

The Boston Computer Society

TI-99/ 4A User Group

Meeting Newsletter

April 1990

Edited by Justin Dowling

LISTEN

by
JUSTIN DOWLING

For tonight's meeting Ron Williams will demo DOM 7. You may remember, I was supposed to bring this disk last month. Ron made available to me a newer version of the editor program and some graphics he edited that were not on last month's disk. You have the updated version this month

I will also show you the CRYPTOGRAM disk which is DOM 8. This program is fairware; try it and if you like it, send your money to the author. It was reviewed by Harry Brashear in the March MICROpendium.

Also reviewed by Harry Brashear in the March MICROpendium is the latest addition to the library. RAG Software has upgraded the MULTPLAN upgrade TI gave us. Art Green's update makes MULTIPLAN run faster. Those of you who use MULTIPLAN know it is a very powerful spreadsheet program. It may not be the spreadsheet of choice for LOTUS 123 fans in the office, but the price is right on the 99/4A. What's more, it can do anything most unsophisticated users can do with LOTUS 123.

Those of you who use the TI Tax program demonstrated some months back by Brian O'Brien know that a relatively unsophisticated user can program a template in a spreadsheet for serious purposes.

Now Art Green tackles the abiding complaint about MULTIPLAN on the 99/

4A: it is sloooow. He also comes up with a system for upgrading programs we already have that are coded by TI in their gram devices. (This kind of software was written in GPL so that TI could corner the software market for this machine and make us pay there too. Now that they have left the market, about the only thing owners of these programs can do is dump them from cartridge to disk using a Gram device like the GRAMULATOR or the old Gram Kracker.) I will show it to you.

Lastly, on the upcoming fair on Saturday May 5th, I am going to hand out a sheet with the mailing address of vendors and user groups who have not responded yet that they are coming. Please contact the folks on this list to urge them to attend. The lack of participation by key vendors and user groups at the recent fair in NJ, at TICOFF, contributed, I think, to the low receipts everyone complained of. I use my 99/4a system a lot; it does what I want in a home computer at the right price. If users like me will continue to get support, we need to permit a reasonable marketplace to flourish. Fairs like ours permit a reasonable marketplace to flourish.

The BCS Home Computer Fair

The Boston Computer Society
TI-99/4A User Group
One Center Plaza
Boston, MA 02108

When? Saturday, May 5, 1990
 Where? Waltham Central Middle School
 55 School St.
 Waltham, MA 0 2154

What time? 10 AM- 4PM (with setup/
 breakdown at 9 and 4)

DIRECTIONS FROM RT 128 (I- 95)

- 1) Take exit 26 to Waltham (Route 20)
 - 2) Stay on Rt 20 for 3 traffic lights.
 - 3) Pass the Waltham Commons on your right.
 - 4) Take Lexington St. on your left.
 - 5) Cross School St.
 - 6) Take Warren Ave on your left.
 - 7) You will see the Middle School to your right, in front of the Vocational School.
- 8a) Fairgoers. Park right here in the lot between both schools, the lot with the One Way sign. Enter the fair through the double doors into the cafeteria of the Middle School.
- 8b) Vendors and User Groups. Go right on Church St. Pass the Vocational School on your left. Go to the middle of the Middle School and take a left to the cafeteria loading dock (under the second story walkway in the center of the school).

LOOK FOR ARROWS TO THE SCHOOL
 (These torturous directions are the result of One Way streets.)

HOTELS

Woburn Ramada Inn
 (last year's fair site)
 6 17 935 876 0
 15 Middlesex Canal Park Rd.
 Woburn NAME THE TI99/4A GROUP for
 the \$ 49.90 rate.

Waltham Motor Inn
 385 Winter St.

Waltham, MA 0 2154
 6 17 890 280 0

Quality Inn
 455 Totten Pond Rd
 Waltham, MA 0 2154
 6 17 890 30 0 0

Guest Quarters Suite Hotel
 550 Winter St.
 Waltham, MA 0 2154
 6 17 890 6 76 7

Best Western
 477 Totten Pond Rd.
 Waltham, MA 0 2154
 6 17 890 780 0

Bettina's Bed and Breakfast, Inc.
 from inside Massachusetts 6 17 497
 916 6
 from outside Massachusetts 1 80 0 6 24
 6 6 54

WILL THERE BE A DINNER TOGETHER
 AFTER THE FAIR?

Yes. Menus to The Chateau, a local
 italian restaurant with low prices that
 can handle a large group, will be
 available at the Fair.

INTRODUCTION TO THE UCSD P SYSTEM

by
 RON WILLIAMS

CREATING PROGRAM MENUS

This month I will try to show you how to create a program menu to give your programs a starting point. I have put together a small program to demonstrate this. It is very simple to do I use the case statement to branch to different procedures that would normally do the work of the program. The way this is set up is to put the main part of the program in a loop that will not exit until some condition is met. I like to use a variable of type character to check if a condition is met. By using this type variable you may have a program respond to a key pressed and not waiting for the user to press the enter key. If you look at the procedures in the program and compare them with the main program section you will see that the difference is in the read statement. If you look at the main program section it uses a readin statement and you must press enter after typing the number of your choice. The program will not start the procedure until you

press the key then enter. In the procedures you can press any key to exit the procedure. One draw back to using character types is the problem of not being able to use the arrow keys to change your mind if you press the wrong key. When you press enter the procedure will execute. If you where to use string types you can use the arrow keys but you will not be able to use the case statement. Also using integers will not work with read statements you must use readln with them. So using variables of type character is your best choice. If you have the disks by Anders Persson he has a very good keyscan function that works like call key in Basic. The repeat statement controls the loop in the main program and the program will stop if you press the "4" key this is for "QUIT". The "4" key is ASCII character 52 that explains the statement "until choice = chr(52);". The code for the menu program is below:

program menu;

```

var
  choice : char;

procedure dummy1;
begin
  page(output);
  writeln('This procedure is called');
  writeln('From pressing "1" key');
  write('Press any key');
  read(choice);
end;

procedure dummy2;
begin
  page(output);
  writeln('This procedure is called');
  writeln('From pressing "2" key');
  write('Press any key');
  read(choice);
end;

procedure dummy3;
begin
  page(output);
  writeln('This procedure is called');
  writeln('From pressing "3" key');
  write('Press any key');
  read(choice);
end;

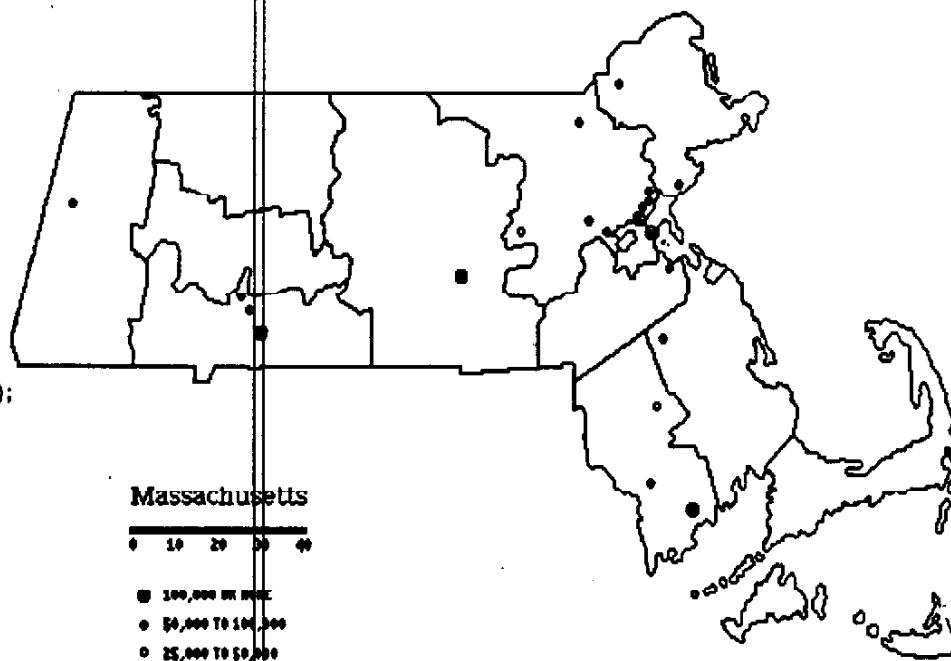
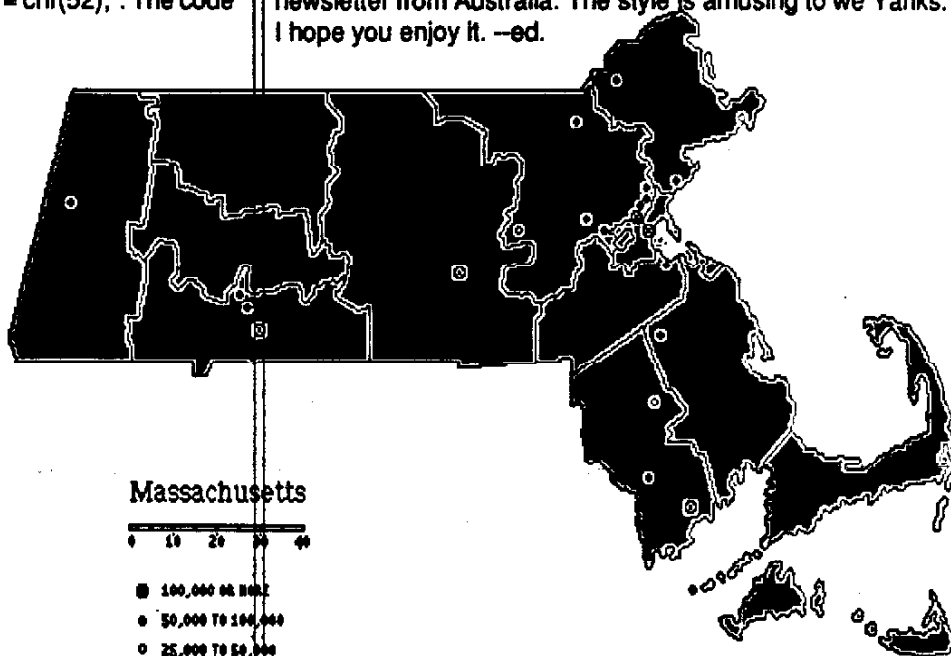
begin
  repeat
    page(output);
    gotoxy(3,3);
    writeln('Press the following numbers');
    gotoxy(3,4);
    writeln('For each procedure');
    gotoxy(3,6);
    writeln('1. Dummy 1');
    gotoxy(3,8);
    writeln('2. Dummy 2');
    gotoxy(3,10);
    writeln('3. Dummy 3');
  
```

```

gotoxy(3,12);
writeln('4. Quit program');
gotoxy(3,16);
write('choice=>');
readln(choice);
case choice of
  '1' : dummy1;
  '2' : dummy2;
  '3' : dummy3;
end;
until choice = chr(52);
end.

```

The following article is reprinted from the Hunter Valley group newsletter from Australia. The style is amusing to we Yanks. I hope you enjoy it. —ed.



FAR OUT

Dick SCHAYDEL

The bloody 'roos are eating everything in sight. They weren't satisfied eating just the leaves but they even dug up a row of beetroot! I tried everything short of shooting the lot with my slug-gun but nothing seemed to work -- a cheeky bunch that lot! I ended up making an emergency trip into Lightning Ridge and got a couple rolls of fencing to keep that lot in check. I think that the first battle in this war has been won but I lost 5 Kg sweating under the sun digging post holes!

This is awful!! Here I am with two litters of piglets to enter into my breeding records and the flamin' IBM packs it up!! What a time to have a stuff up!! I turned the thing on and ---- nothing. I think that the heat got to it. Oh well, I still have the TI to mess about with! Strange, it has never given me any problems. As a result of the stuff up, I'm writing this on my TI. It took me some time to find my TI Writer but I finally found it and I'm back for another try.

In poking about through piles of disks while looking for my TI-Writer, I ran across a program that I find of interest. Ron was telling me that everyone is using either TI-Artist or GRAPHX for drawing various pictures. I think he even mentioned that the artwork in the HV99 newsletter was done that way from time to time. Both of these programs have rather extensive libraries of pictures to go with them but the stuff isn't interchangeable --or is it. A few years ago, Travis Watford came out with the first of the graphics programs for the TI ---MAX RLE. There immediately appeared a series of pictures that a bloke could admire and print with it. Among the options was the ability to load a picture from either TI-Artist or GRAPHX configuration. There is also a SAVE option that allows you to save the picture in one of 4 different formats. The benefit is that you could load a TI-Artist picture and save it in GRAPHX format to be manipulated with the latter program. The opposite holds true as well. I collected an impressive disk of nudes that way! Now you know what Saturday night in the bush is like! In fact, you could also save the picture as a D/V 80 file or a D/F 128 file that some of the other programs use as their file structure. The picture could then be edited with your favourite graphics program. To be sure, there are some other programs about to convert pictures from one format to another but are not quite so easy to use or as fast as MAX RLE.

For an intellectual challenge, you can try one of the adventure games from Infocom. There are a bunch of them like Zork, Witness, and Infidel. They are all interactive games and the object is to make your way through this maze-like environment collecting various things along the way. It's like trying to find a beer two days before the Lightning Ridge trip! Simple two-word commands are entered as well as the direction you want to travel. It all sounds easy but they can take hours or days to get through. Ron said that there is even a bloke in the UG who writes a column about how to solve them from time to time. I'll have to get a copy of those columns --I've yet to solve Zork and I sometimes even have trouble finding the Dunny at night!

I'm just not patient enough for those adventure games. It takes a bit of time to solve them and I muck about until I run out of patience and then give up. Maybe some rainy night.

I have to go check on the pigs. They have been a bit restless lately, maybe and old razorback boar is looking for an extra wife or two, to keep the strain true it pays to be as vigilant as possible. They have been sniffing around the wheat silo as well. It all seems to go in cycles -- the flamin' wild pigs causing problems and the 'roos after anything they can eat especially green stuff!