YESTERDAYS NEWS

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30 Years Ago...

Historical Information taken From Bill Gaskills TIMELINE

FEBRUARY 1987:

MICROpendium changes banner to include Myarc 9640 in advertised coverage.

Jack Riley, of Myarc South, demonstrates the new Myarc Geneve 9640 computer at the February 7th meeting of the SMAUG/99 User Group in Mobile, AL.

Warnings are issued within the TI-99 Community about SuperTrack , a Trojan Horse program masquerading as a track copier that deliberately destroys the contents of any disk it works on. It appears on Bulletin Boards around the country, but is effectively corraled by most sysops.

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

Excellent Extended BASIC tutorials from the McGoverns of FunnelWeb Farm begin to show up in User Group newsletters across the United States.

SPAD XIII, the first realistic flight simulator for the 99/4A is released by Not Polyoptics, written by David Harter 416 High St. Chestertown, Maryland 21620, Who is a partner in the Not Polyoptics firm. The program took about eight months to write.

A 99AT EXPANSION CHASSIS is announced by Ryte Data of Haliburton, Ontario. The box is said to be able to accept the 9640 computer on a card, 99/4A PEB cards and up to four disk drives.

The HFDC (Hard and Floppy Disk Controller Card) is released by Myarc Inc.

PC-Keys v2.0 is released by Jim Kryzak, owner of Techni-Graphics.

The Writerease word processor, written by former Silver Wolf Software partner Galen Read, is formally announced by CorComp Inc. (Author's Note: the other partner in Silver Wolf Software was Chuck Burley).

CSGD User Disk #4 (Character Sets and Graphic Designs) from David Rose is released by Texaments.

AVPC 80-COLUMN DISPLAY CARD is released by DIJIT Systems of San Diego, California.

MISC -- Compute! Editor-In-Chief Robert C. Lock writes his swan song editorial for the magazine.

INSIDE INFORMATION

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CREATING A DISK LIBRARY LIST WITH JOHN BIRDWELL'S DISK UTILITIES v4.12

Originally Published in LIMA Newsletter January 1990

By Charles Good

Part of the "official software library listing" of the Lima Ohio User Group is a series of long DV80 test files that show commented disk directories of each disk added to our software library since 1987. Software is listed numerically by disk number. These are the text files distributed to our paid members and to user groups who are likely to want to make copies of our library at the Lima TI MUG Conferences. As group librarian, I generate these text files from chained disk directories created using John Birdwell's DSKU v4.12 that are subsequently slightly edited. In response to an inquiry from one of my correspondants, I am in this article going to describe the whole process of making these library listings.

See "DSKU", Page 4

REVIEWED

Part Two of Four Reviews Covering GRAM Devices

GRAM KARTE

Manufactured by:
Mechatronic GmbH

from MICROPENDIUM Sep 1986
Reviewed by Mack McCormick

REPORT CARD	
Performance... B+	PRICE
Ease of Use... A+	$249.50
Documentation. A	
Value..... A	128K
Final Grade... B+	version

The 128K GRAM Card from Mechatronic is an exceptional piece of hardware which enables all cartridges to be saved to disk and later loaded and executed from the GRAM Card. In fact, I've permanently stored all my cartridges away. Now every cartridge I own resides on one of my hard disk drives ready for instant access. I personally visited the Mechatronic firm and found their facilities to be modern and efficient. The people are very courteous and friendly, which certainly makes business dealings great.

Performance: The card works perfectly as advertised.I tested dozens of cartridges and found that all performed just like the original. Even the bank-switched cartridges, such as Q*bert and Frogger, worked perfectly. However, the Milton Bradley MBX cartridges will not work due to their unique bank switching scheme. I did notice an occasional problem with some multiple GROM cartridges not loading correctly on the first attempt (Extended Basic, for example). This was by far the exception rather than the rule. I'm sure some data error correction mechanism in the loader could be devised to completely eliminate this minor problem.

The card is completely transparent to the user. The card stays tucked away in the Peripheral ExpansionBox with no switches to flip: Out of sight and out of mind . It's like my computer has built-in Extended Basic and Editor Assembler. When a cartridge is inserted into the console the GRAM Card switches itself out of the system automatically.

When the computer is initially powered up the card executes a brief RAM initialization routine which takes about two seconds before the normal power up screen appears. Up to two separate cartridges maybe loaded at any one time, although with the 512K version (available soon) this limit is greatly expanded.

The German users here have devised several multiple cartridges to overcome this limitation. For example,one such cartridge includes Editor/Assembler, TI-Writer, a disk copier and a debugger all in one. Really impressive! Of course, you may add a second GRAM Card if you desire.

There are two features I would like to see added to future versions of the card. First, I would like to see battery backed CMOS RAM or a jack for a wall transformer to retain the cartridges when the Peripheral Expansion Box is turned off. Secondly, this version of the card does not have the capability to modify the console RAM from >000 0 to >2FFF. For those of us who would like to modify the console routines, this would be most helpful. You can modify console GROMs 0 and 1, though. (*According to Franz Wagenbach,Mechatronic's North American distributor, newer versions permit console RAM modification at the above addresses - Ed.*)

Another feature which I thought was particularly useful is the ability to address the card using DIP switches at any CRU address. This prevents conflict with existing hardware (for example, in my system I'm running out of CRU address space). In short, the card performs exactly as described in the manual with no serious bugs.

Ease of Use: As I have already mentioned, the 128K GRAM Card is easy to use. In fact, after only a few moments, you don't even notice the card is there.

After the title screen appears and you press any key to proceed you are presented with a menu which has the selections

2-FOR GRAM CARD "9800"
3-REVIEW MODULE LIBRARY

Boy, was I ever excited the first time I saw the "Review Module Library" selection as I knew it existed in the computer software but never had seen it implemented. When you press "Review Module Library" it takes you to the next bank of GRAM in the card automatically so, you may load a second cartridge at GRAM address >9820. When you press "2-For GRAM Card 9800" you are presented with a screen which has an option of the loader for cartridge management and eight of the most common modules, such as Extended Basic , Editor/Assembler and TI-Writer. By pressing FCTN 8 you are presented with eight more selections for loading.

You are by no means limited to being able to load only 16 cartridges because when you enter the loader you may load any cartridge. For example to load Editor/Assembler all one must do is press selection 3"DSK1.EA" and the card looks to disk drive one for the file, loads it automatically, and returns you to the main title screen. Using a RAM disk or hard drive this process takes less than 2 seconds. From disk it requires about six seconds: That's just how easy it is to load a cartridge from disk.

The LOADER feature is exceptionally easy to use. The LOADER allows you to LOAD G)RAM WITH PROGRAM. This allows you to load previously saved cartridges one RAM or GRAM bank at a time if desired. Option 2 (LOAD GRAM WITH ASS-FILE) allows the user to load one's own tagged object

code GPL program. I have used Michael Weiand's GPL assembler (*reviewed in August 1986 MICROpendium- Ed.*) and written my own GPL program for loading here. It was great fun to be able to write and assemble my own GPL programs. I finally felt like TI no longer held anything over my head.

Option 3 (LOAD RAM WITH ASS-FILE) allows you to load tagged object code Assembly Language programs into the address space from >6000->7FFF. This is similar to any of the cartridges on the market with RAM at this space but is a very useful feature which doesn't require a cartridge in the port.

Option 4 (LOAD GROM 0-2) copies the GROM address space from >0000->57FF in the console to the GRAM Card. This guarantees you have a good copy, and allows you to go in with the built-in editor and make modifications.

Option 5 (SAVE GROM) is the feature used to save the GROM in a module to disk. Option 6 (SAVE ROM) allows you to save the ROM in a cartridge to disk. One unique aspect of this feature is the ability to switch to another bank automatically in the cartridge. For example, in Extended Basic the ROM is flipped at address space >7000->7FFF.

Finally, Option 7 (LOAD-FILE) allows you to load all GROMs and ROMs automatically with a single filename. The file looks to a Display/Variable 80 file you create with Basic, TI-Writer, or Editor/Assembler which contains the file names of all the individual GROMs and ROMs you previously saved using options 5 and 6. Once you set up your cartridges, there is never a need to modify this file again.

There are also two great features available from any Basic command level. The first is CALL GRAM, which calls up the loader menu previously described. The second is CALL EDITMEM, which calls up a full-featured memory editor allowing you to edit either ROM or GROM files in the GRAM Card. This allows simple modification of cartridges. The book TI Intern by Heiner Martin is a source listing of the ROM and GROMs in the console with a brief explanation of GPL. It is a great aid when modifying code.

Resetting the card is also a snap. Simply press FCTN QUIT and while the computer is resetting press FCTN CLEAR.

An extraordinary feature I found is the ability to load a Basic program you have written and have it displayed on the title screen and executed as though it resided in a module. You simply enter CALL MODUL("DSK1.MYNAME").

From a hardware standpoint the card is well constructed and professionally laid out. There are DIP switches that allow you to modify the GRAM base address in the card. This would be necessary if you used multiple cards. The default addresses are >9800 and > 9820. There are also DIP switches to allow modification of the CRU base address for the card to prevent conflict with other cards in the Peripheral Expansion Box . The default address is >1700. In summary, it is an exceptionally easy piece of hardware to use.

Documentation: The manual for the card is well written and easy to understand. In fact the original version I used was written in German. In spite of my limited ability to read German, I was using the card with no problems within minutes. Each feature is fully explained with clear examples provided. A memory map of the RAM organization in the card is provided for the advanced programmer's use. Also provided for the advanced programmer is a listing of all CRU bits used by the card and their function. I found this to be somewhat unusual for a hardware developer, yet most welcome. The manual also provides a listing of all cartridges and the GROMs and ROMs they contain to make copying them easier. Several examples of program modifications are also provided. The manual answered my questions about the card as well as serving as a reference.

Another advantage lies in the fact that the GRAM Card is hidden away in the Peripheral Expansion Box.

This card is everything it is billed to be. I have thoroughly tested it and found it to perform exceptionally well. I am sure if you decide to purchase one you will be satisfied for years to come while at the same time opening a whole new dimension to your computing.

REVIEWED

XBASHER

Written by Mike Dodd
Sold by Genial Computerware
from GENIE May 1987

Review by Scott Darling

REPORT CARD	
Performance...	A+
Ease of Use...	A+
Documentation.	A+
Value.....	A+
Final Grade...	A+

This program is needed by anyone and everyone! No clarification you say? Everyone has an Extended Basic program! At least one! This program will make that one program run faster and reduce its size. Guaranteed!

Most of us who have been around the TI world for a while remember what Smash is. The bad part about Smash is you had to start it at night and hope it was done by morning! You won't have to worry about XBasher! XBasher runs out of the Extended Basic environment. There are two versions

See "XBasher", page 3

XBasher continues...

available. One for TI XB and one for Myarc XB II. No mention was made of the 9640 compatibility. Probably because the 9640 will be so much faster. You can even run XBasher on combined XB and A/L programs. Complete instructions are given on how to do this!

To run XBasher requires that you save your program in MERGE format using the following:

OLD DSKn.FILENAME

then

SAVE DSKn.MERGENAME,MERGE"

Then insert the XBasher disK in drive and select XB. The disK files will determine which XB you are using and load the correct version of XBasher. After the program has loaded, you are presented witha title screen. Next is the option screen, which is:

Shorten Variables
Crunch Lines
Remove REMs and !s
Remove Lets
Change CALL CLEARs [to DISPLAY ERASE ALL (this one alone saves you 5 bytes!)]
Don't Change [CALL] SUB [routine] Digits
Change Constants.

Some of these are obvious as to what is going on.

Shorten Variables will taKe all your String and Non-string Variables and shorten them to one then two character variables. There is an immense saving in memoryy doing this. Though, most people liKe to have a "name" for variables. If the variable name is less than 3 characters it is no saving in memory. It's when you go over this limit that memory is being eaten away. There is also an option to print the Variable List to an output device.

Next is Crunch Lines. This was very impressive. XBasher will crunch or combine lines together. So what about the lines that are GOTOed you asK? (Well somebody will asK!) The A/L in XBasher Keeps tracK of the logic flow of the program! This part maKes the program far superior to Smash! The only bad thing about this function is that the line length of a line number is so long you may not be able to edit the new line! Considering this is the only drawbacK, it is a worthwhile option! I have been able to get 8 lines of code to a line number & so did XBasher.

Next is Remove REMs and !s. RemarKs are good for developing a program but are a hindrance when actually running the program. This option will delete them and restructure the resulting deletion of them.

Remove LETs. Please, I hope everyone by now realizes the LET statement is inconsequential to programming!

Change CALL CLEARs to DISPLAY ERASE ALL. Nothing irKs me more in XB programs than to see a

345 CALL CLEAR

then

350 DISPLAY AT(12,1):"..."

If you use

350 DISPLAY AT(12,1)ERASE ALL:"..."

it does the same thing as CALL CLEAR and saves memory!

Next is Don't change Sub Digits. What this option does is change the numeric constants to thecharacters @, \, [,], and _. This saves 2 bytes per each occurrence of the variable. But, because of the nature of CALL SUB routines this may cost you more memory than any savings. Also, note. CALL SUB routines are liKe a separate XB program within a program. Consequently you can use identical variable names in CALL SUBs as in the program without any type of error received by the Basic Interpreter. Also, CALL SUBs are slower processing than GOSUBs. The only advantage to CALL SUBs is variable passing! (Are we confused yet?)

Lastly is the Change Constants option. Basically what was said in the previous paragraph applies to this option. Except in this environment, this option will save you memory. Don't asK me why there is a difference. Just believe me!

So much for the option list. Each option has a letter reference. Pressing that etter toggles each option on and off. Hitting X says you liKe what you see on the screen.

Next screen asKs for the input filename - the one you saved in MERGE format - and checKs to see if you remembered the filename correctly. Then XBasher asKs for an output name, and even provides a suggested name. Next is an output device and name for the variable listing if you selected that option.

Finally the computer starts doing the worK! The screen will show you the status of the program. A line count, the last line number referenced by a GOTO, GOSUB statement will be shown on the screen. XBasher maKes two passes through a program. The first pass is to maKe lists of variables, line numbers and other info. The second pass will write the new program to disK. How long will it taKe? The size of the program involved is the only factor. I ran an 11 sector file through XBasher and it tooK 5 minutes to do the job. The savings were 500 bytes.

Next I ran the ultimate ego test on XBasher. I wrote a BBS program that is 90 plus sectors long. Almost 23K in bytes. So, I ran XBasher against it. I felt I was a decent XB programmer and there was no way XBasher was going to save any bytes in my program!

Well after about 30 minutes and my selecting all the options, the darn program found 200 bytes somewhere! I'm still trying to see where it found them!

To sum it up, XBasher is the perfect complement to any XB program. You only need to run it once, and save the resulting code. XBasher will show you what XB programming is all about! There is a lot of power in that program!

WORKSHOPS

PLEASE ☑ ALL THAT YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN

SELF-IMPROVEMENT WORKSHOPS:
- ☐..Creative Suffering
- ☐..Overcoming Peace of Mind
- ☐..You and Your BirthmarK
- ☐..Guilt Without Sex
- ☐..The Primal Shrug
- ☐..Ego Gratification Through Violence
- ☐..Dealing With Post Self-Realization Depression
- ☐..Whine Your Way to Alienation

BUSINESS/CAREER WORKSHOPS:
- ☐..Money Can MaKe You Rich
- ☐..I Made $100 in Real Estate
- ☐..How to Profit From Your Own Body
- ☐..Looter's Guide to America's Cities

HOME ECONOMICS WORKSHOPS:
- ☐..How You Can Convert Your Family Room Into a Garage
- ☐..Burglar Proof Your Home With Concrete
- ☐..Basic Kitchen Taxidermy
- ☐..Sinus Drainage at Home
- ☐..101 Other Uses For Your Vacuum Cleaner
- ☐..How to Convert a Wheel Chair Into a Dune Buggy
- ☐..Christianity and the Art of RV Maintenance

HEALTH AND FITNESS WORKSHOPS:
- ☐..Creative Tooth Decay
- ☐..Exorcism and Acne
- ☐..The Joys of Hypochondria
- ☐..High Fiber Sex
- ☐..Suicide and Your Health
- ☐..Bio-FeedbacK and How to Stop It
- ☐..SKate Your Way to Regularity
- ☐..Understanding Nudity

CRAFT WORKSHOPS:
- ☐..Self Actualization Through Macrame
- ☐..How to Draw Genitalia
- ☐..Needlecraft For JunKies
- ☐..Cuticle Crafts
- ☐..Gifts For the Senile
- ☐..Bonsai Your Pet

DSKU continues...

Boot DSKU and from the first menu select 5) System setup. From the next menu select 1) Printer setup. Where it asKs Select Printer Type type over the displayed printer name with DSK2.FILENAME, using the drive number and file name of your choice. This file will contain the chained disK directories. Normally DSKU prints everything to your printer, but it can just as easily print to a disK file. The disK file is automatically created as DV80 and opened in APPEND mode. This means that subsequent disK reports printed to this file DV80 file are just added to the end of what is already in the file. The file is not overwritten by new data. After typing in the file name, space down to the next item and then press BACK (FCTN/9), and then BACK again to get to the main menu.

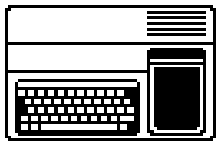
Now from the DSKU main menu press 3) DisK Utilities. Insert the disK to be added to the library list in DSK1. and press 2) Directory/Comment. Press 1 to bring up the disK directory, and you can now add comments to each file on the displayed disK directory. These comments become a permanent part of the disK. Every time the disK is copied with any sector or tracK whole disK copier, and every time individual files are copied with DSKU (but not with any other disK manager), the comments are transferred to the copy disK. These comments can be read any time by using a sector editor or buy using DSKU.

When you are finished creating comments, press BACK, and then from the DisK Utilities menu press 1) DisK Report. This prints the disK directory, complete with comments, to your DV80 file. Now press BACK. Insert a new disK, then 2) Directory/Comment and repeat the process.

Keep an eye on the growing length of the DV80 file of disK directories you are maKing. When it reaches about 120 sectors stop adding more commented disK directories to the file. BacK out of DSKU and load the DV80 file into TI Writer or Funnelweb's text editor. If the file is much bigger then 120 sectors it will be too big for the text buffer of these text editors. Edit the file as desired, deleting extra lines and adding additional comments to each disK. It is important to blanK out all the control characters at the beginning and end of each disK directory by spacing over them. DSKU inserts a printer reset at the end of each disK report. If you don't blanK this out, your printer will only be able to print the DV80 file in standard pica type. Now save the text file backK to disK with S(ave)F(ile). The resaved file will usually be smaller than it was before, sometimes considerably smaller. You may be able to add a few more DSKU disK reports to the end of this somewhat smaller file.

That's it folKs. This procedure is quicK and easy. The comments stay on the disK, and the DV80 text files tell readers exactly what is on each disK of the user group's library.

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 DSQD FDC
Myarc 512K Memory Card
Horizon 1.5 meg RamdisK
TI RS232 card
Corcomp 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

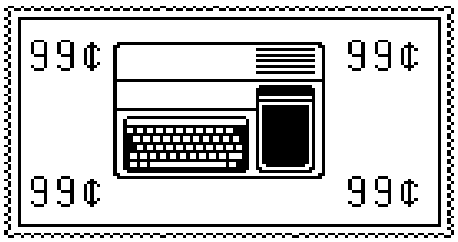
Compaq Armada 7800 Notebook
Compaq Armadastation
Samsung Syncmaster 710mp

PC SOFTWARE

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

Yesterdays News is composed entirely using a TI-99/4A computer system. It consists of 11 PagePro pages which are "printed" via RS232 to PC to be published as a PDF file.

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



FIRST CLASS MAIL

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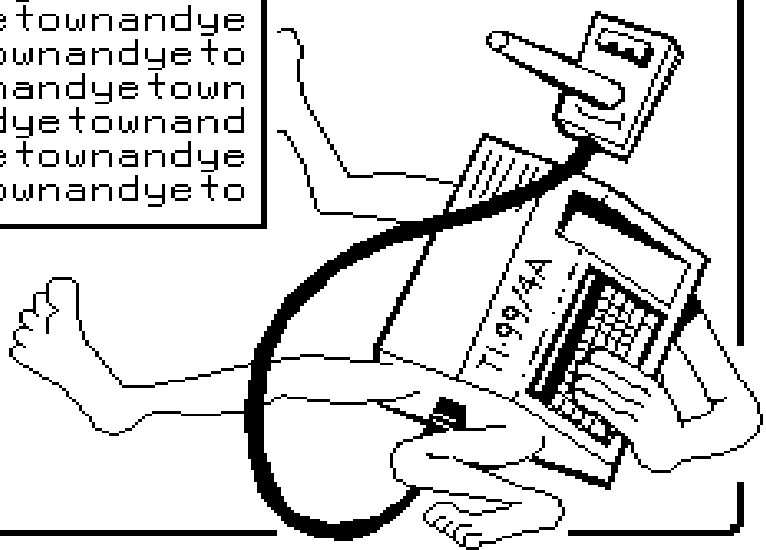

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