

VAST NEWS

Volume 6 Number 3

March 10, 1990

BBS Back In Business!

The VAST Bulletin Board System is back on line after a 2 month pause while the User Group determined what direction it should take. A BBS committee has been set up to watch its operation per guidelines it has established.

The NEW telephone number is (602) 433-2767. For those of you who use the auto dialer of TELCO or any other auto dialer program to dial BBS', don't forget to change your dialer log before calling! For most of Phoenix and its neighboring cities the call should be a toll free call. The board is in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The New SysOp is Leo Baker. After some searching through the group for a person who would be

interested in running the BBS, he was asked by the BBS committee and accepted the role as SysOp.

The BBS committee, which was made a standing committee at our last meeting, is made up of Jan Klabunde, Dan Shell, Bud Barnes and the SysOp of the BBS, Leo Baker. Any questions you should have regarding its operation should be addressed to one of the above. On the BBS, address messages to "SYSOP" and Leo will make sure they get to the appropriate persons.

The software the BBS is running should be familiar to most of you who have used the board in the last several years. It is PCBoard which was used before WBBS was used by the last SysOp. PCBoard was the overwhelming choice of the group and the BBS committee at the last meeting when the discussion of BBS software took place. The BBS committee is also investigating the possibility of updating the software to either a later version of PCBoard or some other BBS software. Your input into their selection is always welcome.

Persons logging on for the first time should be aware of a few things. When you enter your name at the name prompt, the BBS searches its list of users for your name. If it doesn't find it, it

comes back with the prompt "Name not found, [R]enter or [C]ontinue? Just enter a "C" to continue and the BBS will give you a "New Users" message and then ask "Do you wish to register?" At this prompt answer "Y" and then just answer all the questions it asks. First time callers are given a level which will give them 15 minutes a day on the board. Once the name is verified by the SysOp as a member of VAST, the level is raised to give you 60 minutes a day on the board.

Some of the directories on the board have yet to be updated and there are NO files as yet to download. If you try to download

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VAST USER GROUP MEETING

March 10, 1990

Pyle Adult Rec.
Center
655 E. Southern
Avenue
Tempe, AZ

VAST User Group Information

The *VAST Computer User Group* is a support group for the TI-99/4A Home Computer and compatibles, but all computer users are welcome. We meet at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe on the second Saturday of every month. This month's meeting is on March 10th. The business meeting starts at 10 a.m. with socializing starting at 9 a.m.

The yearly group membership fee is \$15 which includes this newsletter mailed to your door!

Our meetings are open to all. Only dues paying members may vote in elections, hold offices or chair committees, or use the club library.

CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mike Grogan 272-3415

VICE PRESIDENT

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mike Marfisi 491-1552

LIBRARIANS

Hazel & Wallace Knight . 938-5446

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jim Ely 921-3375

BBS SYSOP

Leo Baker 931-9010

The date that appears in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label is your newsletter and/or membership expiration date. Address renewals to VAST User Group, c/o 1425 E. Del Rio Drive, Tempe, AZ 85282.

The VAST User Group BBS is now back in operation. The actual start date was February 28, 1990. The **NEW** phone number is (602) 433-2767. The new board is being setup per the guidelines established by the BBS committee. The software should be familiar to those of you who used the board before the last sysop changed it. It is PCBoard.

Don't be shy. Give it a try!

Deadline for submission of materials for this newsletter is the first Saturday of the month. Materials may be submitted in any form, but the preferred method is by modem directly to the newsletter editor at the phone number above.

ADVERTISING RATES

COMMERCIAL

FULL PAGE \$12.00

HALF PAGE . . . \$ 7.00

QTR. PAGE . . . \$ 4.00

PERSONAL

Four Lines . . . \$ 1.00

(30 characters per line)

Each line over 4 \$.20

ALL RATES ARE FOR *ONE* ISSUE ONLY!

Software programs are available from the User Group library at the following rates:

SS/SD disk . . . \$ 2.00

DS/SD disk . . . \$ 4.00

If a copy of documentation is required, a charge of \$.10 per copy page will be made. If the group supplies the disk, add \$1.00 to the above charges. We do have an exchange program for new software added to the library. Contact the librarian for further details.

DISCLAIMER: The VAST User Group can assume NO responsibility for the accuracy of the information in this newsletter or for programs or construction projects tried by its members or others. **YOU** try them at your **OWN RISK!** Any material herein may be republished by other user groups so long as credit is given to the **ORIGINAL** sources.

SECRETARY'S SLATE

MINUTES

VAST USER GROUP

FEBRUARY 10, 1990

The February Meeting of the VAST USER GROUP was held on Saturday, February 10th at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe. In the absence of President Mike Grogan, the meeting was called to order by Mike Marfisi at 10:10AM.

The minutes of the January meeting were accepted as published in the February newsletter.

The treasury shows a balance of \$459.72 and the treasurers report was accepted as read.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

LIBRARY COMMITTEE . . . Wallace Knight.

The library was picked up from Stephanie Bannon and is now in the possession of the Wallace and Hazel Knight. It still needs to be organized. Work will start on that task next month.

A suggestion that we try to build a collection of cassette based programs was brought up. We asked anyone who has programs on cassette to please make copies of them and give them to Wallace for inclusion in the library.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE . . . Jim Ely

Jim asked that if he can't make it to the FEST WEST, would people going please take notes so we could write a review for the next edition.

Jim pointed out that it had been a long time since we had any original articles submitted from our members. It would be nice to get some original material.

We will be publishing more of our members biographies in the coming months. Anyone who has not submitted one is encouraged to do so.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE . . . Dan Shell

No report.

BBS COMMITTEE . . . Dan Shell

A complete copy of the report is attached.

After some discussion regarding what program to use for the BBS, it was agreed that we would use PC Board. This is the program used before the last sysop installed WBBS. Jim pointed out that there is an update available but it is no longer fairware. He believed the cost to be around \$80. A motion was made and seconded that we investigate the update to PC Board and consider purchasing it.

A suggestion was made that we put together some kind of basic BBS tutorial program with handouts for those who have never done any BBSing. This was referred to the Program Committee. Mike will go through past newsletters and the exchange files to see if there are any good materials available. They will then be assembled in booklet form to be made available to anyone who needs them. It was also suggested that when the BBSing program was presented, we make the disk of the month TELCO.

After Dan went through the report step by step and we all had a chance to add our input, a motion was made and seconded that the report be accepted as presented and the provisions be implemented. The motion passed.

At this point Bud announced that the committee had selected Leo Baker as the new Sysop.

The discussion then moved to the area of how to finance the BBS and whether we should install a Phoenix line or leave it as a Glendale number. By leaving it a Glendale line about 1/3 of the group would incur long distance charges. By installing the Phoenix line, the vast majority of us would avoid long

See "SECRETARY'S SLATE",
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"SECRETARY'S SLATE",
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distance charges. A motion was made, seconded and approved to install a central Phoenix phone line so as to minimize the number of callers that would incur toll charges.

The BBS computer equipment was turned over to Leo Baker. He will contact the phone company to make arrangements for installation of the line. He will try to get the old number if it is available.

At this point a motion was made, seconded and approved that the BBS Committee to include Bud Barnes, Dan Shell, Jan Klabunde and Leo Baker be made a standing committee. Its duty shall be to generally oversee the operation of the BBS and to address any problems in the operation or in the formation of policy as related to the BBS.

OLD BUSINESS

FEST WEST

The club will participate in FEST WEST. We will have a table that will feature Dan Shell selling CactusCliff Computer merchandise and a Roll Credit program from Steve Peddy-Court. We will reprint the latest newsletter and



produce a cover sheet describing VAST. Several members will help man the booth. Dan will bring a Geneve and run the demo program that was featured at a past VAST meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

FILLING OF THE OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT

Because of the resignation of Bill Wedmore, the office of Vice President is vacant. The question of filling that office until the end of the term came up. A motion was made, seconded and approved to leave the office unfilled until the next general election.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Mike Marfisi
Secretary

"BBS,"
Continued from page 1. . .

a file that is in one of the directories at this time, the system just won't find the file. Why not instead of trying to download a file, UPLOAD a file that you have and share it with others in the group. I know they would appreciate it.

The BBS committee will very soon be giving a program at a meeting on how to use BBS' in general. We will also be having tutorials on setting up and using various terminal programs for your TI such as TELCO, Fast-Term and Mass Transfer. We will also be publish-

ing some tutorials in this newsletter on how to get around on the VAST BBS so it won't be such a mystery for you first time callers. For now though, just use it and enjoy it and don't worry about pressing a wrong key or something. The system is practically indestructable and it will tell you when you have done something that it doesn't like. Above all, **MAKE SURE YOU READ THE PROMPTS** and you will have no trouble. This is the one mistake most people make most when using BBS'. You think you know what it wants and you enter it and then can't understand why you got what you got. Just read what it wants and answer correctly and it will work like a charm.

Remember, **YOU**, the members of VAST, voted to have this BBS. If you don't use it, it will go away.

More later. . .

Jim Ely

TI-Writer (Part 6)

From the *WEST PENN* Newsletter

By Stan Katzman

Well let's do some more things that by this time you probably already know about, using some "special" keys.

Let's start with Fctn 1 (Delete Character). This key allows us to remove the letter that the cursor is setting over. We have already discussed Fctn 2 (Insert Character). Fctn 3 (Delete Line), will remove the entire line that the cursor is on. Fctn 4 (Roll Down) will show the next 24 lines of text. (Eg. If lines 1-24 are showing, pressing Fctn 4 will now show lines 25-49.) Fctn 5 (Next Window) will "wrap" twenty columns at a time across the screen. Fctn 6 (Roll Up) will move the display up the screen. (Eg. If lines 25-49 are showing, Fctn 6 will now show 1-24.) Fctn 7 (Tab) will now "tab" the cursor across the screen that has been preset in the "Tab" function of the Command Mode. Fctn 8 (Insert Line) will insert a blank line above the line where the cursor is setting. Fctn 9 (Command/Escape) has been discussed many times before. Fctn 0 (Line Numbers) toggles between showing and not showing the line numbers on the left side of the screen.

Now let's discuss the Ctrl keys. Ctrl 1 (OOPS!), if you

make a removal change like Delete Line and you want the line back, press Ctrl 1 and you get the line back. There is a catch, you cannot have pressed any other key before you pressed Ctrl 1. Ctrl 2 (Reformat) we have discussed previously. Ctrl 3 (Screen Color) "toggles" you through a series of screen colors and character colors (I personally just use the starting colors.). Ctrl 4 (Next Paragraph) moves the cursor ahead to the next paragraph with each press. Ctrl 5 (Duplicate Line) will duplicate the previous line. (I have yet to find a use for this one!) Ctrl 6 (Last Paragraph) moves the cursor back through the text one paragraph at a time. Ctrl 7 (Word Tab) moves the cursor across the line one word at a time. Ctrl 8 (New Paragraph) places a paragraph symbol and starts a new paragraph. This is useful in the middle of a document. Ctrl 9 (New Page) places a new page symbol on the screen at the place the cursor is setting. This symbol will cause the printer to advance to a new page. Ctrl 0 (Word Wrap) we have discussed (it toggles between word wrap and fixed mode.).

These special keys also have a duplicate set by using the Ctrl plus letters. There is only one key that is not duplicated with the Fctn or Ctrl plus a number. This is Ctrl Y. When you press Ctrl Y it allows you to go past the left margin (a left margin release.).

More next time.

s.k.

DISK OF THE MONTH

This month I have something a little different for you.

The most popular program ever produced for the trusty 99/4A is TI WRITER. It sold for around \$100 when first introduced. Now it can be had in several forms as fairware or for around \$20 in its original version. Those of us who use it on a regular basis continue to be impressed with its versatility. There have been dozens of articles written to make it easier to use and

more productive.

Our friends of the Chicago User Group have assembled scads of material from newsletters all over the country into one easy to read package. They have also created a disk full of programs that enhance TI WRITER and make it even more productive. The disk includes several programs to help sort DV 80 files, create graphics in TI WRITER format so they can be included in a document and

printed right from the formatter, and a utility that will give you a total word count of your file.

This, then, will be our March Disk Of The Month. The package will consist of the TI WRITER SUPPLEMENT and the SSSD disk of utilities. Because of copy costs, this month's DOM will be priced at \$3.00 which is really a bargain when you see all the goodies.

Mike Marfisi

FLEXI LABEL

A Tiny Gram . . by Ed Machonis

From the *QB-MONITOR* 99'ers U.G.
Newsletter

They say the only way to finish a program is to shoot the programmer. I guess the same could be said for the steady stream of label printing programs which seem to come out of this TI-99. I thought I had written all the label printing programs I would ever need, but I seem to keep discovering new needs.

In the past, most of my video tape labeling has consisted of pencil entries on the slip case. A recent visit by my grandchildren resulted in a stack of unmarked video cassettes piled along side a stack of empty slip cases. They seem to have devised a new game called video roulette.

The only way to restore any semblance of order was to skim through each tape to identify the contents and match it with its slip case. Determined not to repeat this chore after subsequent visits, I decided to do what should have been done in the first place, label the cassette as well as the case. 20/20 Hindsight!

Mailing labels are an exact fit on the side of the video cassette. Often 6 lines of text are needed for a 6 hour tape with six different programs. Rather than use an existing program, such as Disk Label, I decided to write a more flexible program which could handle Video Cassette labels as

well as other types of labels.

Instead of one new program, I wound up with two, each a Tiny Gram. FLEXI-LABEL's distinguishing feature is providing the user with the option to print up to 10 lines of text per label, great for those video cassettes chock full of programs.

When first booted, you are asked to input the number of lines of text to be printed on the label. The font used is expanded compressed which enables an easily readable 28 character line. For labels with

more than 7 lines, the font automatically changes to superscript. You are prompted to input the text for each line.

At any time during text entry you can change the number of label lines by entering FCTN C (Accent Grave); think FCTN C(hange). It can be entered anywhere in a line of text or by itself. The lines you have entered will not be lost, they always default to the next label. FCTN 3 can be used to erase unwanted lines. All editing keys are functional. If you want to redo a label, just enter zero for the quantity to be printed.

Text entry is automatically limited to 28 characters. Text can be carried over from label to label without re-entry, handy for those labels requiring only minor changes. Any line can be indented by entering spaces at the beginning of the line. I think you'll find the program as user friendly as they get.

This Tiny Gram should answer most of your labeling requirements, whether they be video cassettes, return address, meeting notices publicizing your User Group, "Property Of" labels, or simple mailing labels. Its small size makes it a candidate for your Funnelweb utility disk.

Due to sales of public domain software by certain distributors, a copyright notice has been placed on this program. It may be freely distributed provided no fee of any kind is charged. This article and/or the program listing may be published in newsletters of non profit user groups.

Coded for Epson RX-80. To Be Continued. (YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!)

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1 | ***** FLEXI LABEL *****
  *   A Tiny Gram   *
  *  Copyright 1988  *
  *   By Ed Machonis  *
  **QB-99ers, Bayside NY**

2 OPEN #1:"PI0.LF"

3 DISPLAY AT(8,1)ERASE ALL:"
LINES OF TEXT/LABEL?(MAX 10)
" :: ACCEPT AT(9,26)VALIDATE
(DIGIT):S :: IF S>10 THEN 3

4 E$=CHR$(27):: PRINT #1:E$&
"@"&E$&"G"&E$&"W1"&CHR$(15)&
E$&"C"&CHR$(0)&CHR$(1)&E$&"3
"&CHR$(216/(S+1)):: IF S>7 T
HEN PRINT #1:E$&"S0"

5 DISPLAY AT(1,1)ERASE ALL:"
ENTER "" TO CHANGE #/LINE
S" :: FOR J=1 TO S :: DISPLA
Y AT(J*2,3):"ENTER LINE";J:L
$(J):: ACCEPT AT(J*2+1,1)SIZ
E(-28):L$(J):: IF POS(L$(J),
"",1)THEN 3

6 NEXT J :: DISPLAY AT(23,1)
:"HOW MANY LABELS?" :: ACCEP
T AT(23,18):Q :: FOR K=1 TO
Q :: FOR L=1 TO S :: PRINT #
1:" ";L$(L);CHR$(10):: NEXT
L :: PRINT #1:CHR$(12):: NEX
T K :: GOTO 5

```

AFTER THE FEST

The following messages were downloaded from CompuServe by Mike Marfisi. They represent somewhat of an overview of the happenings at the Fest West in Tucson on Feb. 17 & 18. They are written by Jim Horn, one of the SysOps of the TIFORUM on CompuServe. Jim, by the way, represented MYARC at the FEST and CompuServe's/MYARC's booth was set up right next to VAST's. I know Jim was on CompuServe several times from the show as well as being on the "Cactus Patch" BBS which is the BBS of the Southwest 99ers.

Before going much farther, a few comments of my own about the Faire. I was quite impressed with the turnout of people from the VAST User Group at the FEST. We had quite good representation. I manned our tables on and off several times on Saturday. The busiest time at our booth was when Dan Shell finally arrived and started setting all of his "goodies" up. Response was almost immediate and incredible. I understand that Dan came back home with very little left. His prices must have been right in line with what everyone else was doing, maybe even better!

From what I could tell, the FEST was a big success and the Southwest 99ers are to be commended on their outstanding organization of the Faire.

I know I enjoyed myself in Tucson and anyone I talked to about it from the group that went also had

a good time. Now on to the "REAL POOP."

#: 5281 S2/99/4A General
19-Feb-90 20:19:54
Sb: GIF FOR 99/4A!
Fm: Jim Horn 76703,603
To: ALL

Although I had a real bear of a time both going to and coming from Tucson, the trip was worth the effort. The hit of the show was the news that Barry Boone was releasing a GIF package for the 99/4A. They said it could not be done, and Barry had done it. Peter Hoddie said that he was "totally amazed" that it could be done at all, much less with the grace and style exhibited by Barry. Barry, ever the modest achiever, was mortified when he learned that the program he had been selling all morning of the first day of the show was NOT the program he had stayed up all night to produce before flying to Tucson. In his master copy, the one he had picked up in error, there was a "one bit error" (less than a two bit mistake?), Barry said, nearly missing supper as he chased down the many customers who had clamored for a "first day" copy.

The program can display "just about any" GIF. For those of you watching this go by without a clue, or with only a flicker of interest, I can sympathize. I too, have watched with interest as GIF, which stands for Graphic Interface Format, has continued to gather momentum. The first reaction to the idea of computer enhanced and displayed pictures is often "so what?" However, GIF is faced with much the same situa-

tion that photography was in just a few more than a hundred years ago. This "camera" took a wagon load of volatile chemicals, some of which could spoil while others would catch fire. People's eyes looked like they were zombies, and the result was in black and white, not a rich, colored picture as in oil.

Nevertheless, nobody told Matt Brady this would never sell, so he photographed the Civil War, and he is in history, along with that struggle. Well, my confederates, Barry Boone's GIF program is your Appomattox. It is time to surrender, and get involved, with nothing more than your 99/4A, an expansion system, a single drive, and 32K with X BASIC. Barry is selling the program commercially, and can be contacted on TIFORUM. More reports on Tucson later. Jim

#: 5282 S2/99/4A General
19-Feb-90 20:42:32
Sb: GENEVE TRIAD
REVEALED
Fm: Jim Horn 76703,603
To: ALL

J.P. Software, and Wayne Stith have been "mum" about the coming upgrade of TRIAD to the Geneve version, but Peter Hoddie chose to talk at Tucson. "I am very excited about the forthcoming Geneve version of TRIAD" he said, and for Peter, that is saying a lot. Hoddie is working for Apple, and says that they are working him VERY hard. However, he does

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"FEST,"

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plan to sign on to TIFORUM "real soon now." We are looking forward to that.

Peter actually mentioned that Wayne Stith, EMB here, is racing against time to come out with the Geneve version of TRIAD, because he wants to get the package out before delay plagued "Press" from Asgard. To me, that was a very large hint that one part of the <cough> TRIAD will be a very respectable word processor. Others, while not telling me very much, have told me that they are extremely impressed, to include beta tester Jerry Coffey. I asked Peter if he felt it would "blow us away." Hoddie demurred, and changed the subject, but his entire posture indicated clearly to me that the value of your Geneve will soon be going up.

More on Tucson shortly. Jim

#: 5295 S2/99/4A General
20-Feb-90 13:58:35
Sb: ASGARD BUSY AT
TUCSON

Fm: Jim Horn 76703,603
To: ALL

Meanwhile, the Bobbitt engine chugs on, having introduced over 20 new pieces of software last year. In some ways, however, this all is overshadowed by the oft delayed "Press." With Bobbitt, Charles Earl, and Ruth O'Neal all up here, most members know the status of "Press" as well as anyone. There is no news, for the record, other than the project is "still being worked on."

Chris had an atrocious time getting to Phoenix, and was hospitalized briefly with an infected inner ear that acted up on the airplane. However, Chris was spotted in animated conversation with another "Chris," and hopes are for a useful collaboration. This gent, new to the scene, apparently, is an Army man, Signal probably, and into Forth, and displays a refreshing intensity about the 99/4A and wants to do something for the console owner. With the time needed to get fairly straight forward products to market extending over a year in many instances, it is refreshing to see people thinking of designing and developing products that far out.

Of all the people I talked to, I found no one ready to say they were pessimistic about their own efforts or that they were cutting back on their future plans. More later. Jim.

#: 5308 S2/99/4A General
21-Feb-90 12:17:08
Sb: ASGARD AT TUCSON
Fm: Jim Horn 76703,603
To: ALL

As I indicated, I did not get a chance to talk to Chris Bobbitt or see his talk, figuring I could catch up with him this week. Here is a run down of his activities at Tucson:

Asgard introduced and SOLD OUT of the new educational MODULE, called Edu Pak. Edu Pak is described up here in a file thoughtfully left by Asgard. We certainly appreciate the vendors who take advantage of the TIFORUM area to keep the

membership informed here of their activities.

Another gang buster package that was introduced by Asgard is the "Spell It!" software. This is a FAST spell checker, with all of the features of modern PC packages. This one indication that Asgard is not putting all of its Word Processing eggs in the "Press" basket. Jim Reiss, who is up here every Tuesday on CO, is the author/creator of this program. The package requires a minimum of 32k, one ss/sd disk drive and TI-Writer or a compatible. Hmmm. One wonders if it will work with the forthcoming editor of TRIAD? The price is \$19.95 for DS/DD, \$24.95 for SS/SD, and \$34.95 for HFDC. It is a 30,000 word system, up to a 200,000 word system for hard drives!

Asgard fully expects to set the mouse standard for the next year or so at least with the Asgard Mouse, by Michael Maksimik. It is a high quality, solidly constructed 3 button mouse that is compatible both with the 99/4A and the Geneve (My Art, which has its own mouse, does not work). This mouse is easy to install, and Asgard tells us it will be a must for the next generation of 99/4A and Geneve software. Included with the mouse is software for using it with TI Artist and TI Artist Plus. The software also provides an interface to Extended BASIC and Assembly programs. The Asgard Mouse sells for \$49.95 U.S. with \$5 S&H.

And that is the report from Jim Horn. j.e.