



# DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

DALLAS 99 INTERFACE  
Volume 10, Number 3

MARCH 1990

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

DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP  
P.O. Box 29863  
Dallas, Tx. 75229

\*\*\*NEXT MEETING\*\*\*  
Saturday, March 10, 1990  
at the Dallas Infomart

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+-----+
$   Phone the 99er Connection BBS   $
$         24 Hours, 300/1200 baud   $
$           214-233-1750             $
+-----+

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DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP  
P.O. BOX 29863  
DALLAS, TEXAS 75229

FIRST CLASS



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\*  
\* An Evening With Barry Boone \*  
\* Wyatt's Cafeteria \*  
\* Friday March 9th 1990 \*  
\* Josey Lane and Beltline Road \*  
\* 5:30 PM until 8:00 PM \*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
*Please join us!*

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 \* DTIHCG'S MAR/APR SCHEDULE \*  
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March 1990

- 3 Saturday  
   7:00am 1st Sat. Sidewalk Sale  
 9 "An Evening with Barry" at Wyatt's  
   Cafeteria, Belt Line Rd. and Josey Lane  
 10 Saturday  
   9:00am SUPER SATURDAY INFOMART  
 12 Monday  
   7:00pm CCD Corporate Director's  
   Meeting  
 15 TI-Writer Minisig  
 16 St. Patrick's Day  
 17 Saturday  
   DTIHCG E/C Committee Chairman's  
   Meeting  
 23 Friday  
   5:15pm NEXT-STEP TECHNICAL  
   ASSISTANCE MEETING  
   10:00pm Infomart Room Requests  
   Due CCD  
 26 Newsletter Articles due

April 1990

- 7 Saturday  
   7:00am 1st Sat. Sidewalk Sale  
 13 Good Friday  
 14 Saturday  
   9:00am SUPER SATURDAY INFOMART  
 15 Easter Sunday  
 16 Monday  
   7:00pm CCD Corporate Director's  
   Meeting  
 21 Saturday  
   DTIHCG E/C Committee Chairman's  
   Meeting  
 27 Friday  
   5:15pm NEXT-STEP TECHNICAL  
   ASSISTANCE MEETING  
   10:00pm Infomart Room Requests  
   Due CCD  
 30 Newsletter Articles due

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 SECRETARY                 CHARLICE ALTHAR     (214)-337-4640  
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 B-E-S-T BOOK CHAIRMAN  
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These people are the Club's officers and chairpersons. They all are invited to, and most attend, the three hour Committee Chairmen's Meeting (the officers meet for an hour and a half before that!) on the Saturday one week after the INFOMART meeting. In addition to just belonging, they serve themselves, and you, by giving freely of their time to make this a better club for us all.

Thank them individually, if you have the opportunity.

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is cited as the "ultimate extension for Extended Basic." These routines allow access to the bit mapped graphics mode within the console that normally require assembly language knowledge to use. Through different Call Link statements you are able to do manipulation of text and graphics that is nothing short of awesome. There is a "PAPERSAVER" program that is included that allows you the option of reviewing TI Writer files to check format, underlining and bold script. All other printer commands and transliteration commands do not affect the performance of this program. The "DUMP" routine offers direct screen dump in single density and may be configured to the specific printer that you are using. "TI ARTIST" pictures may be loaded and saved also. There is also a "WINDOW" routine that allows a user defined window to be opened with the option of adding text or graphics in or out of the window.

I believe that one of the stronger points of "TML" is the ability to have Turtle graphics with none of the limitations of ink or color that LOGO has. Add to that the ability to move up to 32 sprites independently on the same screen and you see the value of this package emerging. Text operations are available that allow for automatic word-wrap. Character size may be altered to allow up to 32 rows by 60 columns on an unaltered system. You may also display different sized characters on the same screen. There is also an Xbasic utility included in the package to allow you the opportunity to create or modify fonts. There are five different fonts that are included in "TML".

To wrap up my review of "TML" let me make this statement. For the value one may gain from the ease of access to these 32 assembly routines, I believe that the program is well worth the 25 dollar price tag. For the skeptics I would suggest that you look into the "THE MISSING LINK DEMO" disk that was offered by Jim Leshar at the February NEXT-STEP. I give "THE MISSING LINK" an A for value, and an A+ for the manual that offers some insight into not only the ability of the program, but also offers some idea of how to get around the limitations that the program's size requires. "THE MISSING LINK" is a copyrighted program available from Texanents. Authored by Harry Wilhelm.

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION THIERRY WEBER

Hello again, and welcome to another edition of The French Connection.

First of all, I have the extreme pleasure to welcome a new Chairman. Butch Spill agreed to become our new Hardware Sales Chairman and will take over that position immediately. Should you need any prom ports, cables and the likes, he'll be the one to call upon. Please help me thank him for becoming a Committee Chairman. Also, let me take this opportunity to remind you that we are always looking for volunteers in all of the activities sponsored by the club, such as to host some of the club's MiniSIGs or other gatherings.

Speaking of MiniSIGs, the March 15th MiniSIG on TI-Writer is still on and there are only a couple of spots left. I will pass out directions to those registered at INFOMART, so be sure to be there. There is still no definite gathering place for the April MiniSIG. Now, that's the soldering bonanza presented by John Clary. Hosting the SIG would be a great way to make sure that it is held at your convenience...so how about it?

Of course, the big story this month is Barry Boone. Yes, I would like to see all of you in TI land come down to give him a big Texas Welcome on Friday the 9th. We will gather at Wyatt's Cafeteria at Belt Line Rd. and Josey Lane (in the Carrollton Park Shopping Center) starting at about 5:00 PM. Bring guests and appetite, since our dinners will pay for the meeting room. Our old Next Step regulars will remember the place as being the site of a lot of great meetings a year or so back.

It will be a fun way to get to know one of the leading figures of today's 99/4A community, and have a good meal as well.

On Saturday, of course, is our main meeting. Both morning and afternoon sessions will be dedicated to our guest speaker. By the way, plan on coming early, since the business meeting will start promptly at 9:00, followed at 9:30 by the Main Meeting, featuring Barry Boone. Besides, we expect a big turnout, so coming early will get you a seat.

See you all Friday at Wyatt's, and then Saturday at INFOMART. Remember to come early.

#### THINGS PEOPLE ARE BUYING:

*by Jim Leshar*

The sale and use of TI99/4A supplies seem to be quite different in different parts of the country. In Ft. Worth and Nashville the 9640 is big. In Dallas the HORIZON RAMDISK is big. Hardware sales are good in the North and East parts of the country where original 4A equipment seems to be sparse. Here in Dallas there seems to be a glut of hardware. In software, in Dallas, new recruits into the TI world, PARSEC is number one in games and HANGMAN number one in education. TI-ARTIST and companion disks out sell all others as far as steady sales overall. Comrodine made a big splash a few months ago but has since leveled off. In my sales, ASGARD is next to Textaments in volume. And now with the new and powerful programming tools of THE MISSING LINK, Textaments may hit a new high. However as you may have heard, ASGARD now has a mouse for a nickle less than \$55 which looks good. We hope to have a mouse for demo at the next INFOMART. Also be looking for a demo of the fabulous programming powers of THE MISSING LINK.

## PROGRAM REVIEW

*by*

*Butch Spill*

The missing link to the TI world has been found. This is a collection of routines that allows access to the graphics features in the console that never could be accessed without assembly language programming. The program does have some limitations that I will try to explain, but there do seem to be ways of getting around them.

I will focus on the main limitation that is apparent first. That is the program itself does use quite a lot of available stack memory. The worst case would be when you are using the 16 color mode with 3 disk files available. In this case only 424 bytes of stack memory would be available, but I feel that one should understand that the manual is quite comprehensive in explaining ways to get around this limitation. At the other end of the spectrum, you will have over 5k available if you use only 1 disk file in the 2 color mode. The obvious solution is to review the manual carefully and adjust your programming style to fit these shortcomings. The other adjustment that you will have to make concerns the use of sprites. Normal Extended Basic commands that deal with normal sprite manipulation such as "SPRITE, LOCATE, PATTERN, COLOR, and MOTION" routines are provided by the "CALL LINK('SPRITE') Subroutine. This also takes some getting used to, but should not cause any major problems with a person familiar with Extended Basic.

The only other limitation that I can readily see is that the screen dump will only work on an Epson compatible printer.

Now that I have gotten that off my chest, let me tell you about the positive side of this program. I have to state that personally I have not done any real extensive programming with "THE MISSING LINK", and most of my information is from the manual and my own experience with my early fat fingered fumblyings. "THE MISSING LINK" will be referred to as "TML" from here on. "TML"

My blunders are infamous. Like plugging my 24 volt power supply into the 110 volt outlet, while the components went snap, crackle and pop. And rushing through an hour long presentation in 30 minutes, because I couldn't read my stop watch without my glasses. BUT my latest shames even me. January 20th we were finally able to pay for a local Dallas phone line, meaning I could get on the TI Bulletin Board. Or could I? No matter how many times I tried, I always saw NO CARRIER. I went over to PHIL SMITH's house to try his new DAC Auto Redial 1200 baud modem, and we got on the first try. Yet back at home...after a few seconds I'd hit Enter and get NO CARRIER. I'd type A/ causing the modem to redial, and so on, and so on. Finally in total disgust after listening to the modem click out the numbers I just sat and glared and glared. Lo and behold. CONNECT 1200! I got so excited I CUT MYSELF OFF. So I tried one more time--waited--and it worked again. For some reason I do not understand there is a 7 second delay after the last number is dialed by the Modem before it can connect with the BBS. In my impatience, I'd wait 4 or 5 seconds and then redial, effectively cutting myself off. So if by chance you too get impatient while waiting for the CONNECT to appear....give it a 'no, mate! Everything comes to him who waits, and waits, and waits. Signed: TRUE CONFESSIONS

## NEW MEMBERS

BY JIM STEWART

Please celebrate the addition of five interesting new members. MARY LEARD and MATTIE BUSH come as a matched set, because they are such good friends. Both are experienced computer builders, but had never operated one. MARY is now fairly advanced, learning almost totally by herself since she lives in Terrell, Texas. She talked MATTIE, who lives in Dallas, into the TI world, and now she too is making rapid progress, with a particular interest in genealogy. Their enthusiasm is a positive delight to see, so please get acquainted and offer to help them any way you can.

Last month we should have welcomed "BUTCH" SPILL as a new member, but he has already made so many friends we think of him as "family". A regular participant on TIBBS, thank goodness, because he is equally comfortable answering hardware or software questions. Contrary to rumor, he has not found a way to be on TIBBS and the LONGHORN at the same time, but he's probably working on it. We are indeed lucky to have "BUTCH" join our group.

Another new member is JAMES HOYLE, who also came quite a way from Quinlan, Texas to look us over. We much have done something right because he decided to join on the spot. JAMES is essentially interested in printing large banners for his Church. He intends to transfer this to permanent painted signs. The TI-99/4A will get the large letters on paper easy enough, but am I glad I don't have to paint those signs! JAMES is also active with their youth groups, so with good intentions like these we should all extend the hand of welcome to JAMES HOYLE, sharing our skills to help him serve his Church.

## BY JIM LESHER

It's 11 o'clock Sunday night. The stores are all closed. Your eighth grader has just confessed, after a day of camping out, that she/he has a paper to turn in Monday morning, or flunk. You are tired, don't want to drive half way across town to get some notebook paper. Then suddenly you remember, there is a program for your computer to make ruled paper. Oh yes, it is in the March issue of our Newsletter.

RUN IN EXTENDED BASIC ON A GEMINI PRINTER:

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10 REM LINE MAKER IN XB
20 CALL CLEAR
30 CALL SCREEN(6)
40 PRINT "10 INCHES OF LINES WILL BE PRINTED AT ANY SPACING"
50 PRINT
60 PRINT "50 IS FOR NORMAL SCHOOL PAPER"
70 PRINT
80 PRINT "41 IS FOR COLLEGE RULED PAPER"
90 PRINT
100 PRINT "24 IS THE NORMAL PRINTER SPACING"
110 PRINT
120 INPUT "LINE SPACING ? ":W
130 PRINT
140 PRINT "NO. OF LINES"
150 OPEN #1:"PIO"
160 PRINT #1:CHR$(27)CHR$(51);CHR$(W);
170 L=1440/W
180 FOR M=1 TO L
190 B$=RPT$(CHR$(95),80)
200 PRINT #1:B$;
210 PRINT M
220 NEXT M
230 CLOSE #1
240 INPUT "DO YOU WANT ANOTHER PAGE PRESS ENTER ? ":A$
250 OPEN #1:"PIO"
260 PRINT #1:CHR$(12)
270 GOTO 180

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## NEXT STEP REPORT CHARLICE ALTHAR

Morton Hospital Cafeteria was the scene of our NEXT STEP meeting on Friday evening, February 23. By the time the doors were unlocked at 5 PM, half a dozen people were already waiting! As always, we had a lot of fun, exchanged a lot of helpful information, and accomplished a whole lot in general before adjourning to nearby Dunston's for those fantastic mesquite-grilled hamburgers, onion rings, and Blue Bell Ice Cream!

Here's some of the things we did:

1. Demo'd Missing Link.
2. Re-loaded Jim Leshar's ram disk about 3 times.
3. Installed 6 double-sided disk drives in P-Boxes.
4. Observed Terry in the act of killing another console.
5. Solved a quiet fan for a P-Box.
6. Fixed one sick console.
7. Read newsletters from other clubs across the country.
8. Took Greg's test--and Shawn won!
9. Recopied faulty DOMs.
10. Resoldered one Rave keyboard.
11. Diagnosed some other (dirty?) Rave difficulties.
12. Named "BUTCH" SPILL as our new Chairman of Hardware Sales.
13. Replaced one keyboard.
14. Demo'd a Backgammon Game.
15. Observed that safety glass failed an impact test.
16. Demo'd an ET Game with a joystick modification.
17. Signed up one new member.
18. Distributed mass buy purchase of TI-Artist + and TI-Sort.
19. Accepted donations to our loaner libraries of several cassettes.
20. Accepted donation of Backgammon game for our loaner library.
21. Answered questions on TI-Writer.
22. We just can't remember 'em all!

About twenty or so of us went on to supper afterwards, so just imagine what you missed if you weren't at NEXT STEP this month! We keep urging people to come; this is the place to get technical assistance, help with your hardware and/or software difficulties, and answers to most of your questions! But we can't help you if you're not there. Make an effort to join us next month; bring whatever \*YOUR\* NEXT STEP is, or whatever is causing you difficulties, with you, for hands-on, one-on-one assistance. It's one of the best benefits there is to being a member of DTIHCG!

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## MEMBER PROFILE by LINDA WAY

## Meet an Officer

Walter Pearson, our newsletter editor, has been a club member since 1982. He has also served as Chairman of Membership, Recruitment, and Materials Distribution and has written numerous articles for the newsletter.

## BACKGROUND

Walter's mother was born in Germany in an area that is now in Poland. A military brat, Walter was born in New York, has a sister who was born in the Philippines, and has lived in France and Turkey. While living in Europe, he and his family traveled extensively visiting almost every country except Greece.

## SCHOOL

Walter's main claim to fame is having competed in the academic decathlon under the auspices of the UIL. He made it to state twice and was second in state in the science competition. In college he majored in physics and math and later changed his major to theology.

## JOB

Walter has worked in banking and recently moved from the Coca-Cola Company to Soft Warehouse. Congratulations are due for his recent promotion after just three months at Soft Warehouse. He says the 4A has taught him how computers should work more than any other personal computer, which is proving to be very useful in the new job.

## FAMILY

Walter spends most of his time away from work in family and church activities. He and Julie have three kids -- Michael, who is 6 ; Jennifer, 4; and Wendy, 4 months old. They are home-schooling the kids, which means they are teaching them reading, English, math, social sciences, history, and good citizenship right at home. In fact, they are considered a private school under state law. The kids use a Milton Bradley voice recognition system with the 99/4A to do some of their lessons. Jenny especially likes TI-ARTIST.

Favorite games: Michael's: A-Maze-Ing Jenny's: I'm Hiding  
Walter's: Ronan War

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**80 COLUMN****NEWS****DAVE  
AXBERG**

This month our guest speaker is Barry Boore, one of the more active contributors to the 99er community. Barry's thought provoking comments can be monitored on GENie and CompuServe forums on a regular base. Barry is often on the leading edge of 4/A software development. The standard for data compression for the TI-99/4A is ARCHIVER; probably the most commonly used program after the FunnelWeb word processor. It should also be noted that this software is "FAIREWARE" and the author is entitled to the \$10 requested for its use. Past editorials by Louis Guion and John Creviston have expressed the need to support these authors with our suggestions and our money .... enough said?

Barry has recently completed his new GIF (graphics interface format) Display program. GIF is the format used by our friends with the (I)tty (B)itty (M)achines for displaying hi/mid resolution pictures. The /4A, until now, was unable to interpret this format. TI-Artist, CSGD, Picasso, PagePro and PIX were the only formats available. Now with the use of Barry's new GIF display program you can display a GIF picture AND save as a TI-Artist picture. The program is especially exciting because it may be operated in either of two (2) modes.

First the GIF Display program may be operated using the TI 99/4A with no modification. This mode makes use of all 16 colors available and the eight dots per pixel conventions. Now pictures may be downloaded from BBS', displayed and saved as TI Artist pictures.

With RON DINGMAN, MATTIE BUSH, and CHESTER JOHNSON all interested, perhaps we need a Mini-Sig (special interest group) to pursue Genealogy. How many others have the same interest? Let's hear from you.

LOUIS GUION IV, STEVE RYAN, AND BOB WULLER were guests at our February 10th meeting, and we hope we will see them again real soon.

It means a lot when we gain members who are willing to make the long trip to our meetings, like the loyal Tyler fellows do. For those who can't access Bulletin Boards due to the high long distance cost, our group can be most helpful. With no local home town computer groups, the DTIHCG can be an information oasis. Please seek out these new members and make them feel welcome and at home. Just remember how many people have helped you learn, and you too will want to pass it on, because that's what we're all about. DTIHCG.

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**BREAK BREAD with BARRY BOONE**

On March 9th, the DTIHCG will host a special meeting at the Wyatt Cafeteria on Forest at Marsh lane, from 5:00 til 8:00 pm when our Dinner speaker will be BARRY BOONE, who is best known for his famous Archiver program. This will give our members the chance to meet Barry in a casual question and answer session, before our INFONART meeting March 10th, when he will be giving a presentation as our Guest of Honor.

Barry Boone is an articulate spokesman for the TI-99/4a world and has given us many benefits. We understand he may introduce a new program during his visit, so you will really want to make both the Friday night dinner, and the special presentation Saturday March 10th.

Mark these dates on your calendar right now, as MUST events in March, which have been arranged through David Axberg, our Program Director and the DTIHCG Executive Committee.



The Second mode of operation facilitates the use of the Texas Instruments 9938 video processor chip found in the MYARC 9640, the DIJIT System AVPCard and the MECHATRONIC's 80 column "sidecar". If your system has the 9938 chip available you now have 256 colors available and the picture is not compressed to meet the screen definition requirements of the TI-Artist format. The picture is displayed exactly as it would be seen on an (I)tty (E)itty (M)achine monitor.

Notice that with the use of the RAVE 99 interface board, we can use the IBM keyboard; with the use of the AVPCard, we can use the IEM RGB Monitor; with the CorComp TI/IBM connection, we can convert text files from /4A to IBM and back; and now with use of the GIF Display Program, we can display and save IBM picture graphics. Is this a trend or what?

But back on the track of the thing at hand ... Barry Boone!! Barry is going to exhibit and demonstrate to us the latest versions of his software (ARCHIVER 3.03G, GIF Display, etc.) and have copies for sale at "SPECIAL" prices. Also this will be the perfect time to give Barry that \$10 for ARCHIVER you have been using and just haven't gotten around to sending in .... get the latest version while you're at it. I have also asked for a demonstration of his new EPROM for the AVPCard.

