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NEWSLETTER

SUDBURY 99ERS Home Computer Club c/o John D. Majkot
2530 Ida St.
Sudbury, Ont. P3E 4X1

WELCOME to our THIRD newsletter! We have had only one newsletter per year in the past and hopefully will be able to improve this to a quarterly offering. Read on.....see how you can help to make this happen.

"FUTURE MEETINGS" For 1985: (First Wednesday of the Month)

PLACE: Lockerby High School - Room 217 - 7:00 PM

May 1	June 5	July 3 (?)	August 7 (?)
September 4	October 2	November 6	December 4

Please note that our meetings for July and August may be cancelled if there is not enough interest to warrant the meetings. If these summer meetings are held then we must find another place to hold them since Lockerby will not allow the use of the school during these months. We will advise further.

"EXECUTIVE MEMBERS"

Chairman:	John D. Majkot	522-5665
Treasurer:	Marcel Clement	560-0821
Software Librarian:	Gerry Hortness	983-2646
Technical Advisor:	Ernie Hywarren	566-6794
General Advisor:	Jim McLaren	866-2668

"OUR CLUB"

Back in 1983, a group of interested individuals got together to share their interest in the TI-99/4A computer. Over the last two years our group has had it's ups and downs with the membership as high as 40 and as low as 6. To-day we have 15 paid up members. Many of these members are using a basic computer system, but others are using the expanded system. Members are adding to their systems as they can and all members are gaining in knowledge and experience. We have come along nicely since the early days. Even though TI has exited the Home Computer market, the 99/4A is far from dead! The computer still does an excellent job and Third-Party manufacturers are offering many items that allow the continued use of the computer system. Those members who attend our meetings have seen the catalogues that have been sent to our group.

Where are we now, for those past members (and future) that may want to be part of our group. We offer membership in the club on a Calendar basis for annual dues of \$20.00, Individual or Family. The first meeting is free with no obligation to join. We also offer monthly dues of \$2.00. If an annual membership is taken, this will allow access to our Software Library at no extra charge. If the monthly membership is taken, then this only allows attendance at meetings and access to the material present at the meeting. Our club now has 230 programs in it's library and hopes to keep this number growing. We have an Extended Basic cartridge which can be loaned to full members for their use. We are in contact with two other User Groups: Hamilton and Ottawa and hope to expand on this outside contact.

We owe much of the Software Library to these other groups and thank them for their support. Some of our programs have also been submitted by members of our group.

Where do we hope to go in the future? With any kind of luck, we will publish a quarterly newsletter. Our contact with other groups will expand, allowing further expansion of the Software Library and knowledge of the computer. Programming assistance and tutorials will continue. Just operating the computer to it's capabilities is of much interest to those members who are only starting out. One of our junior members has suggested that he would like to start a Module exchange. Other areas will occur as time goes on.

If anyone is interested in BUYING or SELLING items that they want, please bring this to the attention of our executive. Perhaps this could be something that could be added to the Newsletter. At this point I have heard of a Speech Synthesizer wanted and a Computer System (basic) for sale.

Another thought that has come to mind is the possibility of a spare system for the club members. I have had a past member contact me about problems with his RF Modulator, which must be returned to TI for repair. If we had a spare, and if he was a full member, why not borrow the club spare while his was getting fixed? It's a thought!

To the many clubs or individuals that have written to us in the past, we have not answered to this point due only to a lack of time and not to a lack of interest. Our group would welcome the exchange of newsletters, software and technical information which has been suggested in the past. We are limited in our offerings, due to the small size of our group and the lack of experience or equipment of many of our members. In spite of this, we are not lacking in enthusiasm.

"NEW ITEMS"

During January, I had the opportunity to visit the Consumer Service office of Texas Instruments in Richmond Hill. They assured me that their service of the TI Home Computer line would continue for at least the next two years, and hopefully, for a couple of years beyond this. The policy for repairs is that they would repair or exchange any equipment which was submitted for repair. If you pay shipping to them, they will pay shipping to return it to you. In general, the repair/exchange price is 30% of the original Canadian Retail Price of the component. For example, charges are as follows: Console \$55.00; Power Supply \$17.50; RF Modulator \$17.50; X-Basic \$44.00; Expansion Box \$88.00; Disk Drive \$88.00; etc. Repairs are guaranteed for a period of 6 months on the Console and 3 months on other components.

Channel 99 Hamilton Users Group is running a competition for original programs, with cash certificate prizes for the winners. The competition covers many categories and does have time limitations for entries.

A new catalogue has been received from Tenex Computer Express. The supply of TI material does not seem to be lessening.

Tigercub Software is now sending us their TigerTips. Some neat ideas and a good variety of inexpensive software. Look at their catalogue at our next meeting.

Cards for the expansion box still seem to be available even though the TI cards are mostly gone. If you are interested in expanding, ask at the next meeting.

The Hamilton Users Group are exploring the possibility of converting the TI Disk Controller to read double density disks. That would be nice for those who have the capability in their disk drives.

Wentworth Supplies have indicated that a new memory card will be available in the near future. This will allow memory expansion to 128K or 256K for the 99/4A. Some hardware changes may be required.

CorComp continues to keep our group informed of developments of their expansion system.

Millers Graphics has sent us their latest catalogues of technical manuals for FORTH, RS232 Made Easy, Multiplan Dictionary, and Advanced Diagnostics. This last item is on disk and looks real interesting.

More to come in the next issue.....

"NEWSLETTER"

By John Majkot

This Newsletter is being written to update our members and other interested parties of the progress of our club. In order to make this newsletter a quarterly offering as everyone would like to see, there must be something to put in writing. To make it a success, I would like to see each of our members contribute to the information at hand. Your offering does not have to be highly technical or complex. Many of our members can benefit from the simple information that they have not yet reached in the instruction manuals. Why not offer a review of a favorite program? How about that problem that you were struggling with and finally found the answer? How about a question that has plagued you because you can't find the answer? All of this could help some other member. I would like to have your submissions by the end of May so that our next Newsletter could go out in June.

Any article which you want to submit can be hand-written, of course. The easier way for me to put it in the newsletter would be for you to submit the article on Cassette or Disk File. To do this, you would need X-Basic and the Text-Scribe program from our library. This is a simple Word-Processor program that will operate without expansion memory and can store to Tape or Disk #1,2, or 3. You can write your own article on the computer, store your article on the proper medium and then I only have to convert the file and put it on TI-Writer for editing and re-formatting. The articles as submitted by Gerry Hortness were given to me on Disk, using the Text-Scribe program. It means that I don't have to type so much and we could add more to our newsletter.

To those people that wonder about the file manipulation which I do, the following information should explain it. I can't explain what happens in highly technical terms, but I know my procedure works. The Text-Scribe Program will store information as an Internal Variable 254 file. If on Cassette, the file is Sequential. TI-Writer can only handle Display Variable 80 files. The problem is one of conversion! If on Cassette, the file must be converted to a disk file. This is done by reading the Cassette file into Text-Scribe. This file is then stored to disk as a Int/Var 254 file. This disk file can then be converted to a Dis/Var 80 file by the following program:

```

100 REM "FILE CONVERTOR - ADAPTED BY JOHN MAJKOT"
110 REM "SUDBURY 99'ERS"
120 REM "ORIGINAL PROGRAM FROM TI TERMINAL EMULATOR II MANUAL,
PAGE 20"
130 REM "ALL FILE FORMATS COULD BE CHANGED TO OTHER FORMATS"
140 CALL CLEAR
150 PRINT "ENTER 'device.filename'"
160 INPUT "----- ":FILE$
170 OPEN #1:FILE$,INTERNAL,INPUT ,VARIABLE 254
180 INPUT "OUTPUT FILE(Y/N)? ":C$
190 IF C$="N" THEN 270
200 PRINT "ENTER 'device.filename'"
210 INPUT "---- ":P$
220 OPEN #2:P$,OUTPUT,DISPLAY
230 INPUT #1:A$
240 IF EOF(1)THEN 310
250 PRINT #2:A$
260 GOTO 230
270 INPUT #1:A$
280 IF EOF(1)THEN 310
290 PRINT A$
300 GOTO 270
310 END

```

If the file is already on disk, then the conversion can take place by just running the above program. With the input option "OUTPUT FILE(Y/N)?", this can give you a choice of which disk drive to output to, if Y is the answer. If N is your response, then the file is displayed on the screen. If files are a different format than is in the program, then these only have to be changed to the correct format of the file. Remember to change the name of your file so that the Dis/Var 80 file does not over-write the Program file!

Another neat trick that I have used (the program listing above is an example), is to use the command: LIST "DSKn.program/name". What this command does is to convert a Program to a Dis/Var 80 File on the disk. This would mean that the program could then be loaded into TI-Writer for editing and Finding Strings. This has been a handy feature when I have wanted to convert an RS232 to the PIO printer format which I use. Again, remember to change file names so that the new file does not over-write the original file! My next project will be to find out how to convert the Dis/Var 80 File to a Program File.

"PROGRAMMING TIPS"

By Gerry Hortness

IF YOU HAVE EXTENDED BASIC AND MEMORY EXPANSION, YOU CAN DISABLE THE QUIT KEY BY KEYING IN "CALL INIT :: CALL LOAD(-31806,16)".

HAVE YOU EVER SPENT HOURS TYPING IN YOUR NEW PROGRAM AND WHEN YOU WENT TO SAVE IT, TYPED IN "OLD CS1" BY MISTAKE? ALL IS NOT LOST - JUST TYPE shift E, HIT enter, GET AN I/O ERROR MESSAGE, AND START OVER. THIS WORKS IN BASIC BUT NOT IN X-BASIC UNLESS YOU HAVE MEMORY EXPANSION.

IN X-BASIC YOU CAN USE A STATEMENT SUCH AS "IF X=1 THEN Y=7 ELSE IF X=2 THEN Y=33 ELSE IF X=3 THEN Y=19 ELSE IF X=4 THEN Y=21". YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH THIS IN BASIC USING THIS STATEMENT:

```
"Y=ABS((7*(X=1))+(33*(X=2))+(19*(X=3))+(21*(X=4))).
```

THIS WORKS BECAUSE THE STATEMENT "(X=1)" RETURNS A VALUE OF -1 IF TRUE AND 0 IF FALSE. THUS IF X<>1, YOU HAVE 7*0=0 OR IF X=1 YOU HAVE 7*-1=-7. THE ABS STATEMENT CONVERTS Y INTO A POSITIVE NUMBER. THIS FORMULA, USING TRUE OR FALSE MULTIPLICATION, CAN BE USED IN MANY APPLICATIONS.

DO YOU WANT TO PLACE TEXT ANYWHERE ON THE SCREEN, BUT DON'T HAVE X-BASIC? HERE IS A SUBROUTINE THAT WILL DO IT FOR YOU.

```
5000 FOR I=1 TO LEN(A$)
5010 A=ASC(SEG$(A$,I,1))
5020 CALL HCHAR(ROW,COL+I-1,A)
5030 NEXT I
5040 RETURN
```

THIS SUBROUTINE CAN NOW BE CALLED WITH "GOSUB 5000" AFTER YOU HAVE ASSIGNED A STRING TO A\$- (i.e.A\$="HELLO") AND MADE "ROW" AND "COL" EQUAL TO THE ROW AND COLUMN WHERE YOU WANT THE PRINTING TO START. REMEMBER THAT THIS ROUTINE CAN ONLY PRINT ONE LINE. IN ADDITION, YOU MUST MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT TRY PRINTING BEYOND COLUMN 32. FOR INSTANCE, YOU COULD NOT PRINT "HELLO" STARTING AT COLUMN 29 AS IT WOULD EXTEND TO COLUMN 33 WHICH WOULD CRASH THE PROGRAM.

HERE IS A ROUTINE TO CONTROL A SPRITE ON THE SCREEN THAT WILL ACCELERATE OR DECELERATE THE SPRITE IN EVEN INCREMENTS AND WILL NOT LET THE SPRITE EXCEED A PREDETERMINED SPEED.

```
500 CALL JOYST(1,Y,X)
510 X1=X1-X*(ABS(X1-X)<>16)*-1
520 Y1=Y1-Y*(ABS(Y1-Y)<>16)
530 CALL MOTION(#1,X1,Y1)
```

THE MAXIMUM SPEED IN THE ABOVE IS +/-20 (16 PLUS THE 4 JOYST INPUT). TO CHANGE THE MAXIMUM SPEED, INCREASE OR DECREASE THE 16 IN MULTIPLES OF 4. YOU MAY ALSO ADJUST SPEED BY MULTIPLYING OR DIVIDING X1 AND Y1 BY AN AMOUNT DETERMINED BY YOU.

"PROGRAM LIBRARY"

By Gerry Hortness

I AM GOING TO TRY TO PREPARE A DESCRIPTION OF A FEW PROGRAMS FOR EACH OF THE CLUB NEWSLETTERS. IT WILL BE A RANDOM CHOICE OF PROGRAMS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST.

UTILITY PROGRAMS

-BARTENDER-

THROWING A PARTY? THIS PROGRAM GIVES THE RECIPES FOR DRINKS.

-CHARACTER HEXADECIMAL CODES-

IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE CALCULATING THE HEXADECIMAL CODES FOR THE GRAPHICS IN YOUR PRIZE PROGRAM, THEN YOU WILL WANT THIS PROGRAM. YOU CAN MAKE "CHARS" ON A 16X16 GRID. THE COMPUTER WILL RETURN THE HEX CODES AND DISPLAY THE CHAR IN ACTUAL SIZE. IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, YOU CAN CHANGE IT USING THE EDIT FEATURE.

-GAMES-BASIC

ATLANTIS-

SAVE ATLANTIS BY SHOOTING THE ALIEN INVADERS. GOOD GRAPHICS AND A REASONABLE SPEED OF PLAY.

OTHELLO-

A GAME OF STRATEGY EITHER WITH ANOTHER PLAYER OR AGAINST THE COMPUTER. EACH PLAYER PLACES A MARKER ON THE BOARD IN SUCH A MANNER THAT HE TRAPS THE OPPONENT'S MARKER(S) BETWEEN TWO OF HIS OWN. WHEN THIS IS DONE THE OPPONENT'S MARKER(S) CHANGES TO HIS COLOR. THE OBJECT IS TO HAVE THE MOST MARKERS IN YOUR COLOR.

-GAMES-EXTENDED BASIC

ASTEROIDS-

PLAYS LIKE THE ATARI GAME. MOVE YOUR SPACESHIP THROUGH THE ASTEROIDS AND BLOW THEM UP WITHOUT CRASHING INTO THEM.

BOWLING-

TRY FOR THE STRIKES AND SPARES. TWO VERSIONS: ONE USES THE KEYBOARD, WHERE YOU LINE UP THE BALL AND HOPE IT GOES STRAIGHT; THE OTHER USES JOYSTICKS, BUT THE ALLEY IS TERRIBLY CROOKED.

Editors note: We now have an up-to-date listing of our Software Library available to all paid full members. If you did not receive your copy at the last meeting please request it at the next meeting.

To finish this issue of our newsletter, here is a little program that runs in console basic and shouldn't take you a month of Sunday's to key in. It is an automatic music generator that seems to go on forever. It is part of Tips From the Tigercub. Try it! You'll probably like it.

```
100 REM - AUTOMATIC MUSICMAKER IN THE KEY OF A MINOR - by Jim
Peterson
110 RANDOMIZE
120 DIM N(30)
130 F=220
140 FOR J=0 TO 36
150 X=X+1+(X=12)*12
160 IF (X=2)+(X=5)+(X=7)+(X=10)+(X=12) THEN 190
170 Y=Y+1
180 N(Y)=INT(F*1.059463094^J)
190 NEXT J
200 K=8
210 K=K-INT(5*RND+1)+INT(5*RND+1)+(K>21)*2-(K<1)*2
220 IF (K<1)+(K>21) THEN 210
230 CALL SOUND(-999,N(K),0,N(K)*1.5,0,N(K)*3.75,30,-4,5)
240 GOTO 210
```

HAPPY COMPUTING

SUDBURY 99'ERS