LEHIGH 99'ER COMPUTER GROUP

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Next meeting: 7:30 PM, Monday   Conference Room A-D, Second Floor
               March 16, 1987   Sacred Heart Hospital
                                       4th and Chew Streets
                                       Allentown, Pennsylvania

RANDOMIZE
By Mark Appleby

*   JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting was well attended, with 8 members showing up. Since the
original meeting date was cancelled due to snow, few people heard that we had
rescheduled. Those who did come were well entertained by President Mark DeNardo's
presentation. With the aid of a VCR, Mark presented several software demos, which
included a trip to a local TI bulletin board. It was an effective method of teaching
which I'm sure he'll employ again.

*   NEW COMPUTER DILEMMA

Now that the Myarc 9640 computer is a reality, TI users are faced with the eventual
decision of buying this machine, or going the MS-DOS route. The new Triton/MG Turbo XT
makes this a possibility. Every time I walk into a software store or read Computer
Shopper, I start thinking about my future computing.

TI user groups from around the globe are experiencing a strong decline in their
membership. The newsletters are drying up from lack of member input. Notable software
authors Danny Michaels (Screen Dump and Neat List) and John E. Taylor (Jet Software and
Checkbook Manager) have recently joined the clone crowd. Unless a second generation of
programmers develop for the 99/4A, its days are numbered.

The prices for IBM compatibles continue to drop and the amount of software steadily
increases. It's just a matter of time until we either climb aboard or try to keep our
99'ER raft afloat. I love my TI 99/4A and will continue to learn and enjoy it until the
chips all burn out. I'm not a prophet of doom....just a realist who'll own two computer
systems. Everyone needs a hobby!

*   ELECTIONS

     Yes members, its time to step up and be counted. At the March meeting, interested members should come forward and either volunteer to serve or nominate someone who will be good for the club. Elections will be held in April with the new slate of officers presiding at the May meeting. Please attend and keep this club alive another year. If it folds, you'll only have yourself to blame.

*   NEW DISKS

     In the last several months we've added approximately 75 new disks to our freeware library. They cover the entire spectrum....music, education, games and programming utilities. We've also purchased some of Asgard Softwares' latest for your enjoyment. Please come back and check them out.

*   MARCH DISK OF THE MONTH

     I completed March Disk #1. It is a disk full of new assembly games. These are some of the best user written games I've ever played. Disk #2 will be made up of new and useful utilities. Both can be purchased at the March 16th meeting for $3.00 each.

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DISK CAUTION LABELS: by Rick Kellogg

HERE IS A SHORT ROUTINE THAT CAN BE USED TO CREATE A CAUTION LABEL FOR ANY DISKETTES THAT YOU PLAN TO SEND THROUGH THE MAIL. THIS WILL PRINT OUT ON A STANDARD 15/16" x 3 1/2" PRESSURE SENSITIVE LABEL THAT YOU CAN EASILY APPLY TO THE DISKETTE MAILER. THIS PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO RUN OUT OF BASIC OR EXTENDED BASIC. IT IS ALSO SET UP FOR EPSON/GEMINI/STAR COMPATABLE PRINTERS, BUT COULD BE EASILY USED ON OTHER PRINTERS BY INSERTING THE PROPER PRINTER CONTROL CODES WHERE NEEDED.

```
100 REM ******************
110 REM *   DISK CAUTION  *
120 REM *      LABELS      *
130 REM *        by        *
140 REM *  Rick Kellogg    *
150 REM *  Epson/Gemini    *
160 REM *   compatable     *
170 REM * Basic & XBasic   *
180 REM ******************
190 REM
200 CALL CLEAR
210 INPUT "How many labels?
":A
220 OPEN #1:"PIO"
230 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"G";
240 FOR X-1 TO A
250 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"-1";C
HR$(14);"DO NOT BEND!"
260 PRINT #1:""
270 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"-O";"
MAGNETIC MEDIA ENCLOSED"
280 PRINT #1:"_____
_____"
290 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(1
4);"DO NOT XRAY!"
300 PRINT #1:""
310 NEXT X
320 CLOSE #1
330 END
```

DO   NOT   BEND !

MAGNETIC MEDIA ENCLOSED

DO   NOT   XRAY !

IMPACT-99

TEXTWARE, SOFTWARE, and ELSEWHERE
Happenings in the T.I. World Community
by JACK SUGHRUE

There's a grandfather in Ohio who bought his son a computer back in 1982. His son was in high school then and was planning on going into engineering. Neither father nor son knew anything about computers, but the TI-99/4a was purchased because they both liked the feel of the keyboard. The son went into journalism instead of engineering, and the father began to play with the machine. He perused the blue manual, experimented with the computer, liked the things he discovered, and became a computer addict.

Within the next four years the addict became an expert of world-wide fame within our special world of the 99. During that time Jim Peterson — also known as Tigercub Software (156 Collingwood Ave., Columbus, OH 43213) — became the Columbus of this special world. He discovered more and explored more new TI territories than anyone else in the business (including the people at TI). And he shared these discoveries with us in monthly columns: TIPS FROM THE TIGERCUB. Those 41 columns were chock full of programs, tips, subroutines, reviews, recommendations, and items from his huge and dedicated following.

When TI died Jim Peterson did not. He stayed aboard what appeared to be a sinking ship, throwing us a life preserver before we all went down for the third time.

Though he teaches computer workshops, he never took one. I learned more about the TI from Jim Peterson than I did from the 60-plus books I own on 99 computing.

Looking through my disk files a few minutes ago I discovered I have over 400 files from Tigercub Software, most included on five remarkable (there is no other word) disks: TIPS #1, 2, 3 and NUTS 'n BOLTS #1 and 2. The others are single programs I bought along the way: ANTONYMY, SYNONYMY, HOMONYMY, HIEROGLYPHY, PLAIN OF JEWELS, DRUNKEN SAILOR, BAZOO, MECHANICAL APTITUDE TEST, GRAPHIC DESIGNER, SCRUM, SQUINCH, STUFF 'n NONSENSE, KID/STUFF, HANDYDANDY 1,2,3, HAUNTED GRAVEYARD and others with equally fascinating titles. There are lots of demos, music, utilities, games, puzzles, graphics: all original, all his.

I never purchased anything from Jim that I haven't been extremely satisfied with. Little by little I hope to buy his entire catalog. Then I can have the TIGERCUB LIBRARY to spend my cold winter nights with. And that's good company. Look at the titles above. Variety? Yes. But the big thing is the sense of humor. This genius seems to be filled with wonder and awe everytime he uncovers something new about our machine, and he shares these uncoverings in such unusual ways and with such a delightful sense of humor that one cannot help but be caught up in his enthusiasm. He does all this in the speech of the common human: not in techie robotics. He has never lowered himself to shunning the masses. He's one of those people I'd really like to meet someday.

Intrigued by these titles, you probably wonder, What's a Squinch, Scrum, Mechanical Aptitude Test, Synonymy, or Handydandy?

Well, a Squinch is a very peculiar word game for one or many players in which two words have been bizarrely intermingled into one. A timer may be activated as you try to separate the combinations. There are literally millions of possibilities. A Scrum is a very speedy puzzle where you attempt to change the colors on a 3X3 grid. The problem is that the adjacent square's color also changes. Over 500 puzzles in one.

Very challenging. The Mechanical Aptitude Test should be shot at dawn. A frustratingly wonderful puzzle requiring only the mental ability to join two geometric pieces together. (You have to see this to readily understand this.) Handydandies (1,2,3) are collections of about 75 programming routines you can read and LIST and use (and demonstrate). Excellent forerunner to the WONDERFUL disks of TIPS and NUTS 'n BOLTS. Synonymy (similar to Antonymy, etc.) is a game of synonyms. Excellent for adult fun and ideal for children's learning fun.

It would be easy and endless to describe all of Jim's neat little programs (including the rather whacked-out Drunken Sailor), but I wanted to save a little column space for his masterpieces.

There can be no question that NUTS 'n BOLTS (1 and 2) and TIPS (1, 2, 3) are masterpieces. (I just learned in this morning's mail that there is also a #4 TIPS. I learned this from reading Jim's 41st and final *TIPS FROM THE TIGERCUB* column.) Every person I know who bought these 5 disks (about 400 programs, files, subroutines, tutorials, etc., not counting TIPS 4) is astounded. If one opened up these packages today and did no work outside the home it would really take months to go through these items and use them. The files include such things as TIMEDEF, NUMBERSPK, POCKETKAL (for Kaleidoscope), BELLMUSIC, CHAMBORDER (for Chameleon), UPSIDEDOWN, SLASHZERO, SCREENGRID, INITCHECK, MOON, STACKGRAPH, QUICKCOLOR. On and on. Hundreds of programs and subroutines. The subs are already in MERGE format ready to plug into any program and try them out. They are numbered so any subs may be used in the same program. A quickref-type manual sheet comes with easy-to-follow directions with N 'n B. There are README files for docs.

Aren't the titles tantalizing? So are the programs.

Jim Peterson is MR. 99 to most of us in the TI community. We have looked forward to reading his columns in newsletters from around the country; have admired his frankness and dedication and humor and humanness. Now that Jim is no longer doing his column for newsletters around the world, maybe he'll still put out some more great disks. As he said in his final column "I am NOT going out of business."

All of us in the TI community are going to miss his TIPS. Best of luck, Jim. Thanks to you our "Memories are Full," too.
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Send Jim $1.00 (deductable from first order) for complete Tigercub catalog.

3.2.1 IMPACT! until next time.

(Jack Sughrue, Box 459, E.Douglas MA 01516)

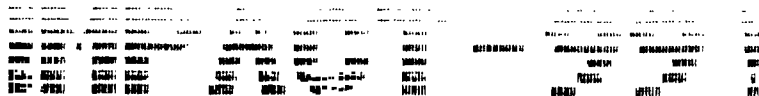**

TI SYSTEM FOR SALE

The following TI equipment is for sale. Contact Pat Strunk at 215-863-6288 if you are interested. All of the equipment is in excellent condition.

TI system with includes the 99/4A console; expansion box with 32k memory expansion, RS-232 card and a double sided disk drive; stand alone case with two single sided disk drives; spare single sided disk drive without power supply; editor assembler; extended basic; and 3 game cartridges all for $350.00.

Panasonic KX-P1030 80 column printer is for sale for $200.00.

IMPACT-99!

TEXTWARE, SOFTWARE, and ELSEWHERE
Happenings in the T.I. World Community
by JACK SUGHRUE

    Some of my user-group friends ask me often about the graphic designs
and fonts I use in my letters and in this column. "How can you make
that with your printer?" they usually ask.

    The answer is simple and not so simple. The different fonts built
into my Gemini 10X are fairly easy to get to. I made a template of my
Transliteration Key and access it through my _T.I.WRITER_ (in this case,
the _FUNLPLUS!_ version, though any form of TIW will work). This lets
me do the following:

    <u>Underline when and where I like</u>

    Be in condensed **Or enlarged**

    Or italics (Or other fonts and sizes)

    Or letter quality. Which is what you're reading. This is normal
printer type. Obviously <u>this</u> is preferable for most people.

    You may even combine:

    <u>_Underlined letter-quality italics, for example._</u>

    All this is done simply and automatically through IFfing the template
which has the TL codes on them.

    If persons are interested I could devote a column or two to this kind
of thing, complete with all the codes and how to get to them
automatically. Let me know.

    But the fancy stuff like the header of this column is what most
people would like to be able to do.

    These kinds of things (pictures, fonts, designs, labels, letterheads,
signs, banners) are all done with some very special programs. Compared
to the costs of similar programs for other computers they are very
inexpensive, but they are not free.

    I'll be devoting the next few columns to explaining how the different
packages work and showing examples. These packages are the ones I use:
GRAPHX, TI ARTIST, FUNLPLUS!, BETTER BANNERS, FONTWRITER, and CSGD. I
use the last (CHARACTER SETS AND GRAPHIC DESIGNS III) to make the
IMPACT-99! logo.

    Of the six graphics/text programs listed above which is the best?
None is _better_ than another. Each does something different from the
others, but now - thanks to FONTWRITER - all the works done by any of
them can be tied together. More on that when I take up FONTWRITER.

    But first let's discuss Broderbund's PRINT SHOP, the most popular
graphics program in the world. This program, which is out for most
computers, is not available for the TI.

    Everyone loves PRINT SHOP. It is so user-friendly a four-year-old
could operate it beautifully the first time around. The program makes
greeting cards, banners, signs, etc. with incredible error-free ease.
And there are now hundreds (including a lot of PD files) of graphic
designs and fonts for the program. The commercial disks for the whole
works for the IBM or Apple is well over $200, the basic program under
$50. People who HATE and FEAR computers _L O V E_ to print with PRINT
SHOP.

    But you pay a price for convenience. I don't mean just money, though
that is _definitely_ a factor. The price you pay is sameness. A PRINT
SHOP anything looks, well, printshoppy. There is not much flexibility.
Granted, you can <u>choose</u> your font; you can <u>choose</u> your graphics; you
can even <u>choose</u> size, form of font, layout - all to a limited degree.

Limited.

With the five commercial programs above (and my FUNLPLUS!) I am unlimited. I can create virtually any type of font or graphic that can fit on a printed page and lots that extend beyond. I can couple any of the above with my word-processor to create dazzling text/graphic printouts, a lot like the MacIntosh stuff. (CSGD III even lets you use TIWRITER versions to type in six new, large, unusual fonts in full or split columns WITH the graphics!) But there is a price. Ease. All this stuff requires reading, learning, experimenting, time. For people willing to put the time in and invest a few dollars (GRAPHX, FONTWRITER about $25 each; TI-ARTIST, BETTER BANNERS about $20 each; FUNLPLUS! $8; CSGD about $18; and various companion disks from $7.95 [from Asgard] to $18). Probably a basic structure for someone with an Epson-compatable printer who is just starting out with this exciting design world would be FONTWRITER, FUNLPLUS! (which also contains other Fairware and PD programs), TI-ARTIST, and CSGD III. That $68 investment would give you far greater flexibility than PRINT SHOP. It would also be a fairly reasonable task to set for yourself to learn how to use these pieces of software. Each has excellent documentation providing you take the trouble to do all the things along with the manual while you are learning. (Though, to be honest, I am always too anxious to get into my new "toy" when I get it to look at the manual. I should follow my own advice because I inevitably have to redo everything because I wouldn't take the trouble to read the documentation BEFORE using the programs.)

If you've never designed your own letterheads or labels or drawn and printed any graphics with the incredible GRAPHX and/or TI-ARTIST then you are in for a real treat. Your computer is far more powerful than you have yet imagined. (Asgard even has an automatic slide-show for the GRAPHX pictures to amuse your friends and amaze your enemies.)
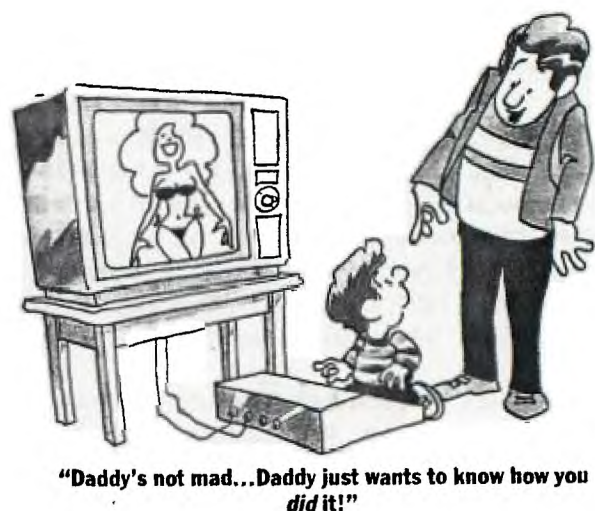
In short, the world is your oyster if your TI is working toward its potential.

We'll discover a lot about that potential in the next few columns.
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3,2,1 IMPACT! until next time.

(Jack Sughrue, Box 459, E.Douglas, MA 01516)

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL COPY PROTECTION.

"Daddy's not mad...Daddy just wants to know how you did it!"

THREE-SLOT EXPANSION KIT
BY R. L. KOTSCHESSA

T. I. expansion systems for $600 did not send me scurrying for my checkbook, but when I heard of the 3-slot kit for $35.00, I was definitely interested. It says here anyone who has used a soldering iron could do it. (Does a torch count?)

There is a telephone number listed, but be advised that this is a small-scale operation. The Captain can be hard to get hold of, and he doesn't take charge cards, so a phone call (no toll-free number) will get you information and conversation only. (The 32k box car sounds interesting, but options bring the price up quickly, still, interesting!)

Optionally, the system can be ordered to power a disk drive ($10.00 extra) which was my choice.

Instructions are in the form of a checklist, which is helpful. My kit was partially assembled, possibly because the instructions did not include the optional power cord and components. It saved a good bit of time (all 3-60 contact card connectors were already in place). Assembly is very straight forward, after I abandoned my usual soldering technique in favor of a 15 watt (Radio Shack, grounded cord) iron. This was more than adequate, smaller would work.

I wasn't too happy to see jumper wires all over the board, especially since there is not physical connection, wires just soldered to components and wires, but it works, and the alternative is a double sided board, which can wind up costing more than twice as much as the single sided board used. The kit went together well, and I am reasonably happy with the results.

Now for the suggestions, comments and criticisms.

The instructions can be confusing at times. I suggest you read everything before you do anything. One suggestion, when step 24 calls for wire ends to be stripped and soldered to components, separate the wires immediately, and make each connection, on both ends, before connecting the next wire. Otherwise you will run out of colors before you start running out of jumpers. There is plenty of wire of the proper color if you cut it as you connect each jumper. This is still easy to follow on the checklist. Pin numbers are difficult to trace until you understand exactly what the instructions are pointing to. I had my odd/even side wrong. After looking at it a while I was able to correct it. Better directions are needed here.

You are not left to your own here though. The Captain will, at NO CHARGE (!) check your assembled kit and correct any errors although you must pay shipping both ways. Possibly someone in the computer group would be willing to check it for you if you decide to go this route.

A box was available, but no longer. A drawing is provided, however, well sort of. The drawing is incomplete and crude, but it can be used as a base for sizes to build your own sheet metal box. (Incidentally, a few weeks after my kit arrived, I was sent a copy of a much more complete box drawing, of wood and sheet metal.) I was disappointed in this phase of the project, since these are the details that can be very important, such

THREE-SLOT EXPANSION KIT
By R. L. Kotschessa
Continued

as strain relief connectors, etc. This may be unfair criticism, but I have seen better details from amateur sources, which go a long way toward a successful project. Many kit projects are disappointing if the details are not provided for; most could do better.

My overall impression, however, is a good one. I have talked to 'The Captain', and found him to be helpful, certainly supportive, and friendly. There are no plans for board kits, since the market doesn't seem to be there. Even though some design work has been done, the expense of having boards made up could not be justified.

If you were at the February meeting, you may be prepared to see the completed board at the March meeting. This will be the first time it is used except as a disc drive power supply.

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