some Walt Disney stuff, and E.T. Also, about the time River Rescue was first announced, (around '84), I recall another release about Zaxxon for the TI. Does anyone know if any of these are available, (new or used), as we are interested here in T.C. Please drop me a line, if you can help.

As far as programming is concerned, a member of the Adam users group approached our 9T9 booth regarding obtaining assembly programs written for our TI. It seems that, like the TI, the Adam uses the 9918 VOP chip and their assembly looks VERY familiar to that used on the TI-99/4A. We glanced through an issue of the Adam users newsletter, which had an article on how to go about translating TI assembly. Well life is a two-way street and I think that Adam assembly can be converted for our use. By the way, I have found out that some of the Tandy computers use both the same video and sound chips as the TI-99/4A, I wonder.

Apparently the last issue of Newsletter 9T9 was quoted in Toronto Computes! It's good to see that Annie isn't the orphan who has a readership. The new executive should be reflected in the next newsletter issue.

MEETINGS

The following indicates the next four meetings of the 9T9 Users Group

Tuesday January 27, 1987

Tuesday February 24

Tuesday March 31

Tuesday April 28

Meeting times are 7:30 PM

4



The following was sent to Newsletter 9T9 and is reprinted for your information: A special vote of thanks to Blair MacLeod who volunteered to be associate newsletter editor and wrote the following, verbatim, ala' TI Writer':

T.I. Network News
Copyright (c) 1986 I.N.F.O. Inc
Ron Albright, Editor and Publisher

In the beginning
Welcome! Welcome to what I hope will be a new publishing adventure for users of the TI 99/4A Home Computer. This is the first issue of the "T.I. Network News" (affectionately hereafter to be known as "TINN"). I have started this venture to be an exclusive offering of Delphi's T.I. Information Network. It will be a conglomeration of news, product reviews, tips (particularly, on telecommunications) and programming (concentrating on XB and 99). I will be hacking it out alone to start but, right up front, I invite and welcome submission from anyone else on virtually anything of interest to the TI users. If you have some new software to tell us about, visited an interesting TI BBS, have discovered an programming trick, or anything you want to share with others, let me know. I will make the arrangements to get the information in TINN. Since we are new at this, we can go in any direction that the readership desires. And since we are "electronically" published, we can have immediate an up-to-date news. I hope to make this a bi-weekly, but that depends on the interest and readership. You can address "Letters to the Editor" to me on Delphi (Username "INFOINC"). Welcome aboard!

The Dawn of Geneve...

Doubters have rumbled and jokes bantered about for over a year. Since the Myarc upgrade to the TI 99/4A was announced formally at the Third Annual TI Fair in Chicago (November, 1985), many have waited patiently for what was the only viable upgrade path available for the 99/4A. And now, the waiting appears to be over. The last hurdle, obtaining the mysterious (at least to me) "gate-arrays" (supposedly, devices that speed the chip operations) from the Mitsubishi contractors has been accomplished. The gate-arrays arrived Thanksgiving week and the Geneve is being assembled, probably even as I write this. The first 500 (that is right, five-zero-zero!) are going to Tenex. So, if you have your order in there, you may be in luck. Else, the smaller dealers, may have to wait for some time. In any case the computers appear ready for the marketplace. I cannot wait to hear the first non-Beta-tester reports of the production machine. Should be fun. By the way, I hear that "Geneve" has been dropped by Myarc over the possible conflict with the "Geneva" portable computer produced by Hewlett-Packard. That all seems very unlikely, since the Geneva has been out of production for over a year. There are a couple other products that come close to that name as well (I think there may even be a Geneve-something already), so the name change is probably a wise move. The name, as I hear it, will "officially" be the "Myarc 9640". Not very glamorous, but might save an undesirable lawsuit.

For those of you interested, here are some specifications on the 9640 computer, just to whet your appetite:

The following are the capabilities of the new Geneve computer as written in the Myarc literature:

- * 99/4A compatible. Runs over 100 existing TI cartridge programs
- * 99/4A compatible. Runs over 95% of all assembly language programs and utilities
- * Basic 3.0
- * TI-writer, now a full 80 columns
- * Multiplan, Also 80 columns
- * Faster, at least 2-3 times
- * Larger, Standard 640K RAM, 2 Mega bytes addressable RAM. Myarc memory card compatible with Myarc 512k card, supplies 1 Megabyte
- * IBM type keyboard included
- * Phone type cable, replaces old Hex-Bus cable
- * Mouse Support
- * Separated Function Keys
- * Incredible graphics capabilities
- * Composite video output
- * F.I. Output
- * 40 column display
- * 80 column display
- * Joystick port
- * Compatible with existing peripheral cards: Disk controllers, Myarc, TI, Corcomp RS232 Cards, Myarc, TI, Corcomp Myarc memory expansion cards add directly to RAM (modification required)
- * Two Megabytes addressable memory
- * 128K RAM Memory
- * True hardware utilities, Sprites, Fills, Lines, Data Moves
- * TI 9995 Processor Chip - 12 Mhz
- * 256 Bytes Ultra High Speed on Chip RAM
- * Pre-fetch on instructions
- * Post-store on instructions
- * Sound compatible and expandable
- * Speech included

The 9640 may be ordered through Disk Only Software by writing to P.O. Box 4170, Rockville, Md. 20850. For more information call 800-446-4462 + 335 at the tone. In the Washington D.C. Metro area call 301-369-1059. D.O.S. is on Delphi under the Username: "E-EDATA" (Jeff Guide). Maybe you can get your 9640 before Christmas! I'll risk a little heat from the real 9640 enthusiast by saying that I have to take a "wait-and-see" attitude toward this machine at present. I will have to see what Craig Miller (MS 1475 W. Cypress Avenue, San Dimas, CA) comes out with this January as he announces the specifics of his MS-005 upgrade for the TI. Then I will compare the two, and decide. Hopefully, the inevitable bugs will have been shook out of the 9640 by then (there WILL be some user problems yet to be discovered, there always are). Then I will make a move - for one or the other.

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Chicago TI Faire...

Thanks to the generosity of Computer Shopper and the editor's (Stan Veit) continued support of the TI community, I was able to attend the Fourth Annual TI Faire sponsored by the Chicago User Group and held at Triton College, Saturday, November 1. It was a great time for all attendees. The crowds were about half the size of times past (about 1000 or so), but the interesting thing was that there were no disappointed vendors, out of the 30 or so with booths, the dollars changed hands like military secrets at the United Nations. We have one from a tired users base (novices, serious users, expert users) to, really, one tier - serious, expert users. Users willing to spend some "serious" dollars on some of the great new hardware and software for their machines. No one stays on the sidelines with a 3 year old orphan. You either have to GET serious or get out. Anyway, I was terribly impressed not just with the way the Fair was run (terrifically), or the speakers on the program (Clint Pulley on c99, Chris Bobbitt on the new Asgard products, and Peter Hoddie on the music capacity of the /4A), but also the fanatics that attended. They attended from California, New York, Massachusetts, Ottawa, Tennessee, and Georgia. They bought out the place. And not the \$4 cartridges, but the new, sophisticated hardware and software from all over. It was a mature, grown-up bunch of 99ers who have survived the three year stint in the orphanage. I was encouraged and really enthusiastic after attending Chicago. I was equally encouraged by the fact that Sandy Bartels (Chicago V.P. and probably future president) said there would definitely be Fifth Fair next year. Probably featuring the 9640. See ya there!

New Products Seen...

At the Chicago Fair, Asgard (awarded the "Software Producer of the Year" in the December TI Forum column in Computer Shopper) ran true to form and introduced three exciting new software products for the 99/4A. "Total Filer" (\$24.95 from Asgard, P.O. Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20850; (301) 345-2492) is the first "text-based", free-form database for the TI. Written by Warren Agee in c99, "Total Filer" doesn't use fields like traditional databases. With "Total Filer" you can enter information in any form or fashion into the record and enter your own keywords. The "Total Filer" can search on any keyword and even use "wildcards" to pick records. For example, if you had some records and "assembly" and "assembler", you could search for both words by using the wildcard search phrase "assembl*". Records with "assembler" and "assembly" as the keywords should be retrieved by that search. You can use "Total Filer" in many ways and I find it a useful tool. I use it to index text-based information like journal references and abstracts in my medical practice. Another winner from Warren Agee and Asgard.

Also released by Asgard was "High Gravity" (\$14.95 from Asgard). People always write to Computer Shopper to ask why there are no new games for the TI. I tell them that the users have, generally matured beyond that form of software, and that the market for games is probably small. Well, Asgard has come out with a hybrid - a game that is both fun and educational. "High Gravity", written by Tom Wattle (also in c99), is a game in that you try to fire a food pod to a stranded spaceship through a maze of planets for points. You cannot steer the pod you have to rely on the gravitational pull of the various planets to guide the pod to the spaceship. Thus, you learn in a realistic way about gravity and its effects in space. You can vary the number of planets, and their gravity to add to the learning experience. Really a nice program. Well done and reasonably priced.

The third part of the Asgard Trilogy, "Font Writer" (\$24.95) will be the subject of a full review in a future issue of TINN. Suffice it to say that the author, J. Peter Hoddie has produced an excellent program that accomplished the merging of graphics from TI Artist or Character Set and Graphics Design and text from TI Writer. Printed together, on the same page and formatted as you desire. An excellent productivity tool. A must. Buy it.

Another product seen and to be reviewed is the "Printer's Apprentice" from McCann Software (P.O. Box 34160, Omaha, Nebraska 68134; \$22.50). It is an implementation of "Print Shop" (tm) for the TI (well almost!). Written in Fortran and complete with 5 fonts and a program to design your own, "Apprentice" allows you to make custom designed page layouts and handle TI Writer files with proportional spacing, microjustification, and hyphenation. Its a peach from the same guy (i.e. McCann) that programmed "Business Graphs 99" (now only \$15.95 from McCann). I hope to spend more time on this program in later issues.

I also have a copy of Monty Schmidt's GPL Assembler and Linker (Ryte Data, 210 Mountain Street, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0; (705) 457-2774) but it will take a little work for any non-assembler mentality to get these beauties running. Keep you posted.

Nibbles and bits...

Tom Rhodes, the producer of the most practical product for the TI probably ever, "Flip Strips", has moved but still has some of these spiral bound overlays for the TI available for \$4. These are keyboard strips for the top of your machines already printed for most TI cartridges and several fairware programs and some blank ones to be filled in for other programs. Very nice. Get them from Tom at 1 Edgewood Court, Chillicothe, Ohio 45601.

There are a couple of fairs planned this spring. The Second Annual for both. The New Jersey TI computer Owners' Fun Fest (TICOFF) will be held March 28 at Roselle Park High School in Roselle Park, NJ. For more information contact Art Byers at (914) 528-5402 or on Delphi (Username="ARTE-33").

The Second Annual New England 99 "Fayuh" will be held April 4. For more info, contact the Eastern Computer Society, TI User Group, One Center Plaza, Boston, MA 02108 or Walt Howe right here on Delphi (Username="WAL-1000").

Winding Down...

Well, there you have the first issue of TINN. Its a start. Let me know what you think. What you would like to see. With the resources on Delphi, we will be able to answer most of your needs. Just let me know what you would like to see in TINN and we will try to provide it. More programming? More reviews? Less reviews? Whatever. Drop us a line. 'Till next time, see you 'round the campus.

For those reading this who are not Delphi members, joining The TINN on Delphi is easy. Dial 1-800-544-4005 (Not likely available in Canada; will let you know -Editor) and the Delphi operator will give you the TYMNET or TELENET access telephone number nearest to you. Rates are \$7.20 per hour for 300/1200 baud, and that includes all network charges such as T.M.N. or TELENET. You can sign on for as little as \$10.00 and for that you will receive a handy quick reference card as well as one hour of free time on line. If the initial prompt is garbled, type in the letter 'A' and the prompt will be readable. Then enter DELPHI. Next you will be asked for a USERNAME - enter JDINTI99. Last you will be asked for a password. Enter TELECOMA and you will be off and running.

DATE: 21 Nov 1986
TITLE: RANDY'S RUMOR RAG
SUBJECT: RANDY'S RUMOR RAG

TEXT:

*** SPECIAL EDITION ***

Randy's RumOR RaG ===== SWAN SONG

How well I remember Black Friday. On that particular evening, I was travelling to a concert with a friend (who had owned a TI for about a year) and he mentioned that TI was dumping their home computer line. This tidbit of information didn't make much of an impact at the time although I had been considering buying a computer for some time (I had almost talked myself into an Apple 2e).

That next Monday, I had to travel to Seattle to take a Certification test (I passed) and on the way home I stopped at a discount store and purchased a TI keyboard and an empty P-Box for \$50 each. That was the beginning of my experience with computers.

In the weeks that followed, I picked up the other necessary pieces such as Extended Basic (\$90), the basic cards, and 2 half-height drives.

Early in 1984, I bought a modem and was faced with a \$300 phone bill the first month. In April of that year, I subscribed to the Source and began to make lots of new TI friends.

In early 1985, Don Bynum asked me about writing a regular column dealing with news, reviews, and events in the TI world. I knew a lot of people by this time but getting the necessary information each month to write the RaG was still a big job. (By the way, the name Randy's RumOR RaG was dreamed up by Don and I just added the mixture of upper and lowercase letters to make it look funny.)

In 1985, I also took a stab at running a BBS. This was a great source of information and I made a lot of friends doing it, but the abuse by a few callers eventually made running the system a headache, so all of the equipment was recently sold.

You know, I've always said that the only thing a PC would do for me is cost more money and that was true....UNTIL NOW.

Many of you have heard the rumors that I had deserted the TI world and had moved into PC land. Well, I can now announce that it's true.

This will be the final issue of the RaG since I do not currently own any TI equipment and it's kind of hard to review hardware and software that way.

I came across a fantastic deal on an XT clone that I couldn't pass up. (For those interested, I'm writing this using Word Perfect, the system has 2 floppies and a 20 MEG hard drive with 640K of system memory.)

In the beginning, I was quite reluctant to give up the TI, but after using the XT for a while, I can honestly say that I really like it.

Don't get me wrong...I am not encouraging everyone to abandon the TI just because I have gotten out of it. Before making some closing comments, I'd like to thank a number of people, without whom the RaG would have never been possible.

First, I should say THANKS to Don and Doyle Bynum for giving me the opportunity to give an honest opinion.

Thanks to Blaine for keeping the RaG on the SIG and encouraging me to write it.

Thanks to Chris Bobbitt and Asgard Software for going out of his way to send software to review. I can't afford to buy every new package that comes out and Asgard was real nice in sending review copies.

Thanks also to Steve Lambert and Taxaments for sending software to review. Like me, Steve always has an opinion on any given subject.

Thanks to Craig Miller for answering all the dumb technical questions I asked.

Thanks to Franz Wagenbach for allowing me to try out a GRAM-KARTE. Too bad I hadn't established that relationship earlier so I could have answered some of your questions about their products.

Thanks to Scott Darling for offering his opinions and technical wizardry on various matters.

I could go on forever listing those who were helpful, but I'll be lucky if I can figure out how to upload this (the PC modem programs are REALLY involved). Special thanks to Source TI'ers Terry Atkinson and Harold Worwatz for their frequent contributions.

Before leaving, I should mention that I will still check into the TISIG from time to time to make sure everything is going the way I think it should, so you haven't heard the end of me.

I'd like to make some parting comments in the true tradition of the RaG.

As those of you faithful readers know, I have been a longstanding critic of Myarc. I remain skeptical concerning the future of Geneve. I appreciate Lou's efforts, but those of you waiting for Geneve to hit the market may be disappointed.

Oh, the Geneve may eventually see full-scale production, but my guess is that it probably won't work right when it comes out and buyers will end up playing "shuffle the PC's" as has happened with other Myarc products.

Assuming you buy a Geneve and it works as advertised, what kind of software will you run? It's still using a bastard chip that is not supported by anyone writing software. What I'm trying to say is that it will need a lot of support from the software people and I doubt that will happen considering the small size of the hardware base.

During the past month or so I have talked with a lot of TI owners. They always ask somewhat I think of the Geneve and I never hesitate to offer my opinion. Then, I ask what they think of Craig Miller's work on an IBM add-on. The overwhelming response toward MG's hardware could best be described as indifferent. It looks like everyone is waiting for Geneve and I can't understand it.

If that's what you want.....

During my three years in the TI world, I have never ceased to be amazed at the stupidity of many computer users. It's almost like people don't know how to read the books that come with the hardware and software. (It's no different in the PC world.)

Some of the worst offenders are the dealers. For example, I had a TI dealer recently tell me that you had to leave your computer on for 4 minutes before using it so that it could warm up. I've never heard of anything so asinine...and you wonder why people have trouble using a computer?

In any case, the beginning of 1987 should see some exciting developments in the TI world. I will be interested to see who Craig is developing his IBM box for. I understand that it is a large American company outside the TI marketplace. In fact, I guess that several people who are *big* in IBM land visited Craig and told him that there was no way you could interface a 4A with an IBM...these were some of the top people in the IBM community...to which Craig replied "Oh, really? as he showed them a prototype. I love it when an underdog shuts down the 'know-it-alls'".

My suggestion is that if you intend to keep your TI, seriously consider the IBM box over the Geneve. The hardware and software possibilities are awesome!!!

THANKS to all of you for your support in actually reading the RaG faithfully. I have really enjoyed creating it each month.

RA's RaG is published on a monthly basis by
RANDELL R. WIRTH PhD 11147 605 W. Wishkah Aberdeen, WA 98520, U.S.A., phone: (206) 533-6647 Source ID TI7513 6Enie
address 44

Downloaded from the Source and run through Spell-check:

ID:TI6780 DATE: 17 Dec 1986 TITLE: TI99/4A FUTURE SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON THE
FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE TI99/4A COMMUNITY

TEXT: Reprinted with the permission of the 979 Users Group and Steve Mickelson.
Requiem For A Computer

If Ron Albright's Orphan Chronicles were to have a third volume to tell the final chapter of the story of the TI-99/4A Home Computer; the third of the trilogy might read like the closing chapters of a Adventure-drama type novel.

For sake of an analogy, take the sinking of the unsinkable SS Titanic, (ironic name play), a ship designed to sail securely through the dangerous seas of the Computer Ocean. Struck by an ice berg the ship sails undaunted for what seems like an eternity,(three years). Our ship analogy would have the crew jumping ship at first call of doom with the passengers left to fend for themselves, keeping the illustrious vessel afloat.

This story now seems to be rushing to its ultimate and still not clear end. For now we see that the passengers are making their way to two different lifeboats, one named 'Geneve' and the other, MG. The sentiment for years was that the TI-99/4A would continue along, reborn in any of a number of possible names, the TI-99/8, Corcomp Phoenix, TI-99/28, etc.

Now, sadly, it seems that many in our community have reached the conclusion that the remaining users must make a choice go the way of Craig Miller and use our TI as an appendage of some IBM clone or go the way of Myarc into uncharted waters of the 9995 and its unique operating system. Those who feel compelled to follow will be physically contributing to the greatest rift yet felt in our dwindling community. Either way you are choosing to embark to a camp which will have little in common, software or hardware speaking, with the other.

I would just like to comment that although I purchased my TI prior to the TI pull out, I have yet felt compelled to "abandon ship". There seems to still be a core of enthusiastic supporters for our orphan, who keep producing hardware and software to meet my needs as a user. I think that some of those who have defected to the "dark side"(if I may use that term), have done so in response to a real need, usually for business reasons, because there just wasn't the software to fill their needs in the TI community. While others, (and I suspect the majority of defector), left because of the sales hype and curiosity, which were probably the reasons why they bought a computer in the first place.

Having made the choice of buying a clone, (or the real thing), and loosing their shirt selling their old TI system and software, both groups now rationalize their decision by saying their new computer is the best thing since fluorescent hoola-hoops and "you should get one, too", as if asking me to join them to help them convince themselves and others that they made the right choice, ("see he bought one too!").

Well to all of you on the rails about to make the plunge, I say STOP!!! Has your computer suddenly stop doing all the things it has performed for the last several years? I remember how it seemed that I and my in-laws all got into buying new vehicles, (five of us purchased new vehicles within a year or so). Granted the old ones all seemed on their last legs, and the Canadian winters with road salt and snow helps bring them to a premature death-- that's another story). So spring comes along and car owner's fancy turns to the shiney new models, and once one gets a new one like lemmings we all had to get rid of the old heap for the new model. The same goes for computer and reading the reviews we all want to replace the old TI, (even the Source sent a mailing referring to it as a classic, with an antique roadster pictured on the card).

So much for the motives, THINK about the reasons not to jump ship. Is your system still meeting your computing needs? Do you belong to or know of a user group in your area, supporting the TI-99/4A? Do you subscribe to a newsletter or magazine which supports you unit? Do you have any friends or acquaintances who use your computer? Have you recently purchased hardware or software for your TI? If you can answer yes to most of the above, then there is still hope!

Don't give up the ship! I can still recall how a recent "defector" remarked how there was a sense of fraternity among TI users sadly missing in the world of big blue clones. The expression: "better to be a big frog in a small pond", seems to be appropriate

In conclusion, though we were orphaned for so long, the delay in a new compatible helped to contribute to a sense of security and stability. Manufactures of hardware seemed content on making only peripherals and the long-dreaded day of which TI compatible to "side" with seemed always on the distant horizon. However, the day of destiny has arrived for the TI community.

I feel 1987 will be filled with dread or anticipation much like what took place back in the fall of 1983. Needless to say we have survived this long in the uncertain waters of being orphans, I feel we will still continue, if we keep the faith and resolve that has kept the TI-99/4A alive to this date.

-Steve Mickelson, Editor Newsletter 9T9(c) c/o 9T9 Users Group, 15 Kersdale Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M6M-1C9, Canada

REPLY to continue or <H>elp:
(EDITOR'S NOTE: at least the original Titanic had a band!)

The following reply from Randy Ainsworth was sent to me regarding my commentary on the future of the TI community:

From: TI7513 9-Lines On:13 DEC 1986 At: 22:32 To: TI6780
Subject: Reply to: REPLY TO LAST RAG

Well, in response let me say that I did not take a bath on selling my TI stuff. at least it paid for the XT with a little left over.

Secondly, anyone who is waiting for a Geneve is NUTS!!!! IBM-land is where the action is and if Myarc ever does get that thing out and working, what are you going to run on it. It is an accident waiting for a place to happen. TI owners will be much better off with the M6 machine in the long run believe me.

(Editors note: The message above prompted me to send this final remark to Mr. Ainsworth:)

Disposition:RE(PLY)

Enter text:

I still think that if my computer meets all my current needs and that I cannot see trashing all of my software and hardware just to own a piece of big blue or clone of same. If the software is needed and not available for TI, well maybe, if my system is useless otherwise. I think people who buy a clone or some other model for no specific purpose are the ones who are nuts; so much for name calling. All the best to you, but to make a clean break I don't think it's necessary to knock the teeth out of everyone, (still staying with TI or Myarc), except those who gave you freebies. I guess, like you, I have strong personal convictions and prefer to call a spade a spade, (even if I'm the only individual to read the cards that way). Sincerely, Steve Mickelson

Wait
Sent to - TI7513

(The following was sent from Terry Atkinson, as I had sent him a copy of my Titanic file -Editor)

Disposition: From: TI6450 7-Lines On:11 DEC 1986 At: 21:24 To: TI6780

Subject:

TI6780

Thanks for the articles. Much appreciated. I will put them up on my TIBBS, and also in the TINS newsletter. Very interesting. Later..

Terry TI6450

Disposition:RE(PLY)

Enter text:

Terry, before you publish or post my article; please run it through spell-check, as I wrote it at 2:00 A.M. and didn't have a chance to proof it. Regards, P. S. did you see your articles/utilis in recent issues of Toronto's U 6. 9T9 Newsletter 9T9? Sincerely, Steve Mickelson.

Wait. Sent to - TI6450

And another reply to the "Rag's Swan Song":

21) Category: GENERAL INFORMATION
Subject: OPEN LETTER TO RANDY
From: TI6450
Posted: 25 NOV 1986 2:54 am

<N>ext,<PD>st, or Return for more:

Dear Randall:

Just a short note of appreciation for all your candor, criticisms, approvals, wit, dourness, paradox, and exactness. Yes, you are all those things. you really kept us guessing!

I, for one, will sorely miss you personally...who am I going to argue with? Who else will call me Krazy Kanuck? To whom am I going to say "I told you so", when Myarc comes through with Geneve? ...and on, and on!

Wishing you all the best in your new "world" of big blue, and what- ever else you become involved in! Your friend (and sometimes confidant)

Terry Atkinson
TI6450

9

The following was captured from the Source:

ID: T13854 DATE: 15 Jan 1987 TITLE: TRITON/M6 COMPUTER SUBJECT: INFORMATION ABOUT THE SOON TO BE RELEASED COMPUTER FROM TRITON AND MILLER GRAPHICS

TEXT:

Based on a tip from a friend in another part of the country (noone who calls here), I called TRITON today. Since I have no confidences to violate, I can freely pass along the information I obtained. I was able to confirm the following information through a discussion with a VERY reluctant salesperson. She volunteered no information at first, but responded to direct questions. TRITON is about to announce the \$499 TI-99/4A XT computer, which is mode-switchable between the TI-99/4A and its own 15" compatible capability. It comes with 256k, expandable to 640k. It contains one 5.25" drive, a parallel interface, composite and RGB ports, and 8 (?) card slots for IBM cards. It shares the keyboard, monitor, and to some extent drives with the TI. I was unable to determine (so was the salesperson) whether it has an RS-232 interface built in, whether in TI mode it could use any of the 256k, and just how much the drives could be interused. The PE box remains in place. The computer will be available in March. The salesperson had never heard of Craig Miller or Miller Graphics, she said. She did not know any more than she could get out of the literature in front of her.

IBM COMPATIBILITY FOR THE 99/4A:

Technical Info:

1. Two part system. A TURBO XT and a small bridge box that connects to the side I/O port on your 4A.
2. The TURBO XT is an 8(Mhz, 4.77 Mhz (switchable) mother board, power supply, XT style case, CGA color graphics card (both RGB and Composite), Floppy Disk controller 1 half high DS/DD disk drive, Parallel port and 256K of Ram on the mother board. The mother board has sockets for up to 640K of ram. There are 8 expansion slots, two of which are used by the CGA card and the Floppy disk controller.
3. The bridge box has inputs for 4A Video in, XT Video in and outputs for XT Keyboard out and Monitor out. It also contains the software for keyboard switching between 4A mode and XT mode and the software to convert the 4A key strokes into XT keycodes. It also has a pass through so you can keep your P-Box or other Peripherals hooked up.
4. Mode switching from 4A to XT can be done through Basic or X-Basic with CALL XT or by holding down FCTN CTRL ENTER on power up of the 4A.
5. Mode switching from XT to 4A is done by pressing FCTN CTRL ENTER.
6. The ONLY items shared by the two systems are the 4A keyboard and your current monitor or TV. Yes you can get 80 columns out of a composite monitor, but it is easiest to read with the color turned off in 80 mode. The XT allows MODE 40 which also gives you 40 column mode. Graphics programs, such as games and drawing programs work fine in 80 column and most other software that doesn't combine weird foreground and background text colors are also quite readable.
7. By not sharing the disk drives it is possible to do concurrent processing on the XT. Example: Go into XT mode, start up your COMMUNICATIONS software, log on to a BBS and start a down load. Now you can switch modes back to the 4A and do whatever you would like in 4A mode while the XT is still down loading from the BBS!!
8. We have tested this system on a number of 4A system configurations and have found it to be very compatible. Since it is an IBM clone it is also fully compatible with both IBM software and IBM HARDWARE. Yes, you can add ANY IBM cards you would like to the system.

9. The minimum 4A system requirements: A TI 99/4A console and a monitor or a TV set with RF modulator.

General Info:

1. This system is being marketed by Triton Products Company in San Francisco, CA. They are also handling the production of the bridge boxes and they have contracted for the Turbo XT clones to their specifications.
2. The system has a 30 DAY money back guarantee and a 1 YEAR parts and labor warranty.
3. The cost for this system (Turbo XT, Bridge box and cables) is 499.00 plus 19.90 for shipping and handling.
4. Their toll free number for additional info and/or a 6-page 4-color brochure on this system is 800-227-8300, (Editors Note: This number is toll free here in Canada!), Monday through Friday - 6AM to 6PM and Saturday 9AM to 4PM Pacific Time

PLEASE DON'T CALL THEM UNTIL MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 1987 FOR TECHNICAL INFO OR QUESTIONS. You can call before then to get a brochure. The people that answer the phones are going through a training course this week so they won't be able to properly answer your questions until then.

5. Delivery is scheduled to start on March 1st of this year. We have been using this system for awhile now and we are very pleased with its performance. This isn't vaporware, ALL RD, testing and software is complete and the units are ready for production, so the March time frame is a reality. At last, a MAJOR expansion for the 4A. We hope you are as pleased with this product as you have been with our other products in the past. As the Triton Brochure says: MAKE THE IBM CONNECTION TO YOUR TI-99/4A

Category: GENERAL_INFORMATION Subject: TURBO XT STUFF From: T13592 Posted: 17 JAN 1987 3:20 pm

<N>ext, <PD>st, or Return for more:

I have ordered a Turbo XT from Triton and was able to get SOME additional info. The system comes with NO key-board, the TI keyboards runs every-thing. The "bridge box" seems to intercept ONLY the keyboard, and passes this to the keyboard on the XT. There is apparently NO communication with XT bus traffic, hence NO data sharing at all, unless I am missing something.

Most likely, the TI and XT video outs go to the bridge box, and one "monitor out" goes to the monitor, BUT, it of course will not run TI software on a flat monitor, even though the XT has an RGB output as well as a composite. It may be possible to bypass this and run the XT on RGB. I ordered it primarily for the clone part, and confirmed that it is returnable in 30 days if I am dissatisfied. Score = one keyboard, one monitor, still two boxes. Close, but no cigar. (Ed. Note: He could always get a RAVE Keyboard, see review elsewhere in this newsletter)

-End-

From F.L.U.G. (Dallas,Tx):

**A DESCRIPTION OF THE GENEVE COMPUTER WITH RELEVANT
COMMENTARY REGARDING WHAT IT MEANS TO US ALL
-by Chris Bobbitt
Copyright Chris Bobbitt 1986**

At its introduction, the Myarc Geneve computer will be among the most advanced computers available, and definitely the most advanced "home computer" in history. It is more powerful than many minicomputers, and is available at a price that would have been unheard of 3 years ago. The following is a description of some of the capabilities of this remarkable device.

MICROPROCESSOR:

The TMS9995 CPU is 5 to 6 times faster than a TMS9900, the processor found in the TI99/4A. This processor is only slightly slower than the 68000 CPU, yet is much simpler to use, more accurate mathematically, and contains a smaller instruction set. The advantages of this smaller instruction set is an article in itself. Suffice it to say that this technique is getting a lot of attention in programming circles.

MEMORY:

The standard Geneve Computer comes with 640K of RAM. This is expandable to 2 Megabytes using special memory expansion devices. A Myarc 512K card can be made to work with the Geneve with simple modifications. The Myarc 512K card memory may be directly accessed by programs.

GRAPHICS:

The Geneve uses the Yamaha 9938 graphics processor. The 9938 processor was designed by Texas Instruments and Microsoft Incorporated. The computer world will discover this chip and its capabilities much in the same way that they proudly announced 16 bit computing for microcomputers, years after TI had introduced the TI99/4A. This graphics processor supports a variety of different modes for graphics and text.

TEXT:

The Geneve supports both 40 AND 80 column modes. The 40 column mode is similar to that of the 99/4A, so none of your current word processing software is obsolete. However, text, foreground and background colors may be any of 512 colors. 256 patterns are available for redefinition. One of the 80 column modes is the same, while another supports blinking text and multi-color text. Some limitations apply, but this permits programmers of the system to use many of the advanced human factors graphics techniques just now being developed. The use of color to impart information, much in the nature of peripheral vision can make word processing tasks as well as the initial learning process easier. Your Geneve computer will be able to keep up with this emerging technology for some time. Indeed the rich resources of the TI programming community may well result in some breakthroughs in graphics presentation. It is reasonably well known that some organizations in the community are working hard in this area. Since each of these various screens occupies very little memory of the 128K of standard Video RAM on the Geneve, up to 32 screens of text can be stored in memory at once. All of this information is directly addressable by the programmer. This bodes well to provide a rich environment for the system and applications programmer and thus the user.

GRAPHICS:

The Geneve supports every text mode of the 99/4A, as well as many new graphic modes that use much of the available memory. One of the more interesting modes supports a resolution of 256 by 212 pixels. Each pixel can be any of 256 colors. This mode also supports multi-color sprites. Each pixel row of the sprite can be any of two colors. Another interesting graphics mode supports 512 by 424 pixels with each pixel any of 16 colors. The on-screen display of a maximum of 16 different colors can be selected from a pallet of 512 colors. This mode is the same resolution as the Apple Macintosh computer, yet the system still finds the capability to support sprites, which the Macintosh does not. The 9938 chip has built in commands for line drawing, block moves and copies at hardware speeds. The benchmark for graphics systems, the Commodore Amiga, can only draw lines half as fast as the 9938 and rectangles nearly so. This bodes well for designers of presentation graphics and animation systems for everything from simple business presentations to television commercials!

INTERFACES:

The Geneve has a number of ports. For video, there is a port for an analog RGB monitor. The analog RGB monitor is more advanced than the digital ones used by the TI Professional Computer in that it allows virtually an infinite range of colors on the screen. Texas Instruments used the quality of the TI PRO monitor as a major component in its "Dare to Compare" campaign against the inferior IBM PC display system. An Amiga monitor displays the power of the Geneve quite well, and is readily available. However, an additional port permits the use of your existing TI99/4A video monitor. Therefore, your current equipment is not obsoleted by the new machine, allowing you the luxury of leisurely getting the best price for your existing monitor and cutting the best possible deal for your upgrade. Indeed, some are already at work seeking to separate early dropouts in the Amiga world from their monitors. The Geneve also supports the Amiga mouse. Other monitors of the serial RGB type work, however, so do not pay extra simply because the name on the front. Your 99/4A console can be used as a stand alone device with the purchase of the Geneve. The Geneve comes equipped with an IBM style keyboard. Other keyboards, costing from \$50 to \$500 will also work just fine. Since the Geneve replicates the functions of the console, you will only need the expansion system or one of the inexpensive expansion kits.

A multi-function port permits even more access to the Geneve. While labeled as being for the Amiga mouse mentioned earlier, it also can support sophisticated applications inputted from both exotic and common equipment. A video digitizer, for instance. Pictures taken from a video camera can be fed into the system. A digitizing tablet, which turns the Geneve into an elaborate data collection system or a component of a computer aided design/manufacturing/engineering (CAD/CAM/CAE) system is fully supportable, given proper software. Light pens are of course appropriate input devices as is information from a video cassette recorder or a video camera. Indeed, with external converter devices available on the market, you can pipe in television signals and enjoy crisp resolution and vibrant colors never seen before from a commercial television set, thus putting your RGB monitor on overtime.

DISK DRIVES:

The Geneve, when utilizing a Myarc Disk Controller, will be capable of transferring up to 1.2Mbits/sec from disk to memory - or roughly twice as fast as any computer for less than \$10.00. When used in conjunction with the Myarc Hard Disk controller, this speed goes up to 5Mbits/sec (5 MILLION baud!), which is fast enough to do full-screen real-time animation with 10 screens displayed per second (as opposed to the average movie which displays 8 pictures per second to achieve apparent motion). Again, this capability is far beyond what comparably, and much higher priced machines are capable of doing. This is accomplished by utilizing an area of RAM in the computer (called 0 wait state Static RAM of which 8K is available in a standard Geneve) as temporary storage, along with the very modern WDS1772 disk controller microprocessor.

PRICE AND COMPARISON:

To put this in perspective, compare the Geneve to other computers. The Geneve comes with 640K of RAM, equivalent to a fully configured IBM PC XT. This memory is expandable to 2 megabytes, twice the standard memory of an Atari 1040 ST. The Atari ST, of course, is one of the more popular "non IBM machines" on the market. The Atari ST is the fastest microcomputer available in its price range.

The Geneve is roughly equivalent. The makers of the Geneve have gone to the extra expense of installing special purpose chips to handle, among other things, input from disks, lightpens, and other devices. In a similar vein, these special purpose chips handle output to screen, disk and elsewhere. And what about graphics? Again expensive special purpose redundancy pays off. Therefore, in graphics, input and output, the Geneve runs circles around the Atari ST. The Geneve deploys eight times as many colors as the Commodore Amiga. The Amiga is the superior machine in these respects. The Geneve, unlike the Amiga and the IBM PC AT, supports graphics with a 'true aspect' ratio. This is the superior form, and gives higher resolution through the use of square pixels, the tiny dots used to give your computer screen, even your television its color and appearance of depth.

The Geneve rates highly as a smoothly upgradeable machine. It obviously will be compatible with the newly developed Myarc disk controller card. In disk drives supported, the Geneve with the Myarc disk controller card will defeat the IBM PC AT. Four 20 megabyte hard disks can be supported with this upgraded configuration, not to mention that the same scheme will control four (or less) double sided QUAD density floppy drives of the conventional 5 1/4 inch size. The drives that use the new plastic bound three inch disks are supported as well. Knowing the market, the Geneve makers realised they needed a system that would obsolete gracefully, as has the 99/4A.

Features of the 99/4A which still challenge the marketplace are retained. An example is the 99/4A's well known device independent operating system. Virtually any peripheral can be attached, unlike almost all other computers including those costing thousands. Device independence is a feature you (the 99/4A owner) have purchased years ago and one that should not be discarded in the name of progress. Therefore, the Geneve is superior to most every microcomputer in graphics, speed, memory capacity, and in versatility.

A full-blown Geneve system would contain a Geneve computer, a WDS model hard and floppy disk controller, a TI RS232 card, plus a 3 slot expansion kit, linked to two full blown 720 kilobyte floppy disk drives and a high resolution serial RGB monitor. If bought all at the same time, using all new components, your system would cost less than \$1,000. One of the finest features of such a system is that it can and probably should be acquired incrementally, particularly if you currently own an expanded 99/4A system. For a machine of this class, this is an incredible price. The Atari 1040 ST is well known as the first computer that cost less than One dollar for each one thousand bytes of memory, new. The Geneve may be the first machine to drive that cost down to fifty cents per thousand.

SOFTWARE:

The Geneve will come bundled with a new version of Extended BASIC on disk which is fully 6 times faster than TI Extended BASIC. Also included will be a MS-DOS like operating system. The package is called "DOS like" because the commands used will be very close to MS-DOS. However, the internal workings of the system will not resemble nor be compatible with MS-DOS. This will be a boon for those who have had to struggle through learning MS-DOS at work or on another machine. In the package also will be an 80 column version of TI-Writer with a larger memory.

A number of other products specifically designed for the Geneve will be available at or near the release of the Geneve. A number of 'C' compilers will be available by all expectations. C is a very popular language on 32 bit machines and is now beginning to appear in micro computers in the last few years. Some business software will be readily available. UCSD Pascal, actually a language within its own operating system, will also be standard. Software developed on many machines, including the IBM PC, Apple, and others which use this system will run without modification on the Geneve.

The new Geneve software will allow users to set up directories as an aid to manage multiple files. A software RAMdisk will also be available, where the user can deal with a notional or in-software emulation of a disk. All interaction on this RAMdisk will be in memory, thus will operate at extremely high speed. Print spoolers will be available. People still pay \$200 for print spoolers, which merely are hardware systems, now software, that fool both the computer and the printer. The printer is wired to signal the computer to stop sending data while the printer repositions the print head, or rolls up the platen. Meanwhile the computer is burning up thousands of cycles waiting for printer to get ready to receive data again. A spooler is nothing but an ever ready printer to the computer and a patient computer to the printer. The job is transmitted to the spooler in a second or two and you are ready to go again while the printer chumps away.

TI BUSINESS MARKET:

The Geneve is assembly language compatible to the TI mini computer world, and awaits a member of that community to make that software run.

There is one silver lining in the "Perils of Pauline" development path of the Geneve, so fraught with delays. Time to think about the new arrival has been purchased with the sweat of the developer in a process which would normally have been extremely secret and quickly sprung on the unsuspecting community with little warning.

NEW OFFEEFEE

One new company has been started specifically to develop Geneve software. A true multi-tasking operating system is among the goals of this firm. Multi-tasking to a user means that several programs can be run at the same time. Multitasking is at the heart of such programs such as Sidekick for the IBM where various panels, or windows are pulled down to allow notes and other activities to take place. Yet another goal for this new developer is a macro-assembler. Macro-assemblers are small utility programs that can be strung together to achieve a variety of goals. In the mini computer world, programmers adroit in the macros of their particular machine rarely had to write much original code to achieve powerful results. This capability will soon arrive for you with the Geneve.

Soon after shipments of the Geneve begin, BASIC and Pascal compilers will be made available by this startup firm. A compiler may not be a familiar concept to all who read this, though it is simple to pick up. When your 99/4A receives the run command, it wakes up and "interprets" the program you have told it to run; Every single time. You probably are aware that assembly language is faster. The reason for this is that it is closer to machine language and therefore requires minimal "interpretation." BASIC, however, along with a host of other languages is not that close to machine language. Easier to remember and use, but requiring some form of intervention. The interpreter is often used for BASIC. While it gives instant feedback, an interpreter is slower than a compiled program which is a machine or assembly language program. You write the program as usual, then run the program through a compiler. That program compiles a collection of assembly language or machine code commands. That "compilation" is what you then use when you need that program. The compilation is much faster, almost indistinguishable from a program written in assembly language. The 99/4A only recently got an example of a compiled BASIC and a compiled C. If you have yet to experience the utility of compilers, you will certainly enjoy the Geneve. The increased memory will, of course, make these compilers superior in performance to anything currently on the 99/4A.

NEW IT-TWEE

A host of Geneve-specific programs are to come. Lou Phillips of Myarc has estimated that four to five years of effort will be needed to complete the full sweep of programs needed to truly tax the Geneve system and the chips associated with it. During that period, if a new design comes along, the card, not the entire structure can be modified. Almost immediately however, terminal emulators, word processing programs that support such sophisticated typesetting concepts as proportional spacing will begin to arrive. Potential new products for the Geneve include databases, spreadsheets, and paint programs.

The Geneve is one of the most remarkable computers ever introduced. A technical marvel, not a ripoff or anyone's clone. We are indeed fortunate that it has been designed to take advantage of the tremendous capability of the the TI99/4A...and its users. It should appeal to everyone, either as a first, a second, or third computer.

from the Chicago Times Newsletter:

PROGRAM CONVERSION
-by John Behnke.

Everyone has the X-Basic Module Now! Right? Well if you don't and you have seen some great program that you would like in a magazine or some other article or newsletter but it's written in X-Basic - this article might solve your problem. In this article is short Basic program that will emulate the two most commonly used features in the X-Basic module - DISPLAY AT and ACCEPT AT. If the program you wish to convert uses any of the SPRITE subroutines you are out of luck because there is no way to emulate those routines in Basic. In this article I will also explain how to simply rewrite the X-Basic program so it will run in Console Basic. Although you will find that the converted program works correctly, you will notice that the program will run at a slower speed due to the inherent slowness of Basic over X-Basic. This article is dedicated to all those TI'ers out there who only have a console and cassette recorder. Yes! Stand up and shout "I HAVE A \$50 COMPUTER AND I'M PROUD OF IT!" I see you people who sneak into meeting and stand in the back. Every month you elect one of yourselves to come up to the library table or a vender and ask "Do you have any NEW program in Basic?" Of course every person within earshot immediately is quiet and looks up to see who the poor soul is and then loose a little chuckle. Well, with this program and a little time, you can convert many programs from X-Basic to Basic and build up a nice little collection. I wish you luck. -JB.

```
3000 DIM ACCEPT AT
3001 COL =COL+2
3002
3003 VAR$=""
IF BEEP=0 THEN 30050
30030 BEEP=0
30040 CALL SOUND(100,1400,0)
30050 FOR @I=0 TO SIZE-1
30060 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL+@I,30)
30070 CALL KEY(@I,OK,AS)
30080 IF @S=0 THEN 30070
30090 IF (OK>13)+(@I=0) THEN 30150
30100 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL+@I,32)
30110 IF @K=13 THEN 30150
30120 @I=@I+1
30130 VAR$=SEG$(VAR$,1,@I)
30140 GOTO 30050
30150 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL+@I,OK)
30160 VAR$=VAR$+(CHR$(OK))
30170 NEXT @I
30171 SIZE=LEN(VAR$)
30180 RETURN
31000 DIM DISPLAY AT
31010 COL =COL+2
31020 IF BEEP=0 THEN 31050
31030 BEEP=0
31040 CALL SOUND(100,1400,0)
31050 IF SIZE=0 THEN 31070
31060 SIZE=LEN(VAR$)
31070 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,32,SIZE)
31080 FOR @I=0 TO LEN(VAR$)-1
31090 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL+@I,ASC(SEG$(VAR$,@I+1,1)))
31100 NEXT @I
31110 SIZE=0
31120 RETURN
```



To Use: Type this program in before you start to enter a program. If the program uses the same line numbers, simply RESEQUENCE this program to another area which is not used and note where to GOTO to when you are typing-in the program.

Other conversions...

X-BASIC	BASIC
100 ACCEPT AT(10,1):A\$	100 ED=10
If you want a numeric variable instead of a string variable: use: 104 A=VAL(V\$)	101 E=1 102 E=-28 (Max input length) 103 B=30000 104 A\$=VAR\$
100 ACCEPT AT(10,1)SIZE(10) BEEP:A\$	100 E=10 101 E=1 102 BEEP=1 (BEEP=1 to beep) 103 SIZE=10 104 B=30000 105 A\$=VAR\$
100 DISPLAY AT(10,1):"TEST"	100 ROW=10 101 COL=1 102 V\$="TEST" 103 E=31000
100 A\$=RPT\$("TEST",10)	100 A\$=" " 101 FOR @1=1 TO 10 102 A\$=A\$+"TEST" 103 NEXT @1
100 CALL COLOR(1,10,11,2,11,12)	100 CALL COLOR(1,10,11) 101 CALL COLOR(2,11,12)
100 CALL C=-: 90,"11111111111111111111 22222222222222222222222222222222" 44444444444444444444"	100 CALL CHAR(90,"11111111111111111111") 101 CALL C=-: 91,"22222222222222222222" 102 CALL C=-: 92,"33333333333333333333" 103 CALL C=-: 93,"44444444444444444444"
100 A=MAX(E,C)	100 IF B>C THEN 103 101 A=C 102 GOTO 104 103 A=B 104 (continue program)
100 A=MIN(E,C)	100 IF B>C THEN 103 101 A=B 102 GOTO 104 103 (continue program)
100 IF A=0 AND B=0 THEN 200	100 IF (A=0)1(B=0)THEN 200
100 IF A=0 OR B=0 THEN 200	100 IF (A=0)+(B=0)THEN 200



(Note: For X-BASIC PEEKS and POKES refer to August-September 1986 issue of Newsletter 9T9 for an equivalent statement, in X-BASIC, which can be translated to Console Basic-Ed)

From Garth's BBS ((416)221-3570):

Read Message:

#115 35 15 Jan 87 12:12:43 From: Clint Pulley To: All REPLY TO #115 SEE ALSO #115

Subj: More on the Millers Graphics TI add-on

I downloaded the official Triton press release from Compuserve this AM and was disappointed (but not surprised). What Triton is selling for \$500+(U.S.Funds) is a rather modest clone, but in place of the keyboard is a box which enables you to use your TI console as the keyboard. The release specifically states that the only items shared are the 4A keyboard and monitor. Otherwise, there is no communication between the 4A and the clone.

In my opinion, this is a turkey. Anyone who has used both a TI and a PC will readily realize that the small 4A keyboard will be almost impossible to use with a lot of current software (how will you key in ALT-LEFT/F8??). I suspect that the first add-on most purchasers will get is a proper keyboard!! In short - if you want a clone, buy a clone.

A recent poll of 4A owners on a major US information network yielded the result that 70% are planning on buying the Myarc 9640, even if they have to wait a while longer. Hmmm(Clnt Pulley is working on software, including a c-compiler for the Geneve, a rival of the Triton/M6 venture -Ed.)

ANOTHER BLOW TO THE ORPHANS: FROM GARTH'S BBS:

Read Message: R)reply K)ill E)nter N)ext P)revious -)Read-Orig. +)Read-Reply Q)uit [173] 1 - 189 R K E N P - + Q or ? for help: N #174 19 18 Jan 87 20:59:39 From: Sysop To: All Tiers Subj: Downloads R.I.P.

I am sorry if this is in rather short notice but as of tonight I have cleared the download section for T.I.. Because of my limited space I have had to clear any new uploads off the disk at least twice a day and even still people are trying to upload MS-DOS programs and getting Disk Full messages. This would tend to put people off of uploading to the board and since I am catering to the MS-DOS and Tandy users I find this to be an unpleasant situation. So I am afraid that the T.I. area has been scrounged for it's disk space, sorry that this had to occur so sharply, but it has. Hopefully this will be an incentive for a T.I. user to get a board up quickly, you are still welcome to use the messaging here. Thanks in advance for your understanding...Garth