MIAMI COUNTY AREA 99/4A
HOME COMPUTER USER'S GROUP

MEETINGS

Just a reminder, this Group meets on the second Tuesday of every month at
the NIPSCO building on US 24 at the west edge of Peru. Meetings start at 7:00
in the evening and end when they are over. Remember the next meeting will be on
Tuesday April 9th. Hope you will join us!

AT THE LAST MEETING

At our March meeting we saw some new faces and some that we have not seen for a
while.   This brought our attendance to a more acceptable level. Perhaps if the
Group works real hard in the next few months to provide useful service to it's
membership, we will begin to see more people showing up on meeting nights.

Eva Gilbert mentioned that she has a Home Inventory program on cassette that she
can't use because of a bug that prevents data storage. If anyone cares to look
at it for her, please give her a call and make arrangements to pick up a copy.
All the officers have her phone number. Eva, if nobody gets in touch with you,
bring a copy to the next meeting and we will have someone help you out with this
problem.

Jim Ike was able to provide a copy of one of the missing programs from our
software library.   We still are missing NIM and SPACEWAR. Anybody have a
copy.....see Tom Weir.

Jerry Rowe brought Super Sketch to the meeting for us to play with.   Super
Sketch is a hardware/software combination that will let you draw pictures on the
screen by moving a swing-arm type of device on a clip board sized drawing board.
Jim Perkins quickly showed us how to draw a very ugly rabbit. Jerry also
mentioned that he is marketing an assembly language based program to dump the
completed sketch to a dot matrix printer.

The remainder of the meeting consisted of punching keys on the computer to show
eachother some of the basic commands and functions that we will be using to
create our program. We looked at things like line numbers and how to manipulate
them with commands like NUM, LIST, RES, INSERT, DELETE, ERASE, etc.   We also
demonstrated the use of CALL CLEAR, PRINT (to screen), TRACE, RUN, GOTO, and the
various EDIT functions.

All in all this was a very productive meeting. If you missed it, you missed a
good one. See you next time!

*PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The subject of this month's 'Corner is one that is dear to my heart, making money. My second job (I have three) is an example of how I like to expand my income. I spend my week-ends working at a Community Building that is run by a Foundation set-up by now dead very rich man who wanted to leave a legacy to the community in which he lived.

This Foundation not only runs the 52 room facility in which I spend my week-ends, they also make grants and try to promote activities and programs that will be a benefit to the city and county. In the last few years they have discovered a useful tool to help them in their endeavors . That tool is direct mail. The Executive Director of this Foundation has related to me that direct mailing has been more effective than any other form of advertising that they have tried. They started off by using a fellow who had a Radio Shack Color Computer and soon outgrew him and now their 15000 name list is done by a local firm with a full blown business system.

They don't miss a trick when It comes to gathering names. Whenever anyone visits the building to view an art exhibit etc. you will find a register book to sign. When they have activities that will bring in a large crowd they have a drawing to give away something. All names are sorted into categories so future mailings will reach those who are likely to be interested in the particular subject being promoted.

Now to shift gears a little. The Sales Manager at my daytime job has formed an organization to promote the construction of a major highway through this area. The Idea is to promote industrial expansion in this part of the State. He asked me if I would be interested in seting up a mailing list for this organization to help them with their promotion. As it turned out he later discovered that one of the people in his group had a Color Computer and since he was one of their own he got the job.

The point that I am trying to make is that there is a very good potential for an indivdual to make these electronic gadgets pay for themselves. Pay attention to your mailbox for a few days, just count the items that come with mailing labels. All but the largest of these could be done on your TI. You simply do not need to have a name brand computer to do this type of work! And don't forget the tax advantages of making your toy a work tool. I sure would like to write off at least some of the money that I have tied up in this thing.

Software is no problem either. Our library has a good mailing list program, TI-Writer works great also. I sent for a mail list program that is written in Forth last week. At $10 I couldn't resist. If you can't find just the right program you could always have someone in the Group modify something for you.

I don't know about you but the idea of using TV time to make some extra cash without being away from home has great appeal to me. One could stick on a lot of mailing labels while watching Magnum PI next Thursday. This would be nice income for students, housewives, retired people, or just about anyone who has the time and ambition. Every retail business is a potential customer. Also don't forget that the lists themselves can be sold.

After writing this article I have just about talked myself into giving it a try. Well maybe not, my wife and kids are starting to forget what I look like.

NEW COMPUTER STILL POSSIBLE

Ever since TI left the home computer marketplace we have been hearing rumors that this company or that company was going to produce a new computer that would either be just like our TI's or perhaps would be like the 99/8 that never was released for sale (some were made for testing etc.). After a few months of such rumors things calmed down a bit and everybody began to admit that such a move was unlikely.

These rumors have started up again and this time they seem to have a better chance of being true. Every one who is publishing things about the TI seems to be in contact with someone who is involved in developing a new version of the 99/8. All the descriptions that you read seem to be similar so chances are that everybody is talking about the same manufacturer. These new computers probably will run existing TI type software (only much faster) and be compatible with the P-Box. One description that I have read indicates that the entire computer will consist of two cards in the P-Box with the keyboard having no logic at all.

If these rumors are true and if these new units ever see production, then this will be the thing that will save the TI from the death that everyone has been predicting for the last two years. In any case it offers another good excuse for anyone who is considering expanding to go ahead and buy a P-Box while they are still available .

LAST CHANCE TO RENEW

For those of you who have not renewed your membership (if it was due in January), this will be your last newsletter. Our last printing cost the Group between $20 and $25 and we have to cut you off to stay within our budget. Thank you for your past membership, you will be missed.

NEW MEMBERS

We have two new members that I am aware of. First there is the Wes Worley family from Peru. Wes and his son Mike (I think, good memory...just a little short) attended our last meeting. Secondly there is Carl Stage from Elwood. My only contact with Carl was during a brief telephone conversation about some troubles he was having with TI Writer.

I'm sure that our membership would like to know more about both of you and your families. Why not write a little introduction and we will see if it can be included in a future copy of this newsletter. Welcome aboard!

TI WRITER TRICKS

One of the advantages of belonging to a User's Group is that you get to read the mail from other Groups. The following tips for TI Writer users comes to us from the February issue of Call Newsletter (Atlanta U. G.). I will type the article word for word (or as close as my fingers will let me).

TI-WRITER

This is a very powerful word processing program. As an example take a look at what happened to me while I was working on this newsletter last night. I had just finished a long article, but had been a naughty boy. Caught up in what I was writing I did not save to disk from time to time as I should have. Just as I was about to save the completed first draft -- a power glitch hit, the key board locked up, the screen turned into psychedelic checkerboard fireworks and finally went blank. After a few calm curse words I remembered a new word that I had seem recently, "RecoverEdit". The file was still in the memory expansion if I could get to it I could get the work back. I turned off the console, (Never turn off the Peripheral Expansion system in this case), waited an interminable two minutes and turned the console back on. Selected TI-Writer from the menu, and then "1" for edit. Then the moment of truth, was TI-Writer up to the strain of the big moment, in command mode I entered "RE" and pressed "ENTER". Typed "Y" at the prompt and pressed "ENTER" and low and behold there was my work back on the screen again. Except for the first line; which was easily replaced. I then did what I should have while typing, I "SAVED" the text to disk.

TI-Writer may not be the most fancy program out, and the P-Box may be big and noisy but they can really do many things that no other computer can manage.

Data Base Files

Wile working with TI-Writer I discovered that the disk controller automatically alphabetized all the files. I needed a data base that was larger than the programs available allowed. Here I thought could be the answer to my problem. I set up a form that I wanted to use, and proceeded to fill in several records. Saving them to disk all I had to do upon loading in TI-Writer was to ask for a Show Directory and I could see my alphabetized file, no matter what order I typed them in. No longer was I tied to a 254 byte record, it could be as large as I wished, (about 22K max due to file limitations imposed by the program).

Data base files were finally mine, I was bursting at the seams, I had to tell someone. Gary, he would appreciate my discovery.

That's great he said, but if you filed all the names in alphabetized groups, like all the A's B's and C's together, then you could use "Find String" to locate a first name. Or you could use it to find a street name, zip code or anything else you wanted to use to locate someone by and you wouldn't even have to sort each time you wanted to change the base of the item you were looking for.

No fair I said you've been working with TI-Writer also.

CALL BORDER
CALL WIPE

Last month we started a series of articles dealing with the use of Subprograms. To review a little: A Subprogram is a tool that is available to the Extended Basic programmer. Subprograms must start with "SUB" and they must end with "SUBEND". You will also remember that they must be placed at the end of the main or calling program (big line numbers). Subprograms are very useful when a program contains operations that are repeated several times. The fact that the calling statement can pass variables into the Subprogram makes them more universal than a subroutine. This feature allowes the programmer to set up a library of Subprograms that can be merged into his next masterpiece.

This month we will look at two Sub's working together that will allow us to set-up a bordered screen and allow us to clear that screen without knocking off the sides of the border. The clear operation looks like turning the pages in a book. This look would make for an interesting effect at the start of a program where you could page through the instructions. Type in the next few lines and see how it looks.

```
1 REM   SUBS AVAILABLE:
2 REM      DELAY  LINE2500
3 REM      BORDER  LINE 5000
4 REM      WIPE    LINE 6000

100 CALL CLEAR
110 CALL BORDER(7,16,2)
120 DISPLAY AT(10,10):"ANY MESSAGE"
130 CALL DELAY(600)
140 CALL WIPE
150 CALL DELAY(250)

2500 SUB DELAY(COUNT)::FOR DELAY = 1 TO COUNT::NEXT DELAY::SUBEND

5000 SUB BORDER(E,C,T)::CALL SCREEN(E)::CALL COLOR(10,E,E)::CALL VCHAR(1,31,104,24*4)::
     CALL COLOR(1,C,C)
5010 CALL VCHAR(1,3,32,24*28)::FOR SET=2 TO 9::CALL COLOR(SET,T,C)::NEXT SET::SUBEND

6000 SUB WIPE::CALL VCHAR(1,3,104,24*28)::CALL VCHAR(1,3,32,24*28)::SUBEND
```
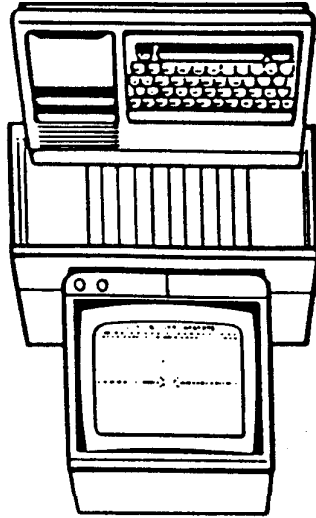
Lines 1 through 4 are optional, they do nothing but make the program a little easier to read. The main program is from line 100 to 150. Program execution starts in 100 and the program stops after line 150. The line numbers larger than 150 are the three Subprograms. Notice the numbers in( ) in lines 110, 130, and 150. These are variables that you are plugging into the subprograms below.

The way line 150 is now written you will see a red border around a white screen with black text printed in the center. 7= red, 16 = white, 2 = black. Change the 7 to a 5 and the border is now blue, change the 16 to 11 and you will see a yellow center. By writing the program this way these Subprograms can be used in different programs without having to be edited each a different look is desired.

Play around with different colors and see if you find a combination that you like. Next month we'll look at another use for Subprograms. If you have any ideas let me know because I am running low on them (ideas) myself.

RETURNED FOR POSTAGE

TENEX
P.O. BOX 6578
SOUTH BEND IN. 46660