



DALLAS
TI
HOME
COMPUTER
GROUP

DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

Volume 7, Number 11 November 7, 1987

(11/09/87- 1:30 pm)

The Online Newsletter of the
DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP

November 7, 1987

Editor: Greg Justice (MC 146041)

This newsletter is the official publication of the DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, a non-profit organization serving member/users of the Texas Instruments 99/4A HOME COMPUTER. For more information you are invited to attend our next meeting or send a SASE to: DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, PO Box 29863, Dallas, Texas 75229

> > > NEXT MEETING < < <

99er Connection BBS

Saturday, November 14, 1987

24 Hours, 300/1200 Baud

The Dallas INFOMART

214-272-2786

NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Day:

Inside DAL99ER:

Main Program: DTIHCG Roots
Software SIG

Calendar of Events
Meeting Schedule
From the Oval Officer
The Program Director
The Newsletter Speaks
Hardware SIG Report
Next-Step Workshop

Big FALL SWAP MEET

** Note NEW Next-Step home **

Mini-Sig Report
The Library Corner
Disk of the Month
Volunteer Column
Cartridge Library
Membership Memos
Stanfill's Stall
Funnyweb Farm
Special Feature

NEXT-STEP workshop:

Friday, Nov. 27, 5:15 pm

at WYATT'S CAFETERIA on
Josey Ln at Beltline Rd

SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

EVENT DATE TIME

INFOMART Meeting 11/14/87
Software SIG featuring
"PR-BASE" " " " 9:00 am
Main Meeting presenting
the DTIHCG history " " " 10:00 am

SPECIAL FALL SWAPMEET
 following main meeting" " " NOON
 Executive Committee and 11/21/87 1:00 pm
 Committee Chairmen " " " 2:30 pm
 PR-Base MiniSIG 11/22/87 2:00 pm
 NEXT-STEP WorkShop #S
 at Wyatt's Cafeteria
 on Josey at Beltline 11/27/87 5:15 pm
 Nominating Committee 11/29/87 2:00 pm

Newsletter Deadline 12/ 4/87 Midnight
 Deadline for Chili
 Supper Reservations
 and deposit payment 12/ 7/87 Midnight
 Last date to cancel Chili
 Supper Reservations and
 get a deposit refund 12/ 9/87 9:00 pm
 Free Software Library
 Swap Session and # 12/13/87 2:00 pm
 Chili Supper at TDI #+\$ 12/13/87 6:00 pm
 INFOMART Meeting 12/19/87

ELECTION THIS MONTH!
 Hardware SIG presents
 SUPERCARTS " " " 9:00 am
 Main Meeting covers
 FORTRAN on the /4A " " " 10:00 am
 Programming SIG reviews
 "NUTS AND BOLTS" " " " 1:00 pm
 Executive Committee Not held this mo.
 Committee Chairman Not held this mo.
 MiniSIG Not held this mo.
 NEXT-STEP WorkShop Not held this mo.

NOTES:

\$ = Attendance Fee
 # - DTIHCG Membership Required
 + = Reservations Required
 SIG = (S)pecial (I)nterest (G)roup

Dallas TI Home Computer Group

Program Schedule - INFOMART

November 14, 1987

9:00 - 9:55 Software SIG featuring PR-BASE Database

10:00 - 11:55 Main Meeting

10:00 - 10:30 Business Meeting

10:30 - 11:30 Dallas TI Home Computer Group History

11:30 - 11:55 Swap Meet - continues through afternoon

12:00 - 12:55 LUNCH BREAK - Swap meet continues

1:00 - 2:55 The Swap meet goes on!!!

Meeting room numbers can be obtained at our booth, or check the master list posted on the two overhead projectors, located just past the Registration booths. Children under age 16 MUST remain with their parents at all times, in accordance with INFOMART regulations!

All meetings will begin promptly on the hour, since other groups may be scheduled to use the room after us. Please be on time.

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FROM THE OVAL OFFICER: Louis Guion
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After having to wade through my overly long column last month, the one about all the club officers and chairmen's duties, you may relish the potpourri this month.

Please look at the schedule for the Library Swap and Chili Dinner. The date has been advanced to December 13th. You really should go ahead and plan to pay the \$5.00 reservation fee (refundable if you attend) at this month's INFOMART meeting. I know the folks in charge of the dinner would like to know as soon as possible how many people to plan meals for.

The sparks 'n spittin that went on with the monitors last month caused David Axberg to get up and run from the electrical buzzes when a monitor was plugged in next to where he was sitting. David's reaction was as correct as it was funny, but the cross connections did cause some problems. Two of the computers died and one monitor was also damaged. The root cause is that some, if not all, of the monitors have a directly grounded chassis. When we strung about five monitors together in our usual daisy-chain fashion, one of them was apparently plugged into the wall "backwards". Yes, I know that they all have 3-conductor power cables and plugs. What was different this time is that we had used a separate wall socket for the last two monitors and in addition we'd used a non-polarized 2-wire extension cord. Evidently one or more monitors in the string were therefore reversed from normal, making the chassis "hot". When the "hot" chassis was connected to the rest of the string which had grounded frames, something had to give. Two computers were involved because we apparently thought we had a "bad" computer the first time. The monitor that "got it" probably wasn't the offending one, either. There just isn't any justice sometimes, is there.

Anyway, the 110-volts blew a few chips in the consoles and vaporized a "wire" on their printed circuit boards. After repairs, both consoles live again! The monitor still is cripple, but help has arrived from TI-Lubbock in the form of a schematic. The schematic was \$5, while an exchange TI monitor runs \$100 for the exchange, \$8.00 for our new 8% sales tax, and another \$6.00 for shipping. I hope we can get the monitor going again now that we have some technical information!

This whole episode points up what we have been saying for a long time, though. Your club needs some equipment brought to meetings so that we can present programs, diagnose problems, and teach others. We ask for equipment to come to Software Library sessions and to NEXT-STEP Workshops. And we always try to remember to say that it simply has to be AT YOUR OWN RISK. Yes, we always try to say THANK YOU for having brought it. Small pay. Big risk? Not usually, but this incident points out that the warning is for real! My thanks, especially, go out to Tom Hall who is still without a working monitor and to John Creviston who has done everything he can to get it monitoring again. I repeat; thanks to all of you that let the group use your expensive equipment when we ask.

As somewhat of an outgrowth of this incident, I understand from personal experience how hard it is to concentrate on what you are doing as you scurry around trying to set up the systems for the meetings. Computers coming out of cases and monitors off of carts. Cables and wires everywhere. Missing disks or cartridges. Ramdisks that have lost their carefully loaded program demonstration software. Many helping hands to assist, and to direct! Right in the middle of this comes MaryJaneJohn Motor-Mouth with a technical question about why her attempt to transfer Fast-Term, version 99.17C2d from her 3 1/2" drive to her cassette recorder caused a red stripe to appear only when she went into the CHAT mode on an Alaskan BBS dealing in conversations covering barbed wire collections. Folks, I gotta let it be known that this sort of question and some a whole lot simpler sure can break your concentration. If you-all could, would you please hold those questions until the folks have the system set up? Hold them 'till the person giving our SIG program has opened his briefcase and completely set up his act.

Ask those questions at the Open Forum. Ask them at the lunch break. Ask them after the meeting. But, please don't ask them while someone is trying to set up the equipment for the meeting. Thanks.

November's INFOMART meeting will feature our big equipment swapmeet, garage sale, flea market, or what-have-you. We'll hold it in the main meeting room, after the close of the History Program. It will begin shortly after Noon, if our past performance is any guide. It will continue until it is over. Just in case no other columnist explains the rules, you can bring computer related items you'd like to sell, swap, or give away. You'll use the tables in our meeting room to set up, display, and sell your merchandise. Of course we expect there will be lots of 99/4A stuff, but other brands of computer gear are also acceptable. We don't need car parts, glassware, Tyler roses, or anything like that. Just computer related items. There will be no charge to members, guests, or visitors for participating in the session. In fact, if you know someone with stuff for sale, have them bring it on down or bring it for them if you want to. Of course we expect buyers as well, so shake the bushes for fiends that need to expand their holding in the 4A world. Yeah, I know, I meant to say, "friends" in that last sentence, but decided it looked good just like I had misspelled it!

I suspect that this is probably a poor time to mention it considering that there may be all sorts of non-working equipment at the swapmeet, but I'd like to remind you-all that the time to repair equipment and to analyze hardware from a hands-on standpoint is the NEXT-STEP Workshop. The NEXT-STEP Workshop is held on the second Friday after the INFOMART meeting. At the NEXT-STEP we provide the place, the people, and whatever test gear we can gather just to help you with hardware problems as well as assist you in other ways. The point is this. Please don't bring hardware to INFOMART and ask that we help you trouble-shoot it there during or after the meeting. We have no test systems nor test

equipment: INFOMART is just neither the proper place nor the proper time to work on hardware.

While on the subject of the NEXT-STEP Workshop, pay close attention to the meeting place in November. It will be at the Wyatt's Cafeteria on Josey Lane at Beltline Road in Carrollton. The cafeteria is located in the shopping center on the southeast corner of the intersection. Same time as usual, but a different place. Don't go to TDI. Josey and Beltline is only a little ways further north. We are trying to give you the opportunity to escape both the kitchen and the turkey since it falls on the day after Thanksgiving. Thanks go to Jim Stewart for making the cafeteria arrangements, and to Greg Justice for the use of his place the rest of the year.

I'll see you at the meeting!

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Jackie Guion

Jon Hodges showed us how to plan future hardware purchases last month at 9 o'clock. I'm wondering how many of you will use some of that information this month when we have our swapmeet. Of course, you could always use the information to hint for Christmas gifts too! It was nice to have someone explain some of the various things we should take into consideration as we expand our systems.

This month at 9 a.m. Lynn Nidiffer will be demonstrating the data base program, PR-Base. Since many of you have been asking for a presentation on a data base, we will be expecting a good turnout for this program. Lynn has used the program extensively and will be showing the latest version, which, I understand, also runs on the Myarc 9640. The MICROPENDIUM reviewer says of PR-Base, "The BEST all-around application in my opinion." The review is in the current (October) issue, which will be for sale by Mike Stanfill at the main meeting for you that don't subscribe. There will be a PR-Base MiniSiG later in the month. The MiniSiG will also be presented by Lynn. You'll have the opportunity to ask additional questions at that meeting.

How'd you like the presentation on the 9640 running Multiplan and TI-Writer last month? I thought Jon Hodges and Richard Roberts did a really good job and, incidentally, brought off the first fully functional public demonstration the group has had of the Myarc 9640. This month we go from that look at the future to a look at the past. Vice President Dan Johnson will be hosting the main meeting's presentation of the Dallas TI Home Computer Group's history. This is a program that I have wanted to present for almost a year now, and with the help of several of the group's past presidents it is now becoming a reality. Be there at 10:00 a.m. for the start of the main meeting.

October brought a presentation of Super Extended Basic as implemented by Craig Miller of Miller's Graphics for Triton Products Company. Host Rip Dowling even wrote a special presentation program in SEB so that we could get an idea of some of the features. We won't be having an afternoon SIG in November as there will be a special FALL SWAPMEET going on during the normal SIG time. It will start shortly after Noon and run into the afternoon. Swapmeet Chairman Richard Roberts will be in charge. We discovered from our experience with the GameMaster's INVADERS playoff that we cannot sandwich another activity in between the end of the main meeting and the start of an afternoon SIG, so we have simply let the FALL SWAPMEET have all of the afternoon SIG time. If you

have any questions about the Swapmeet, call Richard Roberts before the meeting.

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THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR SPEAKS: Greg Justice

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As those of you who read this newsletter regularly know, I have written very little material this year. This has not been by accident, I do not feel obligated to have a column unless I have something to share! Since this month's main program is a history of the club I was fortunate enough to borrow a complete set of the club's newsletters since FEBRUARY 1982! It's amazing to see how far this club has come in its 5 to 6 year life! We are trying to locate the 1981 newsletters too. If you have any or know someone who does please send them our way! From the records we have, it appears the club formed in March or April of 1981. I spent nearly 4 hours last night reviewing this volume of material. What follows is a listing of the highlights that particularly jumped out at me as I scanned them. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did!

In that regard, we are also considering producing some copies of these back issues. If you would be interested in purchasing one, at a yet-undetermined price, let me know.

Feb 82 - Introduction of an "Expansion Chassis" to be available "soon", a NEW Extended BASIC - available "soon", Adventure game series released.

May 82 - A Listing of classes for the 99/4a offered at the University of Texas at Dallas (Richardson) included: Intro to LOGO, Intro to BASIC, Intro to User Friendly Languages, Intro to Personal Computers (NOT IBM!), and an interesting title - Matching Computers to Kids for adults.

Sep 82 - A bulk diskette purchase - \$ 1.75 per disk.

Oct 82 - Munchman/TI-Invaders Contest proposed. (See David, you didn't do it first!)

Nov 82 - Game Contest results - Rod Paulson - Parsec - 10,400 points.

Jan 83 - Expansion Box demo, Rod Paulson sweeps this month's contest too!

Mar 83 - Microsoft Multiplan arrived on the scene.

May 83 - TI Professional Computer demo, Multiplan review, move to Northlake college announced. (All meetings were being held at the University of Dallas).

Jun 83 - Last TI Store in area scheduled to close on the 18th.

Oct 83 - 99/8 project scrapped, revealed that TI had parts for 3 MILLION /4a consoles on hand at the time.

Nov 83 - *** 4 years ago this month *** TI announced that the 99/4a production would cease.

Apr & May 84 - Due to technical difficulties with the newsletter editor's system, the newlsetter was replaced with a postcard reminder of the meeting.

Jul 84 - A HUGE 6 page newsletter. Most of the newsletters previously were a single sheet, sometimes printed on both sides!

Feb 85 - Announcement of a TIBBS test, among visitors this month was Robert Jones.

Apr 85 - The TIBBS test is running successfully, needs more user support.

Jun 85 - Louis Guion finds TIBBS... "addictive".

Sep 85 - Your's truly joined the club after visiting a couple of meetings.

Nov 85 - DTIHCG applied to the Dallas Computer Council for membership.

Dec 85 - "Trial" meeting held at INFOMART.

Jan 86 - First "real" meeting at INFOMART, Northlake College site becomes unavailable. First "booklet" style newsletter, 16 pages long, with graphics!

Feb 86 - The TIBBS celebrates its first birthday.

Mar 86 - With the INFOMART move came official Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and this month saw the introduction of Mini-Sigs.

May 86 - Bulk diskette purchases - 50 cents per disk, DM-1000 version 3.1, and Funlwriter V3.1 announced. Disk of the Month debuts.

Jun 86 - A specialized form of Mini-Sig, the NEXT-STEP is announced.

Jul 86 - After some 5 years the newsletter receives a name - the DALLAS 99 INTERFACE.

Aug 86 - Mike Stanfill's now famous TINYGRAMS debut. The newsletter has grown to 20 pages.

Nov 86 - Bulk diskettes - 10 for \$ 5.00, 20 for \$ 8.00.

Mar 87 - First club dinner held in conjunction with a library swap session.

Apr 87 - Columnist's photos appear in the newsletter. Bulk diskettes - 40 cents per disk.

Jul 87 - Game Review column debuts.

Aug 87 - Special "Super Summer" 28 page newsletter published.

Sep 87 - Game contest reborn after 4 1/2 year absence.

Well, that's about it! I hope this little trip through the archives has been enjoyable. I can hardly wait for Dan's meeting presentation to see what else he comes up with to tell us about our roots. Be there!

Almost forgot! I have inserted a couple of the "old" newsletters so you can see just how far we have come over the years. As I write this I haven't selected them yet so check the centerfold for a bit of nostalgia!

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HARDWARE SIG: Jon Hodges
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LAST MONTH: At 9:00 we looked at ways to plan our purchases for peripherals so that they will be useful on our NEXT computer as well as this one. It went well with the 10:30 discussion of TI WRITER and MULTIPLAN on the MYARC 9640. We got to see how Myarc's system, even in its unfinished state, runs the programs much faster than a 99/4A, but at a price. That same money could be used to add several RAMdisks or even buy a PC compatible such as the Triton Turbo-XT. If you are looking at expanding in that direction in the near or intermediate future, it would be a good idea to consider the upward compatability of your peripherals and buy with that in mind. One thing that is obvious if you have been following the discussion on disk drives on the BBS from a few weeks back; Apple/Atari/Commodore drives are NOT compatible with ours. We were unfortunate to not be able to demonstrate the "Turbo 4A" as we had originally planned; instead we got a lesson on the usefulness of using grounded extension cords for three-prong plugs on our equipment. As a two-wire extension cord allowed the ground and hot leads to be reversed on some monitors, connecting them to the computer blew the video output circuitry in the computer (we SHOULD have known better). Anyway, the "Turbo 4A" is a modified console with a 16-line address bus that allows faster access to memory and therefore faster programs. Perhaps, if Louis is brave enough, we will get to see it in action some day.

THIS MONTH: We take a breather from our intensive hardware emphasis of late so we can have the swapmeet this month. As you can read all about that elsewhere in this issue, I won't waste any more of your time. See you Saturday.

NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP: Tom Hall
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We certainly did have a lot of sick Consoles at the October 23rd NEXT-STEP. And it was contagious, too. The very next day one of my Consoles became ill and two days later a second one failed. So, it looks like Doctors Hodges, Creviston and Guion are going to have a Clinic full of Consoles on Sick Call. By the way, the date of that Sick Call is Friday, November 27th. Time is 5:15pm. Place is WYATTS at Josey and Beltline.

Wyatts is providing us a seperate meeting room. Plan on eating as soon as you arrive. Before you pay (this is Dutch Treat) your ticket, write DTIHCG on it, as we have a minimum dollar amount, in order to get the meeting room free. After we finish eating, the tables will be cleared and we will get on with the NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP. Wyatt's has requested that we conclude our meeting before 9pm. In case any of you members haven't yet attended a NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP, I want to issue you a special invitation to the NOVEMBER 27th NEXT-STEP.

The change in the NEXT-STEP meeting place from TDI to Wyatts is permanent. Our TDI host, GREG JUSTICE, is a key member of DTIHCG and is well known for the long hours and many contributions to our Users's Group. We are trying to cut GREG a little slack. Some special events will continue to be held at TDI.

Due to a number of factors, including Christmas, there will be no NEXT-STEP scheduled for December. However, we will be back strong on January 29th, at Wyatts, with our first 1988 NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP.

MINISIG REPORT: Tom Hall
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RIP DOWLING set new standards as host and SiG Leader for SUPER EXTENDED BASIC. Rip is another key member and the Club is beholden to him.

Sunday, November 22nd, 2:00pm is the time and date of the PR-BASE MINISiG. The host and SiG Leader is LYNN NIDIFFER. The meeting place and directions will be announced at the INFOMART and on THE 99'er CONNECTION. We have had a bunch of folks sign up for this one and it promises to be very popular.

The Library Swap and Chili Supper is the December 13th history making shindig. All you party animals be sure to attend this event and socialize the night away. See Charlice's column for the details.

Sunday, January 29th is the time and date for the UTILITIES MINISiG. Please, let me know what Utilities you would like to see demonstrated. What we are going to attempt is, simple, short, single purpose Utilities. I hope we can demonstrate between 6 and 10 different utility functions. A partial list is ARCHIVER, X-LATE, COMPACTOR, DM1000, BACKUP, DISK CATALOGER, LABELER, QUICK COPY II, AND TI SORT.

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MISCELLANEOUS
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The Club needs hosts for 1988 MINISiG meetings, please contact me if you can see your way clear to let us meet at your home or business. I'll fill you in on the details. It's really a lot of fun, and I promise you that you will get more out of it than you put in.

The success of DTIHCG rests with the volunteer efforts of it's members. We have been very fortunate this past year to have the folks step forward and take up the slack and insure that our Group is successful. It is that time of year when the baton is passed and new volunteers step forward to become key members. If you are interested or just curious, contact any of the Club Officers or Committee Chair Persons and find out what you can do to support our Club. Again, I repeat, you'll get more out of it than you put into it.

If you want to get in touch with me concerning NEXT-STEP, MINISiG's, or volunteering to host a MINISiG - call me at (metro) 267-5987, STARTEXT MC116172 or on the 99'er CONNECTION.

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LIBRARY CORNER: Charlice Althar
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Our SOFTWARE LIBRARY SWAP & CHILI SUPPER has been rescheduled for Sunday, December 13.

A big thanks to those who have contributed public domain software to be placed in the library. We still need more--so if you have any you'd like to make available to us, please bring it to INFOMART on November 14, or get in touch with me some other way. Thanks!!

The two cute Halloween graphics programs which will be added to our Library were brought to our NEXT-STEP October 23. Several members got copies of them for use before the holiday. You never know what you'll miss if you don't join us for NEXT-STEP.

We still need some more Christmas programs--if you have anything we can use, please call me!

The library update is "in the works"--this will be a major update. We're making additions to virtually every category. Among them are a new graphics program for creating and printing art work; PRBASE V2.1, the database manager which is the subject of our November meeting and minisig; Creative Filing System V6.0, another database; several games in extended basic and assembly language; a number of programming utilities; additional music programs; and a home and small business accounting system. These plus many others will be available for the first time December 13. Don't forget to make your reservations--remember, the Library Swap is ****FREE**** and the Chili Supper requires a reservation deposit, refundable at the dinner. Don't miss it!!

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THE CARTRIDGE CONNECTION: Doug Garretson
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Boy oh boy, did we have a run on the Cartridge Library last month! It's like some people only just now learned that the library exists! I was busier than a centipede at a toe counting contest, signing out cartridges to some members and receiving donations from others. Our President purchased two Super Extended Basic cartridges from a mail-order company (one for the club, and one for his son) and netted the club three free selections of TI-produced cartridges as a bonus! Louis elected to choose some educational packages for the Cartridge Library, to fill the ranks in that category. Thanks, Louis! Also, John Creviston came through with a donation of a TI-LOGO software package. This, too, is most appreciated. The selections now available from the Cartridge Library on a one-month check-out basis are as follows:

(2)Addition and Subtraction 1; Addition and Subtraction 2; Alien Addition; Anteater; The Attack; Blasto; Beginning Grammar; Blackjack and Poker; Car Wars; Centipede; Disk Manager; Disk Manager 2; (2)Early Learning Fun; Editor/Assembler; (2)Football; (2)Home Financial Decisions; (3)Household Budget Management; Hunt The Wumpus; TI-LOGO; Microsoft Multiplan; Microsurgeon; Munchman; (2)Parsec; Personal Real Estate; (4)Personal Record Keeping; (2)Personal Report Generator; Physical Fitness; (2)Picnic Paranoia; Protector; Reading Roundup; Securities Analysis; Shamus; (2)Statistics; Terminal Emulator II; (3)TI Invaders; TI-Writer; Touch Typing Tutor; Video Chess; Weight Control and Nutrition.

The titles listed in **BOLDFACE** are new to the library this month. Thanks to John Creviston and Louis Guion for their contributions! In addition, a Super Extended Basic cartridge (mentioned above) will soon be added to this list. Be looking for it!

In the check-out department, we had seven people check out a total of fourteen software packages last month! That is an all-time record for the number of cartridge check-outs in one month! Let's keep it up!

Just a note to the folks who checked out cartridges: Please be sure to bring them back to me as early as you can on Saturday, because someone else may want to check out the cartridge you borrowed in October. So, please be considerate and get those carts back to me ASAP come Saturday.

See you all at INFOMART!!!

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MEMBERSHIP MEMOS: Chuck "Grizzly Adams" Long
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Our October meeting is safely behind us and we all managed to survive once again, irregardless of some of the antics of some of the people involved. We had some great fun watching and cheering on the finalists in the Gamemasters wing-ding. We had several new people join us and become members. For those of you who were not able to make the meeting, we even had Mr. Mark Levine president of the Central Illinois 99 Users Group visit us and share in our meeting.

I am pleased to announce that all of the 100 initial stamps for the vendor post card project have been given out. I have found one address error, however there may be more. If you come across any bad addresses please give me a note so I can correct them, also if any of you fine people that can supply me with any additional names and addresses for vendors, publications, repair sources, or any other useful data, I will add them to our growing list so that all the members of our group may benefit from them.

I would like to take this moment to congratulate CAROL TAPIA on her winning the monthly drawing from the COMPUTER SHOPPER. Ms. TAPIA tells me that this is the first time she has won anything and she plans to put the books and goodies she won to good work, especially since she has three clones (kidos) of her own.

Off On A Tangent (Computer Housekeeping)

This month I want to talk about Disk Drives. Traditionally the programmer (like the quarterback) gets all the credit for all the neat things that your computer can do. However (like a quarterback) much of the credit for success goes to the engineering excellence, precision, and reliability of much of the computer hardware (this is much like the football line). In my opinion the disk drive is very likely the single most important piece of auxiliary equipment that is connected to your computer. It is used as an input device, output to storage, and if you have a DOS system the actual operation of what you are doing is directly affected....Anyway much depends on the proper operation of the disk drive. Imagine this relationship for a moment if you will, the proper functioning of a disk drive is very much like flying a 747 jumbo jet 6" off the ground. This requirement even applies to "bargain" drives, so think about that when you get ready to buy.

As with last months disk care CLEANLINESS is not just next to godliness it is an absolute must do situation. To get an idea of what we are talking about, a piece of common everyday type of dust floating around in the air, to a disk drive, is about like having a tiny piece of stone in your shoe. However a pet or human hair would be like a small marble in that same shoe. The larger pieces of pollution progressively cause greater havoc in your drives.

Fortunately for us down on the farm TI99 hackers this does not pose an impossible problem. Assuming that your drive is located in your P-BOX the job will take a little while but have heart the rewards are worth an hour or so of menial labor. First you need to gather your tools, I found a medium Phillips and a medium Flat tip screwdrivers were plenty adequate, 2 or 3 long stick cotton tip swabs, some rubbing alcohol, an oiler with a long needle type dispenser, a natural hair paint brush, and lastly some cardboard and a paper cup. Next clear off a place about three times as big as you think you will need

and cover it with a piece of cardboard to help cushion your expansion box. CAUTION the box is heavier than you might think so go easy. Remove the top and all cards.

I found that standing the box on the end where the on-off switch is located worked easiest for me, but pick for yourselves. When all is ready you start by removing the black screws from the bottom of the p-box that hold the drive in place, there are 2 screws on the top. The cup is for all the screws that you do not want to lose. Gently slide the drive out until you can disconnect the group of wires from the nylon connector. The ribbon cable from the drive to the controller must also be disconnected gently, (please dont drop the drive). Take a moment to look at the drive housing to see how it comes off, then gently pry up the metal tab and slide the housing off. Take a moment to clean the cover at this time, the brush works well for this. Using a blast of compressed air or freon gently blow the accumulated dust and debris out. CAUTION blow away from the bearings and the record heads, gently is the word of the day. The brush will also work at this point if you don't have any compressed air. Using the long Q tip dipped in rubbing alcohol carefully clean the two slides the heads move back and forth on, be careful not to leave any cotton lint there either. After the slides are dry apply 2 or 3 drops of oil to each slide, do not get carried away with the oil. While you have the drive open take a look at the drive belt if it is cracked or cut or nicked or reminds you of a bad fan belt on your car you will need to replace it. Assuming everything is alright you can reassemble in the reverse order taking care not to pinch, bind or hurt any wires or connectors.

You may not notice any direct improvement in performance, however you have made an investment in the longevity and dependability of your system, as well as the longer life of your overall system.

For those of you who are so talented and courageous, schematics for Shugart drives may still be obtained from:

Hamilton Avnet Electric
Main Office
4545 Viewridge Ave.
San Diego, Ca. 92123
or
8750 Westpark Dr.
Houston, TX. 77063
or
2401 Rutland Dr.
Austin, TX. 78758

Check first, as not all models are available and not at all locations.
GRIZ

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DISK OF THE MONTH: John Creviston Jr.
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The end of the year is almost here. The thoughts of Holidays are gaining in all of the newspaper and TV ads. Charlice is planning on having a holiday music disk this year so I am not placing holiday music on the DOM.

The list of 9640 compatable programs is growing weekly. If we get several people in the group with the new computer there might be a "9640" month. I am

actively seeking a replacement chairman for the DOM committee. One individual has volunteered to consider this position. There was overwhelming response to my request for help in duplicating the past issues for sale at the meeting, but I have accepted help from only one person. This is the same one that wrote a catalog file for all the issues of the DOM. It can be displayed on the screen and printed with TI Writer. I hope to have copies of the disk and printed copies available by the December meeting.

So far I have decided on only some of the programs for the disk this month. One is a music XB program I adopted from the downloads on the 99'er Connection. The other is a special CLOCK from J.P. Hoddie. There are several more to choose from, and I have two weeks to do it!

I have version 7 of MENU and ROS for the HRD. There are 2 small bugs in the files that John Johnson is working on. I will announce when I get the changes so all of you (with Horizon Ram Disks) may get copies of the programs. I also have a copy of DISKUTILS version 4.0. Mr Birdwell has added a complete disk manager to the already excellent program. The new version will access all ram disks, has a separate file utilities menu, will allow you to date the disk when you initialize and several other advantages. I strongly recommend this program to all.

The user group is facing a critical time in the next few months. It is election time and volunteers are needed to fill the various positions of group functions. There are 5 elected positions and many appointed ones. Last month Louis listed the positions and their responsibilities. If you want the group to be here next year for you, you must be here for the group.

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VOLUNTEER COLUMN: Imogene Osborn
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Hear Ye, Hear Ye, ALL VOLUNTEERS!

We still need 6 systems for the Library SIG on DECEMBER 13th., New Date. We need at least 4 crock pots to be brought to the Chili SIG. The club will furnish the chili this time.... sometime in the future we may have a "Chili Cook Off" if there is enough interest. Then everyone will bring their 'own cook'.

Please give this consideration before you arrive at the INFOMART, and be ready to help us make this a wonderful Christmas celebration.

The yellow sheets and I will be at the back of the room, awaiting your vist!

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STANFILL'S STALL: Mike Stanfill
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This is another, in a long line of many, of "WHY I LOVE THE NEWSLETTERS" columns. And this time I got a very good reason.

For about the last two years I've been using the famously infamous Fastext 80 printer. Federated, among other stores, cleared these suckers out at give-away prices. (Got mine for \$69 bucks, he says proudly!) I've had no complaints about the machine except one:

IT CAN'T PRINT OUT TI-ARTIST OR GRAPH-X PICTURES!

As some of you know, I'm a big fan of GRAPH-X. And while I enjoy whipping out artistic atrocities for the general public (That's you!), I've never actually had the pleasure of a hard copy version of these mess-terpieces. Until now!

For it seems that somewhere down deep in the Florida everglades lives a man named Richard Corder who quite coincidentally owns a Fastext 80. And for the past several months has been passing along hints on the proper usage of this mystical little machine in his users group newsletter, "The Jacksonville Jax". So, along comes the september ish and danged if he hasn't figured a way to reconfigure GRAPH-X to print out hard-copy!!! So, as you can well guess, I'm as happy as a pig in FCC memos! And any other pig, uh, member who has this problem and would like the solution, then just give me call and I'll take care of it. You'll find my number in the back of this newsletter. I'm under plumbing or artificial sweetener or something.

Speaking of unspeakably saccharine experiences:

A few of us hung around long enough after the "GREAT SPACE INVADER SHOOT-OUT" to actually see our own, the inimitable, Rip Dowling demo the wondrous Super Extended Basic cartridge. If you were there you'd have felt, as I do, that this is surely a step up! Being a programmer I appreciated the new EDIT-ing commands. Being an artist I drooled over the new BIT-MODE drawing capabilities! But what YOU'LL appreciate is that the Los Angeles User Group, the LA 99er's, are selling it to the public for only \$50!! Which knocks \$9+ off any other offer anywhere!! So how do you get one at this ridiculous price? Well, you could send a \$50 check (plus \$2.50 for postage and handling) and a note explaining what the dough is for to:

LA 99er's Computer Group
P.O. BOX 3547
Gardena, CA 90247-7247
ATTN: Terrie Masters

They told me it wouldn't save us any money on the shipping by buying a bunch of them at a time because these cartridges come with a complete and entirely BRAND-SPANKING-NEW TI Extended Basic Manual! Plus a small manual of the SEB's new features. Besides which they're sent PRIORITY mail, so who can really complain? I've spoken indirectly to the source, Terrie Masters her ownself (through Tom Freeman), so this information, like Smuckers, has to be good!

And, finally, the October MICROpendiums are in (arrived October 23rd) and they are still only 75 cents. It's NEXT month they pop to a full dollar. Come see me. I'll be the one with 10 per-cent REAL fruit juice!

FUNNYWEB FARMS: Mike "Quick Dissolving" Stanfill

You know, I think Judge Bork might have had a better chance at the Supreme Court if he had only, somehow, managed to get himself dropped down a well.

I think what Gary Hart did wasn't all that bad. At least he didn't take the girl out and drown her afterward.

I found out what 'SCAB' stands for: Substitute Cowboys Are Better.

I'm kinda glad the market crashed. Now I won't have to listen to my grampa kvetch about 'How bad it was back during the depression' cause now we got our own!

I wish Nancy Reagan would run for president. She's smart, knows how to run the country and won't have a spouse looking over her shoulder trying to tell her what to do!

My wife left me because I'm a lousy lover. I wonder who told her?

We had 8 kids in our family, so my dad would always rip December out of the calender and tell us there was no Christmas that year. We got even by ripping out New Years.

The St. Louis baseball team has a new nick-name, the "Kleen-X Kardinals" because they were always 'popping up'!

I know a guy so old they put him on the 'CARBON-DATING GAME'.

I hear they're coming out with the ultimate integrated singing group: "Diana Ross and the Supremacists".

I hear there's a group of religions that worship bank vaults. They refer to themselves as "Safe Sects".

And finally,

Why don't they make handkerchiefs with the Ayatollahs face on it?

What does any of this have to do with Tinygramming? Nothing! Not a goll-durn thing! Having ones senses assaulted is guaranteed in your first amendment rights and I'm just trying to do my part. However, we do indeed have a Tinygram for you this month. It's called 'TINYHUSTLE' and it's a modem version of TI's HUSTLE. The rules of this game are simple: You move your character (the blue square) with the arrow keys. As you move you'll leave behind a trail of O's which you will use to encircle your opponent (X's) and force him to run either into your trail of O's or the border walls, whichever comes first! Remember, your opponent will be attempting to do the same to you!

Additional trivia:

- (1) Type the program in. SAVE a copy.
- (2) Phone a friend and decide who moves first.
- (3) Connect your modems. This program assumes 300 baud. Feel free to add whatever programming you like to get it up to the speed of YOUR modem.
- (4) RUN the program. You'll be asked if you're "1st or 2nd?". Hit the appropriate key (1 or 2) and hit ENTER. IMPORTANT, the player going first should wait a moment or two so that his opponents program will have reached the right place. In other words, the first thing player two's program does is run to line 9 and wait for an input. If player one starts too soon he will pass information before player two is in the right place to receive it.
- (5) As I've said, use the arrow keys to move your character (the aforementioned blue square). You don't have to continually hold down a key as once the square is in motion it will continue in that direction until it hits a

wall or a border or a Jehovah's Witness (Not a bad idea!).

(6)The game is equipped for scoring and sound. I hope you like it! And may the best scab, uh, man win!

In case you haven't figured it out already, this game requires, at a minimum, X-BASIC, and an RS-232. I WOULD have included a modem in that list but I figured a couple of you just might have a REAL LONG null modem cable, and I would so hate to be presumptuous!

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-----
1 !*****TINYHUSTLE*****
  *****A TINYGRAM*****
  ****BY MIKE STANFILL****
  *****MEMBER DTIHCUC*****
-----
2 CALL CLEAR :: INPUT "R U 1
ST OR 2ND?":P :: Q=P :: OPEN
#1:"RS232.EC.LF",INTERNAL
-----
3 B=0 :: CALL CLEAR :: P=Q :
: CALL COLOR(2,5,5,5,7,7)::
Y=6-(P=2)*19 :: G=1+(P=2)*2
-----
4 X=12 :: F=0 :: CALL HCHAR(
23,1,64,96):: CALL VCHAR(1,3
1,64,96):: DISPLAY AT(24,1):
" YOU=";U;" HIM=";M
-----
5 ON P.GOTO 6,9
-----
6 CALL KEY(1,K,S):: IF (K=2)
+(K=3)+(K=0)+(K=5)<0 THEN F=
(K=5)-(K=0):: G=(K=2)-(K=3)
-----
7 CALL HCHAR(X,Y,88):: X=X+F
:: Y=Y+G :: CALL GCHAR(X,Y,
C):: H=X :: J=Y :: CALL HCHA
R(X,Y,40):: PRINT #1:H,J,C
-----
8 M=M-(C<>32):: GOTO 10
-----
9 INPUT #1:H,J,C :: CALL HCH
AR(H,J,79):: U=U-(C<>32)
-----
10 IF C=32 THEN P=P+1 :: P=P
+((P=3)*2):: GOTO 5 ELSE B=B
+1 :: CALL SOUND(-99,110,B,-
7,B):: ON (B=30)+2 GOTO 3,10
-----
```

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AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!
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The following letter was posted on the Capricorn BBS in San Francisco, CA.

August 25, 1987

Myarc, Inc.
P.O. Box 140
Basking Ridge, N.J. 07920

Gentlemen:

I received your GENEVE 9640 "computer" together with manual and 3 diskettes. I had ordered the merchandise and received it directly from you. After unpacking I found the computer to be a card for the TI P.E. Box. Fine, I thought, so they shipped the engine for use in an old chassis, rather noisy and otherwise getting on in age. I wondered further, how many of these old boxes might there be around to make it worthwhile the effort, the capital to develop this much heralded piece of equipment? So I read the first pages of the manual, fortunately I had read some of the comments made on the TI Forum, and did what the manual did not tell me, I copied some of my mostly used cartridges to disk. Well, I first used the Cartridge Saver program you supplied on disk. It did not work too well. Second disappointment. So I used the program I downloaded from the DL, it worked beautifully.

Now I disassembled everything I had put together over the past few years, emptied my P.E. Box of your 512K expansion card, which according to your manual does not work with the GENEVE (why not I thought), of the TI hex-cable card, the two Gramkartes and put in your "computer". Oh, yes, I disconnected the TurboXT system, my TI connection to the multi thousand program world of IBM and compatibles which really had worked like a charm - all in the spirit of total submission to the idea of GENEVE and its full compatibility with TI 99/4a and whatever else it had to offer.

I hooked up my new RGB monitor and flipped the switch on the P.E.Box. Presto, the Swan appeared in living color, some further whirring of the disk drive and the GPL loader menu appeared, good! I followed instructions, slowed the machinery down to "2" to alleged even speed with TI. Well, as the machine wanted to give me TI, why not. So I loaded the standard Xbasic disk(cartridge). It worked: the TI screen appeared, tapping a key on the new keyboard, the standard Basic and XBasic showed up. AND THAT WAS THE END OF IT.

No program fully and properly executed! Need I say more? Somewhere along the line it stopped, crashed whatever. Yes, I loaded DM 1000, yes it cataloged, trying to print it locked the whole system up. And you start anew: switch off, switch on, wait to load, wait to load the cartdisk, try something else and - crash. Fast Term (Xmodem) loaded, beautiful I thought, finally something. So the cursor flashes, type the parameter file it said; I did, but nothing happens. The system is locked with the cursor flashing.

Well, I thought, let's try My Word, the "updated" TI-Writer version. This is now purely "their" stuff, it sure ought to work. NO IT DID NOT. Two things: everything I had seen so far on screen (whatever it was) was in normal, well separated color. The Editor version of MY WORD came in the much lauded 80 column format. Absolut lousy, the letters were too small in a kaleidoscope of colors, letters way too close to each other, like glued together, barely readable. No monitor adjustment fixed that. So I tried the Formatter to see if I could print some letter, like simple stuff. Boy, normal, TI like color, letters - but again, each and every time the system locked at the question "stop at end of page". Total lockup, reboot. Now, that is something else to get to MY WORD: get the swan, get the GPL loader, load Editor Assembler, punch 5, load the MY WORD file. Gruesome. And then it did not even work.

So I thought, somehow I must be able to get to DOS, after all I got that thick manual with all the good explanations. I know how to work DOS on my TurboXT, so it cannot be too difficult. Well I punched, pushed, deleted portions of the programs on the disk supplied by you. I felt like a stupe. So I phoned your office, mind you that costs money, too. Very friendly like I was told that NO machine works on DOS as yet. A new System/Sys version will come out by September 1st!

In summary: NOTHING I PURCHASED FROM YOU WORKS, IS COMPLETE. And the good, by now old GENEVE is, clearly stated, from my experience, either a piece of cumbersome junk with so many bugs that it will take forever to make it into a smooth machine or I got a tremendous lemon. I don't think the latter is the case. For the life of me I do not understand why you do not tell your customers the problems, the truth. What you have done (at least to me) is waste my time. One can expect for a few hundred dollars something that works, that performs as stated in the accompanying literature. I do not mind the money so much as the time wasted because of unclear, improper or lacking simple descriptions to operate the thing, or the simple statement, buy and try at your own risk, this machine is still in the development stages (if it is). You are not doing anyone

a favor, least of all yourselves, selling and marketing the GENEVE under the described circumstances.

I forgot to mention, your Xbasic II showed the same symptoms as far as print and color characteristics are concerned as the other 80 column programs as described above. Not readable. Moreover, any TI program containing color or graphics statements were killed, "not compatible with graphics mode". Your Xbasic II version for the TI incidentally works well and fast but does the same thing occasionally.

In further summary: The GENEVE is NOT compatible with TI on a one to one basis. It is terribly misleading, to put it mildly, to see the TI title screen show up, see Xbasic loaded as I described above and then experience that normal TI Xbasic programs do not work. What should one call that?

The foregoing are statements of fact which I hope, you will not mind me sharing with the TI community.

I wonder what you had in mind with the creation of the GENEVE? Did you really think this through? The computer card may have the basic ingredients of something great, it certainly has speed. But what then? to just fill old TI boxes cannot give you a large enough market, to create a new language, a new DOS system in this fashion cannot possibly penetrate in short enough a time period.

Yes, there are no doubt enthusiasts who will improve with you the machine, develop little programs here and there, just like for the TI 99, and just like they are starting to do. But can you expect the majority of the users to be technicians, to "mend" their TI programs to make them truly compatible with the GENEVE, to do the soldering, correcting etc.? You have not created anything so far for the serious, "normal" or least of all for the Business user who would like to set up the system, use existing software to do his accounting, writing or whatever, without having to fiddle endlessly. Regardless of the value of the IBM Dos, or that of another brand, would it not have been making more sense to be able to read an existing language, use the multitude of their existing programs - in combination with being truly compatible with TI? And that maybe in a freestanding box that could be connected to diskdrives, modems and the like?

This is not a business letter. Clear. I have been a TI enthusiast for quite a while, I don't like the beautiful little machine to get lost. I appreciate your considerable efforts, your excellent additions so far, like the Myarc cards which increase the capacity of the TI tremendously. That is why I bought the GENEVE. But IT, at least so far, is purely bad, for the reasons described above. No response needed.

Yours sincerely,
Werner Buntmeyer

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C E O T I C S 9
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Cutting Edge Of Technology In Computer Science: Jim Lesher
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BELIEVE IT OR NOT! SCIENTISTS ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH BRAIN TISSUE FOR COMPUTERS. THE ARTICLE SAID THAT SOME SCIENTISTS ARE TRYING TO PROGRAM FETAL BRAIN TISSUE TO IMPLANT INTO AN ADULT. FETAL TISSUE BECAUSE IT IS STILL GROWING

AND WILL MERGE INTO ADULT BRAIN TISSUE. THE SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THEY CAN PROGRAM THE TISSUE FOR MATHEMATICS, CHEMISTRY, FINANCE, OR ANY OTHER SUBJECT. FOR EXAMPLE ONE PROGRAMMED FOR MATH AND IMPLANTED INTO YOUR BRAIN, YOU WOULD BECOME A HUMAN CALCULATOR WITH ABOUT THE SAME SPEED.

ANYONE WANT TO BE THE FIRST TO SIGN UP FOR THE EXPERIMENT? ON A LIGHTER NOTE, KODAK WHO IS THE PRODUCER OF "VERBATIM" FLOPPY DISKS IS COMING OUT WITH SMUDGE-PROOF DISK. KODAK IS PUTTING A COAT OF TEFLON ON THEIR NEW DISKS WHICH WHEN TOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS IN THE OVAL WINDOW, WILL QUICKLY WIPE OFF AT THE FIRST TURN OF THE DISK IN ITS JACKET. THEY SAID THE PRICE WILL BE COMPETITIVE WITH PRESENT FLOPPIES ABOUT \$23.80 PER BOX WHICH IS ABOUT 15% HIGHER THAN THE REGULAR FLOPPIES AT \$20 PER BOX. YOU CAN SURE TELL THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN TO INFOMART BASEMENT. \$2 PER DISK FOR VERBATIM?

END (DAL99ER) (c) 1987 Dallas TI Home Computer Group
Editor: Greg Justice (MC 146041)