

CENTRAL TEXAS 99 - 4A
USERS GROUP
THE PAPER PERIPHERAL

Central Texas 99/4a Users Group

WHO WE ARE:

We are a non profit organization whose membership is open to anyone interested in the activities of the group. All members pay annual dues of \$12 for individual and for family's are \$15. The membership year is Jan. - Dec. You are invited to attend a couple of meetings before deciding if you wish to join. OUR MEETINGS: Our meetings are on the second Thursday of each month, at 7:00 PM, in the county courthouse at the corner of 10th and San Antonio, on the second floor. Each meeting starts with club business and is followed by a demonstration or talk. The second meeting of the month is our special interest group, the assembly language SIG. Everyone is urged to share information on topics related to the TI 99/4A -- software review, hardware availability, programming tips, etc. MEMBERSHIP: You may join as an individual or as a family unit. Each membership "unit" has one vote in club matters and only one person from a "unit" may hold club office (on the other hand your entire family is invited to serve on club committees and participate at meetings and in meeting planning!). Our monthly newsletter is available to members at the first monthly meeting and is sent to those who don't attend. At meetings, you may buy C-10 cassettes for \$.75 each, 5 1/4 " disks for \$7 each box. We buy these items in bulk quantity and charge cost plus enough to keep several of each item in our library. OUR LIBRARY: Currently, our library is located at the librarian's house and will be available at each of our meetings. Our library has some TI command modules and 350 programs on disk and tape. Roughly half of the library's programs will run on just the console (some may require joysticks) and most of the others only require the Extended Basic module. We have programs of all types (games, education, scientific, and business and household management) and we poll the membership's interests before purchasing more. Above all, we are a membership organization. We depend on everyone for directions the group should go and activities we should undertake. Join our group and share your ideas!

From The Presidents Keyboard

Is it that time again? February sure does go by rather quickly. I guess that has something to do with it being so short. Well we had fun at the last meeting. We tried some programs, we tested others, and we reassured some people that what they had really worked. I was especially impressed with one program. It was a speech demo where Bert and Ernie (from Sesame Street) talked to each other. It sounded exactly like them!

Announcing (reminder) our "swap meet" which will be taking place on Saturday, March 15. This is a chance for everybody who wants some hardware to get together with everybody who wants to unload some. This is also an orientation meeting for anyone who needs/wants assistance hooking up thier system or just wants to see some of the different types of hardware that is available for our "little" machine. We are also working on getting the BASIC SIG going. Does anybody know of any classrooms available inexpensively (read: free)? If so contact either myself or Mike Schultz.

See 'ya at the meeting(s)
Joe Pizzi

From the Business End of the Mailbox

Well the mailbox has been rather bare this month too, but here is what we got:

Brisser SCI-FI Software; 147 Parrish Drive; Chubbuck, Idaho 83202 has sent us a letter stating that they have 15 games and programs for the /4A on cassette. They are willing to sell these programs in a bunch for \$15.00 to individuals, or \$25.00 to the Users Group. Gee, if only they'd sent along a description of what they're selling.

Asgard Software; POB 10306; Rockville MD 20850 has sent a few flyers about some software that they offer. They have Artist Companion. For \$7.00 you get two diskettes a collection of art work done on the TI-Artist. They also have a program called Recipe Writer for \$12.00 and Quick Dialer for \$10.00. Quick Dialer is to be used with terminal emulators. Finally they have the Tunnels of Doom game editor for \$20.00. (I thought that that was in the public domain.)

The next letter is from MBF; #2 Cypress Drive; Wichita, KS 67206. They are offering a Clock Calendar card with 8 channels of Analog to Digital converters. This is useful for BBSs and business application programs that need to know the date frequently. They are offering the board as a kit for \$41.50. You'll need to supply some extra parts costing \$40-\$60 dollars. Or they sell kit with the parts and board for \$83.00, or you can buy the board fully assembled for \$140.00. They claim that the board is completely printed circuit, so the kit could be assembled in an evening.

Next, Blackship Computer Supply; P.O. 883362; San Francisco, CA 94188 is offering wholesale prices on diskettes. The prices for 1 to 50 diskettes are .69 each for SSDD and .79 each for DSDD.

Finally, Western Computer Products Distributors; 457 McGlincey Lane - Unit #4; Campbell, CA 95008 has wholesale prices for diskettes also. The price for Xidex DSDD 100% certified .55 each, in lots of 100.

Mike Schultz

Harnessing the Power of Speech

The TI Speech Synthesizer is an amazing little device. It was a breakthrough for the lower end(priced) computers. Unfortunately, many /4A owners still don't know how to access speech along with all its little features. Sure, a lot of games use speech to add interest and excitement, but the applications of speech go far beyond games.

One of the major features of the speech synthesizer is its ability to let you add speech to your own programs. There are several ways to do this, including TI's Terminal Emulator 2, TI Extended BASIC, and through assembly language routines. Extended BASIC provides a rather limited vocabulary (unless you are using one of several recent utilities that give you unlimited speech in Extended BASIC, but that's another story), but Terminal Emulator 2 (TE2) allows for unlimited speech directly from BASIC. This built-in text-to-speech capability of TE2 will be the focus of this article.

First, plug in the TE2 Command Module, turn on the computer, and select TI BASIC. Now type in and run the following program:

```
100 OPEN #1:"SPEECH",OUTPUT
110 INPUT A$
120 PRINT #1:A$
130 GOTO 110
```

If you get an error, make sure you have the speech synthesizer connected properly to the side port. Now we have a very simple text-to-speech editor. Line 100 contains the OPEN command needed to access TE2 speech capabilities. Line 120 sends the text strings that you type in to the text-to-speech interpreter, which then sends the info to the synthesizer. Experiment with this for awhile by typing in phrases, followed by an enter.

In the above example, you were in the default speech mode. This means that no commands have been sent to alter the voice. We can change the voice easily using the "//" command. The proper format is "//PITCH SLOPE" The PITCH is a number between 0 and 63. A 0 (zero) causes the speech synthesizer to whisper phrases. Pitches from 1 to 63 range from the highest pitched (1) to the lowest pitched (63). For best sound, figure the SLOPE using the following formula:

$$\text{SLOPE} = 32 \text{ times } (\text{PITCH} / 10)$$

Round this result to the nearest whole number. Now, when you enter the command along with these two numbers, it will appear that nothing has happened. But, type in a simple phrase and press enter. You'll notice the change in voice. For example, at the prompt in our simple little speech editor, type "//55 176" and press enter. (Be sure to include a space between numbers) Nothing happened, right? Well, now type something in and press enter. See how the voice changed? It became much deeper. Now try "//0 0" and press enter. Again, type in a short phrase and notice the change - your TI is now whispering to you! Now try "//1 3" and enter a phrase. Another voice tone! Experiment with these and other PITCH/SLOPE combinations to get the feel of working with them.

Before we wrap up this tutorial, we'll take a look at the inflection symbols. These symbols are "^" (carat), "_" (underline), and ">" (greater than symbol). Then "^", when placed in front of a word, indicates a primary stress point to the text-to-speech interpreter. Only one "^" may be used per string. The "_" is used to indicate a secondary stress point and may be used without limit throughout a

string. The ">" will shift the stress points within a word. Experiment with all these to make words sound better and more humanlike. Remember - All inflections symbols must PRECEDE the word they are to affect.

Well, I hope someone benefitted from this article. On a final note, remember that the text-to-speech interpreter isn't perfect! Sometimes you might have to alter a word's spelling drastically to make it sound right. Have fun!

Craig Dunn

Notice to members

There will be discussions at the March meeting about admending the constitution of the Central Texas 99/4A Users Group. In accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the constitution, members must have two weeks notice of any admendments, so the actual vote on the changes won't be until the April meeting.

Here are the purposed changes:

Article 4a will be reworded to say, "Annual dues shall be fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per member or family."

Article 4b concerning a \$1.00 charge for attending Special Interest Group meetings be deleted.

Ask the "Expert"?

It was suggested at the last meeting that the group have a column in the newsletter where novices with the /4A could pose questions and get an answers. Now it is true that when people have a problem, they usually don't want to wait a month to get help, so I suggested that people report problems and we'll try to get an answer right away and report the whole thing later.

After the meeting, I realized that I had the perfect thing to kick off this column with back home on a diskette. Several people have written and asked about low cost word processing for the /4A. And I did some research and responded with a sort of form letter. I seems to me that there may be some others out there with the same questions, so I'll pass the letter on. You'll find it below.

Now let me point out that I don't have time to do this every month, so I'd appreciate it if other "experts" out there will contribute answers that they've given.

And you novices out there send in some questions. Its kinda of hard to read y'all mind, ya hear!

Here's the letter:

I used to get depressed when people with the basic 99/4A system wrote and asked about inexpensive word processing on the /4A. Really there wasn't an alternative except to buy about \$300.00 of additional peripherals. But there now is an alternative called Mini Writer III. It is a cartridge that has many of the features of the TI-Writer wordprocessor that TI sold. The difference is that it will save to cassette tape and has a built-in "parallel printer" interface. These days, most printers are parallel printers and in order to get RS232, the printer has to have a special adapter board placed in it (increasing the cost, of course).

The price for Mini Writer III is \$79.95 plus \$19.95 for the cable when purchased thru Tenex Computer Express. They have a toll free order number 1-800-348-2778.

Now what I don't know for sure is if the Mini Writer III parallel interface can be used from other programs such as a BASIC program. It probably does, but you can call Tenex at 1-219-259-7051 to find out for sure. If you can't use its parallel interface for other purposes, then you can get Mini Writer II for \$39.95 or Console Writer for \$26.95 and then buy a ParallAx parallel printer interface for \$69.95.

Now, about printers, you can get printers from several sources. A local company, CompuAdd, is very good and they have printers that you can actually look at before you buy. If you want to order from Tenex, they have the SG-10 printer for \$229 dollars. It is a upgrade of the Star Micronics Gemini 10X printer which I have and highly recommend as a good inexpensive printer. Make sure that you get a parallel interface cable for \$24.95.

If that is too expensive for you, then Unisource Electronics (1-806-745-8834) had a Axiom GP 100TI printer and parallel interface for \$119.95. The catalog that I have is old and they may not have it anymore.

Now, as I'm sure you realize, Tenex is not the only source for /4A supplies. I recommend that you also write to Triton; P.O. Box 8123 San Francisco, Ca 94128 and Unisource Electronics, Inc; 7006 University; P.O. 64240; Lubbock, Texas 79464 and get on their mailing lists too.

Buying computer equipment should always considered carefully, and I hope that I haven't confused matters by giving you too many details. If you have anymore questions, please feel free to call me at 835-2377.

Mike Schultz

Hardware Swap and Setup Seminar

The group will have our first hardware swap and setup seminar, on Sunday, March 16th. It will be held at Mark Milam's house. The hardware swap will start at 2:00 PM, with the setup seminar starting promptly at 3:00 PM.

The purpose of the swap is to allow members to buy, sell or trade hardware for the 99/4A.

The seminar is for novice members who feel that they need some help setting the system up for the first time.

This is an excellent opportunity for the members to either acquire that piece of hardware that they've been missing, or to find out just what an Expansion Box is.

Direction to Mark's House:

The address is 4203 Yucatan Drive. The easiest route there is to take Burnet Road (1325) (north of 183) to Duval. If you're heading north and come to the 7 Eleven, you've gone too far. If you're coming south and reach IBM, you've gone too far (literally). Duval is that road in-between those two points. Turn west, go to the second street that you can turn right on, (that's right the one with the missing streetsign) and turn north (right if you came from burnet road) and then there will be a stopsign, turn left (west) and go till the last road before the low water crossing, this will be Wycliffe, turn right on Wycliffe, go to the second street to the right, that will be Yucatan, and I am the second to the last house on the right.

If you have any problems, call me or Mike. Good luck, and we will see you here...

Central Texas 99/4A Users Group
General Membership Meeting
February 13, 1986

The February meeting of the Central Texas 99/4A Users Group was held on Thursday, February 13, 1986 at the Commissioner's Court Room of the Travis County Courthouse Annex building. The meeting was called to order at 7:25 PM by the President, Joe Pizzi. The minutes of the January meeting was read by the Secretary, Mike Schultz.

Susan Donaldson, the group's contact person for non-members seeking information, announced to the group that she could no longer perform that function. Mike Schultz volunteered to perform that function for a short time.

Foley Broaddus introduced a new member to the group, Hector Ortega.

There was discussion about having a hardware setup class for novices in March, possibly the weekend after the March meeting.

There was also discussion about a BASIC SIG. No details were decided.

There was discussion about a hardware swap session. It was decided that the hardware setup class and hardware swap session could be held together.

Paul Dunn, the Treasurer, made a treasurer's report.

Everyone introduced themselves to the group.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Mike Schultz
Secretary

Assembly Language
Special Interest Group
Meeting Date : February 19, 1985

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 pm. Members present were: Craig Dunn, Foley Broaddus, Joe Pizzi, Mike Schultz, and Don Lynch (occasionally as he had to work that night)

The main discussion of the night was about the C-compiler, which Mike had got in the mail from Canada.

As a group effort, we compiled a short program, (which took the better part of the time that we were there!) but a good time was had by all.

The meeting was adjourned about 9:00 pm. I wish to thank all that attended for a very fun meeting.

Mark Milam

MEMBERSHIP STUFF

WELCOME

I wish to welcome to our group the following new member:
Albert Dennington

I wish to thank the following persons for renewing their membership:

Penny Nicoles	Mike Schultz
Paul Dunn	Michael L. Jones
Mark Milam	Pete Daniel
Allan Caldwell	

I hope that all of this information is correct, but if it is not I am sure somebody will let me know.

TIME AGAIN
FOR THE RENEWALS

The following persons will be expiring this month, and will not be getting a newsletter next month.

Earnie Salmon Charles White

Editor

Classified Ads

I CAN'T HEAR MY P-BOX! I put a new fan in my p-box, and it's so quiet I forget that it's on.

I can replace your fan with a new QUIET fan for only \$30.00 . Now you may note that the price has increased. That is because installing these beauties for so many people the last few months has used up my

original supply. After searching high and low for a new source I am forced to buy new fans (not used ones) at 4 times the cost. My installation charge remains the same. I have available a list of satisfied 4A'ers, so if you are interested call:

Mark Milam , 836-3301 after 6:00 pm

Or leave a message on The Hideout(BBS) 339-1822

WANT TO ADD 32K BUT DON'T HAVE A P-BOX? For a mere \$35.00 I'll put 32k directly into your console. You supply console and cash and I'll do the rest. Call Mark at 836-3301 after 6:00 PM or drop me a note,

Mark Milam ,4203 Yucatan,
Austin, Texas 78727-5967

Equipment for sale!!

The following people have equipment for sale:

Zack Swenson 836-2726

Black console, speech, PE Box, 32k ,RS 232 , 2 disk drives, software, and a printer that is in need of repair.

Rick Prekap 255-1065

Console, game carts (3 ea)

Jim King 280-0835 hm., 472-6113 wk.

2 Consoles, 32k , Percom Disk + add on disk drive, parallel interface, printer, Sketch Draw, 2 X-BASIC carts.,and software, all for \$350.00

Mike Green 251-3684

1604 Magic Hill

Pflugerville, TX. Complete TI system for \$550.00
call or write for more details.

John 258-2134

Console, P-box, 32k, RS-232, Epson RX-80 printer, TI-Writer, Editor Assembler, ExBASIC, Forth, and games.

Whole system : \$625.00, Without printer, \$475.00 Also
has TI-LOGO : \$30.00, TE-2 : \$10.00

Well that seems to be all this month, if I have made any errors, please let me know, also let me know if the equipment you have listed is sold, or if you want it run in the newsletter next month.

Editor

Commercial Ads

Commercial advertisements are welcomed by our newsletter. This newsletter can provide a select, specialized audience for advertisers. Advertisements also help our group by offsetting the printing and mailing costs of the monthly newsletter. Any advertisement must arrive by the first of the month to be included in that month's newsletter.

The cost of placing a full-page ad is \$20. The cost of a half-page ad is \$10. The ad should be camera (actually photocopy)

ready. Some flexibility is allowed in the size of half- and full-page ads--but let's not overdo it!

Classified ads are free to individuals both members and non-members. Send your ads to Central Texas 99/4A Users Group; Box 200246; Austin, Texas 78720-0246

Current Officers

President	Joe Pizzi	444-6829
	1300 S.Pleasant Valley Rd., #121, Austin, Texas 78727	
Vice President	Al Caldwell	327-8462
Treasurer	Paul Dunn	258-4308
Secretary	Mike Schultz	835-2377
Librarian	Mark Milan	836-3301
Newsletter Editor	Mark Milan	836-3301

Correspondence for the Users Group can be sent to the address given for the President, or to the Central Texas 99/4A Users Group; Box 200246; Austin, Texas 78720.

Meetings Calendar

The following is a list of the currently scheduled meetings.

March 13	April 10	May 8
June 12	July 10	August 14
September 11	October 9	November 13
December 11		

This meeting is scheduled to be held in the Commissioner's Court Room on the second floor of the Travis County Courthouse annex, which is at 10th and San Antonio, in Austin Texas.

Meetings start at 7:30 PM and last until they throw us out!

The Assembly Language SIG is held the Wednesday following the general meeting.

Newsletter Exchange

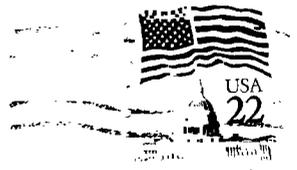
Our users group exchanges newsletters with several other recognized 99/4A Users Groups. The exchange is made with the understanding that, with proper credit to both the newsletter and author (if listed), your users group can reprint articles from our newsletter and, with proper credit, we can reprint articles from exchanged newsletters. (Please feel free to correct any typos, misspelling, bad grammar, etc.; we will do the same.)

Please send your exchange newsletters to:

Central Texas 99/4A Users Group
P.O. Box 200246
Austin, Texas 78720-0246

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