

# PUG PERIPHERAL

VOLUME 7 SEPTEMBER 1985 NO. 9

!!!! NEXT MEETING !!!!

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PITTSBURGH USER GROUP WILL BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 15, AT THE SOUTH CAMPUS OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY. COME ONE, COME ALL!

THIS MEETING BEGINS THE NEW CLASS YEAR FOR PUG MEMBERS, WITH SEVERAL NEW CLASSES ADDED TO OUR FREE CLASS PROGRAM. THESE CLASSES, TIMES, AND STRUCTURE ARE DEPENDENT ON YOUR PARTICIPATION, SO I HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AT THE MEETING.

BEGINNING AT 3:00, THERE WILL BE A CLASS ON "BASIC XBASIC", WITH JONATHAN, BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE PROGRAMMER, AND "PRIMER 99", BY YOURS TRULY, FOR THE NOVICE USERS.

AT 4:00, NEW CLASSES IN "TI-WRITER", WITH GARY STEVENSON, AND "TI-MULTIPLAN", WITH DAVID GZESH, ARE SCHEDULED. THESE SHOULD BE VALUABLE COURSES FOR THOSE TRYING TO LEARN OR IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS.

AT 5:00, WE HAVE A CHOICE OF "TI-FORTH", WITH SCOTT COLEMAN, OR "ADVANCED PROGRAMMING IN XBASIC" WITH DARREN LEONARD.

AT 6:30, WE'LL START OUR GENERAL MEETING, WITH AS LITTLE BUSINESS, AND AS MUCH COMMON INTEREST ACTIVITIES AS POSSIBLE. WE'LL HAVE OUR USUAL DOLLAR RAFFLE, A FREE DOOR PRIZE, ETC. DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE CAS-O-MONTH, AND D.O.M., NEW PRODUCT REVIEWS, (DAN ZUNCO WILL REVIEW THE NEW COR-COMP "TRIPLE TECH CARD"...IF HE RECEIVED IT SOON ENOUGH". MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING THEIR PRSONAL PROGRAMMING PROJECTS TO SHOW, OR ANY OTHER PROJECTS OF 4A INTEREST.

SEE YOU ALL THERE!?! BRING YOUR WIFE, BRING A FRIEND, BRING ANYONE YOU KNOW WHO HAS A TI. AND ESPECIALLY, IF YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO HAS DRIFTED AWAY FROM THE CLUB, INVITE THEM BACK FOR ANOTHER LOOK, THEY MIGHT FIND IT'S "BETTER, THE SECOND TIME AROUND"! CORNY, BUT WHAT THE HECK!

More than likely everyone among us who either programs in FORTH or is learning the language has read Leo Brodie's STARTING FORTH. It's equally certain that many were as delighted as I was when THINKING FORTH was first announced. We expected another book written in Brodie's clear, humorous style, must reading for all those interested in the FORTH language."

The book exceeds those expectations. Unfortunately one serious flaw is evident; namely its title. The title may keep many from reading what otherwise is a literary gem for the programming community. Something like Thinking Programming would be more appropriate. Perhaps if Brodie had simply used the subtitle, A Language and Philosophy for Problem Solving some of what this book is really all about would have come across, for this is NOT a book to be read ONLY by those who are interested specifically in the FORTH language but a book to be studied by all who program in any language.

For those who do not know anything about FORTH, Brodie has supplied a four page appendix which does no more than define what FORTH is, and briefly describe its control and data structures. Just enough information on FORTH is supplied to make the book intelligible to those who are newcomers to FORTH. The necessity to "learn a language" in order to read a book may seem an unusual burden to some. As a parallel consider the "language", the student of English must learn in order to read some of James Joyces "English language" works. The structure of the book follows the steps in the software development cycle focusing on such topics as the preprogramming steps of specification and model building as well as the details that go into the design phase. While the details are FORTH related, those sections on initial design and problem analysis generally are not. Many of the algorithms developed as examples, and more importantly the thought processes that lead to their development are applicable to programming in any language. This book is one of the very few sources where a good deal of the effort of the author is directed toward development of the ability to design applications and develop algorithms as opposed to teaching syntax in a specific language.

The style of the book is in keeping with Brodie's earlier work. Cartoons, tips, and the thread of an interview with Charles Moore creator of FORTH are distributed throughout. The cartoons and illustrations afford a welcome change of pace from the text. The TIPS and Moores comments, could be compiled into a worthwhile book which could stand on its own merit. While the TIPS appear to be a rather cryptic set of do and don't directives a little reflection reveal a depth of logic and sophistication that they represent. For example: ##In developing an Algorithm, consider exceptions last. In writing code, handle exceptions first. ##For newcomers to FORTH(with "traditional backgrounds"):Keep the analysis phase to a minimum. ##For FORTH addicts(without a traditional background): Hold off on coding as long as you can possibly stand it. ##Evaluate your solution. Look for other solutions. ##Each definition should perform a simple well defined task. ##Don't pass

control flags downward. ##Factor at the point where you feel unsure about your code(where complexity approaches the conscious limit). ##Keep definitions short. This small sampling of TIPS indicates the scope of the book. Simple FORTH related concepts, and some rather sophisticated ideas are blended together into a masterful work. If the result doesn't make another FORTH convert as I suspect it was designed to do, it most certainly will improve your programming skills.

-----  
!PTERM VER 2.5!  
-----

By Richard Bryant  
Report Card:

!-----!  
!Performance.....A!  
!Ease of Use.....A+!  
!Documentation....B!  
!Value.....B!  
!Final Grade.....B!  
!-----!

PTERM is a terminal emulator type of program. It requires Console, 32K, Disk System, RS232, Modem, Disk Controller (any), and E/A, X-Basic, or TI-Writer. Printer is optional.

Pterm has two functions: ASCII and XMODEM. The ASCII still has a 24K buffer! and the XMODEM has a 10 block buffer in the screen table. Which means you can watch the actual transfer take place on the screen!

Performance:

As usual Pterm performed flaw- lessly in all phases of operation. It is impossible to crash the program at any point!

Ease of Use:

Pterm is the easiest of ALL term programs to use. There are only 12 keystrokes to remember. Which makes it a very compact program to operate! Documentation:

The docs are on disk, and are concise and to the point!

Value:

For the price Pterm is worth the money! If you want ASCII and Xmodem capability only then this is the one to get!

Final Grade:

I gave Pterm a 'B' because it has only two functions! PTERM is very basic and has no bells and whistles.

To order:

Pterm  
Richard Bryant  
417 E. Alpine St.  
Altamonte Springs, Fl. 32701  
\$20.00

FROM THE PRESIDENT

WELL GANG, THE SUMMER'S AT AN END, EVEN THOUGH IT SURE FEELS LIKE MID-AUGUST! TIME TO START GETTING BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS. DID YOU CHECK OUT THE SCHEDULED CLASSES FOR THIS YEAR. YOU'LL NOTICE THAT WE ARE STARTING A LITTLE EARLIER THIS YEAR, WHAT WITH TIME CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITED EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE. WE'LL BE ARRIVING AT THE CAMPUS AROUND 2:30 ON SUNDAY, SO ANYONE WHO LIKES TO HELP CARRY THINGS IN, WE CAN SURE USE THE HELP! (HINT-HINT!).

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DIDN'T MAKE THE AUGUST MEETING, YOU MISSED SOME REALLY GREAT DEMONSTRATIONS OF PROGRAMS, WITH CHUCK STRINK'S STAR-TREK TYPE GAME, AND KEITH BAJURA'S GREAT MUSIC DEMO. JONATHAN DEMO'ED A NEW TUNNELS OF DOOM VARIATION WRITTEN BY WALT DOLLARD, AND EVEN YOURS TRULY SHOWED A LITTLE WHEEL OF FORTUNE SIMULATION, (WITH BUGS..NATURALLY!). IT WAS GREAT FUN, AND EVERYONE ENJOYED IT, TO THE EXTENT, THAT WE WILL TRY TO DO THIS EVERY MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING YOU'RE WORKING ON, BRING IT ALONG, AND WE'LL ALL ENJOY LOOKING AT IT.

AFTER THE DEMO'S, WE GOT DOWN TO SOME SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS REGARDING THE FUTURE OF OUR CLUB, AND I WAS TRULY GRATIFIED AT THE POSITIVE AND AGGRESSIVELY UPBEAT TONE OF THE COMMENTS. WE CAME UP WITH A LOT OF GOOD IDEAS TO IMPROVE THE GROUP, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE CAME UP WITH AN INTERESTED, GUNG-HO GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING THE IDEAS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, TO THOSE OF YOU OUT THERE WITH MINIMUM CONFIGURATION SYSTEMS, (I.E. CONSOLE, CASSETTE RECORDER AND MAYBE XBASIC,) WHO MAYBE HAVE FELT THAT WE ABANDONED YOU, COME ON BACK. STARTING THIS MONTH, WE WILL HAVE A CASSETTE-O-D-MONTH, DESIGNED JUST FOR YOU IN MIND. ALSO, WITH THE HELP OF CLYDE COLLEGE, AND GENE KELLY AND OTHERS, COPIES OF THE LIBRARY PROGRAMS (THOSE THAT WILL WORK WITH YOUR SYSTEMS), WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE MEETINGS. I'M NOT SURE IF THIS WILL BE READY BY SEPT. MEETING, BUT WE'LL DEFINITELY HAVE SOME BY THE OCTOBER MEETING. SAME GOES FOR DISK COPIES OF THE LIBRARY. THEY'LL BE AVAILABLE SOON, ALONG WITH SOME OF THE NEW STUFF THAT LIBRARY IS WORKING ON. WE'RE TRYING, COME ON OUT AND GIVE US A LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT!

ONE DISCUSSION PLANNED FOR THIS COMING MEETING! HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MEETING ON SATURDAY, INSTEAD OF SUNDAY. COME OUT AND VOICE YOUR OPINIONS, EITHER WAY, AND WE'LL CHECK INTO FEASIBILITY WITH THE COLLEGE AND REPORT THAT ALSO. ALONG A SIMILAR VEIN, I'VE BEEN ASKED TO INVITE ANY ONE INTERESTED TO AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING ON THE FOURTH MONDAY OF SEPTEMBER, AT 7:00 AT THE GREEN-GATE MALL CONFERENCE ROOM. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING IS TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING (HOPEFULLY) AN EAST SUBURBAN CHAPTER OF THE PUG. FOR MORE INFORMATION, GIVE JOHN WILFORTH A CALL AT 527-6656. MY APOLOGIES FOR THE LATENESS OF THE NEWSLETTER! IT REALLY SNUCK UP ON ME THIS TIME, WITH THE EARLY MEETING, AND LABOR DAY, AND ALL. BUT GREAT NEWS, DARREN IS BACK IN TOWN, AND STARTIN WITH THE NEXT NEWSLETTER, HE'S EDITOR AGAIN. HOORAY...YAHOO...WHOOPIE....ETC.

TILL THE MEETING, MAY THE 4'S BE WITH YOU, AND MAY YOU ALL BE WITH US AT THE SEPTEMBER 15TH MEETING AT SOUTH CAMPUS.

ROY CARLSON PRES. PUG

The Lighter Side of Computing  
or  
My Modem Just Stuck Its Tongue Out at Me  
and I didn't even know it had one!

Do you realize that since they've developed automodems which can send messages at pre-programmed times, you can have your computer make obscene calls to yourself any time of the day or night?

Well. I just thought you'd like to know that.

Really, though, modems are great. They open up a whole new world of places to play without ever leaving your house. Anything your heart desires -- from shopping for Public Domain Software (free! free!) to shopping for hardware (VISA and MasterCard accepted) You can find SIG's -- no, not a slang term for an offensive form of tobacco -- they're Special Interest Groups. You can find bulletin boards hosted by seven (or more!) sysops. You can even find 'adult' boards that you have to prove how old you are before you can 'peek'! (Wanna see my SCARS?!)

Best of all, you can find people --all sorts and all ages of people. Most bulletin board systems (BBS's) have a Message Base of some kind. Some are unstructured -- you may find a message from Joe to Martha about what he did last weekend right next to a technical message about monitors. Other systems have sections like 'Wanted', 'For Sale', and 'Other BBS's'. It's quite possible to strike up an 'electronic' friendship with someone just by trading messages back and forth. It's always fun to have mail waiting for you the next time you log on!

Believe it or not, there are even OTHER uses for a modem besides becoming an electronic socialite! Several BBS's have uploading (giving THEM) or downloading (giving YOU) public domain software. If you have a friend with a modem, you can link your computers and trade your non-copyrighted programs back and forth. Or, if you happen to be taking some kind of computer course at one of the local colleges, you can dial up your school's computer and do your homework in the comfort of your own home! (Although I'm not sure even your own home is very comfortable when you're doing HOMEWORK!)

So, as you can see, a modem can be a very entertaining and useful addition to your computer system. The one danger to avoid, though, is becoming a slave to your modem. Some people become so enamored with their new-found social life that they spend more and more time at their computer. Of course, with a little moderation, any intelligent person can avoid this pitfall. I, for example, have no such problems. I have a very ... oops! it's 7:00 -- the Board is open! I have to pop in just to see if I have any mail ... be seeing you on the Boards!

by Barb Knaus

\*\*\*\*\*

\*  
\* JONATHAN'S CORNER  
\*  
\*

Well, here we are at September and I think we are much better off since our August meeting! The enthusiasm and great ideas expressed at the last meeting were gusts of fresh air, and we are working on getting several of the ideas into motion. For example, this month we will have a Cassette of the Month as well as a Disk of the Month and an Expanded Disk of the Month for people with 32K Memory Expansion. Programs include LOGOS, which shows how TI really eats the competition, WORLDMAP, a program that displays a map of the world and allows you to plot points between cities and determine distances, and CHECKBOOK, an advanced checkbook manager with all the whistles and bells. Most of the programs came from CompuServe, and we intend to keep a steady flow of high-quality, interesting programs going.

On other topics, the club is trying to start a mini-campaign to make itself known. If you have a local newspaper or radio station that you like, why not give them a call and give them information about our group? That information can be repeated through their various "community bulletin board" services. Newsletter articles of ANY kind are also requested! CompuServe has again provided us with topics, but input from the members is encouraged, too! Your local school will also probably be interested to know about our free classes in many aspects of the 99 computer! So, happy computing, etc., and here's to our continued growth and progress!

...Jonathan

EDMONTON 99ER USERS GROUP  
P.O. BOX 11983  
EDMONTON  
ALBERTA CANADA T5J 3L1

