

VAST NEWS

for the VAST Computer User Group

Volume 7 Number 5

May 11, 1991

Dear VAST Members,

As you may or may not know, the attending members of the April 13th VAST Computer User Group meeting voted to hold the 1992 TI *FEST WEST* in Phoenix. Hazel Knight and I have volunteered to be co-chairpersons. The event will take place on February 15th and 16th, 1992 at the Days Inn Motel at 502 W. Camelback.

For those of you who were at the meeting and voted for the *FEST*, I ask you to please remember your pledge to help and I thank you in advance. For those of you who were not for the event at this time but offered your help, I thank you also. Last, but by no means least, for the non-attending members, I again ask for your help when called on. I feel that if our entire group gets behind this event it could easily be the best *FEST* yet!

I will give reports on the progress of the *FEST* at upcoming meetings and ask for your suggestions. I have never been to a Fest, Fair, Fayuh, etc. and need ideas on what to do and how to do it.

In closing this short note, think about what you can do to help and please be there when I need you.

Ralph Rees, Co-chairperson, *FEST WEST '92* Committee

I can be reached Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.,
at work - 249-1234 ext. 344
or evenings/weekends at home - 869-8145

MEETING — May 11, 1991

Pyle Adult Recreation Center
655 E. Southern Avenue
- Rural & Southern -
Tempe, Arizona

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TI World and Local News

(Compiled from various sources by Jim Ely)

MYARC Drops Advertising in MICROpendium Magazine!

Myarc, claiming that MICROpendium has been negative toward them "since day one" and is increasingly negative towards them, has dropped its advertising from the magazine. Does that make a lot of sense or what?

The whole thing arose as someone had approached MICROpendium about a possible false advertising claim by Myarc about support by its HFDC of Streamer Tape Drives. It appears that the HFDC does not as yet support the drives as there may be hardware support, but not any software support. MICROpendium approached MYARC about changing the wording of an ad that claims the drives' support and Myarc's response was to cancel its advertising. As usual, Myarc claims to be working on the support.

MICROpendium is the ONLY magazine that gets the word out about new products by all companys supporting the TI. Now how is Myarc going to advertise? For that matter, WHERE is Myarc going to advertise? I don't think word of mouth is going to make it. There isn't too much else left. Out of sight, out of mind. So Long, Myarc...

Bud Barnes Doing Great!

Bud, as you may recall, was admitted to the hospital in April with chest pains. His doc-

tors moved him to the University of Tucson Medical Center where an angioplasty was performed. This resulted in the 100% opening of 1 vein supplying blood to the heart, and the partial opening of another vein. Bud is feeling, doing, and looking better than he has in some time. Isn't modern medicine wonderful? Expect to see Bud at this meeting!

MIDI Marketing Mayhem?

After much promotion by Asgard of the MIDI Interface, Asgard now may not be marketing the device. Mike Maksimik, author (inventor?) of the device may market the device on his own. Asgard is attempting to renegotiate its deal with Maksimik. We'll keep an eye on this one and let you know what happens.

CorComp Items Being Repaired by 99 COMPUTER REPAIR

David Lynch, who was the lead technician for CorComp since 1987, is now an independent service technician repairing in- and out-of-warranty CorComp items for 99 Computer Repair.

The address of 99 Computer Repair is c/o David Lynch, 2101 W. Crescent Ave., Unit A, Anaheim, CA 92801. Telephone is (714) 539-4834

Newsletter look sort of small this month?
YOUR ARTICLE IS MISSING! Why not submit an article or even your Member Profile for inclusion in the next *VAST News Newsletter*? Ask Jim Wayne or Mike Marfisi or Mike Grogan or Ralph Rees how painless it is...

SECRETARY'S SLATE

MINUTES

VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP

APRIL 13, 1991

The April meeting of the VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP was held on Saturday, April 13th, at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe, Az. It was called to order by President Mike Grogan at 9:50AM. Mike G. introduced our newest member, Mr. Gene Gipson. Welcome Gene.

The minutes of the March meeting were accepted as published in the VAST newsletter. The Treasurers report was accepted as read.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BBS Committee: No special report. All running well.

Newsletter Committee: No special report. Jim Wayne has volunteered to take control of the past issues of the exchange newsletters. He will catalog them so that we can find articles in a more efficient manner. They will be available from him for loan to members.

Ian McGregor has volunteered to contact Regina about the possibility of getting some of the material she wrote while working for COMPUTE magazine. He felt some of this may now be available and would make a good addition to the library.

Library: Tips V1.8 and Funnelweb V4.31 have now been added.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to conduct.

At this point the meeting was turned over to Ralph Rees for a special report from the *FEST WEST '92* Investigation Committee. This committee had been created at the March meeting for the purpose of investigating the possibility of the VAST Computer User Group hosting the 1992 *FEST WEST*.

Ralph reported that the committee had found a near perfect location for the *FEST* at the Days Inn Camelback. The Days Inn would give us use of a large exhibit hall, a smaller meeting room plus a hospitality suite. There would be no charge as long as we could guarantee them that we would rent 20 rooms in the motel for the weekend.

The folks from South West 99er's were in attendance and gave us much good advice based on their experience from the last few years.

After much discussion, a roll call vote was taken of the members present. On a vote of 12 yes, 2 no and 1 abstention it was decided that VAST would be the host for *FEST WEST '92*. Ralph Rees and Hazel Knight were appointed co-chairpersons. They were given the list of those voting and will be contacting members to help on the committee as the need arises.

There being no further business, the meet-

See **MINUTES** on page 4

MINUTES, from page 3

ing was closed and SW99'ers gave a demonstration of a VCR system that can be used to make video tapes of computer demos with the ability of using a camera to view the speaker and a direct link be made to the computer. This way the viewer would see the TI screen as if they were watching the monitor instead of a just picture of the monitor.

Respectfully,
 Mike Marfisi, Secretary,
 Vast Computer User Group

From the Editor's Desk

Happy Mother's Day!

IN THIS ISSUE...

Unlike last month's issue that had so many submissions by our members, this month I have NOTHING! I guess everyone just got the bug to do something last month. As a result, this month's issue is only 12 pages long. Oh, well...

On page 5 is *NEW-AGE/99* number 11 looking at the great works of Mickey Schmitt. On page 8 is *VIEWS & REVIEWS*, this month taking a look at Asgard's new *Screen Preview* program. On page 7 is *4/A FORAY* by Ralph Rees with some discussions of group interest.

And that is all I have for you this month.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Below is the 2 month calendar with our meeting dates indicated...

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

See you at the meeting on May 11th!

Jim Ely, Editor

Just a reminder...

The **VAST BBS** has changed its telephone number. You can now reach it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **(602) 233-0790**.

This is a local call for most area residents.



Give it a call for the latest information about the VAST Computer User Group!

FOR SALE

Tan Colored Steel Office Desk
 30" X 60" top measure.
 7 Drawers, lockable.
 Real Heavy Duty. \$70
 Call Mike Marfisi
 491-1552

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

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

#11

THE LADY FROM LOWER BURRELL

Mickey Schmitt, president of the West Penn 99ers, is a young lady with extraordinarily varied T.I. interests and talents. She is an ardent fairgoer, ranging along the eastern seaboard inland to Lima, Ohio, and north to Canada, visiting with her hundreds of TI friends and fans and oftentimes representing groups or companies who couldn't attend.

Mickey is an author, programmer, tutor, collector, and adventure aficionado whose great sense of humor shows through almost all her activities. For example, in a very clever adventure she wrote for the TI Adventure Module (OLIVER'S TWIST - cassette or disk, Asgard, \$7.95), she requires the player to PUT BACK treasures in order to win the game. Her latest Asgard adventure, RATTLESNAKE BEND, is like John Wayne playing Viva Zapata. Wild, hilarious stuff. But hidden beneath the jocularly is a mean adventure guaranteed to please, Pardner.

Adventuring seems to be in Mickey's blood. She is THE expert in the field. If there is an adventure for the TI she hasn't uncovered and played, it was probably written

this morning.

A few years ago we had a chance to talk for awhile at one of the computer fairs, and she felt there was a real need to compile a listing of all the various adventures available for the TI so that users could have some kind of idea what is out there. I agreed but felt the task was formidable. Mickey didn't, fortunately for the TI community. She began collecting, sorting, doing, evaluating, and compiling every available adventure for the TI.

The result of this massive undertaking is THE ADVENTURE REFERENCE GUIDE, a 62-page, 8x11" commercially printed, easy to read book that not only gives a complete alphabetical listing of over 200 adventures but breaks them down into different sections by language (XB, E/A, etc.) and type (INFOCOM, Educational, Role-playing, etc.). There are astute reviews of selected adventures and sections on sources, utilities, and adventuring history. There is also a checklist for solving and comments. This is an indispensable guide for any adventuring Tier (from Asgard, Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20848; \$9.95 / \$2 S&H). [Last I heard, Mickey was continuing to test new and new-found adventures for updating this magnum opus.]

If you own Scott Adams' ADVENTURE MODULE or the disk loader interpreter of this module available from user groups, I'd highly recommend investing in Mickey's two games.

See **NEW-AGE 11** on page 6

NEW-AGE 11, from page 5

Life is strange. At least the life that goes on inside my head. When I sat down to write this article I was planning a review of Mickey's newest book on cassette systems. But I pulled out THE ADVENTURE REFERENCE GUIDE from the Mickey Schmitt section of my TI library by mistake and couldn't resist re-reading it. Then I couldn't resist playing SORCERER (an INFOCOM game reviewed in the book by Mickey which I had started but never finished). Then I couldn't resist eating lunch, still thinking of the spells and magic items I needed to get out of the SORCERER. Finally, I put all that stuff behind (more from frustration than feeling the noble urge to return to task) and got back to doing this review. But I couldn't resist writing about this woman's profound adventuring influence first. Now, the "real" topic of this review: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CASSETTE SYSTEM.

GETTING is based on the series of articles by the same name that appears in newsletters throughout the world. This entirely rewritten work is a professionally published, 8x11", 52-page, loose-leaf package, containing all the original (though updated and revised) articles that first appeared in her group newsletter.

Not only is this book handy for what it does, but Mickey has provided a way for user groups to make a few kopeks on it. She is offering this project for \$9.95 plus \$2.50 S&H to any individual or user group. User groups need only purchase a single copy. She grants the rights for the group to

reproduce it entirely for members of the group free or as a fundraiser, providing no copies are given or sold to persons outside the group. Neat idea. Hope it catches on. The packages must be ordered directly from the author: Mickey Schmitt, 196 Broadway Avenue, Lower Burrell, PA 15068.

Now, what does GETTING get you?

First, a chance to rethink your group membership and future growth, because the cassette is still a powerful tool for a beginner or basic user. This book might just show your group new ways to attract new (or old) members into the fold.

Second, it opens one's eyes to lots of possibilities of cassetting previously unexplored. One of my TIs at school is cassetted, for example, and this book proved to be an immense help in ways I never dreamed of. More on this later.

Finally, this book made a multi-system user of me. I really only need one disk drive system to do all the tasks I do, but many times the system is tied up with heavy-duty printing or converting graphics or any number of long-time chores. Rather than sit and wait or go watch TV or clean my wallaby's teeth, I just move over to my OTHER TI SYSTEM! That's right. I have set my other console (\$3 at a yard sale) onto a TV with a tape recorder hookup. Many nights I now just use the SILENT tape recorder system for some utility or recreational use. And I'm finding more and more uses, including lots of cartridge (MINIMEM, LOGO, etc.) activities I had forgotten were so exceptional,

See **NEW-AGE 11** on page 7

NEW-AGE 11, from page 6

even with tape. I have a sidecar 32K, though many people are putting the chip right in or making that chip part of a Zenoboard package. Anyway, with 32K and Will McGovern's CASSTRANS I can load ASSEMBLY games and utilities into my computer from tape. I can AUTOMATICALLY!!! locate and RUN programs from my tape recorder with Joseph Bartle's CS1*FINDEX. I have my cassette boxes labeled and a catalog on each tape, thanks to Mickey's LABEL and CATALOG programs. All this stuff, by the way, is in the book in short, easy to type in, clever programs. (Will's program is Fairware and in all group libraries.) No more being restricted to BASIC and XB files. Now I can play FREDDY from my tape recorder. No more searching for programs. I don't even need a tape recorder with a counter on it anymore. Now, like the Timex/Sinclair user, I can automatically run a program anywhere on a C-60 tape after locating it in the FAST FORWARD speed mode! In short, tape recorders have come of age. They can be powerful and fast and reasonably efficient and orderly.

Mickey's book is extremely non-technical. She explains everything about computer taping from the VERY beginnings to the state of the art. And it really might get you into that SECOND system. j.s.



4/A Foray

by Ralph Rees

Hooray for May! I would have to say that May is my 2nd favorite month of the year (after December) because it's my BIRTHDAY Month!!! And NO I ain't gonna tell you that I'm going to be 40 years old this month, so don't even ask!!

Check It Out Department

Are you folks aware of the wealth of software that is at your disposal for a measly 1 or 2 bucks copying fee? Wallace & Hazel Knight carry this big converted suitcase? to the meeting every month and I believe I'm the only one in the last couple meetings that has looked in it. You really ought to check into what we have in our Library. You might find something you have been looking for, or didn't know you were looking for.

And while we are on the subject, if you have some software that we don't have in the Library, why not make it a DOM (Disk of the Month) or at least donate it to the group thru the Library. Some of the larger groups out there have GIGANTIC Libraries that their members have for their use.

BestFestWest Department

We are rolling along on the initial ground work for the *Fest '92*. Hazel and Wallace have measured the rooms we have and are busy seeing how many tables we'll have for the event. We met a couple of weeks ago

See 4/A FORAY on page 8

4/A FORAY, from page 7

at Days Inn and we talked to Kim Melcher about possibly giving us a PER Room rate, versus a PER Person rate. I should know something by the meeting, and I will let you know then.

I would like you all to think of a product, service?, etc., that we could possibly sell at the fair. I would also like some input on what we can do for fund raising. I would like some ideas or volunteers for any possible demos we might put on at the fair. Get yourself into a thinking mindset and let's kick around some ideas at the meeting, O.K.?

Last But Not Least Department

It has been nice in the last couple of newsletters to see a few new names of people that are writing for our newsletter. Ask them about how PAINLESS it was to write something. I think it would be neat if we could do a Super Summer Issue like the Chicago group does with EVERYBODY writing something about the ole' TI. Maybe we could call it the Super Software issue with everybody writing about their favorite software program. C'mon folks. It really is kind of effortless. I wrote this short column in less than 20 minutes (I know, I know, it looks it, right?) so it CAN be done. Like the Tennie shoe commercial says... JUST DO IT!!

r.r.

Views & Reviews

SCREEN PREVIEW

Reviewed by Mike Marfisi

This month I would like to take a look at a program marketed by Asgard entitled *SCREEN PREVIEW*. This program is billed as a "remarkable replacement for the TI Writer Formatter that allows you to view and edit on the screen, your formatted document prior to printing it."

How it accomplishes this feat is interesting. When a document is run through the program you are presented with an "on screen" graphic representation of a printed page. What you see is a box which looks like a sheet of paper on which your document is represented by a series of dots instead of letters and words. This way you can see what the indentations, paragraphs, etc., will look like when printed to paper.

The program can be loaded into the 99/4A from Extended BASIC, Editor/Assembler or TI Writer. On the Geneve it is loaded through the GPL interpreter or through M-DOS. It can be installed on a hard drive or on a Myarc or Rave RAM disk. It may not work on a Horizon RAM disk. You must name the disk on which it resides "SPREVIEW".

After loading the program a title screen is displayed. Press any key to continue. The program then loads a configuration file. The

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IEWS & REVIEWS, from page 8

program comes configured for an Epson printer. Note that even if your printer is labeled as "Epson compatible" it may not work. You may have to dig out your printer manual and check all the control codes to be sure they are the same. If they are not, they can be changed through the configure program.

Assuming that you have created a document using TI Writer or clone and have used "dot commands" to format your document, you are ready to use SCREEN PREVIEW. After you have loaded the program and gone beyond the configure file, the program asks you to enter the filename of the document you wish to format. Enter the file as you would with TI Writer Formatter. You are then asked for a device name of your printer, usually PIO. You could have the formatted document go to a disk by entering a file name instead of the printer name.

The program then formats your document one page at a time and then displays the page on your screen. The page is formatted in accordance with the formatting commands you embedded in the text. Each letter in your text is represented by a dot. Bold text shows in a different color dot and underlined text is shown by an underline under the the dot. The whole page is represented by a box on the left side of the screen.

In the upper right corner there is a counter that indicates the page you are on and the line you are currently editing. Also at the top of the text preview box are two arrows which indicate the line being edited.

Beneath the location counters on the right side of the screen you'll see a list of keys and what the command will invoke. You can move the "edit Line" up or down, print the current page, edit the current line, auto print the text (this automatically prints the current page when you press enter as opposed to having to tell it to print). You can also move forward or backward one page at a time.

While previewing the document, you can edit any line by entering the "edit" mode. An edit screen comes up. The original text will be at the top and a copy of the text at the bottom with a cursor beneath. Make any changes to the text that are needed.

The program will support many, but not all of the "dot commands" used by TI Writer. It will NOT recognize commands like transliterates and those used by mail merge.

MY IMPRESSIONS

The program performs as advertised. However, as with all advertising, you are told only those things the author feels are best. They always skip over the disadvantages.

Let's take a look at some of the minus factors.

The program must be on a disk named SPREVIEW. This makes it somewhat inconvenient to incorporate onto some disk formats.

You can not simply substitute this formatter for the TI Writer Formatter and select "formatter" from the menu. You can use the

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VIEWS & REVIEWS, from page 9

"UTIL" selection, however.

The program may not work with many RAM disks, especially Horizon.

The characters that appear on the monitor screen are just awful! They are extremely hard to read. I use a color monitor and can hardly read them. I understand they may be even worse on a TV set.

The "on screen" representation is not very accurate. I formatted several documents using margins of 15 and 65. The screen showed virtually no right margin so you get the impression that the document is printing way to the right instead of centered on the page.

While you can edit text in the document, you can not change the formatting while in the program. If you are not happy with the position of a page break, you must exit the program, go back to TI Writer's editor, make the change to the formatting command and then re-enter the program to check the change.

I find that, for my needs, this program is more trouble than it is worth. I can achieve the same results much faster. Try this. After creating a document, bring up the formatter. Specify a disk file instead of the printer as your output file. The formatter will now print the document to the disk just as it will appear on paper. Load the new file into the editor and check it out on screen. You can edit text AND change most format commands right here. Save the file or simply print it to the printer. Same result, less

work.

Perhaps later versions of the program will address some of the problems. Until then, I'll stick to the old way, thank you.

SCREEN PREVIEW is written by Joe Delekto and distributed by ASGARD.

Report Card

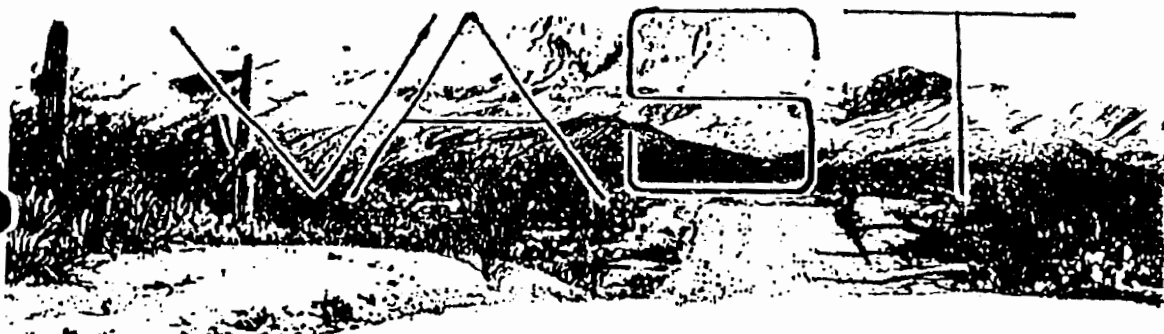
Performance.....	B
Ease of Use.....	A-
Documentation.....	A-
Value.....	C
Final Grade.....	B

SCREEN PREVIEW sells for \$12.95 + \$2.50 Shipping and Handling. For further information or to order, contact Asgard at P.O. Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20849 or telephone (703) 255-3084. m.m.



THE DIFFERENCE

IS



VAlley of the Sun TI-99/4A
USER GROUP
INVITES
YOU

and all Personal Computer owners and users to Join them the 2nd Saturday Morning of each month between 9:00am and 12:00pm (noon) at the PYLE ADULT RECREATION CENTER in Tempe.

VAST OFFERS :

- . 24 hour a day BBS
- . Monthly Newsletter
- . Download from BBS for members
- . Computer "Hands On" demonstrations
- . Loan of a MODEM System for members
- . A library of programs for disc and cassette
- . A friendly forum for discussion of your PC problems

For more Information on VAST, contact either:

Mike Grogan (Pres)...272-4315 or Mike Marfisi (Sec/Treas)...491-1552

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 is (602) 233-0790.

CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mike Grogan 272-4315

VICE PRESIDENT

Jim Ely 275-8018

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mike Marfisi. 491-1552

LIBRARIANS

Hazel & Wallace Knight . . . 938-5446

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jim Ely 275-8018

BBS SYSOP

Mike Grogan 272-4315

ADVERTISING RATES

There is **NO CHARGE** to **MEMBERS** for **PERSONAL** advertising. Non-members will be charged \$1.50 per ad.

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

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Send any correspondence to the address below.

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