

# CPUg NEWSLETTER



Volume 9 Number 12 99er December, 1990

## MINUTES

November 5, 1990

The November meeting was called to order by President Tony Dedonatis at 7:05 pm with 15 members present.

The October minutes were approved as published in the Newsletter. Chet Argast gave his report, with the comment that the Treasury was as sparse as the number of members at the meeting. Report approved.

Belinda Harmon represented Librarian Gary Harmon and announced that he had acquired new folders for our disk binders. A new addition to the Library is Page Pro Font Editor and it is now available for the members to use.

Rich Lindway's only report was that other User Group's newsletters could be read after the meeting. Tony noted that any problems encountered could be sent to Rich for possible answers in future issues.

Considering both the cost of renewing our post office box and the state of the treasury, after some discussion, a motion was made to change the group's address to that of the secretary's home address, effective immediately. Motion was seconded. Motion was carried.

Tony reminded everyone that there were two current MICROpendiums for sale, and that older editions could be taken by members to fill in their own missing issues. He mentioned that he had two notices from non-members who wish to sell their TI systems to anyone interested.

It was pointed out that one or two of our members may be serving in the present crisis in Saudi Arabia. Bob Wagner made a motion that those in the military have their memberships extended without payment of dues. The motion was seconded by Barry Long and was carried.

Also, Barry Long was appointed to investigate Sammon's Channel 16 for a possible demo for CPUg in its community spot, probably next year.

There being no more business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dottie Swartz, Secretary

NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, JANUARY 7th, 1991

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\* THE EXECUTIVE LOUNGE CHAIR \*  
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By Tony De Donatis Sr.  
President, C.P.U.G.  
Harrisburg, Pa.

Hi folks, guess what? I found my soap box, but I'm not going to preach.

Thinking over the past couple of months, I have been lax in starting the meetings on time and conducting them in the proper procedure. After stumbling around one meeting with a motion from the floor, our new secretary presented me with a paper, the heading read "HOW TO RUN A MEETING". I tried to use it in October. I am including the contents of the paper so that we can all learn how to run a meeting.

I would like to start using this format at the January 1991 meeting. This doesn't mean that we are going to get real formal in conducting our meetings, but I would like to have some kind of order so that I can conduct the meeting in the shortest time as possible, so that we can have special guests and use the clubs library and computers and what ever we want to do till we have to vacate the meeting room which is aproximatly 9pm .

You all heard of Roberts Rules? Well here are what I am calling "DOTTIES RULES" on how to run a meeting, (author unknown) the following is as it was presented to me from Dottie Swartz :

#### HOW TO RUN A MEETING

There are 8 steps to be taken in holding a meeting. They are:

1. Call the meeting to order.
2. Hear the minutes of the previous meeting and treasurer's report.
3. Hear reports of officers, boards, standing committees.
4. Hear reports of special committees.
5. Hear announcements.
6. Go on with the unfinished business of the last meeting.
7. Go on to new business. \*
8. End meeting (adjourn). \*\*

"The meeting will please come to order."

#### \* 7. GO ON TO NEW BUSINESS

It is wise, after a new plan has been suggested, to ask first for informal discussion. Any member can do this. The chairman has the privilege of suggesting a new proposal and may present his ideas. Then informal discussion takes place. The discussion is an exploration of the proposal. No one has to take sides. Sometimes nothing comes of it and the matter is forgotten.

When the chairman feels that the discussion is complete, he asks:  
"Does anyone desire to make a motion?"

If no motion is made, the meeting is ready for any other proposal.

- \*\* 8. When the business of the meeting is finished, the chairman says:  
"If there is no further business, the meeting stands adjourned."  
A member moves to adjourn; another seconds the motion.

#### HOW TO PRESENT A MOTION

There are eight steps in presenting a main motion:

1. The member rises and addresses the Chair.
2. The member is recognized by the Chair.
3. The member states his proposal.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The motion is restated by the Chair.
6. The chairman conducts the discussion.
7. The chairman puts the question to a vote.
8. The chairman announces the result.

#### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A special committee is a group chosen to find out necessary information that may guide the group. The chairman appoints several members - usually three, but always an odd number. They set to work and at the next meeting they report their findings.

Any member may move to refer a proposal to a committee.

The committee goes out of existence after it reports back to the group. It is called an ad hoc committee, latin meaning "for this purpose alone".

#### HOW VOTES ARE TAKEN

1. One member puts the action before the club by making a motion, which is seconded by another member.
2. The chairman states the motion, which is now open for consideration by the group.
3. After enough time has been allowed for discussion, the chairman puts the question. He asks those in favor of the motion to respond by saying "Aye". Those opposed are asked to respond by saying "No". The chairman evaluates the votes and announces the results.  
"The ayes have it and the motion is carried."  
or  
"The Noes have it and the motion is defeated."

#### HOW TO CONDUCT ELECTIONS

##### Nominations by Committee

Some months before the election date, the president may appoint a nominating committee to present to the club members a slate of nominees.

At the appointed time, the chairman calls for the report of the nominating committee. After the presentation of the report, the club members at the meeting have the right to make additions to the slate.

If none are made, the chairman inquires:

"You have heard the proposed slate of the committee. What is your pleasure?"

If the group is ready to vote, the chairman puts the question:

"All those in favor of the submitted slate say AYE." Then:

"The officers have been duly elected."

Often as a form of courtesy, a member moves to make the selection unanimous. If no objection is voiced, the chairman instructs the secretary to cast a single ballot for the slate. This makes the election of all officers unanimous. It cannot be done if there is any objection by a member.

#### CLOSING NOMINATIONS

This may be done in two ways: (1) the chairman may declare nominations closed if there is no objection; or (2) any member may make a motion to close the nominations. The usual procedure is that the chairman asks:

"Are there any further nominations for the office of president? The chair hears none. Nominations for that office are closed and we will proceed to Vice President."

#### BALLOT

The chairman appoints tellers to count the returns.

The chief teller reads the results. He then gives his report to the secretary. The first named teller is the chief teller.

#### THE END

I would like to thank Dottie Swartz our secretary for this enlightening material. THANKS !!!!! Tony.

..... SEE YA ALL AT THE MEETING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Tony De Donatis Sr., President

Letter from the Editor or  
In the dumper, again...  
by Richard Lindway.

This month, I really don't have much say. I placed my order for the new ESD HPDC and it should be here sometime this week (I hope). When it comes in there will, of course, be a demo.

I am trying something new this month. On some of the pages you will notice the printing is a little different. This is because I have my printer standing on its end and it's printing sideways. No, not really, I'm just kidding. I'm trying something different to help save paper, space and make some things a little easier on me when formatting some articles.

I would like to hear from some of you as to whether you like this new format or not. If I get a lot of 'no' vote, I won't do it any more. But if I get a lot of 'yes' votes, you will see it more and more. The format works best if the length of an article is about 125 lines so try to keep that in mind if you write an article for the newsletter. (hint, hint) Later...Rich.

No-Name Column  
by  
Dave Ratcliffe  
C.P.O.G., Harrisburg, Pa.  
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Well, the Chicago show has come and gone. Here's what happened there according to a report from Chris Pratt and courtesy of B.B.B.B. in Clinton Maryland:

#### 1990 CHICAGO TI FAIR HIGHLIGHTS

11/3/90

The Chicago Faire had many high points let me elaborate on just a few of them. Here are the things that caught my eye:

\* Compurline released several new programs for the TI. My favorite was a game called "BACKSTRIKE" (Bok stin. y) -- it immediately caught my eye as I passed their booth. The game is so similar to the game Arkanoid for other computers that I had to keep looking for an IBM clone or special video card hooked up to the TI console, but to my pleasure the game is for the TI-99/4A. I bought this one right away.

\* Barry Boone was manning the Texan's booth and everybody loved his new program "GIF MAIL". This program allows TA owners to display GIF pictures without any special equipment attached (video cards and the like). Definitely a winner.

\* Chris Bobbit from Asgard had the new MIDI interface set up. I believe the author was demonstrating it for people but I am not sure, I apologize. Also the new very impressive graphics program "YAPP" (which stands for: Yet Another Paint Program) was for sale. YAPP is well documented and comes with a large manual in a hardback binder.

\* Gary Bower from OPA (in Canada) demonstrated many of his new electronic gadgets, including a new widget type device which allows users to access up to ten command modules simultaneously, and a 9938 circuit which plugs into the 9918A socket in or the other board. This 80 column/hir-res video device has 192K of video memory, a 25 pin analog RGB video connector, and requires no external power supply. Gary demoed the 9938 prototype but will be selling the 9958 version for \$179 soon. I own a Mechatronic 9938 device and love the added features on the 41 including the 80 column support, since the Mechatronic device is no longer available I am glad to see others pursuing these expansion options. (Asgard plans to be coming out with a Mechatronic "CLONG" in 9958 version too. Asgards will be an external device with power supply and a DSK, OPA's does not have a DSK on the board.)

\* T and J Software demonstrated a new program called "Hardback" by Mr. Tom Freeman. This program is a miracle for those who own the Myarc EPDC and wish to back up their hard disks. Also demonstrated a program called "The Bugger".

\* Other hard drive news for the TI came when ESD announced its official shipping date for their new Hard/Floppy controller. They will be shipping on November 30th. Mr Shane Truffer (President of ESD and the designer of the controller card) along with yours truly, (Chris Pratt) fielded questions after the announcement. ESD also held a 3 1/2" 1.44MB floppy drive give away to promote their new controller which is able to control the 1.44MB floppy drives.

\* Rare 99 demonstrated their new PG/2 expansion box which is very sleek looking and allows for the user to install the 99/4A motherboard or the Geneve in the chassis, with other TI peripheral cards, hard drives, floppy disks, and with the Rare XT keyboard allows users to change the look of their TI. The only drawback I can see is that although they allow for the plugging in of command modules however it is a little awkward with an extension cable emerging out of the side of the box. However, this box offers a something new for the TI community and that is a 16 bit bus in the expansion slots. They have added an extra 36 pin connector to each of the 60 pin connectors to provide future designers of peripheral cards the option of adding 16 bit performance to the TI world.

There was so much more at the show but unfortunately I did not have the time to document everything.

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If the name Chris Pratt sounds familiar, it's because he's connected with ESD, makers of the new Hard Drive Controller card.

Also of note regarding the Chicago show, No Myarc. Now isn't THAT a surprise!

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The following was posted on BBBB by Ted Stringfellow and I thought you might be interested:

Just out of curiosity, I called Triton Products. They told me about a company called TM DIRECT that is now carrying products for the TI. They're carrying a limited selection of YARC hardware and it's their older stuff. The sales person I conferred with said they didn't have the 9640 or EPDC. She quoted me a price of \$139.95 for the AS-232 card and \$179.95 for the Floppy only controller. They are currently carrying most of the products listed in the last TRITON catalog (Fall 89, I think). Their number is 800-336-9966.

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Also from BBBB:

In case there are some who are unaware of it, you can still get the grom extension assy from ti for \$5.84 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling. Order the following:

GROM Ext. Assy  
part 049693

Address: Texas Instruments Inc.  
P.O. box 2100  
Lubbock, Tx 79408

or call: (806)741-2265 and use your credit card.

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As you can see, this column was easy to do. Most of it was written by others and all I did was put it together for you. I wish ALL columns were this easy :-)

Till next month.....

\*>> Dave <<\*

## USING A MODEM

Dick Beery

This is the first in a projected four-part series of articles about using a modem with your TI computer. Our new newsletter editor, Bill Wood, has asked me to write such a series to encourage more people to use modems and to help them get started. Several years ago, I wrote a similar series for this newsletter, but that information is largely out of date. So this will be an all-new approach.

Even if you don't own or use one, chances are you're familiar with modems. Basically, a modem allows a computer to send and receive information over a telephone line. This information can consist of messages and other text files (for instance, this article was sent from my computer to Bill's over a modem), games and other types of programs, and even graphics images.

As you are probably aware, computers use digital processing, which means that all information is reduced to a series of ones and zeroes. On the other hand, telephone lines transmit audible (sound) information such as voice and music. The modem serves as a "translator" between one type of information and the other. When you send information over the modem, it translates the computer's digital signals into audible tones, and when you receive information, it converts the audible tones sent by another modem into digital signals that your computer can understand.

Types and prices of modems can vary widely, so it helps if you belong to a computer users' group or have one or two friends who are knowledgeable about modems before you run out to buy one. If you purchased a used TI99/4A system, it may have included Texas Instruments' early acoustic modem. These modems are equipped with a cradle in which you put the telephone handset. The modem creates audible tones that are picked up by the microphone part of the handset and listens for tones coming back through the speaker portion. Although these acoustic modems are no longer made, there's nothing to prevent you from using one. But they do depend upon a tight seal between the telephone handset and the modem to ensure proper data transmission, so you may want to try several of your phones with the modem to see which provides the best fit.

The majority of modems made today are of the direct-connect type--the modem plugs directly into your telephone line and usually has another outlet so that you can plug a standard telephone into the modem. These modems tend to be more reliable, since they generate audio signals internally and don't depend upon a telephone's microphone and speaker. In fact, with the right software for your computer, you can use some of these modems without even having a telephone hooked up to the line.

Modems are usually classified by the maximum speed at which they can send and receive data. This speed is measured in bits of information per second, or "baud". Earlier modems, such as the TI acoustic, could transfer information at 300 baud, which meant that 300 ones and zeroes were going through the phone line every second. To give you an idea of what that means, this article would have taken about five minutes to send at 300 baud.

Nowadays, many people find that speed much too slow, especially if the call is long-distance. Over the past several years, 1200 baud has been the most common transmission speed, and many computer users have gone to 2400 baud. I recently got one of the 2400-baud models myself and it makes quite a difference. Instead of taking five minutes to send this article at 300 baud, it takes a little over a minute at 1200 baud and only about a half-minute at 2400 baud.

However, all that speed can sometimes be a liability. When you're trying to read information as it comes across the screen rather than simply saving it to a file, it can be difficult to keep up with the higher baud rates. In fact, you may find 300 baud much more comfortable to use in the beginning. Higher-speed modems usually can operate at lower speeds as well, so you could buy one of these, run it at 300 until your familiarity and reading speed increase, and then utilize the higher baud rates.

Why would anyone want to use a modem in the first place? That's a question that may seem important now, but believe me, when you become familiar with the amount of information available over phone lines, you'll be wondering how you ever got along without one.

Think of it this way. Without a modem, you are restricted entirely to the computer equipment and programs that you own. When you connect to another computer by modem, you have access to the information that computer contains. And when you tie in to a computer service available to many computers, you can call on the resources of every other use of that service.

The range of such computer services is impressive. For instance, some banks now permit savers to get a current balance, transfer funds from one

account to another and even make some utilities payments directly by computer. In addition, many libraries are now using computerized card catalogs, and some permit the public to access the catalog by modem. The Public Library of Columbus and Franklin County allows patrons to make selections from its catalog in such a manner, and reserve material to be picked up later in person. The Ohio State University, in combination with the State Library of Ohio, also makes its catalog available by modem. More specific information about these types of services will appear in part two.

A number of other computer services are available on a subscription basis. The largest of these, CompuServe, is based right here in Columbus. These services offer public domain and shareware programs, reference information on a variety of topics, and even shopping areas where you can purchase items over the modem.

The most commonly used computer services, however, are local bulletin board services, so named because they serve as electronic bulletin boards for computer users. These services, usually known as BBS's, are run by computer enthusiasts for computer enthusiasts. They offer areas for users to leave messages for one another and typically include libraries of non-commercial programs that can be "down-loaded" right from the BBS to your machine. Interested in getting the latest version of a shareware word processing program for your computer? Just dial up the local BBS and download the program to a disk. Have a question about how to use that program? Leave a message for other users. Chances are, someone else has faced the same question and come up with an answer.

Some BBS's even offer games that you can play "on-line" (while you are connected to the BBS via modem). People who work in specialized areas, like genealogy, can access the finding of others through on-line databases.

One of the most interesting and fun experiences in modeming, according to many people, is interpersonal contact, one on one, through the computer. I have recently helped several people learn how to do this and invariably they have remarked, "This is really fun! I didn't know how much fun it could be!" All we were doing was sending some programs I had and they didn't over the modem (public domain or fairware, of course) and typing messages back and forth. They found it thrilling to type something and have me immediately type a reply to them. While voice communication is in some ways easier, seeing written communication on the screen can clear up any confusion about terminology and correct spelling. But I think the main attraction is finding a whole new way to communicate with others. Many bulletin board services offer users the opportunity to "chat" with the system operator this way.

All right, so now you know some of the things that communicating by modem can do for you. The next question, of course, is how much does it cost?

Your start-up expenses will include the cost of modem and whatever interface is necessary to connect it to your computer. We'll have more on this subject in upcoming segments, but for now you only need to know that a modem doesn't have to be very expensive. Even high-speed modems are available for less than \$100. Communications software is also inexpensive. Fairware programs for the TI typically cost about \$15-\$20.

And it doesn't have to cost you much to use that equipment. Currently, modem access to telephone lines is free of extra charge unless, of course, you're calling long distance. However, telephone companies in some areas of the country are attempting to impose a surcharge for modem usage. BBS operators, national database managers, business users, etc., are attempting to combat this, but it's unclear how this issue will be resolved.

Columbus-area TI users are lucky in that there are three BBS's specifically for the 99/4A-Geneve in the local dialing area. If you are already a modem user, you can call (614) 263-3412 to log on to the Spirit of 99 BBS (the CONNI club's official board); (614) 442-1852 to get TIABS, operated by Bud Wright; and (614) 268-1994 for Chuck's BBS, operated by Chuck Grimes. Long-distance users please note: Columbus is not currently available on the PC-Pursuit network, but can be accessed via Starlink. If those names are unfamiliar to you, don't worry--part 3 will contain further information.

Finally, remember: Using a modem can get you important information to enrich your life and expand your horizons, but it should also be FUN! Plan to enjoy it!

Reprinted from the Chicago Times,  
Feb., 1990

## WHY DO I CONTINUE TO USE MY TI COMPUTER?

by Jan Janowski

Now that is a question that has started a few arguments.... I am aware that there are faster, more powerful computers. I am aware that there are not as many people with TI computers as with MS-DOS computers. So why do I keep using my TI? There are four very good reasons:

1. The TI User Group, and the people in it. The User Group expands your knowledge by sharing information and ideas. I know that is the case. For the first three years with my TI computer I "went it alone" without any backing of a local user group. What a waste of time! The power of a User Group is you have many people all working on there own projects, and these people discover things. It is this sharing of ideas and discoveries that make us collectively smarter. If we run into problems, we search for solutions as a group, covering much more area as a group than as individuals alone. The years I spent working on the TI computer alone were for a large part wasted time, for I was searching through problems that had already been solved. Without the User's Group behind me, I would have never developed the TI Portable, the PAL based MBP Clock, or the Eprommer mod, for I wouldn't have found out about a Ramdisk, MBP Clock, or the Eprommer.

2. Non TI-developed hardware. If ramdisks, Hard drives, and other uniquely designed third party hardware had not been developed, I am certain that interest in our Orphaned computer would have waned. I think of the day I bought my Hamsoft insert at a Hamfest as a turning point in my personal TI history. I spent about a month repairing the broken interface card, and when I was done, I was happily typing on a TI computer, and transmitting RTTY (Radioteletype) and CW (Morse Code) to other ham radio enthusiasts WORLDWIDE. I

occasionally came across other TI computers, but in each case I found out that the people on the "other end" had no local TI User's Group nearby, so they used their TI as a tool, just like I did, but nothing more (Another example of the power of a User's Group!). It was this Ham Radio TI computer --- hardware, that opened my eyes to other projects. For example, Ramdisks have simplified our lives, and made our computers much more versatile. Hardware. That is the key to the future of our computer. The more hardware that becomes available, the more opportunities to expand and modify our individual projects. By expanding our projects our computers become more efficient. The more efficient, the more productive. We all started out saving to cassette. Remember how disk systems made you think that you never wanted to go back to cassette? Remember how Ramdisks speeded up your loading, saving? And of course if you have a Hard Drive, you probably decided that you couldn't live without it, right? I truly feel that Hardware is the key to our computer's extended life.

3. Familiarity. On first thought, you might think that this wouldn't have a thing to do with computers, but it does. One of the major problems facing software companies is getting a large percentage of registered software users to update to new releases of existing programs where the structure of the program is changed greatly, is overcoming the "familiarity factor" of users. This can be taken one more step, and considered on the whole, as opposed to just programs. One of the reasons that so many word processing programs abound is that people learn the one they are using, and do not want to go through the "learning process" all over again for a new program. If you are comfortable in BASIC, and you had an idea for a program, would you suddenly go to assembly language or C, or Forth if you were unfamiliar with those other languages? You probably would stay in BASIC. The same goes for computers.

You have all the documentation available for the TI. Just think of the re-learning time and effort you would need to spend just to get to where you are now... on a different computer. Not only would you need to re-learn everything all new, you would have to re-purchase like programs to the ones you already own, for the new computer, and re-learn that, too. All this is in order to continue with your existing projects. Then there is the problem of compatibility. Will your "new computer" software do exactly what your existing software does? Will it support your printer? Will the files be interchangeable? How much is your time worth? Familiarity.... It makes more sense now, doesn't it? This same argument is the reason why there are still people using Radio Shack Model III, Commodore, CPM, and other computers. Familiarity, it makes a lot of sense.

4. Cost. That is something that everyone can understand. If you have a project that at present costs you absolutely nothing, and you want to compare it against a \$1400.00 outlay that does the same thing, you have an idea of what I am talking about. If you are comparing a project that cannot be done on one computer, verses a \$1400.00 outlay, that is a different story. The biggest difference between our computer and other types would be whether a project could be done on it or not. If a project cannot be done on our TI computer there is no solution other than to consider switching. However, look into the software base for our computer. There are still software writers out there, and they are still bringing out new code. If you are comparing a \$45.00 investment in code verses a \$1400.00 investment in hardware plus "I don't know how much.." for software, which way do you go? It depends on how much you want to spend. I have contacted many hams who boast of an AT or PC connected to their ham radio, but they can't do any better job in RTTY than I can do on my TI computer except load files faster. I could

not justify a \$1400.00 (or possibly greater) expense to do the same thing that I can do on my \$80.00 investment in computer gear for ham radio. (TV \$10, Computer \$15, Interface card \$20, Software insert \$20, Cassette Recorder \$15, I borrow printer when necessary). Cost accounting on purchases is an emotional thing to do, but at the bottom line there still is that dollar figure staring up at you. Cost is a big consideration, when comparing an upgrade to an existing system.

So, why do I use my TI computer? Because it DOES THE JOB. It's:

- Efficient
- Accurate
- Available
- Easy to Use
- Educational
- Affordable (Paid for)
- Inexpensive (parts obtained inexpensively)
- Reliable
- Affordable and Modify-able (mods are relatively inexpensive)
- Improvable (extra hardware is available!)
- Good software base
- Custom software available (it is possible to get custom stuff written for you!)
- Benefit of the User Group
- Great people in the User Group
- Interaction to Ham Radio

and a heck of a lot of FUN!

#### DISCLAIMER

This newsletter is brought to you through the efforts of the officers and members of the HOOSIER USERS GROUP. Every member is encouraged to submit articles.

If you have an article you would like to share with the other members mail it to:

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