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TACOMA 99ERS USERS GROUP NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 NOVEMBER 1987 No. 11

From the President . . .

Time again for this monthly blurb. At our October 15th meeting, we had a short (45 minute) business meeting, then had a super good demo by Art Daniels, on the many possibilities of CSGD. He showed a brief demo of what each program would do and gave some idea of the many graphics, pictures, type fonts, etc. that are contained in the many programs and files that make up the complete CSGD package. Many thanks, Art. It was super great.

All the local Users Groups that are listed in the **Puget Sound Computer User** were invited to participate in the Seattle OFFICE PRODUCTS & SYSTEMS SHOW at the Seattle Center Coliseum on October 20, 21 and 22 and our user group took part in this event. Frank Ashburn had two days off so he took the club's system and set it up at the show. He was at the show on Tuesday and Wednesday and I went up on Thursday. Thanks for helping out, Frank. The show was an experience, as we met a variety of business and professional people as well as users. I talked to some people that have their TI 99/4A's hid away collecting dust and hopefully some of them will get them out and see if they still run. There were other user groups there with their own type of equipment with which I had a chance to get acquainted with with people. The main vendors at the show were Businesses showing their products and services. There were a variety of computers and accessories to look at and we shared a table with Western Washington Computer Club.

We have had some visitors at our meetings recently and we want to make sure they feel welcome so they will want to come again. Also have some people who just recently joined our club. We want to welcome all of you and hope we can be of help as you may also be of help to us. The new names are: (hope these are right) Rondall Frazer, Ben Anstey, John Diaz and Mike Constanti. Just recently, Ron Frazer expanded his system with a P-box, 32K card and two double double disks. Way to go, Ron.

HELP!HELP!

As of now we don't have any special demos lined up for our meetings. We need some input from the membership of what they would

(Continued on Page 6)

Tacoma 99ers HONOR ROLL

For the Period Ending Oct. 25th

The following members have contributed time and effort in support of User Group sponsored activities. This is to express appreciation for their contribution.

Computer Fair SEATTLE Center
Oct 20,21,22 1987
FRANK ASHBURN
VERN SCHROTENBOER

Computer Room For Oct.
TOM KING - 3rd

JEAN / PAUL ANSTEY - 10th
BEN ANSTEY - 10th

JEAN ANSTEY

WALT HAMILTON - 17th

BILL CASTELL - 17th

RON FRAZIER - 24th
JOE NOLLAN - 24th
VERN SCHROTENBOER - 24th

WHERE WERE YOU?_____ 31st
YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

Officers Meeting Oct. 12, 1987

WALLY DUBBERLY
BOB HAUN
RON PREWITT
VERN SCHROTENBOER
ART DANIELS
LARRY HAWK
JOE NOLLAN

Newsletter Articles

VERN SCHROTENBOER
BOB HAUN
JOE NOLLAN
ART DANIELS
WALLY DUBBERLY
TOM FENTON

From the Library Desk. . .

PERIODICALLY MEMBERS CALL OR ASK ME CONCERNING THEIR PROBLEMS IN LOADING PROGRAMS. HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS THAT MAY HELP YOU FIGURE THEM OUT.

FIRST, CATALOG YOUR DISK TO FIND OUT WHAT KIND OF FILES ARE ON IT. THEN START THROUGH THESE TIPS TO RUN THE FILES:

A. DIS/FIX 128 FILES ARE USUALLY ARCHIVED FILES. THEY MUST BE DE-ARCHIVED BEFORE YOU CAN IDENTIFY THE KIND OF FILES THEY CONTAIN. **NOTE;** BEFORE YOU DE-ARCHIVE MORE THAN ONE OF THESE FILES TO 1 SINGLE DISK, BE SURE THEY DO NOT CONTAIN FILES WITH THE SAME FILE NAMES SUCH AS LOAD OR UTIL1, ETC.

B. DIS/VAR 80 FILES.

1. USUALLY THESE ARE A TEXT OR DOCUMENTATION FILES. READ THESE WITH E/A, TI-WRITER, OR DM1000.

2. D/V 80 FILES TITLED READ-ME, DOC OR INSTRUCTION ETC ARE READ AS ABOVE AND WILL GIVE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE DISK OR A PROGRAM ON IT. READ THESE FIRST.

C. INT/VAR 254 FILES USUALLY GREATER THAN 50 SECTORS, ARE XB PROGRAMS REQUIRING MEMORY EXPANSION. THEY RUN IN XB.

D. DIS/FIX 80 FILES ARE ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE PROGRAMS WHICH CAN BE LOADED AND RUN IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS:

1. USE THE LOAD AND RUN OPTION OF E/A OR MM (#3). ENTER THE DISK DRIVE AND FILE NAME (DSKx.NAME). WHEN IT ASKS FOR A SECOND FILE NAME, JUST PRESS ENTER WITH NO ENTRY. IF THE PROGRAM DOES NOT RUN FROM THAT POINT, IT WILL ASK FOR A PROGRAM NAME. IF YOU DON'T KNOW IT, SEARCH THE LAST FEW SECTORS OF THE FILE WITH A SECTOR EDITOR AND LOOK FOR NAMES SUCH AS; START, BEGIN, GAME, LOAD, RUN, SFIRST, ETC. ENTER THE NAME AND IT SHOULD RUN. YOU CAN TRY SOME OF THESE NAMES FIRST AND MAYBE SAVE A LITTLE TIME.

2. IF YOU ENCOUNTER D/F 80 FILES WHICH ARE CONSECUTIVE, SUCH AS FILE1, FILE2 OR FILE, FILF, FILG OR ANY OF THIS TYPE, LOAD THEM INTO E/A OPTION 3. LOAD THEM IN SEQUENCE. WHEN ALL ARE LOADED, PRESS ENTER TO GET THEM RUNNING OR THE PROGRAM NAME PROMPT AS ABOVE.

E. PROGRAM FILES. THERE ARE MANY OPTIONS FOR RUNNING FILES WITH A PROGRAM FORMAT.

1. A PROGRAM FILE NAMED LOAD WILL AUTOMATICALLY RUN WHEN YOU SELECT XB AND THE DISK IS IN DRIVE #1, OR RUN USING "OLD DSKx.LOAD" THEN "RUN".

2. PROGRAM FILES TITLED IN CONSECUTIVE ORDER SUCH AS MASS, MAST, MASU, OR UTIL1, UTIL2, UTIL3 SHOULD BE TRIED IN E/A OPTION #5 OR A SIMILAR OPTION 5 LOADER. ENTER THE FIRST NAME IN THE SEQUENCE AND PRESS ENTER. THE REST MAY THEN LOAD THEMSELVES AUTOMATICALLY. **NOTE;** IF THE FIRST FILE IS NAMED UTIL1 MERELY CHOOSE OPTION #5 AND PRESS ENTER. THIS WILL LOAD THEM AUTOMATICALLY FROM DRIVE #1 ONLY. THESE CAN ALSO BE LOADED FROM TI-WRITER OPTION #3, ANY OTHER UTILITY OPTION OR DM1000.

3. ANY PROGRAM FILE EXACTLY 33 SECTORS LONG IS MOST LIKELY AN ASSEMBLY PROGRAM LOADED FROM OPTION #5 AS ABOVE.

4. PROGRAMS LONGER THAN 33 SECTORS ARE MOST LIKELY BASIC OR XB. TRY XB FIRST.

5. PROGRAMS LESS THAN 33 SECTORS COULD BE BASIC, XB, OR ASSEMBLY. TRY THEM IN THAT ORDER.

6. A PROGRAM FILE OF 52 SECTORS COULD BE A TUNNELS OF DOOM FILE, TRY IT IF YOU HAVE THE CARTRIDGE.

7. A PROGRAM FILE OF 54 SECTORS COULD BE AN ADVENTURE GAME FOR THAT CARTRIDGE, TRY IT.

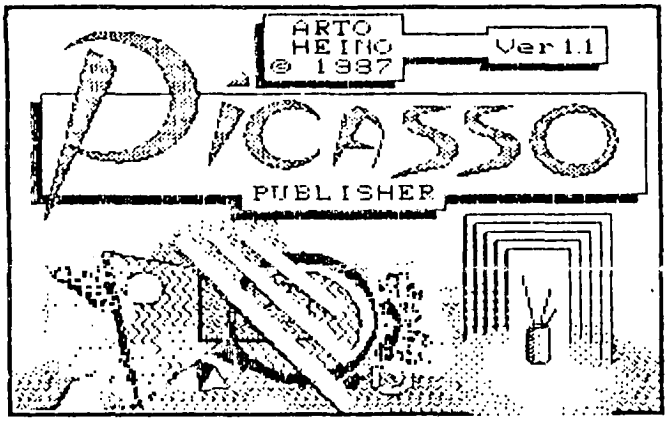
F. ANY OTHER TYPE FILE IS MOST LIKELY A DATA FILE USED BY A PROGRAM AND MUST BE LEFT ON THE DISK TO RUN WITH THE PROGRAM.

G. DON'T FORGET OPTION #4 OF E/A - PRINT. THIS OPTION WILL PRINT A D/V80 OR D/F80 FILE FROM THE DISK TO YOUR PRINTER.

HOPEFULLY THESE TIPS WILL HELP YOU IN RUNNING THE VARIOUS FILES ON YOUR DISKS. WHEN NOTHING SEEMS TO WORK, GIVE ME A CALL, OR JOE NOLLAN, RON PREWITT, ART DANIELS, TOM FENTON OR WALLY D. A CALL FOR HELP.

BOB HAUN **584-3938**

Disk of the Month



Pick up your brush, select your pen's 'nib' and texture, grab the joystick and you're a PICASSO! SUPERLATIVE DESKTOP-PUBLISHING PROGRAM by Arto Heino of Australia! Does ALL the standard draw-plot routines PLUS: Merge TI-writer ASCII files/load and even OVERLAY multiple TI-ARTIST P' type files (incl. the DIGIT PAK). MAGNIFY ANY portion of your pic and work in SINGLE DOT RES. Includes 10 letter fonts and abilities to edit create your own... dumps files to disk and printer...use pics in XB...much more! WELL WORTH THE REQUESTED FAIRWARE DONATION REQUESTED BY THE AUTHOR!!!!!!! Requires 32K, Disk Drive, XB or E/A cartridge and joystick. Fairware at its absolute BEST! This is the DISK OF THE MONTH. See Bob Haun. More details at the meetings.

DISCLAIMER:
THE ARTICLES CONTAINED IN THIS NEWSLETTER DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE OPINION OF THE GROUP, EDITOR, OR ANY PERSON OTHER THAN THE AUTHORS. THE TACOMA 99ERS USERS GROUP CANNOT ASSUME LIABILITY FOR ERRORS OR OMISSIONS IN ARTICLES, PROGRAMS OR ADVERTISEMENTS.

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IBM XT TURBO REVIEWED

By TOM FENTON

Several people have asked my opinion of the Triton Turbo XT. This you may recall is the IBM compatible attachment for the TI. Well, OK. For better or worse, here is MY OPINION.

Last year at the Seattle TI Fair the biggest news, in my opinion, was that an un-named company would be releasing an undescribed attachment for the TI that would allow it to run IBM software. Since I use an IBM compatible at work and could not really afford to 'dispose of' the investment I already had in my TI; this news came almost as a blessing from God. I waited eagerly for the official announcement. Finally, in late January, the official word came out. Triton was handling the machine and would begin taking orders soon.

The first day that Triton was open for orders I called their 800 number and placed my order. That same day I mailed my check. Then I again settled back, anxiously, (yes, that is a contradiction) to await delivery.

And await delivery.

And await delivery.

Then one beautiful rainy day in March (yes, that is a contradiction) it arrived.

The Turbo XT comes with 256K RAM, one 360K disk drive (double sided, double density), the CPU box, a bridge box that attaches to the TI and several cables. Since I happened to have an extra double, double drive sitting around the house at the time, I installed the second drive before I connected the system.

That was the first of many upgrades.

The Triton Turbo XT actually is a Sperry IBM XT compatible with the Triton name. The CPU box is a nearly complete stand alone computer. The only thing missing is a keyboard and display screen. The connections on the back are standard IBM style connections. The only difference between a real IBM compatible and the Triton Turbo is the bridge box which allows you to use the TI keyboard and display.

Well, the first thing I discovered was that the 48 key TI keyboard was seriously inadequate for use with an IBM. A normal IBM XT has at least 96 keys. In order to duplicate this on the TI keyboard there were 4 keyboard 'modes'. This meant that you now had a four row overlay strip on your TI. It also meant that you were constantly switching modes to get the keys that you needed to use. Imagine trying to play a game that way.

Consequently, the next upgrade was an additional keyboard. I now have a lovely 102 key AT style keyboard. It is immeasuably more convenient. Of course, it also means I have paid more than the original machine's price.

Since I had come into a little extra money at the time I also had the memory expanded to a full 640K.

The next problem I had was the display. First I couldn't get color at all. The Triton people were very helpfull and after several attempts to debug and adjust the display adapter card over the phone (an 800 number) they finally sent me a new display card free. (in exchange) After getting the new display card I learned that the CGA (Color Graphics Adapter) card that comes with the machine is only capable of providing color displays on a composite monitor with certain software packages.

I soon added an RGB monitor. Another few dollars.

You may recall that the Turbo XT is actually a stand alone computer that simple uses the TI keyboard and display screen. This

means I now have a stand alone IBM compatible computer that is not connected to the TI. I now have two seperate but not equal computers.

At this point in time I wonder why I was so excited about an IBM attachment for the TI. I should have realized that since the IBM uses a Central Processing Unit chip that is made by Intel instead of TI; there is no way a TI can become an IBM.

The Triton Turbo XT is, as advertised, 100% hardware and software compatible with the IBM. Simply because it is a stand alone compatible computer. It is capable of using the TI keyboard and display; but the result is not very adequate.

IN MY OPINION - If you feel you must have an IBM compatible computer; go buy a compatible. If you really would like to use the TI keyboard and display; I have a spare bridge box and cables that I'm not using.I could let you have them real cheap.

As for why you might need IBM compatibility.

There are things you cannot do on a TI. There are also things you cannot do on an IBM. So I still have two machines. The only problem I now face is the fact that I can bring work home from the office; dammit.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (Continued from Page 1)

like to see. Also I would like to have some ideas of what you would like for door prizes, maybe even a donation for a door prize, if you have something.

It seems there was a rumor started about a Christmas Party for our second meeting of December. Please keep this in mind. I can't hardly believe that is coming up so soon.

If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy of the **HARDWARE MANUAL** for the TI 99/4A - from the Bunyard Group - as was advertised in some of our newsletters and I don't have your name, then please call me at 848-6872 or talk me at our next meeting. With enough interest, we can get the manuals at a reduced rate of about $14.00. The club also has blank disks if you need any for 50 cents each or 25 for $10.00. The CLUB NEWSLETTER needs articles, anytime. Please turn the articles in by the 25th of each month to Art Daniels or any officer.

Computers + store has a couple big boxes full of cartridges and other software in their store on consignment. If you need something, you might check it out. They are located at the west end of Hwy 512 and S. Tacoma Way behind the Mobil Station.

See you all at next meeting-
Vern Schrotenboer

DISKS FOR SALE - See Ron Prewitt

50 cents each or 25 for Ten Dollars

BITS and PIECES

By JOE NOLLAN (206) 572-4680

I'm leaving this article untitled since I will cover many topics. The first will be my impressions of the Seattle Fair which I felt was a big success. Our club did very well distributing freeware offerings and I hope that those who find a program useful will make it known to the author. I had a disk of programs of my own that was received well also.

I sold a few Super Cartridges and gave away all of the copies of schematics/parts layout sheets that I had. It would seem to me that a lot of people wanted to build their own and I want to make myself available to help in any way. I still have some that I am willing to sell to those who lack the tools, knowlege or desire to build one. I just got a copy of a menu program by John Johnson for the Supercart that looks great and will be revieving and demonstrating it at a future meeting. I might mention at this time that I put a copy of the Super Cart Utilities in the club's disk set. I had donated a Supercart to the club earlier and now members have access to these great utility programs for it. The utility disk will be updated as programs become availible.

There is also a copy of the E/A Utilities which goes along with the club's copy of Editor/Assembler Manual and Module. As long as I have an extra Super Cartridge available, I am willing to loan it out to members along with a utility program package to give them an opportunity to see what can it is used for. At the fair I sold the 20 Minimemory batteries which I brought along as a last minute thought. In retrospect I can say that the battery sales surprised me and if anyone else needs one, let me know. The only non seller at the fair was the TI symbol refrigerator magnets that can be used to hold your favorite disk to the side of the PE Box.

In up and coming department I'm working on a program that will allow you to build a menu program for a disk of E/A 5 type programs. It will run with X-Basic. It works now but needs a little fine tuning because it is still user hostile. I finished work on some programs for the library, most notably some great programs for Astronomy. Ask your librarian. I have been pulling some good info from some of newsletters that we trade and will be sharing that soon. I might point out that what I find interesting is probably different from your interests and suggest that you scan the newsletters yourself.

In the hardware dept. I'm working up a demo on changing a resistor in the console that will vastly improve the screen image. It is a 10 cent change and worth the price. I have also ordered a board to put 32K inside the console. The 32K is more involved than the resistor change but I'm more than willing to help others. Another project on my list is a NON-DSR RAM card which fills another 8K hole in the memory map. These projects will be shared at the meetings as they come about.

Need memory? I was made aware of a 1 MEG RAM-DISK kit. It will work with existing cards and the 9640 as well. It can be formatted as multiple drives. Cards available start at 90K and range up to the 1M. Contact Bud Mills Services, 166 Dartmouth Drive, Toledo, OH 43614 or telephone (419) 385-5946.

Now, a little pep talk and soul searching for the group members. We recently changed our format and will be having demonstrations at both meetings. I think this is a great opportunity to see some library programs demonstrated as well as getting questions answered. There has been a sad lack of input from the members for subjects. An effort is being made to keep the business portion of the meeting as short as possible for the maximum demo time. Please support this with your input. One on my own mind is that the utility or game programs are being loaded individually with the E/A cartridge (the hard way) and not with a menu program from X-Basic (the easy way). That is my idea, let's hear yours.

VARIOUS LAWS AND PRINCIPALS

Murphy's Law--If there is a way to do it wrong, it will be done wrong...at the most inopportune time.

Parkinson's Law--Work will expand to fill the time available for its completion.

Weiler's Law--Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn't have to do it himself.

Peter Principal--In an organization an individual will rise to his level of incompetence.

Paul Principal--Individuals in an organization who once functioned at their level of competence often become incompetent as they become uneducated for that level.

Mary Principal--If many individuals remain too long at their level of incompetence, they will destroy the organization because their presence demonstrates to others that competence is not a prerequisite for success.

Chisholm's Second Law--Any time things appear to be going well, you have overlooked something.

Lindberg's "Principal of the Vital Few"--90% of the work is accomplished by 10% of the workforce.

A Company that Cares

By ART DANIELS

It's nice to know there are still companies that care.

On September 9th I ordered 600 disks from MEI to have for our TI Fair on Sept. 26th. They assured me I would have them with no problem. The disks arrived on the 18th in plenty of time. I opened them up that night and found that 500 of the disks did not have the write protect notch. I called Saturday morning on their 800 number and talked to Ms Turner who was very helpful and assured me I would still get them in time for our fair. The package of 500 replacement disks arrived on Thursday the 24th by U.P.S., 2nd day air. They also provided the return shipping on the bad disks. Thanks MEI you made our booth at the fair a success because you are a COMPANY THAT CARES.

TACOMA 99ERS USERS GROUP

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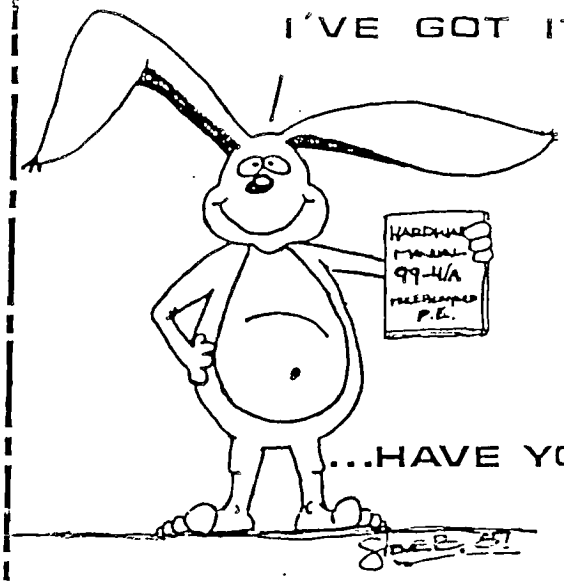

HARDWARE MANUAL FOR THE
TI 99/4A

IT DESCRIBES:

- CONSOLE DESIGN
- CUSTOM CHIP OPERATION
- TMS 9900 H/W ORGANIZATION
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Say you saw it in The Tacoma 99ers Newsletter

Disk Controllers and Compatibility

by: Paul E. Scheidemantle

P and A S O F T W A R E

One of the common questions that i'm always asked is..... If I get this particular disk controller will it be compatible with one or the other of the others??? Well hopefully this article will help remove those doubts and be of help in clearing up alot of missinformation.

All of the disk controllers listed below will initialize single or double sided diskettes provided you have a drive or drives with these features. Next the problem is compatiblity between the differant densities. Shown below is the basic information on each of the major controllers so that you can see what is compatible with what.

One quick note on the Ryte Data chips is that to my knowledge they are not compatible with any of the controllers listed below because they require 80 track drives. You get 1440 sectors with these chips installed in your Texas Instruments disk controller by initializing double sided single density on 80 tracks.

Texas Instrument:

Initializes Single Density only. 9 sectors per track (40 Track). This diskette can be read and written to by both Corcomp and Myarc Control cards.

Corcomp :

Initializes Single or Double Density 9 sectors per track (40 Track) in single density format and 18 sectors per track in double density format. This diskette can be read and written to by both Corcomp and Myarc Control cards, or the TI control card providing that the disk is single density format and either single or double sided (again you must have a drive to match).

Myarc :

Initializes Single or Double Density 9 sectors per track (40 Track) in single density format and 16 or 18 sectors per track in double density format. This diskette can be read and written to by both Corcomp * and Myarc Control cards, or the TI control card providing that the disk is single density format and either single or double sided (again you must have a drive to match).

* Note that if the diskette has been initialized as double density in the 16 sectors per track mode it is compatible ONLY with the MYARC controller!

DEFINITIONS:

SSSD = Single Sided Single Density
SSDD = Single Sided Double Density
DSSD = Double Sided Single Density
DSDD = Double Sided Double Density
T = Texas Instr. disk controller
C = Corcomp disk controller
M = Myarc disk controller

FORMATS:		T	C	M
SSSD:	9 Sectors per track 40 Tracks 360 Sectors total	o	o	o
SSDD:	16 Sectors per track 40 Tracks 640 Sectors total	-	-	o
SSDD:	18 Sectors per track 40 Tracks 720 Sectors total	-	o	o
DSSD:	9 Sectors per track 40 Tracks 720 Sectors total	o	o	o
DSDD:	16 Sectors per track 40 Tracks 1280 Sectors total	-	-	o
DSDD:	18 Sectors per track 40 Tracks 1440 Sectors total	-	o	o

TACOMA 99ERS
USERS GROUP
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P BOX — DISK DRIVE,
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MEETINGS - 1st and 3rd THURS. - 8 p. m.

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For More Information Call 474-7310