net 9 9er news

Vol. 7 No. 9   Sept. 1989

NEXT MEETING:
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 7th

at 9:30am   in the NRH Community Center

— * CLUB OFFICERS * —

President	James Crosson
Vice President	Charlie Bathman
Treasurer	Lee Deforest
Secretary	David Shivers
Membership Chairman	Bill Duncan
Librarian	Joe Torres
Newsletter Editor	Tom Collins
TI-NET BBS SysOp	Phil Chappell

TI-NET 581-1421   300/1200 - 7E1 - - 24 hours

ODE TO JOHN

On September 08,1989, John Guion, member of the Dallas TI Home Computer Users Group was killed in a car accident. He was on his way home when another car crossed the line hitting him head on, both young men lost their lives.

John was on his way home from school to visit with his parents and friends at a dinner-social for the DTIHUG when the fatal accident happened. I'm sorry to say that the accident was caused due to the other car crossing the line, probably due to the driver drinking and passed-out at the wheel. This loss really hurts, especially due to the circumstances.

I have been asked "Who was John Guion", by people who didn't know him, my reply is that John Guion, not quite 23, was a young man that had already accomplished more in using and understanding computers than most other people many years his senior.

The P-Gram card, developed by John and Robert Jones, was one of his best inventions, but there is more, for instance, TI disk controller card modification that enabled the user to have four drives instead of three and use lower case letters for access as well as faster access times and the RS232 mod and even the Super Extended Module by Triton that he modified to use several other groms. Yes, I think John was some kind of special person and probably a genius where electronics was concerned. There is no telling what he was capable of creating in the future, had he lived, because he was involved with Bud Mills of Horizon Ram Disk fame in other projects of who knows what.

But of this I am certain, he loved his TI and he wanted it to survive and prosper as long as it could still capture the imagination of others and serve a purpose to all that used it.

When someone asks what was John like, I say, he was a faithful friend, ideal son, and a devoted lover of the TI.

I would like to say John, I'm going to miss you as most of us will, but in your short years here with us, you left us with something to remember you by, and the TI community will always be grateful.

God bless you and keep you John Guion.

James

-----Presidents Page-----
Local Yokel

Say man do you know what this newsletter means, yeah it means that there is fixin' to be another meeting of the NET 99ers, you got that right (I hope). If you haven't guessed, it is time to do it or try and do it again. I mean it is time to get all your old junk, I hmmmm mmm mean used equipment out of the attic and bring it down to the meeting and lets do some horse trading or buying or even selling if you prefer. This is the meeting that our very own Lee DeForest will attempt to do a demo on the new 9640's, lets give him some encouragement, you know he is getting old and forgetful being retired for so long.

Also this month I will have for the first time some programs for the 9640 on the disk of the month as well as the TI material and speaking of the DOM, those people that bought the TIPS programs you will be in for a special surprise, since the program has been upgraded again and it is even faster. So don't forget that only the people that paid for the TIPS can trade in their old disks for the new one, and for those that didn't pay for the original, you can now!

For those that are interested in the Myarc happenings, here is some news that may have your attention, there is now two new DOS's out for the 9640, yes I said 2 not 1, the reason is that the people that use the 9640 without a hard-drive have one version and the people that uses the Hard and Floppy Controller have another, 114e and 96h respectively.

Anyone for some rumors, boy do I have a juicy-one, I have heard that there is a card that is coming out that has the ability to partition itself off as memory,as well as having a ram disk resident at the same time, I'm interested.

As I mentioned earlier that the buy, sell and swap we're having this time is for the purpose of raising some money for the club, which is in dire need of money, you know green stuff, aw come on you know that stuff that you keep giving to your girlfriend or wife to spend, you know like to buy things. Well if we don't get some people to renew this meeting I guess I'll just have to hire some strong arm people and come and look you up, what would you think about that? huh...

Seriously, those that are due to renew, please do, you know that this is your club and like anything else, if it is worth doing, its worth paying for, right? This club can not exist without funds and the DOM alone does not make up the cost of the newsletter and other activities, such as the picnic and BBS, and other functions, so please help, to coin a phrase, were doing it all for you.

Oh before I forget, there is going to be a sale the morning of the meeting at a church near the meeting place, which I don't have the address of yet, but I will some time this week, so if you plan to pick up on some new TI equipment cheap give me a call later this week, rhymes, huh?

Lest we forget the meeting is October 7th at the N. Richland Hills Community Center at 9:30 a.m., so don't be late or well shoot your date, just kidding, I think! See ya then. *James*

-----TREASURY REPORT-----

The treasurer's report is not good this month as we have gone below the dreaded $500.00 mark which means they will charge us a $5.00 service charge next month.The income for the September meeting was $73.56 but the expenses so far are $145.94 leaving us with a total of $489.18 and a newsletter to put out yet. Let's everyone out there try to think of a way to get the account back up to that magic mark of $500.00 + and let the club officers know about it.
  -Lee W. DeForest-

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with James Crosson and Charlie Pateman presiding. Members were greeted and the minutes from the last meeting were accepted as written. Dave Shivers has resigned his post as Secretary due to personal commitments and a volunteer for that post is needed. The Treasury Report was read, citing a decline in funds, and the report was accepted. The proposal for a TI Faire was discussed again, and Lee DeForest has developed a sample survey to be considered by members, soliciting suggestions for the survey questions. Good friend Marty McCain, a visitor from the Mid Cities/FLUG group was introduced and welcomed. James then reported that last months slow DOM program used for various printing applications has been updated and it runs faster. He then informed the group of the tragic loss of John Guion in an auto accident. We have started a collection for flowers to be sent to John's funeral. Several NET members have donated for this purpose, and Tom Collins handled the collection. James proceeded with a brief demo of loading, editing, initializing and saving of the ROS for the many new Horizon owners in the club. Tom Collins forgot to bring the power supply for his TI/CC console, (a console with a complete CorComp 9900 Micro System built inside the computer), and was unable to demo it for the group. Barbara Massey provided copies of the group photograph of the NET99ERS, taken during the picnic, free of charge to any who wished to have it. James began the demo of the current DOM, a program called ORPHAN (a program seen under several titles). A Geneaology Workshop was mentioned by Chester Johnson, for those who may be interested. Tom Collins announced at that time a program for Geneaology buffs, from the Hunter Valley Users Group. During the meeting, a floppy disk (with the cover removed) was passed around to give all an idea of what a floppy disk is, and a few questions were answered by James. Member Brent Cooper reported an interest in obtaining roll type paper for use in a printer, citing a supplier who can provide a case of 10lb paper for $60. Anyone interested in using this paper should contact Brent. Lee DeForest informed the group MICROpendium prices will be increasing, so if you subscribe, be aware of this. He then announced to the members that some renewals are due. Please contact Lee or Bill to renew your membership. A brief BUY, SELL, SWAP session was held, followed by the break. The meeting resumed, with Phil Chappell passing a list cartridges around the group, asking for help in building his cartridge library. Phil is currently on an endless quest to obtain ALL TI's released cartridges. Tom Collins gave a demo of a program developed by TI used to check the speech strings in various cartridge programs, during software development. This program will be placed in the club library. The meeting officially ended and a disk swap/copy session was held, going into overtime. -your substitute secretary - Tom Colline

It has been said that the full moon has strange effects on people. This is so very true in my case. When I volunteered to try and write the newsletter, not only was it a full moon, but a lunar eclipse as well and I couldn't believe my own ears. Had I lost it, had I gone completely mad? I have never done anything like this. I could not even think of doing something like this, not even in my wildest dreams.

Let's see now. I recieved my TI/994A from my father and for a while used it soley for games. I got brave and bought the TI/Writer then almost gave up. Everytime I purchased a new program, for some strange reason my instructions were either not complete, or in some cases just plain untrue. Frustration and a whole lot of wasted hours were spent trying to run what sounded like simple programs. I called TI so often that I should have put their number on my phone's auto dialer. No longer did I enjoy sitting down infront of my computer, it felt more like I was being sent to the corner for punishment. Then, as in most sob stories, there came the silver lining of my dark thundercloud in the form of The Net99er Club. Out of the blue Lee DeForest called to inform me about the Club. I never knew there was one. I had never attended any type of user club before, so this was a new experience for me. I was in the process of looking for a different computer so I attended a few other computer user club meetings. I honestly feel that we have the best Club around. We certainly have the most dedicated President, James Crosson. I have decided to keep and upgrade my TI. I ordered the 9640 knowing that I have friends close by that will be there for me when I need help. Because of all the help I have recieved from Lee, and from the numerous times James has helped me, I feel that this is a way I can help contribute to the Club. To me this will be a great challenge and I beg, on my knees if need be, everyone to please help me in any way possible. Whether it be in the form of an article, or hints on how I could do something different or better in the future, or even if it is just your input-good or bad. Please bear with me. I would like to also thank Tom Collins for all his time and patience, and I hope I will be able to remember most of, if not all of everything he has told me. -Barbara Massey- Editor

SMART ONE(tm) 2400X MODEM
Product Review by Art Byers
Central Westchester 99'ers

The Dilemma? To Buy or not to Buy?

CONFUSION REIGNED!! Like the many computer owners who use modems, I have been tempted to move up from 1200 to 2400 baud but have held off not only because 2400 baud modems were expensive, but also, strangely enough, because prices have been dropping rapidly. I did not want to buy a modem and find in a few weeks that the cost had been reduced by $25, $50 or even more!

A year ago, 2400 baud modems cost from $300 to $900. Now they cost from $120 to $300. Had prices hit bottom?? Would they start up again? Were the

units at the low priced end of the spectrum "stripped out" models with few features? In addition, mail order ads showed maybe ten different brand names. Which was the best? Length of guarantees varied from 90 days to 5 years. Some had special error screening called "MNP". Some were "upgradable" to 4800 baud or even 9600 baud. BUT - BBS's and services were not offering 4800 baud, and there was no agreement on a 9600 baud protocol.

Having decided that 2400 baud modem prices were about as low as they were going to get, what with chip prices rising daily and the dollar still dropping, I started a pretty thorough search, - reading advertisements, phoning toll free "800" numbers and asking questions. Finally I zeroed in on the SMART ONE(tm) 2400X external modem for several reasons. The three most important were the price (I paid $119 plus shipping and handling, $126 delivered), the fact that, except for the toggle on/off switch, it is completely solid state, and it came with a two year guarantee.

I also selected the SMART ONE(tm) because it had a miriade of options. The best of the features is that all switch settings are done by means of nonvolatile RAM via either the command state or software command programming. This means once you configure the modem with the AT commands, the non-volatile RAM stores the info and reloads it on powerup. Changing a switch setting is as easy as typing one short line of characters which is they way it is done. The non-volatile RAM also can hold one telephone number of up to 40 characters that will be auto dialed on the ATS command.

I have had my fill of poking in the guts of circuit boards, the rear end of modems, etc. with a ball point pen to flip dip switches each time a piece of software demanded a change in DTR or DCD status. I did not trust those little switches. How many times could they be thrown before their tiny contacts wore out. Sometimes they had a stiff action. What would be involved to replace one if it broke? So you can see why a 100% solid state modem was of interest.

The SMART ONE(tm) is a truly powerful piece of equipment. It has 13 programmable registers, several of which are bit mapped, which means you are programming up to 7 items within those registers. There are over 32 factory set defaults that can be changed as needed. All this is most usually done from the command state. Obviously, without a good clear and well written manual, we would be unable to do more than accept the factory defaults as set on opening the box. That would be good enough for many uses as the modem worked, out of the box, with both TELCO and FAST-TERM with only one change in the factory defaults, setting the dial system from tone to pulse as I do not have touch tone dialing.

Manuals are one of the primary ways I judge a piece of equipment or useful software. The more powerful the item, the greater the necessity for an excellent manual. This manual is over 70 printed pages. It is very well organized and written with clarity. There just is not enough space available to go into the full details of everything the manual covers. I can't squeeze 70 pages of concise information into a 2 page review. However, you should know that you can adjust anything and everything from your keyboard. This covers the volume of the loudspeaker, type of dial, pause times, modem timeout, Carrier detect response time, number of rings before answer, etc, etc and more etc. It will have to suffice to say that everything you need, with

one exception, is in this fine manual. I have never owned a Hayes Modem, but judging from the manual, the SMART ONE(tm) is FULLY Hayes compatable. All the modems I owned in the past were only PARTLY Hayes compatable and I never realized the how many many MANY extra useful features were omitted. Now I have them all. I may never use some, but they are there to be had if I ever need them.

The manual has one flaw. To my immense surprise, there is no diagram or explanation of the pin in/out of the modem's RS232 port. No RS232 device I have ever purchased, before this, ever left out this necessary information. Therefore, for those of you who may buy this modem because of my recommendation, here are the connections to the TI-99/4A RS232 port #1:

```
2400X       TI-99/4A
RS232       RS232/1
 PIN#        PIN#


   1--------------1   SAFETY GROUND
   2--------------3\
                     !-TX AND RX DATA
   3--------------2/
   4-------------20  TI RECEIVED DTR
   5--------------5  CLEAR TO SEND
   7--------------7  LOGIC GROUND
```

I was no technical genius to figure this out, this was the pin in/out for my old 1200 baud modem and it works just fine here. The pin 1 to pin 1 safety ground is probably not really needed in order for the modem to work, but just the fact that it is called the "safety" ground should tell you something. That's my word to the wise for today!!

In addition, the SMART ONE(tm) has two self test features, a speaker, to enable you to audibly monitor call progress, with volume control that is adjusted from the command state AT commands, a full set of front panel LED's to tell you what is happening. To top it all off. It came with a free Compuserve sign up kit that has $15 in free connect time PLUS on disk BITCOM(tm) communications software for IBM/compatable computers. That also has a thick manual.

I am extremely pleased with this modem. It's a professional piece of equipment that is huge leaps and bounds ahead of any modem I've had in the past and it cost less than my first 1200 baud modem. - AND -as of this writing, You can't beat the price.

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    MANUFACTURER: Best Data Products Inc.
                  5907 Noble Ave
                  Van Nuys, CA 91411
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Note from the Editor: The prices listed in this article are not current, so please contact the manufacturer for the best price. Thanks!

NET99ER HCUG
P.O. BOX 534
HURST, TX. 76053

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Edmonton Users Group
P.O. Box 11983
Edmonton,Alb. Canada   T5J-3L1