# 99/4 USERS OF AMERICA

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Dear Fellow User Group,

Please be advised that as of June 1, 1984 our name will be changed to: "USERS OF AMERICA."  We will be supporting both the Texas Instruments 99/4A and the IBM PC Junior computers.  We will continue our support of the TI 99/4A for as long as our services are needed.

I am also wishing to divest myself of my personal collection of third party game software for the TI 99/4A.  It is on both diskette and cassette media and includes the documentation.  These are original copies, not duplications!  The collection is sizeable and is being offered as a package and on a "first come first served" basis.  Below I have itemized the programs by author, and shown the retail price of each.  The price being asked for these eighty programs is $550, and I don't believe that you will find a superior price anywhere on this planet.

FUTURA: All Star Baseball XB, All Star Baseball B, All star Bowling XB, Wall Street XB, Wall Street B, Galectic War XB, Starship Concord XB, Chutes and Sharks XB, Fowl Play XB, Lasar Battle XB, London Blitz XB, The Hustler XB, Ice Caverns Of Xen XB/XM, Challenge #1 B, Challenge #2 B, Casino Pack B, Dr. Nuttier B, SAM Defense B, Moonduster B, Hopper XB, Copter; Capers B, Death Station XB, CIA Adventure B, Air Missile Command XB, Mars Marauder XB, The Dragon Game ASS., Viral Viendetta Ass.
 $596 retail

PEWTERWARE: Olympic Decathalon B, Bluegrass Sweepstakes B, Challenge Poker B, Match Wits B, Up Periscope XB, Snowtrek XB, Roll Five b  $70 retail

FFF: Shuttle Command XB, TI Asteroids XB  $35 retail

Bill Bias: Arthropod ASS., AsTIroids ASS.  $60 retail

MAPLE LEAF MICRO WARE: Skydiver XB, Hang Glider Pilot XB, Devil Craze XB  $60 retail

TEXWARE: Frazel XB, Z-Bert XB, Wit XB, Nitwit XB  $70 retail

NSY Software: Crazy Kong XB  $15 retail

INTERSOFT: Defend The Cities XB, Defend The Cities #2 ASS.,
Galectic Gunfight XB, Meteor Storm XB, Mission Battlestar XB,
Theon Raiders ASS/EA, Theon Raiders ASS./MM  $130 retail

DATA FORCE: Space Station #1 ASS., Kippy's Nightmare ASS.,
Bang! Bang! Sub ASS.,  $105 retail

MOONBEAM: Strike Force 99 XB, Cavern Quest XB  $40 retail

EASYWARE: Easy Tag B, Easy Pong B, Easy Screen B, Easy Song B,
Easy Drive I-75 B, Deflectors B, Bachgammon For Two B, Copy Cats B,
Vadering B, Cryptic Code B, Cosmic Coup B, Zoot Shoot XB
$164 retail

Steve Johnson: Textrek #2 XB  $15 retail

Space Race B, The Cube XB, Lasar Shield XB  $45 retail

COLOR SOFT: Three D Trek XB  $15 retail

SOFTWARA III: Bionic Bunny XB, Dungeon/Dragon Fantasy XB,
$30 retail

KEAN COMPUTING: Vid XB, Hiest XB, Sprite Generator XB  $55 retail

TOTAL RETAIL VALUE: $1505!

    If you, or your group, are interested in this package, please
give us a call!  There are no duplicate packages, so the first
order will be the only one filled.  I will hold the package
until the payment arrives and then it will be shipped via UPS.
These eighty excellent programs would make a valuable contribution
to any User Group library!
    Thanks for your time, as I do appreciate it!  Hope to hear
from you in the near future.

                         Respectfully,

                         Duane B. Fischer, President

If that isn't enough to impress you, take a look at the speed!  The chip is a TMS 70 C 20 CMOS 8 bit MPU with a frequency of 2.5 MHZ.  We ran a bench mark test just to see how quick it really was and here are the results.  We used a simple counting loop of: 10 FOR A=1 TO 100: PRINT A: NEXT A  It executed in just under four seconds!  Assembler language on the 99/4A can do it in about three seconds.  This isn't assembler however, but Enhanced Basic!  It has multiple statement lines and is quite similar  to Extended Basic.

The display has one disadvantage, it is only a 31 character LCD display with a scroll ability for eighty characters.  Radio Shack has a nice unit with about eight lines of display, but there are no possibilities of using their's with an external CRT.  The CC-40 will drive a CRT via the Hex-Bus interface!  The current display is five by eight characters in size and can be controlled by a built-in contrast control. It can list a program one line at a time by use of the arrow keys and has a very easy to read display.

It can perform most any mathmatical computation quickly with keys for PI, Radians, COS, Arc's, Exponents, and so forth.  It also includes Greek letters and Japanese characters!  You may also define the ASC II code to suit yourself.  The only sound from this tiny powerhouse is a beep for an Accept At or a Display At.  The modules are about half the size of what we are used to and focus in on scientific, business, and financial applications.  No, there aren't any games for it!  This is a serious computer, not a toy!!!

It has only a left hand shift key, but most of the other is handled by the right hand side function key.  You may type in all capitals or lower/upper case as desired. The keyboard is small, but reliable!  It might be difficult to get up typing speed because of its small size, so it may not be practical for word processing.  I loved the giant killer myself, and found it to be an excellent unit for the money.  If you add on the Hex-Bus peripherals this baby can perform some mighty impressive feats. It may not toss a stone at Goliath, but it will plot the trajectory!  The retail price is $249.95 and your member price is an amazing $189!


## HARD COPIES GOODBYE, CASSETTE SERVICE HELLO!


Effective August 1, 1983 we will be distributing "all" orders from our program directory on cassette tapes!  We aren't really going to get rid of hard copies, but they will be on a request basis only.  We will also offer a diskette service on request from the users.

Here are the prices that will appear in our new Program Directory that will mail on, or about, August 1, 1983.  A minimum order of five programs!  Cassette programs are $2 each, Hard Copies are $1 each, and Diskette programs are $2.50 each.  There will be no free programs to members in the future, as putting them on cassette is too costly for freebies. Please be specific in your orders and indicate what media you wish to have your programs placed on!  We are going to attempt to fill all orders within one week of receipt.

If you need hard copies of your own work, we will print them for you at a rate of $1 per program.  Send us your tape or disk along with the appropriate fee.  We will mail back your copies via first class mail.  We don't mess with third class anything!

### RABBIT TRAILS: SAY DOC, WHICH WAY DID DAT WABBIT GO?

This is a new module from Funware and is for one player.  You may use either the keyboard or remote controllers to play.  It offers seven different screens to test your dexterity on and the difficulty of the game increases as you progress.

You are a fluffy little rabbit who is in quest of guess what?  That's right, carrots!  Every carrot you pick up is worth one hundred points.  However, all isn't happiness for the bunny as he must beware of weasels, traps, hawks, and some nasty cars!  If he is quick enough he can avoid an attack by enemy prey by ducking into a rabbit hole or jumping onto a raft.

The graphics are very crisp and quite colorful and the sound routines are pleasant.  The graphic animation is excellent and play action is quick and very responsive.  It isn't as easy as it may sound either!  Sometimes the weasels attack the poor wabbit in pairs and it is necessary to try to jump over two weasels at once.  If you misjudge the jump and land on an enemy, well it is rabbit stew time!  If you lose three rabbits the game is over.

I liked the game and those who played it found it to be quite a challenge to obtain a high score.  It isn't dull and it isn't slow!  I did find the documentation lacking in adequate play descriptions, although I did figure it out by trial and error eventually.  I also feel that Funware priced the module too high at $44.95 retail. I think that it would sell better at a lower price.  Your user cost is $32.50 and it is worth your money at that price.  We rated it ***-Very Good

### HEN HOUSE: THESE CLUCKERS ARE NO YOKE!

This is another module game from Funware and is for one player.  You may use either the keyboard or joysticks, we like the remote controllers better.  You have a hen house full of chickens  busily laying eggs.  They roll down a chute into an egg catcher.  You are a farmer and have the chore of protecting your prolific hen house from chicken hawks, a coyote, and a nasty egg poacher.

You must do two things at once in this clever game.  First pick up your rifle and score points by picking off the chicken hawks, coyote, and the nasty old poacher. Next keep  an eye on the egg baskets, for if they get full you must catch the eggs before they fall out! However, to accomplish this feat you must first run back and lay your rifle down!  Then you race back, catch the egg, and run over and drop it into the farmer's truck!  Mean while, the varmits are moving closer and closer to the vulnerable hen house.

If you break six eggs, the chickens go to that great hen house in the sky.  You lose an egg if you drop one or if the poacher gets into the hen house.  If the coyote gets in, the game automatically ends!  The speed of the egg laying, poacher and coyote occurance, and frequency of the chicken hawks increases as the game progresses. It gets very fast and you will have to be at full attention to stay even with the pace! The graphics are excellent, sound routines are very nice, and the play action is both exciting and hectic.  We managed a high score of 8,150 and did a lot of sweating to get that high!  If you like action then you will love this game.   I have the same criticisms of this game as the one earlier; Rabbit Trails.  Your user cost is $32.50. We rated this one ***-Very Good

## AIR MISSLE COMMAND: TALK ABOUT URBAN BLIGHT!

This is a new game release from Futura and is authored by Mark Sumner. It is written in X/Basic and is for one violence loving player. The objective is to defend your four cities from the deadly bombs being dropped from an airborn enemy war platform. You can almost hear these warheads licking their lips as they zero in on a helpless city!

You score 25 points times the round number for each warhead you destroy, and 100 times the round number for each city that survives. A bonus city is awarded if you are fortunate enough to score 3,000 points. Simply align the marker on the desired enemy warhead and hit the fire button. Nothing to it!

It offers two difficulty levels: training and command. The playing speed is moderate and the grahics are good. The screen is black, the cities are yellow, the marker is cyan, and the warheads vary in color. There is a slight explosion when a warhead is exploded. The keyboard is faster we found, but take your own pick of playing weapons. It is colorful, plays reasonably well, and is challenging. It is a variation on the Atari game Missle Command, but in no ways as fast or spectacular. The retail price is $19.95 and your member price is $17.50 on cassette. We rated it **-Good.

## COSMIC DRIFT: GET OUT AND PUSH, WE ARE OUT OF GAS!

This is a space game released by Futura and it is authored by Neil Weinstock. It is written in X/Basic. The objective here is to get urgently needed supplies to a distant Earth colony. However, before you can deliver the bacon you must get through a series of complicated quests!

You must fly upwards to avoid obstacles that move both left and right, fly over the colorful surface of a planet to the landing sight and then manage to land, and much more. You must repeat the series of quests three times, and each time they become faster and more difficult to manage! You may depress any key on the right hand side of the keyboard to obtain forward thrust, press "A" to move left or hit "S" to go to the right, and touch "P" to escape into hyper space. Your score is determined by how much time you take to reach your ultimate objective. You have two ships and three shields. You do get a bonus ship if you score 10,000 points or an extra shield for docking with a star base. Six screens are used to present you with a wide variety of graphics and situations to deal with. It offers nice color graphics with some fantastic sound routines!

The screen is black, the particles are all varied colors, and the ship is white. You can see your ship explode as it changes colors. The retail price is $19.95 and your cost on cassette is $17.50. It is a fairly fast moving game and definitely offers the player a challenge. This game will take some doing to master, so beware you space nuts! The play action was good, although mildly sluggish in spots. We rated it ***-Very Good.

## GIVE YOUR DATA A REJECTION COMPLEX

There are times when it is desirable to limit input data to either alpha or numeric characters. One important point to remember at the outset, is that numeric data may be used with any variable, but alphabetic data must be used with a string variable! TI Basic does not have a built in subroutine to restrict data input, but X/Basic does.

The ACCEPT AT statement offers you a variety of options: data entry by row and column coordinates, a tone or not, variable field width, and validation. Here is a typical format for simply accepting input data: ACCEPT AT(12,3) BEEP:A The variable "A" can only be a number and may be up to 25 digits in length. Each line has a maximum length of 28 letters or numbers on the 99/4A. This format permits data to be accepted on the screen in the twelfth row and third column, as opposed to always at the bottom of the screen with the INPUT statement.

Let us suppose that we wish to allow entry of a name and limit its length to twenty characters maximum. Here is the format: ACCEPT AT(12,4) BEEP SIZE(-20):A$ If you try to enter more than twenty characters you will be stopped from doing so. A tone will sound and the last character typed will be replaced. The same format applies to numeric data also, although you may wish to use a variable other than "A$".

There is always some genious who will try to key in numbers when you specify characters and crash the program! Here is how to prevent the program from bombing out: ACCEPT AT(12,4) BEEP SIZE(-20) VALIDATE(UALPHA):A$ Only upper case letters will be accepted by the computer, all numbers will be rejected!

You may find it very helpful to restrict field width when using graphics and text mixed. Sometimes the string that is cleared for the line of text will displace the graphics. If you wish to validate numbers, just replace the world "UALPHA" with "DIGITS".

It is possible to limit a field in TI Basic, but as you will see it does take some additional memory for the lines of code. 10 CALL CLEAR  20 PRINT TAB(5); "TYPE IN YOUR NAME!":::  30 INPUT NAME$    40 A=(28-LEN(NAME$))  50 IF ALT8 THEN 60 ELSE 10  60 PRINT TAB(4);NAME$


## REMEMBER THE PRICE LIST AND THE CONTEST!

Our new detailed price list is available immediately at a charge per copy of $3.50. It is thirty-eight pages long and contains product descriptions and ratings. Our programming contest is running until August 31, 1983. Get your entries in and be eligible for the following prizes: First-PES Cabinet with Controller Card and Internal Drive, Second-P/Code Card with all related software packages, and Third-your choice of $100 worth of software or hardware. No catagory limits!

### HEY YOU, WITH THE HAIR ON YOUR HEAD!  ARE YOU AN AUTHOR?

We are looking for authors to write articles on TMS9900 Assembler and Extended Basic. We will pay $25 per article in either cash or software! Send us a sample of your work and we will make our selections.

## 99/4 PROGRAM EXCHANGE: QUESTIONABLE, AT BEST!

We received a letter from Ralph Simmons of Muskegon, MI and were concerned enough about it to reprint it here. What follows is quoted directly from the: 99/4 Program Exchange, P.O. Box 3242, Torrance, CA 90510.

Mr. Simmons,

Our records indicate that both of your orders have been filled and shipped. Additionally, you requested cassettes, not diskette on your first order. For your information the diskette forwarded to you was #03769. Since the Postal Service has not returned the package, we must assume that you have received. Perhaps you have an ENEPT household.

The request that you made for return of remittance after you already received 16 programs is outrageous! But considering your brash and ignorant letters, this does not surprise us at all.

Now that we have shipped all programs ordered, we are indeed through dealing with you! The 99/4A Program Exchange, Inc. is a very large and rapidly expanding users group. The fact of the matter is we do not need you! Enclosed please find check #233 in the amount of $5.00 as termination of you membership.

Sincerely,

Karl Ashly
Consumer Relations


I personally know Ralph Simmons and have not had any problems with him, or his attitude. Here is simply a person who ordered some programs and did not receive them. I know that the Postal Service sometimes does not deliver mail even when it is sent via first class. They may also not return it to the sender, as I have personally experienced. What ever the reason, it is in poor taste to send such low brow letters to supposed members. I feel that it speaks quite clearly of the true nature of the 99/4 Program Exchange's attitude and that it behoves each of us to give some serious thought to any affiliation with them. Although one person having a bad experience with any organization is not a valid reason to avoid said organization, I believe that the text of the letter Ralph Simmons received clearly speaks for itself.
Thanks for your note Ralph, as we do appreciate hearing about experiences our members have, both positive and otherwise.

## TIDBITS FOR YOU TO BYTE ON

Bud Shapiro

Here are four lines that can be inserted into any game or program so that you may pause for checking the score, giving your joyst hand a break, or whatever. These lines are best inserted in the main body where they will always be read while the program is running. For instance, in a FOR/NEXT loop for listing; insert before the "NEXT" statement. In a game, insert the lines before the CALL JOYST, CALL KEY, or GO TO. Here it is in TI Basic: 10 CALL KEY(0,K,S) 20 IF (S=0)+(KLTGT32) THEN 50 30 CALL KEY(0,K,S) 40 IF SLT=0 THEN 30 50 Here would be your program line, e.g.: next y, call joyst, call key, go to, etc.

In the case of CALL JOYST, CALL KEY, GO TO, or who knows, you must change the line number-(in the line that sends it back)-to the first line of the hold routine you just inserted. Hold the space bar down til the program stops; to continue, "tap" any key. Following is a short program to test how it all works.
10 CALL CLEAR 20 B=B+1 30 PRINT B 40 CALL KEY(0,K,S) 50 IF (S=0)+(KLTGT32) THEN 80 60 CALL KEY(0,K,S) 70 IF SLT=0 THEN 60 80 GOTO 20

Have fun, and I hope that this tip proves useful. Next issue I will offer tips to convert LEFT$, MID$, and RIGHT$ to TI Basic SEG$. Then you will be able to pound in programs that use these statements and enjoy them to your hearts content. Until the next issue...Enjoy your Summer...

## DOUBLE-SIDE DRIVES: WHAT THE HECK WORKS ANYHOW?

There are a variety of double-side single-density drives floating around that will work with your TI equipment. You may use any drive that has a SASI interface and an access time no greater than 25 milliseconds. This applies to the MPI 52S 126 and the Shugart SA 455. You may also use the Tandon T 100-2 We plan to handle all three drives, but presently we only have the Tandon at a price of $250.

## IT'S CUTE, IT'S COLORFUL, AND IT'S BASIC!

Here is a short program that generates myriads of delicate colors and a variety of shapes on your screen. It has no practical application, but it is fun to watch.
100 RANDOMIZE 110 CALL CLEAR 120 FOR A=1 TO 16 130 CALL COLOR(A,INT(RND*16+1), INT(RND*16+1)) 140 NEXT A 150 CALL SCREEN(INT(RND*16+1)) 160 FOR A=1 TO INT (RND*15+1) 170 X=INT(RND*19+1) 180 Y=INT(RND*19+1) 190 W=INT(RND*500+1) 200 W= INT(RND*W+1) 210 W=INT(RND*W+1) 220 FOR B=1 TO INT(RND*10+1) 230 Z=INT(RND*136+24) 240 CALL VCHAR(Y+INT(RND*6),X+INT(RND* 14),Z,W) 250 W=INT(RND*W+!) 260 CALL HCHAR (X+INT(RND*6),Y+INT(RND*14),Z,W) 270 NEXT B 280 NEXT A 290 GO TO 120

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you like the inclusion of short little programs just for fun, let us know and we will try to make it a habit! We don't know what you want unless you take the time to write or call us.

### THE MBX SYSTEM: SHHHH! IT'LL RECOGNIZE YOUR VOICE!

We are anxiously awaiting release of the new Milton Bradley/Texas Instruments joint venture in speech recognition. The release is now set for September, but we will keep you posted. You should add the following list of MBX hardware and accessories to your member price list. MBX Expansion System-99/4A only- $94.50 M MBX Joystick $23.50 M, Terry Turtles Adventure $43 M, Space Bandit $39 M, Sewermania $39 M, Big Foot $39 M, Meteor Belt $39 M, Super Fly $39 M.

### NEW PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENTS!

1. Hex-Bus Phone Modem: HX3100 RETAIL $99.95 Member Price $74.50
2. DLM Word Invasion PHM3169: RETAIL $39.95 Member Price $31.50
3. DLM Word Radar PHM3185: RETAIL $39.95 Member Price $31.50
4. Moonmine PHM3131: RETAIL $39.95 Member Price $31.50
5. Sneggit PHM3146: RETAIL $39.95 Member Price $31.50
6. Entrapment PHT6101: No price yet

### JULY SOFTWARE SPECIALS!

The following programs from Pewterware are available for $12 each: Blue Grass Sweepstakes, Challenge Poker, Olympic Decathalon, Match Wits, Up Periscope X/Basic, Roll Five, and Snowtrek. All are on cassette and all are rated excellent.

Snowtrek is a brand new release and we will offer a full review in September, for the mean while let it suffice to say that it is great fun. It is an obstacle course with a twist!

### THE KEY TO UNLOCK THE LOCKUP?

We have a possible cure for that old problem of the keyboard lockup, but it is a use at your "own risk" solution! It has worked without fail for us, so take it for what it is worth. Use a can of spray relay, or contact, cleaner. Lightly spray the edge connector of a module, be careful not to spray inside on the circuit board. Plug it into the GROM port twelve to fifteen times. Spray a cotton stick with the cleaner and gently clean the GROM edge connector. Make sure that the console is unplugged first!!! We also cleaned the Peripheral port and Speech Synthesizer contacts.

This eliminated the problem for us and we hope that it will do the same for you. While I am on the subject of cleaning I should mention something about sticky keys on the keyboard. NEVER sand the contacts under the keys! They are brass plated and sanding them removes the brass. This will rapidly result in oxidation and possible faulty operation of the keyboard. Clean them or adjust them, but do not sand them.

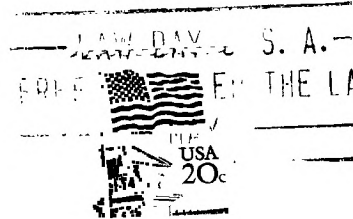HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

DUANE B. FISCHER, PRESIDENT

THE CC-40: A GIANT KILLER!



REBECCA FISCHER: OUR YOUNGEST DATA TEST PERSON.

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