

VAST NEWS

for the VAST Computer User Group

Volume 7 Number 2

February 9, 1991



SPEAK OUT!

You may recall that in last month's newsletter Mike Marfisi wrote an open letter (article) to suppliers about delay times in mail ordering and the idea about "keeping the customer informed" about orders that are going to take longer to deliver than originally anticipated.

All it takes is one person to Speak Out! and then several others comment about similar situations.

Chris Bobbitt of ASGARD Software responded to that article in a message to Mike on CompuServe. Below is an edited copy of that response and an addendum by

Mike to bring you up-to-date.

#: 12159 S2/99/4A General

22-Jan-91 18:31:50

Sb: #12140-ASGARD RESPONSE TIME

Fm: Chris B./Asgard 72561,3241

To: MIKE MARFISI 74726,2522

Mike,

<sig> Let me give you a bit of an explanation of what's been going on lately since it seems to be a sore point.

In the last 6 months Asgard has undergone a major re-organization. This has resulted in a number of changes:

(1) A new dealer invoicing system that has cut response delays on dealer orders by 90%.

(2) The hiring and training of 2 new assistants.

(3) New software for storing and maintaining mailing lists.

As a result of these three changes we've been

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Author of Disk Utilities Dies

John Birdwell, author of the very popular Disk Utilities disk manager/sector editor program died on December 27, 1990. He was 41. He died after a lengthy battle with liver cancer. He will be sorely missed by the TI community. He was in the process of writing an update to the Disk Manager 5 software for the Myarc Hard and Floppy disk controller. This project was not completed. He was also a frequent contributor to newsletters and magazines such as MICROpendium. He is survived by his wife, 2 daughters, his parents and a brother and sister.

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able to cut down the AVERAGE time it takes to fill a product order from 2-4 weeks at the beginning of November to 1-2 weeks as of this time.

HOWEVER, a few things haven't been completed. These include an integrated Inventory and Order Entry system that will, among other things, automatically invoice all orders (including mail orders and updates), as well as handle partial orders.

As a result, until we finish, we are unable to process partial orders with confidence that we won't lose the rest of the order. In your case, Mike, your order was initially caught up in the delay related to the version 1.1 update of Spell It!. That update was completed in December, but due primarily to the Christmas season (and bad weather lately) we haven't processed your update yet. It should go out soon.

Regarding "major flaws in a program I have paid for" - Spell It!, as it was shipped, worked fine on the vast majority of TI systems in use. However, it didn't work too well on HFDC and Horizon systems - which together constitute a royal pain in the neck for all software developers because of their inconsistencies and incompatibilities and undocumented-ness. As it so happens, you happen to have one (or both) of these pieces of equipment. Also, as it happens, the author had neither of those items and had difficulty debugging software to work with them as a result. Hence delays.

Since day one of Asgard we've always told people it takes 4-8 weeks for us to process updates - we are still within that period as I write this.

While I understand your impatience with our service, I must take issue with the underlying hostility involved. We generally act in good faith, and eventually act. We are not out to "rob" anyone, and we make good on promises - kept and failed. You, Mike, practically indicted us in your newsletter over Press. Not only have we publicly "fessed up" about it, we've refunded everyone who has asked for a refund to date. I am personally committed to the TI community, and value my reputation.

Finally, while delays are irritating, I think over the years I've done quite a bit to warrant a bit of tolerance for my tendency towards disorganization. Asgard currently has more new products in development and of recent release than virtually all of our competitors combined. In the last catalog we

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SECRETARY'S SLATE

MINUTES

VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP

JANUARY 12, 1991

The January meeting of the *VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP* was held at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe on Saturday January 12, 1991. The meeting was called to order by President Mike Grogan at 10:04AM. All officers were present. There were 25 members and guests attending.

Before the business of the meeting began, a special award was presented by Mike Grogan. It is called the President's Award and it will be given to a member or friend of the *VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP* each year. Selection of the recipient is made by the officers and selection is based on the winner's outstanding service and/or contribution to the club. The first plaque was presented to Jim Ely.

The minutes were accepted as published in the January edition of the newsletter. The Treasurer's report was read and approved. The year end financial report was also presented to the members by treasurer Mike Marfisi. Mike pointed out that in order to make the task of keeping the club books easier, reports would cover the fiscal month rather than running from meeting to meeting as in the past.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The only formal report was presented by the BBS Assistant Sysop, Jim Ely, who pointed

out that the BBS move would take place on the day of the February meeting. The BBS would go down in the afternoon and hopefully be back on line by evening.

Kind of in backwards order, Bud Barnes reported that he had investigated the cost of moving the board to Mike Grogan's home and keeping the same phone number. The cost was very prohibitive. A motion to formally move the BBS from Leo Baker's home to Mike Grogan's home was made by Bud Barnes, seconded by Virginia Davis and passed by the membership. The BBS will be connected to a second phone line already installed in Mike Grogan's home. The club will pay Mike \$15 per month for use of the line. This move will result in a saving to the club of \$30 per month or \$360 per year. The number change will allow more members to call on a non-toll basis.

OLD BUSINESS

Mike Marfisi reported that he had checked with the U.S. Post Office about the cost saving in mailing our exchange newsletters by third class mail. He pointed out that there is no cost saving until the weight of the mail gets over 1 lb.

NEW BUSINESS

Several members brought some extra TI stuff to the meeting. It turned out that we had an impromptu swap meet. Mel Brown donated several boxes of TI odds and ends to the

See **MINUTES** on page 4

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club. We held an auction which netted another \$45 for the treasury. A BIG thanks Mel!

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10:55 a.m.

A demonstration of the TIPS program was then presented by Mike Marfisi.

Next month we hope to have a demo of the club BBS.

Mike Marfisi will try to make arrangements with Pyle for a phone.

Respectfully
Mike Marfisi

Secretary,
VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP

From the Editor's Desk

As you can see from looking at the first page, there is little or no news to report this month. This issue could be called the "NEW-AGE/99 issue" as most of the space is taken up with 3 articles in the series starting on page 5. The SPECIAL was requested run by the author as soon as possible, hence in this issue. 4/A Foray is on page 11, another fine article by Ralph. Other than that, the calendar for the next 2 months is below with our meeting dates shown and I will see you at the meeting on the 9th. Jim

MARCH 1991							APRIL 1991						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
31													

SPEAK OUT!, from page 2

released over 30 new products - and we've done so for the last 3 years running. Some of our programs are very innovative and have literally meant the difference between people keeping or junking their TIs. Directly and indirectly, Asgard sponsors TI product development in the U.S., Canada, Germany and Australia - and we have software and hardware projects in the works in all of those places.

Also, we have a reputation for quality. It is very easy to notice things that don't go right, but miss those that do. You focus on Spell It!'s initial incompatibility with the HFDC (despite our best efforts at the time) but miss the fact that (a) its by far the fastest spelling checker for the 4A or Geneve, (b) it is the most intelligent and easiest to use, (c) it is extensible, (d) it WORKS under dozens of different hardware configurations, including such oddball devices as the Corcomp RAM-disk. Also, you haven't noted the fact that when something is wrong in what we do we make a great effort to correct it as soon as possible, and often send updates out free, Spell It! has undergone almost a year of development - some of it full time. Page Pro was in the works for over 2 years before release. The Mouse and YAPP are unique products in their areas.

Sure, we have our deficiencies. I've spent a lot of time over the last few months trying to recognize them and address them on a more business level. However, in our level of dedication and interest in this community, we have

See **SPEAK OUT!** on page 14

NEW-AGE 99

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
#6 PAGE PRO - PART 1

BY JACK SUGHRUE
Box 459
E DOUGLAS MA 01516

2+3=?
HMMMM!



DESKTOP PUBLISHING FINALLY ARRIVED FOR OUR 99. THERE ARE MATURE COMMERCIAL AND FAIRWARE AND PUBLIC DOMAIN GOODIES ALL OVER THE PLACE. THERE ARE SO MANY, IN FACT, THAT IT IS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP UP WITH THEM.

BESIDES TI-ARTIST-PLUS, WHICH WILL BE REVIEWED SOME OTHER TIME, THERE ARE FILES OF INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS FROM COMPRODINE WHICH I'VE READ AND HEARD ABOUT BUT HAVE NOT YET EXPERIENCED. THERE ARE CSGO'S GREAT PROGRAMS AND NUMEROUS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND FAIRWARE PROGRAMS FOR BANNERS, LETTERHEADS, LABELS, AND SO ON.



YOU HAVE TO BE

TO FIGURE OUT SOME OF THESE PROGRAMS.

MANY OF THEM ARE SEVERELY LIMITED (THOUGH SOME LIKE GRAPHIC LABELER DO EXACTLY WHAT THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO IN A FANTASTIC WAY).



NOW THERE ARE A PAIR OF WONDERFUL TREASURES FOR ALL 99ERS WITH DISKDRIVES AND PRINTERS!

TIPS

(TI PRINT SHOP - PUBLIC DOMAIN PROGRAMS WITH A HUGE COLLECTION OF PIX)

& PAGEPRO

(FROM ASGARD, THE BEST PAGE MAKER AVAILABLE FOR THE 99 AND GENEVE)

RON WOLCOTT, WITH ABLE HELP FROM BARRY TRAVER AND OTHERS, HAS GIVEN TIPS TO THE TI WORLD FREE OF CHARGE (SEE YOUR USER GROUP OR CONTACT JIM PETERSON FOR THIS AND OTHER PD AND FAIRWARE GRAPHICS PROGRAMS). TIPS LETS YOU MAKE BANNERS, LETTERHEADS, LABELS, GREETING CARDS, AND MORE. WRITTEN IN XB, TIPS TENDS TO BE SLOW AND A BIT CUMBERSOME. YOU MUST PRINT OUT THE DOCS AND FOLLOW THEM CLOSELY TO USE THE PROGRAMS SUCCESSFULLY!



BUY IT TAKES A LITTLE TIME TO MASTER AND TO PRINT.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF TIPS IS ITS COLLECTION OF GRAPHIC ART FROM THE BIG BLUE WORLD. THERE ARE ABOUT 5,000 PIX NOW A PART OF THIS PACKAGE, WHICH INCLUDES PROGRAMS TO CONVERT TO TI-ARTIST AND PAGEPRO, AMONG OTHER ITEMS.

THIS REVIEW USES ALL TIPS PICTURES WITHIN THE SUPERB FRAMEWORK OF PAGEPRO.

WHICH, OF COURSE, BRINGS ME BACK TO THE TOPIC OF THIS REVIEW. THE DAY I GOT THE ORIGINAL PAGEPRO I WAS UP TO THE VERY WEE HOURS PLAYING WITH IT IN ALL KINDS OF INGENIOUS WAYS. WITH PP YOU CAN PUT ANY GRAPHICS (OVER 5,000 IF YOU HAVE TIPS) ANYPLACE ON YOUR PAGE. YOU CAN TYPE OVER OR INTO THESE PIX (AS IN THE TOP AND MOON PIX). THE ORIGINAL PERMITTED 28 PIX PER PAGE. VERSION 1.5 ALLOWS UNLIMITED GRAPHICS BY SAVING PAGES FULL AT A TIME, ALONG WITH ALL TEXT.



Continued page 6

Because of this saving method, PAGEPRO also permits an unlimited number of fonts per page!

Gothic 2 Sample, Script 1 Sample, TULO SAMPLE, etc.

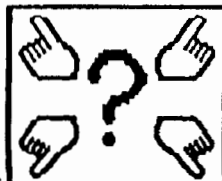
If you've written your text on FUNNELWEB or any DV/80 textfile maker, you can easily import that text into your PAGEPRO pages, though personally, I find it just as easy to type right onto my pages and place the graphics (TIPS) and borders and fonts (PAGEPRO) just where I want as I'm going along.

PAGEPRO is extremely user friendly. Of all the various pagemakers and semi-pagemakers I've used for the TI (and for some other computers), I've found PAGEPRO by far the easiest to use. The commands are mostly single keypress and FAST! If you have any kind of RAM capacity, the whole activity is almost instantaneous.

It's not one of those programs where you'll stop often for tea breaks while the program churns and mopes along.

The latest PAGEPRO also has some great improvements, such as cataloging from any cursor. For me, this was a... **LARGE** improvement.

The columnizer that is part of PAGEPRO has been improved to auto indent and auto page number; two nice features.



A+
RATING

Typing in any direction lets you make quick borders, boxes, whatever, as well as puzzles and text patterns.

There are other neat changes in 1.5 regarding importing/exporting text, printing a page, and so on. But, basically, a great program was made even better.



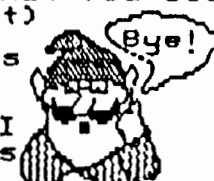
So while the band's playing let me add that PAGEPRO does not stand alone.

Asgard also has PAGEPRO PICS of all kinds of pictures done in neat, thematic packages.

There is also PIXPRO which converts GRAPHX, TI ARTIST PIX & INSTANCES, RLE, PICASSO, MACPAINT, & PAGEPRO into most of the above formats. This is great even if you don't own PAGEPRO.

Also available are PP FONTS (a few of the 50 are shown on these two pages); PP TITLES (which are works of art unto themselves); PP UTILITIES (which allow some extraordinary manipulations of the graphics for all kinds of on-screen pasteps & designs).

PAGEPRO is a WYSIWYG ("wizzywig": What You See Is What You Get) program that more than lives up to its promise. It's the standard for TI as TI-ARTIST is for drawing.



Continued page 7



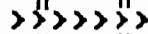
NEW-AGE/99

#7 PAGEPRO pt 2

Last time our wee leprechaun wished us a hoppy goodbye after exploring a few PAGEPRO delights. This exciting installment will uncover & show more ways to desktop publish via PP.

In limiting these explorations to 2-page segments some of the intricate niceties of PP have to be left to your imaginations and time.

We'll show an example of the neat TITLES on the next page but will leave the greeting-card making up to you. Exploring such a program on your own is 8/10ths of the fun!



Okay. What do you need to make PAGEPRO the dream graphics/text program of the TI world?

Not much, really. Last time we suggested getting TIPS from your local user group or Jim Peterson of TIGERCUB for the thousands of graphics that come with it. That'll give you a big picture collection.

PAGEPRO will give you the state-of-the-art tools you'll need!

PAGE PRO 99 v 1.5 by Ed Johnson (& Chris Bobbitt) is the complete page-making software for 486 or Geneva. It includes all you need to make letter-heads, newsletters, pages of all descriptions, text conversions, etc. \$24.95.

PP FONTS by artist Paul Scheidemontle comes on 2 disks. There are 50 of

by Jack Sughrue, Box 459
E Douglas MA 01516

of them (small & large); PP PICS are 7 volumes of excellent thematic pictures; PP TITLES (see next page) are pretty dramatic eye-catchers; PP UTILITIES are extraordinary graphic manipulation tools essential for quick layout (cards), design, inversions, rotations, etc.; and PIX PRO, the single converter you'll need for converting to and from PAGEPRO, TI-ARTIST (pix & instances, ideal for CSGO & GRAPHIC LABEL users, too), RLE, PICASSO and even MACPIX. Yes, PAGEPRO does print full-page graphical

A NEWSLETTER
EDITOR'S
DREAM COME
TRUE!



As a matter of fact, PAGEPRO even lets you save any part of a page or THE ENTIRE PAGE as a single picture, thus giving you endless clipping and overlaying possibilities and greater reprint abilities than ever before imagined.

[This article, for example could be saved as two pictures on disk and sent to an editor elsewhere who has PAGEPRO. That person would simply load the program and load a picture (not a page) & what you see printed before you, including all the graphics and borders are exactly what the editor would get fresh on his or her printer. Neat package, no?

Continued page 8

I thought I'd complete this two-part review of PAGE PRO 99 from Regard by a few bits of dazzle. It's so easy. Below, in case you didn't notice, is an example of PP TITLES. The font I'm using SCRIPT for small fonts. For the larger ones I'll use

LOOK

Antique

which is quite different from any of the others I've shown so far in this lengthy review of PAGEPRO. Next I'd like to fill up and overlay a bunch of this page with pix of all kinds.

AT THIS!



WHIE!

You can see that with such a wonderful graphic program, you are limited only by your imagination.

There is NO



with this program. Only  stuff.

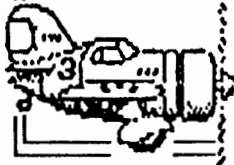
As you have undoubtedly gathered by now, NEW-AGE/99 rates this program a solid A+. I haven't used anything so often since FUNNECUEB, nor had so much fun since the invention of the yo-yo.

To get yours contact:

REGARD SOFTWARE
P.O. Box 10306
Rockville, MD 20850



Ph. 703-255-3085




~~~~~  
 W-AGE/99 \* NEW-AGE/  
 99 \* NEW-AGE/99 \* N  
 EW-AGE/99 \* NEW-AGE  
 /99 \* NEW-AGE/99 \*  
 ~~~~~

SPECIAL

by JACK SUGHRUE,
 Box 459, East Douglas, MA 01516

GOOD, BETTER, BEST!

There is only one program in the TI disk community that is (as my 5th-grade pupils would say) "totally wicked awesome rad to a gnarly degree." I agree with the sentiment, if not the mode of expression.

Nothing else in our world computer community has equalled the impact of the FUNNELWEB environment created for us by Tony McGovern and his son, Will. These two Australian geniuses (and I do not use the word lightly) put together what all of us deemed impossible for the TI.

FUNNELWEB just grew and grew. The original American release was a TI WRITER and EDITOR ASSEMBLER combo, more or less (actually more). Next version a few months later contained a bit more with lots of enhancements of what went on before. TIW, for example, does not contain a ruler or address recall or macro-key CAPS or LC. Tony put all these things in fairly early versions, all of which we take for granted in our word processing activities. The environment always loaded by either E/A or XB, thus making it ideal for supercards (again from earlier versions) or RAMs or whatever device hardwarers could devise.

Then things like Disk Manager 1000 and Diskpatch were added and modified. As were loaders for e99, FORTH, etc. Each time Tony (primarily) would unravel the complexities caused by these needs and create new and better solutions than dreamed possible.

When he came up with the windowing effects for the CONFIG program, for example, which established a profound systems configuration (still able to be ported *en masse* to any newer version, I felt he had reached his peak. Boy, was I ever wrong.

FUNNELWEB is not a program. It is an environment which gives you, the user, some great computing tools in such a complete package that it becomes almost impossible to do without them after using them.

Probably 80% or more of normal (non-programmer) use of computers - especially the TI - is word processing. People need to communicate. FUNNELWEB turned TIW into a great word processor, adding so many features that should have been in the original cart/disk combo that when you go back to that combo you are appalled at its limitations. As I say, we have become spoiled by Tony and take for granted what is surely a remarkable achievement.

Much as I ♥ my TI, I know that if FUNNELWEB did not exist I would no longer be TIing. I couldn't. FWB's a structure equal to the best that any home computer has to offer its users at any price.

Let's face it. It serves as a Master DOS.

See SPECIAL on page 10

SPECIAL, from page 9

What does a Disk Operating System do? Well, it lets you load up other programs, primarily, or lets you handle some disk management tasks. FWB does all that as a sideline.

With the new 4.31 FUNNELWEB the console 99 disk user has just leaped quantumly into an exciting era. The 40-column (standard) TI computer fan now has available to him or her a package heretofore only available to non-standard 80-col upgraders.

Before I go on, I'd like to say:

STOP!

The bad news is this: Will went over to the Amiga a long while ago, and his father will be following shortly. This will mean that the greatest single piece of software for the TI will no longer grow; nor will we be seeing any other pieces come from Funnelweb Farm; nor will there be any more great tutorials (particularly those on exploring XB). This is not only BAD news, it is HORRIBLE news. Not that I can blame Tony. Although close to 100% of all TI disk users use FWB and its upgrades, an extremely small number has ever paid the author a penny – and a tinier number, still, has ever given a second contribution (though the original to present upgrade is similar to the difference between my salary and Donald Trump's). And a tinier number, still, have ever written to Tony to tell him how much they use and appreciate FUNNELWEB and all the other great things he has done for us.

Remember, this is not commercialware. Fair-

ware authors need and deserve our support. Fairware authors of the stature of Tony McGovern have earned massive support financially and socially. They just don't get it.

I urge every user group to "charge" a minimum \$10 copying fee to each member for this upgrade and send the entire collected sum to Tony. Send a group letter. Write him up in your newsletter. Let's let '91 be the Year of the McGovern. Even more, I urge every single reader to sit down at your first opportunity and write (probably using FUNNELWEB) a supporting letter, enclosing the largest cash (certified check, international coupon, money order) contribution you can really afford. It'll still be cheaper than anything you'd have to pay for what would be in the same league as FUNNELWEB (if such a thing exists). People couldn't wait, for example, to shell out \$60 for PRESS (sight unseen) or \$25 to \$60 for data bases. Many of our game cartridges cost at least five times what some consider a "fair" price to pay for the finest piece of software ever for the TI.

How about this for a rule of thumb? Take the most expensive piece of software you ever bought (and probably don't even use anymore) and double it. Send that as a donation. Remember what you paid in those pre-inflationary days for LOGO and MULTIPLAN and TI WRITER and DISK MANAGER II and E/A and whatever?

Well, the new FUNNELWEB has so many new features that most of those expensive cartridges and upgrade disks can be chucked in the basket.

See SPECIAL on page 11

SPECIAL, from page 10

What's your TI worth to you? What'll it be worth to you down the road with Tony McGovern gone? Decide soon about your commitment and make the investment today in your future.

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So what are a few of these outstanding features? Well, for one, there is no more Disk Manager 1000 nor Disk Patch, because the new Disk Review performs all the functions of both (and then some) from within the FWB environment, including **COPYING FILE BY FILE** (to eliminate fractures) **WHOLE DISKS TO MULTIPLE DRIVES!** So stick a disk in Drive 1 and copy to Drives 2, 3, AND 4, while you go comb your walaby. Disks can be **FORMATted** to Quad density, if you have the right controller. Any program can be **RUN** right out of DR, including the huge IV254s. The Quick Directory now lets you mark a file from **WITHIN** the **FORMATter** or **ASSEMBLER**. And the disk editing functions are plentiful and profound.

The whole **FUNNELWEB 4.31** environment is profound. You'll realize this immediately when you see **BOTH** central menus displayed on the screen simultaneously and you just have to move the cursor around to either **RUN** the program (or **VIEW** and/or **PRINT** the text file).

This is a must for everyone!

Get it from your user group today, being aware that everything worthwhile in life costs.  
j.s.

# 4/A Foray

by Ralph Rees

## ➔ *Attaboy Department*

Well, What's happening fellow Vastians? I thought our January meeting was quite good and I especially liked the plaque presentation (with other goodies) that was given to Jim Ely. I was real happy to see Jimmy be the first to receive this award as he works hard



Jim Ely (right) accepts the First Annual Presidents Award from VAST President, Mike Grogan. Photo by Mike Marfisi

for our group and **REALLY** works hard getting this fantastic newsletter out to all of us. I don't really think the term "newsletter editor" does Jim justice because he doesn't just edit our paper. He writes articles, sets up the way the paper will read, gets the final

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**4/A FORAY, from page 11**

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"draft" photo-copied, folds them, addresses them, stamps them, and mails them. (Of late, Mike Marfisi does the folding, addressing, stamping and mailing of the newsletter. Ed) Somewhere in there Mr. Ely finds time to edit and leave an occasional message on our BBS that a certain columnist is late with his article upload (ahem..).

Oh yeah, the BBS. Jim was SysOp when it was running on a TI and he continued when we gained our new system and has done a marvelous job. As you may know, he is currently helping our group as assistant SysOp also.

I could go on and on but will leave it with -  
T-H-A-N-K-S ! JIM!

There are two other members that come to mind that are deserving of this award and require your consideration for next year.

(1) Mike Marfisi, what can I say, he does it all. A tireless individual who is an ASSET to our group and to the TI Orphanage in general. It was Mikey who came up with the idea for the award and constructed it.

My only problem with Mike is.. He's so ORGANIZED! His computer area makes mine look like it was hit by nuclear detonation! (I was going to say SCUD.) My only saving grace is that my better half has not been to Mike's & Cherry's place or I'd hear about it!  
T-H-A-N-K-S ! MIKE!

(2) Walt Brown, here again, what can I say. I think Walt has the inside market on most of the TI equipment produced, but he can't keep an accurate inventory of what he has

because a large portion has been, or presently is, loaned out (ahem).

I remember a night when I was a "neophyte" member of the group (finally got a P-box) and was real "hungry" for disk software. I had just met Walt at a previous meeting and gave him a call. Needless to say, I went to Mr. Brown's house and was allowed access to his VAST amount of files.

In addition to allowing perusal of his files, Walt made me feel like I was doing him a favor by being there, taking up the little amount of time that he has. After I was there a while and Walt told me a little about his life at Luke AFB, I pretty much forgot about the software cos' his stories were so interesting. He is a special man and invented the word "Hospitality".

Oh Yes, then there's the "financial" side to Walt. There have been some substantial contributions made by this man not only to the club, but assistance individually also (ahem). Walt has done this on more than one occasion and doesn't expect or desire any recognition, but some things need to be said.

Again, Another real ASSET to our group, but more importantly (to me) a true friend.  
T-H-A-N-K-S ! WALT!

➡ **Soldered Fingers Department**

As many of you may know, I am really a "hardware hacker" and am always looking for some new modifications to try on our consoles and/or expansion boxes. My latest mod was to add a switched 14.3 megahertz crystal to be used in place of the the onboard 12

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See 4/AFORAY on page 13

4/A FORAY, from page 12

mhz crystal (if the motherboard is so equipped). This allows the CPU to run or "think" at a faster speed. On most computing operations it works fine, but when in Extended BASIC programs that use sprites, it makes them go nuts, appearing hap-hazardly anywhere on the screen.

I usually switch to the faster speed when doing disk/file copying operations, using Extended BASIC pre-scan and compaction programs or any XB software that doesn't use sprites.

Another project I am slowly trying to get done is finishing my "internal" or "Zeno" board. This is an add-on printed-circuit board that allows 32k memory, XB and other cartridge chips, speech synthesizer and a clock all inside the console. At present, I am only going to install the Speech Synthesizer, so I can get rid of that little box on the right side. I'll keep you posted on my progress.

➔ ***Is There Anybody Out There Department.***

Of late, I have not noticed many folks using the fine bulletin board that we have in operation. This is a shame, because a good BBS, such as we have, is the lifeblood of the TI. If you don't have an RS232 card or a modem, check with one of the officers of the club. I believe we have 1 or 2 sidecar RS232's and I think a modem or 2. If you need a modem, let me know and I will loan you a 300 baud to try until you can get one. Once you start utilizing a BBS or computer service, you'll never know how you computed without it. Besides, the larger the audience I have the funnier I get with the messages that I leave.

Think about it ...

➔ ***Post No Bills Department***

I got kind of long winded in this issue and hope you weren't too bored. But if you were then WRITE SOMETHING! I know I've bludgened you every month to write, but I am sincere when I say that it's fun. How about an article on a piece of software you like, or even still, a piece of software you HATE (ooohh, payback time for the author). Write something about how you use your computer, how you allowed the smoke to leak out (remember?), how you stay up too late playing with your 'puter (it's 11:30 p.m. Thus. as I write this). O.K. I have just given you some weak ideas. Surely you can come up with something a LOT better. How about trying to stump Mike Grogan with an impossible question to try and answer. We'd all get a barg out of that, right Mike?

Let me close by saying "You have a Right to Write." After all, it is your group and we need you. If Jim doesn't get any other articles to print, I might write a LARGER Foray in March. Think about that! I'd submit today!  
— Ralph ...



**LINCOLN'S  
BIRTHDAY  
FEBRUARY 12**



**WASHINGTON'S  
BIRTHDAY  
FEBRUARY 22**

**SPEAK OUT!**, from page 4

few equals. In our level of effort, we have almost none. It's far easier to gripe about something than do something. I think Asgard's contribution to the TI community more then outweighs our shortcomings. If you disagree - well I don't make anyone buy what we offer. If enough people disagree, I'm sure my efforts could be applied elsewhere.

To touch on other points of your newsletter article:

(1) Asgard does make an effort to keep people informed about product delays. Please note Asgard On-Line #3 posted here a couple of weeks ago. We aren't always able to respond to people individually - if I did I'd have no time to get any work done.

(2) We NEVER advertise software that "isn't even written yet." The earliest we've ever advertised products were when they were in development. So far we've only had one product that never left that stage. I've learned my lesson from Press - but, damn, that was over 3 years ago. Can't you cut me a little slack on that by now? I've delivered every product announced since then - and many of them weren't announced until they were released fully.

(3) Please read my little article in Asgard On-Line #3 about catalogs. Please re-print it because I'm not the only supplier in this quandry. Many of the people I depend on for software have other lives too - jobs, school, social lives, hobbies, etc. They don't spend all their waking moments in a cave writing software (well, most don't). Sometimes things are delayed because of these reasons. Sometimes out of sheer mental block. That doesn't make my job any easier as a publisher, and it certainly makes lives uncertain for customers, but if I didn't take on these projects chances are many of them would have never been published - and you have to take the bad with the good.

There... Spleen vented. ---Chris

**SPEAK OUT!**

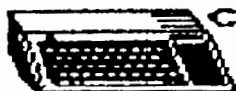
A response by Mike Marfisi to Chris Bobbit's reply...

Last month I published an editorial venting my spleen at both hardware and software companies. I took to task those that fail to deliver products ordered in a timely fashion. One of the companies mentioned was ASGARD. Well Chris Bobbitt read that editorial and took the time to respond to it on Compuserve. I think it only fair to Chris that we publish that response or at least an edited version of it here.

Take the time to read it. Chris gives us a good view from the other side of the issue. He brings up some very fine and valid points.

HOWEVER ... he has still missed the whole point of the editorial. Chris felt that I was being "hostile" toward him. I think the proper term would be "frustrated." He seemed to think I was questioning his integrity. No such thing. I have the greatest respect for Chris and his efforts on behalf of all TI'ers. My point was that most of us know that there will be times when, for whatever reason, a supplier can't deliver our goods as quickly as we would all like. Most TI'ers are very tolerant and willing to wait for good software or hardware. Heck, I have been waiting for more than 8 months for my PE box from RAVE! Usually the wait is well worth it. But there is a big difference between a company that tells you that there is a problem and shipping will be delayed and then keeps you informed and a company that keeps you in the dark. So all I said in the editorial and I repeat now is send a 20 cent pre-printed post card letting us know that an order has been received but will be delayed with shipping expected in so many weeks. That's all.

Chris ..thanks for taking the time to respond. m.m.  
(*Editor's Comment:* Chris has since left a message to Mike saying that he is instituting a policy of sending pre-printed explanations of delays to customers who are waiting for products. Great Move, Chris!)



Come Help Us Celebrate The  
TI-99/4A's 10th Year  
Anniversary

UGOC in association with the  
Pomona Valley UG is hosting

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Across the street from Disneyland PLUS many more attractions in the area for the wife/husband and kids to enjoy while you meet internationally renowned TI entrepreneurs, enthusiasts, and innovators. Fest tickets are on sale now (\$6.00 for both days). Ticket requests with a post mark before January 1, 1991 are eligible for a drawing for one free night at the RAMADA.

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*Travel Arrangements may be made by contacting, Ruth Dickey, Travel Concepts. (714) 778-5459*

For future announcements contact the UGOC BBS at (714) 751-4332 or write to:

Fest West 91 Committee  
C/O Bill Nelson  
11692 Puryear Lane  
Garden Grove, CA 92640



## FEST WEST 91

# VAST User Group Information

The VAST Computer User Group is a support group for the TI-99/4A Home Computer and compatibles.

The VAST Computer User Group operates a BBS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The NEW phone number effective Feb. 9, 1991 is (602) 233-0790.

## CURRENT OFFICERS

### **PRESIDENT**

Mike Grogan . . . . . 272-4315

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Jim Ely . . . . . 275-8018

### **SECRETARY/TREASURER**

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### **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Jim Ely . . . . . 275-8018

### **BBS SYSOP**

Leo Baker . . . . . 931-9010

Send any correspondence to the address below.

## ADVERTISING RATES

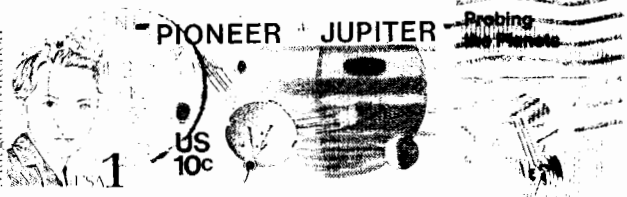
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Please contact the Secretary/Treasurer for **COMMERCIAL** advertising rates.

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