



SHIFT838 Newsletter

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VOLUME 2, NO 1

This newsletter is dedicated to the ongoing support for the Texas Instruments TI-99/4A and Myarc Geneve 9640 user community and is published by SHIFT838.

Welcome to Volume 2 Issue #1 of the SHIFT838 Newsletters!

There will be some changes in this newsletter for the upcoming year. As I stated last month the newsletter may go to a quarterly newsletter due to time and traveling for my job this year. Unless anyone wants to help out and be a 'Guest Newsletter Editor!' HINT HINT.. If anyone would like to do this please contact me privately.

Details and issues are still being worked out for the SHIFT838 site to be moved and hosted by Richard Polvika. A lot of the site has been moved already. Remember there is a fully functional CHAT application installed with no limitations on the site. I encourage all TI'ers to use for live real-time chat. I am wondering if to kick this CHAT application off, maybe we should have a set time to start getting TI'ers engaged on the CHAT application. I know this would be difficult as many of us are in different countries, but it may help spread the word.

<http://shift838.99er.net>

In this issue I wanted to highlight Web99 and a small Q and A with the developer, Klaus Lukaschek

Thanks to all that have subscribed!

Klaus Lukaschek Q and A

Chris: Since Web99 is coded in .NET and is only used for Windows machines, have you considered to make this program cross-platform compatible, maybe a code in Python that could be used on multiple operating systems to benefit other users?

Klaus: This is definitely a learning project. From the start I knew I want to get skills in RS-232 communication, developing my own Device Service Routines, getting deep in TMS9900 Assembly programming. Yet I have hardly started to develop for Web99 on the TI machine. Basically all what I have done so far, was on Pc side. Not to say that this was not intended. I knew that much work has to be done on Pc side first. Choosing the .NET Framework for the first steps was a natural choice since I had experience with that from my day-job. The Index Technology Lucene that is in use is based on Java which is very open to any operating system. I had a plan to go away from Windows with Web99 towards an Android Device and completely run it within an App and connect via Bluetooth towards the TI, but that will for sure take a while, definitely not starting that in 2016. Currently I am so fascinated and busy with decoding all kinds of formats and finding the right specification to structure all

that data in the best way.

Which topic fascinates me the most, is being worked on and therefore driving the project. Since the index can be accessed by any tool, and is almost fully documented by me, it should be not too tricky to have that data usable from other tools.

Chris: Did you collaborate with anyone to help with Web99 and if so who and what contributions did they make to your project?

Klaus: I like to specify a lot before actually starting something. At work we are trained to estimate each development task before doing it, and therefore it needs to be specified and completely thought through. And so far with this approach everything turned out exactly as planned. There have been a few people providing me great feedback on those specifications, or were inspiring me. I remember some talks with Ermanno Betori or Michael Zapf in Birkenau how great it would be to have such a program. Without the structured encyclopedia 'The Cyc' I would have not started to dig through the jungle of file formats and specifications, further ninerpedia.org and nouspikel.com are so helpful resources. Martin W. from work has to listen to all my ongoing topics in regards to Web99, and provides very solid feedback. Rasmus gave me permission to integrate his js99er Emulator as a Tab within Web99. Fredrik Ohstrom gave me permission to integrate his JavaScript code that turns any Basic Program into Audio, so you can output it on your soundcard and read it in as CS1 on an unexpanded TI. Both things have yet to be done. There were people providing me with collections of disks to test Web99. There are people who are beta testing from time to time. And I have to thank my fiancée Sandra, who is maximizing my spare time as much as possible.

Chris: Just from the original Beta 1 release to the latest Beta release it looks like quite a few bugs were fixed. What has been your most challenging bug that you have encountered with **Web99**?

Klaus: I guess the big challenges are still ahead of me. So far a struggling one was related to the Syntax Highlighting Library. Such a library makes reading code far easier by applying different formats for the text, the commands, the line-numbers, the parameters ... I added the TI Basic Language to that library and for some reason it took me ages to get that customization being available in the compiled library. In the end it was some unknown shadow-copying of that library into the temp folder, which was struggling Web99 Users as well, when I released a Debug Version of that library by accident.

Chris: What other enhancements do you think you will be adding to Web99 in the near future?

Klaus: Currently I am troubleshooting with Encoding of Strings when doing conversions from and to Bytes, for example if you read in the Filename of a program from a Disk, it's 10 Bytes, and some contain ASCII Characters below 32 or higher than 126. And I need to ensure to handle them in all use cases, so the export of that file has the same FileName as the original.

In the near future I want to take on the following:

- Detect used Devices in Basic Programs and add them as Meta Data
This will identify RS232 or PIO or CS1 or SPEECH or some other device is required to run the Program
- Check Basic Programs for compatibility against various Basic Schemas (defined by Token and Subprogram List)
This will determine which Basic Version the Program is compatible with and will define a far smarter FileType than only "**Basic**", which is still superior to "**PROGRAM**" as follows:
 - TI Basic
 - TI Extended Basic
 - TI Basic of the Mini Memory Cartridge
 - TI Basic of the Editor/Assembler Cartridge
 - TI Basic of the Personal Record Keeping Cartridge
 - RBX
 - other XB releases (have to check those yet)
- Export should be able to create a DiskImage on the fly containing the selected program(s)
- Support import of single TIFILES
- Support import of Pc99 Disk Images
- Support import of Cartridge Roms/Groms in all formats (even zipped).
- Nice view of any Binary
- Support for the TI-99/8

To clear this up, this project will not be done within a few months. It already has certain features that are not available with other tools. This year I want to get a certain feature set done to widen the possibilities. After that I will continue to develop more features.

Chris: As most developers are open to user feedback and suggestions, have you received any user suggestions that have been implemented or you plan on implementing into Web99? If so, what?

Klaus: Berry Harmsen suggested to have a Website version of Web99, which could be an option. Tursi provided some feedback and the result is the developed "Relations" Tab to give you an overview from which TI Files and TI Disks a selected Binary is referenced. Jon Guidry gave me some hints on handling of special characters. Lee Stewart and Jim Fetzner gave me some hints on Forth and Pascal Disks. And basically the whole hiding of the actual search query syntax behind a search form is a result from listening to the feedback I got from people trying out earlier versions of Web99. People are no longer learning syntaxes these days. So working with Web99 had to get easier. And it did...

Chris: Do you have any other projects for the TI that you are looking at starting on and if so what are they?

Klaus: In December I have started some interviews with (former) TI employees to share their experience and insights on the 99er times. It's a honour to do these.

Another project I am still preparing is making use of the Speech Roms from other TI Speech products in order to let our Speech Synthesizer speak with different voice or

accents.

I would love to get it to speak German one day.

Furthermore I might be busy with preserving a few internal TI Specifications this year.

January Highlights (AtariAge)

- Check out this Ω's TI-99/4A Stuff Blog. This blog has quite a few links to some great TI information such as a .BIN repository for cartridge creation and much more!

<http://atariage.com/forums/blog/567-ti-994a-stuff/>

- Cortex Basic 80 Column – Cool version of Basic and burnable to a cartridge!
- **One Liner Contest** - Some good programmers submitting their one liner programs.
- **Stranger game** – this one is utilizing Harry Wilhelm's XB compiler
- **Elite Game** - port on the TI-99/4A
- **XDT99 Cross Development Tools** – version 1.5.1 released

Software

Web99

Web99 is a program coded by **Klaus Lukaschek**. This program works as a database of TI software that is searchable. The program helps identify duplicate disk images and TI files

The program is still in Beta mode but is coming along nicely. Strictly a Windows program as it requires .NET 4.0 (Sorry Mac and Unix guys).

The program also allows communication between the PC and the TI-99 to allow you to manage it from your TI!

It also currently will copy TIFILES to Classic99 directory structure for use.

<http://atariage.com/forums/topic/238433-web99-search-your-tifilesdisks-v05-beta-4/page-1?hl=+web99>

If you have not downloaded this to check it out then please do so.

Highlighted User System

For 2016 I want to highlight a system for every newsletter. I did not receive but a couple of submissions to choose from. Once a system has been submitted the TI'er does not have to submit again. I will probably be looking at the message thread for users systems on AtariAge to contact users next time.

So the system for this newsletter is Ω's system. See the picture below. A very nice and clean TI workspace!



Omegas System Configuration:

TI-99/4A Console

- 1 F18A VGA Enhancement
- 2 PS/2 Keyboard Upgrade
 - a) System Reset (F12)
 - b) Load Interrupt (F11)

P-BOX

- 1 TI-FDC with 80 track modification
- 2 RS-232-1 with HDX modification
- 3 RS-232-2
 - a) setup as RS232/3 and RS/232/4
- 4 CorComp Triple Tech Card with Speech Synthesizer onboard
- 5 32K Memory Expansion
- 6 Flex Card with 16" extension cable
- 7 Lotharek HxC floppy emulator

Add On

- 1 Lantronix UDS-10
- 2 Vonets VAP11N WiFi Router/Bridge
- 3 Modem
- 4 Custom Joystick
- 5 TI Program Recorder
- 6 External drive enclosure with Teac FD-235HF 3.5" disk drive
- 7 Wico Trackball
- 8 Temperature Display

Cartridges of choice

- 1 Extended BASIC 2.7 Suite with BOOT Enhancement
- 2 Microsoft Multiplan

Support Device(s)

- 1) MiniPRO TL866CS EEPROM Burner

Omega says he could not live without the F18A video upgrade!

*"The graphics are just so damn crisp and clear, I could NEVER go back to the **"muddy looking"** composite display."*

*"With the 80 column capability of Tim's 9640 Menu System and his TIMXT 80 column color ANSI graphics capable terminal program, well need I say more? Yes, I do say more, you know me. :) The added usefulness of having BA-Writer and Multiplan in 80 columns makes the TI so much more practical to use for things other than games... and oh how those **Rasmus** games look on the F18A."*

Calling All GAMERS!

Owen Brand (**Opry99er**) has started a TI Gaming competition on AtariAge where a TI-99/4A game is chosen every month and TI'ers can compete to see who can get the highest score. At the months end the person with the highest scores receives some type of prize.

If you want to read the message thread in its entirety and possibly participate in the friendly completion then click below:

<http://atariage.com/forums/topic/241547-official-ti-994a-hi-score-competition/page-1>

Last month's game was : **CROSSFIRE**
Winner was: **Opry99er** with a score of **275,320** points

I tried this game and it was hard as hell for me.

This month's game is : **PARSEC**

The classic TI game that all of us have come to love since we spent countless sleepless nights to try and get further than we ever have before!

GOOD LUCK!

New Project

Some interest has been shown to developer some 2 player online games. My thought is to develop a primer that we can all use to create some 2 player games that can be played via modem, UDS device and Telnet.

Some games that I have thought to start out is:

- Checkers
- Battleship
- Tic-Tac-Toe
- Global Thermal Nuclear War (grin)

I have a couple of other thoughts, but I need to work on the program primer for this first. I of course will need a user that would like to be a tester and hopefully a co-

programmer. Any takers please contact me directly.

Brain Teaser

For all you TI'ers that like to figure things out I came up with this. I got this idea when I was watching *A Christmas Story* as my family does every year. I don't have any fancy decoder rings to give out like *Little Orphan Annie* did, but since most of us are programmers to some point this can be figured out.

The **Super-Secret SHIFT838 Message** is:

8512884887367952358485128176963277283584940881763696

If you figure it out send me an email at shift838@att.net with what the message is.

Sorry, no prizes, but the first one to figure it out gets bragging rights and will be mentioned in the next edition of the newsletter along with how they figured it out.



Resources

Contact information

To contact me please feel free to visit my website and click on the 'Contact' tab.

<http://shift838.wix.com/shift838>

Newsletter Topics

If you would like to participate in the writing of this newsletter or provide any topics for this newsletter please contact me via my web site.

Sites

There are a few of sites that I think should get their own list below. These are for the TI Hall of Fame and TI-99ers Unsung website. Please visit these below sites as both have great information.

<http://www.ti99hof.org/index.html>

<http://www.ti99ers.org/unsung/>

Floppy Days

Randall Kindig's Floppy Days: A great resource for PODCASTERS to listen about information about old computer systems!

These are just a few of the links available for '**Floppy Days Podcast**':

<https://www.facebook.com/floppydayspodcast>

<https://twitter.com/floppydays>

Remembrance

Also the below site has a list of all the TI-99ers that have passed. Please be sure to check them out.

<http://ti99ers.org/modules/Inspire/remember.htm>

Below resources are just a handful of sites that support the TI-99/4A and/or Geneve 9640 computers. It is in no way a full list. This section will be included in all future newsletters. If there is a site that you think should be mentioned then please contact me.

Web sites / FTP Sites

<http://www.99er.net>

<http://www.ninerpedia.org/>

<ftp://ftp.whitech.com>

<http://shift838.wix.com/shift838>

<http://www.ti99-geek.nl/>

<http://www.mainbyte.com>

<http://www.atariage.com>

<http://www.harmlesslion.com>

<http://www.ti99iuc.it>

<http://www.turboforth.net>

<http://www.ninerpedia.org/>

Yahoo List Groups:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TI99-4A/info>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TI994A/info>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Geneve9640/info>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/turboforth/info>

Active BBS'

HeatWave BBS

Access: Dial-Up and Telnet

System: Geneve 9640

Software: S&T BBS Software

Location: Arizona

Content: TI and Geneve file libraries, message bases, door games and e-mail.
Telnet to: www.heatwavebbs.com port 9640 Dialup : **602-955-4491 @ 8-N-1**

The Hidden Reef

Access: Dial-Up
System: TI-99/4a Modified
Software: S&T BBS Software
Location: New York
Content: TI and Geneve file libraries, message bases, door games and e-mail.
Dialup : **718-448-9402 @ 8-N-1**

The Keep

Access: HTTP and Telnet
System: Pentium 4 running Windows 2000
Software: Worldgroup BBS Software (up to 256 user connections)
Location: Tigard, Oregon
Content: TI and Geneve file libraries, message bases, door games, multi-user and multiplayer games and e-mail.
Telnet : www.thekeep.net port **23** Web browser to <http://www.thekeep.net>

The Keep has TI File libraries, Message bases, e-mail, door games, multi-user and multiplayer games. The keep also has a modem line connected for anyone that would like to contact The Hidden Reef BBS from the internet through The Keep.

Simply telnet to www.thekeep.net on port 23, login to The KEEP and then type **/GO DIALOUT** at the main menu, then D1 to dial out to The Hidden Reef. It's that simple.

Vendors

SHIFT838 – Provides used TI equipment as acquired. Check with me often. A lot of the items need rehomeing from other TI Users.

Arcade Shopper – Provides old and new TI equipment, upgrades and new runs of PCBs at www.arcadeshopper.com

Repair Centers

Richard Bell

Repairs available on limited basis, please contact Richard at swim4home@verizon.net for wait-time before sending any repairs

Tim

Myarc-related hardware repairs on a limited, as-available basis. Contact Tim at insane_m@hotmail.com for wait times or to request service.