

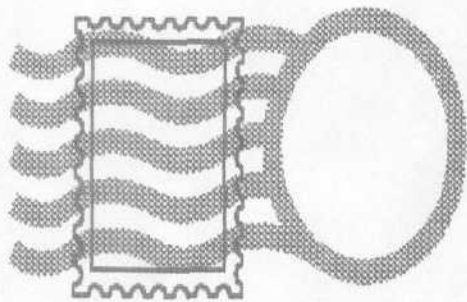
The Ottawa TI-99/4A
User's Group

FINAL ISSUE

Volume 14, Number 2 ... Feb/Mar 1995



OTIUG: 222 Guigues Ave, Apt 603
Ottawa, Ontario CANADA K1N 5J2



COMING EVENTS

Unfortunately, none. This is the final issue of the Ottawa TIUG Newsletter. The BBS, Texlink, and all the executive are still available (see back page), for an as-yet undetermined period of time.

It's been nice. Thanks.

DISCLAIMER

The Ottawa TI Users Group was a non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting the users of the Texas Instruments home computer. No connection whatsoever to Texas Instruments, Inc, ever existed. Although delivery to Gilligan's Island is now feasible, there are no more newsletters to deliver. Sorry. All opinions expressed in this newsletter are the opinions of the individual authors themselves, and may bear no relation whatsoever to the official opinion of the now-defunct OTIUG, which may never become known.



(Large scale version of the logo that I never used - Mike)



OTNODG

THE PRESIDENT'S TWO CENTS WORTH

by Lucie Dorais

Well, this is the last issue; a bit late, but I hope you will like it. I don't know which month will be on the cover, it follows the January one. Mike had time to do only one more before leaving for warmer BC, so I decided to make it bigger to compensate. There is no "Ten Years ago..." chronicle, as it would just be more of the same, but there is one last

XB column. I give you the addresses of other TI groups and Internet e-mail addresses of many in the international TI community so that you can keep in touch with some of us and them. As for the rest of the content, I will see it when I get the printed copy!

The idea for the cover is Mike's; it represents the "last guard": Peter Arpin, Texlink's SysOp; Lucie, me; Mike Brent, the newsletter editor; and Jeffrey Brown, our whizkid and part-time contributor. One important person declined to be "caricatured": Dave Morrison, our Librarian; and no, he is not one of the frogs: this is Froggy, taking her last bow (now why is Froggy a female? I guess because, in French, the word for frog, "grenouille", is feminine). Froggy made her first appearance on the cover in January, 1988, and has been included, in one form or another, in all the covers since (all done by me).

Also, because this is the last issue, I de-

ecided to send a copy to former members who have left their mark on the Ottawa UG: Jane Wrigley, the pioneering woman; Bob Boone, always ready to find the TI hardware or software we needed; Tom Bentley, Charles Earl and Art Green, who put their great programming talents at the service of the TI community; Dick Pich, who did the same for hardware improvements and repairs; Michael Taylor, in charge of the exchange newsletters library; Steve Bridgett, in charge of the cassette library; Dave Hartley, who is still the official Secretary; and two editors who made the newsletter what it is, Margaret O'Connor and Ruth O'Neill.



I don't have a current address for Danny Lyonnais, Paul Berlinguette, Bruce Caron, David Caron, Benoit Tanguay, LLOYD Galenzoski, Bill Sponchia and Paul Meadows; if someone has them, please tell me so I can also send them a copy as a small token of gratitude. And we all should have a special thought for those who left us for better pastures: Berry Minuk, who left us orphans for a second time in June 1989 (he was Pres at the time), and Pat Graham of the North Bay 99ers.

To all of them, and those whose name I have forgotten, a big and warm Thank You. And I personally want to thank the local members of the Ottawa UG for accepting me in my currently CFS disabled state as well as they accepted me first in my "female" state (which I am still in, in case you wondered).

You might ask yourself what we will do with the money left in the bank: well, if there is some left after we mail this issue, it will be given to a charity, as per the Users' Group constitution. Probably for research on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or to an organism that promotes electronic diffusion of information on it.

So long, and Happy Tling!

THE EDITOR WUZ HERE...

Whoa, hey! Am I ever glad to have got back in time to write this newsletter! Man, I didn't think those aliens would EVER bring me back! And the things they did to me! Whoa, I mean..

Okay, okay, I wasn't really kidnapped by aliens, but that's my excuse if anyone asks. :)

Well, the truth is that getting out of the armed forces is a heck of a lot more work than getting in. Getting in was all in one place, neatly arranged over a few days. Getting out has me running wild over the city, and gives me appointments scattered all over the calendar. Life is hectic.

Ahh, and I guess we can blame the internet, too, as I've spent a lot of time online. Well, in all honesty, I'm online right now as I type this, and just checking in every so often. I'm also compiling a program on the TI as well (oh, it's done assembling. Duplicate Symbol. Stupid machine.... <grumble> ;)) [I thought I'd tone down the normal programmer's language there]

Anyway, Lucie contributed a lot of useful stuff, and I dug up an article through the internet on the birth of the TI, which is a very interesting thing to read. It was originally printed by the Lima UG, I hope they don't mind my reprint. If they do, well, we'll never run another newsletter! Yeah, that's it!

Well... I guess I shouldn't joke about what should be a solemn occasion, almost like throwing cream pies at a funeral. The UG has been fun for me, I've only been around about 3 and a half years, but it's always been nice to belong to a group dedicated to the TI. Excepting some arguments I started at the beginning on Texlink (our BBS) about the proper place for IBM discussion (you don't want to know), I was accepted quickly. :)

Where was I? Hmmm, not sure. Anyway, we've also got an ad from Jeff about his Term 80 program, so if you haven't heard of that you can see what it is.

Ah yes, I mentioned above that I was programming at this moment on the TI. I'm working on Super Space Acer 2. I had actually decided I was done on the TI as far as programming, but this one always gnawed at the back of my mind. I ended up getting another TI system (though my RAMdisk seems to be dead), and I finally started coding. The title sequence is impressive so far, even if I say so myself. :)

Well, anyway, here's the last issue. It's been a fun run. Hope you all enjoyed the newsletter, and can ignore my delivery timing. :) Enjoy!

Ah, yes, and here's a pic of where I'm going... I took this picture myself:



FAST EXTENDED BASIC

by Lucie Dorais

(based on an article by Bruce Harrison)

Before we part, I have decided to write one last XB column. This was prompted by an article in the January 1995 issue of MICROpendium, "The myths and legends of Extended BASIC", by Bruce Harrison.



Mr. Harrison has devised assembly routines to time the execution of parts of XB programs, and has used them to test a few things we take for granted in XB. The MICROPENDIUM article has the listings for the XB tests as well as the assembly code. I will not reprint the whole article, but just share his conclusions with the newsletter's readers who don't get MICROpendium. Since his SPIRAL test, intended to show that better coding can improve speed, is appropriate in an XB tutorial column, I give you the whole listings.

By coincidence, Mr. Harrison did send me the whole disk with the test programs and the timing routines, so I tried them, and can testify that his results are perfectly accurate. If you want the whole disk, which is Public Domain, you can get it from me, or try your Users Group Library (Lima has it). I have also uploaded it to GENie as XBMYTHS.ARC

1) TWO MYTHS EXPLODED

The first myth is that of shorter variable names: in one program, Mr. Harrison DISPLAYs numbers 1 to 2000 in three ways: long and short numeric variable names, and using the STR\$ of the short one; he times them with his assembly routine. Here are the display lines, you can complete the program and time it with your watch if you don't have the whole Harrison package.

```
30 FOR ANYOLDVARIABLE=1 TO 2000 :: DISPLAY AT(12,12):  
  ANYOLDVARIABLE :: NEXT ANYOLDVARIABLE
```

```
80 FOR A=1 TO 2000 :: DISPLAY AT(12,12):A :: NEXT A
```

```
130 FOR A=1 TO 2000 :: DISPLAY AT(12,12):STR$(A) :: NEXT A
```

The results don't show much difference (time in min:sec): 2:05 for line 30, 1:59 for line 80, and 2:08 for line 130. Of course, most of that time is used by the DISPLAY statement. So I tried the program without that statement, like this (line 130 is useless here):

```
30 FOR ANYOLDVARIABLE=1 TO 2000 :: NEXT ANYOLDVARIABLE
80 FOR A=1 TO 2000 :: NEXT A
```

And the results were: 0:10 for line 30, compared to 0:07 for line 80. So there is a difference in using shorter variable names, but it is not very big. But remember that each character you don't use in a variable name saves memory because the program is shorter.

Myth number two is that "multiple statement lines execute faster than the same function performed as single statement lines". The test line programs are:

```
40 FOR I=1 TO 5000
50 DISPLAY AT(12,12):I
60 NEXT I
```

```
110 FOR I=1 TO 5000 :: DISPLAY AT(12,12):I :: NEXT I
```

The difference in time was so small that Mr. Harrison had to increase the counter to 5000 to see it. The result? 5:02 for lines 40-60, and an astounding 5:01 for line 110... That myth is truly one! So don't spend too much time rewriting those converted TI Basic programs, unless you want to save memory: each line number you don't use saves four bytes.

2) THIRD MYTH: BETTER CODE WRITING DOES IMPROVE SPEED

To test that myth, Mr. Harrison took a short program he had, SPIRAL, by Jon Keller of the Bluegrass UG (Kentucky), written in 1986. It uses all the characters to draw a spiral on the screen, from the center to the outward edges. The original program, which took ages to run, used ASCII characters 33 (!) to 126 (~); Mr. Harrison shortened it to characters 48 through 57, the digits 0 to 9.

Quoting the original article: "We modified the program primarily to minimize the number of math operations required within each FOR-NEXT loop. By making ROW and COL the loop control variables, we were able to avoid having to do math such as ROW=ROW+RD within the loop itself. In general, we 'cleaned up' the original to make it somewhat leaner and more efficient. For this article, we added some lines to each ver-

sion to load and activate our timing routine."

The original program, SPIRAL1, takes 3:15 minutes to run, and the modified one SPIRAL2 takes 2:21 seconds. On the disk there is a third version, compiled with Mr. Harrison's XB compiler (being mostly in assembly, I cannot reprint it here). The timing of that one? A blazing 30 seconds!

Here are both listings (I REMed out the lines that use the assembly timing routines). By studying them, you should be able to improve your own programs I am sure.

```
10 ! CALL INIT :: CALL LOAD("DSK1.ACCTIME/O")
20 ON BREAK NEXT ! :: CALL LINK("STRTIM")
30 REM SPIRAL1
40 REM JON KELLER
50 REM BLUEGRASS 99 4/86
60 CALL CLEAR :: CN=48
70 ROW=13 :: COL=17
80 CALL HCHAR(12,16,CN)
90 N=2
100 FOR Z=1 TO 11
110 RD=-1 :: CD=-1
120 FOR X=1 TO 2
130 FOR Y=1 TO N
140 ROW=ROW+RD
150 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,CN)
160 NEXT Y
170 FOR Y=1 TO N
180 COL=COL+CD
190 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,CN)
200 NEXT Y
210 RD=1 :: CD=1
220 NEXT X
230 N=N+2 :: COL=COL+1 :: ROW=ROW+1
240 NEXT Z
250 CALL CLEAR :: CN=CN+1 :: IF CN<58 THEN 70
260 ! CALL LINK("STPTIM",M,S):: ON BREAK STOP
270 ! IF S<10 THEN S$="0"&STR$(S)ELSE S$=STR$(S)
280 ! PRINT "MINUTES:SECONDS"
290 ! PRINT STR$(M);":";S$
```

```

10 ! CALL INIT :: CALL LOAD("DSK1.ACCTIME/O")
20 ON BREAK NEXT ! :: CALL LINK("STRTIM")
30 ! SPIRAL2
40 ! JON KELLER
50 ! BLUEGRASS 99 4/86
60 ! REVISED VERSION BY B. HARRISON - 30 NOV 94
70 CALL CLEAR :: FOR CN=48 TO 57
80 ROW=12 :: COL=16
90 FOR N=0 TO 22 STEP 2
100 FOR COL=COL TO COL+N
110 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,CN)
120 NEXT COL
130 IF N=22 THEN 240
140 FOR ROW=ROW TO ROW-N STEP -1
150 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,CN)
160 NEXT ROW
170 FOR COL=COL TO COL-N-1 STEP -1
180 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,CN)
190 NEXT COL
200 FOR ROW=ROW TO ROW+N+1
210 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL,CN)
220 NEXT ROW
230 NEXT N
240 CALL CLEAR :: NEXT CN
250 ! CALL LINK("STPTIM",M,S):: ON BREAK STOP
260 ! IF S<10 THEN S$="0"&STR$(S)ELSE S$=STR$(S)
270 ! PRINT "MINUTES:SECONDS"
280 ! PRINT STR$(M);":";S$

```

3) FASTER SORT

Finally, on the disk was a comparison between two SORT routines, which was not mentioned in MICROpendium: SORT1, the Bubble Sort, which I always used in my own programs, and an even faster one, SORT2, the Transfer Sort. The results: 1:14 minute for the Bubble, and only 0:18 for the Transfer!

Here is the full listing for SORT1 one and the modified code for SORT2 (again, I REMed out the calls to the timing assembly routine). As Mr. Harrison says in the documentation, the Transfer works best here because the data is very unsorted (it is in descending or-

der); if the data is in almost perfect order, the Bubble Sort will prove to be faster... if only the computer could check the data and decide itself which algorithm to use!

```
1 ! SORT1 - BUBBLE SORT
2 ! by Bruce Harrison
3 ! 04 DEC 1994
4 ! PUBLIC DOMAIN
10 ! CALL INIT :: CALL LOAD("DSK1.ACCTIME/O")
20 DIM A$(27)
30 CALL CLEAR :: PRINT " HERE'S THE ORIGINAL LIST": : :
  FOR I=1 TO 27 :: READ A$(I) :: PRINT A$(I), :: NEXT I
40 PRINT : :TAB(5),"RUNNING BUBBLE SORT" :: ON BREAK NEXT
  ! :: CALL LINK("STRTIM")
50 FOR I=1 TO 26 :: IF A$(I)<=A$(I+1)THEN 70
60 T$=A$(I+1):: A$(I+1)=A$(I):: A$(I)=T$ :: GOTO 50
70 NEXT I :: CALL CLEAR
80 ! CALL LINK("STPTIM",M,S) :: PRINT TAB(7);"SORT
  FINISHED":TAB(6);"MINUTES:SECONDS"
90 ! IF S<10 THEN S$="0"&STR$(S)ELSE S$=STR$(S)
100 ! PRINT TAB(12);STR$(M);":";S$: :
110 ON BREAK STOP :: PRINT TAB(3);"HERE'S THE SORTED LIST": :
120 FOR I=1 TO 27 :: PRINT A$(I),:: NEXT I :: PRINT
130 DATA ZEBRAS,YESTERDAY,XENOPHOBIA,WEDNESDAY,VENERABLE,
  UNDERWEAR,TRIFFIDS,SUNDAYS
140 DATA RHYTHMS,QUEBEC,PENTAGONAL,ORIGINS,NATHANIEL,MONDAYS,
  LAMENTATIONS,KITCHENS
150 DATA JUNKERS,IDIOTS,HAMMOCKS,GREMLINS,FOOLSCAP,EVERYTHING,
  DOUBTING,CAPACITY,BUBBLES,ANIMALS,AARDVARKS,P
```

```
1 ! SORT2 - TRANSFER SORT
20 DIM A$(27),B$(27)
30-40 ...same as in SORT1, but type "TRANSFER SORT" in line 40
50 FOR R=1 TO 27 :: T$="zzzz"
60 FOR I=1 TO 27 :: IF A$(I)="" THEN 70 ELSE IF A$(I)<T$
  THEN T$=A$(I):: X=I
70 NEXT I :: B$(R)=A$(X):: A$(X)=""
80 NEXT R :: CALL CLEAR
90-120: ...same as lines 80-110 in SORT1
130 FOR I=1 TO 27 :: PRINT B$(I),:: NEXT I :: PRINT
140-160 DATA ...same as lines 130-150 in SORT1
```

As this is the last FAST XB column, it is a good place to list all the programs published in that column since the beginning (with volume - year/month on the left, [MICROpendium reprint date] on the right):

- 1 - 87/09 ERASEDEMO 3 methods
- 87/10-11 HELLO pre-scan, graphic CALLs
- 87/12 LOVESTORY sprites
- 88/01 XBCAT disk directory; ERROR
- 88/02 QUICKLABEL labeler; print in French
- 88/03 SPRINGSONG sound; use REDO
- 88/04 QUICKBILL utility; IMAGE
- 88/05-06 STAMPDBASE data base, sort

- 2 - 88/09 CALENDAR utility
- 88/10 CALPERPET perpetual calend
- 88/11 LUCKYWHEEL game
- 88/12-89/01 SNOWFLAKE / SNOWPLAY Xmas graphics, utility
- 89/01 XB>ART/MRG convert XB pic to TI-Artist
- 89/02 ADDSUB calculator util.
- 89/03 PGMWRITER makes typing XB programs easier
- 89/04 BARBIE children game
- 89/05 SORT, SORT/UTIL, SORT/O sorting utilities
- CALLKEY short demo
- FONTSCAN font utility (TI-Artist, CSGD)
- 89/06 CHECKBOOK balance utility

- 3 - 89/09 SPR/TESTER analyze sprites
- 89/10 FAIRYWALTZ, EAUVIVE music
- ROOTS math utility
- 89/11 DATACAL daily planner
- 89/12 BUG children game
- 90/01 INVIDEO inverse video
- XB>FONT make TI-Artist fonts from XB
- 90/02-03 BASES / LEARNMASES convert bases 2-16, tutorial
- 90/04-05 FLAGS tutorial, quizz
- 90/06 STRINGMAZE game

- 4 - 90/09 REVERSE game
- 90/10-11 VISUALPERC graphic fun [M 94/08]

- 90/12 ANGES French Christmas carol
- 91/01 LISTCOL pack columns [M 94/07]
- 91/02 COLORMIX make pastels
- 91/03 MONDRIAN graphics
- 91/04 BALLDROP game [M 91/04]
- 91/05 INSTAROT rotate TI-Artist instances [M 93/07]
- 91/06 VASARELY graphics

- 5 - 91/09 MONTECOLOR solitaire game [M 94/12]
- 91/10-11 CANFIELD solitaire game
- 91/12 TRAFIGHTS children game
- 92/01 ROMAN Roman numerals
- 92/02 ONECHECK game
- 92/03 PROBLEM math game
- 92/04 BOOMERANG game by P. Peitrequin [M 94/11]
- 92/05-06 INTMENU / INTLEARN / INTSCRAM / INTHANG
learn 5 languages; play Scrambled word, Hangman

- 6 - 92/09 TISWEEPER Minesweeper game [M 93/02]
- 92/10 BRAINSTORM logic game
- 92/11 GRIDWORD word game [M 93/04]
- ADDCR add CRs to text
- 92/12 XMASBOX music: juke box, Xmas songs
- 93/01 ARROWS game by Michel Montmigny [M 94/10]
- FUSION util: mix two chars (Montm.) [M 94/10]
- 93/02 THERMO temperature (C/F degrees)
- 93/03 CLIFCLIMBR game (adapted from Mike Ward-Brent)
- 93/04-06 CARDFILE / CARDEDIT / CARDUTIL [M 94/09]
make index cards, edit them, more utilities
+ CARD, menu, on disk and in MICROpendium

- 7 - 93/09-10 THE_GAMES sports game by J. GrosLouis [M 93/11]
- 93/11 KINGMOVE artific. intell. [M 94/01]
- 93/12 GIFTS children game, Christmas theme
- 94/01 MAGNIFY / SPRITEDOMO tutorial/demo [M 94/02]
- 94/02 INFERLAB game by Michel Montmigny [M 94/04]
- 94/03 HYDRO short game
- 94/04 FRAMES demo
- 94/05-06 KONO game

no 94/09 HYDRO game, Jeff Brown's version of 94/03
vol. VISPERC2 addendum to 90/10-11

The complete collection is available from our Librarian, Dave Morrison (address on cover) or from GENie (search "Lucie").

In addition, MICROpendium, June 1994, published an alternate version of KONO-5, written by Jeffrey Brown.

Term80

By Jeff Brown

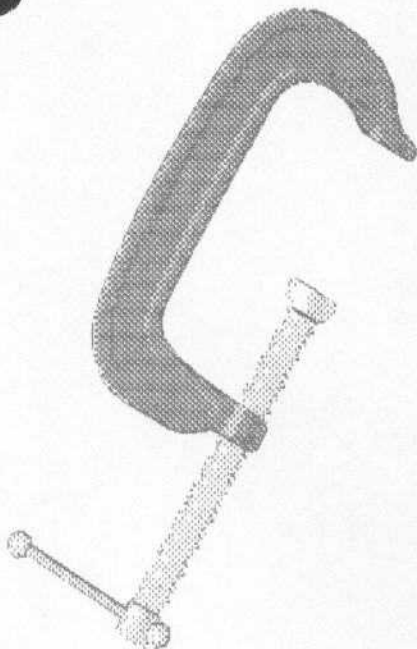
Well... seems like Mike is giving me a chance to blurb something off about Term 80! Heh, maybe I should try not to ramble this time!!

At any rate! I have received many letters from you concerning this program. I am still waiting for cheques, etc... to come by before I can mail them out... so I've not been quite as busy this week as I had thought I would!! Good thing! I have a nice science fair project to do.. and I've just been told it's due for Tuesday!! ARGH! 1 week to finish it off!!! although I don't have to present it for the actual fair until March.

Well, I guess I should say a bit about Term 80's development! Well, I just added a dozen or so other ANSI/VT100 commands to it, including tabs! Yes, now I use them!!! YIPPEE!! Now maybe the HTML links won't be all screwy... they send TONS of tabs!

Also added was the ability to auto detect and use a Supercart or Mini Memory and use it for extra buffering space.. this is a great advantage over what it did previously! I'm considering allowing other devices to be used, such as a GramCracker (or PGRAM), the Foundation and Myarc RAM cards (if I can find docs!) and maybe a few other things.

Well... to those of you who want a copy to try out send a cheque for \$10-15 (or what-



ever more you feel the program is worth to you) plus postage, to:

Jeffrey Brown
2111 Montreal rd. #102
Gloucester, Ontario, Canada.
K1J 8M8

or Email at: bb737@freenet.carleton.ca

If you feel RICH, call voice: (613) 746-1013, or soon, by modem at (613)746-9059 (I'm expecting to have this up and running by mid March...)

Well, I suppose I have rambled enough... bye! And may your TIs live long and prosper!

CE N'EST QU'UN AU REVOIR...

Before parting our ways, it is fitting you look for new means of keeping in touch. Internet e-mail is great for that purpose, and Tom Wills, of the SouthWest 99ers U.G. (Tucson, AZ), is compiling a list of Internet addresses of Tiers. Here is the list as it stands on January 30, 1995:

twills@primenet.com (Tom Wills)
bw.miller@genie.geis.com (Beery Miller)
lucid@indy.net (Bill Lucid)
bradsnyder@delphi.com (Brad Snyder)
dlormand@CCGATE.HAC.COM (David Ormand)
doneil@delphi.com (Don O'Neil)
75227.2370@compuserve.com (Gary Kuehn)
chatter@delphi.com (Larry Tippet)
ab453@cleveland.freenet.edu (Jim Krych)
jkoloen@io.com (John Koloen) * MICROpendium
t.tesch1@genie.geis.com (Tim Tesch)
SSLICER@delphi.com (Shirley Slicer)
74367.3206@compuserve.com (Audrey Butcher)
jim@accelr8.com (Jim Reiss)
swartze@ralph.txswu.edu (Edward Swartz)
cgood@lima.ohio-state.edu (Charles Good)

dd314@cleveland.Freenet.Edu (Glenn W. Bernasek)
mah@cs.ualberta.ca (Dean Mah)
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jeff@tiger3.ocs.lsu.edu (Jeffery Sheldon)
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76702.603@compuserve.com (Jim Horn)
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cz429@cleveland.Freenet.Edu (Harrison W. Hoffman)
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cox@mbcf.stjude.org (Gary Cox)
v.begiers@genie.geis.com (Vincent Begiers)
j.cavanaugh2@genie.geis.com (James Cavanaugh)
mjmw@xyvision.com (Mike Wright)
BurkeS@eWorld.com (Burke Squires)

DISCLAIMER:

I have tried to verify all the addresses listed above. This was done by sending messages to all the addresses I was able to locate. I did not get replies from all the users in the list, but neither did any of the addresses reject. Some of the addressees listed above may not access their mail very often, and replies will be very slow at coming. Also, some addresses may become obsolete as the addressee drops that service provider and goes to another service. I will try to keep the list as current as is humanly possible.

If anyone changes their mind and no longer wishes to be on the mailing list, please let me know as soon as possible.

ADDITIONS, CHANGES, AND UPDATES: If there are any changes to the above address list, or someone wants to add their name to the list, please contact me at twills@primenet.com. Include your internet mailing address along with your first and last name, or that of someone who you know who also wants to be on the list.

Thanks to all who have given me their address. I hope this proves to be a really good way, and cheap way, for Tiers to keep in touch with each other. I put no claims on this

list, which means you can use it as you want. Things like TI Fair announcements would be an example. But, please, do not abuse this listing.

Until the next update, keep T'ing!

Tom Wills, Vice President & Sysop, SouthWest 99ers U.G. P.O.Box 17831, Tucson, AZ
85731-7831

NOTE (by Lucie, simplifying part of Tom's original):

INTERNET ADDRESS STRUCTURE:

name@address (the "@" identifies Internet e-mail)
<ID on the system>@<system ID>.<domain[.country]>

ex: twills@primenet.com (private Internet provider)
6500dtp1@ucsbuxa.ucsb.edu (a US University)
Geoff_Trott@uow.edu.au (an Australian Univ.)
cox@mcbf.stjude.org (a US public institution)

You can send Internet mail to people on the commercial online services if you know their ID on that service (if you belong to one of those, you can also send e-mail). These are examples from above and from my own address list:

GEnie: l.dorais@genie.geis.com

DELPHI: doneil@delphi.com

COMPUSERVE: 75227.2370@compuserve.com

(replace the ID comma with a period; use only
if user has no other e-mail address because
CS charges extra for incoming Internet mail)

E-WORLD: BurkeS@eWorld.com

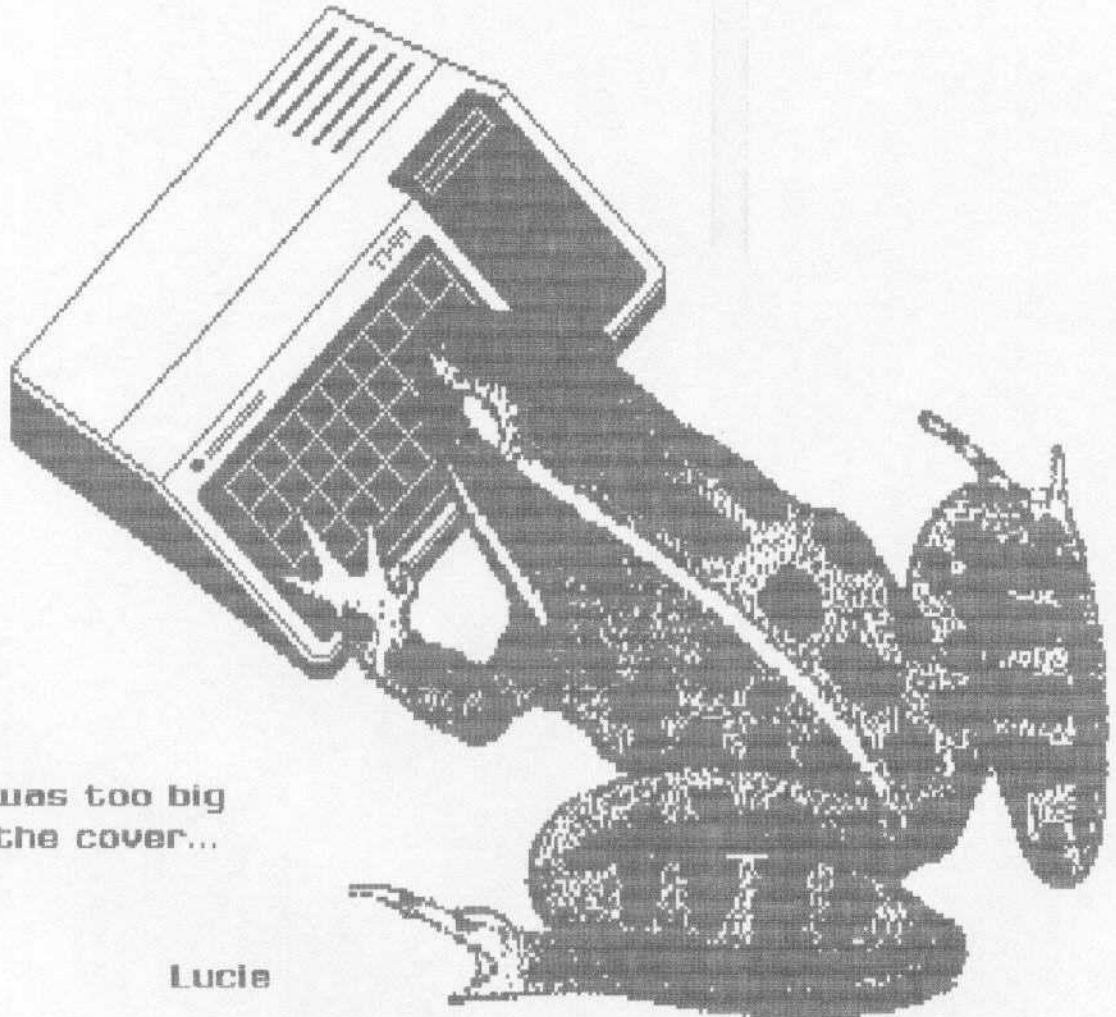
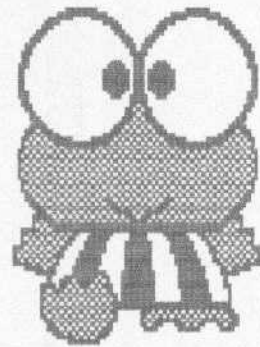
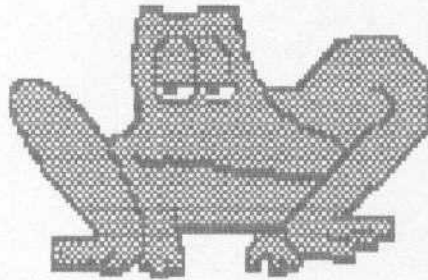
AMERICA ONLINE: Seggers617@AOL.com

PRODIGY: <user ID>@prodigy.com

MCIMAIL: <user ID>@mcimail.com

More Frogs !

Yesterday (Jan. 31), as I was thinking about that last issue, I decided to draw some frogs that I had been collecting for later use on a cover. Here they are:



This one was too big
to make the cover...

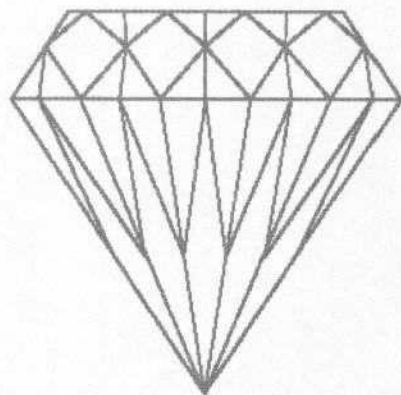
Lucie

Jeff's World III

(party's over, dude)

[Yes, I named Jeff's last article too, because there was no title again. -Ed]

Well, this is it, the moment everyone has been trying to avoid, it's the end of the Ottawa TI User's Group. Well, I guess it's not really a good time to put together an Assembly article, it won't be able to be finished. <tsk>.



Anyway, I guess I should say a few word about the group before it dies... although I wasn't a part of it 'till 1992, I did enjoy the company of the members, and their gracious donations, of their aid. I received a couple complete systems free, and I should say they are being used now! They are NOT in a closet! by NO means! I purchased one from Bill Gard (my original expansion box) which was a BIG jump from cassette recorders, and for that, I thank him! Two more I bought from Mike Ward (our editor) at rather discount prices! As well as a RAM-disk.

I should say the my contribution to this group has been negligable over it's duration. I would have liked to have found out about it earlier, but I was unable to. [Nonsense, Jeff, you were a major contributor to keeping the group around as long as it was. -Mike]

As to the series <ahem> of articles, I apologize for not having been a very good teacher. I might program well, and learn quickly, but I am an appalling teacher! I NEVER know where to begin, and where to end! It helps when someone tells you what they need help in!

Anyway, I hope my contribution to the TI community as a whole is bigger than that to the OTIUG... you probably know about Term 80 by now. Recently, I wrote a few Email postings about it, and I'm getting lot's of mail from it, and a new friend too! How's that for getting your time's worth! [Now, if you would only have not worked your poor editor so hard trying to drag articles out of you.... Mike, again.]

Well, rather than just die, I would like to continue on, individually, through the internet.. so I'll leave my Email address, I hope I'll get some more mail to fill my mailbox! (currently I'm spending 1 1/2 hrs reading and replying almost daily! It's a big chunk, but

I'd like to see more! It means that people still care about this old machine!) [You were planning on dying? -Mike, who can't seem to shut up. :)]

Anyhow, I guess I have to end this letter soon, so I'll say goodbye! And hope that the death of this group won't provoke a chain reaction in others! <sob, sniff>

Bye!!!

OTHER TI NEWSLETTERS

One way to keep contact with the TI world is by subscribing to the newsletters that are still published. Of course, the best source on TI news, programs, etc, is still:

MICROpendium
P.O. Box 1343
Round Rock, TX 78680

The newsletters that we still receive are:

9T9 UG c/o N.ALLEN on disk
52 GRAYSTONE GARDENS excellent content
ISLINGTON, ONTARIO
M8Z 3C4

BLUEGRASS 99 COMP. SOC. very good
c/o OLDEN WARREN title: Byte Mongers
4016 WEBER WAY
LEXINGTON, KY
USA 40514

CENTRAL PA 99-4A UG no much in it... too bad
5309 DEVONSHIRE RD
HARRISBURG, PA
USA 17112-3906

HOOSIER USERS GROUP Very good
P.O. BOX 2222
INDIANAPOLIS, IN
USA 46206-2222

KAWARTHA 99er UG A still very active group,
c/o G. DANIELS often meets the Oshawa one
R.R. #5
PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO
K9J 6X6

MID SOUTH 99 USERS GROUP title: Tidbits; very good
P.O. BOX 38522
GERMANTOWN, TN 38183-0522

OSHAWA TI UG Editor Tom Jakabfy has
660 GIVEN RD. great recipes!
OSHAWA, ONTARIO
L1H 8L7

SOUTHWEST NINETY-NINERS Excellent, sunny and lively
PO BOX 17831 If you contribute an article,
TUCSON, ARIZONA you will be put on their
USA 85731 exchange list!

SUDBURY 99ers/J. McLAREN A couragous one-man thing
2 ANTHONY ST.
WHITEFISH, ONTARIO
P0M 3E0

TiSHUG (AUSTRALIA) LTD Still full of original
3 STOREY STREET material, the best!
RYDE, NSW
AUSTRALIA 2112

Many of these newsletters are finding it more and more difficult to find material. Why not write something? Perhaps, like the SouthWest 99ers, they will put you on their exchange list for free?

NOTE TO NEWSLETTER EDITORS: as this is our last issue, we will understand if you decide not to exchange with us any more; but if you decide otherwise, we would be glad to still receive your newsletters from time to time.

THE BIRTH OF A COMPUTER

Bill Gaskill

October 1992

In April 1984 Texas Monthly magazine published an article written by Joseph Nocera entitled "The Death of a Computer". It was among the most comprehensive accounts ever written on the events leading to the demise of the TI-99/4A computer. Perhaps because of this, the article became so popular that only 2,000 copies of the April 1984 issue of Texas Monthly were available for sale a scant month after it hit the news stands.



Mr. Nocera's work was the driving force behind this article because reading it made me realize that more effort has gone into writing about the demise of the TI-99 than has ever been invested in writing about its birth and life. The reasons for such universally poor coverage of the TI-99 are a matter of debate, but my research leads me to believe that TI's policy of a closed architecture on the TI-99 may have been carried over to one of closed mouths when it came to talking about the machine. No matter what the reasons, it appears that a negative and non complimentary relationship between TI and the media cast a cloud over the 99/4 even before it's release.

Nevertheless, there are some choice tidbits lurking around in the printed media of the late '70's and early '80's which help to piece together the days before, during and after the 99/4's birth. Because I have access to so many back issues of Byte, and because it is the oldest computer magazine still in existence, I chose it as the main source of information for this article. The material chosen from the many issues of Byte that I read through is presented in time line format so one can pick up the chronology of events easier. It is the sequence of events like the RF modulator hassle with the FCC and the production problems with the TMS 9900 chip that to some extent explain why Texas Instruments was so late with its entry into the personal computer market.

Lastly, you will notice that I have thrown in a few items not related to the TI-99. Most are

what I consider significant developments in the personal computer industry that I thought would add some flavor to the article and perhaps a little perspective for the reader about the world that the TI-99/4 was born into. For other historians of the TI-99 I've also provided notations as to the source/location of the information used in the time line. Although not presented according to Turabian, I think someone might find the references useful. I hope you enjoy the reading.

**** LIFE BEFORE THE TI-99 ****

1974: Jonathan Titus creates the Mark 8 microcomputer and advertises it for sale as a kit in Radio Electronics magazine. This becomes the first programmable microcomputer made available to the general public. (YOUR OWN COMPUTER, Waite/Pardee, p.15).

1975: The MITS Altair 8800 microcomputer is introduced and it becomes the first company or corporate venture into microcomputers for sale to the general public. (YOUR OWN COMPUTER, Waite/Pardee, p.17).

1976: Explosive growth hits the industry when companies like Apple, Cromemco, Imsai, Digital and others introduce microcomputers. (YOUR OWN COMPUTER, Waite/Pardee, p.19).

1977: The Radio Shack Division of Tandy Corporation and Commodore Business Machines both join the competition for personal computer dollars with the introduction of the TRS-80 and Pet 2001 respectively. The year 1977 also sees the birth of the computer publications industry when a host of new magazines such as Creative Computing, Kilobaud, Personal Computing, Intelligent Machines Journal (now Infoworld) all appear, trying to break in on some of the profits already being realized by Carl Helmers and Virginia Peschke who had created Byte Magazine back in mid-1975.

Aug 1977: The TRS-80 is released on August 3rd. It comes with 4K Ram and carries a retail price of \$599.95. (Byte, Apr 1978, p.49).

Oct 1977: Commodore enters the market with the Pet 2001. It retails for \$495 with 4K of Ram or \$795 with 8K of Ram. (Byte, Feb 1978, p.190).

Jan 1978: The PLATO computer aided instruction system is developed at the University of Illinois. (Byte, p.184).

Feb 1978: UCSD Pascal is introduced by the Regents of the University of California at San Diego. Price is \$200. (Byte, p.46).

Mar 1978: Texas Instruments begins recruiting personal computer specialists by running full-page ads entitled "Your experience with personal computers is going to open an unlimited career at TI." in trade magazines. (Byte, p.13).

Mar 1978: RAMBLING RUMORS ABOUT TI letter to the editor appears in Byte Magazine with a Q and A. Question: "What will TI do to enter the personal computer market?" Answer: TI is a very aggressive company with the desire to make lots of money by filling the needs of the marketplace. When the bonafide need for a new product arises, if it is in TI's area of expertise, TI will be there, front and center..." (Webb Simmons in Byte Magazine, Mar 1978, p.133).

Apr 1978: TI releases a recreational Solid State Software Leisure Library module for the TI58 and 59 programmable calculators. The module sells for \$35 and includes such applications as golf handicapping, craps, NIMS, Acey-Duecy and 16 other games or recreational programs. Is this perhaps a predecessor to the Solid State Software Command module that would be touted as a reason for buying the TI-99/4? (Byte, p.194).

May 1978: Texas Instruments introduces the TMS3064 charge coupled device memory chip. (No significance to the TI-99/4, but it shows that TI was still involved in other computer developments besides the 99/4 Home Computer. (Byte, p.180).

Oct 1978: The Exidy Sorcerer is released with 8K of Ram, a 64 column by 30 row screen and the ability to use plug in modules which are the size of 8-track tapes. Price is \$895. (The significance of this computer's release is that four years later Texas Instruments would use it as one of the home computers which offered cartridge software, that the 99/4A competed against for market share). (Byte, p.81).

Oct 1978: Technico Inc. of Columbia, MD releases the SS-16, which is based on TI's TMS9900 chip. Here again, no direct impact upon the 99/4, but evidence that TI was trying to push the 16 bit chip in places other than their own home computer. Four months later Byte would offer a look at the success of 16 bit chips industry wide and tell us that it was not well accepted by the industry. (Byte, p.200).

Dec 1978: Over 14 million microprocessors are manufactured during the year, with TI's 4 bit TMS-1000 chip leading the way. Most are used in calculators and games, but sales in the game market appear to be slowing down. (Byte, July 1979, p.99).

Feb 1979: TI'S NEW PERSONAL COMPUTER-Rumors are flying about Texas Instruments' impending entry into the personal computing market. The unit will reportedly use the TMS 9900 processor with 40K of read only memory circuits, will generate 20 lines of 40 characters on a standard television, will have provisions for accomodating video disk players and video tape recorders, and will have sophisticated sound production. Sources predict a mid-1979 unveiling. (Byte, p.63).

Feb 1979: Atari enters the personal computer market by announcing (but not yet delivering) the 400 and 800 model home computers. The 400 is a non-expandable 8K Ram computer which sports a touch audio feedback keyboard, a single cartridge slot and a cassette I/O port. It also has 16 color capability and 8 luminance levels. The suggested retail price is \$500. The Atari 800 is an 8K Ram computer expandable to 48K Ram and it comes with a cassette recorder, it has additional color features, a full keyboard, 8K BASIC built in, high resolution graphics, and it supports two cartridge ports. The 800 carries a suggested retail price of \$1000. Both machines will use the 6502 chip. Limited quantities are scheduled to be available in August, with full availability in the Fall. (Byte, p.63).

Feb 1979: The future of the 16-bit microprocessor comes into question when its lack of acceptance by the industry is pointed out in Byte. The 8-bit 6502 chip used by Apple, Commodore and others is fast becoming the most popular microprocessor of the day. (Byte, p.63).

Although this is supposition on my part, it appears that TI was under a great deal of pressure to join in the personal computer fray. They would probably have done so anyway, but the level of "expectation" seems to have been extremely high and may have driven them to produce and release a product before they were actually ready to do so. The lack of availability of the TI-99/4 even after it's official debut in January 1980 seems to add some credence to this.

Mar 1979: Despite its seemingly unpopular position in the market, Byte Magazine runs an extensive article on mapping the instruction space of the TMS 9900 microprocessor. (Byte, p.14).

Mar 1979: FCC serves a cease-and-desist order on all personal computer manufacturers who fail to receive FCC approval on their products prior to making it available for sale. (Byte, p.108).

Mar 1979: Tandy Corporation begins marketing their TRS line of personal computers through their own direct sales stores. Several other makers of personal computers with-

draw their products from the shelves of department stores after meeting with poor results. (Byte, p.108).

Mar 1979: Texas Instruments announces the new Speak and Spell learning aid for children. It is based on the TMS 1000 chip and two 128K dynamic read only memory chips, each with the capacity to store over 100 seconds of speech. (Byte, p.246).

Apr 1979: Publishing giant McGraw-Hill purchases Byte and onComputing magazines, adding further credence to the escalation of the personal computer market. (Byte, p.14).

Jun 1979: TI AND HP PC SYSTEMS RUMORS-Texas Instruments and Hewlett Packard continue to maintain tight lips on their rumored personal computer systems. As TI said, "TI will not discuss products that have not yet been announced." However, information has leaked out on these units which are expected to have a tremendous impact on the personal computer market. Several rumors have been reported in previous Byte columns. The latest is that TI will introduce their entry at either the NCC (National Computer Conference) show in June or the Consumer Electronics Show in July. In either event, it is expected to be ready for the 1979 Christmas market.

Both HP and TI are expected to have \$500 list prices for the basic unit. Key retailers have already been approached by both TI and HP to set up for selective distribution. It is rumored that they will favor selected personal computing stores that can do justice to software requirements. (Byte, p.129).

Jul 1979: Milton Bradley begins advertising for "Creative Electronic Engineers, Micro-computer Programmers and Technicians" to accommodate their expansion into the personal computer arena. (Byte, p.51).

Jul 1979: FCC asks Apple, Atari, Commodore, Heath, Southwest Technical Products and Radio Shack to submit their personal computer systems for TV interference testing. (Byte, p.99).

Sep 1979: New England Electronics runs a full page ad in Byte Magazine proudly announcing the "Revolutionary TI-99/4 Personal/Educational Computer" and the fact that they have been selected as one of the distributors. Buyers are cautioned that 99/4 product availability is September/October, but is always subject to TI's dealer allocation.

Oct 1979: Rodney Zaks, the author who would give us the book, YOUR FIRST TI-99/4A PROGRAM in 1983, releases 6502 GAMES through Sybex Publishing. Zaks

would ultimately write almost a dozen computer books for Z80, 6502 and TMS 9900 machines. (Byte, p.73).

Oct 1979: Atari has received FCC approval for their model 400 and 800 personal computers. This will probably make the FCC less willing to grant the Texas Instruments request for changes in the rules, as the FCC finds that other companies are able to pass the current requirements. (Byte, p.107).

Oct 1979: PERSONAL COMPUTER TIMESHARE NETWORK INAUGURATED-Telecomputing Corporation of America, McLean, VA, has started a Personal Computer Network which may be accessed by home users with terminals or personal computer systems. They have about 2000 programs and data bases on-line for immediate access. Called "The Source", the service will be available in 200 US cities at \$2.75 per hour from 6 PM to 7 AM weekends and holidays. The rate during normal working hours will be higher. (Byte, p.107).

Oct 1979: Texas Instruments releases the TMS 9927 video controller chip. (Byte, p.253).

Nov 1979: TI MICROCOMPUTER PICTURE IN TRANSITION-Although Texas Instruments finally introduced its 99/4 personal computer system in June, it is expected to be an interim product. TI failed to get FCC approval for the original version (of the computer) and also ran into processor production difficulties which forced the introduction of a high-priced personal computer system (\$1150). TI is still pursuing a rule change request with the FCC and the development of its 9985 stripped down version of its 9940 16-bit processor. TI hopes to then introduce a personal computer system for under \$500 which connects to a standard color-television receiver.

TI has also expanded its small business computer (99/7) marketing efforts. The 99/7, which starts at \$5000, will be marketed by Moore Business Forms, through over 750 sales offices as well as through computer stores and TI's own retail outlets. (Byte, p.81).

Nov 1979: FCC COMPLETES RADIO FREQUENCY RADIATION TESTS-The FCC has completed its tests of six personal computer systems and will release the data soon. Reportedly, the FCC has found that all but one exceed interference levels permitted for devices that connect to television receivers (eg. games). The test included Atari, Apple, Commodore, Southwest Technical Products and Radio Shack systems. Only the Atari passed... (Byte, p.82).

Nov 1979: Computer Shopper releases "Issue No. 1" and offers annual subscriptions

for \$10/year, or \$5/year to charter subscribers, whatever they are. (Byte, p.189).

Nov 1979: Milton Bradley announces its Microvision handheld mini video game machine with its own screen. Microvision comes with the game Blockbuster, and six other games are available separately. They are: Bowling, Star Trek, Phaser Strike, Connect Four, Vegas Slots and Mindbuster. Price for Microvision is \$51.25. (Byte, p.252).

Dec 1979: Image Computer Products of Northbrook, IL announces that it will produce the TI Six-Pack, which consists of six TI Basic games on cassette. Aside from Milton Bradley and Scott, Foresman, which TI lined up to produce software for the 99/4, Image Computer Products becomes the first third-party software house to support the new TI computer.

Dec 1979: SubLogic releases its first Flight Simulator dubbed FS1. It is available for the Apple II and TRS-80 computers for \$25. (Byte, p.133).

Jan 1980: TI RF MODULATOR FCC WAIVER GRANTED-The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has granted Texas Instruments a waiver which permits TI to connect its personal computers to home color television receivers using a radio frequency (RF) modulator. TI Originally petitioned the FCC for approval of the RF modulator system in February 1979. The petition was rejected since the regulations require that the complete system be submitted for approval: TI submitted only the RF modulator for approval. Subsequently, Texas Instruments applied for a waiver, provided that the modulator unit met the standards.

The FCC asked other personal computer system manufacturers to comment on the TI request. Radio Shack, Apple Computer, Commodore, Mattel, and Atari responded negatively to the request. Apple, Atari and Mattel went to great expense to comply with the FCC regulations. The Radio Shack and Commodore systems, which contain integral displays and do not use RF modulators, do not come under the FCC regulations.

The FCC decision further waives testing by FCC and merely requires that the manufacturer provide the FCC with test results showing compliance. In a related action, the FCC relaxed the standards on RF interference generated by commercial and personal computer systems.

Several personal computer manufacturers that compete with TI have already stated that this waiver will give TI a competitive advantage. Furthermore, several firms publicly questioned the FCC's rule-making methods in making this decision. The likelihood now is that the other personal computer makers will offer systems with RF modulators. It will

probably take these manufacturers at least a year to bring out such competing systems. (Byte, p.115).

**** A COMPUTER IS BORN ****

Jan 1980: PERSONAL COMPUTER INTRODUCED BY TEXAS INSTRUMENTS-Texas Instruments has introduced a personal computer featuring easy-to-use computing power for personal finance, home management, family entertainment and education. Designated the Model TI-99/4, the system consists of a console with 16K bytes of programmable memory, a wide range of sound effects, sixteen colors for graphic display, a powerful extended BASIC programming language, and a 13-inch color video monitor.

At the heart of the TI-99/4 is a library of Texas Instruments Solid State Software command modules. These command modules allow users instant program accessibility. Solid State Software command module titles include: Demonstration, Diagnostic, Early Learning Fun, Beginning Grammar, Number Magic, Video Graphs, Home Financial Decisions, Household Budget Management, Video Chess, Football, Physical Fitness, Speech Construction, Investment Analysis, Personal Record Keeping, Statistics, Early Reading and Tax and Investment Record Keeping.

Among peripheral accessories offered is a Solid State Speech Synthesizer with a price of \$150. By building a basic vocabulary into the language system, home programmers can place audible messages in their programs. The speech synthesizer module has a 200-word vocabulary and plugs into the console. Speech can be written into programs using BASIC programming language. Future command modules will call up spoken words automatically.

TI BASIC is a full floating point, 13-digit expanded version of BASIC that is fully compatible with ASCII and the BASIC specifications of the American National Standards Institute. TI BASIC includes a full complement of 24 BASIC statements, 14 commands, color graphics, and sound and music over four full octaves. A Beginner's BASIC Guide for self-teaching comes with the TI-99/4. For users knowledgeable about programming, McGraw-Hill has published Programming Basic With the TI Home Computer, a book by Herbert Peckham.

Remote controls are offered as accessories to the TI-99/4. Two of these controls may be connected to the computer at the same time. Each includes a multiposition (360 degrees) rotary lever with a side-mounted pushbutton. Other accessories offered by Texas Instruments include: a printer, disk storage, and an RS-232 interface for connecting the computer to other electronic devices.

The price for the TI-99/4 system is \$1150. Solid State Software command modules carry prices ranging from \$19.95 to \$69.95 each. For further information contact Texas Instruments Inc. Consumer Relations, Attn TI-99/4, POB 53, Lubbock, TX 79408. (Byte, p.235).

Despite the fact that the TI-99/4 was "officially" available in January 1980, it was in short supply as evidenced by the following ad in the January 1980 Byte Magazine, page 88.

^^^AN OPEN LETTER ON THE TEXAS INSTRUMENTS TI-99/4 HOME COMPUTER

^^^"Its a fact that the new TI-99/4 is the most sought after
^^^home computer on the market today. However the demand far
^^^exceeds the factory's ability to produce them, so they will
^^^be in short supply, for all dealers, for the foreseeable
^^^future..."

In between the excitement of TI's much anticipated entry into the personal computer market in 1979 and its decision to abandon that very same market in October 1983, lies the story of a thousand and one mistakes in corporate strategy, the creation and release of hundreds of exciting new products for the TI Home Computer, the appearance of some of the most talented personalities the community would ever produce and ultimately the heart rending disappointment users felt when the bottom dropped out. But that is another story.

The End of an Era?

...or just a newsletter? The TI machine will live on as long as people continue to use it, and to find it useful.

But, hey, I didn't start this filler... err, article just to harp on that aspect. I thought you might be interested where some of the pictures I put in here came from. Not many pictures in this newsletter, I know, but it's pretty full of text!

So, let's see... October, my first newsletter..well, the logo for the UG was created in three steps... first I set up a TI console, adjusted the light as best I could, and digitized it through a video camera to my Amiga. Then I did the same with a Candian flag. I edited

the images up a bit, and pasted the TI on top of the flag. A little more cleaning up, adjusting the contrast a bit, and drawing a circle around the maple leaf finished the job. Not too bad, though it didn't copy quite as well as it printed (I had that problem a few times).

Lots of text, most of the pics are just clipart.. of course, Lucie did up the visual Basic picture. The wizard in space picture (for Beery's predictions) was a GIF, and the robot 3 pages later (which didn't copy well at all, it WAS a robot, trust me!) was drawn locally by a friend of mine, and was originally an IFF.

Ok, November, and I'd cleaned up the logo a bit more to try and make it copy better. My first inclusion of dolphins on the first page, and the beast eyes beside the disclaimer. I always sort of felt disclaimers were against the darker side of authority, so that, and my other pics for the disclaimer, more or less illustrate that. :)

The swam beside the Word from the Editor is indeed the Geneve swan.. was originally a slightly corrupt GIF that I was finally able to convert. I think Lucie wanted it, but I don't remember if I ever got it to her?

Ah yes, on 'The Day the TI Came', that is supposed to be the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy planet (a series of sci-fi humour novels by Douglas Adams). It SHOULD say 'Don't Panic' above the planet, if you look REAL close.

The picture beside 'Jeff's World' is from a 'Weird' Al Yankovic music video, 'Dare to be Stupid'. <smile>

December...Amy the Squirrel is featured in several animations on the Amiga by Eric Schwartz. The disclaimer pic this time is myself and a friend posing in civil war outfits. :)

Another dolphin for the editor zone (I like dolphins, I restrained myself from putting them everywhere!), and a circuit board GIF for Jeff's World II (which I think originally came from Chip's Challenge, or some such game. The IC in the lower left is labelled SPINNER SOFTWARE).

The font in that issue, BTW, seemed to me to keep going light/dark, which is why I went back to the bigger one.

The dragons in the palace with the virus list were a picture from a raytracers called POV ray, and the dolphins on the last page with the woman's head, that's a poster called 'Dolphin Princess'.

(heck of a filler, eh? Well, I started, I'll finish!)

In January, I had some new clipart, nothing special, though. I scattered it, trying to be appropriate. :) The picture on the first page of Tonkin's Computer dictionary may have been a bit confusion. Well, it should have been, only the top left corner got printed! I didn't seem to notice that I clipped instead of scaled accidentally. It was originally the cover art for a Sega game called 'Sol-Feace' (a spaceship by a wrecked larger ship).

The mountain scene at the end of the newsletter was fractal generated on my Amiga. Of the dozens that I looked at, it was one of my favourites.

And, finally, this one. The largest, I believe, and has the fewest pics! That's because it's full of text, and I tried (somewhat) to keep the size down. It'll cost a bit to mail this one!

Anyway, the cover pic, Lucie drew the bodies and forwarded the pic to me. Lucie also supplied a picture of herself and of Peter. I took the pictures and scanned them at work on a full-page scanner, getting 256 colour PCX outputs. I converted to IFF for the Amiga to work with. I cut out the backgrounds, and touched up a few mis-converted pixels, trying to improve contrast a bit. Finally, I shrunk and pasted the heads onto the body.

I already had a picture of me on the Amiga, and I cut the head out, resized, and pasted directly.

Finally, I grabbed Jeff and shot his picture, getting it developed and digitized ASAP. I followed the same steps as for Lucie and Peter. At this point, I noticed that Lucie, Peter and Jeff's pics (starting life as 256 colour pics) had a lot of very rough pixels in them from the dithering, compared to my pic (which started life as a 4096 colour IFF). So I used the paint program's smooth feature to take care of that, going carefully around the features which had to remain as sharp as possible.

The disclaimer pic is my brother and a friend showing off at paintball. The weapons are loaded, but not lethal. :)

Of course, the pic of where I am going is Summerland, British Columbia, taken from near the bottom of 'Giant's Head Mountain'. A nice view of Okanagan lake, looking northish.

And, that's it for special pics, and the newsletter! Take care!