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OUR NEXT MEETING will be on Thursday  
NOVEMBER 20, 1986 AT 7:30 p.m.

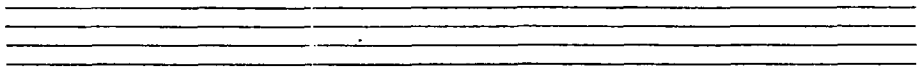
Our DECEMBER meeting will be  
December 18, 1986 at 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: CAPITAL DISTRICT PSYCHIATRIC CENTER  
New Scotland Ave. Next to Albany Medical Center

Topics for November:  
Rich Lane will demo the HORIZON ram disk.  
Chuck Eacy will show his gambling expertise with MONTE CARLO.  
Arthur Fayeur should have FRE-SCAN IT from Asgard.  
The Software Library Club will be present

A NOTE to other Users Groups: The articles printed in the Upstate Newsletter  
may be reprinted if proper credit is given to the author and to the Upstate New  
York 99/4 Users Group.

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ALBANY, N.Y. 12212



Observations from The TI Fair by Ron Albright

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary:

"cult" (F L; F culte, L cultus meaning "care, adoration". "to cultivate") - a great devotion

For some time I have noticed an interesting trend in the TI community. It has been the progression toward what I like to call "cultism". Despite the negative connotation of the word "cult" (from the legacy of Jim Jones and "yuppies"), I like the trend. Like the Trekkies of the seventies which held well-attended conventions of that shows devotees years after the program was off the air, the TI users are becoming cultists. In my way of thinking, cultists are committed, dedicated and forever. Despite the undeniable fact that the computer industry has left the 99/4A in the dark ages in many capabilities, it, because of the cultists, will never really die. Sandy Bartels, the vice-president of the Chicago Users Group put it quite nicely when she observed that despite the fact that her group's members sometimes sell their computers to either go to another machine or give up on computers, the machines almost always sell and, then, those who buy them, become new activists. Group members, anxious to learn and progress with their new machines. It is a never-ending infusion of new, excitable users that keep the cult alive. Why a cult?

What is the difference between a cult and just a user base? Several things come to mind. At the recent 4th Annual TI Fair in Chicago, cult behavior was everywhere. You know you are in a cult when some of the hottest sales items were identifying memorabilia - buttons, t-shirts, bumper stickers, and hats. You know you are in a cult when folks are attending and asking questions at a hardware seminar on how to weld and resolder chips and such in consoles and cartridges and not asking questions about loading and running programs from cassette. You know you are in cult when you start having bona fide "personalities" - fair-goers were actively seeking out to shake the hand of, take the picture of or have their pictures taken with the Paul Charltons, the Clint Fulleys, the Barry Travers, the Peter Hoddies (particularly after his rousing music demonstration), and other "names" in the TI world. Even autograph seekers were out in force. You know you are in a cult when 1000 or so people attend a fair in the rain and cold of a Chicago Saturday not just locally, but from as far away as California, Georgia, New York and Canada. You know you are in a cult when you sit and have a cup of coffee and watch folks leaving the fair with plastic bags full of new software and hardware (and memorabilia). Its an amazing thing to watch, these cults. And a fun thing to be a part of. The numbers game...

The 1985 Fair drew, reportedly, 2000 or so people. This year's Fair drew between 900 and a thousand. Is that a sign of a decline in the cult? Not at all. There are several key things to note. First, the weather. We are talking miserable, folks, with a capital "M". That surely kept lots of local people, not cultists (yet) at home. Secondly, talk to the vendors. Those that came to the show came with spent money. Lots of money. These are the serious users. In a cult, give me 900 fanatics over 2000 "interested participants" any day. So, no, I don't think the decline in absolute numbers is an indication in any way that the cult is weakening. If anything, the quality of the attendees was strong evidence that the TI users are as strong as ever. The Faire Itself...

The doors of the Faire opened at 9:00 am on a wet, blustery Chicago Saturday. The presentations led off at 10:30 with Chris Bobbitt of Asgard demonstrating some of that firms newest software - "Total Filer",

a unique, text-oriented database program from Warren Agee, and "High Gravity", a game and learning tool from Tom Wibel. Both of these fine programs are written in c99. At 11:00, Clint Fulley gave an excellent talk on the C language, as a whole, and c99, Clint's creation, specifically. Then at lunch, there was an informal discussion of the attending user group officers on the trials and tribulations of user group officers, led by the Chicago User Group. The afternoon was started off with a bang as Lou Phillips showed the Myarc 9640 computer (I understand "Geneve" has been dropped as a name as HP already has a "Geneva" portable on the market, but this is strictly unofficial). It will be ready RSN ("Real Soon Now"). The hangup now being the late shipment of the "Gate Arrays" from Mitsubishi. There was an excellent hardware "hackin'" seminar following by Al Stump of the Chicago UG. He showed, with some well-done slides, how to make a "super-cartridge" and other hardware tricks. He said he hoped to make the slides available to other UG's through Chicago soon. The, to me, came the highlight of the entire fair. J. Peter Hoddie, one of the brightest stars on the TI horizon, gave a rousing music demonstration using two consoles synchronized to play music with one console "directing" the other. An incredible thing to hear. The, Peter played a cello to a computer "piano" accompaniment. Absolutely marvelous. Peter also announced that he and Barry Traver would be forming a new venture to produce software and hardware (an 8-port cartridge board was displayed as one possibility). The seminars were closed out by Franz Waggenbach's demonstration of the German 80 column device and assorted other hardware.

On the floor...

There were some 40 or so tables and 30 or so firms selling an incredible array of software and hardware. New products were all over the place. At the Hunter Electronics table, Mike McCann (author of "Business Graphs 99"), introduced his new "Printer's Apprentice", a "Print Shop-like" program. At the same time, Asgard Software was previewing J. Peter Hoddie's new "Font Writer", which is a graphics program that can use Artist and Graphix fonts and graphics and mix text with it. Disk-Only Software announced the publication of a new manual called the "Orphan's Survival Handbook", which will be a unique anthology of both the "Best Of" the TI user group newsletters as well as some brand new material from some of the brightest in the TI community. Databiotics showed the Pilot language they have long promised. I saw the new keyboards from Rave 99 and they were an interesting concept for those interested in an IBM-style user-interface. And more things that I never got the chance to see, as I was busy putting faces with names and shaking lots of hands that I had looked forward to shaking for some time. It was the atmosphere of a celebration and a carnival. Exciting and lively. Incredible for sure.

What next?

I came away with a strange sense of invigoration and rejuvenation. Judging from what I saw in Chicago, the TI community is alive and well. Not as large for sure, but, quantity has been traded for quality. Sophistication and dedication now rule and it is obviously accelerating product development on all fronts. I enjoyed the Fair and agree with Art Byers. When a Fair is happening near you - be it Boston, Los Angeles, Seattle, TICOFF, or wherever - go to it. You meet the nicest people there.

## PRESIDENTS COMPUTER CORNER

### Meeting Notes

Be sure to be at the November meeting to see the following:

- (1) PRE-SCAN IT - an utility program for Extended Basic users and programmers. This program re-writes XB programs so that they execute faster than normal plus the re-written versions are also smaller.
- (2) FAREWARE OFFERING - an XB version of Monte Carlo written by Bob Guellnitz of Colonia , New Jersey.
- (3) More programs from the Software Library.
- (4) See Rich put the Horizon Ramdisk thru its paces. This package includes the Ramdisk plus the operating system on diskette.

### TI-NOTES

Need repair work on TI products ? Inquiries may be directed to:

Damon Fikes, Texas Instruments  
Attn: Repair  
2305 N. University  
Lubbock , Texas 79415  
Phone : (806) 741-2321

Millers Graphics will announce in January a MS-DOS product that will allow TI users to run MS-DOS software. More info will be published as it becomes available.

MICROpendium has announces that C. Regina will be writing their BASIC column beginning in January. Most of you should remember her articles from Compute and 99ER. This column wishes her well.

### HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

Ivan Stilwell wishes to acquire a July 1983 issue of 99ER. He is willing to trade a September issue or purchase if necessary. Ivan also has 2 TI consoles for sale at \$50.00 each. If interested , please phone (518) 399-1254.

Nick has a PEB system with 32K, disk controller card, and a ss/sd disk drive along with other assorted hardware and software. If interested, please phone (518) 372-1178.

This writer still wishes to acquire a CORCOMP disk controller card. If you wish to sell one please phone (518) 370-5215.

### FUTURE TOPICS:

Cartride Emulator and the Program Manager from Pilgrim's Pride.

XB II from Myarc

TI-opoly - monopoly for the TI