TI World and Local News

(Compiled by Jim Ely from various sources, mostly MICROpendium Magazine)

WARNING! WARNING!

After an article appeared in MICROpendium about the availability of some art from VAST, we received an order from Germany. We sent out the order and deposited the check. Well, the check bounced! It was written on an American bank but the account had been closed. This is just to let other user groups that do some mail ordering to be careful about their dealings with others who may have dishonest intentions. We feel that it would be too costly to try and recover any losses as a result of this transaction. Just though you would want to know...

MDOS Buyout Completed

The MDOS buyout spearheaded by Beery Miller was successful, according to Miller, and he now retains exclusive rights to the source code for MDOS, ABASIC and P-

SYSTEM for the Myarc Geneve 9640.

Paul Charlton also included the GPL Interpreter source code. The source code is available only to financial contributors to the MDOS buyout. According to Miller, the source code will not be available on any network or BBS, and should not be distributed to anyone without Miller's direct authorization.

Final versions of the program image files for MDOS, ABASIC and the P-SYSTEM runtime system will be available on Delphi, GEnie and through other BBS systems.

According to Miller's contract with Lou Phillips of Myarc, Miller will send

SECRETARY'S SLATE

MINUTES

VAST Computer User Group
September 8, 1992

The August gathering of the VAST User Group took place on the 8th. There were 20 members in attendance, including all of the officers. President Jim Ely called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. The first topics of business were the accepting of both the minutes of the last meeting and the treasury report.

During the treasury report it was noted by treasurer Tom Pfeffer that VAST had received a check back from the bank that was listed as unpayable. This prompted a discussion of group policy as to the filling of mail-in orders. It was concluded that the best course of action to take was to wait until checks have cleared to fill any further orders. Jim promised to mention this situation in the newsletter to warn other user groups of the potential problem.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Next on the agenda were committee reports. The Publicity, Raffle, Picnic, and BBS committees had nothing new to report or were not represented at the meeting.

LIBRARY: Members were reminded that the library now contains the Fest-West tape as well as other video tapes for member viewing. Speak to Wallace or Hazel about checking them out.

PROGRAM: There was no program scheduled for the September meeting in anticipation of the upcoming picnic. Bud promised to check with Curtis Mavity to arrange for one.

NEWSLETTER: Keep those articles coming in because Jim stated that he is running out of his backlog of stories. Once again Jim asked for some bio material from club members.

OLD BUSINESS

Under the heading of old business, Bud Barnes related that the tour of ESC Litho would take place on November 7 at 10:00 a.m. The tour will take approximately 2 hours and should be very interesting.

Also under old business was a discussion of the formation of an election committee to take names of potential candidates for the upcoming VAST elections. Ray Frantz volunteered for the post and will be contacting all members to fill the ballot. Nominations are to be made in October and the ballots will be mailed out before the November meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Next came new business. Mike Marfisi asked for a volunteer to take over the newsletter exchange for next year. He does not think that he will be available to do the job next year. This also led to a discussion of the possibility of getting a post office box in Tempe. The idea was seconded and approved by a unanimous vote. Mike promised to handle all of the details.

A lengthy discussion about the direction of

the group and how it relates to new members followed. A great deal of good came of the question and answer period and many members had some good ideas. The topics of special interest groups and a buddy system were among the many subjects mentioned.

Potential topics for upcoming newspaper articles were kicked around and it was determined that more member involvement would help to eliminate any voids not covered in our monthly 3 hour get-togethers. Jim reminded everyone that computer users all start out the same way and that the only way to learn anything about the TI is to ask questions. Tom handed out the current VAST demographics list to those that didn't have one. Everyone was encouraged to make use of it. Bud reminded everyone that you will only get out of the club what you put into it. Volunteer, it doesn't hurt!

There being no further business, Jim accepted a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Pfeffer, Secretary/Treasurer

final copies of MDOS directly to the owners. Miller is awaiting names and addresses of the owners from Phillips. Phillips required Miller to handle the estimated 2,200 Geneves and the final mailing of MDOS software in lieu of receiving immediate cash for the buyout.

Miller notes that he had anticipated mailing for 800 Geneves and is still short of money to handle the final mailing. He says contributions will be welcome, and persons may still have the option of acquiring source code diskettes with a minimum $25 contribution.

Suggestions for enhancements to MDOS will only be accepted from contributors; bug reports will, however, be accepted from anyone, Miller says.

A Hard and Floppy Disk Controller and hard drive are required to assemble the source code to these systems, as well as ownership of GenPROG by Paul Charlton, Miller says. Miller says he is negotiating a contract with Charlton on the redistribution of this package.

Prices are: MDOS/GPL, $10 for four 5.25-inch disks or $5 for one 3.5-inch disk; ABASIC/GPL, $7.50 for three 5.25-inch disks or $5 for one 3.25-inch disk; and P-SYSTEM, $5 for two 5.25-inch disks or one 3.25-inch disk.

Write Miller at P.O. Box 752465, Memphis, TN 38175.

Myarc Parts Cecured

Don Walden of Cecure Electronics says he received a package of gate arrays for the Myarc Hard and Floppy Disk Controller and Geneve 9640 and some 9938 video chips from Lou Phillips on Aug. 24.

Walden notes that he still has not directly heard from Phillips himself for several months.

For repairs or parts for Myarc products, write Cecure Electronics, 7759 S. Scepter Dr. 7, Franklin, WI 53132-2201 or call (414) 529-2173.

New Product from Harrison Software

Harrison Software has introduced Stor Mor, a program which provides a set of tools that will allow the Extended BASIC programmer to stash string variables in the unused part of the 32K memory expansion, instead of the VDP RAM space used by XB for string storage. This means that programmers who make extensive use of string variables can have another resource available for keeping them in memory.

Versions included in the package use leftover high memory (program space) and low memory (assembly routine) space. According to the manufacturer, all necessary object files, including AL SAVE, are included, as are the source files and complete instructions on the disk, plus demo programs and an XBASIC program to print the instructions. No assembly knowledge is required.

Harrison notes, "We'd like to publicly thank Bill Harms of Chino, California, and Jim Peterson of Columbus, Ohio, for first inspiring and then helping test and improve this product."

Stor Mor, on a single-side. single-density disk, sells for $6, including shipping and handling in the United States and Canada, from Harrison Software, 5705 40th Place, Hyattsville, MD 20781.

Bill Gaskill Releases Productivity Program

Bill Gaskill has released a new personal productivity program dubbed Quick File. The program can manage up to 1,352 free form index cards, which may be used to store any type of information desired, from anniversary dates to insurance policy data.

Each card can hold 36 lines of text, with 38 characters available per line. Index cards may be saved using descriptions up to 32 characters long, and the program contains a built-in system of alphabetical organizing.

Quick Notes runs on a TI-99/4A with Extended BASIC, 32K and one disk drive, or on a Myarc Geneve 9640 in GPL mode with one disk drive. It is available for $15 from Bill Gaskill, 3210 Cypress Court, Grand Junction, CO 81506.

New Releases From Notung Software

Ken Gilliland of Notung Software says the company has released several new products, and plans to release two more at the Chicago International World Faire Oct. 31 and one at the Australian TI-Faire in Ashfield, New South Wales, Nov. 28-29.

Recent products include "Disk of the Old West" at $15 for the four disk set, plus postage and handling; Midi Music for Midi Master 99, vols. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, DSDD format, $5 each plus postage and handling; Fonts & Borders V, $7 plus postage and handling; Notung T Shirt, $10 plus postage and handling; and How to Use TPA, book with disk, $19.95 plus postage and handling.

Planned for the Chicago fair is a video tape, "How to Use TI Artist... and Not Go Insane." with a planned price is $19.95 plus

4/A Foray

by Ralph Rees

Hello Again Fellow Vastians! My column this month is going to be a little short but I hope interesting. Read on...

TECHNOSPEAK

Some people, especially government employees and computer programmers, speak in a language which is a bit strange to the mediocre mind, like mine.

The following are some tongue-in-cheek examples. See if you can decipher them. They are often heard sayings.

Want the answers? We'll see...

1. Avian species of identical plumage congregate

2. Freedom from encrustations of noxious substances is contigous to conformity with devine prescription.

3. Pulcritude posesses solely cutaneous profundity.

4. A superannuated canine is immune to indoctrination in innovative maneuvers.

5. Ululate not, over precipitated lacteal secretion.

6. All that coruscates with resplendence will not assay auriferous.

7. The existence of visible vapors from ignited carbonaceous materials confirms conflagration.

8. Mendicants are interdicted from elective recipiency.

9. Probity gratifies reflexively.

10. Male cadavers are unyielding of testimony.

11. Inhabitants of vitreous edifaces illadvisedly catapult petreous projectiles.

12. Ergonomia exclusive of diversion renders John a hebetudinous progeny.

13. He who cachinates ultimately, cachinates optimally.

14. Abstenation from speculatory undertaking precludes attainment.

15. Missiles of ligneous and nonmetalic mineral consistency have the potential for fracturing my osseous structure, but malicious appelations are eternally inocous.

See! That wasn't so bad was it!

FCTN +   —Ralph...❖

Chris' Corner

Why the TI?
Conclusion

My interest in the TI 99/4 began in March 1981, when as a student at the Defense Language Institute, I ordered my first TI. In the ensuing years I have devoted an enormous amount of my life to learning about computers. I have no formal training in any aspect of dealing with computers. Everything I have learned has been the hard way - "I earned it." Without the TI, I would never have been able to learn as much as I have. Thousands of dollars and almost a dozen years later, I find that it is time to move on. I had great visions for the now classic TI. I dreamed that maybe I could be a catalyst in a resurrection of the computer. Alas, I have come to see that that will not happen. I had hoped that I could make a significant contribution to the club. Once again, I find that that did not happen. I believe that a measure of the significance of the contribution can be made by measuring what effect the contributor has in his absence. Reviewing the past few months, it seems that my absence has caused little.It has been very hard for me to accept that the degree of devotion I have given to a machine was not or could not be shared by others.

Five years ago I had a novel idea which I offered to my user's group in California. I asked the club president if he would propose the following deal to the club members: a joint club program whereby each member with just a console and a cassette could contribute to the project. The idea was to get as many members as possible to use their computers. With ten to fifteen members and three months we could do a commercial grade geography program. I would coordinate the project as main programmer. I, as well as each contributing member, would get a portion of the royalties. If the club funded the materials for the project then the members could donate the proceeds to the club. But the idea was never raised in a meeting. When I arrived here last year, I tried the idea but once again no luck. I felt that if no one found a reason to regularly use the TI, then I could never expect the computer to make a comeback. Well, the dream of a comeback has given way to reality. The reality is that while the computer won't make a comeback, it is still capable of holding its own. This month I would like to tell you about the things I have done to protect my investment in the TI.

Since access to any TI unique hardware is difficult, I decided to use as much IBM equipment as possible. I realized that when someone reads a letter, they don't care which computer or word processor generated the letter. Their primary interest is the information in the letter and its legibility. To that end, I have t_writer™ and TI writer™ which I use for word processing. To provide the highest legibility, I use a Brother HL 8V - a superior laser printer clone to the HP III. This printer, which is no longer in production, offers emulation modes for IBM, Epson, and HP PCL 4 and PCL 5. In addition to the laser

printer, I have a 24 pin Toshiba dot matrix printer which offers IBM and Qume/Diablo emulation. (Emulation allows a printer to assume multiple identities.) Both printers offer excellent print quality. Incidentally, my TI's have four comm ports (RS232 1 thru 4) and two printer ports (PIO 1 and 2). The laser printer is connected to one comm port and the dot matrix printer to one of the printer ports.

While I'm on the subject of ports...
The following is a description of the peripherals I have connected to my development system. (Note, I have started using IBM terms with the TI terms in parenthesis.)

Com1 (RS232/1): t_mouse — MicroSoft compatible mouse
Com2 (RS232/2): laser printer — IBM compatible laser printer
Com3 (RS232/3): digitizing pad
Com4 (RS232/4): IBM link — direct connection to my IBM clone which permits my IBM to "talk" with the TI.

Lpt1 (PIO/1): Dot matrix printer — IBM compatible printer
Lpt2 (PIO/2): TI link — direct connection to my secondary TI system.

To make my life a lot easier, I decided to make adapters for the printer's parallel ports. I replaced the Centronics 36 pin connector with a Db 25 female connector. I wired the Db 25 connector to permit use of any standard (cheap) IBM printer cable.

One of the smartest things TI did was to use IBM compatible disk memory system when developing the 99/4. That decision meant that I could use 3.5 inch drives in my system. In both my development and secondary TI systems, I have a Corcomp double-sided, double-density disk controller, one half height 5.25 inch disk drive and one 3.5 inch disk drive. I have used the 3.5 inch drives for eight years. A few years ago I thought that both my Corcomp controllers were bad so while I waited for them to be repaired, I used my TI controllers. I could use every disk that was formatted to single-density. Later, I tried using the original external controller "boxcar" with the external drive from an Atari 520 ST. It worked! Recently, a friend decided that he preferred having his children use the 3.5 inch diskettes because they come in a protective caddy. He bought a Teac 40 track 720K 3.5 inch drive and installed it with no problems. I don't think the 1.44 megabyte (MB) or 2.88 MB drives will work because they use more than forty tracks.

Another smart thing that TI did was to use NTSC video for the output of the computer. This video signal is compatible with VCRs and most TV monitors available today. I use a Commodore 1084S monitor which permits RGB and composite video signals to be used. For the highest quality display without a special RGB graphics adapter, I have a Taxan composite amber monitor. The sixty four column mode on this inexpensive monitor is superb — especially, when the right color (shade, since the monitor is amber) combinations are chosen.

As you can see Texas Instruments made quite a few good decisions which provide you with options to enhance you computer investment. These are the reasons "Why the TI?". Thank you.

— CHRIS' CORNER, from page 7

Next month: Power programming with t_dos™ and Wycove forth series.

PS – Tech note: In addition the the equipment above, my development system consists of 2 MB ram, the OPA 9958 RGB video adapter (which I sent to Bud Mills in February to have repaired and have yet to receive), the t_system™ and a speech adapter. The weakest link in this system is my lack of mass storage. The exit of Myarc from the computer seen and the failure of the ESD hard disk drive system to appear makes this link even weaker. My solution, should I find sufficient time, is to use the bi-directional printer ports on both the IBM and the TI so that the IBM provides mass storage for the TI. The current method I use is PC transfer which allows a TI system with a Corcomp or Myarc disk controller to read and write to MS DOS formatted disks. I created a TI Directory on my IBM hard disk drive; used PC to copy my TI programs to a floppy disk; put that disk in my IBM and copied its contents to my hard drive. When the program/data is to be retrieved I simply reverse the process. It is quite possible to use the cartridge port to perform this function without the addition of the peripheral expansion box. In any event, while the time devoted to using the TI has diminished, it has not disappeared. When I get my console back from Bud, I look forward to giving a super graphic demonstration. ct ❖

From the Editor's Desk
Happy Halloween.

IN THIS ISSUE

I'll have to make it short and sweet this month because we have sooooooo much news! Ralph Rees' *4/A Foray* column, on page 5, is a very interesting one. He calls it TECH-NOSPEAK. See how many of them you can figure out. Great column, Ralph. *Chris' Corner* on page 6 is the last of the series "Why the TI" and talks about connecting different devices to the TI. And on page 10 is a sort of novel approach to the *Disk of the Month*; I've called it the Build it Yourself Disk of the Year. We'll see what kind of interesting little programs we can put in this column. That's it this month...

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

NOVEMBER						1992		DECEMBER						1992
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT		SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12	13	14		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19	20	21		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26	27	28		20	21	22	23	24	25	26
29	30							27	28	29	30			

Remember — This month is officer nominating month. Why don't YOU run for an office in the VAST Computer User Group!

See you at the meeting! ❖

postage and handling and "Disk of the Ancient Ones" containing clip art, essays, fonts and a game from the period of "The Ascent of Man to the Fall of Rome." Price is $15 plus postage and handling.

Though Gilliland himself will not attend the fair in Australia, he plans to release his "Disk of Medieval Times," containing graphs, music, games and fonts, plus histories and legends. Price is $15 plus postage and handling.

For information or to order, contact Notung Software. 7647 McGroarty St., Tujunga, CA 91042, (818) 951-2718.

Super Summer Deals

As part of its Super Summer Deals promotion, Texaments is offering nine arcade games for the Geneve 9640 at half their normal retail price until Nov. 1, 1992.

Jungle Terror: a game where the player controls the white Jungler Worm and tries to destroy evil worms. Special price: $7.47.

Space Champions: a 21st century spaceship battle game. Special price: $6.47.

Cave Explorer: locked in a twisted series of tunnels and caverns the player must find the secret key that will unlock the door to freedom. Special price: $6.47.

Train Twister: driving a train, the player must replace the tracks a few gremlins have moved while competing against other trains for the same track. Special price: $6.47.

Traffic Frenzy: the player is stuck in traffic and must negotiate a way out of it without crashing into other cars or being squashed by a steamroller. Special Price: $6.47.

Submarine Revenge: the player must attack an enemy submarine base while avoiding depth charges, torpedoes and other deadly weapons. Special price: $6.47.

Sea Terror: the player must swim the ocean to claim a sunken treasure and avoid being eaten by piranhas, sharks, and killer jelly fish. Special price: $6.47.

Islander and Car Race (two games): in Islander the player is marooned on an island and must avoid being killed by the natives. Car Race is an educational game where the player must use math and English skills plus quick reflexes to win. Special price: $4.97.

Geneve Games can be ordered directly by mail by sending a check or money order to Texaments, 53 Center St., Patchogue, NY 11772. C.O.D. orders can be placed by calling (516) 475-3480. A shipping charge of $3.25 for domestic and Canadian delivery or $8.50 for foreign insured air mail should be added to each order.

Build Your Own... Disk Of The Year

This month I will launch a small project with the hopes, that in lieu of a disk of a month, you might be encouraged to build your own *Disk Of The Year.*

It actually started last month with the short program to find the Day of the Week based on any date entered (you did type that nifty one in, didn't you?).

I will have for you some nifty little program to type in every month for the next 12 months. The programs should be small enough that you will be able to get them all on one SS/SD disk.

Beginners should not have any trouble with these and it should be a fun little project for all to enjoy!   je ❖

AMIGA

Is that a dirty word or what? No, not really. It's just the name of a cute little program (below) which I found in one of my disk storage boxes. I beieve it was written about the time the Amiga computer came out. It shows that the lowly TI can move a graphic ball across the screen very much like the Amiga. I have added "CHECKSUM" to the program for those of you who use this error checking program. Enjoy! —Ralph...

```
100 CALL CLEAR :: CALL SCREE
N(2):: CALL COLOR(12,16,15):
: CALL MAGNIFY(4):: RM,CM=6
:: RP,CP=80 :: SP=128 :: IP=
4 !175
```

```
110 G$="FF818181818181FF" ::
 B$="030F1F3F7F7FFFFFFFFF7F7
F3F1F0F03C0F0F8FCFEFEFFFFFFF
FFEFEFCF8F0C0" !045
```

```
120 S1$="000010300F0F0F0FF0F
070700F0F0F03C0F0F0F00E0E0F0
FF0F0F0F00C080000" :: S2$="0
00C1C3C4343C3C33C3C3C3C03030
3030030383CC2C2C3C33C3C3C3CC
0C0C0C0" !079
```

```
130 S3$="030F0F0F7070F0F00F0
F0F0F301000000000080CF0F0F0F
00F0F0E0EF0F0F0C0" :: S4$="0
30303033C3C3C3CC3C343433C1C0
C00C0C0C0C03C3C3C3CC3C3C2C23
C383000" !083
```

```
140 CALL CHAR(123,G$,124,B$,
SP,S1$,132,S2$,136,S3$,140,S
4$):: CALL VCHAR(1,3,123,672
):: CALL SPRITE(#1,SP,7,RP,C
P,RM,CM,#2,124,16,RP,CP,RM,C
M)!132
```

```
150 CALL POSITION(#1,RP,CP):
: IF CP>20 AND CP<206 THEN I
F RP>4 AND RP<158 THEN GOTO
170 ELSE RM=-RM ELSE CM=-CM
:: IP=-IP !043
```
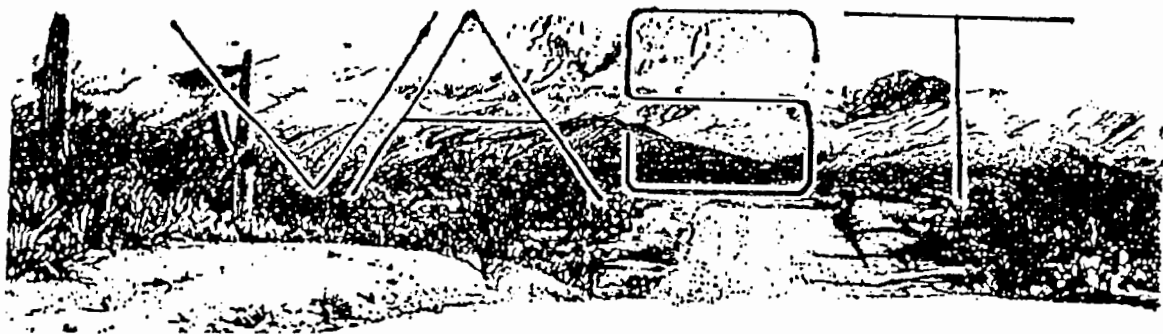
```
160 CALL MOTION(#1,RM,CM,#2,
RM,CM):: CALL SOUND(-50,110,
0,131,0,175,0,-8,0)!177
```

```
170 SP=SP+IP+IP*4*(SP=128 AN
D IP=-4 OR SP=140 AND IP=4):
: CALL PATTERN(#1,SP):: GOTO
150 !247
```

THE

DIFFERENCE

IS

VAST

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:

Jim Ely (President), 966-8374 or Tom Pfeffer (Sec./Tres.), 940-0974

VAST User Group Information

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

CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
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VICE PRESIDENT
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SECRETARY/TREASURER
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Hazel & Wallace Knight . . . 938-5446
NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Jim Ely 966-8374
BBS SYSOP
Mike Grogan 272-4315

Send any correspondence to the address below.

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

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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