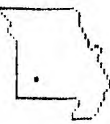




OZARK 99ER NEWS



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OZARK 99ER USERS GROUP

VOL 7: NO 11

SPRINGFIELD, MO

NOVEMBER 1990

* UPCOMING MEETING: THURSDAY, NOV 8, 1990 7 pm *
 * Trinity Lutheran Church *
 * 1415 S Holland *
 * Springfield, MO *
 * *
 * NOV. PROGRAM: 3-D WORLD CAD (COMPUTER ASSIST- *
 * ED DESIGN) demo by BILL BERENDTS *
 * and TIPSLABEL, MULTICAT, AND *
 * D/ACATALOG demos (DOM) will be *
 * presented by MARY PHILLIPS. A *
 * Micropendium demo is also a pos- *
 * sibility. *
 * *
 * MEMBERSHIP: New members will receive Nov & *
 * Dec NL and library privileges *
 * FREE with a 1991 membership of *
 * \$15. Bring a friend! *
 * *
 * HUGS AND ROSES TO: JOE MIRANTI for last minute *
 * printing of the NL, CHARLES *
 * RINEHART for keying, CURTIS *
 * FINNEY for poster designs, TOM *
 * BINGAMAN and BILL BERENDTS for *
 * writing, and MAX PORTER for *
 * helping me get out of the hot *
 * water by telephoning. *
 * *
 * A special bouquet for BOB *
 * OSTERLOH, who has offered to *
 * to take on the printing of *
 * the NL. YEAH, BOB!!!!!!!!!!!! *
 * *
 * NOMINATING COMMITTEE for 1991 officers will be *
 * appointed this month, so be thinking about who *
 * would be new and/or good leaders. *
 * *
 * LEARN HOW TO USE TI-WRITER, ARTIST PROGRAMS, AND *
 * DATABASE PROGRAMS. I will teach someone what I *
 * know if you will assist me with the newsletter. *
 * I didn't get proficient with these programs until *
 * I decided to edit the NL. SEE MARY PHILLIPS *
 * *
 * *****



* OZARK 99er USER GROUP MINUTES *
 * Oct. 13, 1990 Regular Meeting *
 * *****

The regular October meeting was called to to order at
 7:30 PM by Pres. Curtis Finney. There were 14 members
 and guests present.

SECRETARY : Minutes were approved as read.

TREASURER : Barr reported balance a/o 9-13 of \$347.44,
Income of \$51.75; Expense of 35.86; Current operating
balance of \$363.33. Approved.

NEWSLETTER: Mary absent. Noted May DOM listing in NL
instead of October.

OLD BUS : None

NEW BUS : Bob Osterloh has volunteered to print the NL
beginning 1-1-91! Hurrah!

Rinehart asked for and received approval for ordering
300 blank diskettes at best available price.

Rinehart donated disk and docs on 3D WORLD CAD
(Computer Assisted Design) drawing and design program,
one set for the library and one set to be used as
November door prize.

Barr remarked that we have had no new or returning
members since June 1990.

Board Meeting will be held at the Phillips home on
Monday, Oct 15th at 7:30 instead of on the 16th.

Rinehart also donated a copy of 3D WORLD to Berendts
with the understanding that he demo at the November 8th
meeting.

LIBRARY : Mark McCarty did an excellent job demo'ing
SCHEDULE MANAGER! His presentation was up to his past
performance--GOOD!
Leland demo'ed DOM with some interesting music. He also
had MicroPendum and DOM disks, past and present, for
sale.

ADJOURNED : 8:35 PM
Respectfully; C. R. Rinehart, Secretary

* TABLE OF CONTENTS *
 * *
 * FROM THE EDITOR'S CONSOLE PAGE 2 *
 * BBS FOR THE TI PAGE 2 *
 * 3D-WORLD (Review) PAGE 3 *
 * NEWS IN THE TI WORLD PAGE 3 *
 * MURDER (Humor) PAGE 3 *
 * FOR SALE ADS PAGE 3 *
 * GENERAL TI TIPS PAGE 4 *
 * HANDLING LARGE TI-WRITER FILES PAGE 4 *
 * FILE PROBLEMS PAGE 5 *
 * WHY DO I CONTINUE TO USE MY TI COMPUTER? ... PAGE 5 *
 * HARVEST OF PLENTY (Graphic) PAGE 8 *
 * OFFICERS PAGE 8 *
 * *
 * *****



 **
 FROM THE EDITOR'S CONSOLE **
 **

This is "the ~~the~~ that nearly wasn't". I had a frustrating situation at school and I had to give it priority. So here I am on the day of the meeting, scrambling to get the ~~the~~ together. It sure is a good thing Charlie Rinehart has interested ~~the~~ keyed-in for me so all I have to do is proofread, edit, organize and print.

I'm really looking forward to seeing Bill's demo of 3D WORLD. This will be the first CAD program I've seen on TI.

Earl Raguse has added two ~~two~~ icons to TIPSLABE. One is the ~~one~~ images only, and the other ~~the~~. A "Pageful" of images prints diagonally down the page and makes the most clever stationery or sign. (See all the little foxes ~~the~~) I haven't played with ver 1.7 yet so I don't know what Ron has done with it except that I saw on the File Connection description that it has "Hot Keys". I don't know if Ron and Earl got their heads together or not.

Last night, Max Porter came to my rescue. He observed that I had us meeting on Sunday night, and called to check on it. He asked how many cards I'd mailed and when I told him ~~the~~, he offered to make some calls. I made calls, too, to people who haven't been to a meeting for a year or so, and I got such a kick out of the visits. Everyone I talked to said they were so pleased to get the card from me, and I think some of our old friends will be joining us again. Max, these additional contacts wouldn't have been made, if you hadn't called it to my attention. I will just have to assume that the regulars will know I goofed again and will come on our regular night.

 ** BBS FOR THE TI **
 ** By Tom Beersman **

This is the greeting you will get on the File Connection:

 NOTICE! 10-27-90

Due to the immature actions of ONE individual, The File Connection will in the future be a closed board.

Every responsible computer user is welcome to the board. To gain access a new user will need to contact a current user and ask them to leave mail supplying their name, address, and phone number. They will then be able to log on using that name and a temporary password supplied in a return message to the current user. You may also contact the Sysops for

access.

Thanks for your cooperation...Bob...

Well, the news this month is good and bad. The bad being that someone is messing around with the File Connection and making a closed board. This doesn't make it impossible to use just a little harder to get a password for new users. Lots of information is coming out of QEnie, some new and some old. If you like to know what might have been coming out from our TI before production ended for the 99/4A, well a lot of it is on the board. With all of this information, it will be nice to see just what comes out new, like hardware. Two companies are hard at work to get their products out first. One will be the 80 col hardware for the 4A. There is also some hardware from down-under coming out too.

Tom Beersman has uploaded a new list of all the BBSes in town so if anyone is interested, check out files on #13 and it is listed as "NEW". Richard Anderson has uploaded some files there, too. So check it all out this month to see just what is happening.

 Here is a list of the new files on the File Connection:

- 40 ~~40~~ 6K Bytes 10-16-90
- 40 ~~40~~ Your Wish List in a Letter
- 40 ~~40~~ 14K Bytes 10-10-90
- 40 ~~40~~ Lang Source for Ver 1.7 of TIPS
- 40 ~~40~~ 36K Bytes 10-10-90
- 40 ~~40~~ Ver 1.7 of Ron Wolcott's TIPS Hot Keys
- 4014.TI 5K Bytes 10-16-90
- 4016.TI Create & Add to Your Grocery List
- 4016.TI 6K Bytes 10-16-90
- 4015.TI Instructions to Increase Memory to 18K
- 4015.TI 39K 10-16-90
- 4021.TI TI Wafertape User Manual
- 4021.TI 10-16-90
- 4022.TI CTRL/NEWTST
- 4022.TI 10-16-90
- 4023.TI A side Trip from CTRL/NEWTST
- 4023.TI 9K Bytes 10-16-90
- 4024.TI View TRS-80/CHR & HR Files on TI
- 4024.TI 7K Bytes 10-16-90
- 4026.TI October 14, 1990 RTC Notes
- 4026.TI 8K Bytes 10-22-90
- 4027.TI Graphics Icon Converter TIPS
- 4027.TI 1K Bytes 10-22-90
- 4029.TI Converts Input Statement to P
- 4029.TI 26K Bytes 10-22-90
- 4030.TI L MA UG Newsletter October 1990
- 4030.TI 9K Bytes 10-22-90
- 4031.TI RTC Notes for October 21, 1990
- 4031.TI 77K Bytes 10-06-90
- 4033.TI 9/17 UPDATE FOR TIPSv1*6/ER LIST is com
- 4033.TI 12K Bytes 10-28-90
- 4034.TI A Western Version of the Lcub Board Game
- 4034.TI 7K Bytes 10-28-90
- 4035.TI A word Guessing Game
- 4035.TI 41K Bytes 10-28-90
- 4037.TI Classic Music by Sam Moore Disk #1
- 4037.TI 13K Bytes 11-01-90
- 4038.TI RTC Notes From October 28, 1990
- 4038.TI 49K Bytes 11-01-90
- 4038.TI Classic Music by Sam Moore Disk #2



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**                               **
** 3D-WORLD Review by Bill Berends **
** Ozark 99'er User Group, Spfd. MO **
**                               **
*****
```

3D-WORLD is a program that should delight anyone who would be interested in designing boxes, houses, furniture or anything that would have three dimensions. I rate the documentation as being somewhat less than adequate, but I may be swayed a bit by the fact the copy I had to work with had been poorly reproduced and reduced. The combination made easy reference difficult.

Although I tried to follow the directions in the docs, I was never able to print a hard copy of any image shown on the screen. Part 6.1 of the docs deals specifically with, "OPERATION WITH A DOT MATRIX PRINTER", leading you to believe you must type in the information as directed, however, upon loading the program from Magic, Part 6.1 is run automatically. Even so, pressing "P" as directed in the last paragraph caused the screen to display garbage and the computer to lock up.

The program takes about two minutes to load, which may be aggravating to some users, however, to anyone really wanting to take advantage of its capabilities, the time delay might well be worth it.

There are various error messages contained in the program which will appear if the wrong keys or actions are used or attempted. Along with the message is the command to press "Enter" to get out of the error portion and continue with the program.

Two demonstrations, appropriately named "DEMO ONE" and "DEMO TWO" are part of the package. DEMO ONE is merely a pyramid, which, when first displayed on the screen appears to be a triangle, but as you press certain keys to turn it on any one of three difference axes (Yes, that is the correct plural--I looked it up!) you can see the figure is truly a pyramid. Included in the documentation is a "Walk through" instruction of how to draw a pyramid. The drawing is accomplished by instructing the user to enter certain "points" and then how to connect those points with lines. Unfortunately, the documentation does not explain everything one might want to know about how to select the points on his own.

One word of caution. If you decide to save your first attempt to a disk, DO NOT USE A FILENAME THAT IS ALREADY ON THE DISK! To do so would over-write whatever file already has the name. If the disk being used does not already have a label listing the file, I would suggest the user make an appropriate label.

One serious drawback to the program is being preprogrammed for "DSK1," making it impossible for the user to save his creation to a disk in any other disk drive, thereby making it necessary to transfer the image to another disk via a disk manager program.

DEMO TWO is an interesting demonstration of several individual images combined into one image. The program permits the user to remove portions of the complete image from the screen while retaining them in memory and to return them to the screen as desired. I tried saving the complete image to another disk. When I cataloged the disk, the image was identified as a program. But upon trying to run it, it called for a program identified as "DEMO THREE", which is not even listed on the 3D disk. The different portions of the DEMO TWO image may have been saved as merged programs.

Overall the program does seem to have some merit particularly for a user interested in creating drawings

of three dimensional objects. On a basis of 1 to 5, I would rate the program as a 2 simply because of the difficulty I had in trying to obtain a hard copy of the image displayed on the screen. Had I been able to accomplish that, I would have rated the program as a 4. I would have to rate the documentation also as a 2, since I feel it does not go into enough detail to warrant a higher rating. Perhaps a clearer copy of the docs would change my opinion of them.

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** NEWS IN THE TI WORLD **
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The VAST TI USERS GROUP of Phoenix, Arizona now has a BBS at 300/1200/2400 at (602) 433-2767.

The FEST WEST 91 has been scheduled for Feb. 16 and 17 at the RAMADA MAIN GATE in Anaheim, CA across the street from Disneyland. Hoost for the fair is the users group of Orange County, in association with the Pomona Valley Users Group. Too FREE number for the Ramada Inn Main Gate is 1-800-447-4048. For further information, write Fest West 91 Committee, c/o Bill Nelson, 11692 Puryear Lane, 9264D.

The new ESD Corp. Hard and Floppy Card is hot off the Press! The TI hard drive card and floppy controller that WILL meet your needs has finally arrived! See for yourself:

- . A revolutionary design using surface mount parts.
- . Controls up to 4 hard drives and 4 floppy drives.
- . Formats 90K 5 1/4" drives to and including 1.44 MB
- . 3 1/2" drives.
- . User friendly set-up and support software.
- . Designed by an electronics and computer corporation which supports its users.
- . Features an EEPROM which allows future DSR upgrades to be loaded by disk.
- . Uses only Western Digital drive controller chip-sets
- . Two separate floppy drive connectors, one for internal drives and one for external drives, allow for easy installation.
- . 100% TI compatible.
- . Unique design eliminates heat problems on the card.
- . Set-up information stored in the EEPROM eliminates dip switches on the board.
- . Special PATH command allows user to specify alternate path for DSK1. (ie HD1.GRAPHICS.TOOLS).
- . BASIC CALL PC LINES ADD EXTRA DIMENSION TO TI. The price for this controller is \$225, which seems right in line. Other future sources include possibilities from Australia and Washington, D.C. Meanwhile TRITON still has Geneves and HFDC available for shipment.

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** MURDER **
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The following is by Thomas DeQuincy "Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts" (1827), printed in the Johnson Space Center Users Group (JUG), June 1990.

"If once a man indulges in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing, and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking and from that to incivility and procrastination.. AND, inevitably missing the monthly TI meeting!!

FOR SALE: Volksmodem 300 baud w/cable--C. Roberts \$17
 Volksmodem 300 baud w/cable--C. Roberts \$17
 NEC amber monitor w/sound \$40
 Navaronne "Wiget" brand new \$20

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**                                     **
** GENERAL TIPS FROM CHARLIE RINEHART **
**                                     **
*****
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NOTE: The following are NOT original. I have gleaned them from various newsletters and Ozark 99er meeting demos and conversations. C. Rinehart 10/10/90

1. Here are some BASIC commands you may not have used for awhile:

- A. RES X,Y: - This command will renumber all the lines (including GOTO and GOSUB). The first new line number will be X and all the lines following will be incremented by Y.
- B. NUM X,Y: - This command will allow you to automatically generate line numbers beginning with X and incrementing by Y each time you enter a line.

2. This hint will let you line up all decimal points in your program.

- A. PRINT TAB(C-POS(STR\$(N)&"", ".", 1)-(N\10));N
Where N is the number to be printed;
Where C is what column on the screen you want the decimal to appear (limit C to columns 10 through 19).

3. Time saver: When the little "monster" rejects a long long line you have typed in for some reason, TRY THIS: REDO(FCTN 8) key and the line will reappear on the screen ready for correction.

4. If you want to know how much memory you have left in regular BASIC, insert these two lines in your program and run:

1. A=A+8
2. GOSUB 1

When you get a "Memory Full" error, type "PRINT A" and you will have the amount of memory that remains (+34 bytes for lines 1 & 2). The computer used 8 bytes of memory to store the return address for GOSUB. That's why you have to add 8 bytes to A in line number 1.

5. If you own a disk drive and Editor/Assembler or Mini-Memory and want to free up the memory for that used by your disk (assuming that you will use a cassette to save); all you need do is type CALL LOAD(-31888,63,225). Typing "BYE" returns you to the main screen and allows the disk to be used again.

6. Want to know how many bytes of memory you have?

- a. With x-Basic 13928 bytes of memory
- b. With TE II 14026 Bytes of memory
- c. With BASIC 14536 bytes of memory

Reduce these values by 2808 bytes if you have a drive attached (unless you use 5 above).

7. TI-WRITER Tips:

- a. CTRL I Takes cursor to next TAB setting.
- b. CTRL J Takes cursor to beginning of next paragraph.
- c. CTRL K DELETES to the end of the line.
- d. CTRL L Takes cursor to TOP of screen.
- e. CTRL T Takes cursor to right margin (if cursor is at left margin, otherwise a BACKTAB).
- f. CTRL V Takes cursor to LEFT margin.
- g. CTRL W Takes cursor to beginning of next word.
- h. CTRL Y Releases left AND right margins.

8. CALL SCREEN(15) should be used when you use a black and white TV as a monitor. It will disable the color generator in the console and remove the annoying vertical streak you may encounter in this mode.

9. You can eliminate the need to use the arrow keys to go to the actual filename when loading or saving files. The editor doesn't care if there are a couple of spaces after the "LF" or "SF" commands. So if you type in:

```
LF (space)(space)
```

you will find the cursor is positioned over the first character of the actual filename when it appears on the screen. You no longer have to tab over with the arrow keys before you can change the filename. I REALLY LIKE THAT ONE!

10. X-BASIC TIP: When you type in a line number in the command mode and press FCTN +X, that line is brought up on the screen. If you continue to hold the two keys down the next line appears, and the next, and so on. But, did you know that once you started to bring the lines up you can let go of the FCTN key and just hold the 'X' and the line will continue to croll up the screen. Handy if you need to have your right hand free to follow a print-out, etc... It also works with the E, S, and D keys.

11. When cataloging a disk to the screen via RAMDISK listing, (Menu "1", DSK "1" or "2"), program selection (scroll down) may be made by use of UP ARROW (E key) or DOWN ARROW (X key) without using space bar. Note that you can move selection UP if you speed past your choice!

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*****
** HANDLING LARGE TI-WRITER FILES **
** by: Roger Klatt (NL unknown) **
*****
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Here is a procedure for breaking a big text file into two or more pieces when you get that "TEXT BUFFER FULL, SAVE OR PURGE" message. There may be easier ways to do this, but my method results in the largest (and fewest) segments.

First, make a back up of your file and put the original aside for safe keeping. Then load the copy in the usual way, which will produce the above message.

If you SAVE it as-is, you will have the memory so full on subsequent reloads that some of TI-Writer's functions will not work. You need to gain headroom by deleting a few of the last lines, and to do this you neither Save nor Purge, but instead enter an "S" for SHOW LINES, following that with an "E" for "END OF FILE". Let's say it is named BIGFILE, and that 435 lines load before filling.

I suggest deleting around 30-50 lines, so a good separating point should be chosen, perhaps between paragraphs or pages, or if the file is a LISTed Basic program, select a point between two of the Basic lines.

On the command line enter "D" followed by, we'll say 400 435. This indicates the second part, when we get to it, will begin at line 400, so make a note of that. Now, SAVE this portion with a unique name, such as BIGFILEPT1. Do NOT use the original filename, or you will lose that portion which didn't load.

Now, at the command line enter "LF" for LOAD FILE, and arrange it this way: 400 3000 DSKn.BIGFILE

Substitute for 400 the line number you wrote down as being the first line of part two (2). The 3000 only needs to be a number way past the actual end of the entire file. This will load the second part into memory, picking up where part one (1) left off.

If you do not get the "BUFFER FULL" message this time, you are home free with your file in two parts. SAVE the second piece, again giving it a unique name.

If your file is so large that loading the second part also fills the buffer, then repeat the entire process, as needed, until the final portion loads okay. To estimate how many pieces a file will split into, divide its total sectors by 100.

 ** FILE PROTOCOL --- by Mark Schafer **

This article is way too late. TI should've read this article before they used TI Writer! They're using the wrong file format, and you probably are, too.

Let's look at how files are stored on disk. No, I'm not going to get technical and tell you how you can use sector editors to look at and/or change things in a file. This will be a general approach. First, you should be aware that disks are divided into sectors. Catalog programs usually tell you how many of those you have free on a disk. One whole sector is used for each file, to tell the computer everything it needs to know about it before it tries to read or write to it (the header sector). But I'm not going to focus on that either. I'm looking at the part of the disk on which the content of the file is stored.

How many file formats are there? Only counting the ones XB can manipulate on its own, there are four: Internal/Variable, Internal/Fixed, Display/Variable, and Display/Fixed. With any of these file types the computer never splits a record between two sectors. If there's not enough room on the current sector to store the next record, it will start it on the next sector. This is the key to my discussion here.

Starting with variable-length files, the maximum number of characters you can get in one record is 254, (253 in internal in BASIC). There are 256 characters in each sector. As a quick technical excursion, the computer uses the other two characters as a length byte and an end-of-record marker (why it needs both is beyond me). Anyway, you can optionally specify the maximum record length when you open a file (in any language; that's the beauty about this article: it applies to ALL programming languages). TI Writer files for instance, are in DIS/VAR 80 format, so they are limited to 80 characters per record.

Get ready because here comes one of my key points: Why limit the record length to 80 characters when you can have 254? Well, you might say it takes up less disk space. WRONG! Each record in a variable-length file takes up only as many bytes as it needs to. In other words, if you changed every DIS/VAR 80 file to DIS/VAR 254, no thing would change. It would still take up the same amount of space and take the same amount of time to load. Don't do that, because TI Writer won't be able to read them.

So, you might say, why reserve space for each record you'll never use? After all TI Writer only puts 80 or fewer characters in each record; even if the format were DIS/VAR 254, the extra characters would probably never be used. The point is there's no reason not to. If they had done it this way, DIS/VAR 254 would be the standard that DIS/VAR 80 has become. Then all programs that used DIS/VAR 80 files would be able to read each others files, although they may not be able to make any sense out of them, but at least the option would be available.

So if you use DIS/VAR or INT/VAR, you should only use 254. The only reason not to now is to maintain compatibility with other programs. And that's unfortunate, because that's a good reason. That's what I mean about being too late. Oh well, if compatibility isn't important for a particular program you're working on, then go with 254. This will give you the ability to add more characters to the record should it prove necessary later on without having to change the record length.

Yes, I am also going to attack fixed-length record files. Now the maximum is 255 characters (254 in internal in BASIC). The length byte and the end-of-record byte aren't needed since all records are the same length and since that is the case, the number of records in each sector is fixed. So, in most cases, there will be unused bytes in every sector. We need to try to reduce the number of unused bytes without taking up more sectors.

Obviously, FIXED 255 doesn't work because you'd only get 1 record per sector no matter how small. I'll just give this one to you and tell you the reason afterwards. Take 256 and divide it by the number of bytes you plan to have in each record, and drop the decimal. Then take this number and divide it into 256, and drop the decimal again. This is what you should fix the length at. For those of you who are not mathematically inclined, let me give you a list of numbers: 1 through 19, 21, 23, 25, 28, 32, 36, 42, 51, 64, 85, 128, and 256. You can't use 256 since the computer cannot represent that number in a single byte, so you have to use 255 instead. If the length you want to fix is not on the list, move up to the next higher number that is. So if you want to use INT/FIX 43, 43 is not on the list, so you'd use INT/FIX 51 instead.

Let me explain. you see, with 43 bytes per record, you'd get 5 records per sector on the disk. That would amount to wasting 41 bytes per sector (trust me). If you use 51 instead, you still get 5 records per sector but waste only 1 byte per sector. Same argument as above ... the ability to add more characters later on without taking up more space or changing the file format. This won't work out every time; you may have to change the file format some time, but there's no reason to use 43 when 51 costs you no more disk space. The same argument applies to every number not on the list.

This is very important for the numbers between 128 and 255. If you use anything in that range, you'll only get one record per sector. As an alternative to using 255, you might look for a way to reduce the number of characters in each record, especially if you're only a little over 128. If you can get it down to 128, you won't believe the space you'll save! Suddenly, you'll get two records per sector taking only about half the space!

This rule also applies to variable-length record files. As a case in point, I had a program which used a variable-length record file with 64 records. I put so much space in each record, that the file took up the full 65 sectors (one more for the header sector). So I split it into two files, so I could get more records per sector. On one file I get two records per sector; I get three on the other, so the two files combined now take up only 48 sectors! If I had read this article before, they would both be INT/VAR 254 files. So remember, even variable files can benefit from the number list given above. If you can lower the MAXIMUM number of characters per record in files with consistently long records, you can save serious disk space. But you'll still use VARIABLE 254.

In fixed-length records, the most efficient numbers are the powers of 2 (128, 64, 32, etc.) because they use every byte of a sector. This is why archived files are in INT/FIX 128 format. It wastes no space in the fewest reads. Whereas all the above applies to any language, in assembly language you have the option of using PROGRAM files which use every byte up to the last sector, and are therefore the most efficient (not to mention quicker load time). So in assembly language you might want to think about this format for program-specific files. This is the way fractals are stored in FRACTAL EXPLORER.

Reprinted from the Chicago Times,
Feb., 1990

WHY DO I CONTINUE TO USE MY TI COMPUTER?

by Jan Janowski

Now that is a question that has started a few arguments.... I am aware that there are faster, more powerful computers. I am aware that there are not as many people with TI computers as with MS-DOS computers. So why do I keep using my TI? There are four very good reasons:

1. The TI User Group, and the people in it. The User Group expands your knowledge by sharing information and ideas. I know that is the case. For the first three years with my TI computer I "went it alone" without any backing of a local user group. What a waste of time! The power of a User Group is you have many people all working on there own projects, and these people discover things. It is this sharing of ideas and discoveries that make us collectively smarter. If we run into problems, we search for solutions as a group, covering much more area as a group than as individuals alone. The years I spent working on the TI computer alone were for a large part wasted time, for I was searching through problems that had already been solved. Without the User's Group behind me, I would have never developed the TI Portable, the PAL based MBP Clock, or the Eprommer mod, for I wouldn't have found out about a Ramdisk, MBP Clock, or the Eprommer.

2. Non TI-developed hardware. If ramdisks, Hard drives, and other uniquely designed third party hardware had not been developed, I am certain that interest in our Orphaned computer would have waned. I think of the day I bought my Hamsoft insert at a Hamfest as a turning point in my personal TI history. I spent about a month repairing the broken interface card, and when I was done, I was happily typing on a TI computer, and transmitting RTTY (Radioteletype) and CW (Morse Code) to other ham radio enthusiasts WORLDWIDE. I

occasionally came across other TI computers, but in each case I found out that the people on the "other end" had no local TI User's Group nearby, so they used their TI as a tool, just like I did, but nothing more (Another example of the power of a User's Group!). It was this Ham Radio TI computer --- hardware, that opened my eyes to other projects. For example, Ramdisks have simplified our lives, and made our computers much more versatile. Hardware. That is the key to the future of our computer. The more hardware that becomes available, the more opportunities to expand and modify our individual projects. By expanding our projects our computers become more efficient. The more efficient, the more productive. We all started out saving to cassette. Remember how disk systems made you think that you never wanted to go back to cassette? Remember how Ramdisks speeded up your loading, saving? And of course if you have a Hard Drive, you probably decided that you couldn't live without it, right? I truly feel that Hardware is the key to our computer's extended life.

3. Familiarity. On first thought, you might think that this wouldn't have a thing to do with computers, but it does. One of the major problems facing software companies is getting a large percentage of registered software users to update to new releases of existing programs where the structure of the program is changed greatly, is overcoming the "familiarity factor" of users. This can be taken one more step, and considered on the whole, as opposed to just programs. One of the reasons that so many word processing programs abound is that people learn the one they are using, and do not want to go through the "learning process" all over again for a new program. If you are comfortable in BASIC, and you had an idea for a program, would you suddenly go to assembly language or C, or Forth if you were unfamiliar with those other languages? You probably would stay in BASIC. The same goes for computers.

You have all the documentation available for the TI. Just think of the re-learning time and effort you would need to spend just to get to where you are now... on a different computer. Not only would you need to re-learn everything all new, you would have to re-purchase like programs to the ones you already own, for the new computer, and re-learn that, too. All this is in order to continue with your existing projects. Then there is the problem of compatibility. Will your "new computer" software do exactly what your existing software does? Will it support your printer? Will the files be interchangeable? How much is your time worth? Familiarity.... It makes more sense now, doesn't it? This same argument is the reason why there are still people using Radio Shack Model III, Commodore, CPM, and other computers. Familiarity, it makes a lot of sense.

4. Cost. That is something that everyone can understand. If you have a project that at present costs you absolutely nothing, and you want to compare it against a \$1400.00 outlay that does the same thing, you have an idea of what I am talking about. If you are comparing a project that cannot be done on one computer, verses a \$1400.00 outlay, that is a different story. The biggest difference between our computer and other types would be whether a project could be done on it or not. If a project cannot be done on our TI computer there is no solution other than to consider switching. However, look into the software base for our computer. There are still software writers out there, and they are still bringing out new code. If you are comparing a \$45.00 investment in code verses a \$1400.00 investment in hardware plus "I don't know how much.." for software, which way do you go? It depends on how much you want to spend. I have contacted many hams who boast of an AT or PC connected to their ham radio, but they can't do any better job in RTTY than I can do on my TI computer except load files faster. I could

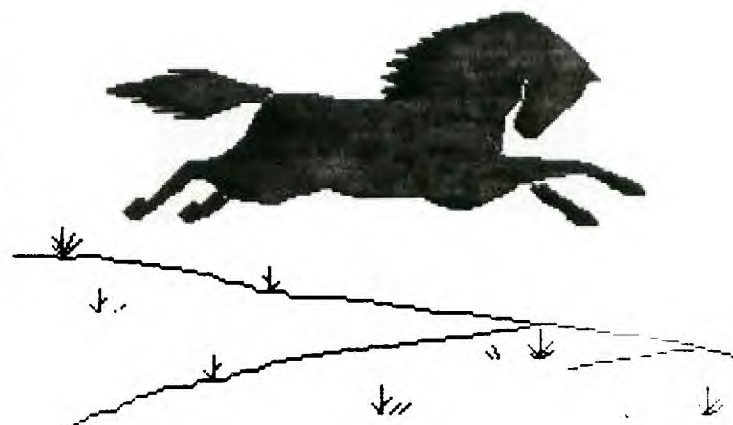
not justify a \$1400.00 (or possibly greater) expense to do the same thing that I can do on my \$80.00 investment in computer gear for ham radio. (TV \$10, Computer \$15, Interface card \$20, Software insert \$20, Cassette Recorder \$15, I borrow printer when necessary). Cost accounting on purchases is an emotional thing to do, but at the bottom line there still is that dollar figure staring up at you. Cost is a big consideration, when comparing an upgrade to an existing system.

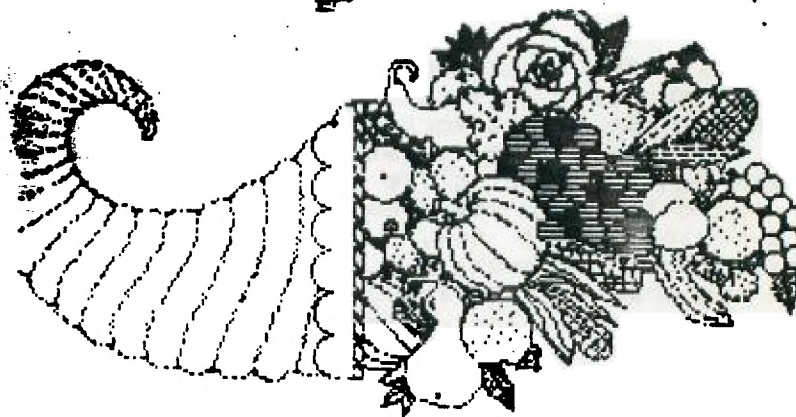
So, why do I use my TI computer? Because it DOES THE JOB. It's:

- Efficient
- Accurate
- Available
- Easy to Use
- Educational
- Affordable (Paid for)
- Inexpensive (parts obtained inexpensively)
- Reliable
- Affordable and Modify-able (mods are relatively inexpensive)
- Improvable (extra hardware is available!)
- Good software base
- Custom software available (it is possible to get custom stuff written for you!)
- Benefit of the User Group
- Great people in the User Group
- Interaction to Ham Radio

and a heck of a lot of FUN!

RUNNING FREE





HAPPY THANKSGIVING

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