

NET 99er
HOME COMPUTER USERS GROUP
PO BOX 534
HURST, TX 76053

Hello there! Fellow 99ers

NOTICE

Next meeting is the 8th of
SEPTEMBER at 9:00 AM at the Hurst
Public Library. Hope to see you
there.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Each month we gain some members and we lose some who choose not to renew. It is quite encouraging to notice that we are making small net gains. At this writing we have slightly over 200 families on the roll. At our last meeting we must have had more than 100 people attending because 100 chairs were filled and a few had to stand. Here's a great big thank you to all of our members who help to make this a good user's group.

It is with great joy that I note--the SUPER SKETCHES have arrived. If you paid the club for one you should have been notified that it is available. If you did not plunk down your money then you still have a chance. Bob Wallace has some extras which are for sale. Contact him at 268-3534 to make a deal. We would like to thank Bob as a club. If it were not for him, the club would not have been able to make the mass purchase of Super Sketches at a good price. PS--I sure hope that my kids let me play with the SS soon. Maybe I should have purchased two of them.

A big thank you also goes to Ross Williams of the TI Exchange Center in Richardson. He gave us some insight into the Lubbock operations of vester year. He also serves as a technical and operational consultant at the Center. Ross is the person to

call if you are having difficulties with your system and have some doubt as to what to blame. Thanks again, Ross.

The Assembly Language SIG had an interesting program presented mostly by Fulton Cook. He demonstrated his much-improved version of the DOW ERA and Mini Memory Disassembler. The next meeting is scheduled for Sept 16 at the First Baptist Church on 820 (same as last time). The next meeting will include a demo of Starsoft Disassembler.

Back when our present library system was devised, both the library and the group were smaller. At our present size, the present system seems to be failing in some instances. Consideration has been given to what changes need to be made. We are spending quite a bit of money on just plain diskettes to supply 60+ to 5 separate libraries and we still neglect our growing membership in Dallas County. What follows is the best guess of how the new system is going to work. Your constructive suggestions are invited (call LeRoy Thompson at 429-2039).

There will be only three librarians. They will be located in west Fort Worth (Zip 76116), Haltom City (Zip 76117) and Irving. These locations were chosen from a plot of members' locations coupled with the volunteers. This is an effort to provide a wide coverage of the metroplex for our members. The libraries will become primarily lending libraries. This will cut down on the time required of a librarian. The librarian will still be expected to schedule time to accomodate those members who have only tape for program storage. For the purpose of protecting our library assets and our members, identification and confirmation will be required prior to your checking out some disks. To prevent someone taking advantage of our club, a deposit of \$4 per disk will be charged. It will be returned upon return of the borrowed disks in good

condition within 4 days. The librarian, at his discretion, can waive the deposit to known friends, but he is still ultimately responsible to the club.

The details are not complete at this writing, but it is hoped that everything will be settled in time to make the changeover effective at the next meeting. Once again, if you have a fear or constructive suggestion please let me hear it..

I must say that I am truly amazed at the phenomenal response to the Cheers and Jeers idea. I can count the responses on one hand using no fingers. The original idea still goes--if you have gotten an especially good or bad deal at a computer-related establishment share it with your fellow members. It will help us all.

The group has been offered a deal on the CorComp Double Density Disk Controller cards. If sufficient number (30+) can be ordered from an out of state distributor, then the price to us is \$152. This includes shipping but no tax is required since the group purchase will be from out of state. There will be no risk since the club will hold the money while we try to accumulate the necessary number of orders. If you are interested please call LeRoy Thompson. This offer is open to all who read it since a comparatively large number of orders are required.

MULTIFLAN SIG MEETING NOTICE

This month's Multiplan SIG will meet Thursday, September 13 at 7:15 p.m. The place of the meeting is the home of Mike Bowen at 905 Chattanooga in Bedford. Call Mike at 571-4956 for directions. Bring an initialized disk and get a copy of TI'S enhanced version of MULTIFLAN. Some templates which have been donated to the library will be reviewed. Bring your favorite hint or your toughest problem to share.

REVIEW OF NIBBLER article by LeRoy Thompson

NIBBLER is thus far one of the best copy programs to come down the pike. It is written by Tarik Isani of Starsoft. He is one of those disgustingly smart and sharp young folks which us older ones both respect and feel shamed by.

NIBBLER is good at most anything connected with copying. It will work with one or two drives. It will initialize the copy disk in SS/SD to DS/DD. You have control of the starting and ending sector for reading and the starting sector for writing. Thus you can copy any part of one disk to any part of another disk. You can also copy full disk. If the master disk is in conventional type format, you can elect to use the sector map (sector 0) to shorten the copy time. It has yet to fail to copy anything for me--it even copies itself. Its speed is on par with QUICK COPY if initialization is not considered and it is considerably faster than FORTHCLONE when initialization is considered. It has no 'cute' graphics and you are only entertained with good text prompts while it runs.

This handy utility is available for a mere \$19.95 from CMS Systems Inc., PO Box 11128, Huntsville AL 35814-1128. At this time they are the only distributors. It is certainly a worthy addition to your stack of utilities. By the way--it runs in Extended Basic with 32K.

REVIEW OF DISASSEMBLER article by LeRoy Thompson

This program is another example of the talents of Tarik Isani. It is one of the better examples of disassemblers. It and DS9900 would complement each other well. This DISASSEMBLER will ask if you want mnemonics, data or text. Then it will prompt for address limits. You then have the choice of screen

output, external dump and list device. This DISASSEMBLER even creates labels for references. Once all the preliminaries are over, this program really shines. If only the screen listing is selected it will scroll so fast that one cannot concentrate on reading it. However this speed would be very useful for scanning and searching. Speed is one of its strong points.

This program requires the Editor/Assembler cartridge and 32K. It is also available from CMS Systems, Inc, PO Box 11128, Huntsville AL 35814-1128. It too, is a good buy at \$19.95.

CHARLIE'S CHATTER

Many, many good things happened this month which make it difficult to know where to start. SO . . . I'll just try it in order.

One of the most amazing things that happened was that we received, not one but two, Care Packages from TI. That's right, Texas Instruments sent us two Care Packages !!!!

The first contained a diskette with Navarone Industries' "SUPER BUGGER", version 3.1. Since I'm not into Assembly language yet, I'll have to defer to a more experienced member for a critique of this utility. Any offers?

The second contained three diskettes which included updates for TI-WRITER and MULTIPLAN and the source codes for TI Forth.

The MULTIPLAN update replaces your existing TIMP disk files with files of the same name, but the new files speed up MULTIPLAN and also provide "auto repeat" when you move the cell pointer around the screen.

The TI-WRITER files provide true lower case letters on the screen and allow you to set up an RS232 default option for your printer when using

the Formatter Option of TI-WRITER.

I have tried the new version of MULTIPLAN and it works quite nicely. I haven't tried the new TI-WRITER files yet and don't know if they allow a PIO default option for the printer.

All four of these diskettes are now in the group library.

Then came the "BIGGIE" for the month, CorComp's Disk Controller Card. This was a long awaited item that had many members pacing the floor in expectation (I was one). In my case, it was the key to my finally installing two double density, half-high Shuggart disk drives in my P2B.

In order to provide a full review of the CorComp Disk Controller Card, there is a separate article on the CorComp Disk Controller Card elsewhere in this newsletter.

A hearty HELLO to all our new members since the last meeting. All new members should have received their membership cards by now, but if you haven't, please call Leroy Thompson at (817) 429-2039 and he'll see that you get yours. New members are:

Henry F. Ball
116 Reaves Court
Euless, Texas 76040
283-7924

Joseph J. Brooks
210 Wooddale Ave.
New Castle, Delaware 19720
(302) 322-5231

Michael R. and Mitch Conner
1620 Rusdell Drive
Irving, Texas 75060
(214) 986-8413

Brent Cooper
7501 Shady Grove
Fort Worth, Texas 75160
498-3259

Lewis M. Deen
P.O. Box 3413

Arlington, Texas 76010
Work Ph. (214) 266-1318

H. C. (Curley) Fields
4116 Morgan Circle
Fort Worth, Texas 76118
Metro 498-2785

Alan and Jacob Harris
404 Pleasant Valley Lane
Richardson, Texas 75080
(214) 231-8320

Michael Hasenfratz
201 Bremen Drive
Hurst, Texas 76054
656-2414

Robert Lee Hoffpauer
609 Arapaho Road West
Richardson, Texas 75080
(214) 235-3515

Samuel Lee
2501 W. Sublett Rd., #824
Arlington, Texas 76017
465-2939

Steve Milton
Route 2, Box 69A
Aledo, Texas 76008
(817) 441-8253

Tim Patton
2803 NW 27th Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76106
625-8465

Mrs. Patricia M. Simon
5412 Whitman
Fort Worth, Texas 76133
292-1237

John and Ernie Stafford
5125 Malinda Lane
Fort Worth, Texas 76112
429-2839

Jim Stewart
4717 Strickland
The Colony, Texas 75056
(214) 370-0922

Craig Voss
5520 Aspen Lane
Fort Worth, Texas 76112
451-1410

Many of us are often in the need for some type of electronic connectors, cables, plugs, etc., to connect our peripheral equipment. There is now an alternative to Radio Shack for your needs. It's a new, small, friendly place called DELTA ELECTRONICS, INC. The folks there are quite knowledgeable and have a larger selection than many other places. Give them a try at 205 Bedford Euless Road in Hurst. Call them at (817) 268-4800 and remember to tell them you're with the NET 99ers.

Well, that's it for this month. I hope you're all enjoying SUPER SKETCH as much as my family is !

CorComp's Disk Controller Card.

by Charlie Bathman

Many of us have, I'm sure, as we've repeatedly exchanged diskettes in our single disk drive, yearned for that second disk drive. And, if we've been lucky enough to acquire another drive, later wished that we could write on both sides of the disks without having to manually turn the disks over. Then too, wouldn't it be nice if we could write on our diskettes in double density so we wouldn't run out of room on a diskette or wouldn't need so many diskettes.

Well, My friends in River City, CorComp has come through, just as they said they would, with a Double-Sided, Double-Density Disk Controller Card, the EXP-DCC, that fits exactly into the Peripheral Expansion Box.

Upon opening the shipping carton, you'll find the Disk Controller Card (wrapped in bubble cushion), a diskette entitled "MGR-DEMO" and the documentation.

The card is physically the same size as the TI disk controller card but it is made of sheetmetal rather than a

cast case. It has an indicator light (just like TI), it fits right in the FEB (just like TI), it has two I/O connector ports, one for internal drive(s) and one for external drive(s) (just like TI) and it must go in slot #8 in the FEB (just like TI). BUT, there the likeness stops.

One major innovation is that there are four screws, in the four corners of the card that allow the user to gain access to the card's interior. Inside the card, CorComp has provided a "Dip" switch that can be set by the user to obtain the best Head Step settings for the disk drives being used with the card. The documentation provides clear concise instructions for proper setting plus a malfunction analysis guide.

Connection of the disk drive(s) to the card is exactly the same as it was for the TI card. The documentation provides clear installation, connection and test instructions. The documentation also provides a discussion about diskettes, their proper care and protection and loading instructions.

Once installed, powered-up and checked out, you get your first surprise. There's a brand new title screen. No more TI title screen with the TI logo. I guess CorComp figured it was time to get their name up in video too, so there is now a "9900 DISK CONTROLLER" title screen and menu. The menu lists the Disk Manager as option #1, TI Basic as option #2 and, if you have a cartridge on the port, that will be option #3. You can still get the color bar chart by pressing the space bar.

WHOA !!!! What about the Disk Manager cartridge? There isn't any, it's been replaced by both the Disk Controller Card and a diskette. So ----, let's install the CC DISK MANAGER diskette and select option #1 for Disk Manager.

After the disk manager program auto loads, a new menu appears with

options for: #1 File Utilities, #2 Disk Utilities, #3 Disk Tests and #4 Configure Manager. Select an option and you're off and disking. Incidentally, you can now remove the MGR-DEMO diskette since the Disk Manager program has been loaded into memory.

When you select option #1, File Utilities, you get another menu with: #1 Copy / Rename / Delete / Change Protection and #2 Load and Run (Assembly File). Since I'm not into Assembly Stuff yet, I'll leave option #2 to another member to review in next month's newsletter.

When you select option #1 of the File Utilities, you get another surprise. NO new menu for Copy / Rename / Delete / Change Protection, only a prompt that asks for which disk drive you want. You can specify numbers 1 through 4 (if you have that many drives, this card will handle them). Once you select the drive which has the disk you wish to work with, you get the words "BUILDING FILE LIST". Now comes the real surprise!

There now appears upon the screen what at first seems to be a diskette catalog with the disk name at the top, the number of FREE and USED sectors and a listing of disk contents by Filename, Size, Type and F (Protection). BUT, then something else catches your eye. At the top of the screen you see "PAGE # OF #", then below the disk name "### (of) FILES", down the left side of the screen a series of 'N's adjacent to each filename under a heading titled "CMD" and a blinking cursor on top of the uppermost "N".

"I wanted to do file work, not get a catalog". You are about to do file work. Here's how it works. - by using the Function key and Arrow keys, you move the cursor up and down the "N"s, changing the "N"s to either a "C" for Copy or a "D" for delete for those files you wish to either copy or delete. Then move the cursor to the first letter of the filenames you wish to rename and type in the

new name(s) and finally again move the cursor over to the protection column and type either a "U" or a "F" to set each file's protection status. When you have made all the desired entries, press ENTER and the words "EXECUTE COMMANDS Y/N : N" appear at the bottom of the screen and the cursor moves over the "N" following the words "EXECUTE COMMANDS Y/N". When you have checked all your entries and press "Y", all of the commands you have specified will be executed in order. If you are copying files, the program will ask you to specify the drive # before copying begins. If the diskette to which you are copying files is not initialized, the program will first initialize that diskette in accordance with your instructions. If there are more pages to the file list, you can "Flip" pages by using the Control X (Next Page) and Control E (Previous Page), make selected changes and then Execute those commands also. This operation is really fast, direct and efficient.

After all file changes are executed, pressing Function BEGIN will return you to the master menu. Function BACK and REDD work the same as in TI disk manager.

Option #2 of the master menu, Disk Utilities, works almost identically to File Utilities and provides the following choices: #1 Catalog, #2 Copy Disk, #3 Rename and #4 Initialize. In the Catalog option, pressing Function O will dump the screen to the device (printer) specified. Copying diskettes (and files) can be done from Single Density to Double Density and/or vice versa.

Option #3 of the master menu, Disk Tests, is very similar to the same option in TI Disk Manager and allows for either destructive or non-destructive testing.

Option #4 is something entirely new, "CONFIGURE MANAGER", and allows the user to configure the disk manager program to suit their own particular

needs and equipment. For example; each of up to four drives can be configured for the number of tracks per side, the number of sides per drive (1 or 2), and either single or double density per drive. In addition, the READ FROM (drive #) and the WRITE TO (drive #) can be specified. A default Output Configuration can be set up. The desired screen and text colors (for the disk manager program) can be selected. Single and double density Interlace patterns can be set. A TURBO copying option which writes without verification can be established and, finally, the entire configuration can be save to diskette for future standard use.

All in all, this is a very, very significant and useful peripheral for the serious TI user. It is very speedy when copying, as fast as Quick Copy. Allows a significant reduction in the number of diskettes or, looking at it another way, allows you to get almost twice as much on the diskettes you already have and combines many file and disk copying tasks into one execution. It reduces manual operations to a minimum and simplifys the entire realm of disk management.

To make optimum use of this fine product, one really needs at least two disk drives that are capable of double sided, double density operation. The documentation, while not perfect, is well above average.

Overall, I personally would rate CorComp's EXP-DCC, double sided, double density, Disk Controller Expansion Card as excellent, truly worth waiting for and the price is RIGHT.

WELL DONE, CORCOMP and Thanks !

PS.

Included on the MGR-DEMO diskette are two programs, "BASICDEMO" and "LOAD", which can be run (and listed) in TI Basic and Extended Basic, respectively, to provide a short graphic demonstration of the Assembly

Files which are also provided on the diskette in both Basic and Extended Basic versions. Next month's newsletter will contain a review of these Assembly Files.

Charlie B.

DEFENDER.

by Bob Webber. Age 13

Although this game might not be as visually exciting as Tennis or Buck Rogers, Defender easily beats them as far as action is concerned. At any given moment (on the higher waves) there could be as many as 15 enemies on the screen at the same time, all out to blow up your world. You pilot the lone spaceship Defender, and you must protect your humanoids from Landers, Bombers, Pods, Swarms, Baiters, and possibly Mutants, all to be described later, even though your task seems almost impossible, you have some pretty powerful weapons to back you up. First of all you have your lasers. These will destroy enemies and humanoids alike. Then you have Hyperspace, which will warp your ship out of a dangerous situation, but there is a possibility that your ship will be destroyed. Finally, there is the Smart Bomb. This fearsome weapon will destroy every enemy on the screen. You start each game with three ships and three Smart Bombs. You are awarded a new one of each after every 10,000 points you score. Controlling your ship is fairly complicated. When you move the joystick to the right or left, the ground scrolls under your ship in that direction, giving an illusion of motion. Up or down moves your ship up or down. To fire, press the red button on the joystick. To release a Smart Bomb, press the space bar, and to Hyperspace press any other key.

Landers--these are the workers they fly down to the ground, pick up one of your ten humanoids and try to carry them to the top. You must shoot the lander and then catch it before it hits the ground. Then set down yourself. The green landers fairly easy to destroy.

Bombers--these box like enemies leave little white X's in your path. If you hit one then you die. Avoid them

at all costs.

Pods--the blue pods fly from the bottom to the top of the screen until they are destroyed; they then explode into a group of Swarms. These tiny red enemies are very hard to kill, and they attack all at once.

Baiters--these white ships come out if you delay, and are very, very fast. They can sneak up from behind and kill you.

Mutants--a mutant is formed if a lander carries a humanoid to the top of the screen and they are very hard to kill. They move up and down and evade your fire constantly.

If you love action then you will love Defender. To run it you'll need E/A, 32K, and disk or you can buy it on cartridge from AtariSoft. Good Luck!

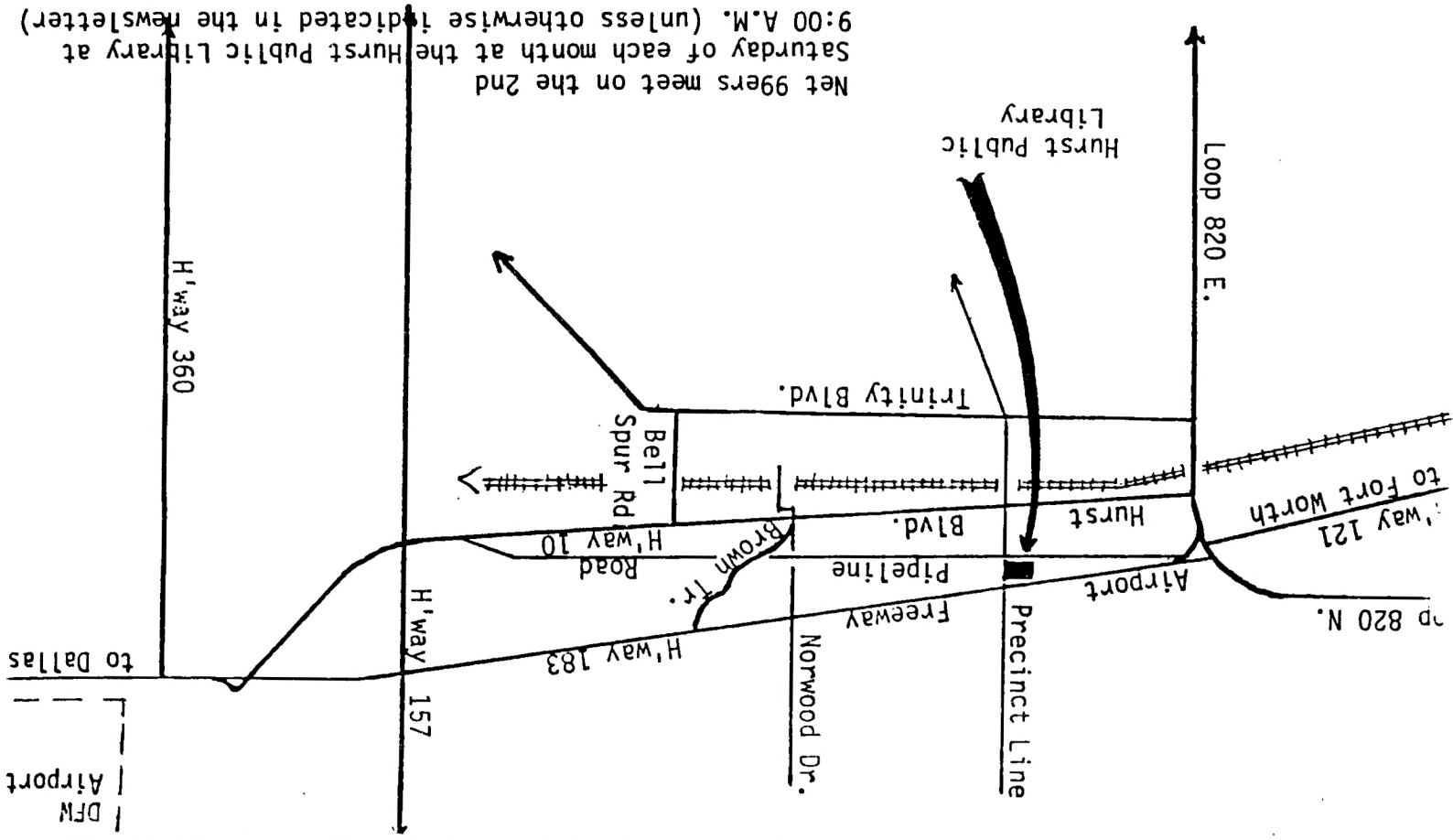
EDITOR'S NOTES

If you haven't already noticed this a relatively short newsletter, the reason? NOBODY other than the regulars made any contributions. I am sure that many of you, in the reading audience, are playing some of the library games and other things. How about a little description of how it played or was used or anything else. Anything submitted does not have to be in perfect English or grammatically correct. I will edit it and take the credit for all mistakes. The club has many young people, who are members, who really understand the adventure games and could help us older players by giving some hints but not divulging the whole story, more or less letting us get further confused.

I therefore offer a challenge to one and all: Who can offer some clues to the adventure games in the library that I can publish in the newsletter without giving the solution away? I know there is really no solution but think that way.

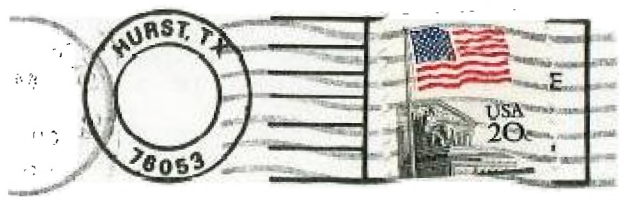
NEW SUBJECT

As you have probably noted this newsletter is now being mailed at a bulk rate, and as was asked at the last meeting. "How late was yours getting to you." We are still interested in the time of delivery.



Net 99ers meet on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Hurst Public Library at 9:00 A.M. (unless otherwise indicated in the newsletter)

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 CANADA