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CEDAR RAPIDS/MARION

Supporting the TI-99/4A and 9640 in Eastern Iowa for over 10 years!

NEXT MEETING: 6:30 PM August 10, 1993

WEST MUSIC, COLLINS ROAD PLAZA

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Our July meeting started out by swapping horror stories about the great flood of '93. Most members in attendance stayed dry, but we were not in a stable situation. Several of the usuals weren't there, and everyone hoped it wasn't due to flooding. Many detours were necessary due to closed roads and interstates. After obtaining a console, disk copying and investigations ensued.

From Gary Bishop: This will be my last newsletter. I need someone else to take over the reins. The next issue already has part 3 of the 9938 tutorial printed out, so September's issue shouldn't be too hard. I will keep the next editor well stocked with articles and ideas. Give it a shot.

SUMMERFEST '93

Sunday August 15, 1993
5000 "J" Street S.W. Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

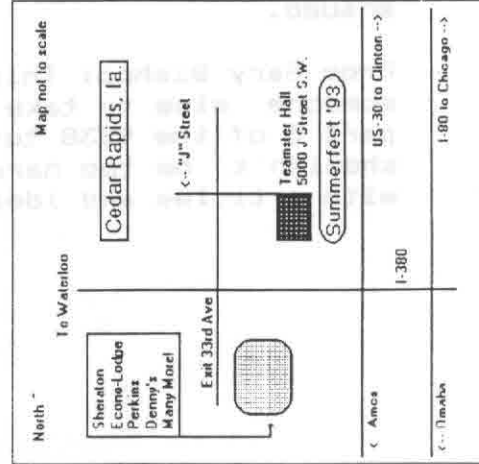
*Iowa's Premier Hamfest sponsored by the Cedar Valley Amateur Radio Club
and sanctioned by the Amateur Radio Relay League.
Over \$2500 in prizes and gifts!*

**Air Conditioned Exhibit Hall
Free Coffee!
Consignment Table
Huge outdoor flea market
Tickets - \$4.00 at the door
(no advanced ticket sales - sorry)**

For more general information on the hamfest contact KEØMS Wayne Harrah @ 319.848.7481 or KEØMS@WAØRJ.T.IA

VE Exams (walk-in OK)
(For pre-registration contact)
WVØC Bob Brus
811 Williams Drive
Marion, Iowa 52302
319.373.9628

Table rental - \$11.00 each
Table rental contact Wayne Hughs
Attn: Table Rental
3109 6th Street
Marion, Iowa 52302
319.373.2391

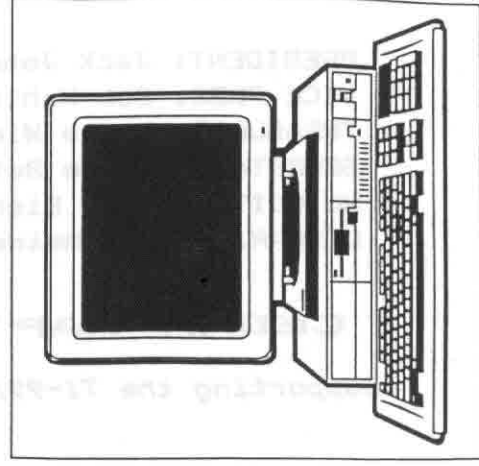


Easy access and lodging and fine dining!!!

Hamfest	Exams *
6:00 Grounds open for Flea Market setup	10:00 Registration 10:10 20 WPM Code 10:30 13 WPM Code
7:00 Hall open for Vendor setup	Novice Written 11:00 5 WPM Code
8:00 Hall OPEN!	Tech Written
10:00 EIDX Forum	11:30 General Written
11:00 Repeater Council	12:00 Advanced Written
12:00 ARRL Forum	12:30 Extra Written
1:00 AMSAT Forum	
2:00 Prize Drawing	
4:00 Hall Closes	

* Times are Estimated

Summerfest '93
Schedule of Events



Ham and Computer Vendors
Something for everyone!!!

THE FACTS ABOUT TI MEMORY SYSTEMS
AN EDITORIAL

Over the last six months there has been a lot of noise on the computer networks and in user group newsletters on issues related to extended memory cards for the 99/4A. Some people have blatantly asked people to come out and choose sides on a very complex issue without understanding what they are choosing. In fact, what should be a pretty objective decision has been turned into an emotional gut-churner - a question decided by loyalties, petty rivalries, lies and innuendo.

Frankly, this is why we are in the situation we are in today - and why companies like Myarc and Corcomp left the community. Everything technical debate gets turned into a personal vendetta, thinly disguised ambition is allowed to prevail over substance, and the community eats its young yet again.

When I set out almost 3 years ago with a really talented bunch of guys to put together a new kind of memory card for the 99/4A, I had believed that the community had finally outgrown that kind of thing. I was wrong. Seeing all of this stuff all over again has made me seriously consider throwing in the towel once and for all.

Why? Because everything we've done with these cards has either been ignored, mis-represented, or labeled as too "controversial" or "not ready for prime time".

For 8 months we've been mailing out press releases, articles and newsletters about our memory cards that apparently no one is reading, and user groups aren't re-printing or even reporting on. The only reference to what we've done that I ever see in print is usually in an article about our competitors, or in an editorial that simply says that there has been a "debate" and that it has "gotten out of hand".

This is simply ridiculous.

This is the most important thing I've been involved with in the 10 years I've been in this community, and unless the community gives this a fair hearing, well, I guess it's finally time to cut my losses.

Here is my last attempt to get the unvarnished facts out in front of you, the reader.

1. The Asgard Memory System (AMS) is available NOW - it is NOT still in "development". We announced the product the day it was commercially available for sale, and in stock. In the last 8 months, we've been refining the product, writing software, and working on the next generation card. Our only competitor announced their product over a year ago, and have yet to release more than press notices (which all seem to be faithfully reprinted everywhere). It is pretty hard to compete against something that so far exists only on paper - especially when the unreleased product gets more press than the one that you can buy today!
2. We started AMS almost 3 years ago - long before there ever was a "National Committee for TI Standards". This so-called committee has never met more than once, doesn't include most of the TI hardware or software developers in the U.S., much less the rest of the world, and has produced a specification for memory systems without any real debate, which endorses our competitor's plans. Before we had a chance to object, it was the declared "standard". Can you say "railroaded"?
3. Our memory system was designed to the only standard TI ever made for extended memory on the 99/4A - the one used in the TI-99/8. In fact, the guy who DESIGNED the TI-99/8 said our design was identical to the one TI specified.
4. Because our design was built to TI's specifications, it doesn't conflict with any other card in the P-BOX - except a 32K card. You can plug it in and your Horizon RAM-disk, Myarc HFDC, or anything else you have will still work fine.
5. Our design uses standard, off-the-shelf components. EVERY other extended memory design uses lots of custom ICs, and even more custom programming (as in a big DSR). Custom parts not only drive up the development time, they also drive up the cost, and guarantee that the design remains proprietary. By using off-the-shelf parts, we keep the price down, and guarantee competition. Remember how much TI used to charge for the 32K card when they were the only one making them?

We designed our system to the "KISS" method - "Keep It Simple, Sam".

THE FACTS ABOUT TI MEMORY SYSTEMS
AN EDITORIAL (Continued)

6. Our system is tried and tested. We use the exact same "memory mapper" (the chip that controls the computers use of memory) that TI used in their 99/8, their 9900 minicomputers, and that IBM used in the very first IBM PCs. This component has been available for 10 years - all "bugs" in it have long been removed.
7. Everything about our system is "open". Anyone can write a program for it or enhance it - the hardware and software specifications are available free of charge. Heck, the 5-disk development system we've spent the last 18 months writing is even fairware - and posted on the bulletin boards.
8. The AMS is very fast. It can switch pages over 10 times faster than any competitor, and with little program code (even in Assembly). Why is speed important? If you are sorting 512K of data, or loading 512K of pictures, you'll notice the speed - in fact, you'll notice the other system is less than half the speed.
9. Our system doesn't have its software in a DSR - and we are proud of it! Why?
 - A. We found that putting the operating software in a DSR makes it run much slower than if it was in RAM - and really doesn't give any benefit to the programmer or the user.
 - B. Any DSR increases the chance for compatibility problems - who wants to waste time finding problems with Myarc cards?
 - C. A DSR is "fixed". If you find a bug in it, the only way to correct it is to replace it. Consider all the pain Myarc users have gone through with EPROM upgrades of the HFDC and the Geneve.
 - D. If programs are written to work around a DSR bug, they may not work when the DSR is fixed.
 - E. If the software to use the card is built into each program, then the only thing we have to do to correct a bug is issue an upgrade. Old programs written for earlier versions of our operating system software would continue to work fine, and new programs could take advantage of new features without worrying about hardware compatibility problems - since the operating system isn't in hardware.
 - F. Why do you think Microsoft and Apple load their operating systems from disk, and not from ROM chips?
10. We have a complete set of development tools available NOW. Even if our competitors released their card today, it would be a year before they had a system that was as easy as ours is for programmers. Because our software was designed before our hardware, we were able to design a "programmer friendly" system that is far easier to program than any other extended memory system. This is important - as so many people have said, who wants a memory card there are no programs for?

In the last 8 months since we released our first AMS card we've released 2 software packages that take advantage of the card (including the word processor FIRST DRAFT), and software from other people has started to appear. Around 20 AMS cards are in the hands of developers around the world.

Is any of this news? Apparently not - I've seen few of the facts above in print anywhere, even though we've put them in a half-dozen articles.

The facts, on their own merit, should be compelling enough for people to put aside their differences and really weigh the benefits of what we've done - instead of consigning it as some "curiosity", or ignoring it.

We wanted to put together something that was cheap enough to build that every TI user could have one, and yet was simple enough to write programs for that every TI programmer could do so. I think we've done that. If the TI world isn't interested at this point, doesn't care, or wants to keep waiting for fantasies, well, I can take a hint.

Thank you.

Chris Bobbitt
July 2, 1993

Article 1004 of comp.sys.ti:
Newsgroups: comp.sys.ti
Path: zodiac.cca.cr.rockwell.com!moe.ksu.ksu.edu!zaphod.mps.ohio-state.edu!howla
nd.reston.ans.net!bogus.sura.net!news-feed-1.peachnet.edu!umn.edu!vx.cis.umn.edu
!daven
From: daven@vx.cis.umn.edu (David Nieters)
Subject: V9938 Graphics Mode 4 Tutorial Part 2 (repost)
Message-ID: <19APR199310514986@vx.cis.umn.edu>
News-Software: VAX/VMS VNEWS 1.41
Sender: daven
Nntp-Posting-Host: vx.cis.umn.edu
Organization: University of Minnesota CIS
Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1993 15:51:00 GMT
Lines: 346

In part 1, we saw a program that would draw lines on the screen in multiple colors. To do this, we had to plot each point by calculating a memory address, reading the contents of that location, and storing the color of the dot we wanted to display.

In this part, we are going to tell the 9938 where to put the dot and what color to make it. The 9938 will then do the work of determining the correct memory address to store the color value and making sure it is properly put in either the high or low nybble. Before we see the new source code, we will review some of the command registers of the 9938 that make this possible.

Registers #32 through #46 are used by the 9938 for executing commands. The ones we will use are #36-#39, #44 and #46. Their usage is as follows -

R#36 - Lower 8 bits of the X coordinate
R#37 - Higher 1 bit of the X coordinate
R#38 - Lower 8 bits of the Y coordinate
R#39 - Higher 2 bits of the Y coordinate
R#44 - Color of the point
R#46 - Command register

Since our screen is 212X256, the high bits of the X and Y coordinates will always be zero. Therefore, R#37 and R#39 are always zero. Also, since we have only 4 bits per color in Graphics 4 mode, the lower 4 bits of R#44 contain the color and the higher 4 bits contain zeros.

The upper 4 bits of the command register (R#46) tell the 9938 what operation we want to perform. To plot a single point, this value is 0101 binary. The lower four bits tells the 9938 what we want to do with the point that is already on the screen. In our case we want to replace the existing point with the new point, so we put in a value of 0000 binary.

Once you write to R#46, the command gets executed by the 9938. Therefore, it is necessary to write data to all the other registers before writing R#46. The 9938 will take a finite amount of time to perform a command before it can be ready to execute another. The 9938 provides a status bit in one of the status registers to let you know if it is ready to accept a new command yet. I've found in this program that the 9938 can plot a point faster than the 9900 can compute where the next point will be, so I do not check the status bit. We will see in Part 3 where a command will take a sufficient amount of time that we may have to wait for it to complete before trying to execute another.

We have now turned our 99/4A into a parallel processor by getting the 9938 to perform one task while the 9900 performs another. The speedup isn't that noticable (in my opinion) over the program in part 1. In part 3, however, we will get the 9938 working more and realize some serious performance gains over what we have done so far.

The source for part 2 follows. It is identical to that from part one, except for the routine POINT now sets the command registers to plot the point rather than directly writing to VDP memory. I have also changed the register usage slightly since R0 must be used in the VWTR routine.

```
REF  VWTR,VSBW,VMBW,KSCAN,VSBR
REF  VDPWD,VDPWA,VDPSTA
```

```
HEIGHT EQU 212          NUMBER OF LINES
NUMLIN EQU 100         NUMBER OF LINES WE DRAW BEFORE ERASING SCREEN
```

```
* CLEAR THE SCREEN
```

```
*
```

```
* THIS ROUTINE CLEARS THE SCREEN BY WRITING ZEROS IN THE
* PATTERN NAME TABLE. WHEN DEALING WITH THE LARGER MEMORY
* SPACE OF THE V9938, WE HAVE TO BE SURE THAT REGISTER #14
* IS CLEARED BEFORE WE START. OTHERWISE WE MIGHT BY ZEROING
* OUT HIGHER AREAS OF MEMORY THAN WE WANT TO.
```

```
*
```

```
CLEAR  LI  R0,>0E00      RESET OUR VDP ADDRESS
        BLWP @VWTR
        LI  R0,>0040
        MOVB R0,@VDPWA
        SWPB R0
        MOVB R0,@VDPWA
        LI  R2,HEIGHT8   WE WILL WRITE 24,576 ZEROS
        CLR R0
```

```
CLEAR1 MOVB R0,@VDPWD
        DEC R2
        JNE CLEAR1
        RT
```

```
* RANDOM NUMBER GENERATOR
```

```
*
```

```
* THIS PROCEDURE RETURNS A (NOT SO) RANDOM NUMBER IN R1.
* IT ENSURES THE RANDOM NUMBER WILL NOT BE 0.
```

```
*
```

```
RAND   MOV  @SEED,R1
RAND1  AI   R1,>1D6B
        JEQ RAND1
        MOV R1,@SEED
        RT
```

```
SEED   DATA >690A
```

```
DX1    DATA 0          THESE LOCATIONS ARE USED TO STORE
DX2    DATA 0          HOW FAR THE ENDPOINTS MOVE EACH
DY1    DATA 0          TIME A LINE IS DRAWN
DY2    DATA 0
```

```
* COLOR FLAG
```

```
*
```

* WHEN COLOR FLAG IS ZERO, THE LINES WILL APPEAR IN
 * DIFFERENT COLORS. WHEN IT IS NOT SET TO ZERO, ALL
 * LINES WILL BR DRAWN IN THE SAME COLOR. IT'S TOGGLED
 * BY PRESSING THE 'C' WHILE LINES ARE BEING DRAWN.

* CFLAG DATA 0

* POINT

* POINT WILL TAKE AN X COORDINATE IN R9 AND A Y
 * COORDINATE IN R10 AND A COLOR IN R2 AND PLOT THAT
 * POINT ON THE SCREEN

```

POINT LI R0,376 CLEAR VDP REGISTER #37
      BLWP @VWTR
      LI R0,396 CLEAR VDP REGISTER #39
      BLWP @VWTR
      MOV R9,R0
      AI R0,366 SET THE X COORDINATE IN R#36
      BLWP @VWTR
      MOV R10,R0
      AI R0,386 SET THE Y COORDINATE IN R#38
      BLWP @VWTR
      MOV R2,R0 SET COLOR REGISTER
      AI R0,446
      BLWP @VWTR
      LI R0,466+>50 SET THE COMMAND REGISTER
      BLWP @VWTR
      RT
  
```

* PLOT

* THIS ROUTINE PLOTS A LINE FROM (X1,Y1) TO (X2,Y2)
 * THESE COORDINATES ARE LOCATED IN THE CALLERS
 * REGISTERS R6,R7,R8 AND R9. THE COLOR IS
 * SPECIFIED IN THE CALLER'S R10.

```

PLOT DATA >8300
      DATA PLOT1

PLOT1 CLR R12
      LI R5,1
      LI R6,1
      MOV @16(R13),R7
      MOV @12(R13),R9
      S R9,R7
      JLT PLOT11
      JMP PLOT2

PLOT11 NEG R7
      NEG R5

PLOT2 MOV R7,R7
      JNE PLOT3
      SETO R12

PLOT3 MOV @18(R13),R8
      MOV @14(R13),R10
      S R10,R8
      JLT PLOT4
      JMP PLOT5
  
```

```

PLOT4  NEG  R6
        NEG  R8
PLOT5  MOV  @10(R13),R2  GET COLOR
        BL   @POINT
        C    R9,@16(R13)
        JNE  PLOT6
        C    R10,@18(R13)
        JNE  PLOT6
        RTWP

PLOT6  MOV  R12,R12
        JLT  PLOT7
        A    R5,R9
        S    R8,R12
        JMP  PLOT5

PLOT7  A    R6,R10
        A    R7,R12
        JMP  PLOT5

* MAIN PROGRAM
*
START  LWPI >8320
        LI  R2,VDPREG      SET VDP REGISTERS
L1     MOV  #R2+,R0
        JLT L2
        BLWP @VWTR
        JMP L1

L2     BL   @CLEAR        CLEAR THE SCREEN

        CLR @CFLAG
        CLR R3             R3 COUNTS THE NUMBER OF LINES WE HAVE DRAWN

        LI  R6,>80        SET THE ENDPOINTS FOR OUR FIRST LINE
        LI  R7,>60
        LI  R8,>D3
        LI  R9,>13

        CLR R0            SET THE INITIAL AMOUNTS THE ENDPOINTS
        INCT R0           MOVE BY
        MOV R0,@DX1
        INCT R0
        MOV R0,@DY1
        INCT R0
        MOV R0,@DX2
        INCT R0
        MOV R0,@DY2

LOOP   MOV  @CFLAG,R0
        JNE  L5
        BL   @RAND        PICK A RANDOM COLOR
        ANDI R1,>F
        MOV  R1,R5
        CI   R5,2          MAKE SURE WE DON'T HAVE BLACK
        JHE  L5
        ORI  R5,2

L5     A    @DX1,R6        MOVE THE ENDPOINTS
        A    @DY1,R7
    
```


A @DX2,R8
 A @DY2,R9

* CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT NO ENDPOINTS HAVE MOVED OFF
 * THE SCREEN. IF SO, REVERSE ITS DIRECTION.
 *

```

MOV R6,R6
JLT L6
CI R6,>100
JLT L7
L6 NEG @DX1
   A @DX1,R6

L7 MOV R8,R8
   JLT L8
   CI R8,>100
   JLT L9
L8 NEG @DX2
   A @DX2,R8

L9 MOV R7,R7
   JLT L10
   CI R7,HEIGHT
   JLT L11
L10 NEG @DY1
   A @DY1,R7

L11 MOV R9,R9
   JLT L12
   CI R9,HEIGHT
   JLT L13
L12 NEG @DY2
   A @DY2,R9

L13 BLWP @PLOT

L14 CLR R0 CHECK TO SEE IF A KEY IS PRESSED
   MOVB R0,@>8374
   BLWP @KSCAN
   MOVB @>8375,R0
   MOVB @>837C,R1
   JEQ L16
   CI R0,>0500 CHECK FOR QUIT KEY
   JNE L15
   B @QUIT
L15 CI R0,>4300 CHECK FOR "C" KEY PRESSED
   JNE L14
   INV @CFLAG TOGGLE THE COLOR FLAG
L16 CI R0,>FF00
   JNE L14
   INC R3
   CI R3,NUMLIN SEE IF WE HAVE MORE LINES TO DRAW
   JNE LOOP IF SO, GO BACK AND DRAW THEM

   CLR R3
   LI R2,10
   LI R4,>FFFF
DLY DEC R4 WAIT A LITTLE BEFORE CLEARING THE SCREEN
    
```

```

JNE DLY
DEC R2
JNE DLY

BL @RAND
MOV R1,R1
JLT L17
ANDI R1,7
JMP L18
L17 ORI R1,>FFF8
L18 MOV R1,@DX2
BL @RAND
MOV R1,R1
JLT L19
ANDI R1,7
JMP L20
L19 ORI R1,>FFF8
L20 MOV R1,@DY1
BL @RAND
MOV R1,R1
JLT L21
ANDI R1,7
JMP L22
L21 ORI R1,>FFF8
L22 MOV R1,@DX1
BL @RAND
MOV R1,R1
JLT L23
ANDI R1,7
JMP L24
L23 ORI R1,>FFF8
L24 MOV R1,@DY2

BL @CLEAR
B @LOOP

QUIT LI R2,REG2
QUIT1 MOV *R2+,R0
JLT QUIT2
BLWP @VWTR
JMP QUIT1
QUIT2
LIMI 2
BLWP @0

* VDP REGISTERS TO SET VDP TO GRAPHICS 4 MODE
*
VDPREG DATA >0006
DATA >0160
DATA >021F
DATA >0711
DATA >080A
DATA >0980
DATA >FFFF

* VDP REGISTERS WHEN WE EXIT
*
REG2 DATA >0000
    
```

COMPUTE NEW RANDOM MOVEMENTS

CLEAR SCREEN
START OVER

RESTORE VDP REGISTERS BACK TO NORMAL

LOCATE NAME TABLE AT ADDRESS 0
SET BACKGROUND TO BLACK
INHIBIT SPRITES
212 LINES

DATA >0F00
 DATA >01F0
 DATA >0200
 DATA >03FF
 DATA >0401
 DATA >0560
 DATA >0E00
 DATA >FFFF

RECENTLY RECEIVED NEWSLETTERS

Cleveland Area 99er User Groups July 93, rcvd 7/23; HOCUS May 1993 and June 1993, rcvd 7/21; TIC TOC July 1993, rcvd 7/23; K-Town 99ers July 1993, rcvd 7/12; Ozark 99er June 1993 and July 1993, rcvd 7/23 (New exchange group!)

WHAT NOT TO DO TO A DISK

by Gary Bishop

END START

I was recently asked about two floppy disks that contained TI Writer files. It seems one of the directory sectors was blown on each disk. The cause was probably that the disk was left in the drive, and the drive door closed, while powering down the system. Try this the next time you shut your system down: remove the disks from the drives, and watch the drive select lights as you remove the power. The lights usually flash momentarily. That flash can be activating the write electronics in the drive, blipping and trashing anything that happens to be under the head at that time. Woe be to the person that does not remove the disks from the drives, or at least open the drive door, before powering down. It took some detective work, but I was able to recover most of the files from the blown disks.

FEELING FRAGMENTED?

BY SISTER PAT TAYLOR, BVM

Those of us who constantly modify files, especially graphic files, start to "FEEL FRAGMENTED!" After altering graphics, I have spent hundreds of hours in file by file copying so my disk is clean of fragmentation and will load files quickly. One of my frustrations is that so many of my commercial originals are also fragmented. Even a file by file copy won't remedy fragmentation if the disk is full and the last file is fragmented. I have tried everything, even copying the fragmented file before others trying to remedy the problem.

Now, there is a fantastic program, "THE DEFRAGMENTER" by Mark Schafer, and IT WORKS!

I dread Assembly programs, as everytime I put in the Assembly module, it takes forever to get my Super Extended Basic module to connect properly again. However, DEFRAGMENTER works from Funnelweb as well. I was so nervous trying it (Assembly does that to me), I made a back-up copy of my fragmented disk so I did not lose anything until I got the "hang" of the program.

Surprise! It did everything it promised. What is really neat too is that it can reserve space for files likely to expand or provide for those likely to decrease. An example of the problem is when I cut down a picture in TI-Artist, and had more work to do on it. I have to save it as an instance within the 22 column size for cards. That is how I fracture so many of my files trying to re-size them to fit all the programs in which I use them.

Mark Schafer only asks \$6 or \$7 (if he provides the disk) for this marvelous program. Its status is fairware. His address is:

539 Whitaker St.
 Morehead, KY 40351

Testimonial to the above from the newsletter editor: I have a disk with many auxiliary files necessary to produce this newsletter. Every time I need to use a file from that disk, much crunching and grinding and searching goes on. I timed DSKU V4.2 at 23 seconds to catalog the disk, with 72 files, 374 sectors in use, and 30 fractured files. Mark's program took 6 minutes 36 seconds to defragment the disk, after which DSKU only required 8 seconds to catalog the disk. Now, when I ask to load a certain program, it starts loading nearly immediately, with only steady and sequential steps of the disk drive. Previously, about as much crunching was required to load a file as occurred when the disk was cataloged. A great job! I found some very slight creature features that could be added, but Mark distributed the source code with the program for your customization. This program is worth every penny being asked. I will bring it to the next meeting. Bring a disk if you want a copy. Remember to send Mark his money; you'll sleep easier at nights, and benefit from an extremely useful program. --Gary Bishop.

6839

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday

August 10, 1993 6:30 PM

**WEST MUSIC, COLLINS ROAD
PLAZA, MARION
ACROSS FROM LINDALE MALL**

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3270 28TH AVE
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FIRST CLASS