

VALLEY TIMES

Newsletter of the Valley 99's
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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

First and most importantly, I wish you all a very HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON. To all my friends locally and across the country, all my very best wishes for the SEASON and the coming NEW YEAR. It has been a MARVELOUS year, thanks to all of you!

Have to take out my barbed pen ONE LAST TIME (for THIS year!), and give my own SPECIAL Holiday wishes for a selected few. I take editorial privilege and the idea from December's POPULAR COMPUTING who gave out their 'FIRST ANNUAL WARPED DISK AWARDS' honoring "Performance Beneath the Call of Duty". Truly marvelous issue. TI won two awards in their issue, FIRST, 'IN GOD WE TRUSS [not misspelled]' award for the nerve to call their 44 pound Portable Professional Computer a "portable", and SECOND, an un-named award for "turning 2 million 99/4a computers into white elephants at the first sniff of a PEANUT". Well, those are CERTAINLY deserved if a bit tame. I have (did you have any doubt!) a few "warped disks" of my own to bestow...and I KNOW these are deserved. The "IF THEY HAD ONLY LISTENED TO ME..." award goes to the innimitable DON BYNUM. If you don't know the story, Don Bynum was Chief Engineer at TI's Home Computer Division in the last 18 months or so of the 99/4a's life. He is depicted in the grand article "DEATH OF A COMPUTER" (Texas Monthly, April 1984), as a rampaging PATTON (I prefer Hitler analogy), parading about till all other corporate executives followed his leads and, eventually, sunk the 99/4 through he and Bill Turner's blundering and mismanagement. The award is given for Mr. Bynum's recent comments at the Chicago TI FAIRE (a HUGE success; congrats to that fine GROUP!). Mr. Bynum says the future of the 99/4a is "gloomy" due (paraphrasing, now) 'rampaging software piracy'. (Mr. Bynum, OF COURSE, no longer with TI, has been trying to make a living with a outrageously priced sound card for the PE BOX and a few mediocre programs (TE1200, et al), AND reworking TEXNET. He appears to be failing miserably at all three.) Don, the problem is not present PIRACY but PAST foul-ups...and you, dear sir, are the chief 'foul'! The "I WANT TO BE YOUR FRIEND...my lawyer will be in touch" award goes to "Chuckles" LaFara. C.F. has come out from under the butcher's block of late and visited several selected UG's about the country, smooth-talking his way back into all our hearts. Well, old man, IUG is all-but-dead, and I'm afraid even Gronos cannot carry you any longer. There is no choice...its back to pork chops and burgers for you. No more free rides from suing 17 y.o. kids (TORRANCE PROGRAM EXCHANGE) and UG's...you'll have to work for a living AGAIN. The "HAVE I GOT SOME GREAT NEW PROGRAMS FOR YOU..." award goes to 'ARIZONA 99 UG', a one-man rip-off enterprise in La Puente, Arizona. Seems the former president of the Arizona UG (a once proud and truly active Group) took more than his gavel with him when he stepped down from office. Took the Groups good-name, a few Public-Domain programs, put his name on them, and started a cute little business. Bombed THE SOURCE with ads for a while (till the users shouted him OFF), and, probably made a little Judas change. His catalog boasts such goodies as SAM MOORE's music, programs from COMPUTE! and FORTH, etc. all at ridiculous prices. Well, if PIRACY is a problem, THIS is one reason why! Finally, last but, God Knows, NOT LEAST...the Rodney Dangerfield 'I GET NO RESPECT' award goes to...you guessed it... poor, misunderstood GARY KAPLAN for sending out a letter condemning newsletter editors for berating his poor, sensitive "magazine" staff. Well, Gary, you're right. You have been belittled and will continue to be UNTIL you start putting out a magazine instead of a quarterly MARVEL comics. The TI user has long since passed you AND your staff by...we don't need tutorials on how to make a sprite move, etc. Too much arrange...not enough pie. My collection of 99er/99 HCM/HCM ended with Vol. 4 No. 3 (or was it August 1984?). Put this in you next letter, Gary, if you can afford the stamps! Sword back in sheath, barbs smoothed. It has been a terribly Fun year for, I hope, all users of our increasingly incredible computer. Thought dead a year ago, the 99/4a is going stronger than ever. More and better software and hardware appears regulary. Surely, we have lost a few cottage software industries, but the major sophisticated producers are still around and going strong. User Groups remain at the hub of the TI universe. FORTH appeared and breathed new life into our community. CORCOMP struggles on and WILL make it! I am content...with the past year, the TI users, and our friends, the hardware/software producers. The future is not "gloomy" Don, the real Santas for the TI number in the thousands...they are the users/groups who wouldn't let it die. 1985 WILL BE EVEN BETTER! Best to all!