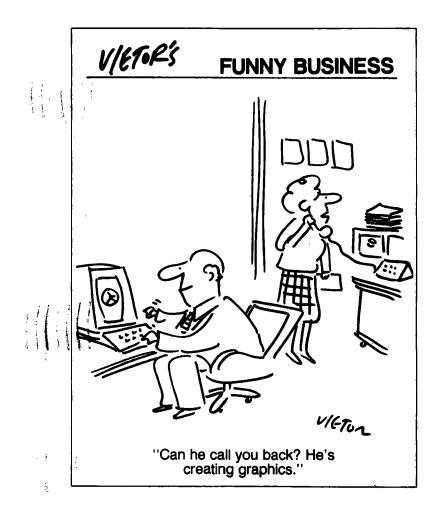
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AUGUST 1984 Monthly Newsletter Version 3.8



UNOFFICIAL MINUTES 17 July 1984

- -- IN the absence of the President, and the Vice President, Treasurer Jim Cox opened the meeting.
- -- Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as published in the newsletter.
- -- The Treasurers report was accepted as presented by Jim Cox.
- -- In the absence of the Secretary, no official Minutes appear in this newsletter.

The Editorial Staff

Technology Support Group of Spencer, Mass, has just announced a very useful package of programming utilities which can do some pretty interesting things. The package, called PRO-MOD, contains routines which can compress a program by removing REMark statements, and even "dissect" your program and point out errors which the computer can't identify! There will be a full review next month, but if you can't wait their phone number is 617-885-6425.

PMB

LIBRARY NOTICE

PLEASE RETURN ALL BORROWED MATERIALS TO THE MUNCH LIBRARY AT EACH MEETING. THIS WILL GIVE OTHER MEMBERS A CHANCE TO ENJOY OUR COLLECTION OF "TEXTWARE" AS MUCH AS YOU HAVE !! THANK YOU !! AGENDA for AUGUST 21 , 1984 7:00 - 7:30 Open Demonstrations New Member Registration Software Exchange (members only) 7:30 - 8:00 Business Meeting: Approval of Minutes Treasurers Report Committee Reports Old Business: New Business Announcements 8:00 - 9:00 Special Interest Group Meetings and Open Demonstrations and Discussion:

DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER WILL BE SEPTEMBER 5th. Please sent any articles to the newsletter staff or drop them off at the Video Connection on Lincoln St.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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OR: MBX SYSTEM:	\$99.95			
BASEBALL	29.95			
TOTAL PRICE	\$129.90			
MUNCH DEAL	\$109.95			

RAMBLINGS

BY Jim Cox

T.I. has sent us three disks which are available to the membership for copying. They are T.I. Writer and Multiplan Enhancements! T.I. Forth. Source Code Parts A & B. The disks will be abailable at the August Meeting.

The following schedule will be in effect for use of the Video Connection Expansion System. Weekdays, with the exception of my day off, from 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.; and Saturday from 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. This service is available as of 8-27-84.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

In response to requests from many people who live outside the Worcester area, we now offer subscriptions to this newsletter. The rate will be \$12.00 for twelve issues. If you order a subscription before 9-30-84, you will recieve all available back issues at no charge.

To subscribe, use the order form on the back page for membership renewals and write newsletter subscription on the bottom.

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 \$10.00
 "

Classified (non-commercial) ADs are FREE for MUNCH members.

~ 5 ~

by Jack Sughrue

You know, it's so great when you can finally save up your pfennigs and francs until you can buy something you really have been wanting instead of squandering it on this and that until you've enough left to buy something second-class instead of first-class.

Well, for those of you who want the best in adventure games - the very best! - whip out your piggy ban! and save away. The best is here! INFOCOM.

For a long while INFOCOM has been known as the best in the business for intellectual, challenging text games. While we 99er-types slavered over such marvels on the TI Professional or the Apple or the IBM, those friends who owned those machines would look askance or, worse, invite you in to try out these games on Their computer as if you were some poor relative left to starve in the snow (and They were filled with the milk of human kindness.)

No more!

Now I feel like the guy in the ad who said "They laughed when I sat down to play the piano..."

All the INFOCOM games are now available for our superb computer!!! And it's about time. I'm sure TI owners will be able to play them all better than anyone else anyway.

In case you're not familiar with INFOCOM, I'll give you a little background. The text games are disk-driven only. You'll need memory expansion, too. (Zork I, for example, uses up 534 sectors on the two disks.) But these things are almost worth purchasing all the peripherals just to play.

They're expensive when compared to lesser materials (You can look around and get the games for under \$40), but the IBM and other versions, for some reason, run \$10 to \$20 more for each game.

These games are worth it.

The Zork series (I,II,&III) are the most famous of the lot, and I'll discuss those in a second.

INFOCOM also puts out some other unusual adventures: Enchanter is similar to Zork in that there is magical evil you must overcome in this fantasy world.

Deadline is a mystery. It is a real-life adventure similar to those bizarre "novels" of Dennis Wheatley and J.G. Links (which are police dossiers full of telegrams and packages of pills and human hair and fingerprints and police interviews which you must interpret to find the doer of the dastardly deed). Deadline is like this. You must solve the mystery.

Witness is an equally exciting mystery. Only this time you have only 12 hours to solve the thing or you'll be taken off the case. This package contains a magazine (pulp-style, as it takes place in the 30° s - the time of Sam Spade).

Infidel takes you, a small-time explorer, into the Egyptian Desert in search of a lost pyramid. If you like Indiana Jones, this is your chance to use your computer to transport yourself into cliffhanging adventures.

Starcross is the first of the science-fiction

adventures. You are about to have a space rendezvous. Suspended awakens you from cryogenic suspension into

an insame world of the future. Planetfall is a hilarious science fiction adventure (not that all these INFOCOM programs aren't filled with wit and fun) that has an infantile robot named Floyd who has to assist you.

That's the lot, so far. And an ingenious lot it is, too. The premise of all these adventures is a good one. Each is a novel - a full-fledged novel - and you are it's leading character. Early programmers dreamed of such a thing. The unlikely has become real.

These adventures are not like Tunnels of Doom. Nor are they like Devil's Dungeon or Haunted House. They may be a little like Scott Adam's Adventures, but not much. Adam's work is like a primer by comparison. You have to use two clue words (Take Book, Go Rock, Talk Bird). You speak English to INFOCOM. In Zork, for example, you can type "Look in the bag. Take out the message. Read the message. Drop the bag." all at once. Everything will be done. You can even use complex sentences: "Throw the newspaper, the red book, and the magazine into the chasm." And thy will be done.

I'd recommend you buy the maps for Zork. The empire is so huge with so many places to go and so much to do before you even get to the underground empire that it might be a tiny bit frustrating. (It was more that a tiny bit with me.) Helpful hints books are also sold for each of the games, but hold off for a few months. And play the games with family or friends. The more the merrier. You will get sarcastic answers if you swear (and different sarcastic answers for different swears).

I guess what it really comes down to is the MASSIVENESS of the programs. They are immense. The thought and the time that goes into them is amazing. They are packaged by a genius. The stuff that comes with Deadline and Witness is unbelievable.

If you want months of pleasure. If you like adventure like Indiana's or mystery or fantasy or science fiction, I would highly recommend the best: games from INFOCOM.

MUNCH OFFICERS AND NUMBERS (all in 617 area)

HANGMAN

by Jony Falco

This short (av definition of short means it will fit on one 8.5 by 11 sheet) program is a rewrite of a program that I wrote when I first bought a TI-99/4A in 1982. It has a feature that some might find useful. It utilizes "invisible data". By this I mean that the data lines are "computer readable" but not "people readable". Listing will only produce spaces and funny characters on the screen.

To get a running version of the program type it in as it appears here but go over the words in guptes that appear in the data statements typing each letter with the control key depressed.

Please note that listing to a printer will cause the listing to stop when the data lines are reached.

280 X\$="USED:"&H\$

 320 IF WRONG THEN 360
 600 A\$=B\$

 320 IF WRONG THEN 360
 610 RETURN

 320 PRINT * PRESS ENTER IF
 & STCRE DATA

 ND G ERT*
 600 A\$=B\$

 340 THEN * GUESS WORD: *:W
 640 READ WORD\$(T)

 50 IF W\$=A\$ THEN 400
 660 RETURN

 350 IF W\$=A\$ THEN 400
 660 RETURN

 360 GOSUB 850
 670 REM: SUBROUTINE TO PRINT

 370 IF WRONG THEN 380 ELSE 2
 INVISIBLE WORDS

 380 N=N+1
 690 A*=UPET

 390 GOTU 450
 690 A*=UPET

 50
 670 REM: SUBROUTINE TO PRINT

 50
 1NVISIBLE WORDS

 50
 680 FOR T=1 TO 19

 390 60T0 450
 700 60SUB 550

 400 PRINT " ##THAT'S IT!!##
 710 PRINT A\$

 *KA\$&"
 (PRESS ANY KE

 70
 60SUB 1830

 410 60SUB 1830
 740 REM CREATE PARTIAL WORD

 41.5 60SUB 1830
 740 REM CREATE PARTIAL WORD

 41.5 60SUB 1790
 FOR DISPLAY

 420 FOR 0500
 700 NEXT T

 430 60T0 250
 770 NEXT T

 440 60T0 250
 790 J\$(1)=""

 460 IF N<11 THEN 250</td>
 790 J\$(1)=Y\$(1)

 480 END
 810 T#/**

490 REM: TO ENTER 'INVISIBLE (1))-64) 590 NEXT B 600 A\$=B\$

 B20 NEXT T

 B20 NEXT T

 B20 NEXT T

 B20 NEXT T

 B20 NEXT D

 B20 NEXT D

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WE JUST HAVE ONE GOODIE FOR YOU THIS MONTH, REPORTED BY THE GOOD PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH BAY TI USERS GROUP IN SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA.

*IF YOU WANT TO GO FROM EXTENDED BASIC TO BASIC WITHOUT RETURNING TO THE TITLE SCREEN, SIMPLY ENTER THE COMMAND:

CALL LOAD (-32116,4)

WE SUGGEST THAT YOU TRY THIS CAREFULLY (AS WITH ANY "CALL LOAD"), BUT IT MAY HAVE ITS USES.

ONLINE WITH THE TI 99/4A

As mentioned in the last issue, your editor has got his hands on a modem and signed up with The Source.

At this writing, time has not been available to fully explore all avenues available to a user of one of the best telecomputing facilities geared toward home computer users (i.e. "what are you doing playing with the computer when there is so much to do outdoors?"), but here's an update:

NEWS & WEATHER: It is possible to tap the UPI news wires through The Source, and code your inquiry by type of news or sports (by keyword), or location (by state), or any number of other criteria to find exactly the story you wanted. Also, stories are kept for the last 7 days, so you may reexamine an item you heard earlier in th week.

ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD: In this area, you may either POST or READ ads placed by other users. Ads are kept for seven days, and once again you may quickly find the type of ad you are looking for by using keywords or topics in your search.

AIRLINE SCHEDULES: If you travel, or if you only like to dream about traveling, The Source can provide very specific information regarding airline schedules anywhere in the world, using very brief commands. It is even possible to make reservations for these flights using an additional service area called "Source Plus". Of course, the hourly charge for these extra services is somewhat higher, but you can also get more useful things accomplished with a small amount of connect time.

While we are talking about charges, The Source currently costs \$7.75 per hour of "connect time" on weekends and during evening hours, and considerably more during the day (when business users are on line). Connect time is just that - the time you are connected to the computer. For this reason, if you log on and find that, because there are many users, the system is very SLOW to respond to your commands, you are well advised to log OFF and try again later. Remember, you pay by the hour, and when the system is slow your hours are not too productive! When the system is fast, however, it is possible to produce many pages of useful information in a short time.

Wait a minute, did he say pages? Yes, by having a printer connected to your system you can simply hit'CTRL 2' at any time and the system will "dump" the screen contents to your printer. This is a function of the TE module and has nothing to do with The Source, but it does come in handy (sure beats taking notes, and easier to read if you write as poorly as I do!). Of course, there are also ways to save this information on files on The Source, and later dump these to your disk for off-line printing later on; but we haven't gotten that far yet.

TEXNET: Saving the best for last, you will be happy to hear that The Source is where a lot of TI users "hang out" these days. Texnet, a special service of The Source geared strictly to 99/4A users, is accesible for regular rates by anyone with a TI-prefixed ID code. Here, many interesting user-contributed programs are available for direct downloading to your disk, many TI-related products and services are available through bulletinboard and commercial advertising, other users groups , and even talk (really) with any other user currently on line!

At this writing, I feel that I have barely scratched the surface of the mother lode of information and services available on The Source. During the coming months, other discoveries will be duly reported here.

Do I recommend it? As a means of interfacing with other TI users and finding interesting software, the TEXNET service alone can justify the investment. (see last month's Newsletter, P.13) PMB

by Jack Sughrue

Finally getting my printer back is such an exciting event that I haven't given much time to reading anything but the items relating to printing. And there are some books out there that can be of help in this area. (That'll be another column.)

Today's topic of discussion is a book live had for about a month and have found it useful, exciting, and full of fun: THE TI-99/4A IN BITS & BYTES edited by Remo A. Loreto (\$14.95 from Remo A. Loreto, F.O. Box 14781, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45214).

Ten different programmers put their best digits forward in this large (BX11, 142 pages) book. The claim is that there are 50 programs in BITS & BYTES. Well, that's not quite true. First, they send you an extra program not in the book (which is quite good); then they don't count the small tutorial programs. There are 37 of these. So, though I bought the book expering 50 programs, I ended up with 88! Pleasant surprise.

Before discussing the 50 (51?) programs for which you buy the book, I'd like to talk about those other 37.

The first 21 pages of the book take up these minis. Section 1 is a rather odd tutorial about programming comands made simple. I say "odd" because this is not a rehash of the manual which comes with the console. The tutorial assumes you're intelligent and that you've probably already read the manual. This section shows you ways to use CALL COLDR, CALL GCHAR, CALL JOYST, CALL KEY, CALL HCHAR & VCHAR, DIM, FOR-NEXT-STEP, GOSUB, GOTO, READ-DATA-RESTORE, and even PRINT in ways you may not have thought about.

Section 2 is a really simple and good examination of flowcharting, including a more elaborate chart for a program in the back part of the book.

Section 3 is a series of hints and tips. I was fascinated by this section and wished there were whole books devoted to this type of thing.

Section 4 contains the 50 ready-to-run programs: 28 are in BASIC, 23 are in Extended or require TEII. (If you noticed the mathematical disparity in the sentence above, I am including Black Hole, the extra program.)

These programs give you your money back many times over in pleasure. Although there are some practical programs for you serious types (such as Loan Calculating, Household Inventory, Curve Plot, Message Board) most of this wonderful book is full of games -GAMES! Dh. sure! Educational games are here, too. and there is nothing wrong with that. I'm a teacher, after all. But this book is mostly fun. Things like Space Fury, Trap, Skydiving, Eviel-Eyevil, Byteman, Death Mobile, Baseball, account for most of the S1 programs.

If you enjoy typing in programs (which is one of the best ways of learning programming, so I suppose that at least - is educational) then this book is for you. I thought the programs ran well and were quite good. They were also very easy to adapt. I was very happy I bought it, which, unfortinately, is not the case with some of the books I've purchased.

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Section 5 is an appendix that contains things programmers are always looking at: ASCII character codes, conversion tables, music frequencies, reproducible TI graph paper, and even a place for notes (which I find very handy). ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ Here's a small example from the book that shows you ho to DISPLAY AT using BASIC: 100 CALL CLEAR 110 A=12 120 B=1 130 A\$="TEXAS INSTRUMENTS HOME COMPUTER" 140 GOSUB 160 150 GOTO 150 160 FOR C=1 TO LEN(A\$) 170 CALL HCHAR(A, B, ASC(SEG\$(A\$, C, 1))) 180 B=B+1 190 NEXT C 200 RETURN

END

FOR SALE . FOR SALE . FOR SALE . FOR SALE

2	Adventure Masters	
•	Pirate Adventure	\$10
	Strange Odyssey	\$10.

- Radio Shack 40 column Thermal Printer with cable and paper - 6 months old - With box and instructions - \$85
- Bernie Miller will be at the next Munch Meeting See him if you are interested.....

AUGUST MEETING - August 21st at 7:30 P.M. at University of Massachusetts Medical Center (come to the visitors entrance...)



NEW GAME AVAILABLE FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN LOGO

LOGOVILLE (tm) is a board game designed to help children aged 5 - 12 learn the most commonly used graphics commands in LOGO. No computer is needed to play the game, and no prior computer experience is required. The gameboard is designed to simulate a computer monitor and the actions of the LOGO"turtle".

More information available at the meeting... See Pat Anderson.

To order LOGOVILLE, please send \$12.95 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling to:

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MEETING

AUGUST MEETING - August 21,1984 at 7:30 P.M. at University of Massachusetts Medical Center (come to the VISITORS entrance..)