

99/4 USERS OF AMERICA

5028 MERIT DR.

FLINT, MI 48506

1-313-736 3774

MBX EXPANDER: MORE WASTE IN THE GIANT'S WAKE

The Milton Bradley Company has announced that they do not intend to release, or produce, their voice recognition package for the Texas Instruments 99/4A home computer. I am told by sources within Milton Bradley that the reasons are two fold. First, TI has failed to produce the software for the MBX Expander in time to market it for the Christmas season; namely, Championship Baseball, I'm Hiding, and Terry Turtles Adventures. TI has had the code for these programs since July of this year and has simply failed to deliver the modular packages, for whatever reason. Secondly, Milton Bradley was serious upset by the Atari move to cancel its involvement with the version of the MBX Expander for their systems. Milton Bradley has filed suit against Atari for forty - three million dollars as a result. Thus when Texas Instruments withdrew from the home computer market in late October, Milton Bradley saw doom on the horizon for the MBX.

Several possibilities now exist. If Milton Bradley sues Texas Instruments, and that is a good possibility indeed, we will see no more of the MBX Expander. It would hurt Milton Bradley's case in court if outside sources were to produce the essential software instead of TI. If Milton Bradley doesn't sue TI, it is possible that they might consider contracting someone else to do the final software production work. I hope that Milton Bradley comes out of this nightmare in sound financial shape, as this isn't the first time that TI has put the thumbscrews to them!

Although Milton Bradley clearly states that their ten new video games aren't going to be produced, I have some of them in stock! For instance, Big Foot runs on either the MBX Expander or the TI 99/4A and it is released and shipping. TI claims that they plan to release at least seven of the ten packages, so who knows! Naturally the critical three are in the mystery shrouded dark rooms somewhere. Well, the voice recognition chip sells for about \$7.50 so maybe the clever souls among us can cobble up our own version of Championship Baseball! Personally, I am disappointed, as I was looking forward to this package with breathless anticipation. What a year! We got socked below the belt on the TI 99/2, the Hex-Bus peripherals, the TI 99/8, and etc. Who could ask for more? Ever get the feeling that somebody in Texas ain't got their modom properly connected to their mouth?

BEWARE THE WHITE ELEPHANT!

The comfortable days of our black and silver TI 99/4A's are gone and the new cheaper to produce-and much cheaper looking-white TI 99/4A console. Unfortunately, the third party modules won't work on most of them! There is no way to identify which ones will work by their production numbers, it must be operating to see if you bought a white elephant or a useable console! Observe the bottom right hand edge of the screen and look to see if it says c Texas Instruments 1981 or c Texas Instruments V2.2.

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If you have version 2.2, then you have the white elephant! The problem is a little thing known as auto-incrementing memory. Simply put, if the software module does not have the auto-incrementing memory chip, it is rejected by the console and the title screen reappears. Thus, the console will not run modules produced by Funware, Romox, Atari, or Parker Bros. Unfortunate, being as TI isn't going to produce modules either!

SLYMOIDS: PROOF THAT YOU CAN'T TELL A GAME BY ITS NAME!

This new release by TI is one of the most sensational arcade games we have yet seen! Perhaps it should be explained that you are doing battle with some varieties of life forms known as moids. They are also sly, hence the name!

Select your difficulty level, loosen up your fingers, and grab a joystick. You battle from one of four graphic battlegrounds: a grassy slope, a castle, a meadow, and a cave. You can run to the right to get away, or stand and blast away in a 360 degree pattern.

The creatures aren't stupid and hitting them isn't always so easy! Any critter you nail that is horizontal to you earns you ten points. The bigger scores are achieved by hitting specific creatures at an angle, while rising, or straight up! The graphics are fabulous and the sound effects are mind blowing! Music with drum background?

If you do battle your way across the slope and into the castle and out of the castle into the meadow and finally into the cave; you might make it to the next screen! Bats dive at you in the dank cave and rocks fall from the roof towards you. Naturally as the game progresses the faster everything moves and the more difficult it is to hit the various types of sly-moids. Everyone who saw this outstanding game bought a copy, so take that for what it is worth! If you like action, lots of motion on the screen, simulated three dimension special effects, and hair raising fun, then this game is for you after all. Don't let the name toss you a curve on strike two! I rated it **** Excellent. Your cost is \$23.50 and we have them in stock!

MASH: NOW YOU TOO CAN PLAY DOCTOR

Twentieth Century Fox Video did an outstanding job of converting the television series into an arcade-like game. The graphics are very realistic and the play action is very responsive. Almost touchy! Several can play, or you can try your skills out against the computer. I should warn you that the console plays a very fast and mean game!

The game offers you five play options: rescue with combat and surgery, rescue with combat only, rescue with no combat, rescue with surgery, or just surgery. I have to tell you now, that the surgery isn't what it sounds like! It is tasteful: no blood, guts, or gore!!!

You fly into the field and rescue injured soldiers, five at a time, and fly them

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back to a landing pad. When you have rescued eighteen you can proceed to the surgery option. Here you have an injured soldier with a piece of shrapnel protruding from the body. Now wait a moment! It doesn't look like a human at all and the shrapnel is a white rectangle. You use the scalpel, it looks like a tuning fork, and move it through a maze. You must touch the shrapnel with the tip of the scalpel and then reverse your motion back through the maze. If you touch the soldier you lose.

The computer does not participate in surgery, he waits for you to goof up! When you do make a mistake, the computer smiles and gets bonus points! The game also has speech, and some clever remarks! If you like the Mash type of theme then you will doubtless like this innovative game. Again, it is clean and not insulting to the senses or offensive to those who actually were in a war. I rated it *** Very Good. The user cost is \$23.50 and we do have them in stock!

A FINAL TRIBUTE: C. Gail Fischer

Our newsletter was printed and assembled by my father; Gail Fischer. He had retired several years ago and took great delight in producing our publication. This all came to an abrupt end on November 18, 1983 when he passed on to greater things. He will be missed by those of us who knew him--remember the great steaks on July 30th.--and fondly remembered.

I would also like to personally thank those of you who sent flowers and sympathy cards to our family. We did appreciate it very much, as it always helps to know that someone out there in the world still cares about other human beings. Again, my personal heart felt thanks to each of you.

NEW RELEASES FOR CHRISTMAS

Here are some of the titles we now have in stock for shipment: Slymoids, Mash, Big Foot, Jawbreaker, Story Machine, Face Maker, Burger Time, Microsurgeon, and Demon Attack. From Atari and Synapse we have: Donkey Kong, Pac Man, Picnic Paranoia, Shamus, and Protector #2. From Parker Bros. we have the hit known as Q*Bert. Some of these are reviewed in this newsletter. Incidentally, we also have Early Logo Learning Fun from Texas Instruments!

TI HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE: AVAILABLE OR EXTINCT?

The hardware situation is not good and is rapidly growing worse. TI claims that they have shipped everything they had out, so we can expect nothing more from them. We do have limited supplies of hardware, but not enough to meet the awesome demand we have been experiencing. We are looking to third party sources now and several of them do appear to be promising. One has assured us that they will be manufacturing their own versions of the Peripheral Cabinet, Disk Controller Card, Memory Expansion Card, and RS/232 Interface Card. We have them on order and will advise you to how well they work,

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or are not. One company is offering a one year warranty, and a five dollar exchange fee on any defective card. It all sounds great, but the final product will determine the well intentioned ideas from the grim reality.

Our current software situation is excellent. We have most modular titles in stock and so far our supply has stayed slightly ahead of our incredible demand. We are not accepting any backorders, as we never know for sure what is going to be shipped to us. If you want software for Christmas don't hesitate to call us to check on product availability! Our third party inventory is excellent also: so shortages of high quality stuff there.

ATARI SOFT: THE DID THE 9918A PROUD

First off, let me advise you that Atari has lowered the retail price of their modules for the TI 99/4A from \$44.95 to a respectable \$29.95. That price I can live with! Your cost on any one of the following is \$23.50: Pac Man, Donkey Kong, Centipede, Dig Dug, and Defender. So far we have only seen Pac Man and Donkey Kong, and here is how we rated them: Pac Man **** Excellent and Donkey Kong **** Excellent. The graphics are high resolution, the play action is very rapid, and they do have the old arcade look to them! No disappointments here.

The three releases from Synapse include: Protector #2, Shamus, and Picnic Paranoia. Your cost on them is \$18.75. We rated them as follows: Protector #2 *** Very Good, Shamus **** Excellent, and Picnic Paranoia *** Very Good. The graphics are medium resolution, the play action is excellent, and the documentation is fair.

Protector #2 is a busy game! The mother ship is beaming humans upwards and transporting them to an active volcano! Ground fire is awful and you can't knock the implacements out until they turn red. You have to rescue eighteen poor humans and transport them to the city of New Hipe. Then the volcano erupts and you must rescue them again and move them to the fortress. Plenty of action, fast movement, and lots of combat skill. Should keep any trigger happy console lover in great spirits!

Shamus is a graphic adventure game. You are the detective Shamus and must move through rooms in search of colored keys that unlock mysterious doors. Creatures attack you and you fight them off with your illegal shiv! Touch a wall and you are dead! The nasty old shadow warns of his ominous presence by a low tone and he is invincible, but you can stun him for a moment or two. If you can get through the myriad of rooms and to the final door, you will find out the secret of the shadow. Extra lives and bonus points from bubbling bottles and question marks! This game grows on you the more you play it!

Picnic Paranoia is misnamed, it should have been Picnic Neurosis! You are George, the guy who just wanted to eat his picnic lunch in peace. The ants don't care and they are determined to carry your food and drink off! All you have is a fly swatter and you whack away at those little critters desperately. The larger the food item the more points it is worth and the more ants it takes to swipe it. You can also get an item of

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grub back if you exterminate all of the ants and swat the item back onto the picnic table. It ain't easy to do either! Now just to make George totally hate nature and the out of doors, there are wasps. Their only reason for existence is to cause him torment and anguish! You must lunge to swat them, but if they sting you your face flushes red and you are frozen for five seconds. Naturally the ants keep right on with their activity while you watch helplessly. If this isn't enough to make you hate picnics, the author added some mean spiders to the adventure. Their bite suspends your mobility for three seconds! It is frantic fun, action packed, and guaranteed to drive you stark raving neurotic!

GET THAT CHARACTER AND GO!

You can save some memory by inserting this routine into your program as a subroutine. It permits you to "read" text from the screen, as opposed to inserting it into the program in string form. It has many varied applications, so experiment with it! It is presented here in console Basic, but may also be run in X/Basic with the addition of the Text To Speech diskette. However, some modifications to the string handling will have to be made.

```
1000 END 1010 R=1 1020 C=3 1030 CALL GCHAR(R,C,LTR) 1040 IF LTR=32 THEN 1110
ELSE 1050 1050 FOR C=3 TO 30 1060 CALL GCHAR(R,C,LTR) 1070 A$=A$&CHR$(LTR)
1080 IF (LEN(A$))=28 THEN 1090 ELSE 1100 1090 PRINT#1:A$ 1100 NEXT C
1105 A$="" 1110 R=R+1 1120 IF R+1=25 THEN 1130 ELSE 1030 1130 PRINT#1:"THE SCREEN
IS COMPLETE" 1140 RETURN
```

Be sure to include the open statement prior to going to this subroutine:
OPEN#1:"SPEECH",OUTPUT This routine looks at each row starting with column three. It searches for ASCII 32, or the blank space character. If it finds that column three is a space, the line is ignored and the row is incremented by one. Thus, the program will only read the particular row and column when it contains text or numbers. This speeds up reading the screen greatly! Incidentally, this program when run in X/Basic with the Text To Speech disk is several times quicker! Remember one important thing, if a CALL CLEAR comes before this routine, it can't read a blank screen!

1984 MEETING SCHEDULE!

January 22, February 26, March 19, April 23, May 21. Meetings will be at the Flint campus of the University of Michigan on E. Court St. unless you are otherwise notified. The meeting time is 2:30. A variety of lectures and demonstrations are planned, including a video tape of a lecture presented by C. Regina Whitelaw. We are open for suggestions as to the contents of the lectures, so write us or call us with your thoughts.

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SILENT NIGHT

Bud Shapiro

```

10 CALL CHAR(120,RPT#("0",21)&"E1F3F3F1F0FC0E09884"&RPT#("80",11)&"00")
20 CALL CHAR(116,"071F3F7F7FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF7F7F3F1F07E0FBFCFEFEFEFEFEFEFEFEFEFEFEFEFCFE
EO")
30 CALL CLEAR :: CALL SCREEN(4):: DIM S(49),K(100,3),T(100),V(100,3),W$(5,100)::
GOTO 740
40 DISPLAY AT(8,1)ERASE ALL:"LAST FREQ. # WAS";F
50 RESTORE :: DISPLAY AT(12,1):"WHAT FREQ. #" :: ACCEPT AT(12,14)SIZE(3)VALIDATE
(DIGIT)BEEP:F#
60 ON WARNING NEXT :: IF F#="" THEN 50 :: F=VAL(F#)
70 FOR N=1 TO 49 :: S(N)=F*1.059463094^N :: NEXT N
80 DISPLAY AT(8,1)ERASE ALL:"LAST TIMING WAS";TI :: DISPLAY AT(12,1):"TIMING?" ::
: ACCEPT AT(12,9)SIZE(3)VALIDATE(DIGIT, ".")BEEP:TI#
90 ON WARNING NEXT :: IF TI#="" THEN 80 :: TI=VAL(TI#):: GOSUB 720
100 W=1 :: CALL SPRITE(#20,116,16,10,100,#21,116,16,10,130,#22,126,16,19,120)
110 DISPLAY AT(23,1)ERASE ALL:"I AM READING THE MUSIC!" :: CALL MAGNIFY(3)
120 RANDOMIZE :: CL=4 :: FOR I=1 TO 10 :: CL=CL+1 :: CALL SPRITE(#1,120,CL,INT(R
ND*132+16),INT(RND*230+10),0,INT(RND*-10+5)):: NEXT I
130 IF KE=51 OR KE=52 OR KE=55 THEN 150
140 FOR J=1 TO 9 :: READ T(J),K(J,1),V(J,1),K(J,2),V(J,2),K(J,3),V(J,3):: NEXT J
: GOTO 800
160 GOSUB 720 :: DISPLAY AT(23,1):"OK! READY..." :: GOSUB 800 :: DISPLAY AT(23,
12):"GO!" :: FOR D=1 TO 150 :: NEXT D
170 CALL DELSPRITE(#20,#21,#22)
180 GOTO 800
190 IF W=2 THEN 840 :: IF W=3 THEN 970 :: IF W=4 THEN 800
200 FOR J=1 TO 9 :: IF J=5 AND W=4 THEN 150
210 IF J=9 AND W=4 THEN 960 :: IF J=24 AND W=4 THEN CALL NOTION(#1,0,16)
220 IF J=9 AND W=3 THEN 980 :: IF J=25 AND W=3 THEN 990 :: IF J=32 AND W=3 THEN
: GOTO
230 IF J=35 AND W=4 THEN CALL NOTION(#1,0,9)
240 DISPLAY AT(23,1):W$(W,J):: CALL SOUND(T(J)*TI,S(K(J,1)),V(J,1),S(K(J,2)),V(J
,2),S(K(J,3)),V(J,3))
250 NEXT J :: IF W=4 THEN 1010
260 CALL SOUND(1500,S(K(0,1)),V(0,1)+20,S(K(0,2)),V(0,2)+30,S(K(0,3)),V(0,3))::
NEXT W
270 DATA 375,20,10,23,0,4,6,125,21,10,25,0,4,6,250,20,10,23,0,4,6,750,16,10,20,0
,4,6
280 DATA 375,20,10,23,0,4,6,125,21,10,25,0,4,6,250,20,10,23,0,4,6,750,16,10,20,
,4,6
290 DATA 500,23,10,30,0,6,6,250,23,10,30,0,6,6,750,23,10,27,0,6,6,500,20,10,25,
,4,6
300 DATA 250,20,10,28,0,4,6,750,20,10,23,0,4,6,500,21,10,25,0,9,6,250,21,10,25,0
,9,6

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```
310 DATA 375,25,10,28,0,9,6,125,23,10,27,0,9,6,250,21,10,25,0,9,6,375,20,10,23,0
,4,6
320 DATA 125,21,10,25,0,4,6,250,20,10,23,0,4,6,750,16,10,20,0,4,6,500,21,10,25,0
,9,6
330 DATA 250,21,10,25,0,9,6,375,25,10,28,0,9,6,125,23,10,27,0,9,6,250,21,10,25,0
,9,6
340 DATA 375,20,10,23,0,4,6,125,21,10,25,0,4,6,250,20,10,23,0,4,6,750,16,10,20,0
,4,6
350 DATA 500,23,10,30,0,6,6,250,23,10,30,0,6,6,375,23,10,33,0,6,6,125,23,10,30,0
,6,6
360 DATA 250,23,10,27,0,6,6,750,20,10,28,0,4,6,750,23,10,32,0,4,6,375,23,10,28,0
,4,6
370 DATA 125,20,10,23,0,4,6,250,16,10,20,0,4,6,375,18,10,23,0,6,6,125,15,10,21,0
,6,6
380 DATA 250,11,10,18,0,6,6,1000,11,10,16,0,4,6
390 W=1 :: FOR J=1 TO 8 :: W$(W,J)="SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT" :: NEXT J
400 FOR J=9 TO 14 :: W$(W,J)="ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT" :: NEXT J
410 FOR J=15 TO 19 :: W$(W,J)="ROUND YON VIR- IR- GIN" :: NEXT J
420 FOR J=20 TO 23 :: W$(W,J)="MOTH- ER AND CHILD" :: NEXT J
430 FOR J=24 TO 28 :: W$(W,J)="HO- LY IN- FANT SO" :: NEXT J
440 FOR J=29 TO 32 :: W$(W,J)="TEN- DER AND MILD" :: NEXT J
450 FOR J=33 TO 39 :: W$(W,J)="SLEEP IN HEAV-EN- LY PE-ACE" :: NEXT J
460 FOR J=40 TO 46 :: W$(W,J)="SLE-EEP IN HEAV-EN- LY PEACE" :: NEXT J
470 W=2 :: FOR J=1 TO 8 :: W$(W,J)="SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT" :: NEXT J
480 FOR J=9 TO 14 :: W$(W,J)="SHEPHERDS GUARE AT THE SIGHT" :: NEXT J
490 FOR J=15 TO 19 :: W$(W,J)="GLOR- IES STRE EAM FROM" :: NEXT J
500 FOR J=20 TO 23 :: W$(W,J)="HEAV- EN A- FAR" :: NEXT J
510 FOR J=24 TO 28 :: W$(W,J)="HEAVEN- LY HO- GOTS SING" :: NEXT J
520 FOR J=29 TO 32 :: W$(W,J)="AL- LE- LU- IA" :: NEXT J
530 FOR J=33 TO 39 :: W$(W,J)="CHRIST THE SAV- IOR IS BO-RN" :: NEXT J
540 FOR J=40 TO 46 :: W$(W,J)="CHRI- IST THE SAV- IOR IS BORN" :: NEXT J
550 W=3 :: FOR J=1 TO 8 :: W$(W,J)="SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT" :: NEXT J
560 FOR J=9 TO 14 :: W$(W,J)="SON OF GOD LOVE'S PURE LIGHT" :: NEXT J
570 FOR J=15 TO 19 :: W$(W,J)="RA- DIANT BE-AMS FROM" :: NEXT J
580 FOR J=20 TO 23 :: W$(W,J)="THY HO- LY FACE" :: NEXT J
590 FOR J=24 TO 28 :: W$(W,J)="WITH THE DAWN OF RE-" :: NEXT J
600 FOR J=29 TO 32 :: W$(W,J)="DE- DE- MING GRACE" :: NEXT J
610 FOR J=33 TO 39 :: W$(W,J)="JESUS, LORD AT THY BIR-TH" :: NEXT J
620 FOR J=40 TO 46 :: W$(W,J)="JE-CE-SUS LORD AT THY BIRTH" :: NEXT J
630 W=4 :: FOR J=1 TO 8 :: W$(W,J)="SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT" :: NEXT J
640 FOR J=9 TO 14 :: W$(W,J)="WONDROUS STAR LEND THY LIGHT" :: NEXT J
650 FOR J=15 TO 19 :: W$(W,J)="WITH THE A- AN- GELS" :: NEXT J
660 FOR J=20 TO 23 :: W$(W,J)="LE- ET US SING" :: NEXT J
670 FOR J=24 TO 28 :: W$(W,J)="AL- LE- LU- U- IA" :: NEXT J
680 FOR J=29 TO 32 :: W$(W,J)="TO- OOD OUR KING" :: NEXT J
690 FOR J=33 TO 39 :: W$(W,J)="CHRIST THE SAV- IOR IS BO-RN" :: NEXT J
700 FOR J=40 TO 46 :: W$(W,J)="CHR- IST THE SAV- IOR IS BORN" :: NEXT J :: GOTO 71
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DOUBLE TROUBLE WITH YOUR OUTBOARD DRIVE!

It has come to our attention, that some of you may own internal disk drives with a faulty resistor pack. This problem is critical when it comes to the operation of a second outboard disk drive. The wrong resistor pack affects the level of data transfer and can result in distorted or lost data. The internal drive at fault is the Shugart, it has the small door that opens to the right. Contact Consumer Relations at 1-800-858 4565 and request the proper resistor pack!

SEG STRING: PULLING YOUR OWN STRINGS CAN BE FUN!

Late one night, actually it was moring and very early, I had a rather inovative idea. I took two Bufferin, but it wouldn't go away! I thought that I should share it with you, after all it might even be useful!

It allows you to create a disk file file name by taking characters out of the two inputs. Let us suppose that you have a program that stores names and addresses and wish to file each name in its own file.

```
10 CALL CLEAR 20 DISPLAY AT(2,1):"LAST NAME?":ACCEPT AT(2,14) BEEP SIZE(-14):LN$
30 DISPLAY AT(4,1):"FIRST NAME?":ACCEPT AT(4,14) BEEP SIZE(-14):FN$ 40 X$=SEG$
(LN$,1,5)::Y$=SEG$(FN$,1,4) 50 Z$=Z$&X$:Z$=Z$&Y$ 60 W$="DSK1."&Z$ 70 OPEN#1:W$,
OUTPUT,SEQUENTIAL,DISPLAY 80 PRINT#1:..... 90 CLOSE#1
```

The sample program does not contain any strings to be output to the file, so be sure to add those lines! The file name generated will consist of the first five letters of the last name and the first four letters of the first name. For example, if the last name is Fischer and the first name is Duane, then ZS=FISCHDUAN Have fun!

SPEECH TIPS: A SYNTHESIZER THAT STUTTERS?

Here are a few cute tricks you can do with a Terminal Emulator #2 and a Synthesizer.

You can have a memory size spoken by the following routine: 1 A=A+8 2 GO SUB 1
When you hear the tone, type: PRINT A and press enter. Next type on the screen:
OPEN#1:"SPEECH",OUTPUT and press enter. Next type on the screen: PRINT#1:A and press
enter. The memory available is now spoken aloud.

This same procedure will work for speaking out variable values, the contents of a given string, or numeric values.

Some interesting results can be achieved if you press specific keys while using the TE#2. A series of "J's" results in a stuttering like noise, a series of "K's" sounds like a train, and a series of "X's" sounds like something from outer space!

The X/Basic manual fails to tell you that to speak the pre-programed phrases you have to use the # sign before and after the phrase: CALL SAY("#READY TO START#")

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ATARISOFT DONKEY KONG

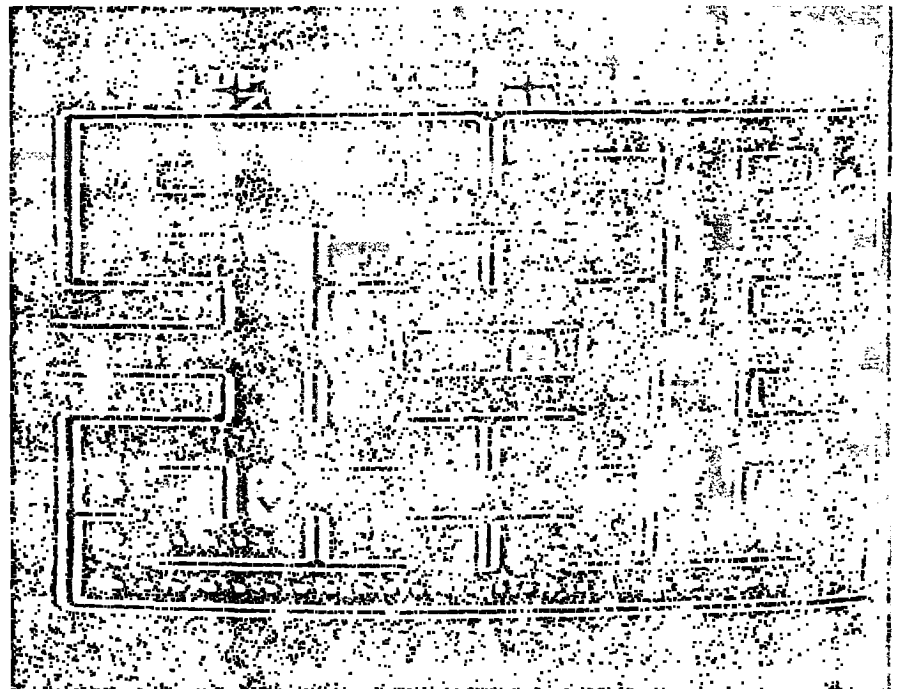
RATING: EXCELLENT

USER COST: \$23.50

ATARISOFT PAC MAN

RATING: OUTSTANDING

USER COST: \$23.50



BIG FOOT: HE GIVES ABNORMAL A NEW MEANING!

This arcade game is by Milton Bradley and is for the MBX Expander and the TI 99/4A. It offers speech, you've just got to hear the Big Foot roar! It is a super version of Alpiner with some very clever twists. The graphics are outstanding, the sound effects are realistic, and the play action is responsive.

Try to climb the first of six mountains, but beware! Big Foot is on top of the summit tossing giant snowballs down at you, dodge them or else! Giant flying eagles zip around the peak of the mountain also, and they will carry you off if they have a chance. Your goal is to climb the mountain and capture the Big Foot, but first you must pick up the food and gold along the way. If you miss one of the twelve items you can't capture Big Foot! You earn 100 for each piece of food and 150 for each lump of gold recovered. You also earn a bonus for taking less time climbing the mountain and for having fewer snowballs hurled down at you!

You move up the slope by tossing a rope and catching it on a ledge and then scaling the wall. If you do capture Big Foot it is worth 1000 bonus points! Each mountain gets faster and harder. More snowballs and more eagles to contend with. It is very colorful, amusing, and difficult. I rated it **** Excellent. Your price is \$23.50 and it is in stock!

FACEMAKER: MORE FUN THAN A SNAKE IN THE GIRL'S LOCKER ROOM!

Spinnaker has created an electronic Mr. Potato Head that is nothing short of hysterical fun! You select combinations of forty facial parts and build a face. Then you can program the face to smile, frown, cry, wiggle an ear, wink an eye, stick out its tongue, or any combination of the above. Appropriate sound effects make the animated face downright side splitting!

You can also play a game with your artistic masterpiece. The child watches as the computer causes the face to animate a particular reaction, or series of reactions. The child must then repeat the facial expressions shown in the correct order. A good exercise of memory and observation! Points are earned for correct sequences. The graphics are bright, highly detailed, and very colorful. The sound effects are spectacular and play response is great. Don't underestimate the age of interest on this one, as older children just adore it! The selection of facial parts is very flexible and it makes the face possibilities nearly unlimited. I rated this one ***** Outstanding. Your price is \$23.50 and it is in stock!

STORY MACHINE: BREATHE LIFE INTO YOUR WORDS!

This Spinnaker creation is highly innovative and offers a novel approach to the dull subject of proper sentence construction and story writing. It allows the child to create proper sentences from a built in list of modifiers, noun-subjects, verbs, articles, and prepositional phrases: over 76 in all. Proper construction is indicated by eight different error or mistake messages! You can't trick it either, I tried!!!

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The story is more than words though, as the computer sets the proper graphics and sound effects to fit the theme! The child can repeat a story, change the words in a story, or alter the animation at will. The child also learns to save and recall stories from a storage device: cassette or diskette.

It is fascinating to watch your child work with this marvelous educational tool! I heard a horse sing a song to a girl; Green Leaves no less! The graphics are colorful, very detailed, and nicely animated. Sound effects and music are sensational! I was highly impressed with it and rated it ***** Outstanding. Your user cost is \$23.50 and it is in stock!

JAWBREAKER #2: A CALORIE FREE WAY TO EAT SWEETS!

This arcade game is by those wizards at Sierra On Line. It is a single player game that involves a set of teeth racing through a maze of shifting colored dots and revolving doors. You earn points by devouring the colored dots and candy goodies that you come across: 5 for a dot, 20 for an energizer, 200 for candy canes, 400 for lollipops, 600 for melon slices, and 800 for a candy mountain.

A toothbrush appears to clean your teeth after each screen, just to keep the local dentist happy! The nasty old grinding gobblers come at you from both sides of the screen and they spell doom! If you eat an energizer dot you can devour them or escape them, but not for long! Energy goes fast and they are back in a flash! You can also escape through the revolving doors if you are quick enough. You get a bonus jawbreaker for each ten thousand points earned too!

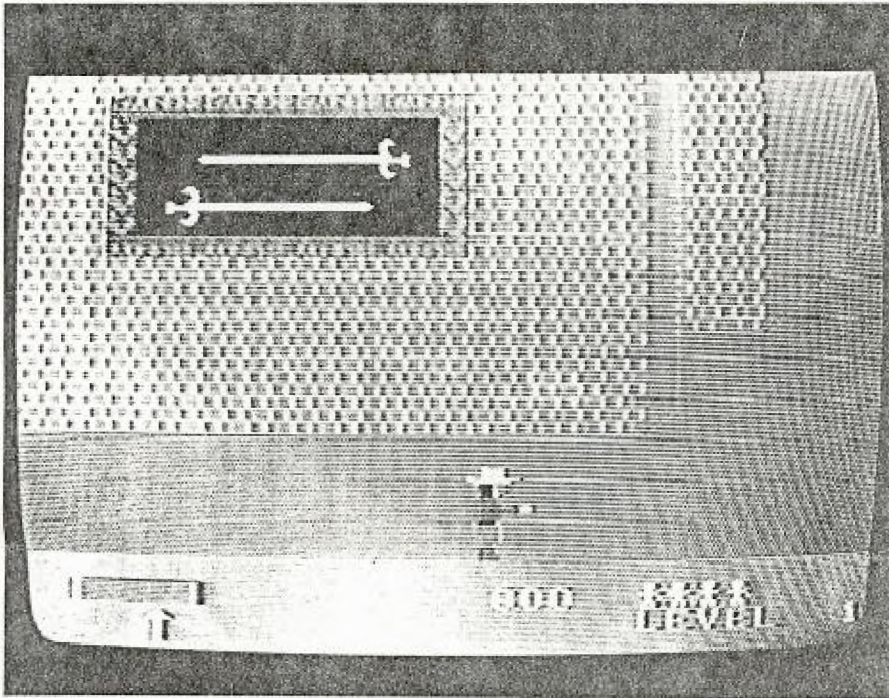
The game is colorful, fast paced, and delightful to play. It isn't easy, and it does get tough on the higher levels! Great animated color graphics, fast response, and pleasant sound effects. I just love that toothbrush! I rated it **** Excellent. Your cost is \$23.50 and we do have them in stock!

BURGER TIME: GOOD GRIEF! THEY'RE AFTER MY BUNS!

You are Peter Pepper and you are in a kitchen trying to make some simple hamburger sandwiches. However, some ugly pickles, hot dogs, and eggs don't want you around! Try to drop the components of the burger: buns, meat, lettuce, down through the different layers to the plates below. If you can build four burgers you can move to the next screen. The kitchen scene changes and it gets harder!

You can wipe the villains out by throwing pepper at them, or by dropping burger components on top of them! You receive 50 points for each layer of the burger that drops down, the farther down it falls the more your gain! Wiping out a hot dog nets you 100 points, a pickle is 200, and an egg is 300. If you make contact with an ice cream cone it is worth 500 and a coffee cup is 1000! A bonus Peter Pepper for each ten thousand points scored. Super graphics, fast play action, and sensational fun! Much like the arcade version! I rated it ***** Outstanding. Your cost is \$23.50 and it is in stock!

DECEMBER 1983 NEWSLETTER



TI SLYMOIDS

RATING: OUTSTANDING

USER COST: \$23.50

TI MASH

RATING: EXCELLENT

USER COST: \$23.50



DECEMBER 1983 NEWSLETTER

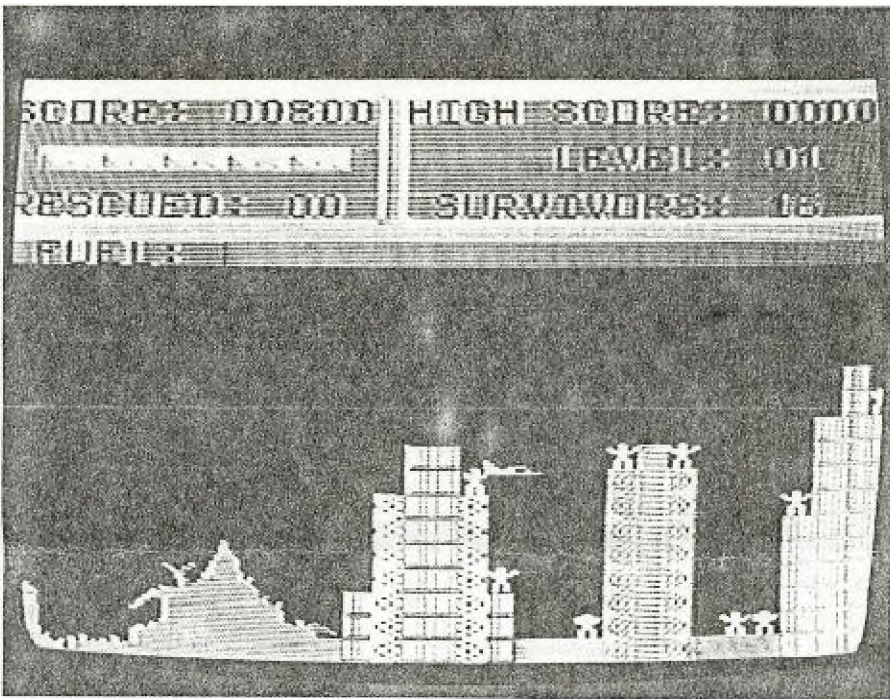
TIDBITS FOR YOU TO BYTE ON

BUD SHAPIRO

Boy, oh boy, another year is coming to a close. How time flies. Oh well, let's get to the subject matter at hand. Let's add spaces after numbers so any video display of words or numbers listed on the screen, in column format, will not shift one space over due to numeric variables printing with leading & trailing spaces. If you are listing in a FOR/NEXT loop or a GOTO loop and you are using the loop variable to print the reference number before each piece of information displayed, then this little routine will come in handy. It will allow you to use up to 3 digit numbers. Let us assume that X is the variable of your loop & A\$ is the text to be printed. Here it is in BASIC;

```
10 X%=STR$(X) 20 IF LEN(X%)=4 THEN 50 30 X%=X%&" "
40 GOTO 20 50 FRINT X%;A$ then your next or goto. For X-BASIC it is
one line: 20 X%=STR$(X)::X%=X%&RPT$(" ",4-LEN(X%))::PRINT X%;A$
then your next or goto. In basic, insert lines 10-40 before
your print statement and line 50 replaces your print statement.
In x-basic the one line replaces your print statement. You can test
the routine, as a short program, by adding: 5 A$="HELLO" 6 FOR X=1 TO
125 80 NEXT X and in x-basic the same.
```

I mentioned in the November article that I might include a program or two as a Christmas special. Here is one that may be new to all. It uses the CTRL key that the 99/4a has very little use for. Let us suppose you wish to protect your program from prying eyes. You do not want anyone to see the code listed in the program. I know you can use ON BREAK NEXT in x-basic, but there are several ways to overcome this and list the program. Or, perhaps, you want to drive a friend bananas by giving him a program with this routine inserted in front and allow him to list the program and tell him to figure out the code. Make sure it is a good friend because it is sure to cause MANIAC symptoms to surface. Do not use letters A-E in basic as they print symbols and we only want blank spaces between the quotes. In x-basic anything goes. The lines in Basic are: 1 CALL CLEAR 2 INPUT A\$ 3 IF A\$(1)="" THEN 1 Now your program starts. In x-basic it is: 5 CALL CLEAR::INPUT A\$::IF A\$(1)="" THEN 5 Now your program starts. I only used 3 letters in my code and drove most people nuts. Only two of my friends got it. You can use more letters or numbers if you wish. The trick is to type your code between the quotes while holding the CTRL key down when typing this into your program. Then, when you run, hold the CTRL key down and enter the code and away you go. Have fun with this till next year and till next year I'll say "that's it for now." I wish you all a MERRY CHRISTMAS and have a HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR. See you next year. (50)



ATARISOFT PROTECTOR 2

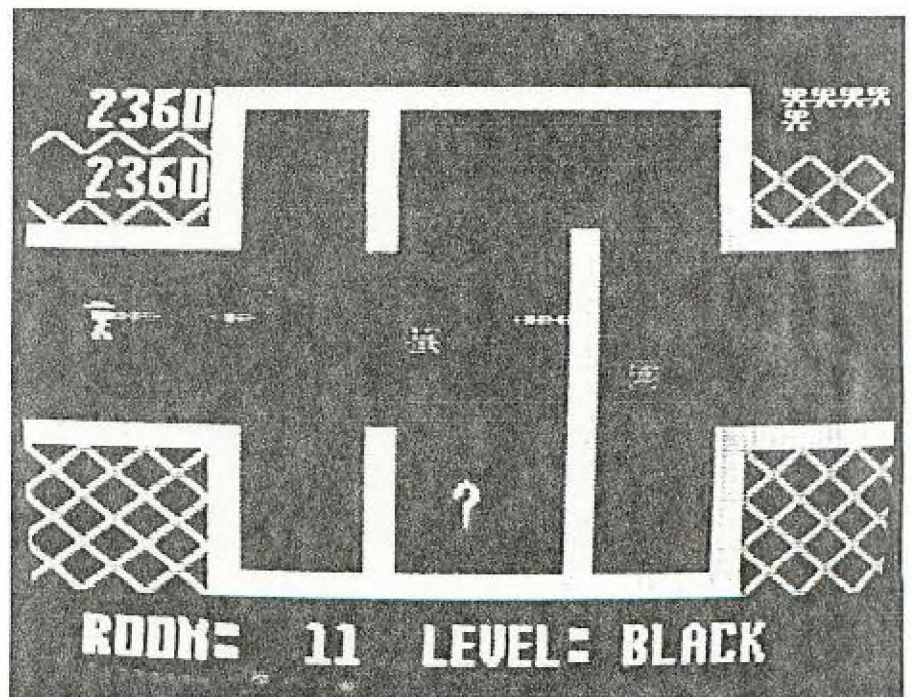
RATING: VERY GOOD

USER COST: \$18.75

ATARISOFT SHAMUS

RATING: EXCELLENT

USER COST: \$ 18.75



99/4 USERS OF AMERICA
5028 MERIT DR.
FLINT, MI 48506
1-313-736 3774

December 5, 1983

Dear Member,

The Users Of America will continue to operate throughout the next year and we do not plan to curtail any of our services. The October 28, 1983 announcement by Texas Instruments left many of us in unfortunate positions, and support from a Users Group now is more vital than ever before.

Our membership was presented with three proposals at our November 20, 1983 meeting: (1) to suspend operations effective January 1, 1984, (2) to maintain the current membership fee at twenty dollars and to raise program directory prices from \$2 to \$3 per program, to go to full retail on all third party software, and to limit the size of the newsletter, (3) to raise the membership fee from its present level to thirty five dollars per year and to maintain all present services. The Michigan and national membership that responded elected to go with proposition three. Because of the withdrawal of TI from the home computer market, we can no longer offset our operational costs by diverting money from the retail sales end. This is the primary reason for the membership fee increase.

We are requesting that all members submit their additional fifteen dollars by the end of December 1983. All membership renewals will be at the new membership fee structure of thirty five dollars and those who are up for renewal will receive written notification.

Our present stock of TI software is excellent and we will continue to offer it to our members for as long as supplies remain available to us. Our stock of hardware is somewhere near critical and that picture does not look brighter for some months to come. Several third party companies are in the process of developing their own versions of the Peripheral Cabinet, Disk Controller Card, Memory Expansion Card, and RS/232 Interface Card. We are not sure yet when availability will be possible. We have already committed advance orders on such hardware and will keep you advised as to the product release dates.

We are presently expanding our coverage of third party software and will be offering many new quality programs to you next year. Our Program Directory will also be expanded this month to include over one hundred new programs. We are presently well stocked with third party modules: Funware, Romox, Atari, and Parker Bros.

It is now up to each of us as individual owners to band together for the survival of the whole. We do hope that you will remain with us and continue to give us support and contributions. The final fate of this organization is totally up to each of you as members, so make your decision and let us know. Thanks for your past cooperation, as it truly is appreciated.

HAPPY COMPUTING AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Duane B. Fischer, President

99/4 USERS OF AMERICA
DUANE B. FISCHER, PRESIDENT
5028 MERIT DR.
FLINT, MI 48506



EDMONTON USERS GROUP
P.O. BOX 11983
EDMONTON,
ALBERTA CANADA T5J 3L1