



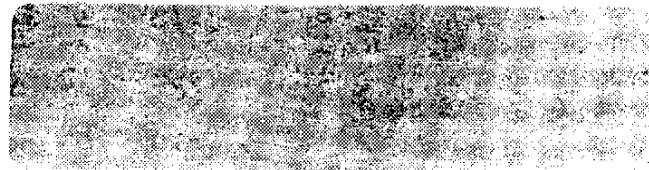
99'er Online

August 1985

p.o. box 11983
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5J 3L1



to:



99'er ON LINE is the news letter of the Edmonton 99'er Computer User's Society published ten times a year. Unless otherwise stated, all material contained in this news letter may be published in other news letters provided that source and author are identified. We welcome correspondence from all 11 User Groups and we will credit authors quoted in 99'er ON LINE.

CORRESPONDENCE: News letter editor: BOB PASS, 59 LABELLE CR, ST. ALBERT, ALBERTA, CANADA T0N-2G6. (403)458-7658 All other correspondence: EDMONTON 99'er COMPUTER USER'S SOCIETY, P/O BOX 11983, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA T5J-3L1

OFFICERS: PRESIDENT--PAUL HELWIG,
VICE PRES--TOM HALL, TREASURER--SUSAN LIVINGSTON,
SECRETARY--ROGER LOTEN

DISCLAIMER: All information published in this news letter is, for the most part, the fruits of the labors of amateurs; therefore, we cannot guarantee that the information presented is always correct.

REGULAR MEETINGS: Regular meetings of the Edmonton User's Group are held on the second Tuesday of each month on the 8th floor of the General Services building of the University of Alberta from 7:00 till 10:00 PM and are open to all members in good standing. Non-members may attend their first meeting free of charge. The Executive Committee meets monthly. Members may attend these meetings as observers or to address a particular issue. Arrange with one of the officers listed above if you wish to attend.

ADVERTISING: Commercial advertising space is available in this news letter at the following rates: FULL PAGE--\$20.00, HALF PAGE--\$15.00, 1/4 PAGE--\$10.00. Discuss your commercial needs with JIM NULLIGAN at 467-6021, at the next meeting or write to the P/O Box above. Members may advertise their personal computer related items for free but are asked to limit their ads to about 50 words. Mail your ads to the EDITOR'S ADDRESS or hand it to him at the general meeting; newsletter deadline 15th of the month.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: FAMILY---12 MONTHS, \$20.00, 6 MONTHS, \$15.00. STUDENTS---12MONTHS,\$15.00, 6 MONTHS, \$10.00.

USER GROUP NEWS

THIS NEWS LETTER... welcomes you back from what we hope was a safe and enjoyable summer and reminds you that our first meeting will be the second Tuesday of September (the 10th) at 7:00 PM in room 849 of the U of A's General Services building on 116 St north of the Jubilee auditorium. This month's issue will be fairly brief as your editor is too busy with other summer type things (like cutting grass, painting the house, etc) to spend much time bashing a keyboard!

NEW EXECUTIVE... please note the new executive listed on the "Masthead" on the front sheet of this news letter. Paul, Tom, & Susan were acclaimed as there were no other nominees for their positions. Roger Loten was foolish enough to volunteer as secretary and he was quickly voted into that position. Our "new brooms" are looking forward to introducing some innovations in the next few months so come on out and see what's happening.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS... helping to keep the group running are non-elected volunteers who are in many ways the soul of this User's Group:

Newsletter Editor - Bob Pass
Advertising & Editor's Assistant - Jim Mulligan
Mail Coordinator - Greg Sears
Disk Library - Ken Godbeer
Print Library - Gord Bradlee
Bulletin Board Sysop - Tom Hall

If you see a job that needs doing that is not covered by the above departments, how about volunteering your services at the next meeting; you will find that it is worth the effort.

BULLETIN BOARD... a BBS service is operated for this User's Group by our new VP, Tom Hall. To get on line, dial (403) 424-3258. In addition to news and the usual BBS offerings, there are programs available for downloading to your TI machine. See also Tom's BBS Update in this letter.

FLOPPIES... if you wish to order a fresh supply of disks, please place your cash (or cheque) orders with Bob Pass at the September meeting. Price is \$16.00 per box of ten. Also available are handy plastic storage boxes that hold ten disks at \$3.90 each. Delivery will be at the October meeting, unless you care to drive to St Albert. Because of cash flow problems, there are usually no extras available so remember to place your order at the September meeting.

CONTESTS... the deadline for your entries to our two programming contests is the September meeting. See previous newsletters for details.

WANTED... any clippings from newspapers, magazines, or comic strips that you think may be of interest to other members of this User Group. Please forward to the editor.

ALSO WANTED... your advertising. Don't forget that members can advertise their computer related merchandise or requests in this news letter for free! Give your ad to Bob Pass or Jim Mulligan by phone, mail, or at the next meeting. See the fine print on the newsletter cover sheet for further info.

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING
JUNE 18, 1985

Members present: Paul Helwig, Tom Hall, Susan Livingston, Roger Loten, Bob Pass, and Jim Mulligan

Old Business:

(1) Tom made a motion for our group to join the national (Ottawa) 99'er group which would cost \$30.00 a year. Seconded by Roger and passed unanimously.

New Business:

(1) Agreed to modify cheque signing authority from three to two signatures with either Tom or Susan's signature mandatory.

(2) Paul moved to schedule executive meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the regular meeting location at the U of A. Also final assembly of the newsletter will be done at this time. Seconded by Susan and passed unanimously.

(3) It was agreed that a club roster with and without (as requested) phone numbers of members will be included as an insert to the October newsletter. This will be sent only to members, not to general distribution.

(4) Bob made a suggestion that a general interest survey be done to gather input from members to help plan meetings and newsletter features.

(5) B.B.Q. for executive and assistants at Bill Cannon's place, Sunday, June 23rd.

TI TRIVIA

by: Jim Mulligan

I hope to be able to make this a regular feature of 99'er ONLINE. TI TRIVIA will contain all sorts of usefull information about the 99/4A hardware and software such as undocumented commands, poorly described software, quirks, etc. If you are aware of any things like these, please pass them along to me. Now for this month's questions....

Question #1: If you have 2 cassette recorders, is there a simple way to make backup copies of your software?

Question #2: Name the five options available to you when assembling a program from the Editor Assembler option prompt screen.

Question #3: Why should you not use elastic bands near your computer?

Answers appear elsewhere in this news letter. Have fun and let me know of your TI TRIVIA!

BBS UPDATE

by: Tom Hall

Well, even though summertime is here, and most of us are spending more time outdoors than in, this is not to say that our bulletin board has been idle! As of July 9, 1985 (the date of this article), there are over 125 registered users of the board, nearly half of whom are TI owners.

Although it's impossible to keep accurate statistics about usage of the board, I have to say that for TI-ers the download section seems to be the most popular feature of the board. During the summer there have been some very interesting programs put up, and a few of our younger members, Jim Beck and Paul Stahlke, have contributed original programs of their own for the benefit of the rest of us.

I moved on the first of June, and for the first couple of weeks in the new place I had some trouble with the board wanting to crash at various times, usually when I was either asleep or at work. On more than one occasion I took the system apart and cleaned every component I could get my hands on, and finally it seemed to settle in, and lately things have been running fairly smoothly.

I've been asked by a number of people if upload will ever be added to the board. I'm afraid the answer is no -- at least not for the foreseeable future. At one time it looked as though I was going to be getting such a routine from another BBS down east, but as it turned out, there is no upload routine available anywhere that any of my contacts knows about, so if we want uploads on our board, we'll have to write our own!

GAMES GANG

by: Jim Mulligan

The Games Gang is gone! Now hold on, it's not as bad as it sounds fellow users of "obsolete" computers. If you take a look at this issue's advertizing space you will encounter a company called "Edison Bell" which is the new name of the Games Gang crew. Well, that is not quite correct as there has been a change in the crew as well. Chuck, who is well known to most of us, has departed for the land of no winter (Victoria) to pursue a new business opportunity there. We wish him well in his new venture and if he ever misses snow and -40C weather, he certainly knows where to find it! Meanwhile, Edison Bell will continue to support the TI machinery as long as they see a market opportunity. We are not yet alone!

NEWSLETTERS FROM OTHER GROUPS

by: Bob Pass

Greg Sears is maintaining files of newsletters from about 30 other User's Groups who exchange newsletters with us. Many of these are gold mines of information and are well worth reading. You may sign out these files at regular meetings. Please see Greg who usually can be found near the front right side of the room.

ANSWERS TO TI TRIVIA

Question #1: Yes there is if you also have the dual cassette recorder cable. Undocumented is the fact that the TI console outputs data on both the CS1 & CS2 record leads simultaneously. Hook up both recorders to the dual cables (see pages 18 to 112 of the User's Reference Guide) as usual. Simply save your data to CS1 as you normally would but apply the on screen instructions to both recorders. Note that the #2 recorder motor will not be controlled by the console; it will have to be manually operated. Presto, two copies of your program or file!

Question #2: The options are:

R,L,S,C,&T

The first four are documented on page 34 of the Editor Assembler Manual but the "T" option is, as far as I know, undocumented. It stands for "Text String" and it prints out the location & hex value of all text strings in your code. I am not too sure how useful this option is, but maybe some of you more experienced E/A people could clue me in!

Question #3: If you should happen to get an elastic band into a disk drive, the computer may start to make snap decisions.

SURGE PROTECTION

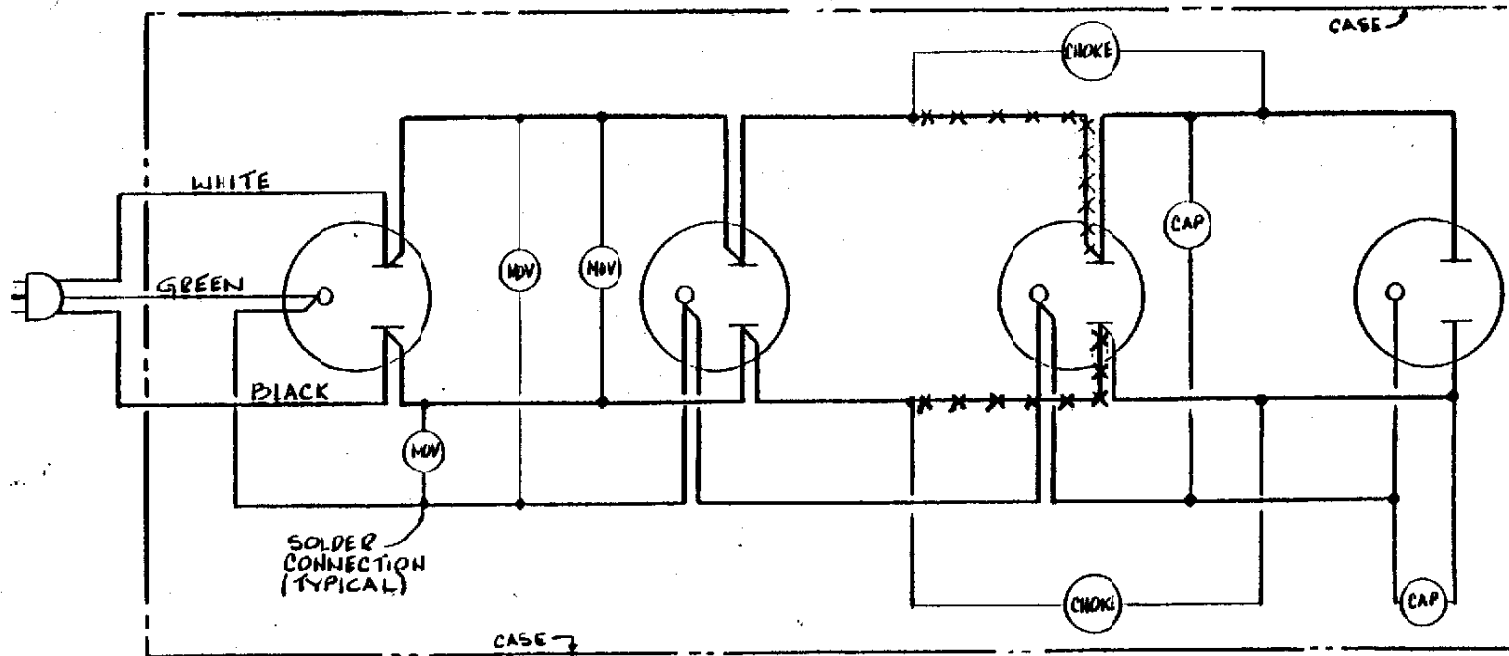
Reprinted from:

BAYOU BYTE Newsletter, April, 1985

Every computer user should have a surge suppressor installed between his computer equipment and the power source (wall outlet). Retail prices for effective surge control are \$65.00 and up. Also, since the standard outlet does not provide nearly enough receptacles for most computer setups, you will also need a multiple outlet box that go for about \$20.00 and up. If you are handy with a soldering iron, you can modify one of these gang boxes to provide surge protection and save a few bucks. The two wiring diagrams show how to add the protection devices to 4 & 5 gang boxes. Parts are available from Radio Shack but you should call before you go; not all are well stocked. Try the one on 118 Ave at Groat Rd.

PARTS LIST

Quantity	Description	Part #
3	Metal Oxide Varistor	275-570
2	0.047 Microfarad Capacitor	272-1052
2	Choke, 100 MicroHenri	273-102
1	4 or 5 outlet gang box. Available at many electronics stores or make your own with standard receptacles, boxes, & cable mounted on a board.	



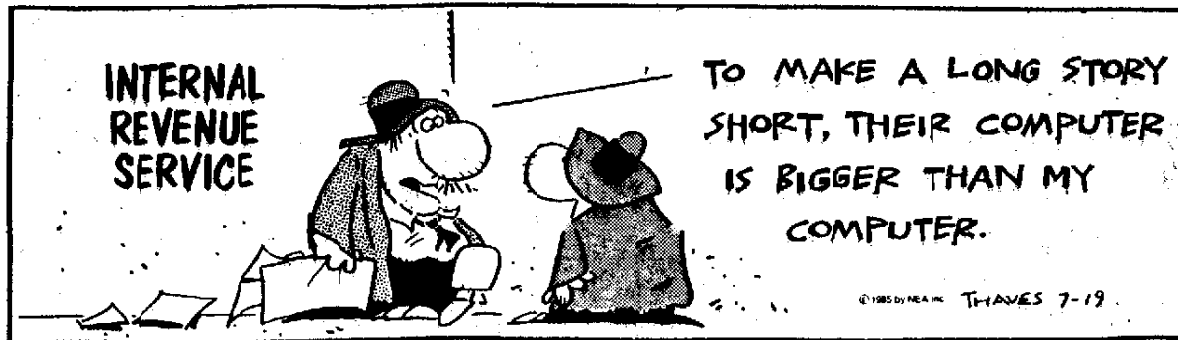
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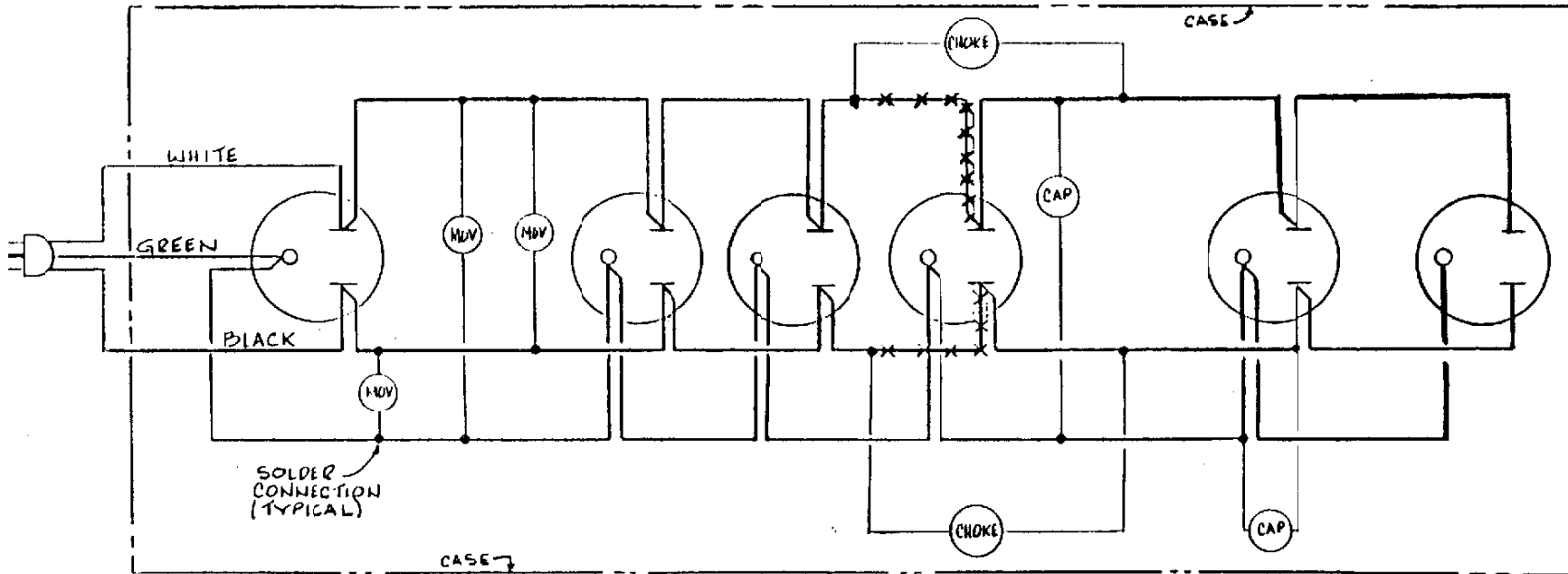
- EXIST. WIRING
- NEW WIRING
- REMOVE WIRE
- MOV METAL-OXIDE VARISTORS (RADIO SHACK 276-570)
- CHOKE 100 MICROHERTZ RF (RADIO SHACK 273-102)
- CAP 0.047 MICROFARAD CAPACITOR (RADIO SHACK 272-1052)

WIRING DIAGRAM
VOLTAGE-SURGE PROTECTOR

FOUR SOCKET

FRANK & ERNEST





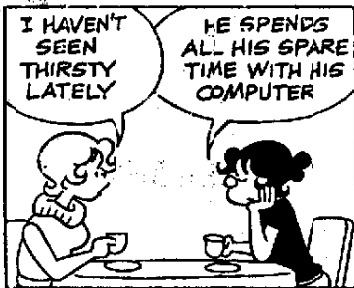
LEGEND:

- EXIST. WIRING
- NEW WIRING
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- CHOKE 100 MICROHERTZ RF (RADIO SHACK 273-102)
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**WIRING DIAGRAM
VOLTAGE-SURGE PROTECTOR**

SIX SOCKET

HANDS



ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS

a software review by: Tom Hall

Of all of the companies still supporting the TI 99/4A, there is perhaps no one as close to the cutting edge of software development as Craig Miller and his company Millers Graphics. His newsletter, even though published sporadically, is eagerly awaited by all true aficionados of the computer. Craig was also one of the people who lent his expertise to CorComp in their development of the double-density controller and other peripherals for the 99/4A.

Millers Graphics has now come out with its first major software release: **ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS**. There is so much that this package can do that a complete description of its capabilities could easily fill an entire issue of this newsletter, so I'll briefly outline its major capabilities.

First of all, it's a disk fixer par excellence. You can easily access any track or sector on a disk, and view the contents of a sector in either ASCII or hexadecimal format. When in Edit Mode in a sector, you may not only alter any byte, but you may even insert or delete data! Think of how easy it would be to restore a deleted file to a disk by merely having to insert its directory sector number into the File Description Index Record in Sector 1.

ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS will also check your disk for you, and tell you if there are any bad sectors. What it actually appears to do is to check every sector in the bit map table against each directory listing, and returns as "bad" any sector which according to the bit map table is used, yet does not appear as part of any file. The number of all sectors tagged as bad are displayed on your screen. Additionally, the **Check Disk** command will tell you which files, if any, on your disk are fractured -- that is, which files are split up into one or more chunks of continuous sectors on your disk.

ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS will also check all available RAM in your computer, including VDP, Scratch Pad RAM, and Expansion RAM, and will return information about any flaky areas it finds. **Convert Number** will allow you to convert a number in either decimal, hexadecimal or binary format into the other two formats and all three equivalents are simultaneously displayed on your screen.

The **Copy Read** and **Copy Write** commands can be used to copy all or part of a disk on a sector-by-sector basis to another disk, and from any place to any other place on a disk. The **Disk Directory** command provides an alphabetical listing of all files on a disk.

The **Format Disk** command will initialize a blank disk in any combination of single or double sided, single or double density. The **Find File** command will locate any file on a disk which has not previously been deleted, and will simultaneously display, in decimal, the sector number of the directory listing, and the numbers of all sectors on the disk occupied by that file.

In addition to various disk access utilities, **ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS** will also allow you to perform various hardware tests. The **Head Step** command allows you to alter the speed with which the read/write head of your drive moves across the disk. The **Motor Speed** command lets you see the RPM for your drive on a bar graph.

Other utilities allow you to check the DSR routines in the ROM of your controller, and the software has even been designed for use with possible hardware that might be developed in the future, such as a RAM disk.

I can't rave enough about this package, and the fact that all of this costs a mere \$19.95 (US) makes it even more of a steal. You also get a 35-page manual which explains in considerable detail all the capabilities of the software. There are some very informative appendices in the back of the instruction manual which provide a lot of detailed information about how a disk directory is constructed and how file information is stored on a disk.

SUPER BEAST FIX

by: Ron Hohmann

If any of you had trouble getting this great program by Jim Beck to run, give it another try. But first fix these typos that appeared in the April newsletter listing:

1440 IF RAC>4 THEN CALL SPRITE(#6,60,14,138,128,0,-12)

1720 CALL COINC(#1,#4,10,FR) :: IF FR=-1 THEN 1800

1800 CALL SOUND(1000,262,0,330,394,0)

LINE #530 NEEDS ANOTHER * MARK

Also several long CHAR lines have spaces almost at the end which need to be deleted.

Editor's note: these typos are my fault and I am sorry for any inconvenience. As stated in the last newsletter, I have solved this problem with my Super Lister program.

NEW PRODUCTS

by: BOB PASS

TI-WRITER enhancement from Tex-Comp. Called "99-Writer II, it features all the upgrades to the original TI WRITER plus added character sets. It is compatible with existing TI WRITER files and the Dragon Slayer spelling checker. The TI-WRITER module is not required as the program will load with X-Basic, Editor Assembler, or Mini Memory. 32K memory expansion and disk drive are required. Price - \$19.95 (US). Contact:

Tex-Comp
P/O Box 33084
Granada Hills, CA 91344
(818)363-7331

Add on 32K Memory Expansion units (plugs into side port of console) is available for \$119.00 (US) from:

CorComp inc
1255 North Tustin Ave
Anaheim, CA 92807

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF PC'S

CLEANLINESS is next to godliness. Keep the areas around the computer free of excessive dirt, dust, moisture and materials that obstruct air flow. Do not place books or papers on top of monitors or disk drives as this may interfere with the machine's ventilation.

MAINTAIN the proper AC electrical grounding as required, and correct any conditions that do not meet specifications. Provide dedicated outlets, or be sure that other electrical devices, including monitors, heating appliances, fluorescent and blinking lights, aren't plugged into the same outlet or circuit. Ensure that all cables are free of kinks or tight bends.

MINIMIZE the accumulation of static electricity in carpeted areas by using properly grounded static mats or anti-static carpet spray as required.

DON'T MOVE the disk drive while it is operating. Make sure it is properly grounded with an AC circuit which is free of interference from appliances or fluorescent lights.

THE READ-WRITE heads in a disk drive (which read, record or erase data to and from the disk) are sensitive to dust and dirt. They should be cleaned every two to three months using special cleaning diskettes. Check the operator's manual for the manufacturer's recommendations.

THE AVERAGE LIFE of a diskette is approximately 40 hours of use. Thus, it is important to make backup copies of working diskettes on a regular basis. Discard old diskettes. Don't wait until the diskette fails and you are no longer able to read the information stored on it.

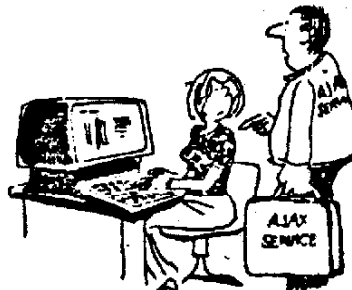
READ THE MANUAL for your printer and become familiar with the machine care recommendations. Pay careful attention to the inking device - the ribbon or ribbon cartridge - as well as to the paper. Avoid hard-strike print settings as much as possible and use only the paper the manufacturer recommends. Make sure the paper is stacked properly and aligned correctly behind or under the printer to feed easily.

THE CONTRAST LEVEL on display units should be turned down when the monitor is not in use and set only at a comfortable viewing level while being used. Turning the intensity up all the way for an extended period of time can cause degradation in the quality of the display as well as visible burn marks on the phosphorcoated screen. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

SYSTEM RELIABILITY is improved by leaving the computer on during the entire normal working day. Turning on the power activates all the components of the computer with a sudden surge of power, and this should be done sparingly. Do not enclose equipment. The ventilating system should always face an open area where warm air can freely rise. Do not use household extension cords or multiple sockets. It is advisable to use only UL approved commercial adapters.

PORTABLE COMPUTER owners should remember that although the system looks like a piece of luggage, it is still a delicate piece of high-precision equipment and should be handled accordingly. Protect the system from excessive heat, cold and moisture. You can't go wrong by packing the system in Styrofoam to protect it against vibrations.

THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN UNISPHERE MAGAZINE



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