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THE HUGGERS
 HOOSIER USERS GROUP

NOVEMBER, 1983

THE HUGGERS NEWSLETTER

INDIANAPOLIS IN

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It was with some mixed emotions that I heard the October 12th announcement by TI that it did not plan to introduce any new models this year. Certainly we could all use a breather from the rumors and the 'hype' that have been a part of TI's history since day one. And this announcement is sure to have a positive effect on sales of the 99/4A -- the only choice for Christmas (unless you really want to be a pioneer out on the CC-40 frontier or have a rich uncle who can't wait to give you a TI Professional). In a way I suppose it was a blessing for the Users Groups that the new lower prices on peripherals now make the 99/4A the best little bundled computer in Texas (or anywhere)! But I guess I felt the same kind of sadness you would feel when you hear that your best friend won't be able to make it back home for the holidays. Kind of makes you want to reach out and "touch" someone, doesn't it?

Well, enough about my problems. I have had some vraging news in the past month. Two gentlemen have stepped forward to work with the Officers as coordinators of the South and East Hoosier Users Group. Dennis Sherfy and Don Lang will be interested in hearing from you HUGgers on those sides of Indy-town as they prepare to help us grow and become more responsive to you South and Easterners. As regional coordinators they look forward to presenting and gathering information which will be of benefit to a more local area. They will be in contact with the Officers and will have a regular opportunity to communicate with us all through the Newsletter. We are still looking for individuals who will be able to put their fingers on the pulse of the North and West sides of town; so don't be shy. Let's hear from you at our next meeting. One suggestion that has been made would make the HUGgers Software Library available to the local groups, making it a lot easier to swap and share our resources. Greater access to the Library would certainly be a benefit we want to promote.

Another bit of good news came when Michael McGraw not only announced the expansion of MicroComputers, Inc. (both in their facilities and their product line), but also announced an arrangement with the Texas Instruments Computer Advantage Club (TICAC) coordinator that would make the TICAC Center open to the HUGgers when not otherwise being used. As Tiny Tim would say, "God bless you, everyone!"

With the Thanksgiving holiday this month, I want to be to take time to express my personal thanks to all who have shown such glorious support of the Hoosier Users Group by the generous donation of so much of their time and talent. I am both admire and respect all that has been done on behalf of the group. My sincerest thanks!

Hope to see you at our next meeting, November 13th at HUG Center West. Let's hear from you!

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING WILL BE NOVEMBER 13, 2 P.M., AT HUG CENTER WEST. SEE YOU THERE!

NOVEMBER DEMO: A Modem demonstration is scheduled and a few surprises!

BEST OF THE LIBRARY diskettes are still available, please contact one of the Officers at the next meeting if you wish to purchase one.

REGIONAL NEWS: Regional Meetings are now being formed on the east and south side of Indy. Don Lang is organizing HUG CENTER EAST, and Dennis Sherfy at HUG CENTER SOUTH. Both Don and Dennis will be contacting members in their areas to begin preparations for these meetings. If you wish to volunteer to help Don and Dennis on the east and south side, call Don at 353-1862 for east-siders and Dennis at 881-5918 for the southsiders.

Volunteers are still needed to head North and West side Centers. If you wish to volunteer for this, please contact the Officers at the Nov. 13 monthly meeting.

ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE DISCUSSION GROUP is now meeting. Call Bill Jones at 925-5283 for details.

NEWS FROM MICROCOMPUTERS: The regular HUGger merchandise discount applies to "P-Box Special" purchases, OR get a box of Brown Pulse 1 Diskettes FREE! This offer expires November 13, 1983.

CARE PACKAGE: The October Care Package has not yet arrived as of press time. Look for more details in the next Newsletter.

BEST OF THE NEWSLETTER: Starting in January, 1984, look for the "Best of the Newsletter"! The Newsletter Committee will be reprinting selected articles from past issues of the HUGger Newsletter.

COME BY AND SEE THE NEW MEMBER OF THE MICROCOMPUTERS, INC. FAMILY

-----THE TI PROFESSIONAL COMPUTER-----

THE ROVING EYE

by J. W. Maxwell

Recently the Hoosier User's Group has received a rather large quantity of information from third party hardware and software companies which sell products for use with the TI 99/4(A) Home Computer. As a service to our readers, I would like to briefly describe some of the more interesting offerings from these third party companies.

DYNACOMP of Rochester, NY is offering single-sided single (Wabash) and double (Control Data) density diskettes for as little as \$14.95 per box of 10; however, there is a minimum order of 10 boxes and a S & H charge of \$5.00 per hundred (or fraction).

From Steve Davis Publishing of Dallas, TX comes the book entitled **Introduction to Assembly Language for the TI Home Computer**. The book is designed to "make sense out of the Editor/Assembler manual." The book sells for \$16.95 plus postage but there is a discount for large quantity orders. This is the same company that brought you **Programs for the TI Home Computer** which is available at MicroComputers, Inc. (Look for **Introduction to Assembly Language at MicroComputers** soon!)

The KIDware company of Idaho Falls, Idaho specializes in quality software designed for kids and the TI 99/4A. Each cassette sells for \$10.95 and there are 2 programs on each cassette.

In somewhat of an untouched area, THEOBYTE of Kansas City, Kansas offers "software for religious education in the church and home." Prices range from \$7.00 to \$12.00.

EASTBENCH SOFTWARE PRODUCTS of Logan, Utah offers many utility programs including a disassembler for the TI 99/4A. Likewise they sell home management and finance software. Prices are in the \$10 to \$50 range.

PILGRIMS' PRIDE of Hatboro, PA has mostly dealt with businesses on a wholesale basis in the past. Now they are getting things underway in the mail-order business. Besides the normal software and hardware offers, they are offering a "RENT BEFORE YOU BUY" policy where one can rent a piece of software for a specified period with the option to purchase. This would give an individual the opportunity to try software at home.

This is but a sampling of some of the many third party companies that have ventured to contact us about what they can offer us. If you have or do come across any third party offering that might be of interest to other readers, please drop me a card in the mail or at MicroComputers, INC so that I might incorporate these in future additions of "The Roving Eye." I will be keeping my eye open also.

In no way does this listing of third party companies signify the TI Hoosier User's Group or my recommendation of these companies or the products and services that they offer nor can we guarantee that these products will be suitable for your needs.

ACLD CONVENTION

by Barb Uhrig

The Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities' convention at the Atkinson Hotel, October 14 and 15, 1983, was a huge success. Al Lovati of the TI Computer Advantage Club (TICAC) set up a TI demonstration unit both days. The ACLD is very pleased that TI is involved in community activities such as this.

Other mentions of TI: The Indiana Optometric Association used a TI P-Box as part of a non-TI computer set up. Instructional Computer Equipment (ICE), a company developing unique educational and business software and hardware. ICE is awaiting a TI chip so they can physically alter computer systems to run their software.

LAST MINUTE NEWS

November, 1983 Insert

TI TO HALT PRODUCTION OF HOME COMPUTERS

Dallas (AP) -- Texas Instruments Inc. pulled out of the volatile home-computer market Friday after it reported losing \$110.8 million in the third quarter. It recorded a \$119.2 million loss in the previous quarter.

Texas Instruments, whose 99/4A home computer was mainly responsible for the company's \$222.9 million loss for the first nine months of this year that "to limit further financial drain on TI, we have made the decision to withdraw from the consumer home-computer business."

"Production of 99/4A hardware will stop in November, requiring significant personnel reductions in the consumer group," it said.

The statement, issued by Chairman Mark Shepard Jr. and President J. Fred Bucy, said: "The first nine months of 1983 have been the most difficult period in the history of TI. We believe that with the painful, but correct, decision to withdraw from the consumer home-computer business, that period has now ended."

The company said that excluding the results from consumer products, Texas Instruments' financial performance improved. Texas Instruments, also a leading maker of semiconductors and defense electronics said third-quarter sales, excluding home computers, rose 11 percent from a year ago.

"Retail sales of 99/4A home computer consoles and software in the third quarter were disappointing," the statement said. "Inventories at retail remained high, limiting new orders and resulting in an operating loss for the quarter."

"With this situation continuing into October, it became clear that fourth-quarter demand would not be sufficient to prevent large additional losses," they said.

Texas Instruments said it would continue to provide service for current 99/4A owners, and that it would make unspecified price cuts to dealers to clear current inventories of the machines.

The company also said it would continue to make its more-expensive personal computers aimed mainly for business and professionals.

Home computers account for less than 10 percent of the overall operations of Texas Instruments.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This month's Newsletter was already laid out when the October 28th announcement was made of TI's decision to 'withdraw' from the home computer business and halt production of the 99/4A. As an Officer in the Hoosier Users Group, I feel all the more responsible now to provide support to you 99/4A owners. You have a good computer; we plan to help you learn more and help you enjoy more of it. As long as funds are available, we'll continue to bring you information, news, and programming tips that will make your investment in the 99/4A all the more worthwhile. Your letters and comments are welcome. We particularly want to hear how we may best be of help to you. If plans to establish an Electronic Buletin Board System are realized, your Hoosier Users Group resources will become only a phone call away. Your continued support and contributions to the Hoosier Users Group are a trust which we, the Officers, most seriously intend to respect and continue to warrant.

Don Donlan, President, Hoosier Users Group

NEWS FROM MICROCOMPUTERS:

MicroComputers, Inc., will continue to fully support our 99/4A customers, as we has done so in the past.

The new price of the 99/4A should be around \$75. with NO REBATE. At this time, there is no information available on the Free Speech offer.

Look for more information from MicroComputers by the next Hoosier Users Group meeting.

Pat McGraw

The article to the left was taken, in full, from page 27 of the Indianapolis Star; Saturday, October 29, 1983.

DIAL A HUGger MODem DIRECTORY

With the importance of communication as a priority within the Hoosier Users Group, a suggestion has been made on how to improve it by compiling a directory of members who own modems and want to communicate with them to other members. This directory will be compiled on a strictly voluntary basis. To include your name in the directory, please write to the P. O. Box (leaving your name, type of modem you have, and phone number, of course), or call Pam Sims at 631-7255.

The deadline for inclusion to the directory will be Saturday, December 31, 1983. The Dial A HUGger Modem Directory will not be published in the Newsletter, but will be sent out separately only to those members who respond to this by the deadline date. Scheduled publication of this directory will coincide with the publication of the January, 1984 HUGger Newsletter (just in time for all those HUGgers who find modems under their Christmas Trees!)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday to these November, 1982 members: Glenn Newville, Roger Rees, Allen Douglas, William Lucid, Mark Weis, Steve Mitchell, Charles Rees, Max Mantooth, Karl Hiller, Erick Smith, Greg Polakoff, Barb Uhrig, Neil Ott, Rick Rich, Russ & Sandra Stafford, James Hendry, James Wilcox, John M. Wood, David Shouse, Brian & Sara Lakstins, Charles Williams, Chuck Mason, Paul Hubbard, Wally Martin and Leon & Mary Rodney.

WELCOME

The Hoosier Users Group welcomes these new October members: Bob Wetzel, Joseph Fischer, Mike Allee, Jack Peters, Northwest Hendricks School Corporation, and Ed Ferguson.

THINGS TI NEVER TOLD US

Editor's Note: When creating this column I did not expect to see it included in the HUGger Newsletter often, but, little did I realize how much can be learned by experimenting.

This month's TINT's come from sources outside the Hoosier Users Group. They are handy when you are involved in a midnight debugging session and say OH-OH!

The first TINT comes from Jim Peterson of Tigercub Software; 156 Collingwood Ave., Columbus, Ohio. Jim has this to include from Tips from the Tigercub # 3:

Here's a lifesaver that was passed on to me verbally, so I don't know who to credit for discovering it...It's 2 A.M., you just got the last bug out of your new program, you sleepily put a new cassette in the recorder, type OLD CS1, hit enter and...oooooh!, you meant to type SAVE CS1!! But all is not lost - just type SHIFT E, hit ENTER, get an I/O error message and start over! (Editor's Note: If you have the Alpha Lock DOWN and type E, and hit ENTER, you will get the same results. The lower case "e" is not accepted when using this procedure. Look for more from Tigercub # 3 in the December Newsletter.)

And the second comes from the Pittsburgh Users Group newsletter "Peripheral": Let's say you're editing a program and instead of pushing Function 2 (Insert), you inadvertently miss 2 and hit Function 3 (Erase)! DO NOT HIT ENTER! Instead, push Function P (the quotation marks) and then press ENTER. LIST the program, and guess what -- you didn't lose the line after all!

Editor's note: When typing in the Function P and ENTER, the computer will come back stating "INCORRECT STATEMENT". Since this is not a valid entry, your original data was not lost, it just became "temporarily invisible".)

THE HEART AND SOUL OF PERSONAL RECORD KEEPING

by Don Donlan (Part II)

The HEADER subprogram which resides in the Personal Record Keeping command module provides access to a "data dictionary". This dictionary defines the data that has been created by the PRK module. As I mentioned in the last article there are two formats or ways to code the "call" for this subprogram. For numeric information use [CALL H(R/W,INFO,FLD,V)] and to read/write character information use the format [CALL H(R/W,INFO,FLD,V\$)]. If the "R/W" variable is "1" the subprogram will "read" information from the Header record. If the "R/W" variable is "0" (zero), the subprogram writes information to the Header record. "V" and "V\$" are used, depending on which kind of information you wish to retrieve (V for numeric; V\$ for character). The "FLD" variable is sometimes ignored, sometimes required, depending on what number is in the "INFO" variable. "INFO" is a number between 1 and 14 which determines what Header record information you will read or write. A "FLD" number is ignored for the first 8 kinds of information; the rest require a "FLD" number. The fourteen kinds of information stored by the Header record are as follows:

- 1 = File Name up to 10 characters long.
- 2 = Day of the month (a number from 1 to 31).
- 3 = Month (a number from 1 to 12).
- 4 = Year (a number from 0 to 99).
- 5 = Number of fields per record (a very important number because it will determine how many times we will need to ask for information found for the information types 9 thru 14 shown below). This number is automatically incremented each time a new "highest numbered" field is defined
- 6 = Number of records in this PRK file (also automatically incremented each time a new "highest numbered record" is written).
- 7 = Size of Header record (length is automatically calculated and entered).
- 8 = Size of the Data record (this too is automatically calculated and stored).

Now we come to the Header record information that describes the individual fields within each data record. This sequence of information is repeated for each of the fields, up to the number of fields indicated in Header record information 5 (see above). If "FLD" is 1, the first Data record is defined; if 2, the second; if 3, the third and so on.

- 9 = Name of the data field (up to 10 characters long).
- 10 = Type of Data field: 1=character 2=integer 3=decimal 4=Exponential.
- 11 = Size of Data field. This depends on the type:
 - Character data fields are 1 to 15 bytes long.
 - Integer data fields are 1 to 10 bytes long.
 - Decimal data fields are 2 to 11 bytes long.
 - Exponential or scientific notation fields are 8 to 13 bytes long.
- 12 = Number of decimal places. For character and integer data, this is zero. For decimal data, the number would range from 1 to "size" minus 1. And for Exponential or scientific notation the number is 0 to 5.
- 13 = Amount of space required for the Data field (as set by Header subprogram).
- 14 = Position of this field within Data record (as set by Header

As you can see, with this kind of information you can reveal the data base structure of this PRK file. I don't know if you could use a BASIC program and the Header subprogram to write your own data base structure. It would be interesting to see what would happen. A typical Header record might look like this:

THE HEART AND SOUL OF PERSONAL RECORD KEEPING

by Don Donlan (Part II)

MYRECORDS_10_22_83_2_15_50_30_NAME_1_15_0_15_1_PHONE NO._1_15_0_15_16

I use the "_" character to set the "INFO" fields apart. Above would be header record for a file called "MYRECORDS" which was last used October 22, 1983. It says there are 2 fields for every Data record, 15 such records in the file. The length of the header record itself is 50 bytes; the size of each data record is 30 bytes. The name of the first of our two fields is "NAME", which will have up to 15 characters of information in it, so we'll reserve 15 bytes. This first field starts in position 1 of the Data record. Our second sample field is called "PHONE NO.", again a 15 byte character field that needs up to 15 positions in the record, so we'll start it in position 16. The sample Header record above could be the start of a phone and telephone number data base that was created by the PRK command module. If you have the PRK module you might want to go ahead and make up such a sample file and store it on disk for use by the programs that we will be presenting at the end of these articles. That way you will be able to 'test things out' on your own.

Next month we will review the GETPUT subprogram, the utility that reads and writes the Data records created/retrieved by the PRK command module.

PLATO Courseware Puts Twist into Traditional Studies.

PLATO educational courseware was developed with genius that would have made even the immortal Greek philosopher, Plato, smile.

This unique, computer-assisted learning system was developed at the University of Illinois in the early 60's with funding from the State of Illinois and the National Science Foundation.

In 1962, William C. Norris, founder of Control Data Corporation (CDC) of Minneapolis, took an interest in the idea behind the PLATO system. And as a result, the company committed itself to the development of the system, and it pioneered the use of computer-assisted learning. The PLATO system has since been a proven learning tool in school systems, universities, businesses, industries, and governments worldwide for more than 20 years. Students of all ages have found the PLATO system to be an exceptional learning tool.

Through an exclusive agreement between Texas Instruments and Control Data, PLATO educational courseware in the areas of Basic and High School Skills will be available for use with the TI Home Computer.

The PLATO courseware designed for the TI Home Computer utilizes a particularly effective learning strategy which combines the use of tutorials and drills.

In a tutorial, the student is guided step-by-step through all the new information. The drills then allow students to evaluate the level of proficiency they gained from earlier tutorial work.

An entire integrated set of over 450 programs in 44 subjects for grades 3 through 12 will provide users with a comprehensive educational library.

PLATO Basic Skills courseware will be available for students in grades 3 to 8. The curriculum consists of mathematics, reading, and grammar. Users may choose from 64 courses.

Courseware also is available for students at the high school level. The PLATO High School Skills curriculum consists of math, reading, writing, science, and social studies. A total of 44 courses will be available in the High School Skills series.

Every PLATO program requires the use of the PLATO Interpreter cartridge. The Interpreter cartridge is packaged with survey diskettes designed to evaluate a student's basic skills, strengths and weaknesses in an objective way.

A Parent's Questionnaire is enclosed with every Interpreter cartridge. Parents with elementary age children can use the questionnaire to evaluate a child's skill level using a subjective means. The Interpreter cartridge has a suggested retail price of \$49.95.

To operate PLATO courseware, users need a console and monitor (or television and adapter), the PLATO Interpreter cartridge, a Peripheral Expansion System, a Disk Memory System, and a Memory Expansion Card.

HUGger GOSSIP SHOP

NEW COMPUTER CANCELED AT TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

As reported in the October Newsletter, TI was rumored to introduce a "new computer" for Christmas, 1983 market. On October 12, 1983, TI announced that it "abandoned" plans to introduce this new computer. The following article about this announcement, was taken from the October 12, 1983 Wall Street Journal.

DALLAS--Texas Instruments Inc. abandoned plans to introduce its 99/8 home computer, which was widely expected to be unveiled this year, according to sources close to the company.

Texas Instruments declined to comment on whether the 99/8 was canceled but confirmed that "there will be no new home computer console introduced this year." In making that announcement, Norman Neureiter, vice president, corporate staff declined to elaborate or to comment on whether layoffs might follow.

The 99/8 would have been a successor to the 99/4A home computer, whose unexpectedly slow sales resulted in a \$119 million second-quarter deficit for the company. After the loss, the company stepped up its marketing program for the 99/4A, laid off more than 1,000 workers and hired a new manager for the consumer-electronics division that makes the home computer. However, analysts say sales of the 99/4A aren't likely to improve under heavy competitive pressure from machines such as the Commodore 64, made by Commodore International Ltd., and that Texas Instruments needs a new product to stay competitive in the home-computer market.

If the 99/8 is permanently shelved, it will be the second time this year the company has canceled a home computer. Texas Instruments dropped the 99/2 computer, which was planned as a less expensive version of the 99/4A, after price competition reduced the 99/4A's price to the range planned for the 99/2.

By David Stipp, Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal.

UTILIZING MINI-MEMORY CAPABILITIES

Part 2

For the computer enthusiast looking for a versatile and economical way to customize his or her basic Home Computer system, the TI Mini-Memory cartridge offers unique expansion capabilities.

This expansion cartridge increases the memory capacity of your Home Computer by adding a total of 14K bytes of memory to your system. This includes 4K RAM (Random Access Memory), 4K GROM (Graphics Read Only Memory), and 4K ROM (Read Only Memory.)

The Mini-Memory's built in battery enables a user to store a 4K BASIC program or data file in the cartridge even after the cartridge has been removed from the console. (4K memory will accommodate approximately 250 lines of BASIC).

With the use of a cassette-based Line-By-Line Symbolic Assembler, a user can develop Assembly Language programs to add new instructions to the computer's BASIC Language which are not already available. (The Line-By-Line Assembler is packaged with the Mini-Memory cartridge). The Assembler cassette loads directly into the Mini-Memory cartridge from a cassette recorder. This cassette enables users to write assembly language programs which can then be saved on additional cassette tapes.

Users can link BASIC programs to Assembly Language subprograms by utilizing the TI BASIC subprograms and utility routines available in the Mini-Memory cartridge. This allows a user to address the internal components of the Home Computer directly.

With access to the machine resources of the computer, a user can build a customized system using a minimum computer configuration of console, Mini-Memory, and monitor. With a TI Program Recorder, procedures can be saved for future use.

TI Mini-Memory is available at a suggested retail price of \$99.95. The TI Program Recorder is recommended for saving programs developed with the Mini-Memory cartridge. Mini-Memory also may be used with all other Home Computer peripherals.

Conclusion of a two part article on the TI Mini-Memory. Taken in part from the September, 1983 TI Newsletter.