

MSP 99

USER  
GROUP

# THE MSP 99 NEWSLETTER

## THE NEWSLETTER QUESTIONNAIRES

by Jim Kavanaugh

Forty-one Newsletter Questionnaires found their way back to Marilyn McPartlin, our estimable Editor. I can't say there are 41 completed questionnaires -- they range from nearly complete to nearly incomplete; from well thought out typewritten responses to obscurely obscene doodles - the latter were returned, most probably, by mistake! Nonetheless, it is clear the respondents do not represent the group. For example, 44% have at least one disk drive. Examine Table 1. Compare your equipment to the respondents'. If you find a difference and disagree with the findings here, call Marilyn and tell her your opinion. Better yet, write it down and mail it to her.

The interesting results are as follows. Table 1 shows the peripherals owned by the respondents. Over 1 in 4 have a complete set of expensive peripherals and over two-thirds have Extended BASIC and the Speech Synthesizer. One statistic that  
(continued on page 10)

## HATS OFF TO MIKE!

by Diane Kavanaugh, MSP 99 President

Mike Larson, who has single-handedly run the Activities Committee for over a year and a half has resigned from this position. Mike has seen to it that there has been a program every month for our group and has made sure that all the equipment needed has been there and running. Most months he has brought in his own system and has picked up and returned the big screen IV that we have used. Thanks Mike for a job well done! All your time and effort have gotten our group off to a tremendous start.

## "HENHOUSE" REVIEWED

by Sarah DeMars

Looking for a new and exciting game for your TI-99/4A? Funware has several new cartridges available and the one that is my favorite is Henhouse -- its graphics, sound and speed are great!

The farmer must protect his henhouse from crows, a poacher and a wolf. Then at the same time he must collect eggs and load them in his truck. He protects his henhouse by shooting the poacher before he gets away with an egg, or shooting the wolf before he gets into the henhouse. If the poacher gets away with an egg, it's not all that bad because you just lose an egg, although if the wolf makes it into the henhouse the game ends. While the farmer is protecting his henhouse, eggs are dropping and filling up bins. When a bin becomes full, the farmer must drop off his gun, run over to empty the eggs into his basket and then run over and load them in his truck.

This game starts out slow, but with every 2500 points you accumulate, the game speeds up. By the time you reach 10,000 points those eggs are dropping into the bins so fast you have about all you can do to keep the bins from overflowing. Each time a bin overflows, you lose an egg. The game ends when you lose six eggs. (Don't forget, while you're collecting eggs the wolf or poacher may appear and catch you off guard without your gun.)

I've yet to meet anyone who has tried this game and not enjoyed it. It's one of those games that once you've lost you can't wait to press Redo and start all over again!

The MSP 99 USERS GROUP meets monthly for a program of discussion and presentations that will enable you to be better informed about your computer. Users group members share and exchange information. Some members have a broad range of computer expertise that they are willing to share with others; others are just beginning. We are not affiliated with or sponsored by any other group or company. We are owners of the Texas Instruments TI-99/4 and TI-99/4A home computers, and share an enthusiasm for these fine machines. Membership dues are \$12 a year for a family, \$10 a year 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.

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

PRESIDENT -- Diane Kavanaugh	644-5940
VICE PRESIDENT -- Bill Lovegren	784-5918
SECRETARY -- Dean Sorensen	425-7154
TREASURER -- Joel Gerdeen	572-0148

MSP 99 NEWSLETTER is published by the MSP 99 Users Group to serve the needs of TI home computer users in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Members are encouraged to contribute articles for publication. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the MSP 99 Users Group, its officers, editor, or members.

Newsletter Editor--Marilyn McPartlin 636-5663

Newsletter Committee Members:

Bonnie Burton, Wayne Page, Jon Todd

MSP 99 Newsletter articles may be reproduced if appropriate credit is given to the author (if one is listed) and to the Minneapolis-St. Paul 99 Users Group.

The MSP 99 USERS GROUP MEETINGS are held at the Brown Institute Computer Building, 27th Avenue and East Lake Street, Minneapolis, on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. (Check Calendar of Events for changes.)

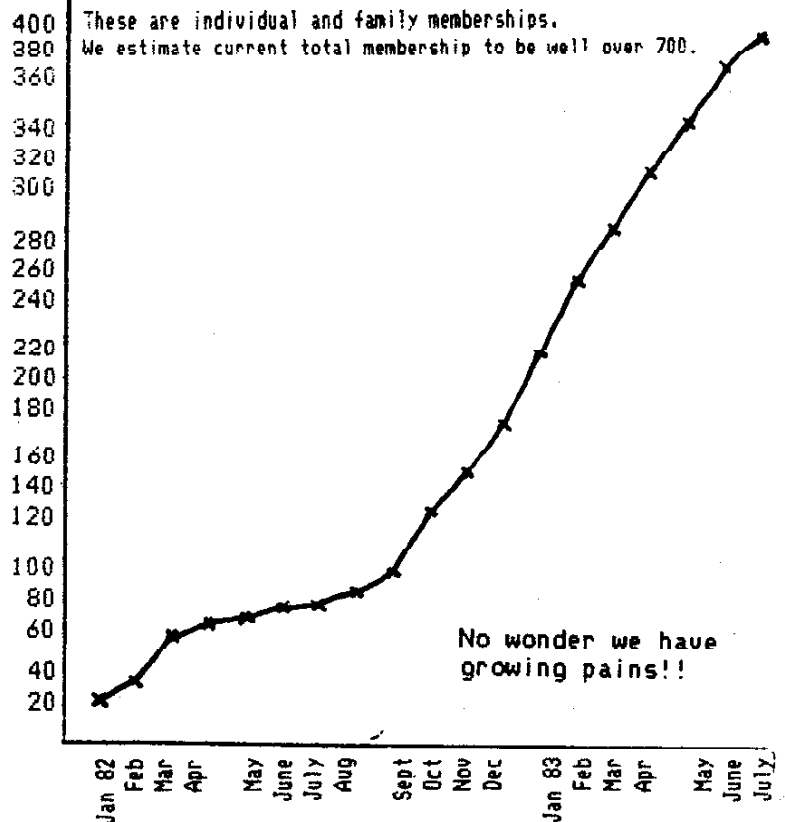
Ideas for future programs should be submitted to the Program Committee at the Users Group address given above or talk to an officer at a meeting.

If you're interested in working on one of our committees (Education, Equipment, Program, Publicity, Software, Newsletter), contact one of the officers.

**COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT RATES** -- Business firms that desire 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) \$30; Half Page (3-1/2 X 10-1/2) \$20; Quarter Page (3-1/2 X 5) \$12. Each ad must be camera-ready in sizes indicated and paid in advance. Contact the newsletter editor for more information.

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

## MSP 99 USERS GROUP GROWTH



## BEST of 99'er

IT'S HERE AT LAST...COLLECTING THE LONG-OUT-OF-PRINT FIRST YEAR'S ISSUES OF "99'er MAGAZINE" (Nos. 1-6) IN ONE 376 PAGE PUBLICATION. REVISED AND UPDATED ITEMS PLUS SOME NEW MATERIAL, AS ADVERTISED IN THE JULY 99'er, RETAIL \$19.95, SPECIAL TO MSP99 MEMBERS \$17.95 WHILE QUANTITIES LAST

BACK ISSUES OF "99'er MAGAZINE" ARE AVAILABLE @ \$3.75 (\$3.95+shpg. retail) SEE US ALSO FOR CURRENT ISSUES @ \$3.50.

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**MSP 99 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**  
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SEPT. 20 -- Presentation of TI peripherals and TI-compatible peripherals for  
 (TUESDAY) the 99/4A. Will help answer such questions as what are they and  
 7:00-9:00 what can they do. A guide to helping you plan the expansion of  
 your system.

We will be voting on changes to the Constitution and By-Laws.  
 Copies of the Constitution will be available at Brown Institute  
 the night of the meeting. If you wish to see a copy beforehand,  
 write to the Group's address and include a self-addressed  
 stamped envelope.

OCT. 18 -- PROGRAM TO BE ANNOUNCED  
 (TUESDAY)  
 7:00-9:00

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

BUSINESS--At regular MSP 99 meeting  
 for Septembber. Pres.: Bob DeMars.

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.

**COMPUTER**  
*Concepts*

September Training Schedule.

- TI-WRITER Beginner's Seminar \$25 Sep 22  
 A three hour session showing the basics  
 of TI-WRITER and how to use it to write  
 letters, charts, tables, and graphics.
- TI-WRITER Advanced Seminar \$25 Oct 6  
 A three hour session showing the use of  
 printer features, BASIC, and Multiplan,  
 with TI-WRITER to get professional-like  
 results. Rol-O-Disk at a 40% savings.
- BASIC Programming Course \$100 Sep 20  
 This course is for those who want to  
 learn how to program effectively. Six  
 3+ hour sessions. Includes course notes  
 and programming examples.

Classes are limited to 15 students. Make  
 reservations and obtain more information  
 by calling or writing.

JIM KAVANAUGH, Senior Consultant

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## THE FARMER'S DILEMMA - PART 2

by Jon Todd

In last month's newsletter we created a simple adventure game. This month we will add several new features.

The following program lines will add the commands LOOK, LIGHT, and WAIT to the game. Also it is now possible (even likely) that your farmer will "die." But before you type these new lines in, you must resequence (RES 1000,100) the program from last month. (If you don't want to do all that typing, the complete program is also available from the Software Committee.) Read the directions at end of this article before typing.

The heart of an adventure game is the "parser" section, which divides the commands you input into a verb and noun. It then compares the verb with the words it is programmed to accept as valid commands. If your verb doesn't match one of the valid words, you are told that you can't do that. The parser checks nouns the same way, usually with some condition testing to see if the noun, if valid, is allowed to be ~~operated on as you request.~~ The LIGHT section of the program is a good example of this condition testing.

First (line 10648) the verb (V1\$) is compared with the string "LIGHT." This makes us skip this section if our command was anything other than "LIGHT ...." Next we see if the matches (OB(5)) are in our possession (remember 99 is our personal location, the things we are carrying). Lines 10652-10655 handle the lighting of a match. Note in 10652 that we use "SEG\$(V2\$,1,5)" instead of just V2\$. This allows the program to go ahead whether we typed MATCH or MATCHES. The variable M (line 10654) represents the status of the match, so M=1 if you've lit a match and M=0 when the match is out.

This variable is used in the next section (line 10656) to force the player into the proper sequence of events. If the match is not already lit, the player can't light anything else. Hopefully the program is clear enough to be understood with a little effort. The logical "ands" and "ors" used throughout the program (see line 3922) are probably the hardest parts to understand.

Besides the new commands and several new objects in the program, we have a "special effect" in the WATCH TICKING section (lines 3947-3952). The effect of this line is that when you are in a room adjacent to the watch, you hear ticking. Actual CALL SOUND commands could be put in this section for a real special effect. Also at different points in the program, the screen color could be changed (for sunset, twilight, and night, for example).

As in most text adventure games, the real work in writing the program is to account for all possible conditions. The condition testing accounts for most of the program lines. The LIGHT section again is an example of how all variables are considered. Lines 10659, 10662, 10668, 10684, and 10688 are used to treat specific objects, and 10691 is a default, in case no valid object is named.

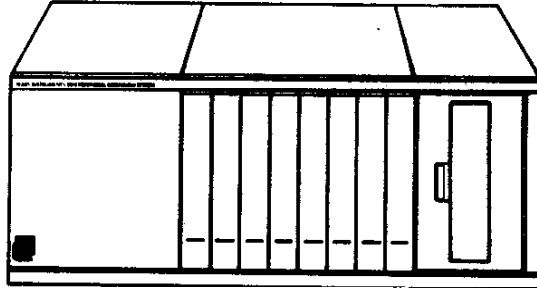
Adventure programming can be as involved or simple as you wish to make it, and the world you create will be correspondingly complex. This program is by no means polished or complete, and in fact is quite wasteful of memory. Serious adventure writers will do well to invest in Extended Basic, primarily for the Boolean logic and multiple statement lines it allows. Use of these two tools would make this program shorter by 50%, leaving room for many more rooms, objects and conditions.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TYPING PROGRAM LINES:

1. Load the original version from last month.
2. Check the line numbers against the newsletter version. They must be the same!
3. Type "RES 1000,100". This has the effect of multiplying all old line numbers by 10.
4. Type in the lines of program printed below. Some of them make minor changes to existing lines.
5. Save the new program separately (in case of typing errors you can start over if need be).
6. Type RUN and good luck!

If you have problems, please feel free to call me at 920-3263.

# Expand your Texas Instruments 99/4A Home Computer . . .



## Now get more out of your TI Home Computer — for less.

We are pleased to announce a dramatic price reduction on a group of Peripheral Expansion System components designated by Texas Instruments as PAP-4000. This package consists of one each of the following: PHP-1200 Peripheral Expansion Box, PHP-1240 Disk Controller Card, PHP-1250 Disk Drive (90K), and PHP-1260 RAM Expansion Card (32K). With the purchase of each TI PAP-4000 system, you will also receive your choice of one of the following software packages at no extra cost: TI LOGO II, TI Writer, TI Multiplan. Our special low price for this package is \$399.95, plus Minnesota State Sales Tax where applicable. Call Dick or Mary Nelson for further information. This is a great buy, so order your PAP-4000 soon!

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## EXTENDED BASIC

by Bob DeMars

At the last Business Group meeting we presented an overview of Extended BASIC features. The following highlights of this powerful language may be of interest to anyone considering buying the module.

- ~~Over 40 new or expanded commands, statements, functions and subprograms.
- ~~Multiple-statement lines increase speed, efficiency, and save memory.
- ~~Exciting new graphics capabilities with sprites and fast moving graphics.
- ~~Added subprogram capability allows user to store/access common routines on disk.
- ~~Ability to load or run one program from another.
- ~~New features for controlling errors, warnings and breakpoints.
- ~~Direct input and output screen control with Display At and Accept At (no more scrolling up from bottom).
- ~~The Extended BASIC cartridge adds 36K of RAM, ROM and GROM to your system.
- ~~Automatically utilizes 32K Memory Expansion.
- ~~Support for loading and running Assembly Language programs or subroutines.
- ~~Ability to define local variables.
- ~~Merging of programs and/or subroutines.
- ~~Greatly expanded if-then-else capability.
- ~~New program protection feature.
- ~~Power-on automatic program loading from disk.
- ~~Built-in speech capability.
- ~~Greatly improved editing features.

If you have any questions about the presentation or the Business Group, call Dick Clemetson (926-8083) or Bob DeMars (544-6219).

## PARSEC TRICKS

from the Arizona 99 Users Group

To get your spacecraft to orbit around the right side of the screen, hold down the up arrow and the right arrow keys at the same time.

To be able to fire your laser for a long period of time without overheating, hold down both fire buttons at the same time. This will leave fire trails across the screen. To make it easier, try tapping one on the fire buttons down.

## LIVE AND LEARN

by Jim Kavanaugh

For months I have been saying that there is no way to get the Prowriter to use TI-WRITER's Overstrike (&) and Underscore (&) Format Commands. I thought that I had tried every possible combination of DIP SWITCH settings and printer names. I hadn't! Ed Neu stopped by my booth at the last Users' Group Meeting and told me how to do it: DIP SWITCH 1 should have SW1-2 and SW1-7 closed and all of the others opened. The name of the printer is PIO.LF for the Formatter. Be sure to thank Ed for this tip the next time you see him.

These settings for DIP SWITCH 1 will require the PIO printer name for BASIC and Extended BASIC programs to get single line spacing. The printer name PIO.LF in a BASIC or Extended BASIC program provides a carriage return but not a line feed at the end of each line. Therefore the lines of text will print on top of one another unless the printer is explicitly sent a line feed (CHR\*(10) or CTRL J) at the end of each line. PIO.CR will print everything on the same line because the Carriage Return character is suppressed. The BASIC program would have to supply both the Carriage Return and the Line Feed instructions to the printer (CHR\*(10)&CHR\*(13) or CTRL J & CTRL M.) at the end of each line. This feature could be useful when utilizing bit image graphics.

The Overstrike feature is very nice and even enhances the Bold print. The Underscore is quite sloppy. The Prowriter's built in Underline feature is much nicer. A few examples follow.

This is an example of Overstrike.

This is an example of Overstrike W/Bold.

This is an example of Underscore.

This is an example of native Underline.

## NEWSLETTER QUESTIONNAIRE

(continued from page 1)

surprised me was that 25% have Minimemory -- a truly underrated cartridge.

Table 2 shows the programming level that the respondents picked to describe themselves. Nearly 60% pegged themselves as intermediate or advanced programmers! All use Basic/Extended BASIC as their primary language. The rare birds who use a second language prefer Assembly. Oh yeah, one courageous person boldly noted that he was not interested in programming. That was refreshing!

Nearly everybody reads the newsletter regularly and says that its great, good, excellent, attractively done, informative, interesting, and very helpful. A few don't read it and who cares what they say.

Now, to deal with what these respondents want to see in the newsletters. Almost everyone wants to have articles with program listings. Few of the respondents are fussy about the subject matter of the programs. They simply want program listings. The most common requests were for games, games, education, games, household, games, business, and games.

Most respondents wanted to see regular columns for specific programming levels. See Table 3. It is interesting to note the strong negative response of 22%. Normally, negative responses on a questionnaire are made by not answering the question. It is clear that regular columns on programming should be kept in control. The kinds of articles respondents want to see are technical articles giving programming tips and ideas and hardware reviews. Next come the program/module and software/book reviews along with the MSP 99 Calendar. Then regular columns and want ads. Finally, way out in last place barely visible, are member profiles.

The questionnaires provide numerous individual requests for topics. Some are specific topics such as "What accessories are required to hook up a printer?" and some are more general, like "What would I get with special equipment?" Anybody interested in writing an article can get good ideas from the questionnaires. They will be kept available for perusal by Marilyn McPartlin. The most popular

articles to date were my TI-WRITER Review, Program Titles/Headings by Wayne Page, and "Dick Irwin's humorous comments."

TABLE 1. Special Equipment.

<u>ITEM DESCRIPTION</u>	RESP %
Disk Drive	44
Printer	33
Telephone Modem	19
Editor-Assembler	14
Extended BASIC	81
Speech Synthesizer	67
Expanded Memory	28
P-Code	3
Mini-Memory	25
Cassette Tape	14

TABLE 2. Programming Levels.

<u>PROGRAMMING LEVEL</u>	RESP %
Beginner	39
Intermediate	39
Advanced	20
Not Interested	2

TABLE 3. Regular Columns for Programming Levels.

<u>PROGRAMMING LEVELS.</u>	RESP %
Beginner	42
Intermediate	28
Advanced	8
Not Interested	22

## FROM THE EDITOR :

OK, all you brilliant programmers out there. I need someone to tell me how I can change the number of characters per line when I want to LIST a program on my printer for use in the newsletter. I know there must be a way to override the computer or printer's determination that I must print the line length it's chosen. HELP!!! Call me at 636-5663 if you have an answer.

Marilyn McPartlin, Editor



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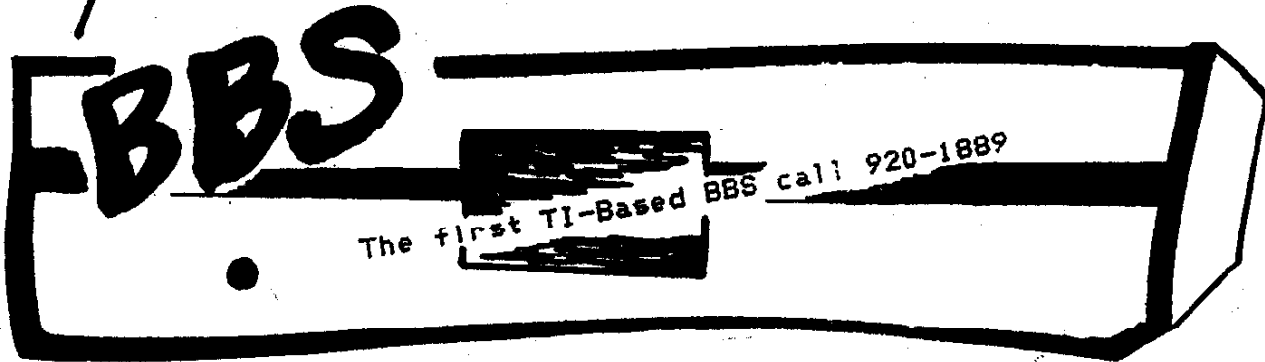
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## TIDBITS

\*\*\*The August meeting was a great success. Four of the five winners of our recent software contest demonstrated their programs and gave tips to the group. Presenters were: Dan Faust with "Math Quiz," Ann King with "Day of the Week," Robert Kemmetmueller with "ET," and Ted Allen with "Finance Decisions." Thanks to you all for sharing with us.

\*\*\*The overpopular Software for Good Kids program officially terminated on August 16. Kids, you can tell your parents that President Diane Kavanaugh said that as of that night you no longer had to be good.

\*\*\*A current software order form is included with this newsletter. Please use it for your next orders. Note change in address and new postage and handling charges of \$1.00 for cassettes and \$1.25 for disks.

\*\*\*Several months ago the MSP 99 Users Group received a request from a vendor to sell its membership list for the purpose of sending our advertisements. After asking for feedback from the members regarding this issue, the Board has made the decision to sell the membership list. For security in keeping the members' names and addresses private, an officer of the MSP Users Group will handle the total mailing of the materials. The mailing list will not, at any time, be made available to anyone other than an officer of the Users Group. If you would like to be excluded from such mailings, please notify the group in writing and include a copy of your newsletter mailing label.

**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 Bonnie Burton at 431-6064 or by turning in written copy of the ad at any MSP 99 meeting.

X-BASIC MODULE for sale -- new, \$85. Call Tom Rosenberg, 432-8501 evenings.

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.

GET PUBLISHED -- Write an article for the group about a program, ways you use your computer, or a module. Call Marilyn McPartlin, 636-5663, for info.

## PRINTERS, PRINTERS, PRINTERS

The Business Group will be holding their next meeting at Brown Institute following the regular MSP 99 meeting. We will be demonstrating and answering questions on several brands of printers which may be used with the TI-99/4A.

Everyone is welcome to attend this demonstration. If you have a printer and are willing to demonstrate it and/or share what you know about it with others, please let Dick Clemetson (926-8083) or Bob DeMars (544-6219) know before the next meeting so we can include you in the agenda.

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