



OSHTI



NOV. 1995



COMPUTER FAIRE

The Ontario Computer Faire was held at SOCCER CITY on Sun. Oct. 22nd. Thanks to Doug and Bernie for helping out by manning the tables. Ray and Jennifer were also there to give support and I believe that I saw Ed Colbran of the Kawartha club as well. Ex II user Dick Hornan was also in attendance for the T.A.C.O. (Amiga users group).

The number of vendors and attendees was DOWN this fall from last Spring's show. The vendors also seem a little tired out. Sales were slow; even I spent much less than last year. I got away without even spending \$10.

There were a lot of different IBM clone systems. But who knows the differences between some of the 486's. And it is very difficult to compare computers (clones) since the prices vary so widely. It's hard to tell if you're getting a bargain with an IBM clone. The rate of failure is quite high for the cheaper systems.

A fellow from another computer club said that he was glad that we still came out to the show. He felt that showing the computer public that there are other alternatives out there is well worth the effort. I have to agree with him as well. A lot of people equate computer with IBM these days.

A lady also came up to the booth and said she was glad to see that the II was still carrying on. She said that she had learned to program on one. Later she gave two machines away to a community program for the handicapped. She said that her son had started off with one, and he is now 'way up there' with a computer corporation.

Still others said that they would pass on to friends and relatives information about our club.

In all, I would say that the contacts that we made were worth the effort. Although, I think that this particular Ontario Computer faire stop may be left out next year.

Of course, there is a much bigger and longer computer show coming up in Nov. at the East Metro convention centre in Pickering (Nov. 8-10).

Our 'friend' from the ADAM computer club, and the ADAM club was NOT in attendance. Last spring they had all kinds of problems getting their act together.

LAST MEETING

OSHTI

The October OSHTI meeting had the biggest attendance of any meeting in several years. A total of 13 people attended, one from as far away as 750 km. This latter person was none other than Bob Young. What a great surprize this was. You could have knocked me over with a feather.

Bob has a temporary job (I think it's temporary) with his former employer (IBM) but I didn't catch the current name of the division. At any rate we are glad to see Bob back for the next few meetings.

We also welcomed Jennifer Blodgett, Ray's wife to the meeting. Jennifer has expressed an interest in graphics and text. Jennifer also gave her impressions of the computer faire in Whitby. She is also interested in the Internet.



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Speaking of the Internet, that was the first topic of the meeting and it yielded a wealth of information and discussion. Although I can't remember all of the details, there was quite a discussion of local carriers and the cost; and what the cost means. I believe that some places offer a cheap rate and give you 2 hours a day, but you can't bank your hours, so it is restrictive. Phil mentioned that not being able to bank time was a real draw-back, and you would want to avoid this type of package.

The ability to capture GRAPHICS as well as TEXT was also discussed. You might want to get graphics but you will have to pay more for this feature. The cheapest packages involve text only!

We also welcomed the merry travellers from the Kawartha club to our meeting. They always have something to share and Ed brought some more of his hunting lodge stories; now if we could only get him to write them into a word processor we could put them in the newsletter.

Another lively topic was the Quebec referendum. A lot of us seem to be of the mind that if Quebec wants to go then, let them. We have all heard the complaints for years, it is getting very tiresome. My personal prediction is for a 55% NO vote (ie. 55% in favour of staying). We'll see what happens.

I did a review of the TIPS program and the utility programs which allow you to VIEW or change TIPS pix into II ARTIST Instances. There are over 4000 TIPS pix available in our library. I'm not sure how many disks this would take.

- The TIPS program will do the following print outs:
- > LABELS: Graphic and Text
good for addresses or disk labels.
 - > BANNERS: Graphics and text
Lengthwise or Iotem Pole style.
Great for birthdays large signs
 - > SIGNS: Graphics, Text and Calendars
Make monthly calendars or Title pages for essays.
 - > CARDS: Print your own greeting or birthday cards

TIPS also makes use of the COLOR printers (dot matrix only!) You can do a variety of colors or just one color at a time.

The TIPS program will also convert the graphics to II Artist instances for working on by II ARTIST. You might want to change a graphic slightly or use it for a color image as I did last month.

All in all TIPS is an excellent program and the cost is just for the copying.

There is also another TIPS program that does LABELS and LETTERHEADS. I am still learning how to use it, but I don't think that it has the same color capabilities.

Unfortunately, there is no way that I know of to put II Artist instances or Page Pro pix into the TIPS format.

I also demoed a short program that I had typed out of a 1983 Family Computing magazine called HORROR MOVIE TITLES. I will include some of them in another article for your enjoyment.

Dick showed us a quick example of another of Bruce Harrison's programs. This one uses II ARTIST Instances.

Well we had enough coffee this month, I made 40 cups and we drank them all. There was also extra goodies this month. Thanks Liz for sending the nice lemon cake.

Bob also pointed out that he was expecting a STEAK DINNER. Read the HELP! article in the Oct. OSHTI newsletter.

By the way, I love wearing SLEEVELESS sweaters, they seem to match my piquance for losing disk sleeves.

Great meeting, hope we can continue for a long time to come.



ARTICLES NEEDED

I hope you that the diverse content of the newsletter will meet your needs. It is often hard to know exactly what to write about. If we had more input from others then we would get a wider view of things.

I can only write on what I see in the school system and other experiences that I gain from observation. The more observers we have out there the better we can see the world.

I have read in other newsletters that they have similar problems. There are a lot of 'other guys' out there who will have to do it. Somebody will undoubtedly be found, but no one wants to step forward, then WHO will do it. Please try to commit yourself to doing an article or two for the newsletter. It doesn't have to be fancy; no one will grade it; we will all benefit.



TIARTIST COLORS

I did say that I would tell you how to use TI Artist Plus (TIA+) or the first version (TIA), when I understood how to get coloured images. Well here is my first attempt. You don't need a color printer to do this. However, you can turn a rather dull black picture into a colored one.

You can only get a color print-out using TI ARTIST PLUS (the latest version). It is still available from TEXAMENTS.

Normally what I do is load an INSTANCE in using the Enhancements. I make sure that the instance is mainly BLACK rather than transparent with black lines. Any black will be replaced with any color.

The one limitation with color on the standard TI 99/4A is caused by the video chip the 9918A. In the hi res mode, it can NOT address every pixel with color, rather, it can address every column of 8 pixels with the same colour. This means that the 16 possible colours when placed side by side will look like 8 lines of color. The rows are still different, so each row can be a different color. This is the problem caused solely by the video chip and there is no way around it. Using TI Artist on a Geneve or other 80 column device does not solve the problem. The only programs that solve this use a different video chip either the 9938 or 9958. These two chips can address every pixel and give it a different color. These chips can also give you MORE colors as well. The 9918A chip gives only 16 colors but that is plenty for most uses.

Well, enough background lets get on with how to make a colored picture from a black image.

Load an image in using the Enhancements (select 2 on TIA). To load an Instance on TIA you select Slides from the Instance menu. Then pick #6 and enter the instance name. Then go to the Artist. (Function Quit to return to main menu then select 1 for artist).

There are two ways to replace colour. One is to use the SNAP and the other is to use DRAW.

First select a color that you want to use by placing the cursor on it and pressing the fire button or pressing enter.

Touch the cursor to the SNAP function and then proceed to the picture using SPACE BAR.

In TIA you just have to press the fire button or enter and the ENTIRE instance will be transformed into the color that you selected. In TIA+ the following happens.

You will now be able to move the cursor to the part of the picture that you wish to swap colors with. Press enter (fire) and you will get a Ribbon which can be expanded to include more of the picture. When you have selected the part that you wish to work with, press enter or the fire button. The color of the cursor will be swapped for the black. You can do the same thing for ANY color not just black. But all instances come as black when they load into TI Artist.

The above method is great for covering LARGE areas, but really poor for fine work. In fact for TIA it does the whole picture.

For fine work, press the space bar to get back to the menu. This time select Draw and Zoom. Go back to the picture. When you have selected the fine area to work on, press enter (fire button).

You can now change one pixel at a time using the fire button or enter key. Be careful to select the correct pixels.

In TIA+, if you make a mistake, press period (.) this will take away the one that you made by mistake. Period again, toggles you to the paint mode. This is ONLY in TIA+!

When you have finished with this area, press space bar to return. Then move the Zoom box to another area and proceed.

Of course, you can choose a different color for different areas. Just remember that you are replacing colors NOT actually painting with them.

TIA+ offers a choice of background colors as you paint. This doesn't seem to be of a great benefit, unless you choose to colour in the background as you paint. I'll have to try this some time. But you don't need it for the painting of pictures.

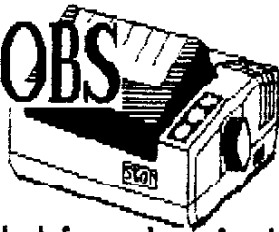
There you have it, now you will have to PRACTICE this. I will do a demo at the Nov. meeting so that you can see how to do it. There are a few other things to keep in mind as you work with the TIA program.

By the way, TIA+ has support for a mouse as well as joystick and keyboard. I believe I paid \$29.95 US plus shipping, I don't know the current price or the current address of TEXAMENTS. I will do some searching to see if I can come up with it. I had heard that they moved to Oklahoma.

Tom

THE BOX. FOR SOME REASON, ONE OF THE TRACES HAD OPENED UP AND WAS CAUSING ALL SORTS OF UNPREDICTABLE PROBLEMS.

PRINTER PROBS



I think I told you when we spoke, that I was planning to buy a new clone and join the world of the big blue, so when all this took place, I packed up the II and retired it to the garage, figuring on setting it up there, (I could use it for inventory) if I got it working again. Five days later the system was running again and I got my first look at what you had sent.

When I went to print a short test for a class of mine it came up wit the strangest print out. The letters were all SCRAMBLED. they did not spell out the words that I had typed. This was very strange because I had just finished printing out the newsletter with no trouble.

Over and over I tried the printing but it came out scrambled. I tested the printer and it worked fine from another II computer. The fault lay in the RS232 card.

I had had this problem before, and the card was sent out to be fixed. The person who was going to fix it said it was fine. So back it came.

When I got it back the last time, all worked fine until this week.

What I had remembered doing was taking the computer to the Computer Faire. Maybe it got jarred out of place. So I took the card out of the PE box and pushed all of the chips into their sockets to 'reset' them.

Voila ! When I fired up the computer again, all was OK ! Another problem fixed in no time.

Maybe it will help you some time by knowing this.

P.S. At the computer Faire we repaired Doug's computer. Solution to not booting from Extended Basic.... a dirty card connector. Cleaned it and she worked fine.

Tom

NORTHERN NEWS

This is a letter sent to me from Stephen Andrews of the North Bay 99ers Club. Stephen phoned me in the summer and asked me to send him some software for the II. I accomodated him and this is his letter of reply. I hope he does not mind me quoting it here.

Hi De Ho Tom,

Thanks for sending out the software we spoke about. It arrived safely, however I had a major crash of my II system the day before the disks arrived from you. After tearing my complete PE box apart, I found that the trouble was in the modified console I built some years back and now use as my main core. To make a long story short, the problem was with the widget that is buried in the heart of

The weather got bad, the days started to pass and my clone was delayed. The more I thought about leaving the II in the cold and dust of the wood shop, the more I didn't like the idea. Then the weekend came and the weather cleared. I got a better idea, I completely changed things around to compress the II and Atari work space into one.

I now have the compression done and it worked out very well, if I do say so myself. The systems sit together in about six feet of desk, including two monitors and the II keyboard on a pull-out drawer under the Atari console. In some ways it is more effecient than the old way. There is just one small thing that makes me feel silly. The deal for my clone has fallen through and I am now back out looking for a new deal. In the mean time, I am sitting at one desk loaded down with computer equipment, while in the other corner of the room, an empty desk sits waiting for a computer that may be some time coming.

I loaded up the new Funnel Web last night and was some impressed. It never ceases to amaze me how anyone can squeeze so much out of so little, If the Intel world had programmers as effecient, maybe they would not need eight Meg of Ram and one Gig hard drives.

By the way, the one thing I did miss in the pack you sent was the ewulator (Swartz) for the clones. I would still like to get it if the offer is still good, on the chance that I fill this empty desk in the future.

Well, I guess that's all the news for now. I will try to let you know when and if that new deal comes through. I am enclosing some money for disks and postage and a bit more in hope that you will keep me on the newsletter list. I don't get Micropendium any longer so I really look forward to your newsletter to keep us up on the II world, as well as our friends in the South. Keep up the good work and know that it is appreciated.

Your Truly,
Stephen.....

Stephen is now our newest member of the OSKTI group. Thanks for the newsy letter and the kind words. You II ewulator is on its way. When I find a copy of it.



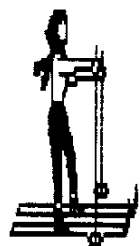
COLOR PRINT

Did you like the pumpkin? Somebody didn't like the color. Well, this year I did a quick drive-by pumpkin study. I found that they come in several colors. I even found a white one. When they judge the BIG PUMPKINS down in the states, the only qualification for color is that the pumpkin MUST be YELLOW, ORANGE or WHITE, but NEVER GREEN. Green 'pumpkins' are really SQUASH!

When I was experimenting with II Artist colors, I found that the orange was more red and I decided to make the pumpkin yellow. However, after closer screwtong, I found that the red-orange color was better. I am sorry if you didn't get an orange one, but you did get a color for a change.

I still am experimenting with II Artist. It is not as nice as Y.A.P.P. (Yet Another Paint Program) which makes use of 256 colors. However, Y.A.P.P. doesn't have color printer capabilities at all. So I will have to try more experimenting with II Artist. See the article that follows in this newsletter.

The limitations of II Artist colors comes from the fact that you must address screen colors which are 8 pixels wide. At the moment, what I do is to start with a BLACK picture and then turn it to reverse (white where the black was), then I change the color of the pixels by inverting with a new color. I don't fully understand what I am doing, but when I do, I'll do a demonstration.



THE FORECAST FOR WINTER:



Be prepared for a COLLILLLD and SNOWY WINTER. All indicators seem to point to a bad winter this year; at least in this part of the land...southern Ontario.

Someone told me that the size of spiders (the ones that set up house in the corner of your window or in the front hedge) helps predict the type of winter we will have. The spiders are very large this year and this indicates a bad winter.

Also, the number of cluster flies in my house this fall has been large. Are they too trying to tell us something?

And when I looked at my crabapple trees around the pond, they are just loaded down with nice little apples which the partridge love so much. Are they saying the same thing?

I think we may over react to these indicators but last summer was very hot and an excellent season for growth, maybe that's all we can read into it.

Well, we can also look outside this November and see that it has been unusually cold. In fact the first week of Nov. saw lots of snow on the ground in the Kawarthas, not far from here. Just last week, still the first week of Nov., the Barrie area (only a 2 hour drive) had over 60 cm of snow (2 feet) and they opened the downhill and cross-country skiing earlier than anyone can remember.

So it seems that we are in for a cold winter. So bundle up and get something to warm your innards. Winter is already here.

As our minister said last weekend (Nov.4th).

"Canada is God's country, and we are his 'frozen' people."

Tom

LOST FILES



I am writing some of these articles for the second time. The first time was last weekend. Unfortunately, I saved another file over the top of the second file. My ingenious system for saving text files for the newsletter, was not so ingenious. I even had two back-ups for the same files. That is, 4 copies of the same file.

I can't say that it was because I can't see the screen properly. I was able to get a proper 80-column monitor for the GENEVE. I guess that I just plain goofed. I just hope it isn't the software that did this.

I use the newest version of FWEB 5.2f and it allows you to work on up to 4 files at a time. When I did this with version 5.2, it messed the two files. This new version has been working well since last summer, but I will have to double-check the files after they are saved, the next time.

One thing that I would definitely like to see in a future version of FWEB is a check to make sure that you DO NOT overwrite an existing file. I know that is asking for a lot, since FWEB editor does so much now and fits in only 32K of space. But maybe it could be done. Tony has done so many good things with it already.

Can you imagine a wordprocessor for the IBM world doing all of this in just 32K? If they did, then you wouldn't need 8-16 Meg of memory to operate the system.



WRITING

I found time the other day to write a program using the MISSING LINK operating system designed for the standard II system (well, you must have 32K) with Extended Basic.

The purpose of my program was to add VECTORS. This is something that we do in Physics. It is useful in FLIGHT problems involving wind speed, plane's air speed and the planes track and speed across the ground.

Last semester, I had a student do this on an IBM. His program was so large that it required a 1.44 Meg diskette. It was written in Pascal and made use of graphics.

The students program did demonstrate the main idea of adding vectors but it could only solve vectors that were at right angles. I suggested that he try to write one which could do it for ANY angle between the two vectors. However, he couldn't do it.

So, I decided last summer that it should be possible to do this using the hires screen on the MISSING LINK. Of course, I would do this in extended basic with the added commands of the MISSING LINK and not have to worry about PASCAL. I'm not very familiar with PASCAL, but I could have attempted it on the II with PASCAL, but why do it if something as simple as EXTENDED BASIC and the MISSING LINK could be used.

Ususally, what I do to write a program is simply start at the keyboard and start writing code and testing it on the spot. This time, I thought that it would be better to sit at a desk and write some simple flow charts and break the problem down into parts and then go to the computer when all was pretty well figured out.

Doing the program at a desk is not my idea of programming but I thought that it would be better. AS it turned out, I was able to figure out the correct ALGORITHM to solve the students dilemma. An algorithm is a mathematical expression which translates what you want done into something that the computer can do quite easily with its limited set of commands.

To give you an example of the problem would be better. We will add a vector which is 200 Km/h [E] with one that is 80 Km/h [S30W]. This is our INPUT from a typical problem. What has to be done is to find a way to have the computer understand which way is [E], East and which way is [S30W], ie. South 30 degrees West. The computer then has to draw LINES which are SCALED to distance and at the PROPER ANGLE (direction).

Once the computer could find the proper points on the screen to start its drawing, it had to make sure that the second vector started at the end of the first vector. After this was done, the computer would draw a line to the STARTING point of the first line forming a TRIANGLE. Yes, this is TRIANGULATION !

The most difficult part of the project was to get the angle for each vector drawn from the [E] or [S30W] input. There are BOOKS available on the market for finding out this algorithm, but I wasn't about to purchase one unless I got to the point where I was lost. Fortunately, playing around at a table with paper, pencil, ruler and calculator yielded the correct algorithm.

When I got to the computer, I had spend about 8 hours at the table, 4 of these the last day. In less than 2 hours I had the program working and doing any two vectors that I could think of; and it worked flawlessly. Well, it worked well at least and I even thought to add in some color to make the vectors different colors.

This program could have been written in Extended Basic but in XBasic you only have a screen which is 32 blocks wide by 24 blocks top to bottom. Using the missing link, you can use blocks (pixels) which are 240 wide by 192 deep. The detail in Hires (standard II) is much better, but you MUST use the MISSING LINK to address it; or write your own machine language to do it.

I am happy with my first attempt at this program and realize that it is better to sit down at a table for a longer time and do a detailed PLAN than it is to try and get the plan done at the computer while you write program lines. The only problem is developing the discipline to do this.

Who said programming was fast anyway ?

And of course the program is not complete yet. I still have to make it more user-friendly and look 'cute' and attractive. Even though the 'guts' of the program (the algorithm) has been established, there is still much to do.

Tom

Below is a diagram to try to show you what the output of the program looks like.

Vector Addition



OSHTT



TI-92 not an average calculator

Meet your new computer lab.

Just when you least expect it TEXAS INSTRUMENTS makes an announcement. This one was in my Ontario Teachers' magazine and I reproduced it in photoreduced form to the right.

You know, when you look at the TI-92, you can see that it really isn't a calculator anymore. It has a QWERTY keyboard and a track ball in the upper right hand corner. Notice that it has F1 to F8 keys and a number pad to boot. The 'pull-down' menus remind us of a Windows environment. This is really a little computer. I will be contacting TI through the 800-TI-CARES line to find out more information on this little gem.

As you may recall, last year I did a series of articles on the TI-85. This was the current high end graphic calculator; now the TI-92 is the latest in the graphics calculator field.

Although the TI-92 is larger than the TI-85 it is still small at 20 cm by 12 cm or 8" by 4 5/8". The 'chicklet' keyboard is reminiscent of the original membrane keyboard on the TI-99/4 (sans A).

It looks like TEXAS INSTRUMENTS is aiming this at the science/math market. Notice, that you can get TEN of these for the price of one computer. Sounds like we're into the \$250 range to me. It sure was a good add in our magazine; it took up two pages side to side.

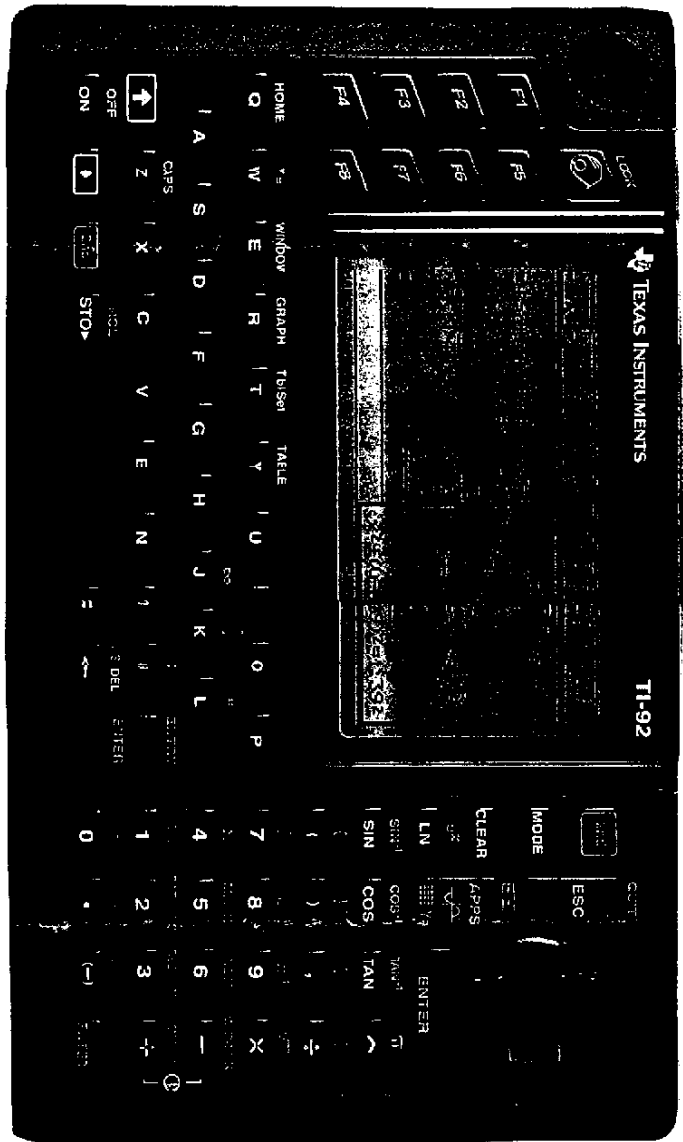
I guess TI is still in there fighting for a part of the Graphics calculator market, along with CASIO and SHARP.

There is no indication in the ad that there is a built-in programming language, but I'll bet there is a PASCAL-type language similar to that found in the TI-85. And what about word processing? If they put a QWERTY keyboard in, well, doesn't it sound like you'd be able to type text too.

I would imagine that there is also a computer interface which can be purchased separately. And I'll bet that it goes to a PC or Mac as did the TI-85.

If it is compatible with the TI-82, this indicates that it has the ability to tie in with a series of Lab Sensors which I know are available. These sensors enable the calculator to measure temperature, pH, light intensity and time. I know that the price is really competitive if one buys the interface and sensors. The probes (sensors) that I use now hook up into a PC, but they are really 'clunky' and require a lot of space and set-up time. I can see that Texas Instruments has a really good product here, just as they had with the TI-99/4A. The question is will they market it right this time.

More next time.
Tom




OSHTI MEETING

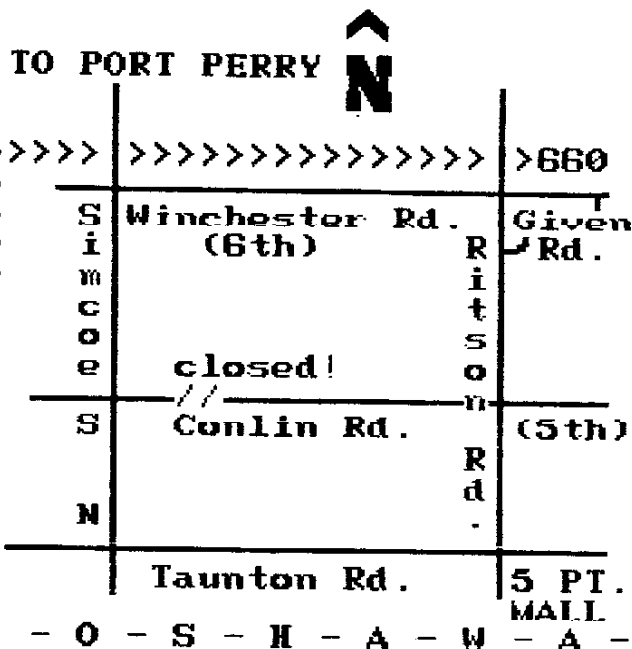
WED. NOV. 22

Nearly **NEW** and **USED** **EQUIPMENT** **SALE** at this month's meeting!

AT **TOM'S**
See map >>>



TI-Artist
COLOR DEMO!



**OSHAWA TEXAS INSTRUMENTS HOME
COMPUTER USERS' GROUP**

- CHAIR:** RAY BLODGETT
(579-1767)
- TREASURER:**
- LIBRARY/SEC.:** DOUG BURLEIGH
(579-5109)
- NEWSLETTER :** TOM JAKABFY
EDITOR (725-7298)

**WHO WILL HOST
THE XMAS PARTY**

Members receive ten(10) news-letters per year.(Jan.-Jun. Sep.-Dec.). Members also have the use of the club library (CASSETTE + DISK). VISITORS to club meetings are WELCOME. Copying charges for disks-of-the-Month are \$1(your disk) or \$2(our disk)

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The OSHTI Users' Group is a Non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging the continued use of the TI/994A for education, entertainment and data management. The club also supports the MYARC 9640 or GENEVE(TI compatible) computer.

This newsletter was produced on a TI-99/4A using FUNNEL-5.21, PAGE PRO, and PAGE PRO COMPOSER. Occasionally news articles are photocopied.

MEETING TIMES:

The OSHAWA TI USERS' GROUP (OSHTI) meets between the hours of 7:30 and 10:30 pm Location to be named in the newsletter.

OSHTI

