

Bayou 99 Users Group, P.O. Box 921, Lake Charles, La. 70602

BAYOU BYTE

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MEETING NOTICE**SPECIAL DAY**

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BAYOU 99 USER GROUP IS FEBRUARY 17 7P.M. **NOTE!** This a **WENESDAY** and not a Tuesday because of **MARDI GRAS!** This is for February's meeting **ONLY**. March and other meetings will still be on the 3rd Tuesday. We'll be giving a the first of a series of tutorials on T.I. Writer. The use of format commands and edit commands will be covered. If you are having any problem with your word processing or any question regarding the same, bring them with you! We would like to begin another tutorial on T.I. BASIC, so if you're interested or know of someone that is be sure to speak up so we can get it organized and going! As you know, we've gotten some new members that have "recycled" 99/4A's and are just starting out. Come out and help them just as you got helped. Be sure to attend and learn what's new on the 99/4A scene. In addition, don't forget the drawing for the raffle of the Z-80 card. There have been tickets purchased by other User Groups as well as ours! (Directions to the meeting location on back of newsletter.)

Last month's **WINNER** of the **DOOR PRIZE** (The book - Using and Programming The II-99/4A) was Richard Mitchell. Don't miss out on a *Door Prize*, be at the next meeting!

THE TALKING HEAD

There are a lot of exciting new things happening in the 99/4A community and it is becoming increasingly more important that each of us keep abreast of these many and sundry events. The best way is by active participation in a User Group.... always has and always will. In an effort to make YOUR User Group the best it can be for you, there are certain things you must do:

- 1) Be certain your dues are paid so you can be a member. (Check your mailing label for expiration date.)
- 2) Attend the meetings.
- 3) **PARTICIPATE!**
- 4) **PARTICIPATE!**
- 5) **PARTICIPATE!**
- 6) Fill out and return the User Group Survey and Interest Inventory (found elsewhere in this newsletter). Bring it to the next meeting or mail to the P.O.Box.

7) Oh yes, one more item.... participate!

Really, you'll be suprised how much more you will get out of the User Group just by following those simple steps.

Now if I may have a trumpet fanfare.... >*<*<*< PETE HAS PROMISED TO HAVE A CATALOG OF THE CLUB LIBRARY AVAILABLE AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING!!!!!! Honest, that's what he told me! Be there to see vaporware become firmware!

OUT-OF-TOWNERS MEETING

by Helen Girouard

When I saw the notice in Bayou Byte for an out-of-towners meeting, I saw that it was an event I didn't want to miss. (This was on Nov. 7th at John Singleton's home-ed.) As it turned out, there was some schedule juggling to do, but I made it.

Let me introduce myself: Helen Girouard from Port Neches, TX. I've had a TI computer for about five years but am still an amateur. This area has never had a support group so any information I've picked up has been from newsletters, catalogs, and an occasional question addressed to BAYOU TIBBS. (Due to lack of support, BAYOU TIBBS has been taken out of service-ed.)

Anyway, back to the out-of-towners meeting. I was greeted by John's wife after I wandered around the yard a bit looking for the front door. I was graciously welcomed and escorted out to a lovely back yard on the Calcasieu River. John had his system set up outdoors (I had never seen that before!) and was waiting for others who were planning to set up indoors. I visited with several local members who had dropped by and quickly noted that everyone seemed to be an expert: I admit to being somewhat in awe and impressed.

Meanwhile indoors, Pete Still and Roger Hickerson had set up their equipment--I was further impressed. All I could do as Roger demonstrated some of his equipment and programs was nod my head and say "uh-uh" as if I understood. Pete seems to have the library well under control and I look forward to his upcoming, updated library catalog.

There was a box full of newsletters from around the country and I spent some time browsing through them. I believe that for someone like me who is "isolated" from other TI users that newsletters are indispensable. I look forward to the Bayou Byte every month.

John then served us some delicious hamburgers with all the trimmings. He said he did all the cooking himself--this gang keeps impressing me.

Don Barnette of Baton Rouge gave me several disks with some nice programs and Les Lowery (he rides a motorcycle!) offered to send me some of his programs.

When it was time to leave it was with regret. As I drove home, I thought "what a nice time I had" and "what a nice bunch of people." This out-of-towner is glad to have made the meeting. (We're glad you made the meeting too, Helen!--ed.)

DON'T FORGET RAFFLE!

The Foundation Z80 Card will be raffled off at \$2.00 per chance.

THE RAFFLE WILL BE OPEN TO MEMBERS OF ALL TI USER GROUPS.

The raffle drawing will be held at the February 17, 1988 meeting. Anyone interested in purchasing a raffle ticket should contact one of the officers or write to:

BAYOU 99 USER GROUP
P.O. BOX 921
LAKE CHARLES, LA 70602

If you send a check, please make it payable to *Bayou 99 User Group*. You may purchase as many tickets as you wish. The more you buy the better your chances of winning.

Just in case you don't recall, all this is through the generosity of Mr. Charles Foster.

Thank you Charles!

Be warned, other user groups have bought raffle tickets and the competition is heating up!

FROM WEST PENN 99'ers DEC. 1987 ISSUE:

THE PROTO-BOARD FOR THE TI-99/4A CONSOLE IS HERE. DELIVERY OF THIS BOARD STARTED IN SEPTEMBER 1987. SALES HAVE EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS (OVER 200 DELIVERED TO DATE). WE EXPECT ABOUT THREE NEW PROJECTS TO BE DOCUMENTED AND PUBLISHED BY CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS, AND SEVERAL MORE BY THE LATER PART OF JANUARY. WE EXPECT A REDESIGNED SOUND BOARD (FORTI CARD), DSR, SUPER CART, A/D, AND THE SPEECH INTERFACE IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS. THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF AN 80-COLUMN TEXT ONLY CARD. A BANK-SWITCHED MEMORY, PRINT SPOOLER, NEW RS232/MODEM, DIGITIZERS, ARE ONLY A FEW OF THE OTHER PROJECTS MENTIONED FOR THE PROTO-BOARD. IF ANY OF THE ABOVE EXCITE YOU, AND YOU HAVE THE ABILITY OR INTEREST TO ATTEMPT THE DESIGN, LET US KNOW.

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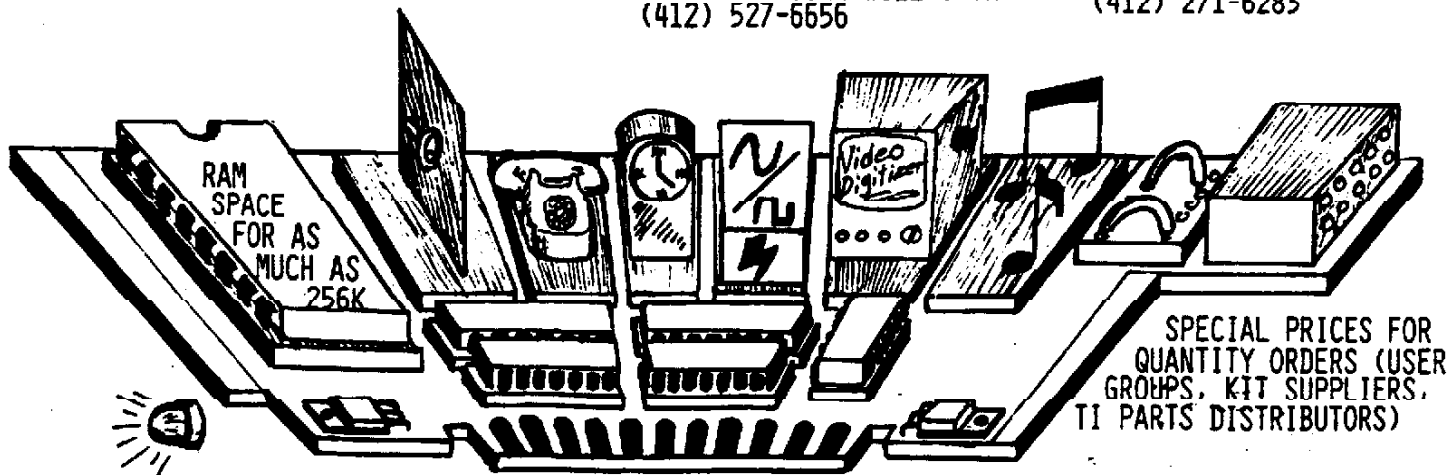
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PROTO-BOARD FOR PEB INSTALLATION

PROFILES, BARRY TRAVER

OCT. 1987 ISSUE

by Terrie Masters

Barry Traver, son of Al, husband of Sharon, father of John Calvin, friend of many. Barry wears many hats in addition to husband and father, he is Minister, teacher, mentor, programmer, author. He is indeed an incredible man.

Barry the husband is a caring Mr. Mom. Due to early age cataract surgery Barry has lost his peripheral vision, and must wear "coke bottle glasses." This has indeed put a crimp into his outside of home work and/or transportation ability. Sharon, just completing her doctoral dissertation, is an English teacher in a suburban Philadelphia area school.

Barry the teacher actually teaches their son John Calvin. Sharon and Barry are home schoolers, John Calvin is a very bright, gregarious young man. His membership in Mensa is a testimonial to his home school education. Barry considers all life experiences education, therefore John Calvin has accompanied Barry on all the trips taken to various "Fests" around the continent. The trip from Philadelphia to Los Angeles in 1986 was via Trailways Bus. As it becomes more widely known in our 4A community, Barry has found more home schoolers, Mike Dodd is another prime example of the virtues of this system.

Barry the mentor has several persons looking to him for direction, development and sincere honest friendship. Age in this area is certainly not a factor. There is not a malicious, envious, or negative breath in Barry's soul, and it shows. To know him is to love him. Barry has opened his home to many of us and one never feels uncomfortable or unwanted. A few years ago a quite young Paul Charlton met an even younger Chris Faherty in Barry's home and programmed well into the dawn. Peter Hoddie, Curtis Provanca, Tom Freeman, George Steffen and Richard Mitchell among others share a special relationship with Barry, and all are richer for it. Many a program in development has been entrusted to Barry for evaluation, enrichment and beta testing. There has never been a leak. We can all learn from this man of many talents and few faults. He generously shares his talents and criticizes only constructively, and that with extreme delicacy. It is with complete confidence that we direct budding programming talent to Barry for Genial Computerware. We do this knowing full well that each program developed and marketed will return to the programmer the full and honest value of product sold, a policy firmly established by Craig Miller and NG., and religiously followed by Genial.

Barry the Minister is indeed that - an honest to goodness real preacher. He was a few years ago a full time Minister, but by choice and health has become a part

time Minister. Barry writes and delivers his sermons with the same soul that he gives to our community. He is indeed a fine example of a man of the cloth. Honesty, integrity, caring, interest, these are the characteristics he reaches his flock with, the religious and the 4A community.

The depth of Barry and Sharon are reflected in their surroundings. Steel industrial shelving cover every wall in their home and every shelf is laden with books. Every subject imaginable, fact to fiction, religion to fantasy, cooking to magic, organization to origination. You name it and it is there. Then there is the computer section, when Barry visited LA he was amazed to find a book there that he did not have. What warm, wonderful surroundings. Then there are the Cats. Yes the Travers are cat lovers. One cat will clearly let everyone in the house (guests included) know when it is time to go up to bed.

Barry the entrepreneur, if you let him he would give it all away. Traveler volume 1 is a perfect example. 6 disks, numbers 1-6, 2 bonus disks, disk mailers, first class postage, all this for \$39.95. Basic math shows this was a real giveaway. Post cards and letters with errata, apologies for delays. This was and is really a labor of love. Within this newsletter there is a copy of a letter Barry recently sent to all his subscribers. We are reprinting this as it, more than this profile, shows the character of the man Barry Traver.

Finally, Barry the friend and his humor. Some time ago on a visit to Philadelphia, in order to avoid 4A DT's we arranged a mini-meet at Barry's home. We camped out all over the place, mostly the floor, and there were quite a few of us. Sharon was away visiting family, so it was all "batching" it, except for Terrie. Well we planned a visit en masse to Lou Phillips at Myarc. All well and good except that there was a large volume of debris. Pizza boxes, aluminum cans, paper plates, I am sure you get the idea. Not really noteworthy except that there was a garbage strike in Philadelphia!!! Well no problem, we filled two of the giant size garbage bags, loaded it into Howie Rosenberg's car and off we went in a 4 car caravan to Basking Ridge, garbage and all. Lou very generously allowed us to deposit it at his home. We all caravanned to a restaurant. After a good meal and great conversation we headed back to Lou's. Barry in the car with us in front, Lou behind. Barry in a very ministerial tone said "the next time we come to visit Lou we should really bring him a better gift than garbage." As you say well imagine our car rocked, and Lou and the rest wondered what had gone on. That my friends is a profile of our friend Barry Traver.

TRAVELER SUBSCRIPTION FORM

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 ___ Volume Two @ \$36.00 (six issues)
 ___ Volume One and Volume Two @ \$65.00

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Please make your check payable to Barry Traver, and send it - along with this form - to Barry Traver, editor, Genial TRAVELER, 835 Green Valley Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19128. Thank you.

From MIAMI CO. AREA 99-4A HCU6 JULY 1987 ISSUE!

<p>THIS PROGRAM WILL HELP YOU TO JUDGE HOW WELL YOUR TV OR MONITOR IS SUITED TO YOUR COMPUTER SYSTEM BY PLACING A DIFFICULT PATTERN ON THE SCREEN. IT WILL ALSO ALLOW YOU TO TRY DIFFERENT COLOR COMBINATIONS TO SEE WHAT WORKS BEST. X-BASIC REQUIRED.</p>	<p>A55AAS5FFFFFFFFFFFFFFF):: CALL CHAR(136,"00"):: CALL C HAR(115,"00")</p>	<p>210 DISPLAY AT(13,2):"2) BLA CK 10) LT RED"</p>	<p>290 ACCEPT AT(22,7)VALIDATE(DIGIT)SIZE(-2)BEEP:S :: GOSU B 330</p>
<p>100 ! THIS PROGRAM WILL USE THE CHARACTER PATTERN "A55AAS5A55A55" TO TEST THE RESOLUTION OF YOUR MONITOR OR TV</p>	<p>150 CALL COLOR(14,1,11):: CA LL COLOR(12,2,11):: CALL COL OR(11,1,11)</p>	<p>220 DISPLAY AT(14,2):"3) NED GREEN 11) DRK YELLOW"</p>	<p>300 ACCEPT AT(22,17)VALIDATE (DIGIT)SIZE(-2)BEEP:F :: GOS UB 330</p>
<p>110 ! X-BASIC REQUIRED</p>	<p>160 A9=RPT\$(CHR\$(128)&CHR\$(1 36),4):: B8=RPT\$(CHR\$(136)&C HR\$(128),4)</p>	<p>230 DISPLAY AT(15,2):"4) LT GREEN 12) LT YELLOW"</p>	<p>310 ACCEPT AT(22,27)VALIDATE (DIGIT)SIZE(-2)BEEP:B :: GOS UB 330</p>
<p>120 ! 9/29/87 by Renkenbeger</p>	<p>170 DISPLAY AT(2,2)ERASE ALL :A9:" ";B8:" ";A9:" ";B8:" " :A9:" ";B8:" ";A9:" ";B8:" "</p>	<p>240 DISPLAY AT(16,2):"5) DRK BLUE 13) DRK GREEN"</p>	<p>320 GOTO 290</p>
<p>130 !</p>	<p>180 DISPLAY AT(5,19):RPT\$("3):: DISPLAY AT(6,19):"5" CHR\$(127):"5" :: DISPLAY AT(7,19):RPT\$("5",3)</p>	<p>250 DISPLAY AT(17,2):"6) LT BLUE 14) MAGENTA"</p>	<p>330 IF B=1 THEN X=S ELSE X=B</p>
<p>140 CALL CHAR(127,"A55AAS5A</p>	<p>190 DISPLAY AT(10,2):RPT\$("5",20)</p>	<p>260 DISPLAY AT(18,2):"7) DRK RED 15) GRAY"</p>	<p>340 IF F=1 THEN Y=S ELSE Y=F</p>
	<p>200 DISPLAY AT(12,2):"1) TRA NSP*NT 9) NED RED"</p>	<p>270 DISPLAY AT(19,2):"8) CYA N 16) WHITE"</p>	<p>350 CALL COLOR(12,Y,X):: CAL L COLOR(11,1,5):: CALL COLOR (14,1,X):: CALL COLOR(13,Y,1):: RETURN</p>

BACK TO THE FUTURE: HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE TI-99/4A by Larry Spohn. Housing cleaning recently, I ran across some old issues of Home Furnishings Daily and its special section called ComputerWare, which I used to receive in connection with the furniture market. In one, February, 1983, I found a most interesting article on Bill Turner, president of Texas Instruments consumer products division in 1982.

Thought ya'll might enjoy some choice excerpts, like one unidentified industry analyst's suggestion that this division had earned TI's "major, long-term commitment, still critically dependent on Turner himself." Remember this was written in Spring, 1983, and the article credits Turner as being the "marketing sharpshooter" behind TI's first \$100 rebate announcement, bringing the 99/4A down to \$199 on Aug. 4, 1982. The article's lead paragraph calls it a "red-letter date," and I think we could all agree that red is quite the right adjective.

The article notes that Turner exceeded his goal of having the 99/4A on 7,000 outlet shelves by the end of 1982. The figure was closer to 10,000, and his "10-gallon goal," according to the article, for the infamous 1983 was to have the computer available through 25,000 outlets. So much for volume as the critical factor in mass-marketing.

To the "storm of criticism about profit-busting implications of the rebate," Turner told the trade journal, "It's just a matter of time before we see the traditional retailer sell professional and small business computers," and "Next year everyone will broaden their line to include several (price) points that will sweep upward." This was at a time when TI also was introducing its 99/2, priced at \$99 to compete with the Timex, et. al.

Turner also talked at length about "feature-rich" consoles with more options; software as the critical component; multiple positions of use (student, hobbyist, entertainer, educator, at home professional); a more educated consumer "who has gone beyond price point and kilobytes as the only criteria for purchase; new distribution channels, like drug and video stores; professional computers "creeping" out of computer stores into traditional retail outlets and (get this) "a growing aftermarket—wide open territory for those willing to pioneer it."

Prophetic, no? How about these golden nuggets: TI is "in the computer business for the duration;" "No matter what skirmishes may develop among the retailers in 1983, Turner and TI are poised for the best year yet;" "The competition this year will be different than last year's—we'll be competing on feature, not price;" and "the success of the 99/4A home computer is being viewed as a prototype for a turnaround for the entire (TI) company." Remember now, these are the pros talking, the guys with MBAs and analyst credentials.

The article, which I will try to have at the next meeting for anyone wishing to read it completely, also has a fleeting reference to what I guess was the 99/8 successor "to compete with the Commodore 64 and the Atari 1200."

Personally, I really like the article's ending line: "The only thing certain is that Bill Turner will be doing his best to stay on top of his bucking bronco of a market." Wonder where he landed?

Here's a couple of other kernels I culled from that issue:

—according to a national distributor's "hit list," the top five TI-99/4A software offerings in February 1983 in four categories were: Munchman, Parsec, TI Invaders, Car Wars, and Tombstone City in entertainment; Addition and Subtraction I, Early Learning Fun, Number Magic, Addition and Subtraction II and Multiplication I in education; Household Budget, Home Financial Decisions, Personal Record Keeping, Personal Real Estate, and Tax/Investment Record Keeping in home/business; and Teach Yourself Basic, Extended Basic, Terminal Emulator II, Mini-Memory and Editor/Assembler in utility. It is interesting to note that all are TI cartridges, which contrasted significantly with lists for other computers that had a range of third party software citations. Wonder what such a list today would contain!

—Computer Research Analyst Alex Stein, commenting on the TI and Commodore console price cuts, said, "Today's home user is not sophisticated enough to appreciate the differences between systems. He does know that 64K versus 16K let's you use more professional applications, but he's still buying a console, not a system."

—An unidentified retailer observed about the difficulties of merchandising home computers, "The only thing that makes it all worthwhile is that consumer demand is so great. The sales projections in general are just incredible, and I believe they will prove accurate. In a way, that gives all of us a lot of room for mistakes."

—And on a lighter note, a reference to a New York Times report on "computer divorce." That article, titled "New Martial Stress: The Computer Complex," reported that "Families suffer when a spouse is obsessed with the perfect machine, but still dealing with the imperfect human being." Worse the machine is charged with creating "computer widows" who are becoming commonplace "in psychotherapists' offices complaining of neglect and maintaining their mates are mesmerized by the machine." The article asks whether the machine might someday be cited as a "co-respondent" in a divorce case.

Can charges of alienation of affections be far away? Shouldn't we consider a cooperative defense: having a club seminar on programing these machines to testify on our behalf, say about our exemplary characters, for example. Surely the court will take into consideration our humanity in adopting the abandoned 99/4A. And what about TI's joint responsibility—not to mention Bill Cosby's—in getting us addicted in the first place. It's getting serious, don't ya think.

PROGRAMMING TIPS FROM LASHER

ROUNDING OFF NUMERIC INPUT TO THE NEAREST INTEGER OR DECIMAL

The TI-99/4A keyboard will handle 14 digits with integrity. For instance, if you let $A=12345678901234$ then A will return the same digits without rounding off. The A numeric value, however will be expressed in "scientific notation" as $1.23457E13$ which merely means that the decimal must be moved 13 places to the right. Although the sixth digit in the scientific notation expression has been rounded off to a "7", it still remains a "6" in the machine memory.

In layman's language, another example is in order to explain scientific notation. This example would be to let $B=123456789$ which could be expressed in scientific notation as $1.2E8$ or $1.23E8$ or, if the fourth digit is used, then the "4" should be rounded to "5" and shown as $1.235E8$. The "8" following the "E" indicates the position of the decimal moved to the right. If the "8" had been "-8", then it would mean that the decimal should be moved to the left and the B numeric value was equal to 0.000000123456789 instead. The TI-99/4A, however expresses all digits up to 10 digits in numeric format and only goes to scientific notation with 11 digits or more.

Now, to go back to our original value of $A=12345678901234$ which will print to the screen as $1.23457E13$. To retain our fundamental approach to this explanation, we will describe the "INT" (INTEger) function and the "^" (powers of) function and then show how they are used to redisplay all of the 14 digits of "A" numeric in string format and that the 14 digits have not been rounded or changed. An integer is any whole number and does not have any fractional values. The expression 12.34 contains the fractional value ".34" and the integer of that expression is "12". So $INT(12.34)$ will be returned as "12". Next, the power function can be expressed as 10^3 which means the same as $10 \times 10 \times 10$ and equals 1,000. Another would be 2^4 which is the same expression as $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ and equals 16. Still another could be 1^3 which is $1 \times 1 \times 1$ and equals 1. For my program use explanation, we will use 10^n (where "n" represents the number of times a digit is multiplied by itself) to explore how to move the decimal point left and right in the "A" numeric expression above. We saw how 10^3 means $10 \times 10 \times 10$ or 1 with 3 zeros after it. Therefore, 10^8 means 1 with 8 zeros after it. Now 10^1 means simply 10 or 10^0 simply means 1 with no zeros after it. Exploring a little further, 10^{-1} means the decimal is moved one place to the left of the 1 and equals "0.1". Now, if I multiply 1234 by 10^{-1} this would equal "1234"x"0.1" or "123.4".

If we multiply the numeric value of "A" (which is 12345678901234) by 10^{-8} , we will produce the value 123456.78901234 and if we further invoke the INT function, we will now end up with the value of "123456". If we further multiply this by 10^8 , we will now have "12345600000000". Next if we subtract "12345600000000" from "12345678901234" we will now have the value of 78901234 as a remainder. The following mathematical expressions will produce the same results as follows:(See Next Page)

```

Let A=12345678901234
    (if we print A, it will be displayed as 1.23457E13)
Let X=INT(A*10^-8)
    (this sets X=123456)
Let Y=A-X*10^8
    (this multiplies X to equal 12345600000000 and subtracts it
    from A=12345678901234 and leaves the remainder of
    78901234)

```

In EXTENDED BASIC and in command mode, this can be written as:

```
A=12345678901234 :: X=INT(A*10^-8) :: Y=A-X*10^8 :: PRINT X,Y
```

The print display on the screen will be as follows:

```
"123456"      "78901234"
```

Next try this in command mode:

```
A=123456789012345 :: X=INT(A*10^-9) :: Y=A-X*10^9 :: PRINT X,Y
```

The print display on the screen will be as follows:

```
"123456"      "789012300"
```

As you can now see, using 15 digits will change the value of A by rounding off.

In the first example, where we are using only 14 digits, if we further combine the STRING equivalents of X and Y into one display, we would then always display on the screen using PRINT STR\$(X)&STR\$(Y) as follows:

```
"12345678901234"
```

The next step now is to illustrate how to round off a numeric input value to the nearest integer. If we add 10^{13} (or 10,000,000,000,000) to a numeric input value of 12.34, the machine will round this off to 10,000,000,000,012 and then by subtracting 10^{-13} , we will be left with 12 as our answer or 12.34 rounded off to 12. The value 12.56 would be returned as 13.

Last of all 1E13 is the same as 10^{13} and 1E-13 is the same as 10^{-13} . Therefore the following program can be written as follows:

```

100 DEF RD=A+1E13-1E13
110 INPUT A
120 PRINT RD
130 GOTO 110

```

Another technique would be as follows:

```

100 INPUT A
110 PRINT A+10^13-10^13
120 GOTO 100

```

To carry this thought one step further, we can further round off other numeric inputs to the nearest decimal point using 1 or 2 or more decimal places. First multiply your numeric input by 10^n (where "n" represents the number of decimal places desired) before adding 1E13 and subtracting 1E-13. After this adding and subtracting, then multiply "A" times 10^{-n} . If two decimal places are desired and 12.34456 were input, the answer would be 12.34 and an input of 12.34567 would result in 12.35 as your answer.

DATA BASE MANAGERS FOR THE TI-99/4A

By Bill Gaskill, reprint from Chicago Times.

Some owners/authors of the applications I have covered in this article will no doubt be angered by the apparent brutality of it. I choose to view it as honesty rather than brutality. Too many reviewers white wash the weaknesses of TI software they critically review. I will not. I think sometimes that we are afraid that the software market will dry up and blow away unless we give favorable reports on the software products that do appear for our computer. I prefer to think of it in another way; if we promote junk software in a favorable light those that do publish product reviews will lose credibility and those that buy software based upon those reviews will simply be that much more reluctant to get burned a second time. In the process of searching for the perfect data base manager I have purchased several programs and spent over \$300. All of the programs that I own have positive points and all have negative points. What I have discovered to date is that the "perfect" data base manager does not exist yet (not even in the business world). What I am going to share with you are my impressions of the programs I own and in doing so will perhaps save you a little time and money if you too are looking for that "perfect" application.

The programs I own are;

ACORN 99 from Oak Tree Systems DBMS from Navarone Industries DATA BASE 1 from SPC Software DATA BASE 99 from Quality 99 Software DATA BASE 300 from the International Users Group DATA BASE X from Western Ware PR BASE v1.2 and V2.0 from William Warren TURBO DATAMAN from Easy Ware

I have used these programs enough to feel comfortable with each and could probably write several pages about each one. Unfortunately, publication space is limited and such a voluminous article would never see print because of it. Thus I have tried to be brief, but to the point in my comments on each program. Also, please keep in mind that my comments are subjective, based upon how each product meets MY needs and expectations. Yours may be different. For ease of reference I have included some of the information in a comparison table that allow analysis at a glance. In the paragraphs that follow I will try to provide a little detail to each issue and cover special features, lack of what I view as standard features and product performance of each program. I apologize in advance for the cryptic style you will read, however I needed to be brief. The DATA BASE 300 program will not be looked at since it is not available.

DATA BASE MANAGERS FOR THE TI-99/4A

ACORN 99:

Among the top three DBM's available to the TI community. The only relational data base available, also the only one with a programming language interface for custom applications. EXTREMELY powerful and well designed. Can support three active files at one time, allows existing data file formats to be edited, copied to another file, resequenced and can reformat a file structure into another file format. Does not have the ability to show number of records in a file. Can hold more than 1500 records per file on a SS/SD disk (depending on file size). Sorts alpha characters and strings better than numbers. Indexes record location for subfile creation and mainfile is then concatenated to create the subfile as another database. Possesses ability to search using; "equal to, unequal, greater than, less than, ignore" logical operators. Supports relational operators in

search routines through the use of a true/false convention that allows selection of records where all parameters are met or any parameters are met. CAN print a single record from a display screen. EXTREMELY slow in operation. Uses 40 column text mode. Allows duplicate key field data entries. Allows printer control codes to be encrypted in setup file. Provides input checking for "numeric, integer, money, string, flag and date" entries. Overall, a fabulous program, with almost limitless potential. The best documentation of the group, giving many examples along with explanations. SUPERB application.

DBMS (Navarone):

Allows 32,000 records per file but only 350 per SS/SD diskette. Limits you to half that amount if you wish to sort the file since it creates a second sorted file that demands equal space on your data disk. Most interesting report generator I have ever seen, a cut and paste type affair that is really neat but poorly documented. Excellent custom screen design module which includes help screens that you design. FAST,FAST,FAST. Requires unique key field entries only, which I find inconvenient. Documentation is better than originally written but still confusing at times and incomplete. Does on mundane things and skips over or entirely omits important things. Does totaling in reports but no other computational work. Does not support single record printing but can use the report module to scroll data on screen, write it to disk or send it to your printer. Can append new data fields to the end of an existing record but cannot reformat the record in any other way. Can create subfiles but you have to figure out how to do it for yourself because the documentation does not tell you how. It doesn't even mention subfiles. Allows printer control codes to be encrypted in Report Generation file. Does not perform input checking of any type. All data is considered to be a string entry. Best suited for a hard disk environment. Not difficult to use once you have "played" with it, but can be intimidating at first.

DATA BASE 1:

Best suited for mailing lists or other LIST type data files. Cumbersome design setup requiring records to be accessed by their relative position in the file (record number). You must first list the records by a specified field if you don't know the record number. Time consuming. Provides three pre-set mailing label report formats and one custom format for your own design. Will NOT do reports that have heading information. Includes several nice utilities such as a form letter generator, disk file data base which creates a DB1 data base file out of the information on your library of disks. Does not provide for input checking nor length of field entries. Only looks at the length of overall record. Does searches by "equal to" operator only, only on one data field at a time. Requires that you first create an index file and then search. To search by another field you must create another index file. Searches by a maximum of 5 characters in any field. Sorts are limited to 1000 records no matter how many exist in the file, but both alpha and numeric sorts are offered. Subfiles can be created to a printer in the main program or to disk by using the Utilities options. Selection is by "equal to" or "between two values" which can be either alpha or numeric type.

DATA BASE 99:

More emphasis put on copy protection than on program performance. Allows custom screen design and claims 28 fields of up to 28 characters each. Would be a neat trick to do since four of the 24 rows on screen are used by program prompts. Fast assembly language interface for report generation. Cannot generate reports with headings and does not permit printer

control codes to be inserted in report data. Does not save a format after design so you will have to re-create it each time you want a report. Data is printed in continuous format without regard to page breaks or anything else. Design of layout is cumbersome, requiring you to conceptualize how many colons and/or semi-colons are needed to push the data across the page. Number of colons/semi-colons is limited to 127 characters allowed in a LINPUT command. A terrible system. Disk catalog accessed from main menu will crash program if you enter an alpha character instead of a number when it prompts for the disk drive number to be cataloged. Color is lost after a crash since it was CALLED from the LOAD program. Does not permit single record screen print (unless you buy the DB 99 Utilities), must use EDIT option to search for a record or search sequentially. Cannot go directly to a record by its relative position in the file. Will create subfiles to disk allowing the search by "less than, equal to or greater than" operators. Search is limited to one field for all practical purposes. Sorts can be performed in ascending order, by any one field. Sort is an actual re-write of the file. All data is considered string information. No number crunching (again, unless you buy the DB99 Utilities), no input checking. Documentation consists of two 8 1/2" X 11" sheets of paper printed on both sides. Program is slow, inflexible, inconvenient in many ways and cumbersome to use. It might have been an advanced application two years ago. Today it is a dinosaur, even with the DB99 Utilities. Much too expensive.

DATA BASE X:

Very modular, meaning that each function (adding, editing, printing, deleting etc.) is a separate program that must be loaded each time you want to use that function. Does statistical analysis of data. Record counter is inaccurate, code of program is jumbled and entirely unstructured. Does not sort data even though documentation uses the term "sort". What it means is "select". When DATA BASE X " sorts" by a particular parameter it is really selecting records for dumping to a printer that meet that parameter. Does allow selection between ranges. Cannot create subfiles, does not index existing records. Access of a record is done sequentially unless you know the record number. No way to tell the record number, you must guess. Supports 1 or 2 disk drives. Excruciatingly slow. Requires that you name the data disk DBXDATA for no good reason that I can see, otherwise program errors out. Does not save report definition but does allow it to be printed in normal or compressed mode. Definition process is fairly simple but time consuming. Documentation is the "shabbiest" I have ever seen. It is photocopied and put into booklet form with the pages not even cut straight, so that some information is missing off of some pages. Overall, this program is JUNK! As with the IUG's DATA BASE 300/500, it never really belonged on the market in the state that it is in. Unfortunately I didn't know that and paid out over \$30 to find out.

PR BASE:

Totally assembly language coded. THE BEST all-around application in my opinion. FAST, flexible, does virtually anything a user would want in the way of data handling except number crunching. It will not do anything in that area. Treats all data as part of a big string just as DBMS and DATA BASE 99 do. As long as you own the PRB Utilities written by John Johnson you can create subfiles, other wise you can't. Has on-line help for commands, creates an index by any input field you choose and then accesses any record in about 1 second. Also has a FIND feature to look at data sequentially in any single field and a GLOBAL option that searches for a single data entry anywhere in the record. Saves up to five report

formats, V2.0 allows you to format a data disk. Custom screen layout with terrific graphics options for borders/windows etc. is available. A tremendous program, well thought out, well designed, artistically executed. FAIRWARE!!! PRB Utilities are free for the asking as long as you provide the disk and mailer. Report design routine is cumbersome and confusing. Prints single record from screen display in either 40 or 80 column mode. Program is very sensitive about I/O device names. My copies (V1.2 and V2.0) both require PIO. to work rather than just PIO or PIO/1 etc. With number crunching abilities this program would be a perfect "flat-file data manager" for most TI users. As it is, the value and performance for a FAIRWARE application or a commercial application too for that matter, is unsurpassed. If you don't have PR BASE then you are missing out on one of the premier productivity tools available to the TI Community.

TURBO DATAMAN:

This is the second most powerful and useful data manager, taking a back seat only to PR BASE. It runs slightly ahead of ACORN because it performs number crunching and is faster in operation. Like ACORN, TURBO DATAMAN allows you to create a dictionary of data items (fields) and then lets you choose from that library of fields to put a record together. Up to 30 fields are allowed per record. Twenty pre-defined records (file formats) can exist on one disk. Allows custom screen layout design, complete with graphics for borders/windows etc. Does input checking, allows secondary screen access like ACORN's Detail Records. Allows formulas to be created and saved that perform the four basic math functions. Report definitions can be saved. Allows wildcard type operators in searches, will print single record from screen display. Provides "less than, greater than, equal to, not equal to, greater than or equal to, less than or equal to" operators in screen display and report generation modules. Permits sub-totals in reports that can be formatted like TI Extended Basic does with the IMAGE statement. Subfiles can be created through the report generator by sending the output selected to a disk file rather than a printer. The results must be converted back to INTERNAL, FIXED from DISPLAY FIXED before you can use it in the program however. TURBO DATAMAN does not provide you with that utility. The documentation instructs you to "write a program" to do it. Names used for different modules in the program are confusing. Ex; ETCH,SKETCH, SKETCHR, FETCH. Should change names to more accurately reflect function of module. Documentation acceptable but lacks adequate coverage in some areas. Utilities are provided to perform some mundane operations such as counting the amount of records in a database. Reformatting or restructuring of an existing file is not permitted unless the input field is appended to the end of a record format. This program needs some "fine tuning" in some areas but is still an exciting productivity tool with immense possibilities. Its speed of operation is not fast but acceptable. It is faster than ACORN. One can set up the SKETCH program to auto-load if desired but the whole application should be centered around a menu in my opinion. As it is now, you must RUN each module from the READY> prompt when you need to use it, because every module exits with an END statement. If you don't own this program, you should. Whether you want to manage a mailing list or do accounting, TURBO DATAMAN is for you.

Reprinted from:

CALL SOUNDS, AUGUST 1987
Newsletter of the Central Westchester 99'ers,

BAYOU 99 USER GROUP MEMBER
EQUIPMENT AND INTEREST SURVEY

Please fill out the following and return so we can provide you with the best as a member. If you have a particular need or have any surplus equipment you would like to trade or sell, space has been provided at the end. Remember you can turn in at the meeting or mail to : BAYOU 99er SURVEY, P.O. BOX 921, Lake Charles, LA 70602.

Member's Name:--

Mailing Address--

City, State, & Zip--

Home Phone--

Work Phone--

(Best time to call)-

1) Do you use your TI 99/4A Daily?

Weekly? Other-----

Check off all primary uses :

- Business type use
(letters, invoices, etc.)
- Entertainment (games, etc.)
- Data files
- Household records
(checkbook, etc)
- Programming
- Desktop publishing
(newsletters, etc)
- Graphics design
- Music composition
- Educational
- Telecommunications
- Other (specify)---

2) HARDWARE (Indicate which you have:

- 99/4A console
- Joysticks
- B/W monitor
- color monitor
- cassette
- GRAM Kracker
- printer Type---
- peripheral expansion box

- speech synthesier
- disk controller card Type--
- disk drive(s) quantity---
type(ss/sd, etc.)---
- hard disk Size---
- memory card Size---
- Horizon RAM disk
quantity---
size---
- 80 column card
- modem
Baud rate---
type---
- "Side port" equipment
- Myarc Geneve
- Triton Turbo PC

Firmware/Software

3) CARTRIDGES:

- Extended Basic
- Mini-memory
- Editor Assembler
- Term. Emulator II
- LOGO (I or II)
- Plato
- TI-Writer
- Multiplan

3) SOFTWARE:

- Wordprocessor (other than TI-Writer)
- Spreadsheet (other than Multiplan)
- Data base mgmt. (state type)
- Business software (state type)
- Grafics (state kind)

3) ADDITIONAL HARDWARE/SOFTWARE (list)

MEMBER INTERESTS

Please indicate your interest in the following categories

1) HARDWARE

- Modifying your existing hardware

- Demo's of new hardware
- Demo's of original hardware
- How to repair your system components

If a SIG is started would you:
 Participate
 Be a leader
 (Explain)---

2) SOFTWARE

- Demo's of new programs
- Demo's of older programs
- How to use TI-Writer
- How to use Multiplan
- How to modify existing software
- Learn a new programming language

4) NEWSLETTER

Does the newsletter (BAYOU BYTE) give you what you expect from a User Group Newsletter?

3) TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- How to access a BBS
- How to set up your own BBS
- Demo of a Database Service
- Do you belong to a Database Service? Which one(s)?---

If not, what would you like included in it?

- Do you belong to another User Group BBS? Which one(s)?---

SUGGESTIONS:

4) MEETINGS

What would you like to see **most** at the monthly meeting? (Please be specific):

LIST BELOW ANYTHING YOU WISH TO BUY, SELL, OR TRADE:

What type programs would you prefer at the monthly meetings?

- Informational
- Tutorial
- Hardware Demo's
- Software Demo's
- Other (please list):

Please return by the April meeting so all results can be tabulated. P.S. Only those submitting their survey will be included in the distribution of the tabulation of results. (No input---no output!)

Would you like to see a Special Interest Group formed? On what subject(s)?---

Should these be held on the same evening as the regular meeting and for how long?---

"NOTICE"

BAYOU 99 USERS GROUP

DUES

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT John Singleton
 VICE PRESIDENT Richard Mitchell
 SECRETARY
 TREASURER Roger Hickerson

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

NEWSLETTER EDITOR John Singleton
 PROGRAM Richard Mitchell
 LIBRARY Pete Still
 EDUCATION John Singleton
 RECRUITING Pete Still
 & EQUIPT.

INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY--- \$12.00/yr.
 CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL TO SEE
 YOUR EXPIRATION DATE. IF YOU THINK
 THERE IS AN ERROR, NOTIFY ANY
 OFFICER.
 OUT OF STATE NEWSLETTER
 SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE \$6.00/yr. (INSTATE
 IS \$12.00/yr.)

MEETING DATES

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE THIRD TUESDAY
 OF EACH MONTH AT 7:00 PM IN THE
HENRY HEIGHTS RECREATION CENTER,
 801 E. SCHOOL ST. (JUST WEST OF
 LOUISIANA AVE. BEHIND HENRY
 HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, ON THE
 NORTH SIDE OF THE ROAD.) ALL
 VISITORS WELCOME!

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 QUARTER PAGE..... 6.00/ISSUE
 EIGHTH PAGE..... 4.00/ISSUE
 MINIMUM CHARGE.... 3.00/ISSUE

MEMBERS are entitled to three lines
free each month for non-commercial
 personal ads or notices.

***** 1988 *****

FEBRUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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MARCH						
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	27	28	29	30	31	

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