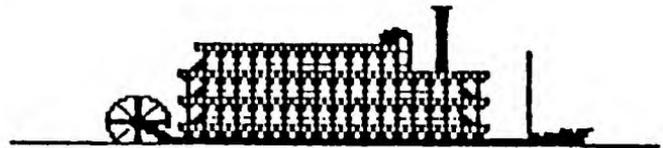


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TIDBITS

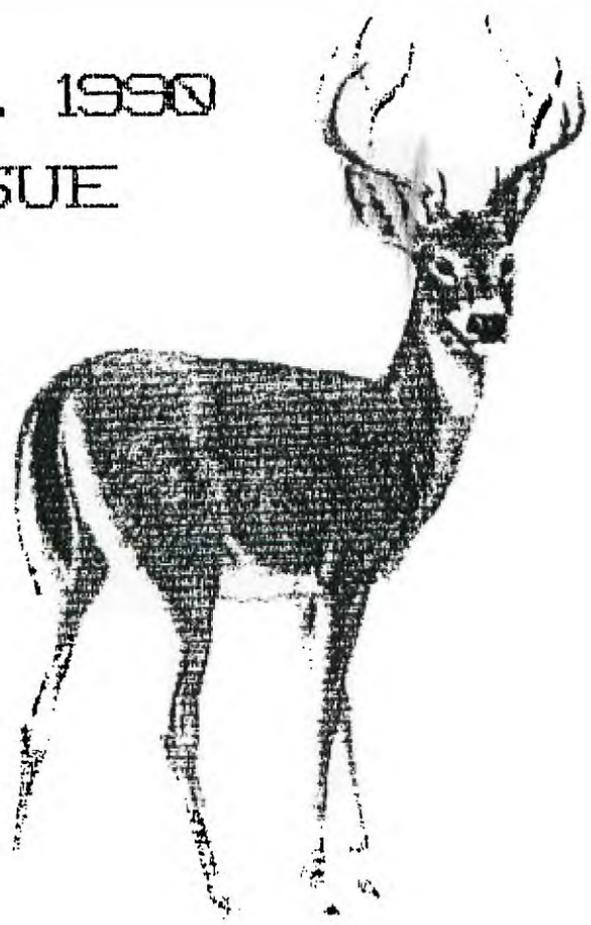
MID SOUTH 99 USERS GROUP



MEMPHIS TENNESSEE

APRIL 1990

ISSUE



T I D B I T S

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Gary Cox	PRESIDENT	901-358-0667
Richard Hiller	VICE-PRESIDENT	901-794-9945
Michael Dorman	SECRETARY	501-732-5126
Bob Jones	TREASURER	901-363-9213
Jim Saemanes	Technical Support	901-476-7011
David Ferguson	Disk Librarian	901-795-3287
Pierre Lamontagne	CO-Librarian	901-386-1513
Michael Dorman	Editor - Newsletter	501-732-5126
Gary Cox	Program Chairman	901-358-0667
Mac Swope	Chairman - Equipment	901-363-3880
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Don't forget! One of these articles could be the infamous April Fools' Day joke.

PRESIDENT'S BIT

By Gary W. Cox

Discussed at last month's meeting was the possibility of having a TI Fair here in Memphis. During the past month a feasibility study was conducted on costs and interest as well as available help. These such items have been discussed throughout the month and at the Saturday workshop. Our conclusion is that we do not have a high enough density of TI owners in this part of the country to make the fair worth it. Plus costs are quite high not to mention available help low. While a full blown TI fair doesn't seem possible for us at this time I did come up with another idea. My idea is to fly in a vendor (with us either paying for it or at least assisting on the travel costs) to one of our meetings to sell and demonstrate their equipment and software. Furthermore, we could even sit aside a Saturday to have a special meeting. Possibly a sort of mini TI Fair. What are your ideas and comments toward this idea? Of course, we would need some donations to help pay for this as I can't see a TI vendor coming here having to pay their travel costs as it wouldn't be worth it...

As mentioned last month Pierre has online a BBS supporting TI! Many problems remain in the system to be worked out but work is going along smoothly. One of the most exciting features of the board is the National TI Echo where messages are transferred across the country through his local system. The number is (901) 386-1760. Also another local BBS is carrying the National TI Echo, the Home Computer Users Group (a users group for all computer types) has it on their BBS but I think you must be a member of the group to gain access. The number though is 398-9050.

Several out of town members have inquired as to obtaining copies of "Technical Interface", our second newsletter publication. If you are not familiar with "Technical Interface" is a publication edited by our member Marshall Ellis and contains "how to" articles obtained from other newsletters that we exchange with. Up to now we have only handed out copies at our meetings due to the costs of having to mail out copies. However, if anyone is willing to pay for the costs of mailing them we would be glad to mail them to you. The costs of mailing them out for a year would be around \$9 in postage. If interested just send \$9 to the group address and specify that you wish to have "Technical Interface" mailed to you. The only requirement is that you must be a member of the group. If you would like a sample copy just to see if you are interested just write or call and I will send you one.

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As promised Computer Buyers Guide has added a column on the TI99/4a and Geneve to their publication taking up where Computer Shopper stifted us! I should have some FREE copies at this months meeting.

A new up to date library listing is nearing completion and could be ready as soon at this months meeting. The new listing will probably be made available on disk for members who request it and can not attend a meeting.

I probably do not say this often enough but I would like to emphasize the point that our group is here to help you our faithful members! As our members I would like to know your ideas, comments, criticisms and suggestions on what we can do to better serve you. Is there something that you dislike about the group, is there something you would like to see more of or less of? Is there a particular piece of software or hardware that you would like demonstrated? We can try to get just about anything you would like. Many times we plan around what we think people want because no one says anything so please speak up and let me know what you think!

C ya at the meeting...

## PROGRAM BIT

- 6:30pm - Doors Open, April 19, 1990
- 7:00pm - General Discussion
- 7:30pm - Demonstration by Jim Saenenes of Reminders (Date Tracking and appointment manager) and 40's Utilities.
- 8:15pm - Demonstration by Beery Miller of various programs on the Myarc Geneve 9640.
- 9:45pm - Meeting Ends.
- 9:55pm - Late Dinner at Shoneys located on Poplar Ave.

## IN THE NEWS

By Gary W. Cox

The following comes from the Greater Tampa Bay UG - Feb 1990

Two years ago the FCC tried and, with your help and letters of protest, failed to institute regulations that would impose additional costs on modem users for data communications. Now, they are at it again. A new regulation that the FCC is quietly working on will directly effect you as the user of a computer and modem. The FCC proposes that users of modems should pay extra charges for use of the public telephone network which carry their data. In addition, computer network services such as Compuserve,

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Tymnet, and Telenet would also be charged as much as \$6 per hour per user for use of the public telephone network. These charges would very likely be passed on to the subscribers. The money is to be collected and given to the telephone companies in an effort to raise funds lost to deregulation. Jim Eason of KGO newstalk radio (San Francisco) commented on the proposal during his afternoon radio program during which he said he learned of the new regulation in an article in the New York Times. Jim took the time to gather addresses which are given below. Here's what you should do NOW! Pass this information on. Find other BBS's that are not carrying this information and upload this as a file so others can easily get a copy to pass along. Next, print out three copies of the letter which follows (or write your own), and send a signed copy to each of the following:

Chairman of the FCC
1919 M Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Chairman, Senate Communication Subcommittee
SH-227 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman, House Telecommunication Subcommittee
B-331 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Here is the suggested text of the letter to send:

Dear Sir,
Please allow me to express my displeasure with the FCC proposal which would authorize a surcharge for the user of modems on the telephone network. This regulation is nothing less than an attempt to restrict the free exchange of information among the growing number of computer users. Calls placed using modems require no special telephone company equipment, and users of modems pay the phone company for use of the network in the form of a monthly bill. In short, a modem call is the same as a voice call, therefore, should not be subject to any additional regulation or extra fees.

Sincerely, (be sure to sign your name!)

It is important that you act now. The bureaucrats already have it in their heads that modem users should subsidize the phone company and are now listening to public comment. PLEASE stand up and make it clear that we will not stand for any government restriction on the free exchange of information!

The following edited from the March 1990 Micropendium:

Harrison Software has raised prices; disks which formerly sold for \$4.50 are now \$5 and disks which formerly sold for \$7.50 are now \$8, including shipping and handling. Bruce Harrison of Harrison Software says. He notes that J.C. Bach Opus V disks shipped before November 1989 had gaps in the documentation included on the disk. He says the company will forward a corrected disk to any user bothered by this program who writes. Address for the company

is Harrison Software, 5705 40th Place, Hyattsville, MD 20781.

The User Group of Orange County in California has updated its configuration instructions for Funnelweb. According to Jim Swedlow of the group, it now covers all version from 4.10 to 4.21 and included direction to a more recent version. It is available on disk. The group asks \$4 for media and postage. Also, Earl Raguse's series Beginning Forth, originally published as newsletter articles, is available on paper for \$4 for copying and postage. Swedlow's entire set of newsletter columns, containing a variety of information especially about XB and TI Writer, is available, along with a number for TI Related files. Runnable copies of all programs are on the disks, he says. Cost is \$5 for three double sided disks for \$6 for five single sided disks (specify format when ordering). Ben Hathaway of the group has written Magic File Manipulator, an assembly program that transfers files between the TI and any other computer "at an unbelievable rate," according to Swedlow. From the keyboard of the other computer, you can transfer files either way, catalog TI disks drives and perform some disk management tasks (rename, protect, unprotect, delete etc...). Requirements are a TI with 32K, RS232 and at least one disk drive and XB. The other computer must have a serial port and a terminal emulation program. Instructions for a three wire cable are included. The disk includes a utility to change test files from TI format to MS-DOS format and vice versa. The group asks \$4 to cover media and postage. Swedlow notes that the program is also on many BBS's. For any of the above items contact Jim Swedlow, 7301 Kirby Way, Stanton, CA 90680.

Bill Gaskill has released Membership Manager, a TI BASE application he says is designed specifically for computer user groups. The program is available for \$25 which include shipping and handling from Bill Gaskill, Box 2642, Grand Junction, CO 81502.

The Boston Computer Society Home Computer User Group fair has been rescheduled to 10am to 4pm May 5th at the cafeteria of Waltham Central Middle School. 55 School St., Waltham, Massachusetts. For information write the Boston Computer Society TI99 User Group, One Center Plaza, Boston, MA 02108.

A new software company, KB Computer Concepts, is offering a free catalog of its products. Products include three games, Spinner, a wheel of fortune game for 1-3 players; Memory Motel, the object of which is to place alien guests into their proper rooms; and Quizzard, a quiz making and taking utility. Also offered are 'phrase disks' for Spinner. The cost for each game is \$12 and the phrase disks are \$5. To order the catalog or products write to KBCC: c/o Keith Bergman; 653 1/2 Fair Ave NW, New Philadelphia, OH 44663.

Finally a note on a few changes in BBS numbers, the new phone number for the Tampa TI BBS is (813) 988-7676 and a new number for the Pittsburgh TI BBS at (412) 341-4820. Also the Cactus Patch TI BBS in Tucson, Arizona now has a new phone number, it is (602) 290-6277.

Check out the latest Micropendium for more news...

UNIVERSAL GRAPHICS INTERFACE

By Richard Hiller

American Jape Inc. has come out with a new and timely product this year. The product is called a Universal Graphics Interface System (UGIS). It can be used with almost any computer including the TI 99/4A without any modifications. It is truly a universal product compatible with most known personal computer systems (TI's of course, Apple including the Macs, Atari, and IBM and clones). As the name implies this product is a system. The system's makeup is both hardware and software that works in graphics and character modes.

What does it do? You ask. Well just about anything you want to do with graphics or characters with a computer. For example in its graphics mode one could do graphics (of course), plotting, imaging, design (including CAD capabilities), etc.. In ASCII mode you could do wordprocessing and spread sheets. Now for the best part, you can combine both modes. So whatever you can dream up you can print out.

The system is optically coupled and operated through a physical interface. It is very user friendly. In fact you could sit right down and start using it without ever opening the manual. Its virtual stand alone operation is also adaptable to hostile environments and makes this a very low maintenance product. The specifications of the system are nothing short of spectacular.

Memory: high speed access; storage is interactive and high density; and is fully expandable.

Color: fully color compatible, with almost unlimited color capabilities (limited by the computer and monitor used)

Power: rechargeable on board power supply, also cordless and mobile.

ASCII mode: has almost unlimited Fonts available, almost anything you can design (can use any of the fonts available for the TI now); auto wrap; able to set to any column width, including standards of 40, 80, 132 (sorry you don't get 80 or 132 column on screen using TI); supports foreign languages; lines per page limited to print size and size of paper.

Graphics mode: resolution limited to computer and monitor used, and capabilities of user; color or monochrome depending on monitor or print medium.

Control: an optically coupled, manually operated control unit which works through a physical interface, that is similar to a joystick.

I used UGIS (model date: 4190) for some time now and have been

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very satisfied. In fact I don't know how I ever did without it. I done some print shop routines with this system including doing such things as multi column,, graphics and character interfacing (pictures and text together without special function handling), and multiple copying. I've also used it to do wordprocessing with special fonts. I took a TI Writer file and had it printed using a font I designed myself. It made a great presentation at a meeting. Look out Macintosh! You know the TV commerial. I done some spreadsheets with graphics and even designed some graphics for a game program that a friend is programing on another computer system.

With some extra hardware and/or software items available you can do other things such as editing. The functions are: cut and paste, delete, copy, move, insert, and spell check. All of these functions work in the fonts in which you're working. By the way you can mix fonts, as many as you want, together. Complete backup capabilities are available with special file handling. Files can be merged, moved, copied, specially stored and retrived (such as with passwords or other 'locks'), numbered, write protected, and displayed. In wordprocessing special dictionaries are available including foreign languages and thesauri. And, get this, some multitasking is available even on the TI. The data you have can be protected even in a shared environment; and can be archived.

If you would like to get more information or obtain the Universal Graphics Interface System, get pencil and paper and write American Jape or me. Be sure to remember model date 4190.

(NOTE: Richard will demonstrate this system at the May meeting)

# FOUR-A/TALK

Random ramblings about things TI.

By Bill Gaskill

MARCH 1990

TAX TIME

WHAT'S HOT:

SPELL IT!, ASGARD MOUSE, BRAD SNYDER 40 COLUMN UTILITIES, REGENA ON ADVANCED BASIC, SMALLTALK, TI TAX, HARRISON WORD PROCESSOR UPDATE, TIPS V1.5 and more.

DISCOVERIES:

-You will recall that I made mention of the SmallTalk BBS program

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that I found on GENie in the last Four-A/Talk column. It is a 100% assembly language program written by Canadian programmer Lloyd Galenzoski, that consumes less than 50 sectors on disk. Well, I finally got to try it out with a friend recently, and is it "sweet". SmallTalk has to be the simplest piece of BBS software to use that there is. It supports about a 100 users, XMODEM file transfers, has a complete message base facility and let's the Sysop view everything that the caller is doing. It does not (at least as far as I can tell from the limited docs) allow the Sysop to break in on the caller or to communicate with the caller on-line like the "big boys" do. However, if you are interested in setting up your own Bulletin Board, and want the quickest way to get started, I will guarantee that SmallTalk is going to be the most user friendly BBS you will find. It supports 300, 1200 and 2400 baud modems too. The entire package is public domain and will probably start showing up in club libraries, if it is not there already. Nice job, Lloyd!

-I have also been playing around with Brad Snyder's 40 Column Utilities package lately, after reading Harry Brashear's MICROreview of it in one of last year's MICROpendiums. I REALLY like this program. Although there are other 40 column display utilities out there, namely DEP from Oak Tree Systems, XDP by Australian Craig Sheehan, EDP by Paragon Computing (Curtis Provance) and a 40 column display program written by Dr. Roy Tamoshiro, the Snyder package has won my favor. It does not have the features of the EDP program by Curtis Provance and it does not have the flash and immensely impressive graphics of Craig Sheehan's XDP, but it does have ease of use over all of them. It is simply a very comfortable piece of software to program with, lacking the clutter of "so many features you can't remember them all, or how to use them", yet with the kind of features that an XB programmer demands most.

My "playing" around resulted in a couple of really nice applications that could not have been created without the 40 column text screen and some of the other options that the Snyder package offers. If you are an XB programmer who would like to put some real "class" into your screen displays and who has an interest in unique features like the ability to scroll the screen in all four directions, read strings of existing text from the screen, convert upper to lower case, convert lower to upper case and dump the contents of any screen to your printer at the touch of a key, then this program is for you. Of course it has all the "expected" features such as windows etcetera too. The price for this Fairware application is a measley \$6.50. Ought to at least be a \$10 program, but I'm not the author, so I'll keep my mouth shut. Contact;

BRAD SNYDER  
148 Ave. A  
Palmerton, Pa. 18071

NEWS:

SPELL IT!

-Jim Reiss (and Asgard Software), the guy who brought us

Typewriter 99 and who is working on a module version of a new terminal emulator program, has written a new spelling checker for the 99/4 (and Geneve) that is available in SS/SD, DS/DD and hard disk versions. I don't have a ton of information on the product, but I do know that it will work with TI-Writer and ANY of the TI-Writer clones such as;

- o Art Green's RAG Writer,
- o Paolo Bagnaresi's BA-Writer,
- o Tony and Will McGovern's FunnelWeb,
- o J. Peter Hoddie/Myarc's My-Word program for the Geneve,
- o Jerome Prinkl/DataBiotics' WordWriter etc.

Since I haven't received my copy of it yet, I can't tell you much about its operation, speed, accuracy etcetera, but the claims are that it is "many times" faster than any existing 99/4A spell checker (all one of them, not counting the one that comes with WriterEase) and it also apparently works within the document rather than as a separate setup the way the Tom Kirk (DragonSlayer-American Software) spell checker does. My guess is that it will probably work with Press too, when it comes out. Chris Bobbitt would not have overlooked that need, I'm sure.

Prices that I have seen in print are \$19.95 for the DS/DD version and \$24.95 for the SS/SD version, both of which contain 30,000 word dictionaries, and \$34.95 for the hard disk version, which contains a whopping 200,000 word dictionary. Add \$2.50 for shipping and handling when you order. I knew I bought my hard disk for something. It SURE IS NICE to see someone supporting the HFDC and hard disk setups out there! If you are interested in obtaining a copy of Spell It!, contact Asgard Software at the address listed below.

#### ASGARD MOUSE:

-As if a new spelling checker weren't enough, Asgard has also introduced a new mouse for the 99/4A and Geneve. You will recall that Franz Wagenbach introduced us to the Mechatronics GmbH mouse through his T.A.P.E. firm back in 1986, which was the first 99/4A mouse that I am aware of. Unfortunately, it didn't seem to achieve the kind of acceptance I thought it would. I am not really sure if it is still available, but I did see Franz still offering it at the Fest-West in San Diego in February 1989. At any rate, Mike Maksimik, author of FDOS and in my opinion, the best newsletter article of 1989, has created a new mouse for the 99/4A that also comes with the necessary software to use the device with TI-Artist, TI-Artist Plus! and for interfacing with Extended Basic and assembly programs. The mouse sells for \$49.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling. You may order yours from;

ASGARD SOFTWARE  
P.O. BOX 10306  
ROCKVILLE, MD. 20849  
703-255-3085

#### TI TAX:

-Bill Chavanne has released the 1989 TI Tax (Multiplan Templates)

Income tax program through Jeff Guide's Disk Only Software this year. To the best of my knowledge, TI Tax is the only Federal Income Tax preparation software still available for the 99/4A or Geneve. James Sleeth of California used to offer a Multiplan package and even had a few State income tax modules to offer too, but he doesn't seem to be involved in it anymore. Julian Achim and Datax had an Extended Basic tax preparation program, but I believe the last one of those he produced for the 99/4A was the 1986 tax year release. Steve Karasek of St. Louis seems to be producing Federal Income tax preparation programs for every computer but the TI and Joe Nuvolini of RMJ Home Computer Sales in Colorado Springs dropped out of the income tax software business 4-5 years ago. So it looks as if TI Tax is your best shot.

According to a press release I read on TI Tax, all of the IRS forms that it replicates are IRS approved. The eight volume set is massive, but I don't think everyone needs all eight. I believe the idea is that you buy only those forms that you need, based upon your tax scenario. The most expensive module in the set is only \$20, with most being more like \$12.50. You must have Multiplan to use TI Tax. If you are interested, contact;

DISK ONLY SOFTWARE  
P.O. Box 244  
Lorton, Va. 22079  
800-736-4951

#### REGENA ON AVANCED BASIC:

-Cheryl (Regena) Whitelaw, known far and wide for her expertise in TI Basic and Extended Basic (not to mention Microsoft Basic and who knows what else), has begun tackling yet another computer language. Regena has now created a Diskazine type offering of Myarc Advanced Basic techniques, tutorials, programs and the like that will be offered on a monthly subscription basis. You may order as many or as few months as you like. The cost is \$6.00 per issue. Topics to be included are;

- o Learning to program,
- o Adapting other Basics to Advanced Basic,
- o Programming techniques and
- o Actual Advanced Basic programs.

If you are a Geneve owner and wish to take advantage of this ground level offer, now that Advanced Basic is a "whole" language, write to;

REGENA  
918 CEDAR KNOLLS WEST  
CEDAR CITY, UTAH 84720

-Asgard Software has compiled over 50 listings of GENie uploads into a Page Pro 99 specific library, dubbed library 38. It is apparently open to all registered owners of Page Pro 99. To join Library 38 you must send a note via GENie Mail to C. BOBBITT.

-Ron Wolcott's TIPS (TI Print Shop) is now in V1.5. The newest version has been trimmed down for additional speed and it also

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supports color printers like the NX1000 Rainbow. There are also some new font files available, that were released at the same time as V1.5, that provide fancy alphabet images. Barry Traver has uploaded the new version and the newest fonts to GENie and probably CompuServe for the TI-SIG subscribers. If you are not into telecommunications, check your club library. I would imagine that someone has downloaded the new stuff to make it available to you.

-Paul Dam has released V2.5 of MENU80, which is sort of the Geneve version of John Johnson's BOOT/HRD MENU program for the 99/4A. He says that; "...MENU80 Ver 2.5 (1s) probably the last in a series of MENU80's unless some radical changes come along. I have used some ideas that speed things up over ver 2.3, and have added some options. I will work on a MOUSEMENU80 in the c99 programming language, and possibly put another MENU screen on MENU80. I would like to add John Johnson's XUTILS on the next Screen. MENU80 is made possible with Barry Boone's GETKEY, GETSTR EXEC programs. MENU80 is Public Domain. Permission is granted to distribute MENU80 with any other software...". Another Paul Dam upload that I ran across was a HELP file for 9640 owners that Geneve users might be interested in. Here again, both files are available as downloads from GENie.

-Gene Hitz has given Barry Traver permission to distribute a ton of Basic and Extended Basic games written for Arcade Action Software back in the days when Gene was commercially involved with the 99/4A. Barry, who is an assistant sysop of the TI RoundTable on GENie, has put the programs up for grabs as SHAREWARE. They may or may not appear in a future Genial Traveler issue. Don't know one way of the other. If you would like to contact Gene about the programs write to;

ARCADE ACTION SOFTWARE
4122 N. GLENWAY
WAUWAUTOSA, WI. 53222

-Bruce Harrison called the other night (March 12th) to say that he was releasing an upgrade to the Harrison Word Processor. The new version apparently contains some bug fixes and also a few added features that existing users have requested. I don't have mine yet, but will report more on the upgrade when I get it. To ensure that you get a copy of the upgrade (assuming that you are a current owner), write to;

HARRISON SOFTWARE
5705 40TH PLACE
HYATTSVILLE, MD. 20781
301-277-3467

STORE FRONTS:

-It seems that one of the vanishing "breeds" in computerdom (is that a word?) everywhere is the retail computer store. Even in the IBM and MS-DOS clone world there seems to be fewer and fewer local vendors that have actual "open to the public" type shops where a person can walk in, browse through the goodies and generally talk computers. Of course store fronts have been a rare

thing in the 99/4A community for some time, but there are still a few out there. From the folks at Fest-West in Tucson I learned of The Orphanage in Littleton, Colorado, and from my own wanderings and contacts I came across Janie Lawrence's Bits and Chips and Barb Weiderhold's Queen Anne Computer Shoppe, both in the Seattle area. If you know of a store front operation in your community that still supports the 99/4A or Geneve, even as a side line venture, I would like to know about it. There are also a few vendors who operate out of their homes that are open to the public by appointment only or only on weekends etc. I would like to hear about those supporters too. I will make sure that the information is included in future Four-A/Talk articles for all 99/4A and Geneve owners to take advantage of. Please help! Here's a list of some that I am already aware of.

THE ORPHANAGE
LITTLETON, COLO.
303-973-6390 or
303-973-3290

· BITS AND CHIPS
23637 HIGHWAY 99
SEATTLE, WA. 98020

QUEEN ANNE COMPUTERS
6102 ROOSEVELT WAY NE
SEATTLE, WA. 98115
206-283-0953

NOVA COMPUTERWARE
52 AIRPORT ROAD
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
CANADA T5G 0W7
403-452-0372

COMPETITION COMPUTER
719 2629 WEST NATIONAL
MILWAUKEE, WI. 53204
414-672-4010

L.L. CONNOR ENTERPRISE
1521 FERRY STREET
LAFAYETTE, IND. 47904
317-742-8146

JIM LESHER
722 HUNTLEY
DALLAS, TX. 75214
214-821-9274

BRAATZ COMPUTER SERVICES
719 E. BYRD ST.
APPLETON, WI. 54911
414-731-3478

TRIVIA:

-Ever wonder who that smiling guy is in the NOVA Computer ad that has been in MICROpendium for the past few years? If you don't know what I'm talking about, turn to the November 1989 issue of MICROpendium, page 32, lower left corner. Well, I did wonder, and thanks to Steve Mehr, I found out. It's Leigh Dehany, son of Nova Computers owner Judy Dehany, who recently attended Fest-West in Tucson, and who's firm is featured in the STOREFRONTS article above. How's that for trivia?

Did you know that;

-An outfit named Leroy Enterprises in Dallas, Texas used to market a complete 99/4A software package for Shaklee Distributors?

-Jim Peterson, of TigerCub Software, used to use a different company address in his software advertisements, to identify the publication the customer read the ad in? A similar idea is often employed by other companies when they include a DEPT. in the address of their company. It is to tell the owner which paid for

ads are generating the most sales.

-Mike McCann, author of The Printer's Apprentice and other great commercial programs, also released a Fairware program called 99-Animator in 1987?

-Armadillo Bytes, a Dallas, Texas computer repair firm, offered a TI-99/8 with hexbus DS/DD drive for sale (used) for \$1000? A month or so later the price was down to \$800, but it apparently sold at that price or something close to it. Kind of gives you an idea of what one might cost if you wanted to own a 99/8.

THIS MONTH IN TI HISTORY:

By Bill Gaskill

<1980>

Creative Computing magazine calls the new TI-99/4; "One of the most easy to use systems we've tested...price still beyond grasp of Middle America."

-The same source verifies that TI Basic for the 99/4 was written by Microsoft, to TI specs.

<1981>

Second issue of TIHOME Tidings contains letters from Stephen Shaw and Peter Brooks.

<1982>

Stephen Shaw, dba Stainless Software is granted licenses to sell FFF Software, Norton Software and PRP Computergraphic software in the United Kingdom.

-The Minneapolis / St. Paul 99ers are formed with Paul Weiblen as president.

<1983>

Microsoft Multiplan is released for the 99/4A.

-Plans to produce ZAXXON for the 99/4A are cancelled by DataSoft. The reason is that the program could not be ported to a GROMpack (module) and DataSoft did not think that there were enough owners with expansion systems to successfully market the program in a disk version.

-TI releases Disk Manager II module. It is offered as a \$9.95 upgrade to owners of Disk Manager I.

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<1984>

San Francisco based Triton Products Company is named by TI as the "fulfillment house" for remaining 99/4A hardware and software products.

-TI officially left the home computer market behind and ceased all production of the 99/4A on March 28, 1984.

-InfoCom reverses decision of Feb84 and decides to continue producing its adventure games for the 99/4A.

-Creative Computing writes an in-depth article on the demise of the 99/4A. The article is authored by David Ahl and is found on page 30.

-DIABLO game is released by Extended Software of Cedar Creek, Ohio.

-Speed Math program appears in Popular Computing page 209.

<1985>

Peter M.L. Lottrup book on Mini-Memory assembly language debuts from Compute! Books.

-Chicago TI-UG members Roger and Orlan Degris, Box 481 Lake Zurich, Il. 600047 release the 49-99 keyboard, a standard 99/4A keyboard with an added Fctn key.

<1986>

Thomson Software, a Michigan based supporter and vendor of 99/4A software closes down after owner Don Thomson accepts a new job that will reportedly conflict with his TI business.

-CorComp releases the X-10 Home Sentry System.

-On March 19 Richard Mitchell purchases the rights to The Smart Programmer and merges his Super 99 Monthly publication under the new name. Mitchell announces the merger in the Mar86 issue of Super 99 Monthly, which appears in June '86.

-Millers Graphics announces a new card for the PE box that interfaces with IBM keyboards. It is never produced.

-Myarc demonstrates XB II at Fest-West in Los Angeles.

-John Keown releases the ill-fated menu program called Program Manager. It runs out of a cartridge and is designed for assembly programs. The module is to be marketed by Pilgrim's Pride.

-Texas Instruments closes all exchange centers. The final nail is driven in to the 99/4A coffin.

-Chicago Users Group becomes the first Users Group to advertise nationally for outside members.

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-Home Computer Magazine does its last disappearing act when magazine subscribers and supporters receive notification by mail that HCM has gone out of business, and that the balance of their subscription is considered "filled" by the one issue of Home Computer Journal that is sent with the notice of HCM's demise.

<1987>

Access Engineering, a consortium made up of Jim Horn, Richard Roseen and Chris Bobbitt, announce ADOS, AMOS, AC-BASIC and AC-PASCAL for the Myarc 9640 computer.

-Triton Products Inc., the company chosen by TI in 1984 to handle the remaining stock of 99/4A hardware and software, announces a PC Clone to the TI Community complete with an MG designed bridge box so that you can use your 99/4A keyboard with the IBM clone.

-MICROpendium receives beta version of Myarc 9640, which is now a computer on a card for the PE Box rather than a full-fledged computer as originally planned.

-Ryte Data 210 Mountain St., Haliburton Ontario, Canada announces its plans to build an IBM-AT like expansion box for the 99/4A and Geneve computers.

-Bible Trivia is released by Trinity Products.

<1988>

Myarc announces release of Hard Disk Controller Card.

-Al Beard, dba LGMA Products, releases 99Fortran, a version of the Fortran 77 language, ported over to the 99/4A.

<1989>

Paul Charlton releases a developers kit for the Geneve 9640.

-ADVANCED BASIC for the Geneve debuts.

-Al Beard, spokesman for LGMA products, announces 99FORTRAN for the Geneve.

-Asgard Software announces a contest to design a new 99/4A compatible computer to pick up where the Myarc Geneve left off. Owner Chris Bobbitt is critical of Myarc's mismanagement of the Geneve and their lack of customer support for the product.

MICROdex for TI-Base announced. Program is the first third-party application to be developed for TI-Base.

-.Geometer's Apprentice debuts from the Mike McCann software house.

-Northcoast 99ers begins accepting non-attending members, following the lead of the Chicago TI-UG.

-TICOFF is held March 18 at the Roselle Park (N.J.) High School.

-MICROpendium publishes the sources of several computerized indexes to their magazine.

UPGRADING YOUR TI

By Gary W. Cox

One of the most often asked questions that I receive is where do I go next in upgrading my TI or how do I make my TI more productive?

For those of you who still have just a console almost anything is an improvement! Many people in the past and even now have looked down on the TI99/4a as a toy because the console is so limited. That statement is almost true of the console alone but the console has a great deal of potential for a small additional investment.

While the console can run many sophisticated cartridge programs output is limited to the screen or cassette which output is one of the most important features of a computer aside from input. The purpose of a computer is to be able to input information, process it and output that information back in easily useable form as quickly as possible...

In almost all cases the step to upgrading is a big one. I think the absolute minimum that a person needs to take even partial advantage of their TI99/4a is of course a console with the Extended BASIC cartridge (necessary to run nearly every program out there on disk), 32K memory (absolutely necessary as most assembly language programs will not run without it), a disk controller for a disk drive and at least a SS/SD (Single Sided / Single Density) disk drive. I have seen such equipment for sale as used equipment as low as \$100 to up to around \$300 to \$400. Note that all of that is necessary as most of that is a requirement now days!

Now I am at the point that I think many are at and that is where to go next? While the above equipment will run most software today many additions are possible to aid your progress and speed.

The first addition I think everyone should go for is purchasing one or two DS/DD disk drives. Those drives can be purchased from a variety of places as most standard DS/DD drives work with the TI. I would recommend two half height drives which can fit in the Expansion Box. However, note that the TI brand disk controller card will only operate the drives as double sided not double density. However, with a double sided drive you double your disk capacity and many programs in our library are on double sided disks which will not operate in a single sided drive (except the first side of the disk can be read). A Double Density controller would be necessary (such as Myarc or Corcomp) to use Double Density capability.

After the upgrade of disk drives what is next? Perhaps an RS232

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card. An RS232 card will provide the ability to connect a modem or a serial or parallel printer as each RS232 card comes with one serial port (a splitter cable can be used for a serial port #2) and one parallel port which most printers use. With that addition a printer can be added (many standard printers will work) or a modem (any standard modem will work). So with the printer your information can be printed and with a modem you can communicate with almost any computer in the world as almost all computers can communicate with each other through the modem. Thus you now have your INPUT and OUTPUT capabilities!

Now what? Why not a Horizon Ram Disk from Bud Mills Services. I say Horizon because I have observed those to be the most reliable and trouble free Ram Disk plus it provides many features not found in some Ram Disks! A Ram Disk operates just like a disk drive, data can be stored and loaded from it except that data is stored on memory chips so any operation occurs at lightning speed! I have found my Horizon Ram Disk to be one of the most useful pieces of hardware that I own! The memory chips are backed by a battery which is recharged while the system is in operation (battery lasts for months without a recharge!). As soon as I turn on my system I have instant access to many of my most often used programs such as the Editor or Formatter of Funnelweb, Telco, Archiver etc... Many of my programs are available in an instant by a touch of a button. The Horizon Ram Disk is something which has certainly increased the speed and ease in operating my system. A RAMBO can even be added to the Ram Disk to allow additional memory access for your programs beyond the 48K memory barrier on the TI99/4a.

From this point you could purchase a hard disk, or just a DS/DD disk controller. How about a P-GRAM card (like a Gram Kracker) where cartridges can be saved, modified and loaded from disk... Perhaps a Geneve is now more your taste with high resolution graphics, far greater speed and superior capabilities even beyond IBM PC's! Where you go with your TI is limited only by your imagination! Perhaps this article will have given you an idea what direction to take with your system.

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NOTICE

Information contained in TidBits is accurate and true to the best of our knowledge. Viewpoints and opinions expressed in TidBits are not necessarily that of the Mid-South 99'ers. We welcome any opinions/corrections from our readers. Articles may be reprinted elsewhere as long as credit is given to the author and newsletter.

GROUP INFO

Visitors and potential members may receive 3 free issues of TidBits while they decide if they wish to join (no obligation). On the top of your label is a code. A Y means you are a member, N means 3 free list, UG means user group and S means a business. Beside the Y is a date, one year from that date your dues are due. A dollar sign (\$) on the label will indicate that your dues are due. The library is open only to members. Library list is \$1. Mail order disk library access is \$2 for the first disk and \$1 for each additional disk - max of 5 disks per month. Order by disk number only. At meetings, library access is FREE if you exchange your disk for ours or \$1 per disk for our disks. Send all mail order library requests to librarian's address! Send dues and correspondence to group address.

CALENDAR

MEETINGS: April 19, May 17 (3rd Thursday!)
WORKSHOPS: April 28, May 26 (4th Saturday!)

24HR TI BULLETIN BOARD

The Midnight Hour BBS 300/1200/2400/9600 Hayes 501-735-9980
Dial 735-9980 from Memphis area for toll free call.

GROUP MAILING ADDRESS

Mid-South 99 Users Group
P.O. Box 38522
Germantown, Tn. 38183-0522

LIBRARY ADDRESS

David Ferguson
3377 Creighton Ave.
Memphis, TN 38118

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____ | | \$15.00 FAMILY
ADDRESS _____ | | \$10.00 JUNIOR (under 15)
CITY _____ ST ZIP _____
PHONE() - : INTERESTS _____

EQUIPMENT, ETC. _____

Detach and mail with check payable to: Mid-South 99 Users Group,
P.O. Box 38522, Germantown, Tn, 38183-0522.

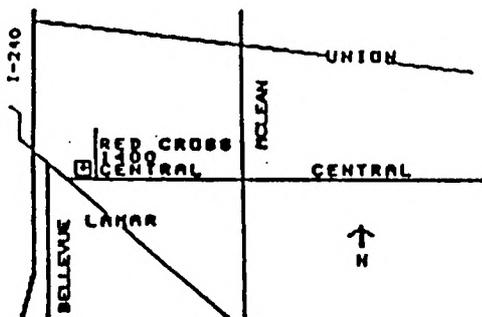
NOTICES

MEETING

7:00 P.M.
Thursday, April 19th
Red Cross Building
1400 Central Ave.

WORKSHOP

9:00 A.M TO NOON
Saturday, April 28th
To Be Announced



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UG
EDMONTON 99ERS USER SOCIETY
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