

VAST



NEWS

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The Newsletter of the VALley of the Sun TI99/ers

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM VAST

INSIDE INFORMATION

ITEM	PAGE	ITEM	PAGE	ITEM	PAGE
MY WAY.....	2	FROM THE PREZ...	2	BILL GASKILL....	3
COFFEE QUIPS....	5	COMPUTER TUTOR..	5	VAST INFO.....	8

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VAST**NEWS**
VOLUME 12 NUMBER 12 Established 1984 **DECEMBER 1996**

The Newsletter of the VALley of the Sun TISSERS

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION MY WAY

I am going to attempt starting with this issue of our newsletter to put down on paper how I go about composing VAST News. I have had quite a few people in the TI community ask how I do what I do so I'll try to explain in depth as much as my feeble brain will allow.

In this first article I will give some background on how I became newsletter editor and a few other things. We'll really get into it next issue.

My first issue of the News hit the streets in September of 1993. The job was more or less thrust upon me (as well as the club presidency) due to the previous President becoming too ill to carry on.

Being a hardware junkie at heart, I didn't really ever play around too much with Page Pro or TI-Writer or any of the other art or word processing programs. But, being the hard headed kind of guy that I am, I pressed on.

The first thing I did was look over my complete collection of all VAST News newsletters. I had always really liked the way Jim Ely did our newsletter and decided I'd rely heavily on his way of laying out pages.

The September, October and November 93 issues were all published using Page Pro exclusively. I ran my first Page Pro Composer newsletter on December of 1993. Using this software allowed me to use two Page Pro pages to produce one page for Page Pro Composer which effectively doubled the space for information.

Through the years I have used a large variety of software to get the results I've wanted. The main ones are:

PAGE PRO
 PAGE PRO COMPOSER
 PAGE PRO EFFECTS
 TI-WRITER
 TI ARTIST+
 GOFER
 PIX PRO

We'll get into more depth next issue.

Ralph...

FROM THE PRESIDENT..

As we go into 1997 I thought I should write a short article on the current state of VAST as I see it.

CLUB MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES - We presently are meeting at various eating establishments around town. This has worked out fine for the usual members that show up, Wallace and Hazel Knight, Walt Brown and myself.

I would love to see more members at these meetings. I would love to have a regular meeting place where we can bring the club system and do demos and things of that nature again. But for this to happen requires YOU to get active. YOU will need to decide if coming to club meetings is important. YOU will need to find a meeting place that we can use free of charge to set up our TI system to do demos, etc. My VAST plate is overflowing, how's yours?

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION - It was decided at the January meeting that we would produce a newsletter 6 times a year (every other month) instead of 12 times a year (every month). This was decided for economical reasons.

I would like to state as always that I would love to have more articles from members. If current meeting attendance is any indicator, I won't hold my breath on getting anything to publish.

BULLETIN BOARD SERVICE - Thanks to the efforts put forth by Jim Ely, our club system is probably one of the best bulletin boards going. We have received monetary and equipment contributions from some VAST members. We have received some monetary contributions from non-VAST members.

FINAL NOTE - Our group has gone through many changes since I became a member. The first meeting I attended probably had at least 25 to 30 members that showed up. Our current attendance as written above is much lower. I guess this is to be expected with the glut of MS-DOS machines taking over.

I remember shortly after attending my first meeting going over to Walts house to peruse his disk library. This was the start of a friendship that has enhanced and enriched my life more than you can imagine.

I remember Hazel and Wallace doing all the footwork to find our spot for FESTWEST 92. I also remember Hazel knocking herself out putting the whole thing together. We had one hell of a fest and really gave a good transfusion to the club bank account.

And one neat thing is.... We're still here.

Ralph...

ARTICLE BY BILL

GASKILL



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COLLECTING CARTRIDGES -- PART 4

INSTRUCTION MANUALS

Like cartridge labels, documentation or instruction manuals for TI cartridges also went through a metamorphosis between 1979 and 1983. Anything produced by Texas Instruments from 1979 to about the 2nd Quarter of 1982 was released with covers that had one predominant color and a small window centered in the top 1/3 of the cover that depicted a screen displayed by the program the instruction manual was written for. I call these docs type OLD.

During the 2nd Quarter of 1982 TI changed the cover of cartridge software instruction manuals. The most likely reason for the change was because the original manual covers lacked eye catching appeal and TI probably felt this was causing their software to lose shelf space to the competition. Remember that the Home Computer Wars with mighty Commodore, and to a lesser extent Atari, started with the 1981 price rebates on console sales. This meant that if consoles had to be sold at loss-leader prices to undersell the competition, then software must be used to make up the difference in profit. So a more eye catching and cosmetically appealing cover on the instruction manuals for each cartridge made a lot of sense. But a new instruction manual cover doesn't guarantee a new cartridge color and new cartridge label packaged with the manual. Obviously TI had an existing inventory of the old-style cartridges to sell, which means you will find "new" product that comes with the original black cartridges with black labeling and orange or yellow lettering in the 1043601-1 cardboard box, but has a new, vividly colored artist-drawn cover on the instruction manual. Inside the manual though is the exact same information as the original manuals that sported the one predominant color covers.

Sometime around the 4th Quarter of 1982 the insides of the manuals were changed in order to allow credit to be given to the development team, which consisted of the program designer, the programmer and the people whose voices were used if speech synthesis was part of the cartridge's capability. The practice of giving credit to the development team continued up to the last cartridge TI

produced for the 99/4A. I call instruction manuals with the new vividly colored, artist-drawn covers, with or without programmer credits, docs type NEW.

As an aside to the price rebates mentioned above, Michael Tomczyk's THE HOME COMPUTER WARS book indicates that Commodore never really worried about losing the price rebate wars to TI. They knew that their cost to produce a VIC-20 (about \$60) was almost one-third of what it cost Texas Instruments to produce the TI-99/4A. Commodore president Jack Tramiel learned the lesson of product cost control from TI when Commodore almost went bankrupt in a hand held calculator price war with Texas Instruments in the mid to late '70's. Thus Tramiel was prepared for such a confrontation with TI (or any other manufacturer) should it come up in the home computer market too. As it turned out, TI lost the war and was forced to report a \$100 million loss for the second quarter of 1983 alone, which caused their stock to drop 50 points in two days.

Another point on instruction manuals is the need to be aware of the oddball printings that existed in Texas Instruments produced documentation. For example, I own two Speech Editor cartridges, each with the OLD style instruction manual, but one manual has a light purple colored cover and the other has a turquoise colored cover. Differences in the shading of inks used during printing is apparently not that uncommon, since I have found it in several other instruction manuals too. But two very clearly different colors in an instruction manual cover of the same design is uncommon.

Verifiable examples of differences in the shading of inks used during printing can be found in the OLD style Hangman cover, the OLD style TI Invaders cover, the OLD style Munch Man cover and the OLD style Personal Record Keeping cover. The differences are not subtle ones either. I am talking about shading differences that make one instruction manual appear that it does not belong to the same program as another instruction manual printed for the identical cartridge.

Equally as perplexing is the Numeration 1 and Video Chess instruction manuals that I own which sport totally black, white and gray covers (no, they're not photo copied) and a Parsec instruction manual that is medium blue and black only, both clearly originals (not duplicated on a copy machine, which I can tell by the quality of the print). I cannot explain these anomalies, but they do make for interesting conversation when showing off my collection, and they are something to be cognizant of when collecting.

Following the OLD/NEW instruction manuals mentioned previously are those that were produced for cartridges sold outside the United States. I have a 15-page 1983 Texas Instruments color brochure which shows the covers of Connect Four, Hangman, Hunt the Wumpus, Hustle, Number Magic, (Indoor) Soccer, The Attack, TI-Invaders, Video
see "CARTS", page 4

Games 1, and Vahtzee all with covers totally different from their made for sale in the U.S. counterparts. I also own instruction manuals of this type for A-Maze-Ing and Car Wars. So be on the lookout for these types of manuals.

Most third-party instruction manuals were not nearly as well done as the ones produced by Texas Instruments. This is especially true of the manuals that came with game cartridges. TI included a card stock cover on all their instruction manuals, even the ones that came with their game cartridges. Few if any third-party game cartridge manuals had card stock covers. The covers were usually just paper. This applies to Atarisoft, DataBiotics, the John Phillips produced games, Parker Brothers, Sofmachine, and Tigervision. It may also apply to others. It does not apply to the Norton Software games like Killer Caterpillar, which has a very nicely done card stock cover with professionally printed contents inside.

Lastly, the Scott, Foresman and Company educational cartridges in the Mathematics Skills Courseware came with a large, 8" x 11" Teacher's Guide typically around 25 pages in length. The Reading Skills Courseware contained two instruction manuals per package. One manual was a large 8" x 11" Teacher's Guide and the other 5.5" x 8" Student Reader which contained stories and questions. All of these manuals used glossy card stock covers. The Student Readers also contained numerous color illustrations and were typically 30 pages in length. The instruction manual to the Math Action Games Series was also 5.5" x 8" in size.

PROGRAM VERSIONS

Texas Instruments produced only a couple of updates to its original code for cartridges as far as I can tell, and those were Disk Manager and Extended Basic. We know that Terminal Emulator and TI LOGO got new versions, but they also got new product numbers in the process so they really aren't too tough to track. But these are things to be on the look out for. Just because you own Extended Basic doesn't mean you've filled that slot in your collection. There are XB v100 and XB v110 from TI, not to mention the Mechatronics XB II+, the Exceltec and Micropal licensed versions of Extended Basic, Triton's Super Extended Basic and Asgard's Extended Basic III.

Remember too that some modules were produced by more than one company, so you will need to be on the look out for multiple versions of the same program. For example, I own a TI produced version of Numeration 2 (PHM 3051) and a Scott, Foresman produced version (SF 30216) that are both white cartridges, but which have totally different labels. The TI version is a blue label with gold type in a typical TI design, while the Scott, Foresman version has a white label with blue type typical of the design shown in a Scott, Foresman advertisement in the November 1982 issue

of 99er Magazine on page 53. Similarly, some modules ended up having name changes that were for all practical purposes the same program. For instance, DataBiotics' Magic Memory and TI Workshop are one in the same program.

The same can be said for their Console Calc and TI Planner spreadsheets or Sofmachine's Jumpy and QMAZE. Different names, but really the same programs. You have to decide if you want to spend the money it costs to buy two of the same program, just to get the different name on the label and documentation.

Of special significance in the "same title produced by more than one manufacturer" arena are the Scott, Foresman Company produced cartridges. I made mention of the dual Numeration 2 cartridges earlier, but there are several more.

For instance, in the Reading Skills Courseware Series also mentioned earlier, Scott, Foresman offered:

- EARLY READING,
- READING ADVENTURES,
- READING CHEERS,
- READING FLIGHT,
- READING FUN,
- READING ON,
- READING POWER,
- READING RAINBOWS,
- READING RALLY,
- READING TRAIL, AND
- READING WONDERS.

All of these were blue cartridges with white labels and blue lettering. TI released their own versions (versions referring to packaging, cartridge color and label design, not program content) of Early Reading, Reading Flight, Reading Fun, Reading On, Reading Rally, and Reading Roundup. In the Mathematics Courseware Series Scott, Foresman released:

- ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION 1,
- ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION 2,
- ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION 3,
- DIVISION 1,
- DECIMALS 1,
- DECIMALS 2,
- FRACTIONS 1,
- FRACTIONS 2,
- MULTIPLICATION 1, AND
- MULTIPLICATION 2.

Most of these cartridges were red in color, except the Fractions programs, which were gray.

A "really" different Scott, Foresman and Company offering was the Math Action Games Series also mentioned in the

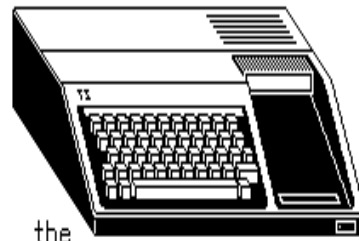
see "CARTS", page 6

COFFEE KNOWLEDGE 101

- ☐ Use fresh, cold water. The standard proportion is one coffee scoop (2 tablespoons) of coffee to six ounces of water.
- ☐ Adding extracts: For a hint of flavor, add 1/8 teaspoon of either rum, almond mint, orange, lemon, vanilla or chocolate extract to a cup of coffee.
- ☐ Store coffee or coffee beans in the freezer.
- ☐ Do you know what the best selling fruit in America is? Coffee! Coffee trees bear cherries & inside the cherries lies the coffee.
- ☐ After the green coffee beans are shipped to the U.S., they must be roasted. This involves heating the beans a around 400 degrees Farenheit for about five to fifteen minutes while roasting them in large bins.
- ☐ More than half of all adults drink two cups of coffee every day.
- ☐ Coffee was first used as medicine and a survival food during the first millennium A.D.
- ☐ The Venetians brought coffee to Europe in 1615, with instant success. Over the next hundred years, coffee houses opened in many major cities, providing meeting spots for businessmen, politicians, journalists, artists and intellectuals. Revolutions were said to have been fomented in cafes, commercial institutions grew out of them and they became fashionable centers for refreshment and gossip.
- ☐ The Dutch originally introduced the American colonists to English style coffee houses, but Americans preferred tea to coffee. After the American revolution and the Boston Tea Party, however, the Americans boycotted English tea. This led to coffee becoming the beverage of choice in America, and coffee is still the choice for most Americans today.

YOU LOVE COFFEE WHEN...

- ☐ There's a picture of Juan Valdez hanging in your living room.
- ☐ You look forward to the "daily grind."
- ☐ You think of your husband/wife as your "coffee mate."
- ☐ You have an electric bean grinder on the nightstand by your bed.



the
ELEMENTS OF BASIC PART 17

COMPUTER TUTOR

by Dave Howell
ERIE 99'ERS

STRING FUNCTIONS - CONTINUED

Last month, the topic of string functions was introduced. As explained previously, the computer usually expects all information to be numerical. Certain information, however, is treated as strings, or groups of characters. This kind of information has to be treated differently. Accordingly, the computer must be told that this information has to be treated differently by enclosing it in quotation marks. For example, PRINT 7 + 15 * 2 tells the computer to print 37, but PRINT "7 + 15 * 2" tells the computer to print 7 + 15 * 2.

In this program,

```
10 LET N$="TI-99/4A"
20 PRINT N$
```

The computer is signaled to treat the value of a variable as a string (in quotes) by ending the variable name with \$.

Strings can be concatenated (combined) with the ampersand (&). To combine the string "TI-" as A\$ with the string "99/4A" as B\$, use the statement PRINT A\$&B\$, as in this program:

```
10 LET A$="TI-"
20 LET B$="99/4A"
30 PRINT A$&B$
```

if B\$="99/4A" was changed to B=99 in the above example and the \$ was dropped from B\$ in line 30, a "STRING-NUMBER MISMATCH" error message would result. Strings and numeric expressions cannot be combined in this manner.

The string functions in TI-BASIC include ASC, CHR\$, STR\$, VAL, SEG\$, LEN, and POS. The ASC function was discussed last month. ASC(X\$) produces the ASCII character code for the first character in the string X\$. If the string expression is a constant, it must be contained within quotation marks. The CHR\$(X), also discussed last month, does the opposite of ASC. It produces the character for the ASCII number of X.

STR\$ FUNCTION

It was just demonstrated above that numeric expressions and string expressions cannot be combined (or

see "BASIC", page 7

Original Packaging Section of this series. Again, these are the:

- FROG JUMP,
- NUMBER BOWLING,
- PICTURE PARTS,
- PYRAMID PUZZLER,
- SPACE JOURNEY, AND
- STAR MAZE.

programs. The reason I say they are "really" different is they were offered at least initially in two programs per cartridge versions, then later in one program per cartridge versions.

The two programs per cartridge modules were yellow in color. The one program per cartridge modules were all gray as far as I can tell, with white labels and blue lettering. The instruction manuals were changed, out of necessity I assume, and went from fairly drab 9" X 6" booklets used with the two programs per cartridge versions, to the more colorful, eye-catching designs that Craig Reitan and company used in the illustrations found in their Unisource Encyclopedia. An excellent color advertisement showing the Math Action Games Series packaged in one program per module versions can be seen in the December 1983 issue of Comput! magazine on page 159. The packaging in the ad for these cartridges appears very similar to TI's 1043601-1 cardboard box, but the Scott, Foresman boxes all appear to be black.

CARTRIDGES SUPPORTING SPEECH

The following Texas Instruments licensed/produced command module software supports, and in some cases requires, the use of TI's Solid State Speech Synthesizer:

■ ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION 1	PHM 3027
■ ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION 2	PHM 3028
■ ALPINE	PHM 3056
■ DIVISION 1	PHM 3049
■ EARLY READING	PHM 3015*
■ MULTIPLICATION 1	PHM 3029
■ NUMERATION 1	PHM 3050
■ NUMERATION 2	PHM 3051
■ READING FUN	PHM 3043
■ PARSEC	PHM 3112
■ SCHOLASTIC SPELLING-LEVEL 3	PHM 3059
■ SCHOLASTIC SPELLING-LEVEL 4	PHM 3060
■ SCHOLASTIC SPELLING-LEVEL 5	PHM 3061
■ SCHOLASTIC SPELLING-LEVEL 6	PHM 3062
■ SPEECH EDITOR	PHM 3011

*speech synthesizer required

LABEL TYPES

Label A - Black label with TI logo at left edge of label and white vertical bar to right of logo. Command Module

banner at top of label, cartridge title under banner in normal sized, mixed case font, printed in orange or faded yellow ink. Copyright date under title and product number at lower right corner of label.

Label A1 - Black label with TI logo at left edge of label and white vertical bar to right of logo. Solid State Software - Command Module banner at top of label, cartridge title under banner in normal sized, mixed case font, printed in orange or faded yellow ink. Copyright date under title, product number at lower edge of label to the immediate left of another white vertical bar which is as far from the right edge of the label as the other white vertical bar is positioned from the left edge of the label. To the right of the right-most white vertical bar is a country code and a part number.

Label B - Colored label with TI logo at left edge of label and white vertical bar to right of logo. Solid State Cartridge banner at top of label, cartridge title under banner in mixed case font, printed in orange or faded yellow ink. Copyright date under title and product number at lower right corner of label.

Label C - Color label (faded blue, green, mauve and red seem to be the most common colors) with Texas Instruments Solid State Cartridge banner in white lettering centered at top of label, cartridge title printed underneath banner in large, usually gold or faded yellow ink, product number in lower left corner of label, copyright date and copyright owner in lower right corner.

Some labels like the Milliken Math Series also have Milliken Math Series printed on the label between the banner and the cartridge title. I consider these still type A, B or C, but do make note of the additional series designation where it applies.

Label D - Milton Bradley MBX cartridge labels. Tan labels with Milton Bradley Solid State Speech Cartridge in white at the top of label. Program title is either in blue or red and remaining text is in black. A 1983 copyright date followed by the product number appear in the right corner.

=eof=

**MONEY TALKS-AND THINGS
HAVE BEEN PRETTY QUIET
AROUND MY HOUSE LATELY.**

BASIC CONTINUES...

concatenated). But suppose it is necessary to combine a name and an age - the name is a string and the age is a number. To concatenate the name and age, convert the age number to a string. Then combine the two strings. The function STR\$(x) will convert the number x to a string. If x is an expression such as 4*2, the expression is evaluated (multiplied in this case) and the result is converted to a string. The string will be the number only, with no leading or trailing spaces. To illustrate:

```
10 N$="U.S. CONSTITUTION, AGE: "
20 A=200
30 B$=STR$(A)
40 PRINT N$&B$
```

It would be easier to combine the string N\$ and the number A in line 40 and do away with line 30. But it can't be done in BASIC. So... line 30 converts A(200) to the string B\$("200") so that it can be combined with the other string N\$. The program could be shortened by eliminating line 20 and rewriting line 30 to read B\$=STR\$(200).

VAL FUNCTION

Sometimes it is necessary to convert a string like "200" to its corresponding numerical value 200. The function VAL will do this. This is the opposite or reciprocal of the STR\$ function which converts the numerical value of 200 to its corresponding string "200".

The function VAL(A\$) is the numerical equivalent of the string A\$. If A\$ does not have a numerical equivalent, then VAL(A\$) is equal to zero. Here is an example of using the VAL function:

```
10 A$="200"
20 PRINT A$
30 PRINT VAL(A$)
RUN
200
200
```

It appears that both PRINT statements print the same value 200. In order to see the difference between VAL(A\$) and A\$, add these lines to the above program:

```
40 PRINT VAL(A$)+10
50 PRINT A$+10
RUN
200
200
210
*STRING-NUMBER MISMATCH IN 50
```

The results show that the number VAL(A\$) can be added to 10 because the VAL function converted the string "200" to a number. Since both are numbers, they can be added. In line 50, however, trying to add the string A\$ to the

numerical value 10 produced an error message. This shows that adding or combining strings with numbers cannot be done in BASIC. Now, change line 10 to read 10 A\$="CONSTITUTION".

```
RUN
CONSTITUTION
* BAD ARGUMENT IN 30
```

The error message for line 30 shows up because the argument in (A\$) is not numerical. "CONSTITUTION" is not a number. Now change line 10 once again to read:

```
10 A$="3.7E9"
RUN
3.7E9
37000000000
37000000010
* STRING-NUMBER MISMATCH IN 50
```

Since "3.7E9" is the exponential value of 3700000000 (the exponent 9 tells the computer to move the decimal point to the right 9 places) is a number, lines 30 and 40 are executed properly, But A\$ in line 50 is the string "3.7E9" and cannot be added to a number. Hence the error message.

To show that the functions STR\$ and VAL are opposite or reciprocal functions, type the following program and run:

```
10 PRINT STR$(VAL("200"))
20 PRINT VAL(STR$(200))
```

On page II-103 in the "User's Reference Guide" that comes with each TI-99/4A console are further examples of the use of the VAL and STR\$ functions.

**WE HAD A TOUGH DAY AT
THE OFFICE YESTERDAY. THE
COMPUTERS WENT DOWN,
AND EVERYONE HAD TO THINK.**

VAST USERS GROUP INFORMATION

The **VAST COMPUTER USERS GROUP** is a support group for the Texas Instruments TI-99/4A Home Computer and Geneve 9640.

← CURRENT OFFICERS →

PRESIDENT Ralph Rees.....582-0800	VICE PRESIDENT Al Bradbury.....943-8108
SECRETARY/TREASURER Hazel Knight....938-5446	LIBRARIAN Wallace Knight..938-5446
NEWSLETTER EDITOR Ralph Rees.....582-0800	BBS SysOp Jim Ely.....UNLISTED

The **VAST COMPUTER USERS GROUP** operates a BBS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We have two nodes available. The phone numbers are **(602) 267-1419** or **(602) 267-1920**. We have many TI files for downloading and online games available.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the **VAST COMPUTER USERS GROUP**.

ADVERTISING: There isn't any charge to paid members for PERSONAL advertising. Non-members will be charged at a cost of \$1.50 per ad.

JOIN US! BECOME A VAST MEMBER

\$15.00 YEARLY MEMBERSHIP \$1.25 MONTH PRORATA

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P.O. Box 37725
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NEXT MEETING Manuel's - 5670 West Peoria
Wednesday, February 12th at 7PM

THIS NEWSLETTER WAS COMPOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY USING A TEXAS INSTRUMENTS TI-99/4A AND A MYARC 9640 COMPUTER



VAST NEWS
c/o Ralph E. Rees
P.O. Box 37725
Phoenix, AZ. 85069

FIRST CLASS MAIL

