

THE SNUGLETER

FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

Vol. 4 - No. 5

JUNE, 1986

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1986 - 6:30 PM

CHARLESTON PLAZA LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

OLD BUSINESS

It's been another very interesting month for SNU5! At our May meeting, we had guest speaker Franz Wagenbach from T.A.P.E. Franz gave us some very interesting demonstrations of some new products from Germany. Among the things demonstrated were the Gramkarte and the new TI-Mouse. He showed us a stand alone 128K memory card and talked about a new 80 column card that will soon be available. Franz also showed us a new EPROMMER, but couldn't demonstrate it because he didn't yet have the power supply for it.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Franz for taking the time and expense of coming to our meeting. Thank you FRANZ!!

For those of you who missed the meeting, we did make a video tape of Franz's talk. The tape will be available to check out from the group library. Unfortunately, the quality of the tape is somewhat less than great, so if you can't stand a few imperfections, don't bother to check it out. Speaking of tapes, we also have available the tape we made at the Feb. meeting when we replaced a keyboard in the group's console. Same thing applies to the quality of this one...especially the beginning. Still haven't gotten the Jan. tape with Craig Miller back from San Diego yet, but when I do, it will also be available for checkout.

Just prior to the May meeting, 9 of us sent off for the new Horizon's RAM DISK kits. As of this writing, 7 of them have been assembled. From the comments I have gotten from the other users and from my own experience, I believe that the Horizon Ramdisk is one of the best and most useful additions the serious user can make to his system. It's similar to going from a cassette based system to a disk based system. You wonder how you got along without it! I am using the Ramdisk now along with Funlwriter to write this column. The text files save to and load from

disk in a fraction of the time it used to take. Moving from the Editor to the Formatter is done effortlessly and quickly enough that you may think both programs are in memory at the same time (I timed it for fun and it took just over 3 seconds from EDITOR to FORMATTER). These two features make it very easy to make additions, deletions, spelling corrections, etc. and then print out the file for proof reading again.

The only disadvantage I can see to using a ramdisk is that the ramdisk is actually an electronic disk, not an electronic disk drive. This means that when the ramdisk is full you either have to delete one thing to load another, or dedicate your ramdisk to certain programs. (with 720 sectors, you can get quite a few programs on it before it gets full). You can't just put in a fresh disk and start to fill it up like you do with a real floppy (unless, of course, you have enough money to buy more than one ramdisk!).

I have chosen to put my most used utilities on the ramdisk and use the remaining space for text files or programs that I am working on. I have FAST-TERM, FUNNLWRITER, DM-1000, NEATLIST, MASSCOPY, QUICKLOAD, ASSEMBLER, and DISKO on mine, along with a few programs and files, and I still have 218 sectors available for more files or other programs and utilities.

The Horizon ramdisk is available in either assembled and tested form or in kit form. There is approximately \$90.00 difference in the price, so if you are at all handy with a soldering iron, you would probably prefer to assemble your own. Plan on spending about 3 to 5 hours putting it together, as there is a lot of soldering to do. The kit is not especially difficult to assemble and is well documented. If you follow the instructions and are careful about your soldering and component polarization, you should have no trouble putting it together. I was very impressed with the quality of the circuit board itself and the completeness of the parts kits.

The Horizon Ramdisk is available from:

Horizon Computer Ltd. (approx \$50
PO box 554 for board)
Walbridge, OH 43465

Parts kit for R/D is available from:

Bud Mills services (\$105 for DBL
166 Dartmouth Dr. \$72 SNGL
Toledo, OH 43614 \$36 for upgrade)

NEW BUSINESS

At this month's meeting, we will be having our first ever demonstration of TI MICROSOFT MULTIPLAN (MSMP). We have talked our own George Tilley into giving us a demonstration. George uses MSMP daily in his real estate business and has a very good knowledge of many of it's uses (both obvious and obscure). He is video taping most of his demo so we can see how everything works without waiting for some of the longer calculations and setup. George says he learned MSMP long before he learned BASIC and has found that for many things, MSMP is much better suited. It promises to be a good meeting for those of us who bought MSMP when the price came down and then never used it because it was another one of those long reference manuals to learn.

As some of you probably know, next month, (July) is election month for SNUG. If anyone would like to run for any of the offices (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Youth Liason), please let Rudy Johnson know before the July meeting. Rudy is coordinating the nominating committee this year, (he's looking for committee members too) so please let him know. This is your user's group. Get involved! We will also be appointing committees for such things as membership, library, and newsletter, so please volunteer. Help us make this the best user group possible!

--John Martin--

BBS NEWS

The BBS has seen a marked increase in usage over the past few months. It's finally getting enough users calling often enough to make it seem worthwhile to run it. There were several times over the past year that I almost decided that it wasn't worth the effort because days would go by with only 1 or 2 calls. Now, I am averaging about 5 calls a night (still not so busy that you will have trouble getting through, but busy enough to let me know that you appreciate having it).

If you haven't checked out our (O)ther BBS section lately, I think you will be surprised. We now have over 300 TI bulletin boards listed from across the country and

around the world! Thanks to our new assistant SYSOP, Bob Tipton for compiling this list for us from many different sources.

Bob Bieber is currently working on the BBS program to add XMODEM transfers (much faster than TE2 transfers) to it. The problem right now is that the original program takes up most of the available memory, so if we want to add something to it, something else has to go! Many other TI BBS's have just dropped the TE2 transfers altogether or made the TE2 section so small that the only thing in it is a utility program to allow XMODEM transfers. We are resisting that approach because many of our users are comfortable with TE2 and don't want to learn a more complicated terminal program. If we can shorten the program and make it more memory efficient, we may be able to retain both TE2 and XMODEM transfers. I would appreciate all comments and suggestions in this area.

If any of you have any articles or tutorials that you would like to have put into the (I)Info and news section of the board, please let me know. I have been downloading files from Compuserve and putting them in that section, but I would like to get some other input. (Compserve has this funny habit of charging money for connect time). If you have downloaded something that may be of interest to the rest of us from Compuserve, the Source, GENie, Delphi, or any other data base or BBS, please share it with the rest of us on our BBS. If you have an original article, we would like to see that, too. With just a little participation from our users, we can make our BBS much more interesting.

--John Martin--

IN OTHER NEWSLETTERS

The newsletters which SNUG receives in exchange with the other users' groups abound with information which will benefit most TI users in one way or another. Currently there are tutorials being presented on using FORTH, 9900 assembly language, BASIC, Extended BASIC, c99 and even PILOT. There are many programs being published on a variety of topics too numerous to mention.

A new group's newsletter, which was just received, was primarily devoted to TI-Writer use and aids. Many of the aids had previously been published in other newsletters, but this issue had pulled them together into

one issue. Other newsletters publish reviews of newer software releases including fairware (fareware, freeware?) releases. Other topics covered include new hardware such as the one which announced the ramdisk which several of us recently assembled. There are project plans for adding 32K memory expansion to just about any device in the system from inside the console to the old stand-alone disk drive controller (also inside the speech synthesizer.)

Announcements which cover current interest items include the on-going coverage of Myarc's new computer. The latest on that is that it will be a card that will fit inside the P-Box with connections for an IBM type keyboard (in the April MICROpedium.)

All of this amounts to more information than anyone person can cover, especially when other duties are required such as getting this newsletter out on time.

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SNUG ELECTIONS

John Martin has asked me to head the nominating committee to recommend officer candidates for the July elections. John is in his words "An old, tired President in need of a break!" John needs to have someone else take over the presidential duties after his two year stint. He is kept busy enough operating the SNUG BBS right now. There are changes and additions to the board's programs which he wants to do but he has not had the time to do so. I think that we need to give him a break!

What SNUG needs now is some fresh blood in the leadership of the group. So anyone who has interest in getting involved in the operation of the group should contact me.

Along the same line the SNUGLETter needs some real help to continue publishing on a monthly schedule. I have some commitments coming in the next 4 to 6 months that will take significant amounts of time on my part. This will prevent me from spending enough time to get out the newsletter on a monthly basis. Actually a new editor or co-editor is needed for the newsletter so I could have some time to devote to applying some of the things which I have been reading about in the other newsletters. I would still help a new editor and hopefully also be able to contribute some new material to the newsletter. Who has the interest in continuing publishing the SNUGLETter?

-- Rudy Johnson --

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TI Tips #2

For the Basic Programmer

Last month I covered the different ways to LIST a program.

This month I set my mind to figure out how many ways to PRINT things in a program. These are a few of the one I came up with:

* PRINT used by it's self will PRINT a blank line to the screen.

* PRINT with information between quotation marks will PRINT that information to the screen.

* PRINT A will PRINT any numeric value assigned to 'A'.

* PRINT A\$ will PRINT anything that is assigned to A\$ providing it is between quotation marks.

* PRINT A,B will PRINT any numeric value assigned to 'A' and 'B'. 'A' will PRINT at position 1 and 'B' will PRINT at position 15.

* PRINT A;B will PRINT the value of 'A' and the value of 'B' side by side with no extra spaces between the values.

* PRINT A:B will PRINT the value of 'A' on one line and the value of 'B' on the next.

These are just a few of the many different ways a PRINT statement can be used. Take some time and see how many you can come up with.

Until next time, Happy Computing

-- Bob Tipton--

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T.I 99/4A CONVENTION

SNUG has received an announcement from the Puget Sound 99ers of their 1986 State of Washington T.I. 99/4A CONVENTION on September 26, 27, 28, 1986. So if you may be visiting the Seattle area on those dates you should keep this TI event in mind. For further information contact Rudy Johnson for the details. They also have a BBS in operation from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. at (206)283-0953 for current information.

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PRINTER FOR SALE

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RITEMAN DOT MATRIX PRINTER WITH PIO
CABLE FOR SALE.....\$155

CALL RON WEBBER.....367-2741

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 * (SNUG). SNUG is a non-profit organization of individuals with an inter- *
 * in all aspects of Texas Instruments' 99/4 & 4A computer, including all *
 * related hardware and software by third party vendors. The GROUP meets *
 * 6:30 PM on the second Monday of the month - currently in the Clark County *
 * Library meeting room, 1726 E. Charleston Blvd. [Charleston Plaza Mall]. *
 * Visitors and guests are welcome to attend the meetings. Information on *
 * membership is available at the meeting. *
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