

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

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30 Years Ago...

Historical Information taken from Bill Gaskills TIMELINE

JANUARY 1991:

Talk of a full C language compiler for the Geneve and Myarc's completion of a Pascal Runtime module for the Geneve are discussed in MICROpendium. While Al Beard's C compiler is a reality, Myarc's promise of a finished Pascal Runtime module turns out to be smoke and mirrors.

Barry Traver begins part 1 in a 4 part series on GRAPHICOMP, a program he wrote to compile Extended Basic's screen display statements into assembly language source code. Readers later prompt Traver to expand the program into a full-blown Extended Basic compiler, but he declines stating that he has neither the time nor the technical expertise to do so.

Version 1.30 of MDMS, the Myarc Disk Manager is released. It was reportedly recovered from the hard drive of the late John Birdwell, after his death. No new features have been added, but some bugs in 1.29 have apparently been corrected.

Ben Yates releases DeZip v.05 for the TI-99/4A on January 5th. The program allows the TI to extract /ZIP files created on the PC on your TI. On January 12th v.07 is released to fix a small bug in the extraction of a reduced file.

Jack Sughrue's releases NEW-AGE/99 #5, his newsletter that discusses what's going on the TI Community. In this issue he includes a review of Jim Peterson's TI Public Domain Software library, consisting of a collection of 400+ disks available at \$1.50 each.

Master assembly language programmer Mike Maksimik begins talking about the creation of GDOS for the TI-99/4A, which is envisioned to be a GEOS-like graphics interface similar to what was created for the Commodore 64 by Berkley Software.

The Chicago TI Users Group releases the Encyclopedia of

INSIDE



INFORMATION

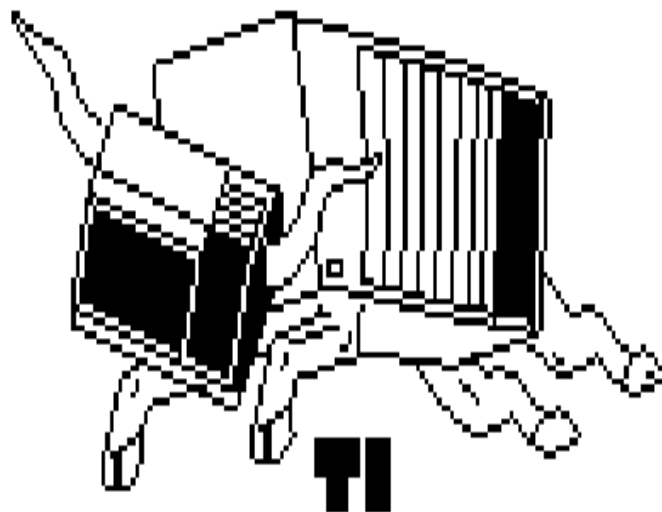
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Graphics (E.O.G.) book. The enormous project was undertaken by Chicago 99er and Geneve owner Don Jones. It consists of printouts of all of the commercially distributed graphics available for the TI-9 9/4A and Geneve.

T.I.C.O.F.F., the TI Computer Owners Fun Fest held in Roselle Park, New Jersey every year, changes its name to the Family Computer Exposition when PCs overtake the show.

TOP CHOICE

TEXAS



I WOULDN'T STEER YOU WRONG

TI CLASSROOM



TIPS FROM THE
TIGERCUB
By Jim Peterson

NUMBER
20



More on the pestiferous asterisk bug in TI-Writer. Dr. Guy-Stefan Romano has confirmed and explained it. If you are printing out of the Formatter mode and your text contains an asterisk followed by two or more numeric digits - the asterisk and two digits will disappear! For instance, A*256 becomes A6, and I've noticed that A6 in programs published in several newsletters recently.

The TI-Writer program misinterprets the asterisk and two digits as an instruction to input data from a "value file" (see Alternate Input on p. 111 of the manual).

The solution to this bug is to type two asterisks followed by two dummy digits, then the actual digits. For instance, instead of A*256 type A**25256. Trouble is, the bug usually shows up in a program which has been LISTed to disk and then MERGED into TI-Writer, and is usually not noticed. The solution? Run the program through my 28-Column Converter (see Tips #18!).

Dr. Romano informs me that there is an even worse bug in the Transliterate command coding, erratic and sometimes destructive. It is triggered by certain sequences of characters, but these have not been documented.

Dr. Romano says that

he does not use transliteration.

I would suggest that you also avoid the use of the & and @. The & will only underline a single word, unless you tie words together with the ^ sign. If you tie words together, the Fill and Adjust will leave gaping blanks in your lines and if you tie too many together the line will extend beyond the right margin! Also, the underlining is a broken line. It is better to use the escape codes CTRL U, FCTN R, CTRL U, SHIFT -, CTRL U, SHIFT A, CTRL U, which will give a solid underline until you turn it off with CTRL U, FCTN R, CTRL U, SHIFT -, CTRL U, SHIFT @, CTRL U.

The @ is handy to emphasize a single word, but if you want to double-strike a whole sentence or paragraph it is better to use the escape code CTRL U, FCTN R, CTRL U, SHIFT G, and turn it off again with CTRL U, FCTN R, CTRL U, SHIFT H.

The period bug is another killer - the Formatter thinks that any line which begins with a period is a formatter command, and deletes the whole line! If your text contains a decimal value such as .11 and the wraparound puts it at the beginning of a line, the line disappears! There are two ways around this - put a

0 in front of all your decimals, as 0.11, or transliterate all your periods.

In all, the TI-Writer formatter is a temperamental and unpredictable piece of software, prone to unwanted line feeds and unexpected paper-wasting form feeds. I like to use it to right-justify text back to the disk, but from then on I prefer to print it out of the editor mode, or out of my own program.

Designing downloadable characters for the Gemini printer (see page 115 of the manual) is a bit tricky because it is hard to visualize how the expanded pattern will appear in print. The following program will enable you to experiment with designs, dump them directly to the printer for viewing, then save them as a file. When you later dump this file into printer RAM for use, you must activate the download characters with the escape code -

```

100 CALL CLEAR :: CALL SCREE
N(4):: CALL CHAR(128,"FF8181
81818181FF",129,RPT$("F",16)
):: CALL COLOR(13,2,16)
110 FOR R=9 TO 15 :: CALL HC
HAR(R,11,128,9):: NEXT R
120 X=1 :: FOR R=9 TO 15 ::
DISPLAY AT(R,7)SIZE(2):STR$(
X):: X=X*2 :: NEXT R :: FOR
C=9 TO 17 :: DISPLAY AT(8,C)
SIZE(1):STR$(C-8):: NEXT C
130 DISPLAY AT(2,9):"TIGERCU
B'S" :: DISPLAY AT(4,1):"GEM
INI CHARACTER DOWNLOADER" !p
rogrammed by Jim Peterson fo
r the Public Domain
140 DISPLAY AT(17,1):" Move
cursor with W,E,R,S,D,";"Z,X
and C Keys. Toggle on:"and
off with Q Key. Press:"Ent
er when finished.": : "Pres

```

```

s any Key"
150 CALL KEY(0,K,ST):: IF ST
=0 THEN 150 :: CALL HCHAR(17
,1,32,224)
160 R=9 :: C=11 :: CH=128
170 CALL HCHAR(R,C,32):: CAL
L HCHAR(R,C,CH):: FOR D=1 TO
10 :: NEXT D :: CALL KEY(3,
K,ST):: IF ST=0 THEN 170
180 ON POS("QWERTZXZS"&CHR$(
13),CHR$(K),1)+1 GOTO 170,31
0,230,220,210,200,190,260,25
0,240,330
190 R=R+1
200 C=C+1 :: GOTO 270
210 C=C+1
220 R=R-1 :: GOTO 270
230 R=R-1
240 C=C-1 :: GOTO 270
250 C=C-1
260 R=R+1
270 R=R-(R<9)+(R>15):: C=C-(
C<11)+(C>19):: IF CH=128 THE
N 300 :: CALL GCHAR(R,C-1,GX
):: CALL GCHAR(R,C+1,GZ):: I
F (GX<>129)*(GZ<>129)THEN 30
0
280 DISPLAY AT(22,1):"You ca
n't have two in a row":"hori
zontally!" :: FOR D=1 TO 50
:: NEXT D :: DISPLAY AT(22,1
):" ":" "
290 CH=CH-1
300 CALL HCHAR(R,C,CH):: GOT
O 170
310 CH=CH+1+(CH=129)*2 :: IF
CH=128 THEN 320 :: CALL GCH
AR(R,C-1,GX):: CALL GCHAR(R,
C+1,GZ):: IF (GX<>129)*(GZ<>
129)THEN 320 ELSE 280
320 CALL HCHAR(R,C,CH):: GOT
O 170
330 FOR C=11 TO 19 :: X=1 ::
FOR R=9 TO 15 :: CALL GCHAR
(R,C,G)
340 IF G=129 THEN A=A+X
350 X=X*2 :: NEXT R
360 FOR J=1 TO LEN(STR$(A)):
: CALL VCHAR(15+J,C,ASC(SEG$(
STR$(A),J,1))): NEXT J ::
M$=M$&CHR$(A):: A=0 :: NEXT
C :: A=0
370 DISPLAY AT(20,1):"Print?
Y/N Y" :: ACCEPT AT(20,12)U
ALIDATE("VN")SIZE(-1):Q$ ::
IF Q$="N" THEN 470
380 IF F=1 THEN 390 :: F=1 :
: DISPLAY AT(20,1):"Printer

```

```

name?" :: ACCEPT AT(20,15):P
$ :: OPEN #1:P$
390 DISPLAY AT(20,1):"ASCII
to redefine?" :: ACCEPT AT(2
0,20)VALIDATE(DIGIT)SIZE(3):
CH
400 DISPLAY AT(20,1):"Descen
der (0 or 1)? 0" :: ACCEPT A
T(20,21)VALIDATE("01")SIZE(-
1):0$ :: D=VAL(D$)
410 M$=CHR$(27)&CHR$(42)&CHR
$(1)&CHR$(CH)&CHR$(D)&M$
420 PRINT #1:M$ :: PRINT #1:
CHR$(27);CHR$(36);CHR$(1);
430 PRINT #1:RPT$(CHR$(CH),7
2):: PRINT #1:CHR$(14);RPT$(
CHR$(CH),36)
440 DISPLAY AT(20,1):"Save (
Y/N)? Y" :: ACCEPT AT(20,13)
VALIDATE("YN")SIZE(-1):Q$ ::
IF Q$="N" THEN 470
450 IF F3=1 THEN 460 :: F3=1
:: DISPLAY AT(20,1):"Filena
me? DSK" :: ACCEPT AT(20,14)
:F$ :: OPEN #2:"DSK"&F$
460 PRINT #2:M$
470 M$="" :: DISPLAY AT(20,1
):"Another (Y/N)? Y" :: ACCE
PT AT(20,16)VALIDATE("YN")SI
ZE(-1):Q$ :: IF Q$="Y" THEN
100
480 CLOSE #1 :: CLOSE #2 ::
END

```

Micropendium ran a contest to improve on a brief ingenious organ program. The winner was Michael Christianson, who wrote a superb program. You'll have to buy the January issue of the magazine to get it (you should be subscribing, anyhow!). I didn't enter the contest, of course, and my version is not nearly as good, but have fun -

```

90 CALL CLEAR
95 PRINT TAB(5);"MICROPENDIU
M ORGAN": : : : : : : "Pl
ay bass with left hand": : "o
n left side of keyboard": :
"melody on the right": : :
100 REM - MICROPENDIUM ORGAN
modified by Jim Peterson
110 OPTION BASE 0

```

```

120 DIM NOTE(20)
130 FOR A=0 TO 20
140 READ NOTE(A)
150 NEXT A
160 DATA 40000,220,247,262,2
94,330,349,392,440,494,523,5
87,659,698,784,880,988,1047,
1175,1319,1397
170 CALL KEY(1,K1,S)
180 CALL KEY(2,K2,S)
190 CALL SOUND(-1000,NOTE(K2
+1),0,NOTE(K2+1)*1.01,5,NOTE
(K1+1)*3.75-ABS(K1+1=0)*1100
00,30,-4,0+ABS(K1+1=0)*30)
200 GOTO 170

```

A sprite routine that doesn't do anything but look pretty. I call it Patches.

```

50 CALL CLEAR :: CALL SCREEN
(5)
100 A$=RPT$("AA55",16):: B$=
RPT$("F",64):: CALL MAGNIFY(
4):: RANDOMIZE
110 FOR CH=40 TO 136 STEP 8
:: CALL CHAR(CH,A$,CH+4,B$):
: NEXT CH
120 C=2 :: S=40 :: R=1 :: FO
R T=1 TO 24 STEP 2 :: COL=15
0*RND+50 :: CALL SPRITE(#T,S
,C,R,COL,#T+1,S+4,C+1,R,COL)
:: S=S+8 :: C=C+1 :: R=R+15
:: NEXT T
140 FOR T=1 TO 50 :: CALL CO
LOR(#INT(24*RND+1),INT(16*RN
D+1)):: NEXT T :: GOTO 120

```

This is one that I fancied up, based on a sprite routine written by a youngster named Andrew Sorenson, published in the Sydney Newsdigest from Australia.

```

100 ! WILL O' WISP
by Jim Peterson
based on
Andrew Sorensen's
sprite routine
110 CALL CLEAR :: CALL SCREE
N(2):: CR=48
120 FOR CH=48 TO 63 :: FOR L
=1 TO 4 :: RANDOMIZE :: X=IN
T(16*RND+1)*2-1 :: X$=SEG$(
"0018243C425A667E8199A5BDC30B
E7FF",X,2):: B$=B$&X$ :: C$=

```

```

X$&C$ :: NEXT L :: CALL CHAR
(CH,B$&C$):: B$,C$="" :: NEX
T CH
130 FOR N=1 TO 28 :: CALL SP
RITE(#N,CR,INT(14*RND+3),8*N
+20,120,5,0):: NEXT N :: IF
CR=64 THEN CR=48 :: T=T+1+(T
=2)*2 :: CALL MAGNIFY(T)
140 X=(INT(3*RND)-1)*4 :: Y=
(INT(3*RND)-1)*4
150 IF INT(10*RND+10)<>10 TH
EN 170
160 CR=CR+1 :: GOTO 130
170 FOR N=1 TO 28 :: CALL MO
TION(#N,-Y*20,X*20):: NEXT N
:: GOTO 140

```

Here are a few more enhancements to my Menu Loader, published in Tips #15. Delete line 150 and add

```

101 OPTION BASE 1 :: DIM PG$(
127):: ON WARNING NEXT :: G
OTO 110
105 @,A,A$,B,C,D$,FLAG,I,J,K
,KD,KK,N$,NN,P$,PG$(C),Q$,S,S
T,T$(C),TT,VT,X
CALL INIT :: CALL LOAD :: CA
LL LINK :: CALL PEEK :: CALL
KEY :: CALL SCREEN :: CALL
COLOR :: CALL CLEAR :: CALL
UCHAR :: CALL SOUND :: !@P-

```

The pre-scan will speed up run time by a worthwhile amount. The warning default will prevent a screen scroll on an erroneous Enter.

When you're finished printing strip labels, cut off the strip BEHIND the platen and roll it FORWARD! You'll waste a few labels that way, but if you try to roll backwards and get a gummy label stuck in the works, you've got trouble!

MEMORY FULL

Jim Peterson

the Tigercub





HCM - Vol 4, No 1 - May 84 - Greg Roberts - pg 42
 Long ago, when the TI Home Computer was very young, a small band of users wandered over the outback looking for games. Tied to their bleak terrain, these aboriginal arcadians would pick up anything that looked loadable, digging with their joysticks the most primitive software.

Over the past few seasons, however, the desert has bloomed. Games are plentiful. Tonight the tribe sits well-satisfied round a hillahong overflowing with fat, colorful tapes and diskettes, and each game hunter's CPU is warm and full.

In times of plenty the games people like to tell stories: "The rarest beast of all is the plug-in cartridge from the dry plains of the south," an elder tribesman explains to the young men who squat around a gray-backed monitor. "Such games come so seldom, each one brings the whole tribe out to see it and once in a pink moon there comes a trophy that makes the whole clan celebrate."

But a cartridge of such a calibre has not shown its prongs for many seasons, and the games people have been craving to try their remote controllerangs on something new. Memories have grown dim of the last notable game from that remote place, and the tribe's chief - a user so positively ancient that he still remembers rubbing his fingers against the Chiclet Keys of a 99/4 - tries to recall the legendary coming of the last great cartridge. "Its name was Parsec," he explains, "and I seem to remember a great rejoicing in the desert, but it has been so long - and my mind is scrambled from staring endlessly at the computer-generated rocks and gullies." Suddenly the withered one cuts short his story, and all eyes stare out into the blackness to see a wonderful beast lope into the light of the campfire . . .

We who are stationed at that remote outpost called the HCM review desk also have full tucker bags of fine gameware these days. And as we load game after game, it is easy to feel a bit jaded, even fire-opaled, sometimes, from so much rich fare. When a game comes up on the screen, our first reaction is to pigeonhole it as to place of origin - whether it be The Land of Kong, Froggerania, or Pac-Man-Du. But this time we are unable to peg the program. Yes, believe it or not, there's something new under the joystick, a new TI Command Cartridge called Hopper.

Speeding through a maze of packing crates, three evil circus trainers are trying to grab Chadly, the pink Kangaroo. You can make Chadly Kick the crates to form barricades, or let him drop the cargo on his enemies. He can smash crates too, in order to make a trap for the trainers - permanently fencing them in. With this movable maze, the strategies are unlimited, giving this game near immunity to boredom.

This is a fast-paced game. You must think and move quickly to protect your little pal joey as you devise ways to trap the trainers. By some bizarre quirk of fortune, I managed to capture all three trainers together in one box where I could put the squeeze on them - Pit and the Pendulum style - and come up with a thrilling score of 5,870 on my first of the three Kangaroos. As I bragged that this was the highest score possible for a first inning, someone more perceptive than I observed that, in fact, it would be easy to rack up a higher score based on an oddity of the game: You get ten points for Kicking a crate, no matter what. So, once you've captured at least one trainer and squashed the others, you can sit there Kicking crates until they are all lodged in the corners of the square. Then you can smash the crates for an additional sixty points each. These easy points can be taken as an extra reward for capturing the trainers, or as an annoyance. Fortunately, they are not significant enough to greatly alter a high score.

Hopper's graphics are good, hut not extraordinary except perhaps for the feisty little Kangaroo. You have to move him right, left, forward, or back in order to take action on the crate of your choice. These precise joystick maneuvers add to the challenge.

The game's sound effects are logical and simple. The high-pitched beeping might get annoying after a while, but the volume control is always handy.

The documentation (which at press time was in manuscript state, but adequate) mentions nine levels of play. The progressively-higher levels are simply faster and more difficult, with no change in scenery except to offer a different crate configuration. Only at Level 10 do you encounter a new and very difficult challenge. This is a surprise screen, so all we can tell you is to keep your eyes open for some flash of recognition, or it will be lights out for that round and back to Level 1.

Designers Phillips and Archuleta came up with Hopper as part of a TI employee-incentive program in which they designed the product at home, on their own time, with off-the-shelf equipment. No special TI-proprietary development systems were used on this one. That's right, lads, this particular big game was not bagged with the high-powered weapons of the Lubbock laboratories, but with the slings and arrows of that outrageous little device called the Editor/Assembler package. The program takes up

only about 6K-bytes of memory.

This game is just the sort of program cartridge that makes the 99/4A such a good buy even if you have nothing but a console and monitor. The best choice, mate - definitely the dinkum oil. YN



By Greg Roberts

HCM Volume 4, Number 2

A few decades ago, in a darker age of education, most children were not given ample resources for developing their minds until they reached first grade. Now we find that the two-year-olds are capable of much more than we gave credit for. It turns out that they love learning, and they have no time for anyone who would deny and deaden their fine curiosity. Fortunately, the adult world is finally responding to the children with an outpouring of read-early books, television programs such as Sesame Street, and a widespread interest in Suzuki-style music education. And yet, the computer world has lagged in meeting the needs of pre-school children. Very little software has been designed for this group and the truly good programs are as spotty as the selection of bordeaux in an all-night mini-market.

Tag Tom and Fire are packaged on a single diskette for pre-school children. Each game is designed to be entertaining, while teaching spatial relationships necessary for reading. For example, children must understand right and left before they can be expected to follow words printed on a page. This basic concept, plus shape recognition, sequencing, hand/eye coordination, and opposites are some of the considerations that went into the design of these programs.

Tag Tom

Tag Tom's basic scenario is to make one figure tag another on the playground and around the house. The game offers four variations in play. On the simplest level, a touch of the keyboard is the only input required. No matter what key you press, your man Timmy goes right over to tag Tom. The menu offers a second version that is faster than the first game, and it too is meant only for the very young.

The joystick mode is more challenging. You have a limited time to direct Timmy over to Tom. A speeded-up version of the joystick game is your fourth option. In all four levels of play, the screen flashes one word descriptions of Tom's location within the scene - up, down, upon, etc. These words may be heard through a speech synthesizer, but the silent version also does a thorough job of teaching

and entertaining. The movements of the two figures are accompanied by cheerful sound effects that should appeal to any child.

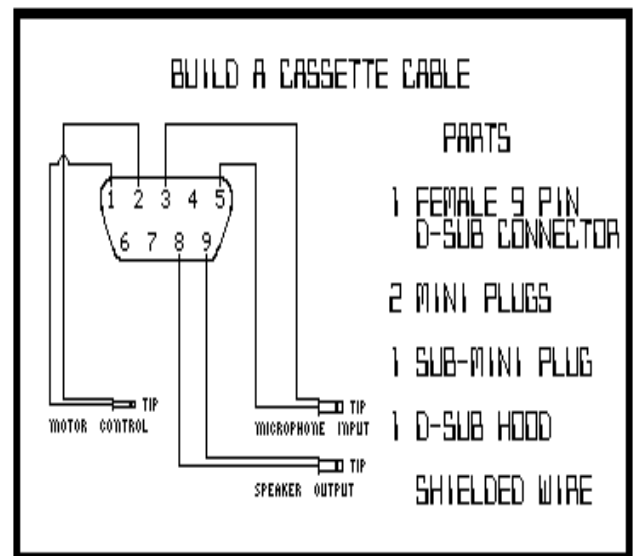
Fire

On the same diskette is Fire, a colorful little maze game that asks the player to direct a fire truck through the streets to a blaze at the top of the display. On its lowest level, you simply press a key on the right or left side of the keyboard to send the fire engine to its destination. A more complex option uses up and down arrows. Finally, you can choose joystick mode to guide the fire truck, again using all four directions.

This program provides stick-on arrows for the keyboard. The arrows come in four colors, corresponding to the arrows that come up on the screen showing the proper direction to guide the truck. It is a good exercise for giving very young children some experience with basic directions.

Both games use simple graphics showing a colorful, albeit static background with only one moving object at a time. A little more action would probably not be lost on a child, but the existing graphics certainly do captivate the typical pre-schooler. Both games will be quickly outgrown, but that is a quality of most playthings for this fast-growing age group. And that is why a package like this has been priced reasonably at \$15.95.

These games come with thorough documentation, including an explanation of the educational concepts behind their design. They are simple games, of course, and would not hold much interest for anyone but a child but that is what makes them special. Tag Tom and Fire are worthy offerings for a previously neglected group of computer users. YN





Ever since the debut of *The Beverly Hillbillies* in the late 1950s, one of the American public's favorite get rich quick fantasies has been to strike oil in one's own backyard . . . and like Jed, become an instant millionaire. The last decade's oil price hikes, along with the recent heavy promotion of oil and gas lotteries have undoubtedly added to the mystique and lure of wildcatting prospecting for oil in an untapped or questionable area. And Hollywood movies haven't exactly portrayed wildcatters as calm, level-headed, conservative businessmen who are out to make a reasonable profit. Rather, we're shown images of a lusty, brawling gambling lot who are time and again willing to risk all they have (and can borrow!) on a crapshoot little more than a hunch that the next well sunk won't come up dry . . .

What is it really that brings success and wealth in this romantic endeavor? Luck? Courage? Good business sense? Or perhaps, a combination of all three? Well, now you can find out for yourself in the comfort of your own home, with nothing more to risk than the price of a new simulation program for your Home Computer.

Wildcatting, from Image Computer Products, is a game of strategy for up to four players. In no time at all, any of the players may, in fact, strike it rich, or come up dry once too often joining the ranks of history's defeated gamblers . . .

Operation

To play Wildcatting, you'll need a color TV or color monitor connected to your TI-99/4. Unlike many other computer business simulations that display only text or simple graphs, this program includes a simulation of an oil field as a three-dimensional model, with colors representing the height. Each time the program is run, a different map is constructed and stored in the computer's memory. Drilling costs, the predicted probability of striking oil, and the amount of oil a well produces are all calculated for each location.

Each player takes a turn (representing a week) picking a location, taking a geological survey, and deciding whether or not to invest money drilling for oil. The survey reveals the probability of a strike, drilling cost per meter, and weekly taxes. If drilling is attempted, the drilling cost, depth of well, and player's net worth are displayed every 50 meters. A cross-sectional view of the actual drilling progress is also displayed on the screen and controlled by depressing the space bar. A player can stop drilling at any time when he or she feels that the cost is getting too expensive; The well may then be sold for a loss. Any of the player's other wells that start to dry up (and produce less income than the weekly taxes) may also be sold at that time. After each player's turn, a color position marker is left on the oil field. These squares indicate the probability of striking oil at that location. By studying the color patterns that begin to emerge after a few turns, it becomes possible to make predictions on where the exact center of the oil field (with 100% probability of striking oil) will be. Players have ten weeks to either amass their fortune or go broke.

Performance and Engrossment

Although the economics are purely fictional, the costs for drilling and the outputs per week provide a well-balanced and realistic game. Simple, straightforward instructions make the game easy to learn. The controlling keys are well documented with screen instructions: A player makes decisions with a simple "Y" or "N", selects wells to be sold by using the up and down arrow keys, and accomplishes all other functions with the space bar. Despite the game's simple structure and ease of play, it is nevertheless challenging and difficult to win. Even in an area with a high probability of striking oil, the well may, in fact, be dry!

The only minor operational fault I could find is display-dependent. It is, however, not the direct fault of the software developer. At the time the game was originally designed, the TI-99/4 was sold together with the color video monitor; the RF modulator (for hooking up the computer to a regular TV set) wasn't available. When used as a computer display, some TVs can't fit all 32 columns on the screen, and wind up chopping off one or two columns from each edge. So if a programmer is working only with the monitor and plans the display to utilize the very outer columns for important information, it can be a problem for users with certain models of TVs. Since in Wildcatting you use a blinking arrow on the extreme left to indicate the well you decide to sell, it's quite possible that on certain TVs you won't be able to see this symbol, and might accidentally sell the wrong well! Fortunately, the map itself is not affected.

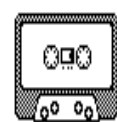
If Wildcatting merely had the features that I've detailed so far, I would have to classify it as an interesting game that performs well, and is easy to learn and play. I

wouldn't necessarily feel that it was particularly engrossing or absorbing in the sense of losing sleep over . . . or forgetting to eat. But the people at Image Computer Products did, in fact, put in one additional feature that caused the program to jump up a few notches on my engrossment scale: Each player gets a chance to actually handle the drill (controlled by depressing the space bar), hear the whirring and grinding noise of the bit, and watch in fascination as the shaft plunges deeper and deeper into the earth. When you finally make a strike, the abrupt audio and visual effects that simulate the gusher practically jolt you out of your seat (at least it nearly did the first time . . .). It's quite a realistic effect one that will keep you anxiously awaiting for your turn to handle the drill to come around again.

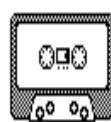
Documentation and Packaging

The people at Image have done well in making sure that the product lives up to their company name. The cassette (within its protective plastic case) is packaged in an attractive, 4-color, book-size box; it can conveniently be stored in a bookshelf next to your TI Command Modules. The 6-page typeset instruction booklet explains every step of play in well defined, easily-referred-to sections making it quick and easy to look up some forgotten detail. The one minor complaint I have concerns the design of the storage box. I'd like to see a latch on the rear panel of the cardboard box to prevent the cassette and case from accidentally falling out when the box is pulled from the shelf or carried.

All in all, I feel that Wildcatting is an effective software product that many TI-99/4 users will enjoy playing repeatedly. Potential third-party software developers would do well to study the way this product has been implemented. YN

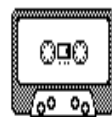


DADDIE'S HOT ROD



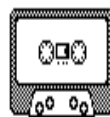
Lantern Software

What an absolutely spiffing day, what? Just ace for a quick tootle round the jolly old block in daddie's spanking new hot rod. Pity his lordship's not about just now, seems I'll have to ask his permission when I get back, haw! haw! Drive through the country side and make sure you don't crash. There are sheep fields, woods and rivers as well as other cars on the road and trees to be avoided. When you have control of the car try to pick up hitchhikers down perilously twisting roads. Home Computing Weekly said that it was faster than most games written in TI Basic and gave the game a five-star rating. YN



STAR VENTURE

COMPU THINGS
TEXAS TUFF SOFTWARE



A major space station in sector 129.55 has exploded due to reactor malfunction. Fourteen hundred men have been floating in space for over 24 hours. You must warp to their sector and pick up any survivors...

They must be quickly rushed to our secret space station inside the third moon of Saturn for treatment. Do not collide with any asteroids or the edge of the moon or your ship will be destroyed...

The men are very weak. You must bring your ship alongside the men long enough for them to crawl on board. GOOD LUCK!

YN

