

# THE MSP 99 NEWSLETTER

## STATE OF THE CLUB

By Joel Gerdeen, President

### ELECTION RESULTS

The ballots have been cast, the votes are counted and the results of the 1984 MSP 99 Officer's Election are in! Joel Gerdeen was voted our new President, Dick Dunbar will serve as Vice-President, Jon Todd becomes Secretary and Brad Olson will assume Joel's former post of Treasurer. Congratulations to our new officers! We wish them well in the coming year.

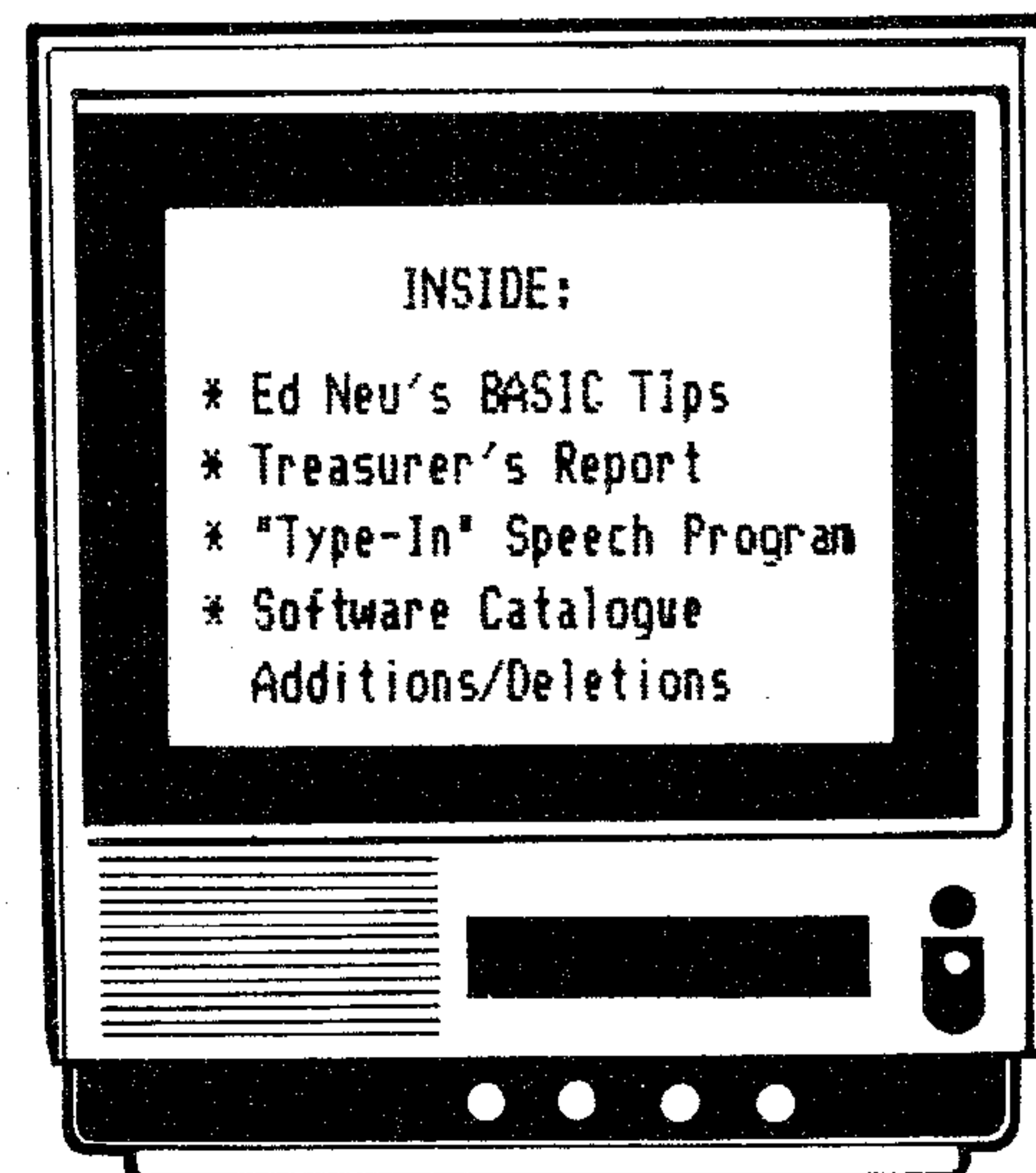
In addition to the election, members voted to pass Amendment #1 to the Constitution: The financial records of the User's Group must be audited. (Related to this; see the Treasurer's report which appears in this issue.) Amendment #2, involving the bonding of the Treasurer, failed to be passed by our membership.

To all the members who attended the last meeting, thanks for the vote of confidence in electing me president. You have my pledge to support the club as best I can during the next year. This year will be an interesting and challenging one for our club. With TI dropping the TI-99/4A home computer, many people assume the future for TI owners is bleak. This is definitely not true! We have assurances from TI and numerous vendors of continued support for the TI-99/4A computer. But certainly things will change. What can we expect next year?

We can expect a change in the marketing and availability of hardware and software. TI plans to manufacture software modules only as long as supplies hold out. They are transferring the manufacturing rights to other companies that have been assisting them in the software  
(Continued on page 9)



(Dick Dunbar, Brad Olson, Jon Todd, Joel Gerdeen)



The MSP 99 USERS GROUP meets each month for discussions and presentations that enable its members to be better informed about their computers. Users group members share and exchange information. Some members have a broad range of computer expertise; others are just beginning. We are not affiliated with or sponsored by any other group or company. Membership dues are \$12 a year for a family, \$10 for an individual, and \$50 for a sponsor member. You're welcome to visit a meeting before you join. For more information, call or write us.

USERS GROUP MEETINGS are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Brown Institute Computer Building, 27th Ave. and East Lake St., Minneapolis.

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MSP 99 USERS GROUP  
P.O. BOX 12351  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55112, U.S.A.

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PRESIDENT -- Joel Gerdeen	572-0148
VICE PRESIDENT -- Dick Dunbar	488-0153
SECRETARY -- Jon Todd	920-3263
TREASURER -- Brad Olson	786-1235

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Newsletter Editor: Bonnie Burton, 431-6064

Editor's Assistant: Jon Todd

Newsletter Committee Members:

Clarence Brockman, Marilyn McPartlin, Julia Stark

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: February 21**

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If you want to work on a committee (Education, Equipment, Program, Publicity, Software, Newsletter), or have an idea for a program, contact one of the officers.

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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT RATES -- Business firms that want to communicate with our members may do so by placing an ad in the newsletter. Rates are: Full Page (7-1/2 X 10-1/2) \$40; Half Page (3-1/2 X 10-1/2) \$30; Quarter Page (3-1/2 X 5) \$22. Each ad must be camera-ready in sizes indicated and paid in advance. Inserts (printed by advertiser on 8-1/2 x 11) may be inserted in the newsletter at \$20 per sheet. Contact the editor for information or to reserve space.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS -- Before you move, please mail a change of address to the group at the above address.

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## From The Editor:

Many members have asked me what format they should use in preparing their articles for the newsletter. Wonderful! I hope you find the following information helpful.

I want to emphasize that handwritten articles are perfectly acceptable. I would prefer you concern yourself with legible penmanship rather than worry about precise punctuation or perfect spelling. (The Editor needs SOMETHING to do you know!)

For those of you who wish to use your word-processors and printers, it is helpful if you print your article twice for me, once in PICA and once in ELITE. In Pica, set your columns for 38 characters per line. In Elite, set your columns for 44 characters per line. Condensed print requires 58 characters per line. Right-justification is desirable. (This article is printed in Elite, using 44 character length columns and is right-justified.)

If you wish to include a program listing, it is easiest to list it on the printer, using condensed print and the column width suggested above. This saves a lot of typing and reduces the amount of potential error. Don't worry about margins on the top or bottom of the page. I will slice it at the appropriate points when pasting up.

If you do NOT have a printer, submit your program on a cassette or disk, along with your article and I will make the hard-copy listing. Your cassette or disk will be returned by mail or at the next meeting.

Deadlines for copy are at the regular monthly membership meetings PRIOR to the next month's newsletter. For example, at the February 21st meeting, I will collect articles for the March newsletter.

You know, if each member were to write (and subsequently format!) at least one article or tip this year, approximately 40 different articles would appear in each newsletter. That's a lot of interesting reading! Think about it.

Bonnie Burton, Editor

Do you have an opinion to express, question to ask, comment to make? Send a letter to the Editor, c/o MSP 99 Newsletter, P.O. Box 12351, St. Paul, MN 55112.

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MSP 99 CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
\*\*\*\*\*

FEB. 21 -- Telecommunications! The program will include a  
(TUESDAY) demonstration of modems, electronic bulletin  
7:00-9:00 boards and inter-console file transfer.

MAR. 20 -- Speech Demonstrations! The Education Special  
(TUESDAY) Interest Group will present various ways to get  
7:00-9:00 your TI-99/4A to talk. The program will include  
speech synthesizers with Extended Basic,  
text-to-speech with the Terminal Emulator II and  
speech with only a cassette recorder and console!

**BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM**

By Joel Gerdeen

**SUBGROUP MEETINGS:**

ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE--First Tuesday of month, Brown  
Institute. Chair: Kerm Steffenhagen.

BUSINESS--Second Tuesday, 7-9 p.m., Norwest Bank,  
Hopkins. Call Bob DeMars (544-6219) or Dick  
Clemetson (926-8083) for info.

EDUCATION--At monthly MSP meetings. Chair: Pete  
Lawson.

INVESTMENT--Second Thursday, 7 p.m., Brown  
Institute. Chair: Dean Sorensen.

YOUTH GROUP--At monthly MSP meetings. Pres.:  
Scott Morgan.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

Education--Marilyn McPartlin, 636-5663

Equipment--We need someone.

Newsletter--Bonnie Burton, 431-6064

Program--Dick Dunbar, 488-0153

Publicity--Dave Wunderlin, 544-8266

Software--Ed Neu, 425-8744

Several members have expressed an interest in the club sponsoring a bulletin board system (BBS). In the November newsletter, we announced a BBS sponsored by Stan Murray and Scott Morgan. The BBS used Stan's equipment and was programmed by Scott. Such a system requires daily support which Stan was not able to give. Both are still interested in the BBS, possibly by using club equipment located at Scott's house.

A BBS is a centralized computer system that is accessed by other computers or terminals through the telephone. Messages can be posted, read, or exchanged between all callers or by specific callers. Programs can be sent to the BBS or transferred down the caller's computer.

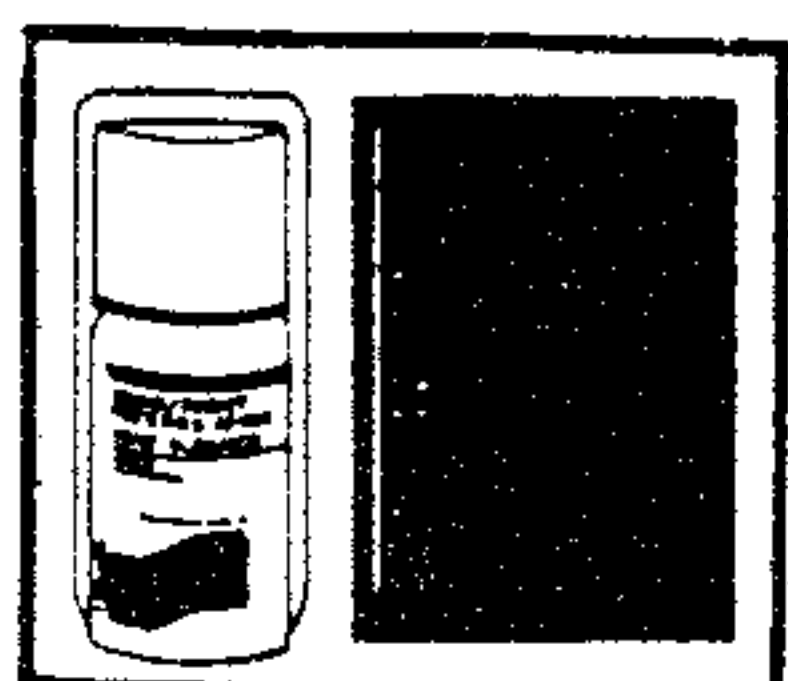
Access to a BBS requires specialized equipment. On the TI99, a RS232 interface, a modem and the Terminal Emulator II module are required. If the RS232 interface is not a separate box that attaches to the side of the console, a peripheral expansion box is also required. Though not required, a disk drive and printer are useful.

(Continued on page 8)

**Facts About Disk Drive Systems. . .**

It has been estimated that 60% of all drive down time is directly related to poorly maintained drives. Drives should be cleaned each week

regardless of use. Drives are sensitive to smoke, dust, and all micro particles. Systematic operator-performed maintenance is the best way of ensuring error-free use of a computer system.



**Floppy Disk Head Cleaning Kit**

13.00

- Floppy disk head cleaning kit.
- Kit contains: 1 Read/Right Floppy Disk Head Cleaner, 1 1 1/4 oz. Metered Spray Head Cleaner.

**Cartridge/Contact Cleaners**



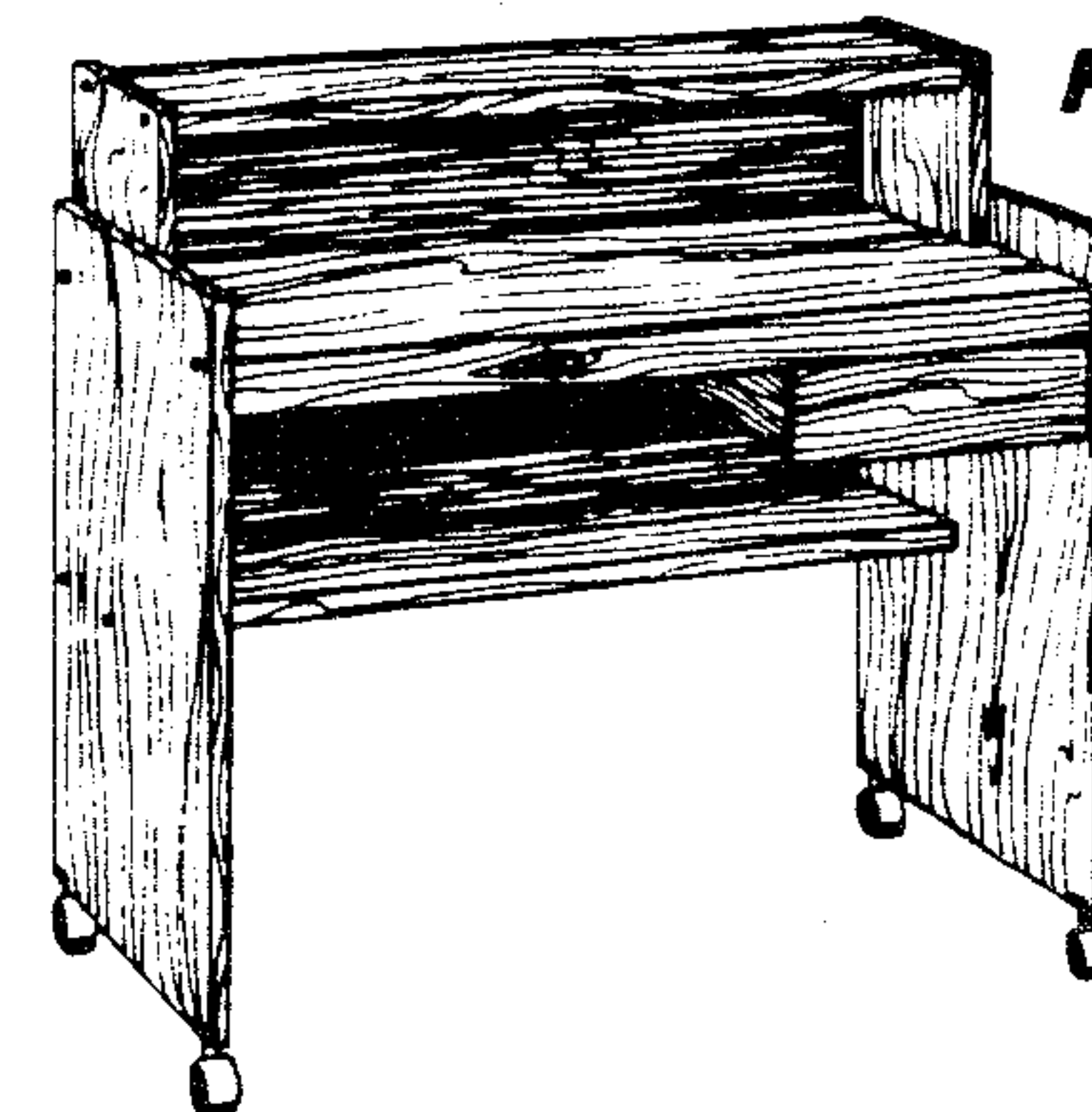
- Cartridge contact cleaner pack.
- Blister pack contains: 6 flexible pre-saturated wands for removing residual contaminants on computer or game cartridges. 10.99



**Aerosol Dust Blower Cleaner**

5.99

- Aerosol dust blower cleaner.
- Blister card contains: 1 aerosol dust blower cleaner with 3-strength airflow valve and 4-inch nozzle.



**Home Computer Center**

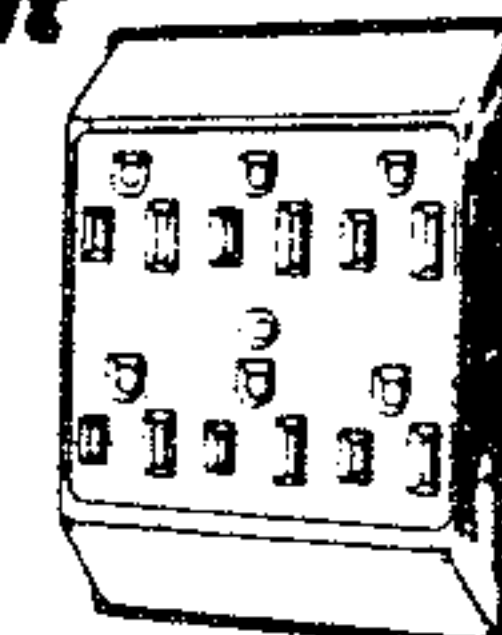
129.95

- Generous work area includes a full-width 19-1/2" deep shelf to accommodate computer terminal, disc drive, etc.
- Convenient drawer.
- Full-width top shelf for eye-level monitor viewing.
- Rich light walnut vinyl veneer for durability and easy care.
- Deluxe dual-wheel casters.
- Full wood-grained back.
- 34-3/4"H x 37-1/4"W x 19-3/4"D.

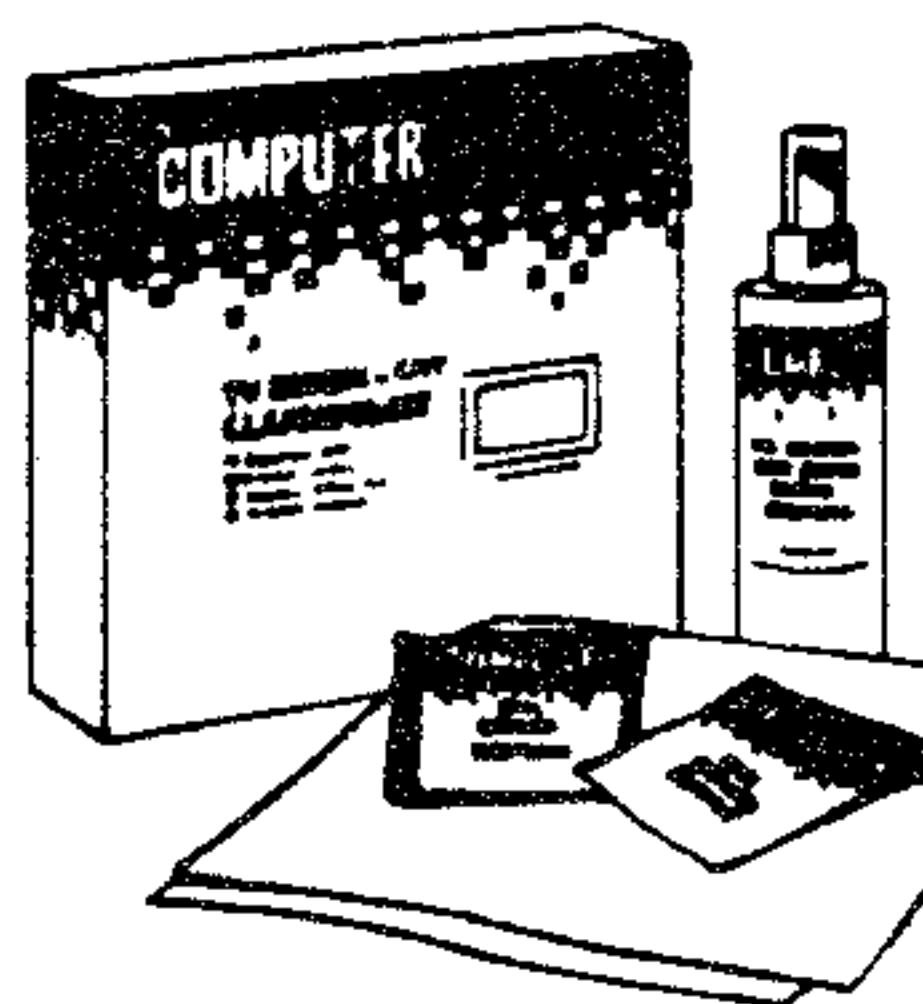
**Lineguard Spike Suppressor Plug-In Unit**

- Disposable wall plug-in unit.
- 6 "U" ground outlets.
- Pilot light constantly on; shuts off when overloaded to indicate filter not operating.
- Internal overload protection.
- Plastic case.
- Metallic silver finish.
- 3" x 6" x 1".

13.00



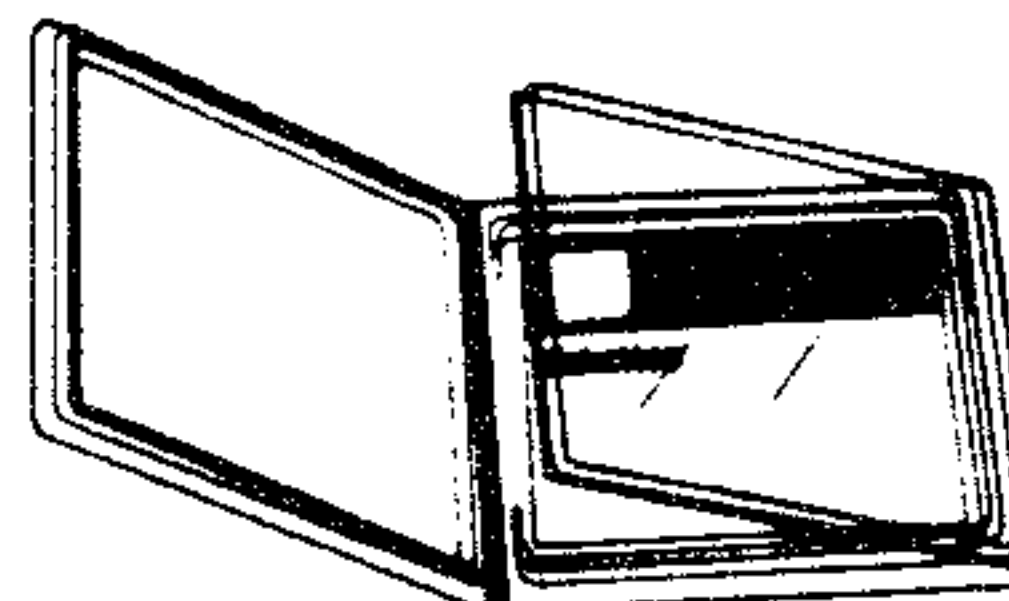
**TV Screen/CRT Cleaning Kit** 17.50



- CRT cleaning kit.
- Kit contains: 1 4 oz. screen cleaning solution pump spray, 2 screen restorers, 25 6" x 6" lint-free cleaning cloths.

**Anti-Static Spray** 7.50

- "Work area" anti-static spray.
- Kit contains: 1 12 oz. bottle anti-static spray.



5.95

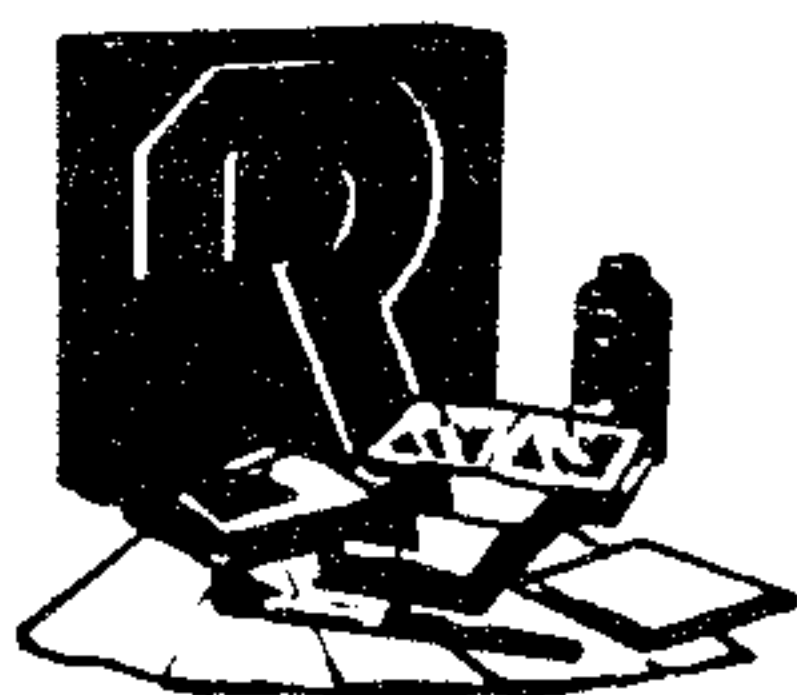
**Mini-Diskette Transporter**

- Specially designed cases provide maximum protection for up to 3 diskettes.
- Made of chemically neutral material for continuous use.
- Unique, three paneled, molded vinyl construction provide dust-free environment when closed.

**Computer Printer Cleaning Kit**

- Computer printer cleaning kit.
- Kit contains: 40 Ink-Off towelettes, 10 Office Wipes for removing smudges and stains, 20 Alco-Pads, 1 bag Bluewipes, 25 gloves (clear plastic), 1 brush, 1 TP35 non-aerosol 9.5 oz. can.

39.95



- Designed to produce 2-channels of simulated stereo sound from all mono UHF, VHF or Cable TV channels, AM tuner, mono records, video tape recorder or any source you wish to simulate stereo sound with.
- The unit's output easily plugs into the amplifier aux, tape or tuner input.
- All cables necessary for connection are included.
- Two-year warranty.
- Black aluminum.

**Simulated Stereo TV Sound**

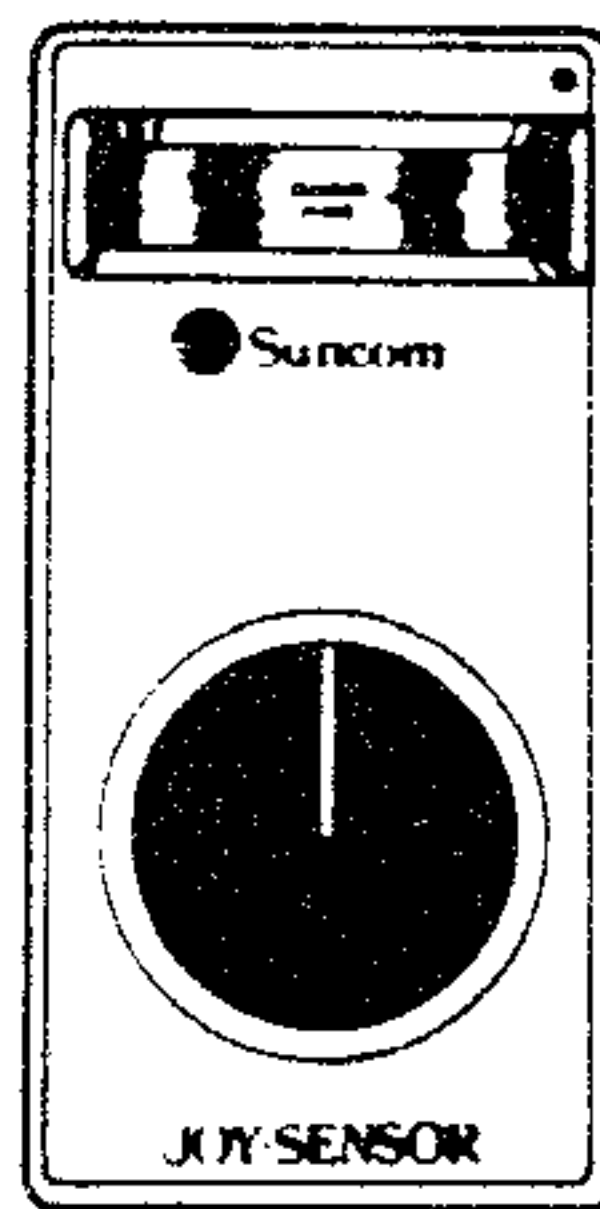
39.95



**Audio and Video Game Cartridge Storage System**

29.95

- Holds 20 audio or 10 video cassettes in standard or plastic book design.
- 20 Atari, Mattel, Activision, Odyssey, Bali or Texas Instruments video game cartridges or many home computer cassettes.

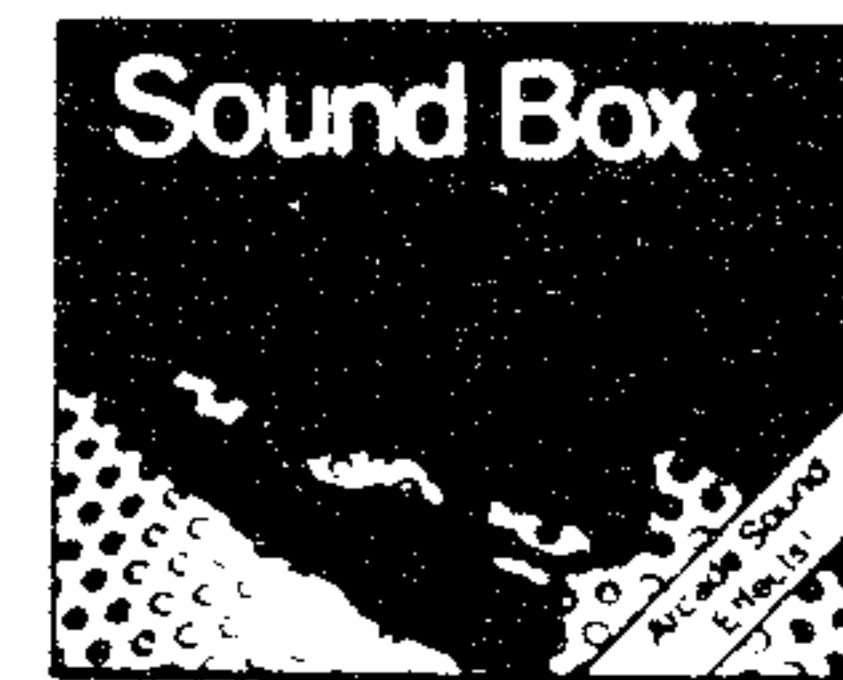


**Sound Box** 9.95

- Enhancement device compatible with VIC20, C64, Atari 800 or TI99/4.
- Allows use of standard audio or video connections.
- Connects to amplifier, monitor or headphones.
- Creates a whole new dimension of arcade play.

**Joy Sensor** 29.95

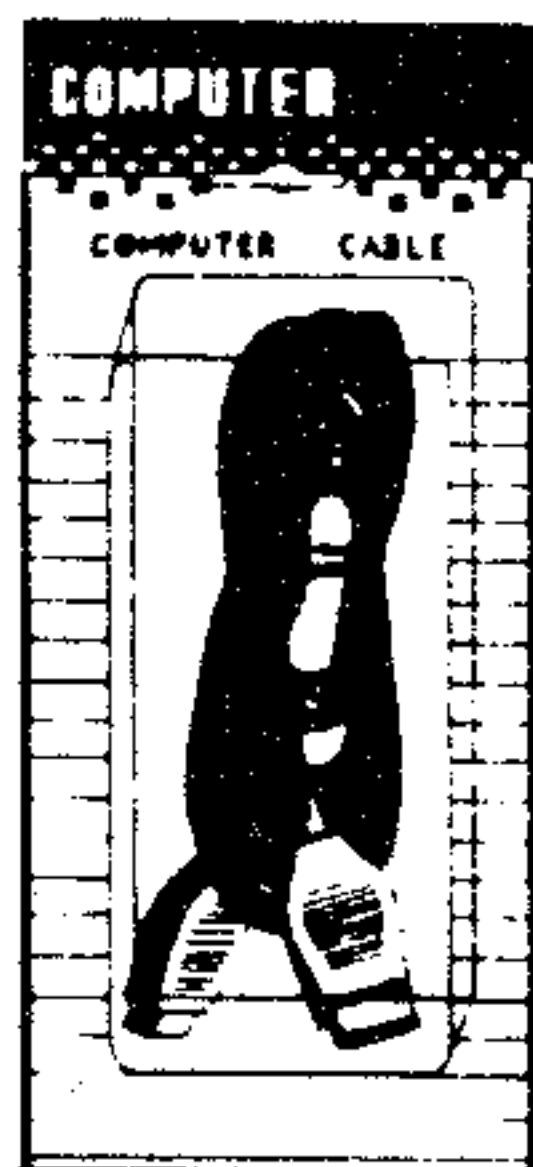
- Digitally-simulated joystick controller with no stick.
- Slightest touch is all that it takes to effect control movements on your game screen.



**Texas Instrument Computer to Cassette Recorder Extension Cable**

9.99

- 10' cable extends the distance between TI99/4A and data cassette recorder



**Joystick Extension Cable**

- 6-foot extension cord ..... 5.95
- 12-foot extension cord ..... 10.99



**Texas Instrument Computer to Cassette Recorder Cable**

15.95

- 3' cable to connect the TI99/4A and data cassette recorder

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## BASIC Tips

by Ed Neu

### Part 3-

It seems so long since we last talked about Basic programming tips. It has only been two months, but the holidays sandwiched in there made time go by so fast! I'm sure many of you got new Command Modules for Christmas. I hope that doesn't deter you long from getting back to your Basic programming. The Second Annual Software Contest is in full swing you know. There are still two months for you to finish that program and enter it.

When we did last talk, we discussed many methods of putting information on the screen and getting rid of it again. This month we're going to talk about putting information into the computer.

The most common way of entering data is through use of the keyboard. It is always the first method used to tell the computer whether to use the contents of a Command Module or to go to console Basic. After that it is still the most common interface - except maybe for the joysticks!

Before data are entered from the keyboard a programmer must make certain he/she has given the user adequate information as to what type, quantity and format of data the program is expecting. A message giving the user this information should first be displayed on the screen using any one of the several methods described in Part-2. An INPUT statement with a prompt such as:

INSTRUCTIONS? (Y/N)

is a very simple method. However, the message is restricted to the bottom line of the screen.

The user should be informed whether to input numeric or alpha information. If numeric data are to be input, be sure to mention what units of measure are expected. If something like a date is to be input, be sure to give an example of the format in which it is expected to be entered.

An important aspect of all good programs is the ability of the software to check the validity of any data input. For instance, if the question above is to be answered, be sure the program looks for only a "Y" or "N" response. Do not set up the program so that an unintentional key press is misinterpreted. Provide an error message or

tone so the user can try again.

This type of input checking can be easily performed by using logical operators in an IF...THEN statement. The input is checked whether it is "yes" or "no" or something else and the program branches to the appropriate area. This is demonstrated in "CHECK-IT" below.

As a further aid to the user, make sure if a capital "Y" or a capital "N" is expected as the proper response, that only those values can be input. There is nothing more frustrating than to answer with a lower case letter and not realize the computer is expecting something else. It is a good idea to use the CALL KEY function to control this. Before the response to such a question is accepted, execute a CALL KEY(3,K,S) statement. This puts the TI in the mode where it thinks even lower case letters are upper case. It really helps eliminate user frustrations. If the program later needs to use lower case input, execute a CALL KEY(5,K,S) statement, resetting the keyboard to normal.

This short routine demonstrates both the input error checking and the setting of the keyboard to answer the question posed in LINE 170.

```
100 REM *****
110 REM CHECK-IT
120 REM *****
130 REM
140 CALL CLEAR
150 REM Accepts all letters
    as capitals
160 CALL KEY(3,K,S)
170 INPUT "INSTRUCTIONS? (Y/
N) ":Q$
180 REM Resets keyboard for
    later use
190 CALL KEY(5,K,S)
200 REM Checks for input
    error with logical
    AND
210 IF (Q$("<")"Y")*(Q$("<")"N")TH
EN 280
220 REM Checks if user wants
    instructions
230 IF Q$="Y" THEN 260
240 PRINT : : "The program go
es on without displaying ins
tructions." : :
250 GOTO 310
260 PRINT : : "The program pr
ints instruc- tions here" : :
:
```

(Continued)

```
270 GOTO 310
280 CALL SOUND(200,220,2)
290 PRINT : : "SORRY, TRY AGA
IN" : : :
300 GOTO 160
310 END
```

These input techniques, combined with the routine below, make the input of data more "human" and friendly. Below is a routine which allows you to input data anywhere on the screen, giving you much more flexibility than just using the last line. This is a simple, no-frills version. It does not allow backing up and correcting input errors like the Basic screen editor does. For that kind of routine you should look at the program "Energy-2" (H02021) available from our library. That has an excellent input routine which allows full editing of the data before hitting the "enter" key.

```
320 REM*****
330 REM  ACCEPT-AT DEMO
340 REM*****
350 CALL CLEAR
360 INPUT "input row: ":ROW
370 INPUT "input col: ":COL
380 GOSUB 430
390 CALL CLEAR
400 PRINT IN$
410 GOTO 410
420 END
430 REM*****
440 REM  ACCEPT-AT
450 REM  SUBROUTINE
460 REM*****
470 C=32+(C=32)*2
480 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,C)
490 CALL KEY(0,K,S)
500 IF S<=0 THEN 470
510 IF K=13 THEN 590
520 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,K)
530 IF COL>31 THEN 570
540 IN$=IN$&CHR$(K)
550 COL=COL+1
560 GOTO 470
570 CALL SOUND(200,440,2)
580 GOTO 470
590 RETURN
```

Sometimes a program needs to use a lot of data that are always the same. These are not input from the keyboard, but stored within the body of the program in DATA statements. The programs "Presidents" (E0110) and "Capitals" (E01080) are just a couple from our library which make extensive

use of this technique. You may want to study them. The data are accessed by using the Basic READ command. Each data entry is read sequentially starting with the first item each time a READ is encountered. TI is a quick way to read data into the computer memory from tape because it is stored in memory image format on the tape along with the rest of the program.

It is, however, not very quick to access once the program is running. The utility programs built into ROM used to find and extract these data from memory are relatively slow working - sometimes requiring seconds to read a screen full of information.

If you need to store and access this amount of data but need to access it quickly when the program is running there is a technique that works well. At the beginning of the program READ the data stored in DATA statements into an array specified by a DIMension statement. Because of the relative slowness of the READ operator and the usually required FOR...NEXT loop, this takes a little time. But later, when the user is actively involved in interfacing with the program, the data access is nearly instantaneous.

As with all "tricks" there is a drawback with this one. The way TI Basic, and Extended Basic as well, are structured, you end up using twice as much memory to store the data - one set to contain all the DATA statements, and an identical set to hold the filled arrays.

Of course, if you have a large program and it requires a lot of data, you can solve your memory problem by storing the data on a tape or disk file and use the very versatile file managing capabilities of the 99/4A. As most of you probably do not yet have disk drives, and there is adequate information about disk file handling available, we'll skip that for now. But a couple bits of advice about TI tape files are in order for this article.

I have never seen a good description of how tape files REALLY work on the TI. If any of you readers have, please share your source with us. To help fill that void, here are some hints on what to do and what to expect.

Every time your program encounters a PRINT statement that directs printing to an OPEN tape file, the computer runs off a bit of blank tape, puts about a ten-second audible cue tone on it, then it prints your data on the tape - twice. This whole

(Continued on page 11)

## MSP 99 USER'S GROUP FINANCIAL REPORT - 1983

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
<b>INCOME</b>							
Dues-New	\$517.00	\$376.00	\$320.00	\$300.00	\$132.00	\$342.00	\$128.00
Dues-Sponsor					\$250.00	\$50.00	
Dues-Renewal		\$116.00	\$98.00	\$90.00	\$34.00	\$18.00	\$48.00
Software Programs	\$425.00	\$80.50	\$204.00	\$185.25	\$60.00	\$49.00	\$92.25
Tapes/Boxes		\$6.75	\$144.50	\$215.00	\$112.00	\$103.00	\$6.50
Disks	\$384.00	\$120.00	\$48.00	\$123.00	\$288.00	\$40.00	\$40.00
Advertisements			\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$97.00	\$40.00
Miscellaneous		\$10.53	\$6.35	\$6.48	\$6.83	\$96.81	\$5.84
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1326.00</b>	<b>\$709.78</b>	<b>\$870.85</b>	<b>\$919.73</b>	<b>\$882.83</b>	<b>\$795.81</b>	<b>\$360.59</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
Newsletter	\$168.37	\$150.00	\$82.58	\$0.00	\$131.87	\$217.83	\$157.94
Software Programs	\$228.41	\$205.99	\$70.74	\$119.77	\$59.50		\$164.80
Postage	\$55.40	\$97.95	\$121.09	\$76.10	\$93.85	\$51.97	\$79.01
Tapes/Boxes		\$74.60	\$140.00	\$175.00	\$0.00		
Disks	\$406.00		\$430.36	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$505.62	
Library	\$38.22	\$25.00		\$0.00	\$11.00		
Supplies		\$90.58		\$34.15	\$5.65	\$35.33	\$50.55
Group Equipment				\$368.87	\$359.21		\$484.54
Program Expense				\$93.00	\$0.00	\$8.27	
Misc-General	\$3.20		\$8.27	\$6.78	\$10.17	\$34.92	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$899.60</b>	<b>\$644.12</b>	<b>\$853.04</b>	<b>\$873.67</b>	<b>\$671.25</b>	<b>\$853.94</b>	<b>\$936.84</b>
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>\$426.40</b>	<b>\$65.66</b>	<b>\$17.81</b>	<b>\$46.06</b>	<b>\$211.58</b>	<b>(\$58.13)</b>	<b>(\$576.25)</b>
Begin Capital	\$844.45	\$1270.85	\$1336.51	\$1354.32	\$1400.38	\$1611.96	\$1553.83
End Capital	\$1270.85	\$1336.51	\$1354.32	\$1400.38	\$1611.96	\$1553.83	\$977.58

	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Average
<b>INCOME</b>							
Dues-New	\$100.00	\$186.00	\$128.00	\$142.50	\$190.00	\$2861.50	\$238.46
Dues-Sponsor						\$300.00	\$25.00
Dues-Renewal	\$10.00	\$96.00	\$130.00	\$92.00	\$54.00	\$786.00	\$65.50
Software Programs	\$101.95	\$157.75		\$162.75	\$633.75	\$2152.20	\$179.35
Tapes/Boxes	\$44.50	\$101.50	\$42.50	\$99.00	\$130.35	\$1005.60	\$83.80
Disks	\$60.00	\$20.00	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$60.00	\$1343.00	\$111.92
Advertisements	\$27.00	\$63.00	\$77.00	\$127.00	\$60.00	\$541.00	\$45.08
Miscellaneous	\$6.01	\$3.48	\$5.33	\$3.83	\$8.50	\$159.99	\$13.33
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$349.46</b>	<b>\$627.73</b>	<b>\$462.83</b>	<b>\$707.08</b>	<b>\$1136.60</b>	<b>\$9149.29</b>	<b>\$762.44</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
Newsletter	\$200.08	\$166.63	\$177.07	\$216.66	\$117.82	\$1786.85	\$148.90
Software Programs	\$72.16	\$92.33	\$34.75	\$232.39	\$283.94	\$1564.78	\$130.40
Postage	\$88.68	\$52.30	\$55.75	\$58.76	\$77.86	\$908.72	\$75.73
Tapes/Boxes		\$183.28			\$146.66	\$719.54	\$59.96
Disks					\$169.34	\$1511.32	\$125.94
Library					\$4.19	\$78.41	\$6.53
Supplies	\$7.05		\$8.27		\$23.96	\$255.54	\$21.30
Group Equipment			\$45.54	\$55.00	\$55.00	\$1368.16	\$114.01
Program Expense	\$10.07		\$143.90		\$7.67	\$262.91	\$21.91
Misc-General	\$100.00		\$17.00		\$190.00	\$370.34	\$30.86
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$478.04</b>	<b>\$494.54</b>	<b>\$482.28</b>	<b>\$562.81</b>	<b>\$1076.44</b>	<b>\$8826.57</b>	<b>\$735.55</b>
<b>Net Change</b>	<b>(\$128.58)</b>	<b>\$133.19</b>	<b>(\$19.45)</b>	<b>\$144.27</b>	<b>\$60.16</b>	<b>\$322.72</b>	<b>\$53.70</b>
Begin Capital	\$977.58	\$849.00	\$982.19	\$962.74	\$1107.01	\$844.45	
End Capital	\$849.00	\$982.19	\$962.74	\$1107.01	\$1167.17	\$1167.17	

## SPEECH HELPER

By Jon Todd

Most of us who are lucky enough to have obtained the Terminal Emulator II command module have tried to use the text-to-speech features in programs.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the speech. The TE II uses certain rules of pronunciation which may not apply to the particular words you wish to use.

The result is that you must try to spell the words phonetically and listen as the computer says the words over and over.

When I am working on such a program, I find it helpful to start with the following program. It can be put at the beginning of the program you are writing, and when run will allow you to set the pitch and slope of the speech, as well as the spelling of the phrase you wish to use.

When you are satisfied with the pronunciation, you can enter the displayed string on whatever program line you want, and continue by typing RUN again.

In this program, if you want to use the same pitch and slope as the previous attempt, just press enter when the CHANGE PITCH/SLOPE? prompt appears; and likewise for the previously entered phrase.

```
100 REM *****
110 REM * TE II SPEECH *
120 REM * HELPER *
130 REM *****
140 REM JAN. 22, 1984
150 REM
160 OPEN #1:"SPEECH",OUTPUT
170 CALL CLEAR
180 INPUT "PITCH XX (0-63)":XX$
190 INPUT "SLOPE YYY (0-255)":YYY$
200 PRINT #1:"//";XX$;" ";YYY$
210 INPUT "PHRASE?":A$
220 IF A$="" THEN 240
230 B$=A$
240 PRINT #1:B$
250 CALL CLEAR
260 PRINT "PITCH=";XX$;" SLOPE=";YYY$
270 PRINT "PHRASE=";B$;:
280 INPUT "CHANGE PITCH/SLOPE?":YN$
290 IF YN$="Y" THEN 170 ELSE 210
```

## The MSP 99 Module Swap

A report by Dick Dunbar

Well, the Module Swap is now history. We had lots of participation. A lot of people went home with software they had been wanting, at a cost that was very easy to take; others sold modules they didn't need anymore, ending the evening a little richer.

There were a few unexpected occurrences to keep us on our toes. For example, at times while the meeting was going on, it seemed there were more folks in the swap room wanting to buy software than there were in the main room. Of course, we weren't opening up for sales until the meeting ended.

We had originally planned to conduct the sale on a first come, first serve basis, but that proved to be unworkable. Too many folks were too interested in a few scarce modules. It would have been a pushing, crowding disaster. The people who had actually attended the meeting and voted in the election would not have had a chance.

So, being flexible if nothing else, we switched to an auction format to give everybody an opportunity. There was some lively bidding for some of the more sought-after items - like the Tunnels of Doom games!

In the end, we sold \$480 worth of goodies, including one console with software and modules as a package, all of which brought in \$47 to the MSP 99 treasury. Final accounting for the sale was completed the same week. All those who had money coming should have received checks for their proceeds by the time they receive this newsletter. We hope everybody enjoyed this event. Next time we'll have an even bigger and better swap, building on what we learned this time.

\*\*\*\*\*

(Bulletin Board, continued)

Since additional equipment is required and everyone in the club cannot benefit directly from a BBS, users of a BBS may have to share the cost. The February meeting will include a demonstration of a BBS in addition to general communications between computers. Anyone interested in supporting a BBS should contact Scott Morgan or one of the officers of the club. Scott's telephone number is 454-8684. The officers' numbers are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.



(State of the Club, continued)

development. Other vendors are assuring us that they will continue to produce software. These vendors see the large number of TI computers already in homes as a big market, especially with TI out of the software business. Knowledgeable experts have estimated that two to three million TI computers are in homes across America. TI states that more than one million owners have registered their home computers. In any sense, the installed base of TI owners is a large market. But it remains to be seen whether large retailers that have been handling the TI products will continue to handle the products of the cadre of small manufacturers.

The situation is similar for hardware. Numerous small manufacturers are making TI compatible hardware. Two companies in particular come to mind. CorComp is manufacturing RS232 and memory cards and plans to introduce an expansion system and a new 9900 compatible computer named the 99/64. A local company named INFRA has announced a high capacity disk system and performance enhancements for the TI-99/4A. These two companies and others will allow us to expand our systems to match the power of any in the market today.

Our club will take a stronger role in assisting owners in making full use of their computers. We will provide essential support for new and experienced users. We will provide a channel of marketing for small vendors. Since you must rely more heavily upon mail order, we will arrange for invaluable reviews and demonstrations of new hardware and software before you consider any purchases.

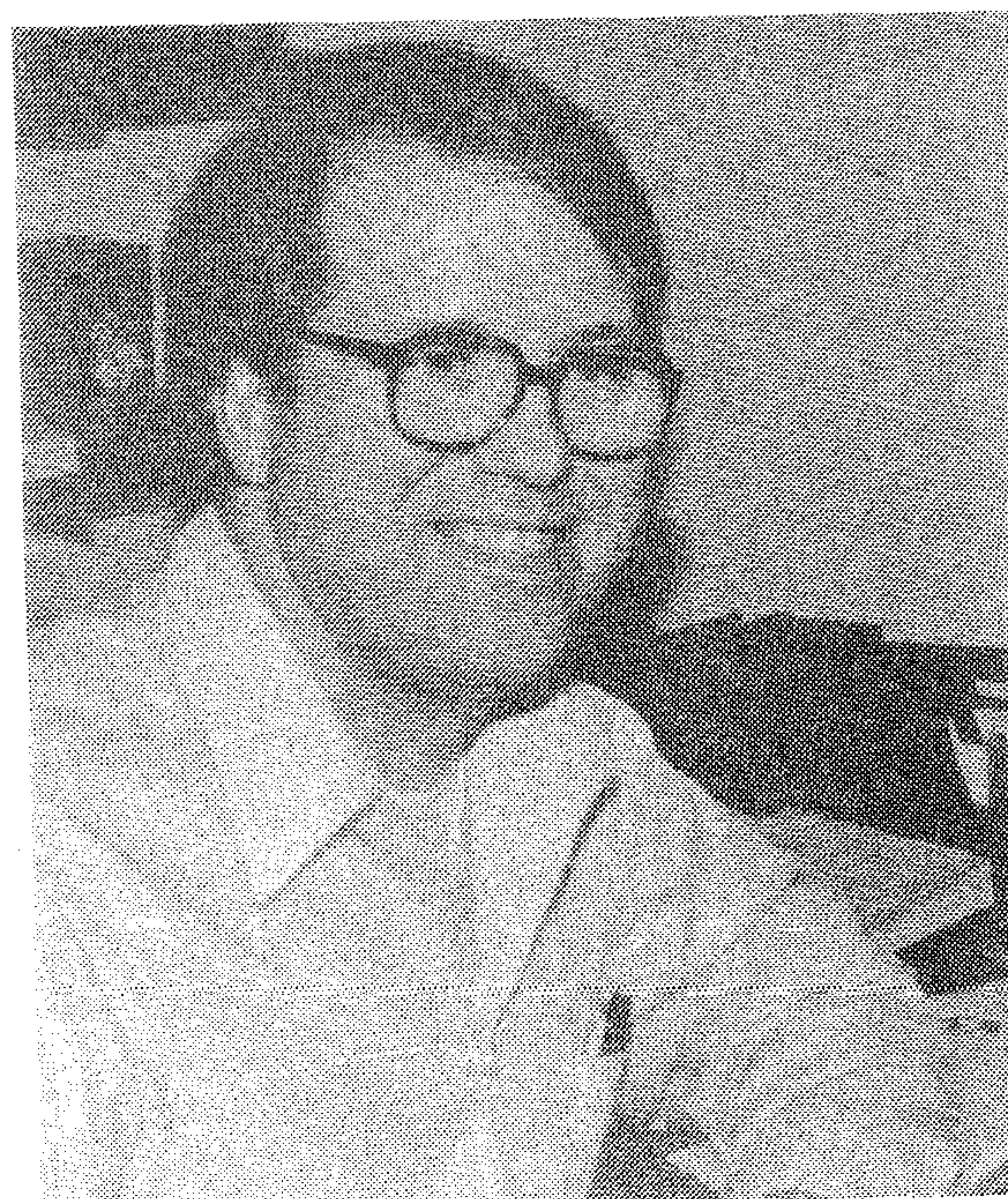
In addition, many new changes in our club are underway. Our new officers and committee chairpersons have many exciting ideas. At the February meeting, we will start two new sessions. In one session, one of the officers will describe the club, answer questions about the club and sign up new members. In another session, an experienced member will field any questions about the TI home

computer and programming. We are also considering holding BASIC classes, distributing a tape-of-the-month (and disk) and sponsoring a computerized bulletin board. Our present activities and subgroups continue as before.

Our club has the potential for continued growth. Assuming that there are two million TI home computers and that Minnesota is an average state, our active membership of 400-plus represents only one percent of our potential size. While I am not soliciting rampant growth, when we provide support and value for our members, others will naturally join.

We also received free publicity via KSTP radio. On January 21st, I was a guest on COMPUTER TALK, a weekly talk show. We have already received inquiries and new members as a result of that show. In the future, Ray Douglas has invited a TI-99/4A computer to call in with some real "computer talk." Listen to KSTP radio (1500 AM) at 5:00 PM every Saturday and receive additional information about computers.

Concluding, this is one home computer club that is alive and thriving. Come to the monthly meetings and support the cause! It will be a beneficial year for all members.



Joel Gerdeen

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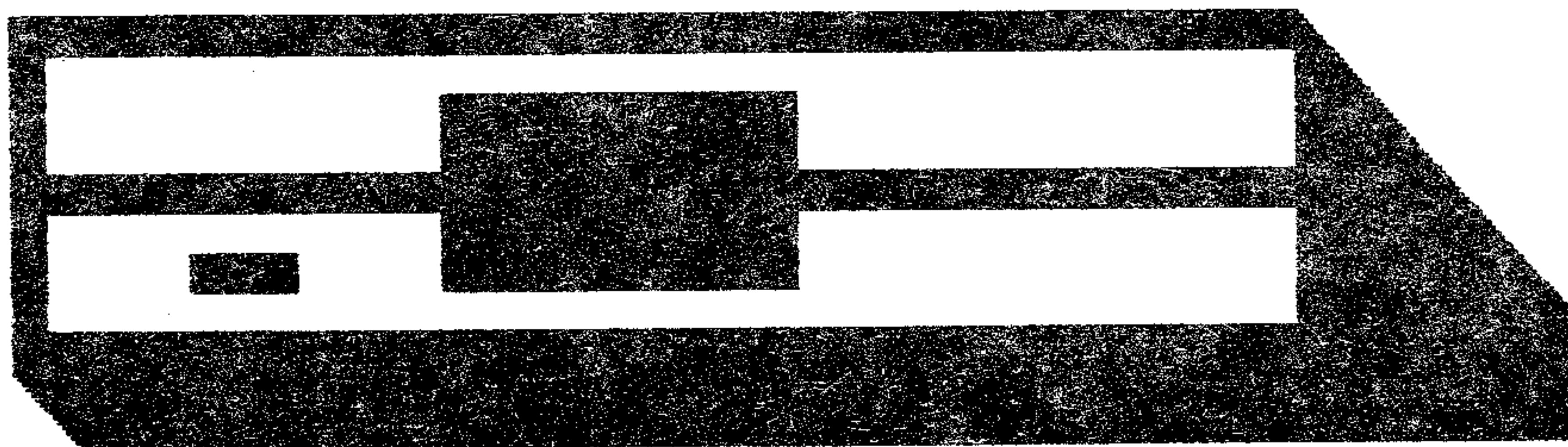
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(BASIC Tips, continued)

process takes about 15 seconds. If you are writing a simple address book program and print a name, a street address, a city and state, and a telephone number you will probably want to PRINT four times. That will probably take about one full minute per entry! That's not really why you bought a computer, is it?

The way you help this is to concatenate (i.e. use the "&" between variable names) as many variables as you can into one long record. You could even set up a loop and concatenate together the information for two entries into your address file. You can put together up to 191 characters this way. Now you can put two address book entries on one tape record in about 15 seconds - instead of two minutes the other way. That's smart programming.

Oh, yes. I mentioned the computer prints the data twice. It always does that - even when it is recording programs. That way, when it reads the data or program later, it compares both copies it recorded. If they are different, an error code is generated and the reading stops.

Tape data files can be very useful, but they do not operate at the speed we all seem to expect of our computers. For that you'll have to move up to a disk drive. If anyone needs more help with using tape files it is always available at our monthly meetings.

Next time we'll be discussing something probably of much greater interest to most of you than input/output. We're going to touch on the topic of graphics and utilizing the sound and music capabilities of the incomparable TI-99/4A. See you then.

# COMPUTER TALK

CAN GIVE YOU THE  
ANSWERS!

**KSTP-AM 1500**  
SATURDAYS 5:05-6:00 PM

## AN MSP 99 SOFTWARE REVIEW

### TRUCKER

By Bruce Larson

Put the pedal to the metal, good buddy! This fast moving, and fun, game requires all of your hand/eye coordination!

The plot involves a trucker..you.. driving down this Texas road plumb-full of assorted hazards like skunks, armadillos, turtles, giant jackrabbits, and of course the inevitable chuckholes. Because you are an experienced gear-jammer, you know enough to bring twenty spare tires with you. Naturally, when you hit a hazard, or run off the road, you lose a tire. The object of the game is to travel as many miles as possible before you run out of tires.

If you negotiate the entire curving highway without ruining every spare tire you own, you start again at the next level with an extra spare tire. Fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on your skill with the old joystick, the road at each level is the same. Somewhere down the line YOU WIN (I looked at the listing!), but as the Chief Game Player at our house didn't get past the fourth level, I don't know where that magic mileage is.

The instructions at the beginning of the program are almost complete...BUT they don't tell you that you only need left-right joystick movement. I automatically kicked off the alpha lock and then wondered why I couldn't get the game to recycle with a Y on the Y/N question. Naturally enough, my answer was a lower case y ASCII number!

The only significant fault I could find with the program was the horrible color combinations on the game instructions. Perhaps they look okay with a real honest-to-goodness monitor, but many of you Program Doctors out there might prefer changing them. It's easy enough to do with line numbers 120,180,260,270 and 280. If you would also like to clean up the score display you could change some things in lines 760,770, and 780. However, changes here will mess up your road unless you also change the IF THEN in line 820 to 280.

The game, written by Sam Moore, Jr., was Texas Instruments contributed software. It requires Extended Basic and joysticks. The disc version takes up 24 sectors of room. Order it with Catalog Number G06062.

TIDBITS

\*\*\* Our former officers deserve a round of applause for their interest, enthusiasm, skillful leadership and plain hard work this past 12 months. Thank you Diane Kavanaugh and Bill Lovegren for a very good year.

\*\*\* "Atarisoft" is now making some of their programs available for the TI-99/4A. If you would like to be on their mailing list, drop them a line stating you are a TI-99/4A owner. Their address: ATARI, Inc., P.O. Box 2943, So. San Francisco, CA 94080.

\*\*\* Group rates are available for purchasing 99'er Magazine. If 40 people or more participate and purchase 5 or more back issues each (any month combination), each issue costs \$2.95 (\$3.95 retail). John Burg is coordinating this effort and can be contacted at 537-5463 for further information.

\*\*\* The combined December/January issue of 99'er Magazine should finally be out in early February.

\*\*\* MSP 99 articles are regularly reprinted in other User Group newsletters around the world. Most recently, Bob DeMars' article, "THE TALKING LISTING" (from our November issue), was reprinted in the December '83, issue of the Mid-America Cursor. (Shawnee Mission, KS User Group.) Jon Todd's article, "CAVE MAZE" (also from our November issue), appeared in the December '83, Washington DC Area User Group newsletter. We have some nationally recognized authors in our midst!

MSP 99 USERS GROUP  
P.O. BOX 12351  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55112

Address Correction Requested

WANT ADS

Members may place want ads, at no charge, by calling Jon Todd 920-3263 or by turning in written copy of the ad at any MSP 99 meeting. Businesses may purchase ad space at the cost of \$1 per line.

WANT TO BUY -- Peripheral Expansion Box and goodies. Call Gary, 774-3773.

DISKS/TAPES -- Top quality blank disks and Ampex 10-min. tapes at users group rates. Box of 10, \$20; single disk, \$3. Tapes: 10 for \$5; 75 cents each. Tape boxes: 10 for \$1.50; 25 cents each. Mailing charge \$1 or pick up at meeting. Call Joel Gerdeen, 572-0148.

WANTED -- Used printer. Call John at 537-5463.

HELP WANTED -- Program Committee Volunteers. Help plan and coordinate each month's MSP 99 Group event. Call Dick Dunbar for information: 488-0153.

99'ER MAGS

Back Issues, any month, \$2.95 each.

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STATISTICS Command Module for sale, \$10. Jon, 920-3263.

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## MSP 99 USERS GROUP

### Software Catalogue Additions February, 1983

The following new programs are now available from the Software Committee. Just fill out the usual order form and send it to MSP 99 SOFTWARE.

#### G01132 Knockout G,XB,J

The TI-99/4A version of the old favorite arcade game "Breakout". Simplified and not as fast moving as the arcade version, but fun to play and colorful. See if you can speed it up! From the Central Iowa Users Group.

#### G01141 Elephants G,B/XB

Your elephant must shoot its trunkful of water at the computer's elephant before it gets a chance to give you a shower. You are not able to see the TI's elephant, but are given a report as to its last whereabouts. A game in which both chance and logic intertwine.

#### G02131 Minotaur Maze B

You are trapped in a dungeon-maze with the sinister Minotaur hot on your trail. With every wrong turn, the beast draws closer, until you either escape or are eaten. Only for the most persistent or lucky - everyone I let try this got devoured!!!

#### U01123 ASEEKA EA,D,MX

The assembly language source file of the alphabetic search routine described by J. Gerdeen in his October '83, newsletter article. Includes instructions.

#### U01133 ASEEKO XB/EA,D

The assembled object file form of "ASEEKA" (U01123). Ready to use as a fast search routine in your own Extended Basic program. Does not require memory expansion. Instructions included in U01123.

#### U01143 ASORTA EA,D,MX

The assembly language source file of the alphabetic sort routine described by J. Gerdeen in his October '83, newsletter article. Includes instructions.

#### U01153 ASORTO XB/EA,D

The assembled object file form of "ASORTA" (U01143). Ready to use as a fast alphabetic sort routine in your own Extended Basic program. Does not require memory expansion. Instructions included in U01143.

#### U01162 Directory XB,D,MX,P

Keep a directory of up to 50 files on 50 diskettes. You may enter a description of each diskette and of each file. Several lists may be produced including lists of all disknames, all files, either in diskette order or sorted alphabetically by file name. Or run a catalogue for any or all disks. This will be a great aid in organizing your program library and is strongly recommended for anyone with a disk system. Used by the Software Committee. Requires the assembly language object file sort program "ASORTO" (U01153) to run.

#### U01172 Mailer XB,D,MX,P

This is the same program used by the User Group for keeping track of members and preparing mailing labels and directories. An excellent and fast program that can handle up to 450 names with addresses, membership numbers, expiration dates and general comments. Prints several reports and sorts by any one of three categories. Requires assembly language sort and search object code files "ASORTO" (U01153) and "ASEEKO" (U01133) to function.

#### U01180 Printer Demo B,P

An excellent program that demonstrates the versatility of the EPSON/TI Impact Printer. The four page print-out describes how all the software printer control codes work. Requires considerable modification for some other printers.

## SOFTWARE CATELOGUE DELETIONS

The MSP 99 Users Group has always made available to its members the highest quality user created software we could locate. Much of the software in our library has come from sources outside our own group.

Occasionally it is brought to our attention that some of the programs we have collected may have come from copyrighted sources.

It has never been our intent to violate the copyright protection deserved by the authors and distributors of quality software. It is often impossible to determine the source of software submitted to the group because identification can so easily be removed. This has resulted occasionally in the inadvertent inclusion of protected software.

The Software Committee is always reviewing the programs we are distributing and has recently determined that the following programs probably infringe on copyright protection and therefore been removed from our catalogue.

G04041 Air Combat  
G01110 Air-Sea  
M03112 Animal  
E01060 Career File  
G03101 Cars and Carcasses  
G06072 Chicken Helper  
G01102 Chutes 'n Sharks  
G03142 Dodge-em  
H01140 Family Tree  
M02011 Haunted House  
M01082 How Old Will You Be  
M04061 How Old Will You Be  
G03062 Knightstour  
G02062 Largodowns  
E03091 Lexicality  
M01160 Love  
G04081 Miner  
G03121 Othelo  
M02021 Seahorse  
M04082 Smoker Self-Assessment Test  
M02031 Snoopy Christmas  
E02011 Spelldown  
G04020 Touring  
G03010 T-Thello  
G02082 Warfish  
G04031 Yahtzee