

YESTERDAYS NEWS

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30 Years Ago...

Historical Information taken From Bill Gaskills TIMELINE

JANUARY 1987:

The birth of comp.sys.ti is announced. "This newsgroup is being renamed from net.micro.ti to comp.sys.ti. This renaming will gradually take place over the next few weeks. More and more messages posted to this newsgroup will be aliased into the new newsgroup as they pass through the net, and people will begin to post to the new group. After a few weeks, the old name will be removed. This note is to inform you of the renaming so you can begin to read the new group as well as the old group." Mark Horton Director, the UUCP Project.

An 80 Column Display Card for the 99/4A is released by Mechatronics GmbH.

John E. Taylor of the Shoals 99ers in Alabama, Fairware author and freeware champion (aka JET) announces that he has sold his TI-99/4A system and will be moving on to IBM PC clones because of his job. Taylor is best know for his popular Checkbook and Budget Manager program, but was also the author of several other offerings via the fairware/freeware distribution network.

Subscribers to The Smart Programmer newsletter from Richard Mitchell, dba Bytemaster Computer Services, receive the October 1986 issue.

The Printer's Apprentice v2.0 is released by McCann Software of Omaha, NE.

Mark Beck of Jacksonville, Arkansas releases Creative Filing System v5.0.

Cheryl Whitelaw, aka Regena, joins the staff of MICROpendium as the regular BASIC columnist.

James Schroeder releases RedisKit disk copier.

Walt Howe, the New England area 99er who met and married a

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gal he met "on-line" as a sysop for the Delphi network, releases Chainlink Solitaire.

Rumors of a TI-99 version of Turbo Pascal surface on the editorial page of MICROpendium.

Gene Harter of Not-Polyoptics announces that his firm will be releasing a flight simulator on February 1st.

Myarc announces that the 9640 GENEVE will be "available on your dealer's shelf in February". The computer was demonstrated at the January 18th Atlanta 99ers User Group meeting by Jack Riley.

The first TI-TAX templates for 99/4A Multiplan are released by William Chavanne of Ft. Meade, Maryland.

XB II v2.12 is released by Myarc Inc.

DISKAssembler by Tom Freeman is released by MG.

CorComp Inc and Will and Tony McGovern are given Outstanding Support Awards by the Front Range 99ers computer group.

Tunnels of Doom Editor v3.0 is released by Asgard Software.

MG releases a message to the TI world of an upcoming product that will put IBM compatibility at the finger tips of 99/4A owners. The product turns out to be a bridge-box that allows the 99/4A Keyboard to be used with a PC Clone. No real "compatibility" exists.

TEXNET is discontinued on The Source telecommunications network effective January 30th.

Quality 99 Software releases Screen Dump II.

REVIEWED

PART ONE OF THREE REVIEWS COVERING GRAM DEVICES

GRAM KRACKER

Manufactured by:
Millers Graphics (MG)

from MICROPENDIUM May 1986
Reviewed by John Koloen

REPORT CARD	
Performance... A	PRICE
Ease of Use... A	\$189.00
Documentation. A	+ \$4 S/H
Value..... A	for 80K
Final Grade... A	version

Millers Graphics' GRAM Kracker is an outstanding piece of hardware that offers tremendous power to TI users. This power is available to those with minimally configured systems as well as those operating out of fully expanded systems, though those with disk drives and expansion memories have the most potential to work with.

It is difficult to know where to begin a review of a device such as this, which provides as much programming potential as most users will ever develop. With it one can actually modify the computer's operating system, make changes to cartridge-based programs such as Extended Basic, and save them. Just exactly how far one can go depends entirely on one's ability and desire. Since it's not possible to do an exhaustive review of this product in the space provided, I will dwell primarily on GRAM Kracker's more obvious benefits. GRAM Kracker hackers may wish to supplement this review in the future with more technically oriented text.

Performance: GRAM Kracker is contained in a small, black enameled box that's somewhat longer than a Navarone Widgit and about an inch high. The front face includes five control switches. GRAM Kracker plugs directly into the cartridge port. GRAM Kracker has its own cartridge port, so one can plug a cartridge in at any time. Unlike the console cartridge port, the GK cartridge port can be used to dump the contents of a cartridge into the GK memory and then onto a disk, RAM disk or other addressable device.

GK is available in several configurations. The "stripped down" unit comes with less GRAM than the fully expanded 80K GRAM Kracker. The additional GRAM costs less than \$20 and is worth it. There are a number of things that cannot be done without the extra GRAM. As an example, with the 80K GRAM one can convert a v2.2 console into a non-v2.2 console. This is done by loading the operating system from a non-v2.2 console into the v2.2 console. Other operating system modifications are also not possible without the 80K GRAM. For that matter, without a memory expansion one cannot load and save the console memory, though one can save and load cartridges.

The GRAM Kracker provides two action menus, depending on

what one wants to do. Its main function menu allows the user to load or save modules, initialize module space (wiping out the contents of memory), load and save the console contents and edit the contents of the computer's memory. Without a memory expansion users are limited to loading and saving modules and initializing module space.

Among the most common uses that many users may have for GRAM Kracker is to load the contents of a cartridge into the GK's memory. Because GK is battery backed (the manual includes thorough instructions on how to change the battery) the contents of GK memory remains intact even when the computer console is turned off. To load a different cartridge one wipes out the console memory and then loads the cartridge. All loading and saving operations are fully prompted and may be done without referring to the manual.

The memory editor that is accessed through the first menu is quite sophisticated. This operates in a similar fashion to such disk editing programs as Disk Fixer, DISKO and Dis+Aid. The difference is that instead of editing the contents of a disk the memory editor allows the user to edit the contents of the computer's memory. Functions include toggling between horizontal windows, moving blocks of memory, filling a block of memory with a specified byte, paging up and down, searching in Hex and ASCII, toggling among colors, dump a block of memory to an output device, toggling between ASCII and Hex display and more.

A second menu is called up by selecting the load/save console option from the first menu. Here the options include load console, save console, GROM/GRAM 0, GROM/GRAM 1 and GROM/GRAM 2. The GROM/GRAM selections refer to the GROM/GRAM that may be saved. As an example, this menu would be used to save the operating system and Console Basic.

The GRAM Kracker is packed with a disk that includes a number of useful utilities. Among them are utilities that allow owners of the MG Explorer program to modify it so that it can "talk" to two types of GRAM (pseudo GRAM and true GRAM), a "utility to load either the Editor/Assembler or TI-Writer from the GK very rapidly and another utility that allows E/A or TI-Writer and another cartridge to be saved together allowing the contents of two cartridges to be selected from the screen menu. Also included are a series of CALL routines, including CALL NEW, CALL BYE, CALL CLSALL, CALL CLOCK, CAL LCLKOFF and CALL CAT. There are also utilities to allow the user to write Basic programs that reside in cartridge space instead of VDP RAM, and a couple of files containing a new character set.

All of the CALL routines are available anytime the GRAM Kracker is installed in the cartridge port. I find the CALL CAT to be the most useful. This routine allows the user to catalog disks without wiping out the contents of

memory. All CALLs operate out of Extended Basic.

Ease of Use: The GRAM Kracker is easy to install. By following the manual any user should be able to start using the GRAM Kracker within an hour of unpacking it. Where you go from there depends entirely on you.

Documentation: The manual that comes with the GRAM Kracker is outstanding, showing the care and time that Millers Graphics puts into all its products. Its 55 pages are packed with information, taking the purchaser from the initial process of installing the GK to a number of tutorials on how to use it with a variety of cartridges. Included are step-by-step instructions on how to give Terminal Emulator II the ability to operate at 1200 baud, how to modify the Tax/Investment Record Keeping cartridge to access the parallel printer port, how to modify the operating system so that cartridges will automatically power up rather than having to select them from a menu, how to change the color schemes in Editor/Assembler, TI-Writer, Mini Memory, Disk Manager 2, and Extended Basic, how to chain the loading of Assembly Language program image files and more.

The manual also contains several pages of information about GROM and GRAM headers and other data of use to sophisticated hobbyists.

Value: I've had the GRAM Kracker, plugged into my console since February and wouldn't think of disconnecting it. The only annoyances I've encountered have to do with the GROM port connection, which is common to anything that is plugged into the GROM port. Although the GRAM Kracker fits snugly and rests on rubber feet, contact with the ROM port is occasionally lost, which locks up the computer. Apparently, the GK slides out an imperceptible distance (a micron, maybe). What I do in these cases is to press the GK toward the GROM port. I feel no movement, but the connection is remade and everything works fine. Although I have no evidence to back it up, I feel that the reduction of wear and tear on the cartridge port is extending the life of the console. I have had no problem plugging in or removing cartridges from the GK cartridge port. (The cartridges plug into the port vertically.) When a cartridge is plugged in, it overrides the program that may be stored in the GK. When the cartridge is removed, the program in the GK again becomes resident.

The most annoying problem results from the location of the GROM port. Because the GK is about an inch high, my right hand constantly rubs against it while typing on the computer. Shifting slightly to the left helps to reduce this but does not eliminate it.

I don't think I can speak too highly of the GRAM Kracker. It is a superb device that can open new vistas to veteran programmers and applications hounds both. (I fall in the latter category.) I have found that the more I use it (and

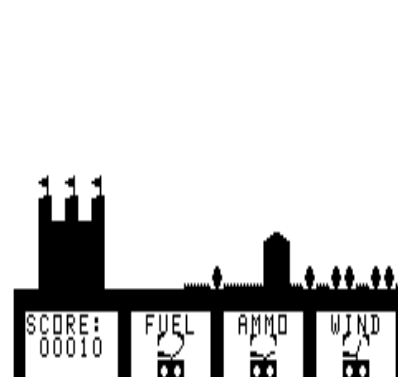
re-read the manual) the more I am able to do with it. It is money well spent.

REVIEWED



BUBBLE PLANE

Manufacturer:
Gadego Software



REPORT CARD	
Performance...	A-
Ease of Use...	A
Documentation...	A
Value.....	A
Final Grade...	A-
	COST \$15

from MICROPENDIUM July 1987

Reviewed by Bryce Wilcox

When I first sat down to this game at the 1987 Computer Faire in Denver, CO (sponsored by the Rocky Mountain 99ers), I wasn't the least bit disappointed.

The performance of this new game was quite good and the eye-pleasing "Bubble Plane" graphics kept my eyes riveted to the screen.

Later, as I read the manual and had a chance to talk with the creator, I learned that "Bubble Plane" is 100 percent Assembly Language, run, from XB, and costs only \$9. It was looking better and better!

(WILCOX EVIDENTLY RECEIVED A SALE PRICE. THE MANUFACTURER SAYS THE GAME RETAILS FOR \$15. - Ed.) MICROPENDIUM

The graphics are, for the most part, typical 8 x 8 sprites and average 1 or 2 char trees, men and chickens ("CHICKENS?" you say? I'll get back to that later.) There are two exceptions to this standard:

First, the left-to-right (or right-to-left) scrolling is extremely jerky, and the plane jerks with the rest of the screen! This is quite disconcerting, and though I was soon able to ignore it I hope future versions of Bubble Plane will not suffer from the same problem!

Second, the "Bubble Plane" itself, a small soap-bubble sprite, can point its rounded nose in 16 directions! This was really fun to watch, and several times during the game I stopped to see the cute-looking crusader do loops and twirls on the screen in response to my joystick!

SEE "BUBBLE", PAGE 3

BUBBLE CONTINUES..

One of the many interesting things about this program is the fact that the author (who lives in Colorado Springs and founded Gadego) saw fit to add several strange features with such bizarre names and purposes as "Fudge," which is what happens if the enemy soldier parachutes onto the wrong surface and disintegrates! One such phenomenon is "Chickens" (I told you I'd get back to it). As your acrobatic aircraft loops over barns and dodges clouds, he will encounter a chicken sitting on a factory roof or standing on a house's chimney! Although the author asked me not to reveal the exact purpose of "chickens," I can assure you that the logic (or lack thereof) in the creation of these funny fowls is rare in computer games and well worth seeing in action.

The purpose of this game is to defend Bubblonia from the evil "Grundslanian Jets," which fire missiles at the good guys. As your Bubble Plane flies over the peaceful Bubblonian landscape, a brief "Buzz" is heard and a Grundslanian Jet arrives on the scene. On the earlier levels all you must do is stay above or below the Jets and you are safe, but, as you get further along, the Jets fire guided missiles! There are a couple of ways provided in the booklet to escape these, but the player will soon discover his own additional ones, necessity being the mother of invention!

Overall, I would recommend this game to anyone who enjoys a good romp through Wonderland or to anyone who likes an aerial dogfight, coupled with the challenge of a series of mazes as well as the challenges of bombs and bad guys!

ACCORDING TO THE MANUFACTURER, A CASSETTE VERSION OF THE GAME WILL BE ISSUED AT A LATER DATE. - ED. MICROPENDIUM

Editors Note: This game is unique in a couple of ways:
 1. *It has the SHIFT838 cheat feature.*
 2. *Unusual protection scheme - The disk is formatted at 32 tracks and the game will look for this and will not load if on a conventional 40 track disk. - rr*



THANK YOU, J.L. KILROY

ANNOUNCING THE NEW TI-99/SG UPGRADE! !

from 99 'PUTERS 'N STUFF, ltd.

Phineus T(cimely Chronotis, President

Dear TI-99 User,

Ever since Texas Instruments thought it best to discontinue their fine product and leave us out in the cold to fend for ourselves, people like you and me have been asking for an upgrade to our miserable little machines. Well sir, your waiting is over.

Announcing the new upgrade for your TI-99, it's the TI-99SG (SG for Super Good!) It is, in our opinion, the best little buy that can be legally had in this country.

You see, friend, my chief engineer and next door neighbor Farley had his Kid's TI open trying to clean the cat fur from between the Keys, and he looked up at me and said, "Phil, this ain't so hard to clone. Why, give us a little time and we can make one of them upgrades ourselves. If we could get it working before the next presidential election, we ought to have it before them boys back east ever finish with theirs."

"You Know, Farley," I replied, "you got something there." So Farley and me, we cleaned out my garage and began working on what would become the TI-99SG! But enough preachin', let's get down to brass tacks.

The 'puter is about as big as my cat Fred, so if you ever met Fred you probably have a good idea. Either way it's about the size of a toaster oven, with a long air conditioner cord which hooks to 220 so you can plug it in next to your dryer. And unlike the 99/4, we put a fan in ours to keep her cool. We got the fans on sale too. Ever wonder what they do with those WWII office fans that's as big as a plate and painted that dirty grey? We'll, they're just the thing to keep all this high tech stuff cool.

Let me tell you, the cabinet is a beaut. We went out and bought a lot of that cork board they have on sale over at the lumberyard, and we fashioned us this box. We then stuck some contact paper over it, shined her up with some wax and a little spit, and I'll eat spoiled milk if it doesn't look as good as a mantle clock polished with bacon fat. We also went down to the auto body shop and got us one of them smoked glass things all the VW's seem to have, and with a lick of the torch we fashioned a custom dust cover. Course, you have to prop her up with a pencil and a piece of postal tape, but Farley says we can throw that in without upping the price any.

For those of you technical folks, well, we got a surprise. Farley got one of them old microwave ovens and he put together our microprocessor, the CPU5204 -X0IR/PS199x.

It's about the size of a pack of cigarettes and has more wires coming out of it than a beagle has hairs on his butt. We figure that you can just hook whatever you want to whatever wire and get better results than all that Japanese dip switching stuff.

Now, a lot of jaw flappin's been going on about keyboards, and we came up with a great idea. Farley said we have to keep costs down so we decided that we'd fix it so you can get one of those cheap typewriters at a rummage sale and hook it up straight away. You take the keys and you take that long little arm, and instead of hooking it to those levers, you hook it up to the little arms we have jutting out of the box, and you can use your typewriter as a keyboard. You can even use one of them electric jobs if that's your fancy. You just open up the bottom, pull off all that electrical junk and hook her up just like it was a manual job and you're all set.

We also have a RAT (Really Astonishing Thingamajig) which'll beat those "mice" paws down. Instead of having its tail going all over the floor and hooking up to the 'puter itself, we decided to go remote control. Now what you do is you lift these two little antennas which are where its ears ought to be, and then you kind of give it a thump on the back of its neck with the back end of your middle finger. The RAT will send a signal to the 'puter, which will send a signal back. The RAT's eyes'll light up like a Christmas tree and you're ready for business. Whole thing doesn't take more than thirty seconds or so to do.

Of course, there's always someone yammering for compatibility. Our computer will become compatible with whatever is out there. Of course, it'll take time, and Farley figures that by the time we get it to run right our competition will be filing chapter 11. So we'll burn that bridge when we come to it.

Now we have to admit that the computer isn't quite up to snuff yet. We've found that if the computer is left on for more than five minutes it starts a minor electrical fire, and the CPU does have a tendency to explode, which sends the RAT running in circles underneath the house. However, we feel these are negligible bugs and will be worked out by the time you read this. In the mean time though, we've been traveling about showing off our dandy cabinet and telling good folks like yourself all about it and what it'll do when we get it to working proper. And I must admit, everyone seems pleased as pie with the cabinet and say if the 'puter is as good as the cabinet looks, we'll be living in Rio this time next year. And I thank you all for your wholehearted support. Maybe we can drop by your user group meeting and show you our cabinet too. We also have lots of literature, such as you're reading right now, and we have a few photos of Farley and me holding up the RAT. Those always seem to do well.

Hope to see your check for the new 9956 computer soon. And God bless.

Cordially,

Phineus T(imely) Chronotis
President

Phillip Farley
Chief Engineer

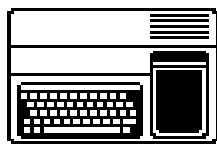
P.S.

One of our admirer's suggested we include a garbage disposal in the beautiful cabinet as an option. Farley was so disappointed by this oversight on his part that to make amends he will not only include a garbage disposal but also a PAPER SHREDDER! This should be especially attractive to newsletter editors. We listen. Give us your feedback.

TYPE IN PROGRAM

```
1 DISPLAY AT(4,6)ERASE ALL B
EEP:"PROGRAM COMPACTOR": : :
: "USES A PROGRAM 'SAVED' IN
MERGE FORMAT": : "USE A DI
FFERENT NAME FOR THE 'COMPRES
SED' FILE!"
2 DEF GLN(X$)=ASC(SEG$(X$,1,
1))*256+ASC(SEG$(X$,2,1))::
R$=CHR$(201):: DIM V$(200)::
INPUT "FILENAME: DSK1.":F$
:: OPEN #1:"DSK1."&F$,DISPLA
Y ,INPUT ,VARIABLE 163
3 LINPUT #1:L$ :: LN=GLN(L$)
:: IF LN=65535 THEN 9
4 SS=1
5 P=POS(L$,R$,SS):: IF P=0 T
HEN 3 ELSE X$=SEG$(L$,P+1,2)
6 GOSUB 24 :: IP=V :: IF V=0
THEN NV=NV+1 ELSE 8
7 V$(NV)=X$
8 SS=P+2 :: GOTO 5
9 RESTORE #1 :: PRINT "COMPR
ESSED" :: INPUT "FILENAME: D
SK1.":C$ :: OPEN #7:"DSK1.":%
C$,OUTPUT,VARIABLE 163
10 LINPUT #1:A$ :: IF GLN(A$
)=65535 THEN PRINT #7:A$ ::
GOTO 26
11 IF POS(A$,CHR$(147),1)<>0
THEN PRINT #7:A$ :: GOTO 10
12 LINPUT #1:B$ :: P=POS(A$,
CHR$(132),1):: IF P<>0 THEN
23
```

```
13 IF POS(A$,CHR$(154),1)<>0
THEN 23 ELSE IF POS(A$,CHR$
(131),1)<>0 THEN 23
14 IF GLN(B$)=65535 THEN PRI
NT #7:A$ :: GOTO 26
15 X$=SEG$(B$,1,2):: GOSUB 2
4 :: IF V<>0 THEN 23
16 IF POS(B$,CHR$(150),1)<>0
THEN 23
17 IF POS(B$,CHR$(161),1)<>0
THEN 23
18 IF POS(B$,CHR$(154),1)<>0
THEN 23
19 IF POS(B$,CHR$(131),1)<>0
THEN 23
20 IF POS(B$,CHR$(147),1)<>0
THEN PRINT #7:A$ :: PRINT #
7:B$ :: GOTO 10
21 IF LEN(A$)+LEN(B$)>=162 T
HEN 23
22 A$=SEG$(A$,1,LEN(A$)-1)&C
HR$(130)&SEG$(B$,3,LEN(B$)-2
):: GOTO 12
23 PRINT #7:A$ :: A$=B$ :: I
F SEG$(B$,1,1)=CHR$(255)AND
SEG$(B$,2,1)=CHR$(255)THEN 2
6 ELSE 12
24 V=0 :: FOR X=1 TO NV :: I
F X$=V$(X)THEN V=X :: RETURN
25 NEXT X :: RETURN
26 PRINT #7:CHR$(255)&CHR$(2
55):: CLOSE #1 :: CLOSE #7 :
: PRINT : : : "ENTER 'NEW'
THEN MERGE THE": "COMPRESSED
FILE INTO MEMORY.PROGRAM MAY
THEN SAVED IN NORMAL MANN
ER."
```



Yesterdays News Information



Yesterdays News is a labor of love offered as a source of pleasure & information for users of the TI-99/4A & Myarc 9640 computers.

TI-99/4A HARDWARE

Black & Silver computer
Modified PEB
WHT SCSI card with SCSI2SD
Myarc DS00 FDC
Myarc 512K Memory Card
Horizon 1.5 meg Ramdisk
TI RS232 card
Concomp Triple Tech Card
1 360K 5.25 floppy drive
1 360K 3.50 floppy drive
1 720K 5.25 floppy drive
1 720K 3.50 floppy drive
80K Gram Kracker
Samsung Syncmaster 710mp

TI-99/4A SOFTWARE

PagePro 99
PagePro Composer
PagePro FX
PagePro Headline Maker
PagePro Gofer
TI Artist Plus
GIFMania

PC HARDWARE

Compaq Armada 7800 Notebook
Compaq Armadastation
Samsung Syncmaster 710mp

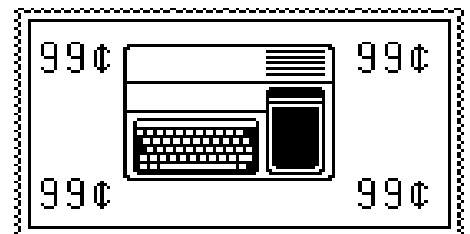
PC SOFTWARE

Dead,Dead,Dead Windows 98se
FileCap
prn2pbns
Infanview
Adobe Distiller
Adobe Acrobat

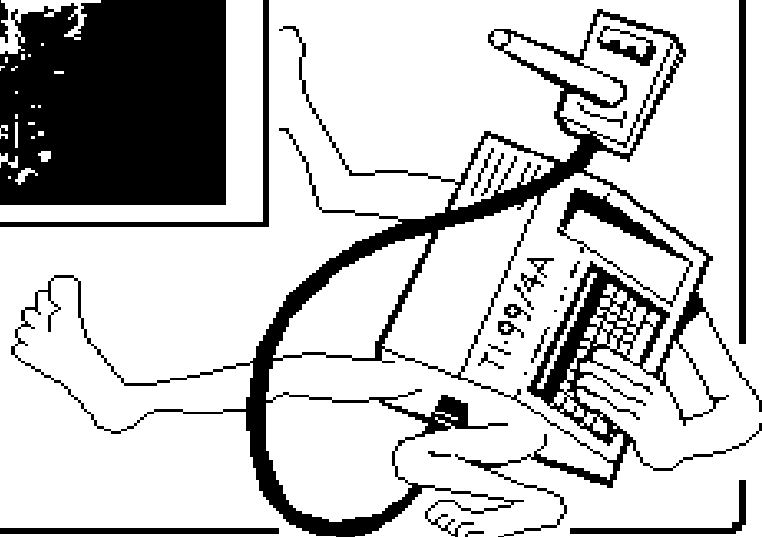
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Yesterdays News
c/o Sparkdrummer
AtariAge forum
Phoenix, AZ. 85027



FIRST CLASS MAIL



FIRST CLASS MAIL