WINNIPEG Newsletter

FEBRUARY

1988

The Winnipeg 99/4A User Group is a non-profit organization formed by computer hobbyists for users of the Texas Instruments 99/4A Home Computer and compatables. The content of this publication does not necessarily represent the view of the Winnipeg 99/4A user Group.

Next General Meeting - Date : Febuary 28th 1988
                        Time : 1:00 P.M.
                       Place : 1334 Aikins St.

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Here we are again, newsletter time and it's 2 AM and the deadline was 2 days ago. I have taken on 2 extra days of teaching and my time is not my own. Oh well I should be adjusted by next month. Thankyou Rick and Marie for the articles but I really think that it is time for some others to help out, so I will probably be speaking to some of you regarding tutorials and special interest areas etc.

Well although our unparalleled treasurer is remaining a member in good standing, he did sneak out over the Christmas holidays and buy an Atari 1040. Don't let it lead you astray Bill we need you here! One of our publishers has put his system up for sale as well...tsk tsk Dave after all it has done for you?

This bit of local gossip does lead us to ask 2 questions though:

1. What does all this mean to the club?
2. Why do we consider new computers in the first place?

1. As old members sell off their equipement we do not lose a member but gain a brand new member with their new TI(to them anyway)and little or no experience on the TI at all. This means that the rest of us older diehards must work a little harder and try to make the new people feel welcome. Don't let them re-discover the wheel, help them with all the problems that we needed help with a few years ago and take for granted now. I think that the club now has a dual role insomuch as the older members need to be kept abreast of all the advances and new software and hardware etc. and the latest faireware should be made available whenever possible, but the new members, many with only a console and cassette player should be helped and given the software that is available for their system(which is quite considerable) as well. So welcome one and all and if anyone has any questions or needs help I am sure that there is someone who can be of assistance.

2. I believe that the main reason for looking at a new system is primarily a fear of being left behind in obsolescence. It is certainly true that alot has happened since the TI first came on the scene and there are alot of ineresting and seemingly powerful computers on todays market, but do they really have anything to offer us? The first thing to do is to analyze our needs and see if they are being met or not. Some of us have "legitimate" uses for our computers and require a fairly powerful word processor or database or busines software etc. and some of us primarily use the computer as a hobby and are in it for just the fun of it. Whatever our needs are we must decide if the TI can or cannot compete and if not, then and only then consider changing. I have many friends who have gone on to other computers Apple, Atari, IBM etc. and have had opportunity to try and

compare them and in every case I have come away knowing that I could do the same thing that they could one way or the other. I have not yet seen a word processor that I would rather use than TI Writer and the graphics are totally adequate for all my needs and the programming is BETTER than anything else I have seen. Finally any computer that has been on the market for 10 yrs. is going to be behind current technology but is a new system necessary or will an upgrade do or even be better? The Geneve has all the features of the latest models and more, so when my time comes I will stay with my preferred system and expand...why trade in an old friend. One more thing and I will get off the soapbox...of all my friends who have upgraded, only one has continued as a hobbyist. The rest have ended up using the new equipement almost exclusively as a video game machine...no more programming, hacking etc. because they are just not user friendly enough!

Whew! Well now that THAT'S off my mind we can get back to the business at hand. We have I believe just received Funnelweb 4.1 for all who are interested and Rick has agreed to take a collection for a group donation to send to the author in Australia so anyone who wishes to contribute please see him. We are still hoping to get some more of the latest fairware to try and Rick and I will be sending letters to hopefully set up some trading agreements with anyone interested.

With the new members we now have and a few others who only have the base unit we are getting calls asking for modules for sale so we will be re-instating a small for sale area in the newsletter. Anyone who has anything for sale please contact me and I will be glad to submit it. Submissions should be in by the 15th. Thank you. I guess that is all for now(it should be) so see you all next month.

Review by Marie
CREATIVE FILING SYSTEM

CFS is a handy database program that would be of use to anyone who has data to organize.

CFS is loaded using Extended Basic. Once loaded, a menu appears and gives you the choice of accessing CFS, CFS Utility, CFS Report or a Cataloger. The cataloger is very primitive and only print the name if the file on the screen. The size of the file is not given. From the catalog option, you can also initialize a file or merge files.

Choosing CFS from the main menu leads you to another menu with the following choices: create, display, append, search, change, sort and graph. I will focus on the operation of the create option.

When creating a record, you can name up to 16 fields. The fields are placed 2 per line and may be left blank. A display line on the screen tells the number of the current field being named. To tab from field to field the enter key is used. Once the fields have been named, you are prompted for corrections. Answer no and the record format is stored and the program prompts for data input. The data disk must be named 'CFS_DATA' for the program to work. When inputting data you must use the space bar to advance from field to field. This is a nuisance. Also each record is stored as it is input, causing the disk drive to be working almost constantly. Typing 'STOP' in any field gets you out of create mode and back to the CFS main menu.

CFS is a very versatile and flexible program. It is easy to learn and use.

HELPFUL HINTS
by Rick Lumsden

Well the beginning of a New Year and the hope for a new TI compatible seems to be more realistic everyday. The Myarc Gen'eve is gathering momentum and the new M-DOS operating system is at Version 1.0 now. If you want to keep your TI system useful and new products and software support for it, it would be wise to consider purchasing this unit. I was talking with Darrell the other night and he mentioned there was a new upgrade for the Horizon Ram Disk to pull the total memory on the card up to 1 Meg. That's a lot of storage on a card but the biggest drawback is the current prices of the memory chips to upgrade. The American-Japanese trade war is having it's affect on the price of memory chips. The upgrade requires you to remove your existing HM6264LP-15 chips and replace them with HM62256LP-15 chips. These are the newest 256K Static Ram chips and presently cost about $20/chip. If I remember correctly there is around 24 of these memory chips required which brings the price to about $500 for the chips alone. A totally assembled 1 MEG card is available from Computer Download Unlimited in Arnprior Ontario for around $650. If you want to know anything more about the card or Computer Downlaod Unlimited, give me a call and I'll give you Bob's address and phone number. He is able to aquire anything currently built for the TI and his prices are hard to beat. Anyway, let us get back to the HRD upgrade. In my mind, I think I would rather bring the HRD up to the 256K with the 6264 chips or perhaps with a single layer of the 62256 chips and leave my HRD at that until the memory chips become a little more reasonable. 256K is alot of room for VER-MENU and the programs you normally

keep there. The option I mentioned to Darrell was instead of upgrading the HRD to that proportion, it may be wiser to look at purchasing the new Myarc Floppy/Hard disk controller. This gives you a double benefit!! First of all, the controller is capable of handling Double Sided Double Density drives so your disk storage goes from 180K to 360K if you currently are using double sided drives. If not, your storage will go from 90K to 180K as you can now benefit from the Double Density portion of the drive. A couple notches in the disk jacket and you can use the flippies to 360K as well. The other benefit is the controller can handle Hard Disk up to, I believe, 115 MEG. The current price of 5 and 10 MEG hard drives is under $100 U.S. so couple this with a controller price of $280 U.S. and the total price is not all that far from the upgrading price of the HRD BUT you now have 10 MEG of very fast storage on hand. In my experience with the IBM hard drive, I can tell you that it will load programs as fast if not faster than the HRD but that is on an IBM machine. The restrictions of the TI and the Myarc controller may slow that down somewhat, I don't know, but at any rate it will be alot faster than your floppies. I am not trying to downplay the 1 MEG upgrade to the HRD but with the present memory prices, it may be more cost effective to keep your HRD the way it is and look at a Hard Drive. Believe me, 10 MEG or more of software a keystroke away is a real luxury and your floppy may become just a place to back everything up. Steve Zabarylo, a former member of our group who moved to Saskatoon, was in this past week and he is busy performing this upgrade to his HRD. He mentioned that Bob Boone was offering to buy back the old 6264 chips when you buy the new 62256 chips from him but Steve made no mention of the prices. Well still no Sector Editor article here nad it looks like it may take awhile to put together yet so in the meantime I'll try and throw in a few tips and tricks to keep you hacking through the rest of this winter. Let's start with a couple of old but still useful CALL LOADS. CALL LOAD(-31806,16) will disable the QUIT key. Goto XB and enter this statement at the prompt and hit ENTER. Now try the QUIT key. It should have no effect and save your sanity a bit when typing in that log program and you accidently hit that key. Remember, CALL LOADs CALL PEEKs and CALL INITs only work from certain modules and must have a memory expansion. A little hint for you Funnelweb and TI-Writer users. If you are tired of windowing back and forth across the screen while you are entering a letter, set you margins at 5 and 35 for example. This will keep everything you type on the screen in front of you and be much easier to read but if you print it this way it will look a little strange. Add a couple DOT commands for fill and adjust and all should be well. If you want to see what your letter will look like befroe you print it, go to the formatter and answer

the prompts as you normally would but instead of answering PIO when prompted for a print device, enter a disk number and filename. e.g. DSK1.TEST. Now when the formatter does it's job, it will dump the document to a disk file that you can reload with the Editor and see what it looks like before you waste any paper. For you Multipan users who would like to see their spreadsheets take up a little less room on paper, try using the 132CPI or condensed print mode of your printer. To do this, before you go to Multiplan, go to TI Basic and enter the code required to set your printer to condensed. To do this with an Epson compatible printer hooked to the PIO port try this short program. 100 OPEN #1:"PIO" 110 PRINT #1:CHR$(15) Now go to Multiplan and y output to the printer will be in condensed printing, however as soon as you turn off the printer it will return to normal. Ever wonder why some Editor/Assembler program image files are called UTIL1?? Well the reason for this is if you go to the E/A option #5 to run one of these programs you do not have to enter anything at the prompt. The program looks automatically to drive one for a program called UTIL1. For example, say you have an E/A program you want to run called TEST. Normally you would go to the E/A menu screen, choose option #5 and then enter "DSK1.TEST". If you rename that TEST file to UTIL1, the procedure is to choose option #5 and then just hit ENTER. Have you just finished typing in a BASIC program and it is not working quite right? You try to debug it but looking back and forth between the magazine you typed the program from and the computer screen is driving you crazy. Try plugging in your Terminal Emulator II cartridge and type LIST"SPEECH". The speech synthesizer will no read your entire program to you including line numbers while you follow in the printed listing. While on the subject of the Speech Synthesizer, some people still have trouble with the word strings in the XB vocabulary and have not been able to get them to work. These strings are the ones you see like, "GOOD WORK" "TEXAS INSTRUMENTS" etc.... These strings must have the "#" sign before and after them to be voiced. e.g. CALL SAY("I AM YOUR #TEXAS INSTRUMENTS# HOME COMPUTER") That's about it for this month. The old hands at the TI will recognize these tips right away but they are inended more for our more recent arrivals. One last note to these same newcomers. For possibly the best mag for the TI to keep you up to date on what is new in the TI world and a wealth of info and reviews, try subscribing to MICROpendium magazine. There address is P.O.Box 343, Round Rock Texas 78680. Yearly subscriptions are $22.50 and they have been in business for a number of years and recently have been joined by Cheryl Whitelaw or known to many as C.Regena, who is doing many good BASIC tutorials. Try it!! I am sure you won't be disappointed.
TI-CHAT

by Marie

To the delight of our editor and I'm sure many of you, we now have a working copy of PRBASE.

There are some TI FESTivals upcoming. The Ottawa TI Users Group is hosting the 3rd annual Canadian TI-Fest on March 5. Also the Southern Nevada User's Group is holding the TI EXPO 88 on February 27 and 28.

The following has been reprinted and edited from the RND 99'ers Computer User's Group.
Observations of the 5th Annual Chicago TI FAIRE
by Larry J. Harpring
Bud Mills Services was selling kits to build the new 1-MEG Horizon for $399. He was giving an impressive demo of John Johnson's Menu program Version 7.1 with three Horizons installed. One was 256K and two were 1-MEG. Each 1-MEG was partitioned into five or six drives.
Inscebot announced that they will begin to produce TI-Artist in cartridge format in the near future for users with just a console. Genial Computerware's newest program is "PC-Transfer". It provides a method of transferring ASCII data between a TI-99/4A or Myarc 9640 and an MS-DOS based machine. It will even format a diskette in the MS-DOS format. However, it only works on Myarc and Corcomp disk controllers due to the fact that the TI disk controllers will not format in double density as required by an MS-DOS diskette.

One of our newer members was at the Chicago TI-FAIRE and will be at this month's meeting to tell us all about it.

New Cassette Loader
by Yves Chevalier
Reprinted from the Edmonton 99'er Computer User's Society.
A new high speed cassette loader by Mickey Schmitt is said to be twice as fast as TI's. It can be obtained by sending $5 (US) to WEST PENN 99'ers, c/o John F. Willforth, R. D. #1, PO Box 73A, Jeannette, PA 15644.

FOR SALE!
Dave Woods has his entire system (including 2 half-height double sided drives) for sale. Price: $800.
Darrell Wyatt has assorted TI books for sale. Eg. Terrific Games for the TI-99/4A, Things to do with Your TI-99/4A Computer, etc. Assorted prices.
Any offers?

Here is a list of current T.I. hardware and

software distributors.

Reprinted from the QB Monitor (Dec. 1987).

Horizon RAM Disk, PO Box 554, Walbridge, OH 43465.

Quality 99 Software, 1884 Columbia Road, #1021 Washington D.C., 20009-5161

Amnion Helpline, 116 Carl St, San Francisco, CA 94117. (freeware)

Disk only software, PO Box 244 Lorton, VA 22079.

McCann Software, PO Box 34160 Omaha, NE 68134.

DataBiotics, PO Box 1194 Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274.

Tenex Computer Express, PO Box 6578 South Bend, IN 46660.

Tex-Comp, PO Box 33084 Granada Hills, CA 91344.

Texaments, 53 Center Street, Pathogue, NY 11772.

Triton Products Co., PO Box 8123, San Francisco, CA 94128.

Genial Computerware, 835 Green Valley Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19128.

Ryte Data, 210 Mountain Street, Halburton, Ont. K0M 1S0.

Micropendium, PO Box 1343, Round Rock, TX 78680.

Corcomp, 2211-C Winston Rd., Anaheim, CA 92806.

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WORDSEARCHWORDSEARCHWORDSEARCHWORDSEARCH
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U C N J T Z F I R F E D V W I W Q D A V
Q J F N Z B V X K E A V R V O H Y Z C D
O B P V M U C V L M U D C E D C C U A F
X C O F O D W P E H C I X H T Z T G U W
Z O R Q C Q W R A R Y A S I B U E C G H
V M S W W I C M H L K P Z E B J P R N O
I P C J Z E E K A I R A R R E F X M V L
Z I H E D T F M F E S D Q L O V D G O U
K L E E S B I R A Q O J E S D Z T U L C
S E S Y U G U D H T D Q Y S F A N I Q F
Y R S J A T S Y V E E S E C A Y K T W L
J R M Q E H V T D N Y A N I B B E A P O
P E D N E T I I K I D E Y B P T A R S B
O Q B E D I V L B H X X L E T X H T N O
L U T V H A L I W C B E W E Q X T L A C
X I T T O O X T W A P P V F G Y A W D D
H R K F L A K U G M I R A R S C N N D K
O E D M F P R O X H O S N P S U U D T F
N S D N S I A Z C C F O K A T Y Z O O W
B R C W U J S N O Q S P P K H C M O L N
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COMPUTER
UTILITY
REQUIRES
GUITAR
PORSCHE
MERCEDES
FERRARI
CORVETTE
AMIGA
DOS
DATABASE
COMPILER
SYSTEM
MACHINE
CHIP
NYBBLE
COBOL
SPREADSHEET
PASCAL
APL

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100 ! ********************
110 ! *    DISKLABEL     *
120 ! * by ROBERT NEAL   *
130 ! * T.I. USERS OF    *
140 ! *    WILL COUNTY    *
150 ! * ADAPTED TO EPSON  *
160 ! * &ROLAND PRINTERS *
170 ! *   by TOM ARNOLD   *
180 ! * CHANNEL 99 USERS  *
190 ! ********************
200 DIM PN$(127),SZ$(127),PT
$(127)
210 TYPE$(1)="D/F" :: TYPE$(
2)="D/V" :: TYPE$(3)="I/F" :
: TYPE$(4)="I/V" :: TYPE
$(5)="PRO"
220 OPEN #1:"PIO"
230 PRINT #1:CHR$(27)&CHR$(6
5)&CHR$(6);:: !*** SETS LINE
 FEED TO 6/72 INCH ***
240 PRINT #1:CHR$(15);!*** P
UTS PRINTER INTO CONDENSED P
RINT
250 DISPLAY AT(2,1)ERASE ALL
:"          DISKLABEL":"
      ========"; :"
      by Bob Neal":"         Vers
ion 2.0": :RPT$("c",28)
260 DISPLAY AT(9,1):"Avail=2
91 Used= 67 DISKNAME":RPT$("
=",28):"DLABEL 20 PRO DL
ABEL 27 PRO":"LOAD   15 PRO
LDATA   25 D/F":RPT$("c",28)
270 DISPLAY AT(20,1)BEEP:"Pl
ace Disk To Be Labeled in Dr
ive #1 Then Press Any Ke
y" :: ST=1
280 CALL KEY(0,K,ST):: IF ST
=0 THEN 280
290 OPEN #2:"DSK1.",INPUT ,R
ELATIVE,INTERNAL
300 FOR X=1 TO CNT
310 PN$(X)="" :: SZ$(X)="" :
: PT$(X)=""
320 NEXT X
330 CNT=0
340 INPUT #2:A$,J,J,K
350 IMAGE " ##### #### ###
## ###        #######
##"
360 PRINT #1,USING 350:"AVAI
L=",STR$(K),"USED=",STR$(J-K
),CHR$(14)&A$
370 PRINT #1:CHR$(27)&CHR$(8
3)&CHR$(1);:: PRINT #1:RPT$(
"=",58)
380 LC=2
390 FOR X=1 TO 127
400 INPUT #2:A1$,A,J,K
410 IF LEN(A1$)=0 THEN 460
420 PN$(X)=A1$ :: SZ$(X)=STR
$(J):: SZ$(X)=RPT$(" ",3-LEN
(SZ$(X)))&SZ$(X)
430 A=ABS(A):: PT$(X)=TYPE$(
A):: IF A=4 AND K=254 THEN P
T$(X)=TYPE$(5)
440 CNT=CNT+1
450 NEXT X
460 CLOSE #2
470 FOR X=1 TO CNT STEP 3
480 IMAGE ######## ### ###
    ######## ### ### #####
### ### ###
490 IF LC>9 THEN 500 ELSE 53
0
500 PRINT #1:"":""
510 IMAGE "
                         #######
##"
520 LC=2 :: PRINT #1,USING 5
10:CHR$(14)&A$ :: PRINT #1:C
HR$(27)&CHR$(83)&CHR$(1)
;:: PRINT #1:RPT$("=",58)
530 PRINT #1:CHR$(27)&CHR$(8
3)&CHR$(1);:: !*** PUTS PRIN
TER IN SUBSCRIPT MODE **
*
540 PRINT #1,USING 480:PN$(X
),SZ$(X),PT$(X),PN$(X+1),SZ$
(X+1),PT$(X+1),PN$(X+2),
SZ$(X+2),PT$(X+2):: LC=LC+1
550 NEXT X
560 FOR X=1 TO 11-LC :: PRIN
T #1:"" :: NEXT X :: PRINT #
1:CHR$(27)&CHR$(84)! ***
LAST PART RESETS SUBSCRIPT,
MAY NOT BE NEEDED ON GEMINI
570 DISPLAY AT(20,1)BEEP:"CA
TALOG ANOTHER? (Y/N)":"":""
580 CALL KEY(3,K,S):: IF S=0
 THEN 580
590 IF CHR$(K)="Y" THEN 270
ELSE IF CHR$(K)="N" THEN 600
 ELSE 570
600 CLOSE #1 :: END
```

DISK LABELS

by Tom Arnold

Every once in a while I come across a program that really impresses me. Disk Label by Robert Neal is one of those. It is one of those rather simple programs that performs like magic and is really very useful. This program catalogs your disks, which isn't so special, however it prints out the catalog on a 3 1/2" x 7/8" label! Now this is really handy. Simply place the disk in the disk drive and press a key. The label is printed out, ready to stick on your disk. This makes updating your disks really easy. The print is in compressed subscript, which isn't the easiest to read but neccessary to get long listings on the label. I want to thank Bob for this most useful program and bet that you, the reader will find this one of the most used programs in your library.