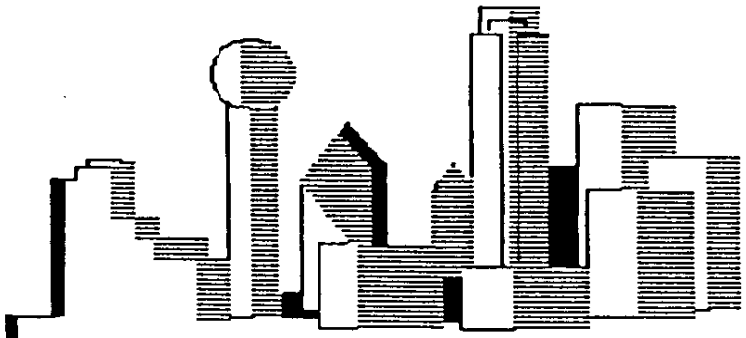

DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

DALLAS 99 INTERFACE
Volume 10, Number 4 *APRIL 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, April 14, 1990
at the Dallas Infomart

$	*Phone the 99er Connection BBS* $
$	*24 Hours, 300/1200/2400 baud* $
$	*214-233-1750* $

INSIDE THE INTERFACE:

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

FIRST CLASS

Phone the 99ER CONNECTION BBS
24 Hours, 300/1200 Baud
214-233-1750

Member of the
Computer Council of Dallas

CCD Information Line: 746-3297

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*****************************************
*                                       *
*       DTIHCG   APRIL   SCHEDULE       *
*                                       *
*****************************************

SATURDAY  1
    April Fools Day
    Daylight Savings Time- set ahead
             one hour

SATURDAY  7
    7:00 am  1st Saturday Sidewalk sale

SUNDAY    8
    Palm Sunday

TUESDAY  10
    Passover

FRIDAY   13
    Good Friday

SATURDAY 10  SUPER SATURDAY AT INFOMART
    9:00 am  Informal Pre-meeting gathering

    9:30 am  Business Meeting

   10:20 am  Main Program
             Jim Stewart tutorial on
             Funnelweb's Configure program.

             Cartridge Library Demo
                 - Billy Monroe
   11:30 am  Social Hour / Lunch
    1:00 pm  Dos Enthusiasts - informal
                 round table gathering

SUNDAY   15  Easter

MONDAY   16  CCD Corporate Director's
             Meeting

THURSDAY 19
    6:30 pm  Mini Sig at at John Clary's
              pre-registration required
                Solder Training for
                 Home Computerists

SATURDAY 21  EXECUTIVE COMITTEE MEETING
    1:30 pm  DTIHCG Officer's meeting
    2:30 pm  DTIHCG Chairman's meeting

FRIDAY   27  NEXT STEP MEETING
    5:15 pm  Next Step Technical Assis
               tance Meeting at Wadley
               Blood Center.
   10:00 pm  Newsletter Article Deadline
   10:00 pm  Infomart Room Request due
             at CCD
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MERCHANDISE SALES CHAIRMAN	LINDA WAY	(214)-437-5955
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MINISIG CHAIRMAN	JOHN CLARY	(214)-341-9985
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DISKETTE SALES CHAIRMAN	EARL BULLOCK	(214)-934-0013
NEXT-STEP CHAIRMAN	ROSS WHITMORE	(214)-352-3889

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 adddtion 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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MEMBER ADS

PROGRAMMERS, PLEASE NOTE:

Developing software? Writing docs?

Linda Way is offering proofreading services free to members who are writing their own software and/or documentation. If the docs are quite lengthy, there would be a small fee or bartering of services or goods. Leave message on the BBS or at 214-437-5955.

FOR SALE: a TI 99/4A printer, all original manuals, Y connector and in original shipping carton. Plus 2 colored ribbons. $100

CONTACT TOM HALL (817) 267-5987

THE REMOTE TERMINAL by Distantly Located Members and Jim Stewart

Vernon Marshburn in Olathe, Kansas...I hope this gets your attention. And Tom Damura.....we haven't forgotten you since moving to Sunbury, Pennsylvania.
James Dreher, this is one way to bring you the kind of help you need down there in San Antonio. You see, we have almost 20% of our active membership located at distances that make meeting attendance almost impossible. We can't begin to provide them the same services, but even some help is more than most have available in their home town.
This column will be their forum to ask for help, comment, gripe, question or whatever.....if they could reach our meetings. BJT it will only achieve that purpose if the remote members speak up and make it known what is needed from the DTIHCG!
James Dreher needs someone to send him modem hook up instructions, and how to get started accessing our TIBBS board and possibly some even closer to him.
Mary Leard has offered her help to those brave individuals who have undertaken replacement of the 560 ohm resistor with a 330 ohm resistor based on articles in MICROpendium reportedly improving monitor or TV screen clarity. Different model consoles have this located in different places, but the correct resistor is R-200 which is the VDP Load Resistor. If you need help with this project, write us and we'll try to help you with specific instructions.
We hope to hear from Vernon Marshburn, so he can tell us what he would like from us. It would be nice if we could get him in touch with David Rose of Salina, Kansas who was looking for help in Kansas. They're a long way apart, but still a lot closer than Dallas.
Tom Damura-what's the TI world like back in Pennsylvania? We're glad you have transferred your membership. Let's hear from you. What might we be able to do long distance, that would extend our sphere of helpful support?
Remote Members....the ball is in your court. Let's hear from you. To make sure we know what equipment you have, we're sending you a survey form along with a copy of this column. Please take the time to fill it in, and jot down your ideas or requests. You can write to the DTIHCG at our PO Box number or to Jim Stewart, 4717 Strickland, The Colony, TX 75056 for quicker mail service. We intend to answer you in our next news letter, but please be patient. We will ask for help from one of our very busy "techy members", who are not always easy to reach. This column is an attempt to seek ways to better serve our remotely located members. Please participate and speak up. If you want representation, this is the right place, so crank up TI Writer and contribute to the REMOTE TERMINAL.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

THIERRY WEBER

Hello again. Welcome to another edition of The French Connection.
Of course, reviewing the past month, the first thing that comes to mind is the very informative presentation by Barry Boone at INFOMART. After answering all of our questions on the future of the TI-99/4a the night before at Wyatt's, he went on to do a demonstration of several of his programs, including the latest version of Archiver.
But the "hit" of the day had to be his afternoon demo of a "pre-release" version of a program called GIF Display , an assembly language program to load and display on the TI, graphic screens created for IBM compatible. These screens can then be saved as TI-ARTIST pictures for re-use or editing. The whole thing sparked so much enthusiasm that by the following Monday, the 99er connection's download directory was flooded with GIF picture files.
March was the month, also, for the return of the MiniSIG. MiniSIGs (a SIG is a Special Interest Group) are small meetings, usually held at a member's home and usually of 8 to 15 people , which concentrate on a specific topic. March's MiniSIG which was held at my home, was dedicated to the use of TI-WRITER's formatter commands. As usual, Charlice did a tremendous job in presenting the meeting and it was a fun and lively learning experience made even more enjoyable by Jim Lesher's arrival with cookies. To top it all off, each one of the attenders was handed off a diskette with hundreds of transliterate codes (if you don't know what they are, you should have attended the MiniSIG). A superb job, indeed. THANK YOU AGAIN, CHARLICE.
The Next Step meeting, held on the 23rd at Wadley's was as busy and well attended as always and was a truly busy ending to a truly busy month for the Dallas TI Home Computer Group.
Perhaps the level of activity of the club merely reflects the fact that March, as I'm sure you know by now, saw the arrival of spring. Which brings me to the fact that this month INFOMART meeting is held on Saturday the 14th. That is ,of course, Good Saturday.
This month we will present a two part program during the morning session. First, after a quick business meeting, Jim Stewart will demonstrate how to use the configure program that comes with Funnelweb. He will show you how to personalize all of the options to suite your needs and wishes.
In the second part of the session, Billy Monroe will demo some of the treasures in the cartridge library, so be sure to stick around for that.

While on this subject, and before I put the pen down (or in this case turn off the computer), there is one problem that has plagued our INFOMART meetings and that I must address. It seems that many of our nembers have a tough time hearing presentations while seated in the rear half of the room, partly due to the open door, and partly to on going conversations. We must ask to please refrain to carry on conversations or conduct business during a presentation. We will do our best to provide breaks so these can take place. Please be courteous to the speaker and your fellow members and observe this rule. We want to keep these meeting as friendly and relaxed as possible but some kind of order needs to be maintained for everyone to enjoy our INFOMART session to the fullest. Thank you in advance for your help, and hope to see you all at INFOMART.

±twc°

HARDWARE REPORT

BY

BUTCH SPILL

What is up with Hardware Sales, you ask! As hardware chairman I am pleased to report that the club's stock is growing. We now have the PEB half-height

disk drive cables that have been much in demand. Also coming up at a meeting near you: MODEM SPECIALS!! The club has a genuine 300 baud modem that needs a good home. We need to move this classic antique out to make room for items to be announced soon. Watch for future articles concerning special prices on hardware as we update our stock. I am available after six p.m. almost daily at my home (817-461-0805) or leave a message via the Turbo 99'er Connection.

FROM THE Mini-SIG CHAIRMAN:

We will be having another Mini-SIG at my house, Thursday, April 19, 1990. This will be the infamous Soldering Mini-SIG, and we will teach you how to make pretty soldering joints on your very own machine. There will be practice boards that can't be hurt any worse than they already have been hurt for desolder/solder work, and your final test will be installing the 330 ohm resistor in the video out line to remove "ghosts" from your TV screers if you use a TV instead of a monitor. Directions will be available at the afternoon session of INFOMART, or by calling 341-9985 and asking for me. There willl be a limit of six (6) participants because of equipment limitations, so sign up early.

I hope everyone with a 2400 baud modem enjoys the improvement. I also hope that any of you considering the purchase of a first modem, or upgrading an existing modem, seriously consider the few extra bucks it takes to get a 2400 baud model. While the step from 300 to 1200 is twice as big a step, the step from 1200 to 2400 is a much greater "perceived" improvement. And that's what counts in the computer business!

Thanks for allowing us to experiment with the club's system and for supporting our efforts by investing in the future at 2400 baud!

**** SPECIAL NOTICE TO OTHER TIBBS SYSOPS ****

Now that TurboTIBBS! has proved itself in the "REAL WORLD" by running flawlessly for 10 days I am pleased to announce that Louis Guion and myself have decided to market the TurboTIBBS! system. We have located a LIMITED supply of the modems required and want to make them available to all who want them. We will provide the necessary cable AND modificatiors to your software all as part of the package. If you are interested in joining the ranks of TurboTIBBS! SysOps you can contact Louis or myself via the following channels:

1 99er Connection BBS (214) 233-1750

2 Longhorn II Wildcat! BBS (214) 240-4979

3 By mail: TurboTIBBS! c/o Greg Justice 5209 Longhorn Trail Garland, TX 75043-3516

We will provide all the details of the upgrade, including pricing, warranty terms and conditions as soon as we hear from you. As I said, the modem supply is limited and demand is expected to be great. If you are interested, act quickly. Bill Rister's Phoenix in Houston is already on board to be the World's Second TurboTIBBS! system on-line.

TAKE A BOW!

Special DTIHCG thanks to member GENE CARR, who for the past couple of years has very faithfully presided over our kiosk in the lobby at INFOMART preceding each of our monthly meetings. Gene always has a ready smile as he dispenses information about DTIHCG, as well as about the TI-99/4A in general to our own members as well as all others who pass through the lobby on Super Saturdays. Gene was accompanied in this area by his wife, Lucille, as long as her health permitted, but he has carried on alone in recent months. Having our booth manned at INFOMART is a vital service to our group, as this is one of the most important ways others learn about us. We salute you, Gene, and thank you for your faithful help. TAKE A BOW!

TurboTIBBS HAS ARRIVED!!!

TurboTIBBS! has Arrived!

To the infrequent user of Bulletin Board Systems, this column will probably not be very exciting. However, to those of you that spend a lot of your time on-line it should be VERY EXCITING. Since the time I started the Longhorn TIBBS in June of 1987, I've been frustrated by the 1200 baud limitation with which Ralph Fowler's TIBBS(tm) is afflicted. I spent countless hours trying several different schemes to break the barrier, but none ever proved to be reliable enough to put on-line. I proved that the 99/4a and TIBBS could run at 2400, and even 4800 provided you didn't use Xmodem. The problem was determining at what speed the caller had connected to the board. So, the project went on the shelf, as did the Longhorn TIBBS, shortly thereafter.

>>>>> Time Warp forward about 2 years..... >>>>>

With the reincarnation of the Longhorn TIBBS as the Longhorn II Wildcat! BBS, AND the falling price of 2400 baud modems into the $100.00 range, I, along with 99er Connection SysOp Louis Guion set out to take another shot at the 1200 baud limit.

I had decided, based on the aforementioned testing, that to upgrade TIBBS to 2400 baud would require a modem capable of indicating on the RS232 interface, the speed at which it had answered the phone. Most "Hayes compatible" 1200 baud modems indicate 1200 baud. Absence of an indication of 1200 baud implies 300 baud. Likewise, most "Hayes compatible" 2400 baud modems indicate 2400 baud. Now, for the problem... Both 300 AND 1200 baud connections indicate NOT 2400 BAUD. There is no reliable way to tell at which speed the modem connected.

As it happens, my employer had purchased a pair of 2400 baud modems for one of our branches to use to connect to our VAX system. For reasons too deep for this column to discuss, we needed dialup modems capable of SYNCHRONOUS as opposed to ASYNCHRONOUS (normal) operation. We finally found a vendor who had a suitable modem. And finally, I had a modem that was suitable for TurboTIBBS! This modem is the only one I've been able to find that, among several other features, provides separate indications for 300 baud and 2400 baud. The absence of both indicates 1200 baud. The existing TIBBS system uses a cable that monitors this signal and through a "little black box" provides JOYSTICK movements that the program can test. All I had to do was clone the "little black box" to check two signals. Now TIBBS becomes TurboTIBBS! fully capable of 300, 1200, and 2400 baud operation.

FUN STUFF IN THE 1990 PROGRAMS
By
David R. Axberg

This month has been a challenge to say the least. While still revelling in the enjoyment of the Barry Boone presentations and receiving confirmation from Bud Mills that he will be our MAY presenter .... I forgot about the APRIL program. But typical of our users ... Butch Spill has volunteered to provide us with the benefit of his recent experience with the MYARC (H)ard and (F)loppy (D)isk (C)ontroller.

With the new information from Barry Boone about the price of the $ 180.00 for the HFDC (which at the time of this writing is pending confirmation) a large group of us have a renewed interest in the product. If we are to confirm the price it could be expected to be the next major purchase of our group. The information provided by Butch could help many of us make a more intelligent decision about the purchase of and the operation of the HFDC. I personally owe Butch a personal thanks for taking his time to share with us.

As for the MAY program Bud Mills will be preserting "What you can really do with a RAMdisk". Bud explained his presentation as one that illustrates many applications for the RAMdisk not considered by most users. He will also be offering us many incentives to expand our RAMdisks to higher memory capacity. I will have more details on the presentation by next week, and will keep you posted on the 99er Connection.

As for the boys in Pt. Orange, Florida, they are looking forward to the program in JUNE. Chris Faherty has some applications for TI-Artist+ he will be reviewing with us and showing us some of the "tricks" of working with Display Master. Dennis has stated he will share with us the new 3.0 version of TI-Base.

As for me I have had to do a great deal of travel recently as a result of the needs of my "regular-daytime-job". The executive committee and the users have come to my rescue and I am grateful .... a special thanks to all. I am looking forward to our April program with Butch Spill on SuperSaturday at the INFOMART. See you then.

ERRATIUM

LINEMAKER ERROR
IF the lines program in last months newsletter won't run, this is why.

Somehow in the transmission from my computer to Walter's a semicolon was lost. Line 160 should read like this:

```
160 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(51);CHR$(W);
```

RAMBO CONQUERS TI WORLD

BY

HUGH MCKNIGHT

I am happy to report that the death of the 99/4A as has been chronicled throughout the civilizec world, is BULL MALARKIE!!!!! The time to say many words over the open coffin of our dear little computer, is not now!!!! For VERILY! there has been yet another birth to the 99/4A community called the "RAMBO"..!! Hang on a minute and see just what the potential of this little sucker will mean to all of us!!!!!!

First of all, It's a PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD that's added to any existing HORIZON RAM DISK. On a HORIZON 3000 you just remove one chip and plug it in, attach 6 wires and it's ready to fly. Now when I say fly, I mean fly! It processes programs faster than my wife can process many unneeded items on a new plastic charge card. Let me describe this sweet little jewel for you!!!

First it is called "RAMBO". This stands for "RANDOM-ACCESS -MEMORY-BANK-OPERATOR". This means the Horizon memory can be broken down into two different paging and access mode memories. With RAMBO you will be able to partition the RAM onboard between RAMDISK and PROGRAM space, allowing you to run new TI or GENEVE programs using this extra RAM as program space, which could be as large as your total ramdisk memory capacity.

All of the 99/4A and GENEVE programs that exist today, and have not been modified to utilize the new RAMBO, will continue to work as they do today. THE NEW PROGRAMS that are written or the existing programs that are modified to utilize the RAMBO will be resident within the program space alocated in the RAMDISK. Basicly, this means RAMBO will process without the necessity of periodically seeking access to another memory device, ie., the HRD, ramdisk, disk drive, etc., etc., etc. Also it means programs can be written to any size. The only limitation of program size, being the capacity of memory you allocate to the RAMBO BANK OPERATION.

RAMBO adds a whole new paging system to the HORIZON which gives the programmer an 8K MAIN DSR RAM (first 6K reservec for the ROS) at the normal >4000 space but now instead of tiny 2K pages of RAM the programmer has 8K pages of RAM at the >6000 (TI99-4A Cartridge space). RAMBO also makes the DSR RAM on/off control independent of the 8K page control, which means to the programmer he/she car finally write large programs in easy to handle 8K blocks, anc access any DSR without using any of the standard 32K CPU RAM. WOW!!! unlimited program size.... Now that's one of the biggest limitations I've been hearing about for the 99/4A.

Take a look at this comparison of costs:

Hardware	TI 99/4A	IBM CLONE
CPU/keyboard	$ 45	$ 800
101 keyboard	$ 200	N/A
Expansion cabinet	$ 100	N/A
RS232c I/O card	$ 75	N/A
32K Memory Expansion	$ 20	N/A
DS/DD Dsk Controller	$ 130	N/A
Clock/64K print buffer	$ 120	$ 100
1 MEG RAMdisk	$ 535	$ 500
80 column/VGA card	$ 185	$ 285
RGB monitor	$ 300	$ 300
	$ 1710	$ 1985

Software	TI 99/4A	IBM CLONE
disk operating system	N/A	$ 50
TI Basic/GW Basic	N/A	$ 50
word processor	$ 20	$ 150
spelling checker	$ 20	N/A
database manager	$ 30	$ 250
communications	$ 20	$ 100
graphics	$ 30	$ 150
disk utilities	$ 20	$ 65
	$ 140	$ 565
Total System Cost	$ 1350	$ 2550 ($ 700)

CEOTICS

BY

JIM LESHER

FEROELECTRIC MEMORY CHIPS

Ramtron Corp. Colorado Springs. is working on a 4-megabit static memory chip. The new process requires only 1/4 the amount of transistors on present day chips. Also present day static rams require a small current to keep them "Fresh". These NEW static rams will hold their information for ten years without batteries. The new static rams have their own name: FRAMs. Some experts predict that by the year 2000, chips will be able to store more than 1 gigabit. Another company is presently making matchbook size solid state disk drives as replacements for the mechanical ones.

What is the TI 99/4A worth?
by David R. Axberg

This year, as program chairman for our user group, I have had a chance to see the truly dynamic changes that are taking place in our 99/4A community. Our machine by today's performance standards is slow, with limited graphics capabilities, and a shortage of peripheral devices supported. Yet, software applications for wordprocessing(Funnelweb 4.21) with spellcheckers(Spell It), database managers(TI-Base 3.0), electronic spreadsheets(Super QuickCalc), and grpahics(TI-Artist+) continuing to be created and improved to meet our user needs.

I have said in the past, that I find it amazing that the 99/4A is still around. There is not a good reason for it(TI 99/4A) not to have gone the way of the ADAM, VIC20, TIMEX/SINCLAIR, and the PC,jr. The manufacturer has discontinued support of the product and has refused to allow its production be any other manufacturer. It is my understanding that there have been a number of attempts to approach Texas Insturments about the subordinate manufacture of peripheral devices and the CPU, but to no avail. Why then would the 99/4A not only survive when all others parished, but continue to create product?

In my opinion, there is but one reason .... the composition of the user base and their demands of the machine. Think about it for a minute. The majority of us use our machines for recreation, limited personal tasks and ancillary professional application requirements. We appreciate the value of function and the ecomonics of utility. We tend to be more frugal with our electronics expenditures and understand that utility is more important that fashion. Therefore our uses of the machine are not as demanding as those of the DOS 386 processors with 5 megabytes of memory on the motherboard with processing speeds in excess of 33mhz and touting 0 wait states.

Consider this, we pay $15 to $20 for fairware i.e. Funnelweb, DiskUtils, or ARCHIVER, and $25 to $40 for commerical software i.e. TI-Artist+, Missing Link, or TI-Base, name any other machine that is supported by software in that price range with the same level of utility .... We have proven we are loyal to our suppliers who provide quality software and hardware. Bud Mills claims that he supports over 2,000 HORIZON RAMdisks today!

Can you imagine the difference in TELCO, TI-BASE, FUNNELWEB, MULTIPLAN, SYSTEM III, AND OTHER LARGE PROGRAMS, if they were modified to utilize RAMBO?

I can't pass up the opportunity to discuss a big motivating factor that will be having an impact on the modification of the above mentioned existing programs; the funding or payment to those program authors that have contributed so much to our 99/4A community thruogh their programs. If we are to continue to be blessed with fantastic new programs and updates, we must show our gratitude by supporting their efforts with a contribution of money.

So to all those who are praying for the demise of the 99/4A, we place our right hand in the air, fist clinched, and sing, "WE SHALL OVERCOME, WE SHALL OVERCOME" !!!!!! See ya at the next SUPER SAT MEETING!!!

MEMBER PROFILE

MEET AN OFFICER

The club treasurer, Linda Way, a member since 1988, has lived in the Dallas area almost three years. Part of last year she was the Hardware and Merchandise Chairman.

Linda spends her days scoping for court reporters on an assortment of IBMs and compatibles and her evenings dictating to court reporting students at 100 and 120 words per minute. She says that learning about the 99/4A has helped her understand how other computers function and has enhanced her value as an employee at the reporting firm. Each reporter learns the system she purchased, but Linda has learned all the different systems.

Linda says she joined the DTIHCG family for: a. the fellowship of like minds b. to learn more about the 99/4A c. to try out some of the cartridges in the loaner library before purchasing her own d. to ask questions about hardware problems e. to have access to more software f. and to have some fun. She says the more she puts into the club, the more she gets out of it and urges other members to volunteer to do something.

Her other hobbies, when she has the time, include programming, reading (especially science fiction), photography, artsy-craftsy stuff, and playing with her cats.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

JIM STEWART

It is a privilege to report we have 5 interesting NEW members joining DTIHCG this month! AND we are pleased Jon Hodges renewed his membership. Though he has entered the DOS world, he has not left his many DTIHCG friends behind.

STEVE RYAN joined at the February meeting. He is a hard traveling executive with Rockwell, with a very nice family, but not much time lately to devote to his 99/4A.
LISA MORGAN is a charming addition to our Group, moving here from Lubbock, Texas, where she got to know us by dialing up the TIBBS bulletin board. Her first interest is in finding a computer operations job, so she can then pursue her programming and graphics interests.
JEROME GRAHAM has lots of Printing experience, but relatively little computer experience. He ran into a bargain too good to pass up, and we hope he will soon think of the DTIHCG as another bargain too good to miss. Let's help Jerome get started right. Then maybe he'll someday put his experience to work with our Dallas 99 Interface news letter, which we all need to support and help publish.
SUSAN DOTY is another beginner, and would appreciate help in getting started with TI WRITER and her Brother Daisy Wheel printer. She has children who can enjoy our many game modules available for monthly check-out, and possibly our modem loaner so she can access the TIBBS board.
JAMES DREHER is clearly the long distance champion for joining the DTIHCG this month from San Antonio. As James says "The distance will be a problem for me, but at present I get no help at all, so even limited (help) looks good to me." Many of you may not realize almost 20% of our membership is located a long ways from our Dallas meetings. Each of the DTIHCG chairpersons are trying to find better ways to share the group benefits with those who are unable to routinely attend our meetings. We have instituted this month a special column called the "REMOTE TERMINAL", which we hope will become the forum for requests and comments from our distant members.

With Barry Boone visiting us on February 10th, we had an unusually large number of visitors. From the Net 99ers James Crosson attended with Tom and Jeremy Collins. Our faithful Tyler members brought Jack Welch, and Marion Ziober from Flint, TX. Representing the Brazos Valley TI Group in Waco, Jeffrey Kuhlmann attended, coming all the way from Temple, Texas. Terence Lim was another visitor. We didn't get your home town, Terence, but you and all the others are welcome to visit us any time, or even join us from wherever you are. Thanks for visiting the Dallas TI Home Computer Group.

NEXT STEP REPORT

CHARLICE ALTHAR

Friday evening, March 23 was the time & date of our latest NEXT STEP gathering. For the benefit of those who don't regularly participate in this technical assistance meeting, here's an overview of what we accomplished during the evening:

-Changed 2 TI Impact Printers from Serial to Parellel.
-Brought disk drive cables for our "store".
-Read/discussed newsletters from other User Groups.
-Paid DTIHCG bills.
-Purchased one complete system.
-Discussed our new 2400 Baud 99er Connection BBS.
-Returned Jim Stewart's monitor.
-Had a "Show & Tell" of XB & cartridge cards, control panels.
-Consoled & commiserated about a member's recent auto accident.
-Renewed memberships.
-Bought, sold, and traded hardware.
-Demo'd PAPERSAVER from THE MISSING LINK.
-Gave 2 new members the club disks of "the latest & greatest".
-Saw Linda's new little red Yugo.
-Helped others with pointers and tips on TI ARTIST PLUS!
-Distributed DTIHCG calendars for April activities.
-Determined the function of some previously unknown cards.
-Swapped software.
-Completed Newsletter Articles (and gave them to the Editor!).
-Learned how to configure and operate a RAM disk.
-Arswered questions about TI-WRITER.
-Learned about A/B switch boxes for computers and printers.
-Demo'd PAGE PRO.
-Fixed a modem cable.
-Updated address/phone changes in the Club roster.
-Watched Shawn run around acting like he knew what he was doing.
-Observed that once in a while, Shawn wasn't acting.

New member Susan Doty, with husband Dave and baby William found us just as we were leaving our meeting room, but was persuaded to accompany us to our monthly pig-out at Dunston's for their super hamburgers, etc., so she was able to get a couple of questions answered about a printer even without actually being at the meeting! We think she'll be back next month, now that she knows where we meet. How about joining her--and us--on Friday evening, April 27? Things get started about 5 PM, end between 8-8:30 to go eat. This is the time and place to get the technical assistance you need on almost any problem with your TI-99/4A, get arswers to your "how-to" questions, and one-on-one help from the gurus in the group. Give it a try!

(b) Loader control

AUTO .. If AUTOmatic running is specified the link name specified on the LAST directive will be used to autostart the programs. The default, with no AUTO or ALLM directive, stops for editing of the link name.

IAOF .. I(nternal) A(utostart) OFf cancels internal autostarting of object files (like Option 8).

LWLD .. LoWLoaDer sets up the load conditions as for Low-Loader (Option 6 of the Loaders screen). File LL is loaded from the boot disk after the Script file has been read but before object file loading begins. It should be issued at the start of a Script and over-rides ALLM.

LAST .. Indicates the end of the script to be parsed by SL. If it is followed on its line by text, the first 6 characters will be read as a link name for RUNning the programs. If the end of the script is reached before a LAST directive is found, an error is issued.

(c) Memory Control

ALLM .. ALL M(emory) sets the LFHM memory pointer to the standard E/A value >FFD7. Once set it cannot be revoked. It also sets AUTO and a link name must be specified on LAST or an error will be called. Returns are adjusted to be to the title screen.

(10) Low memory loader LL

Some well known utilities for the TI-99/4a, such as the Editor and Assembler occupy low memory and use high memory for extra code, but mostly as a single large data storage area. The only way that TI provided for users to load such files in object format was Miniмem, and now Low-loader provides this function for general use, with automatic recognition by FSAVE.

When LOW-LOADER is selected from the Load Environment screen or is signalled by the LWLD directive in Scriptload the LL file is loaded. This provides an alternate set of E/A utilities just below the FUNNELWEB program in high memory. Low memory is now used as the first block for loading relocatable object files (only 8K is available for this block). All E/A REFs are recognized, but E/A utilities REFed this way will not be available to program file loads of FSAVEd versions. The predefined REF/DEF table ends at >E138 and new entries build down from there.

(11) Assembly line locator LH

LINEHUNTER is one of our working tools now made available for FUNNELWEB users, though it could well stand comparison with many commercial programs on its own. If you write substantial assembly programs you will be aware of the problems in tracking down assembly errors through multiple Copy files. Printing of List files is fine, but impractical for the home computer user.

Give Linehunter the name of your master source file and a line number and it will locate and display the line itself, and the line number in, and the name of the file in which it is located. It will conduct a similar search for a source code label if one is entered instead of a number. If <space> is pressed string search is enabled in the Operand field of valid assembler source lines, for tracking down where labels are used. The search starts automatically when 4 digits of line number or 6 characters of label have been entered, or else with the <enter> key. Pressing <ctrl-A> resumes the search process. Exit from the program is by the <ctrl-=> key.

(12) XB FORTH Loader XB4THLD

This program allows the standard TI FORTH disk to be loaded by TI XB. It works only with the XB and E/A modules, and its primary use would be from the XB User List.

CONFIGURING FUNNELWEB 4.21

JIM STEWART

(The following docs will be used during our main meeting)

Utility files of various origins are included on the FUNNELWEB distribution disk(s). Files LGEN/S (for generating XB programs like LOAD) and LDSR/S from Vn 4.0 are not included as not a single comment has been received concerning their existence or use. This file contains notes on the following programs in FUNNELWEB.

1	CF/CG	7	UL
2	DP	8	CT8K/O
3	MG/MH	9	SL
4	CP	10	LL
5	FSAVE	11	LH
6	LDFW	12	XB4THLD

(1) Configuration CF

CF/CG is used to customize LOAD, UTIL1/FW and various User List files to your preference in the run-time setup of FUNNELWEB. The program makes extensive use of windowed displays and context sensitive help screens. The editing process is tree structured and is easy to follow along to any particular item. Help screens are often available with a press of "?" <fctn-I). You save system configuration details for re-use in data files of which SYSCON is an example. CF loads as an Option 2 program file from FUNNELWEB, which is used as a source of default data but the program in memory is NOT altered. Remember to use Install before exit and reload to check your handiwork.

(2) Disk sector editor DP

This is based on DPATCH aka DISKO, issued by TI to user groups after orphaning the 99/4a. DP has had extensive modifications to make it easier to use. Key functions have been changed around a little, for better or for worse. <Ctrl-C) parallels <Fctn-9) for some purposes. Both the original and DSKU (J. Birdwell) pattern are active. With Myarc FDControllers a read of sector #0 is forced so that 16/18 sectors/track can be distinguished.

If QD is already in memory when DP is loaded then a third choice for disk directory appears. This is just a bonus and its absence is NOT a bug. Exercise AID first if you want to make sure it appears.

(3) Disk manager DM1000 Vn 3.5

See -READ-ME for "fairware" advice. This has been reassembled from the Vn 3.5 source code from the Ottawa UG to improve its interface to FUNNELWEB. Various bugs have been fixed and some changes made. Now all DD operations with Myarc disk controllers are at 18 sectors per track in either SS or DS. The program has been shortened and <ctrl-C) and <ctrl-A) added as alternatives to <BACK) and <PROCD). Some other features have been made over more to our idea of convenience too. The XB program unprotect has been removed as taking up more space than it was worth. Just CALL LOAD(-31931,0) instead.

The option to reload FUNNELWEB will return directly to a set pathname using filename FW, else it first asks for primary and secondary drive numbers with those at entry as default, and then tries to load the FW file or else UTIL1 from the secondary drive. If neither of these files is found then it will use XB LOAD in the primary drive as its source of the FUNNELWEB code. This allows owners of single SSSD to use XB with standard TI-Writer functions and DM-1000 without FW/UTIL1 on the disk.

the program files have been renamed MG/MH to avoid confusion with the originals. Saving details to disk from DM-1000 will go to the MG/MH boot drive, or to the default drive #1 if MG/MH are loaded other than from FUNNELWEB and boot tracking fails. This default may be modified with DPatch in the filename just after the start of the MG file.

** WARNING ** With a Myarc disk controller present and Myarc sense on, any operation involving formatting at double density (Initialize or DiskCopy) will go directly to the physical disk 1 to 4 and format that, ignoring any RAMdisk emulations, but the disk header sectors will be written to the emulating disk if any. Myarc sensing can be turned off as a (fn-3) option for ROMs which default to 18 s/t.

** CAUTION ** The program is now believed to be reliable. However during development anomalous behaviour was observed with the Miami Vn 7.3 MENU Opt 3 - Run a program.

** NOTE ** The program has been modified to work around a bug apparent under some circumstances in the operation of Corcomp style FDCs in the presence of high CRU Horizons.

(4) c-Compiler interface CP

Clint Pulley's Vn 4.0 c99 compiler files C99C/D/E may be loaded directly as Option 3 program files. File CP brings user convenience in working with c99 closer to FUNNELWEB standards. Instead of loading c99 directly, load CP as a Option 3 program file, and it will then load C99C/D/E from the same disk drive. The return from c99 reloads FW from either the set pathname or the E/A side boot drive and preserves the mailbox filename. If no filename was initially present, the c99 source code filename is installed.

(5) Save utility FSAVE

The E/A SAVE utility loads as absolute code in low memory. FUNNELWEB is compatible with SAVE, but does take up its own 6K share of high memory, so the FSAVE utility has been prepared to allow SAVEing of object files loaded by FUNNELWEB, including into low memory. FSAVE loads as absolute code overlaying the FUNNELWEB (UL) system area. The start and first executable instruction should be DEFed with SFIRST and the last address DEFed by SLAST. Select entry point SAVE and enter the SAVE filename. If the Loader has placed files so that SFIRST is in hi-mem and SLAST is in low memory, FSAVE will SAVE high memory from SFIRST to the FFAHM indicated by the Loader at UTLTAB+2 and then proceed to SAVE low memory from >2676 (above the E/A utilities) to the FFALM. The utilities are not included so that the files will remain compatible with FUNNELWEB if reloaded under a different module.

When used with Low-Loaded (Opt 6) files, FSAVE saves its first module from low-mem from SFIRST to the top of lo-mem, nominally >3FFA (at UTLTAB+4), and then from hi-mem from >A000 to SLAST. If SFIRST and SLAST both point to the same segment the SAVE is normal. The MBSAVE entry adjusts the hi-mem start to >A050 above the Mailbox. Use E/A SAVE for addresses in the >6000 to >8000 cartridge space.

The MEMSAV entry point allows direct entry of hex address limits for the memory block to be SAVEd. The second entry is the address of the last word (inclusive) to be saved. MEMSAV ignores SFIRST and SLAST but these must have been DEFed, perhaps by a dummy object file, for correct LOAD/RUN operation.

FSAVE indicates the actual length of the memory block saved in each file in the second word of the header block, to a maximum of >1FFA in each file. The TI E/A SAVE utility, amongst its other little foibles, adds a further 6 bytes to this count, but the program file loader in the E/A module believes the byte count in the header. In normal usage the extra 6 bytes, falsely indicated by E/A SAVE, as read in from VDP to CPU RAM do not cause problems.

FSAVE files will of course not cause any problems unless perhaps a loader incompatible with E/A is used. File FWSAVE for cassette or long file saves has been removed from the package as no comments were ever received concerning its use. A revised version which works with Vn 4.2 has been prepared.

(6) Basic loader LDFW

LDFW is an auxiliary load program in the form of an autostarting object file which may be executed from E/A, Minimem Basics, Myarc (BIL by CALL LR("..."), E/A Load Run, or most other object file loaders such as come with Myarc or Corcomp disk controllers. It may be kept in Minimem cartridge RAM if you follow the MM instructions for forcing it to load there. The RUN name is LDFW. It offers choice of several pathnames or entry of floppy disk numbers.

(7) User List UL

Writing in of the 8 user selectable options is done with the CF/CG installer program. If a hard pathname load is chosen CONFIG will remind you that only the file-name or further pathname should be entered. There is no entry corresponding to "9 (CRT ROM) 0" which looks for a cartridge ROM header at >6000 and "9" executes the first program listed there and "0" the second. This may be handy for owners of Vn 2.2 consoles who have disk controllers that will load FUNNELWEB.

Remember that UL is a normally executing Option 2 Program file and different UL files can be chained by specifying them in a UL type of file. UL is coded to be fully position independent. Just remember to avoid file name clashes. File DS is a UL type file collecting various disk utilities together for Opt 3.

(8) Cartridge RAM loader CT8K/O

Object file CT8K/O is used to store FUNNELWEB in >6000 - >8000 cartridge RAM, if present, so that it comes up as a selection after the title screen (not on V2.2 consoles or in the presence of Myarc 128K OS). The code produced is ROMable. Load FUNNELWEB and then load CT8K/O as a Utility Load / Run option. FUNNELWEB is loaded into hi-mem on selection.

(9) Batch File Loader SL

SL loads a list of up to 15 object files specified in a DV/80 script file. When SL is loaded as Option 5 SCRIPTLOADER it will prompt for entry of a script file name, but when a User List entry of Script Load type is selected, SL will just load and process the script file specified. File SCRIPT is a simple example that shows how to eliminate some of the tedium in preparation of E/A SAVEd files. It is possible to load any combination of relocatable object files that E/A will load. Comment lines in a Script start with an asterisk in the first column and blank lines are ignored. Comments may also follow entries except as noted. Details of the load process are controlled by directives. These fall into several classes, some illustrated in SCRIPT.

(a) File specification

FILE "DSK.xx" .. Followed by a filename complete with pathname, all in quotes, single or double, FILE specifies one of the files to be loaded. No spaces are allowed between the quotes.

BOOT "filename" .. Followed by a filename without any load pathname. This instructs the ScriptLoader to supply the FUNNELWEB boot pathnase and to append this filename. If the Hard Disk path is OFF the drive number where SL was found is used as "x" in "DSKx.filename".

UTIL "filename" .. As for BOOT except that the currently defined Utility pathname is used.