SLAVES

AND

OTIUG
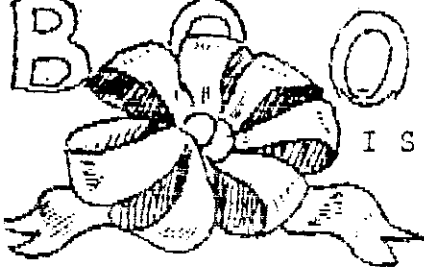
OCTOBER 1991 NEWSLETTER

Happy Halloween

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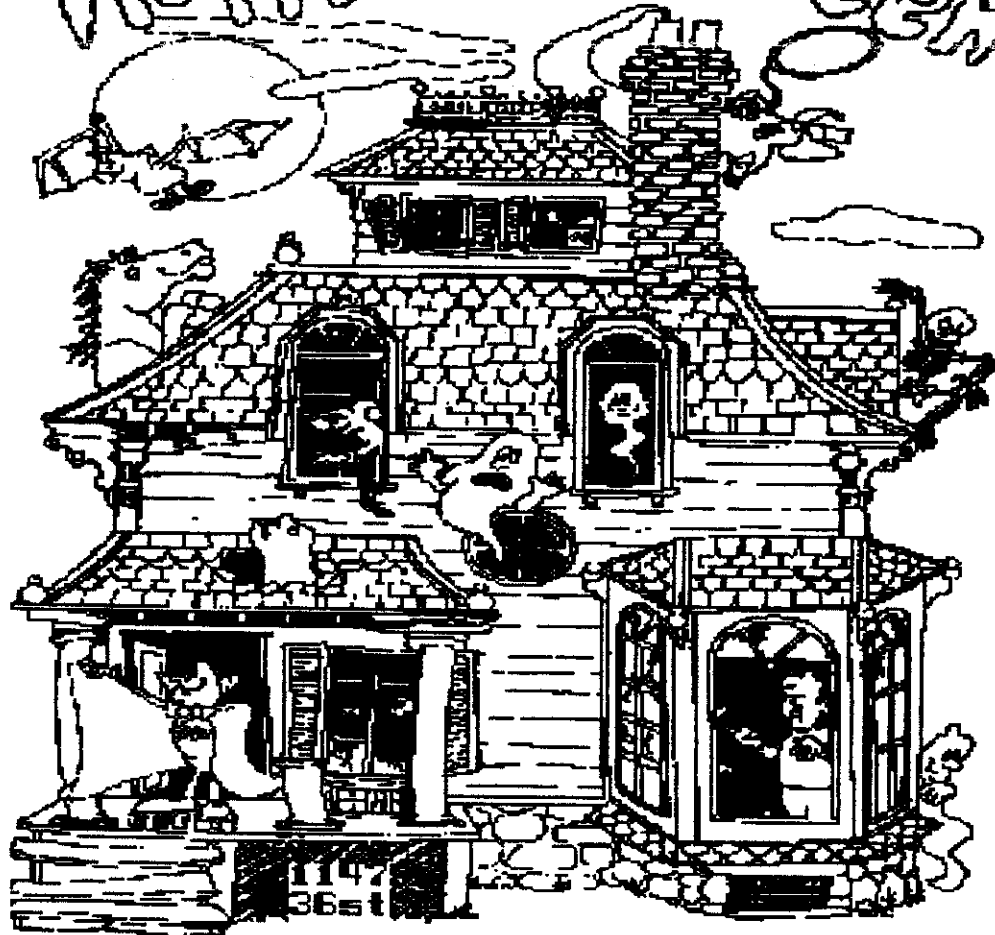
IS IT TIME YET?
by Steve Richardson
SLAVE User's Group

There is now no doubt that the last days for the TI home computer are at the doors. Some thought the last days happened back in 1983. And perhaps for many they did.   For those of us who live in the real last days, those were the early days. It is astonishing to consider how far our little computer has brought us since then.

In a way, buying a TI was a lot like joining a church. We suddenly found ourselves snubbed by people who thought they had made a better choice. And people whom we barely knew suddenly became almost bosom buddies. Our reading material was limited to literature that could be applied to our special case. And we received back what we put in, and then some. And that was what made it all worth it.

This is a time for reflection on what the little keyboard with a small black map of Texas on it has meant in our lives. I suppose buying a TI must have meant more to people who were in some way connected with Texas or its instrument company. I try to imagine how that symbol is viewed by TI owners in Germany and Russia, and even New Jersey. They must think the machines are built by cowboys between cattle drives. They assemble consoles by day and fight Indians by night.   Of course Texas also has hurricanes and oil wells and millionaires and astronauts.   It must be confusing for non-Westerners trying to figure out how all these elements fit together in one state.

My first experience with a company named Texas Instruments came during my senior year of college in 1973. There was an ad that appeared in the college newspaper advertizing a calculator called the SR-10.   In those days the engineering students walked around campus wearing long slide rules slung from the belt like sabres. Oh, there were calculators--I recall seeing Hewlett-Packards the size of a Franklin Day Planner chained to the counter at the university bookstore, each was being hovered over by an engineering student, accompanied by a line of other engineering students awaiting their turns.' Why didn't these students just buy one? Because the price tag was, as I recall, $750. And college students in those days didn't have access to that kind of money.   There was an optional leather holster you could buy to sling it from your belt where the slide rule had been.   There was also an ignition key to prevent anyone from making unauthorized calculations.   Calculators had a power-draining LED display and had to be plugged into the wall at all times except for the briefest of excursions to the classroom.   The TI SR-10 was only $149.95. Sure there were cheaper calculators. The cheapest at that time was the Commodore mini-calculator with 4 functions and a memory for $69.50. But the TI SR-10 could do square roots! I clipped the ad and saved it for when I had the money to spend on one. I never did, and became a member of the last generation that knew how to use a slide rule. By the time I had enough money for a SR-10 it had been replaced by the SR-something-else, and the consumer electronics world was changing.
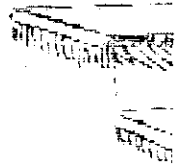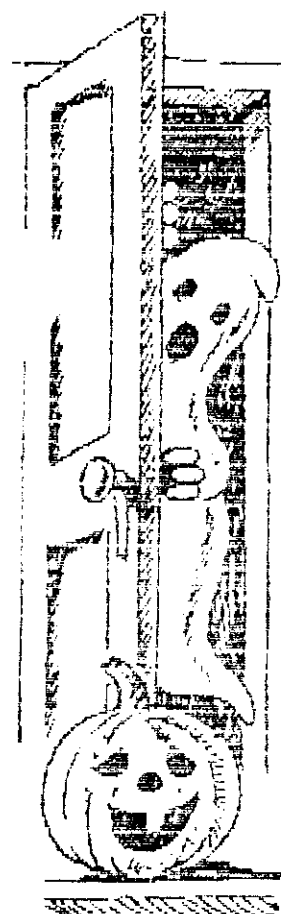
Then about 1978 the price of calculators dropped to about $5.00. I bought one. Maybe it was a Casio, I don't know. It eventually stopped working and I no longer have it.

The Texas Instruments home computer made its debut at a time when Jimmy Carter was still President, and Manuel Noriega and Saddam Hussein were our friends. There were still some hippies running around that hadn't yet metamorphosed into yuppies. A savings and loan still looked like a good place to invest your money. And technology was inching its way ever further into our lives. There were VCRs and Microwaves. Home computers were still so expensive that none of us would have bought one without first knowing what we were going to do with it. That was before the hype.

A few years later there was a movie that came out called "ET." You will recall how how the little turtle-like extraterrestrial assembled a transmitter using an umbrella, some tin foil, a radial saw blade, maybe a phonograph, and connected these elements to the innards of a recognizable red electronic TI educational toy called "Speak 'N Spell." That was my first clue that the device was somewhat more advanced than a tape recorder. We investigated and bought one. Though I recall its cost being somewhere around $70, it was almost everything it was claimed to be. That left me with a warm feeling towards Texas Instruments, even though it's possible that a real ET couldn't really have used one to phone home.

Home computers were flooding the marketplace, accompanied by constant advertizing to keep them in our consciousness, and my wife and I decided we should get one, though we weren't yet quite sure what to do with it. We had kids, though. We were getting it for them. Maybe they could eventually think of something. Several brands were compared, each excursion to the store was accompanied by increased confusion and indecision. Then one rainy night in the spring of 1983 I left home with the intention of buying a home computer, realizing I didn't know enough about the subject to make an intelligent decision. My wife and the four kids stayed home this time to allow me to take my own time to study the alternatives. Several hours later, based on our previous friendly experience with the Speak 'N Spell, I chose a TI 99/4A and also got two educational cartridges that today you can see in piles at the local thrift store for a dollar each, but each of them cost me nearly fifty times more. Our first two cartridges turned out to have little value to me, but it was intriguing to own a machine that seemed capable of thinking. In no time it was informing me that I had used bad arguments, incorrect statements, and it was smart enough to recognize the fact, but not friendly enough to inform me how it had made the discovery, or what I could do to fix the problem. But after repeating the mistakes enough times I eventually became smart enough to know what to look for. This machine certainly wasn't HAL, the computer in the movie "2001," but what the heck? The year also wasn't 2001. But we were headed in that direction.

The manuals were and still are excellent, and within a few months I was composing my own programs in BASIC, and even got a great deal of personal satisfaction out of the related painful learning process. I proceeded from there to Extended
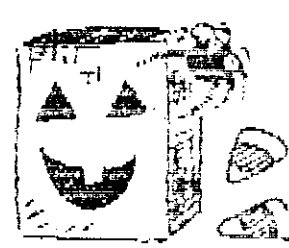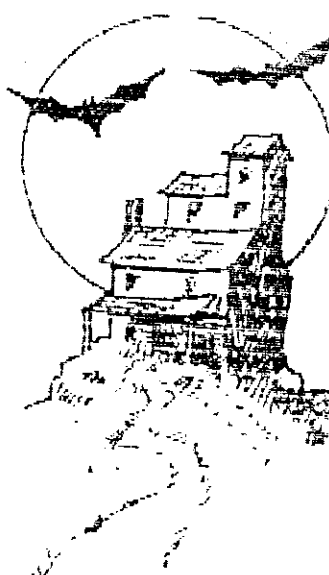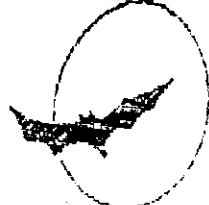
BASIC, then Super Extended BASIC, and now I'm learning to become comfortable with The Missing Link. Using these languages I can write programs that do anything I ask them to do. If I wish to progress deeper into unknown territory, I can easily do so with LOGO, FORTH, C99, FORTRAN, and Assembly. All of this without changing machines!

There was, of course, that tragic day in October 1983 when Texas Instruments suddenly dropped out of the home computer market. Simultaneously 99'er Home Computer Magazine disappeared from my mail box and the future was very uncertain. But my friends that laughed at me then have since had to discard their Ataris and Commodores and Vics and Adams and Sinclairs while I have been able to maintain an honest enthusiasm for my TI, and, like an American spacecraft, our TI has continued to function almost daily for me and every one of my kids in a hostile environment (my home) long after the end of the lifetime it must have been designed for.

As a part of my work I routinely write MicroSoft GW-BASIC programs for IBM-compatible computers, but it isn't fun. If you've programmed in GW-BASIC you'll know what I mean. Programs that have been written in GW-BASIC run much faster, processing much more data more rapidly than our TI could ever hope to. And they race if the programs have been compiled using MicroSoft's Quick BASIC. So I usually write and debug the programs in TI-BASIC and then translate them to fit the other machine. I don't think anybody could do as good a job programming from scratch in GW-BASIC. The process is such a pain that they'd almost certainly lose interest before they finished.

When Texas Instruments designed the 99/4A they were uncertain what a home computer would be asked to do, so they gave it capabilities in speech and music and even graphics that most "modern" computers don't have. They knew that they were designing the instrument for non-professional programmers, so they made every effort to completely document each function. They expected we would want to program games, so sprites and many advanced functions were made available to Extended BASIC programmers. Of course, computers have come along since then that are faster and more powerful, but few have the personality and charm of a 99/4A. And it's doubtful that any computer enthusiast has a software collection as large or as varied as that of a TI owner. Likewise, it will be a long time before a virtually unused PC can be purchased at a Salvation Army thrift store for $3.00, as I did with a TI just last week.

The potential of the TI has not yet been exhausted, and I suggest we should explore that potential before heading off into unknown territory. In the meantime, PC's will get cheaper and maybe even friendlier and less businesslike.

There is now no doubt that the last days for the TI home computer are at the doors. Just when that end will come is up to us.

THE
SALT FLATS BBS

THE OGDEN TI USERS GROUP
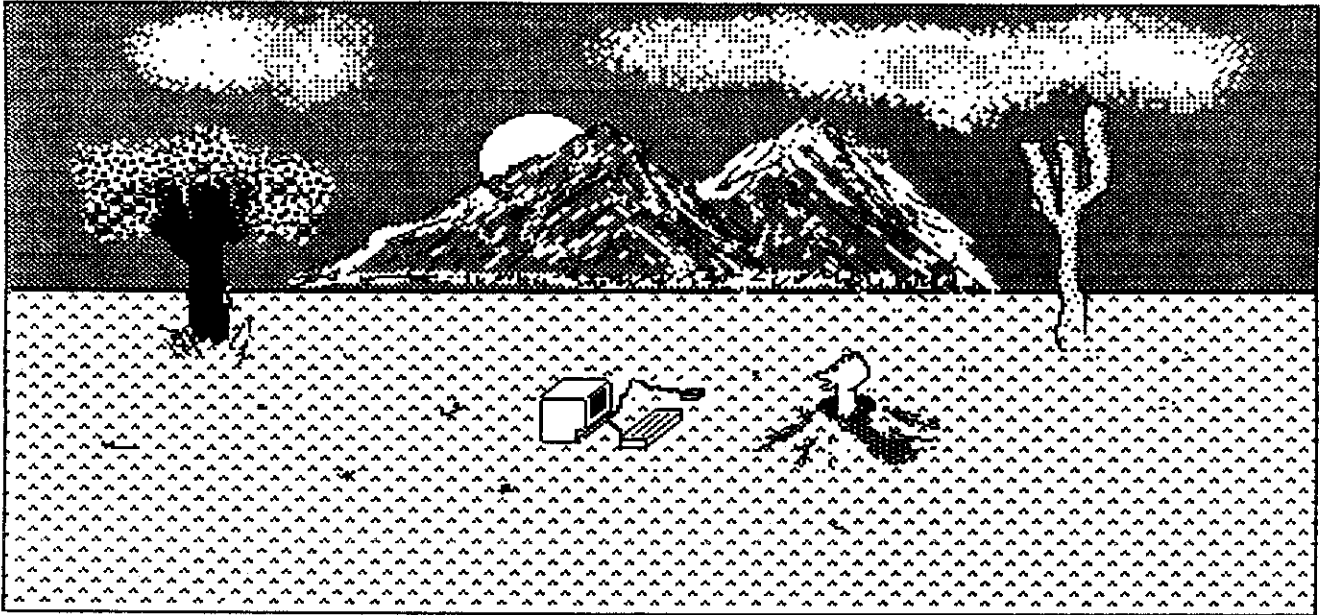
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At this point TIB is like Extended Basic, it's waiting for commands from you. If your printer is PIO then press the ALPHA LOCK for all Caps, turn your printer on and enter SNAP and press Enter. "From now on I will denote press Enter as <E>." If it worked that odd stuff on the screen is printing out. If your printer is set for RS232 then type SET PRINTER =RS232.CR.LF <E> first and then type SNAP <E>.

```
SNAP  <E>
```

```
SET PRINTER=RS232,CR.LF  <E>
SNAP  <E>
```

```
QUIT  <E>
```

If you got a printout, you have just programmed in TI-Base. Now type QUIT <E> to get out of TIB so we can go back to work.

Right now things are going to get tough, but I know you can do it. You should be out of the TIB so fire up FunnelWeb (Fwb). I'm going to feed this to you as I do it, good luck. Put your Tutor disk copy in drive two. You should be in the Fwb EDITOR, selection 1 from the load screen. Type (Fctn 9) then LF <E> then DSK2.TUTOR/C <E> and the Tutor file should load in. "It's a long CF." Now with your printer on type (Fctn 9) then PF <E> then PIO or RS232 <E> to get a printout of the complete file. First thing after that press (Ctrl 0) for no word wrap. This gives you the little rectanglular cursor, and most important, it stops Reformat. Any time you work with CFs, which have no carriage returns, if you hit Reformat you'll find your whole file jammed into the upper left corner af the screen. Next arrow down to the first CLEAR, I think it's the fourth line and using (Fctn 3) to delete all the lines from and including CLEAR down to and including CASE A="1", about line 28. Now arrow down to CASE 1=1. Using (Fctn 3) again, start deleting, including CASE 1=1, all lines down to and including ENDWHILE. "That pruned her down a bit." Now as you slowly arrow back up to the top of the page, as you pass each line starting with CASE, use (Fctn 1) to delete everything after the word CASE. The phrases you are deleting look like A = "P" and A = "O" etc.

```
SET TALK OFF
SET RECNUM OFF
SET HEADING OFF
      USE INTRO
      PRINT ALL ITEM
      CLOSE
----------------------------
```

```
----------------------------
      USE REPORTS
      PRINT ALL ITEM
   CLOSE
      USE CONTROL
      PRINT ALL ITEM
   CLOSE
RETURN
```

As you complete those deletions, arrow all the way to the top of the page. Once there we will do some Replace String stuff. With the cursor at the top of the page press (Fctn 9) then RS <E> then type /CASE/CLOSE/ <E> and when Fwb hits the first CASE and asks you Replace Y/N you press A and Fwb will Replace All of the CASE words with CLOSE, and you'll find yourself at the bottom of the file. Press (Fctn 6), ROLL UP, several times to get back to the top of the file. Now press (Fctn 9) then type RS <E> type /BREAK/PRINT ALL ITEM/ right over the old phrase and <E> and again when asked Replace all Y/N press A for Replace all. If everything worked right this CF is ready to use. Press (Fctn 9) and PF <E> to get a printout. When the system comes back from printing press (Fctn 9) and SF <E> and <E> again when the filename appears to save the new file over the old TUTOR/C file. If this doesn't work we always have the original Tutor Disk to use to get another copy Note: The listing in the lower left hand corner is a listing of the finished Tutor CF with all of the middle of the program chopped out. The stuff I chopped out was just repetition. All the commands in the middle of your file will have a USE "name", such as USE FIND, followed by the statement PRINT ALL ITEM and then CLOSE. The beginning and end of your file should look like the file I have listed. This CF will now print out all the tutorials you previously had to read from the screen. Let's try it out. With the file saved back to the Tutor disk which should be in drive 2, quit Fwb, place the copy of the TIB program disk in drive one and select Extended Basic to load TIB so we can run the TUTOR CF. When TIB asks for the date enter it and all the stuff I have listed here in larger print. Enter each line separately, pressing ENTER where the <E> is located. You need not enter

```
06/18/91  <E>
SET PAGE=000  <E>
SET DATDISK=DSK2.  <E>
SET PRINTER=PIO.CR.LF  <E>
DO DSK2.TUTOR  <E>
```

SET. PRINTER=PIO.CR.LF, that is already set. I put it here because this is where you would enter SET PRINTER=RS232.CR.LF if that is the comfiguration for your machine. If that is the case, change PIO.CR.LF to RS232.CR.LF and use that line. If I have explained everything right and you have typed it in correctly your machine should do a bunch of grinding and searching and print out the whole tutorial disk of information. If none of this works for you, you can still get a tutor printout. Type in the first four lines as above, without the DO DSK2.TUTOR. Then type USE INTRO <E> then PRINT ALL ITEM and after the printer is done type CLOSE <E>. You must repeat these three steps over and over, until you have used all of the different names on the original Tutor CF, down to and including USE CONTROL. This is possible because a Command File (CF), is just a group of commands that you would enter on the screen with the <E> put in automatically at the end of each line. At any rate start reading again. Read all of those tutorials carefully and check to see if there is any information in them that is not included in the manual or the Help stuff you read before. If you find anything on any of the printouts that is not included in the manual or is explained in a different or better way, mark it with a colored pencil or something, so you can reference it later. Between now and next month, when I will wrap this up, go back and read my tutorial in the NorthCoast Newsletter from Sept. 1988. "I know this is confusing, so write me, ask questions, and tell me where I went wrong." Martin A. Smoley, 6149 Bryson Drive, Mentor, OH 44060-2324.

Good Luck.   Marty

TI-Base

Question And Answer?

Having received several questions lately, I thought I'd try to help some TI-Base users and give Deanna a little land fill for the newsletter at the same time.

The first question concerned the compatability of my early tutorials with TI-Base version 3.01.

The answer is that they are not all compatable. One important item is (LINE=80) or (SET LINE=80). This command (which will still be found in my early tutorials) is not compatable with version 3.01 and will cause an error message. If any form of SET LINE is found in the tutorials it should be removed.

In addition to that, I should say that the original tutorials will probably never be updated to match version 3.01 or later. Any differences are not disasterous and should be easily noticed if you compare the new TI-Base manual with the old tutorial printouts.

The second question which may be of interest to all is about Databases that contain 750 records or more and how they slow down the machine, especially when sorted.

I pointed out this problem in some of the last tutorials written, called "Big Databases - Don't Ever Use Them" or something like that. Any database can be broken down into four(4) small databases. This can be done by numbers or alphabetically. If you cannot come up with a command file to determine where a new entry should go, it is fairly simple to do this in your head using a complete printout for some guidance as to which database should get the new entry. If a large database is sorted, APPENDing records is even slower because TIB will find the sorted position for each new entry immediately after it is made. I know it's difficult to do but I always try to make new entries into an unsorted database. When all new entries are complete I SORT the database by one means or another and then do my printouts. If your database has less than one hundred records, don't worry about this problem.

If you have any questions please send them to me Martin A. Smoley, 6149 Bryson Drive, Mentor, OH 44060-2324 and I'll try to write something on them.

Now Let's Get Started

I am going to start at the very beginning with TI-Base (TIB). I'll try and get your system set up with a Database (Db) and a mailing label Command File (CF). If you don't really have the desire to learn this then stop reading now and go away.

OK! You just received your copy of the newest version of TIB in the mail and you don't know what to do first. The first thing you do is put write protect tabs on every disk you received if they don't already have them. After that you should make complete copies of the original disks you received from Inscebot onto new disks of your own, using DM-1000 or some other good disk utility program. After that put the original disks back into the envelope from Inscebot and put them in a safe place. Before you get good at this stuff you may have to make several copies of those originals. "I did."

Now you're ready to read. First read this tutorial June 14,1991 through to the end. Then come back to this point and start again. Now read the TIB Manual at least three times. The first time skim through it to see where everything is located. Make sure to read all of the headings. You can look up things you may be interested in or had heard of previously. Next read the whole manual through from cover to cover, as if it were a novel. Now I want you to read it as if it were a text book and there will be a test. Read each heading a couple times and then slowly read the explanation of the heading that follows it. In all this reading I emphasize READ, do not memorize the text. Just read it hard and try to remember where things are located in the manual so you can jump to the right spot when you have questions later. "After doing this myself I understood, or comprehended about 60% of what I had read." If you don't understand most of it, don't dispair, just look at it as a bigger challenge.

I hope you have a fair working knowledge of FunnelWeb or TI-Writer, because I will be using FunnelWeb quite a bit. So load up your FunnelWeb and by whatever means you can, print out all of the DIS/VAR 80 files you can find on the TIB program disk. I'm referring to README, AIDO6/H, AIDO7A/H, etc. The easiest way I have found to print out a bunch of files is to use DM-1000. When you have DM-1000 running you select 1 for Files and then the disk drive to get a menu. After that you arrow the cursor to the file you want and press (Shift P) to print that file. When finished the menu will come back and you just arrow to the next file and press (Shift P) again. This allows you to quickly print all the DIS/VAR 80 files on a disk. The idea here is to print out all the information available on the TIB disks. The Tutor and Help stuff is neat, but I will not waste disk space to store it, I do not like to read from the screen and I like to search for help at the same time I am looking at the problem on the screen, not flip back and forth to help screens. Flipping tends to confuse me even more. "I confuse easy." Take the AID or Help stuff you just printed and read it through. Take time to compare it to the manual to see if they are the same or if we have gained any extra knowledge.

Before we go to Funnelweb let's run your TI-Base. Put the TIB disk into drive one Reboot or Restart your system (Fctn =) and select 2 for Extended Basic. If all goes well you will see the TIB loading screen. When asked, enter 06/16/91 for the date and press Enter. TIB will now run another bunch of stuff. If all goes well you will be left with a bunch of stuff on the screen you do not understand with the cursor flashing in the lower left corner.
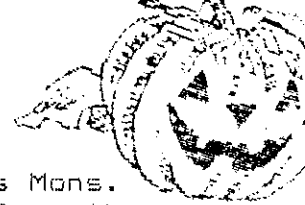
"Good morning, Steve, Time to wake up."
I yawned and opened my eyes to a beautiful sunrise over Olympus Mons.
Issac, the house computer, had downloaded one of my favorites from the
on-line image library. It made the wall sized,flat-panel, high definition
television in the bedroom look like a picture window into Mars.
"It's 8:03 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 1,2001. Miami skies are partly cloudy, the
temperature is 78 degrees, there is a 28 percent chance of rain this
morning."
Isaac's synthesized voice sounded like James Earl Jones this morning--- a bit
heavy for the hour. As I shaved, I told Isaac to sound like my daughter, whom I
missed because she was at grad school.
"Coffee is ready, Dad," said Isaac, using Annie's voice."Mom's already at
work. Her computer called to cancel lunch today; the board meeting will be
late. We rescheduled lunch for Friday, and made the reservations. Today's
the deadline for your story on the 20th anniversary of the old IBM
personal computer. The air conditioner filter needs changed. You're 13 days
overdue for bringing the car in for tuneup."
Nag.......
Isaac began reading me headlines from this mornings's version of My Herald,
which Isaac had compiled overnight for me by pulling text, images and sound off
the datanet stream. Isaac knows I'm particularly interested in stories about
computers, sailing, movies and astronomy. Not so long ago, all subscribers got
the same newspaper, no matter what their interests were. Now, Isaac customizes
a My Herald for me and a much different My Herald for my wife, Ellyn.
While reading aloud, Isaac's multiprocessor also selected next week's menu from
our data base of favorite recipes, sent an order for the needed groceries to
the supermarket computer, paid the bills and maintained its round-the-clock
montoring of the house sensors for intruders, smoke,fire, bad weather and other
hazards.
As I left, Isaac shut off the lights and the air conditioner. Periodically
through the day, Isaac used my voice to tell Sophie, our rotund basset hound ,
to get off the couch.
On the way to the Metrorail station, the car computer reminded me it wanted
that tuneup and led me on a back way around the daily traffic jam. Only twice
did it tell me to slow down.
At the Herald, I settled down at my terminal to work on the IBM anniversary
story. Though dinosaurs like me still often use a keyboard and mouse, most
young reporters these days prefer simply dictating to the voice recognition
software.
The library window on my monitor showed me the old clips and other references
it had found for me. One was the story I had written back in 1991, on the PC's
10th anniversary, guessing at a few of the computer wonders we now take for
granted in 2001.
I remembered how skeptical my editors had been about it, even when I insisted
that everything described in the story-multiprocessor computers, expert system
programs, voice synthesizers,voice-command recognition, flat-panel television,
custom newspapers--either already existed or was in prototype.
While I worked, my computer also drafted answers to my electronic mail,
filtered my phone calls, tutored me in Spanish and sold a block of stock
for me.
That night, back at home,Ellyn and I used Isaac's expert system software to
plan how we would redecorate the living room. The interior decoration expert
module let us experiment with different colors, fabrics and furniture. using
other"expert" modules, we've designed clothing, selected landscaping, collected
fine wine and diagnosed a fungus epidemic in the fish tank.

Later, Ellyn and I lay in bed, Isaac tiled my side of the wall screen with
live images from six different ball games, while flipping the wall-size
pages of "Dave Barry's Guide to the 21st Century" for Ellyn to read on her
side of the screen.
Finally, we had Isaac display the moonlit image of Cane Garden Bay in the
British Virgin Islands, with the soft sound of breaking waves and wind in the
palms.
Then I told Isaac not to intrude until morning. Even in 2001, there are still
some things too personal for personal computers.

From Compute-It
by Stephen K. Doig
Submitted by David Mischler OTIUG.

JOHN's FORMATTER TIP

by Harold Hoyt
St. Louis Computer Bridge
May, 1991

     John Briscoe is some of that new blood that the club needed.
Here is another good tip from John.

     This one is a real time saver for people who use the TI
Writer Formatter in Funnelweb. You can do a disk directory while
in the Editor and mark a file so that you don't have to type in
the DSKx.FILENAME. This ia a big help if you can't remember the
filename. If you do a disk directory while in the Formatter,
apparantly you can't mark the file, so if you want to mark a file
for the mail box, you exit the formatter, enter the Editor, do a
disk directory, mark the file, and exit the editor, re-enter the
Formatter. This is a very clumsy, and slow if you are not using
a ram disk.

     John's trick has you do a disk directory (Fctn)7 while still
in the formatter. Arrow down to the file you want. Press
the space bar, which places an invisible mark on the file. Press
<ctrl> = to return to the formatter, then press <fctn> D (right
arrow) to place the new file name in the formatter mail box.
Saves the see-saw time for repeatedly loading the formatter and
editor, just to mark files.

     This is super for people who are intimidated by long
filenames and can't remember, was it DOCS or -DOCS- or -READ-ME-
or README. If you give up and use single character filenames,
then a year from now, when you are reviewing your disks, you
won't have a clue as to what file X is for.

*Note! I tried this and I discovered that you MUST have files QD
and QF if you are using Funnelweb.....ED*
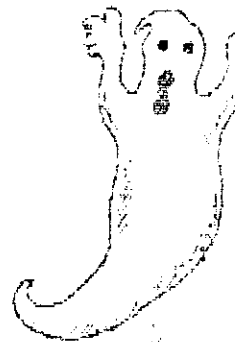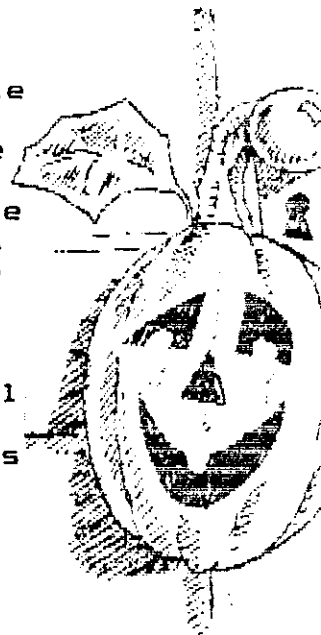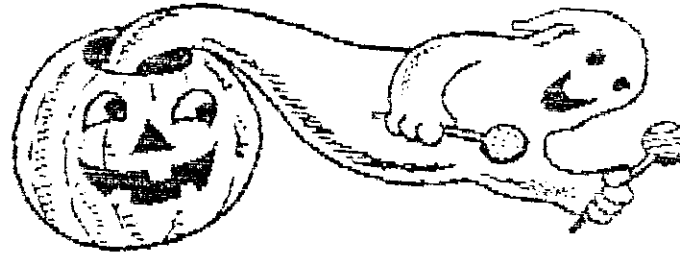
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OCTOBER 1991 NEWSLETTER

TI SLAVES	OGDEN TI USERS GROUP
OUR NEXT MEETING IS OCTOBER 19 1991 AT 9:00 am WE MEET IN THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HALL AT 273 E. 800 S. PLEASE BE THERE PROMPTLY.!! COME AND HAVE FUN.	OUR NEXT MEETING IS OCTOBER 5 AT 9:00am. AND(OCT 12th BASIC CLASS 9:00am)AND OCTOBER 15th 7:00 pm AND(OCT 26th 9:00am BASIC CLASS) WE MEET AT THE OGDEN MUNICIPAL AIRPORT IN THE FIRST BUILDING JUST EAST OF THE NEW TOWER.

Slaves & Otiug
1396 Lincoln APT B
Ogden, Utah 84404