

# WORDPLAY

The PUNN Newsletter Portland, Oregon

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## From the President

1990 will soon be history and all in all I believe that PUNN had a good year. It is time to plan for 1991 and with your help it will be a GREAT year. As you know, our next meeting will be TUESDAY - DECEMBER 11TH., same place, same time. The reason for not holding the meeting on the First Tuesday is due to the fact that the auditorium at the PGE building was not available on our regular meeting date.

Our meeting on 12/11/90 is an important one as on this date the 1991 officers will be elected. It is up to you to make your choice whom you wish to head up PUNN. This is no time to be bashful about running for office. You still have time to nominate yourself at our meeting on 12/11/90. At the last meeting good friend MIKE KING made an excellent comment to me. Mike said, "Apathy will be the finish of PUNN ." I could not have put it better. If you, as an individual, have found that membership in PUNN has been an enjoyable experience, then give some thought to helping to keep PUNN alive.

Several of our members brought canned food to our last meeting to help those less fortunate than ourselves. Please help with this project by bringing to our next meeting as much as you can.

On behalf of the officers & board members, I herewith wish you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS & A GREAT NEW YEAR.

Don...

## Club Officers

PRESIDENT	
Don Barker . . . . .	223-1749
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(300-1200-2400, 7/0/1,24-Hour)

# News and Views

## PROGRAM

We are going to try something different this month for the program.

We want everyone to bring some program that they have had trouble with and we will try to find what you need to do to make it work. We will also have a short program on Woodstock. Bring your program and let's see what you are doing.

We also are going to have the question part of the program and we want you to ask something. In the last few months no one has asked any questions. We know that some of our members have had some trouble or have tried something new that is not working. Let us know.

## DISK OF THE MONTH

This month we will have some new disks of the month. We have had a new program on Calender, one two-disk set of Xmas music, Fast Term, DSKU, etc. We will also have another disk on some util. items.

We will have the blank disk pack for sale. These are set up with either DSDD, DSSD, or SSSD for your convenience. They all work because when we set them up we took out the bad disks. So far we have had 2 bad ones out of 900. The club makes a few cents on the sale of these packs to help us pay the mailing cost. Come and help us.

TED PETERSON

## WHY WE BELONG TO PUNN

We are members of user's groups that are really clubs. The objective is to help each other. Perhaps it can go beyond that to helping each other to be creators. To do that we need to enable each other. This is a very difficult process. To catalyse the process one needs to examine what is happening in order to determine what is possible. We hope to find ourselves learning to use our computers to learn, to do tasks, and to pay for itself. To pay for itself, it needs to be remunerative - not only in money, but in understanding. This can be through writing, art, entertainment, education, learning, services, and interacting with each other. Perhaps the most powerful way of spreading ourselves is each one of us helping someone else do something or helping them to do something better.

DORMAN BLAZER

## IN THIS ISSUE

PUNN members wrote everything in this month's issue of WORDPLAY! In response to the card that everyone signed at the last meeting, NORM MINKS wrote a moving thankyou and tribute to his late wife. MIKE CALKINS wrote up a review of NOVA's TI Fair in his usual fine style. RICH GILBERTSON gives us a mindboggling look into the possible future of the TI 99/4A and GPL. TIM LUNGREN contributed a condensation of an article about IBM's new PS/1 and Tandy's 1000 RL. DON BARKER created the Christmas card at the bottom of this page. Thanks to GENE BURNEY for typing help.

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

If you are interested in J. K. Lasser's "Your Income Tax Software," information is at the front table. Whoever borrowed the 10 page Index to the Hardcopy Library, please return same to Mike Calkins, as this is the only copy we have. Make your own copy if you want, but please bring it back to the club.

Don't forget to bring an item of food to club this month for the Food Barrel.

Next week's board meeting will be at the home of Mike and Myrt Calkins, 1215 Cedar St., Lake Oswego.

WALLACE MURPHY, Editor



**IN MEMORY OF GLORIA MINKS**

My dear PUNN friends:

As you know from the BBS and the November general meeting that I lost Gloria, a very precious and kind wife and the mother of my five wonderful girls on Sunday, November 4th. She fought a very valiant and courageous fight against an uncommon cancer of the linings of her plurea and abdominal cavity. She and I and all our family knew in early July that it was terminal. She took the verdict with a marvelous attitude and courage, perhaps better than the rest of us, going about her usual household routine until the last two and half days of her life. She died at home with me and members by her side as she wanted. Though she suffered very great discomfort from nausea being unable to hold food or water down, she suffered no pain usually associated with cancer. This we are very thankful that she was spared the pains.

To those who knew her expressed to us many times the kind and generous person that she was to them. This we knew this all the time, but it is very refreshing to each of us that others also saw these same traits in her.

In closing, we want to thank all of you for your kindness and offerings of support in our sadness. Your have given more valued support to us than just support in the use of the TI-99/4a. May God bless you all.

From the loving family of Gloria Minks,

Norm, Virginia, Nadine, Teresa, Dolores and Dorothea

## TI FAIR REVIEW BY MIKE CALKINS

The Columbia Northwest TI-89/4A Fair is a month past and we have finished our debriefing process. Guess what! It was a real success! You could feel the Esprit de Corps among those attending. The enthusiasm shown by the Tiers at the fair was contagious and the number of thank you notes that we have received from those who attended is very gratifying.

We had a better turn out than we had any right to expect with about 255 to 275 spectators coming to the fair depending on who you talk to and how the count is made. The discrepancy arises because we didn't keep an accurate count of unpaid guests but it doesn't matter we'll do it better next year.

The fair was held in the west half of the Grand Ballroom of Red Lion Inn at Jantzen Beach overlooking the Columbia River. The room was twice the size of the one we had planned on, so the fair looked smaller than it really was. But it compensated by giving lots of room to sit, get to know each other, and talk TI.

Believe you me a lot of TI was talked because we had a lot to talk about. Major vendors bought tables and sent sales packets, so, though they couldn't be there in person, they were well represented by local Tiers who demonstrated and sold their products. We were privileged to have John McDevitt of Rave attend in person and Jim Luque was there representing Texaments and Comprodine.

Dorman Blazer represented both Asgard Software. (He sold out all the Picasso in the first couple of hours.) He must have been real busy because he also demonstrated Bud Mills Services P-Gram Card and Horizon Ram Disk. Paul Colman and Quinton Torman represented Comprodine Software and

themselves. Rich Gilbertson demonstrated his Windy XB-V-3.0 and CCad Electronics Grammulator. He's really good with that thing. Some people told me he was doing it with magic spells, but I think it's just good hardware and one darn good programmer.

Family Computing Software from Mt. Vernon, Washington was here in person as was Jim Smith with Disconsulting Ltd..

The swap meet, which took up 10 or 12 tables, was held at the rear of the room over-looking the Columbia. This made all of the 3 and 4 letter computer owners get a good look some real TI's as they walked by and stopped to marvel.

We also had some foreign guests drop in, so one of the spots we had on Cable TV must have paid off. Well what do you expect for free? We had real honest-to-goodness serendipity Tiers. There was a couple from Japan, an exchange student from Denmark, two engineers from Germany, and a musician from England.

Last but not least was the banquet and we're told by several people who have choked down a lot of chicken croquettes that the banquet Saturday evening was a good one. Jim Luque and John McDevitt were keynote speakers and directed their remarks toward what most people tell us is a shrinking TI community. Both Jim and John made the point that the TI could be saved by some good consumer programming. That is we must program the TI users to be honest and pay for their fareware. How else can we get our programmers to invest in up to date hardware and get the hardware builders to build new products. It's in our hands - be cheap and we loose. Be honest - and we gain a renewed vital TI community.

## THE FUTURE TI-99/4A

GPL/Assembly and the future TI-99/4A approach to Software/Hardware.

~~~~~by~Richard Lynn Gilbertson~~~~~  
GPL (Graphics Programming Language)

Well there are many things that can only be done in GPL. And as Assembly Language programmers know many of the subroutines built into the console lead right back to the GPL interpreter. Making them useless for pure Assembly approaches that would like to use them. My approach is to imbed Assembly into the GPL code and branch to it only when speed is required. GPL is great for what Texas Instruments designed it for, which is set-up, menus, and for storage. Programing wise GPL always leads back to GPL, while Assembly has to exit to the original start up screen, or to other Assembly Language programs. When creating programs GPL takes less memory space to do the same thing as Assembly. That is becuae GPL is a BYTE orientainted language and Assembly is a WORD (two bytes) orientainted language. I use both languages, but for speed I need the Assembly. For control I use GPL.

So Assembly is good for speed, and GPL is good for menus, storage, set-up, and controlling the whole thing in a orderly fashion. You need gobbs memory to get that out of Assembly.

Future projects may include adding TE2 speech to Extended Basic. Or may include a better GRAM0 operating system by eliminating Cassette and replacing it with Mouse routines.

Looking at some news letters I found TI-99/4A MEMORY ARCHITECTURE by John F. Willforth. It shows where all MEMORY MAPPED PORTS are including FastrAM, Sound, VDP, Speech, and last but not least GROM/GRAM.

History: Texas Instruments decided that if they sacrificed 8 bytes they could gain 40K of GROM/GRAM. Now there are 16 banks so that is: 40K times 16 banks equals 640K.

It requires little thought to see that if each of the 16 bank lines went through a PAL chip that made 4 more per normal bank that you would get:

PAL:::BANKS:::1BANK:::TOTAL  
004 \* 00016 \* 0040K = 2560K  
~~~~~ 1/4MEG

OR:

PAL:::BANKS:::1BANK:::TOTAL  
016 \* 00016 \* 0040K = 10240K  
~~~~~ 1MEG

OR:

PAL:::BANKS:::1BANK:::TOTAL  
256 \* 00016 \* 0040K = 163840K  
~~~~~ 16MEG

OR up to:

PAL:::BANKS:::1BANK:::TOTAL  
32768\*00016 \* 0040K = 20971520K  
~~~~~ 2048MEG

FINNALLY:

PAL:::BANKS:::1BANK:::TOTAL  
65535\*00016 \* 0040K = 41942400K  
~~~~~ 4095MEG

I'm not an electronics wiz, I am a programmer. But I've had a few discussions with those who do know it can be done. And I've read the comments of the engineers that designed the TI-99/4A. This seemed exactly where they were going. Consider Assembly and GPL all being run from the original operating system that is already in the TI-99/4A! Now that IS TOTAL COMPATIBILITY!!!!

The TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSE OUTLINE which is in my library of books to have. This book is mostly the development outline of the TI-99/4A, 4B (yes, 4B), and the TI-99/4X (99/8). Now having read it several hundred times with no electronics talent I have found that the only difference between the 4A and 4B is three (3) jumper wires and one (1) chip. W.Germany is suppose to send us the data (5 months ago) of how it is done.

## GIVING THE PC A HOME condensed by TIM LUNGREN

Giving the PC a home

This article appeared in the October 8, 1990 issue of U.S. News & World Report and has been condensed by Tim Lungren.

Two new entries aim at rank novices and work-at-home types

This time you won't resist. You'll smile when you see the screen light up with a bright, simple display. Never will you have to speak of bytes, baud rates or error messages if you don't want to. And you'll love how the computer smoothly takes over household chores from checkbook balancing to school reports. Yes, this is the Era of the Home Computer - finally.

That's what IBM, Tandy and their followers hope. It isn't that IBM's new PS/1 and Tandy's 1000 RL home PC's are modern and powerful in ways that earlier home PC's were not. They are designed around technology that goes back to the mid-to-early 1980's. But unlike earlier home PC's, the PS/1 and 1000 RL come fully loaded with programs and with special software that puts each application a keystroke or two away.

Is either PC for you? The PS/1 aims at employees who bring home work from the office. Tandy, wooing novices, wants you to think of its 1000 RL, more as a helpful household appliance, ready to churn out grocery lists and family memos. (Though mum on details, Apple is expected to launch two cheaper versions of its simple-to-use Macintosh this month.)

To put its PC into an everyday setting, IBM is selling the PS/1 at Sears, Dillard's, and Dayton-Hudson department stores as well as at computer outlets. The \$999 base price rises as high as \$1,999 if a hard-disk drive and high resolution color monitor are added, and discounts have been

rare. Tandy is peddling the 1000 RL for \$750 to \$1,300 - again depending on disk and monitor - at its more than 7,000 Radio Shack stores. Prices could drop during special promotions.

Those prices are not bargains. Far more powerful computers can be obtained for roughly what you'd pay for the top PS/1 configuration. You can easily beat IBM's or Tandy's price by buying a PC clone and adding your own software, though beginners who try to coax a reluctant program to run may remember why they hesitated to get involved in the first place. Still, reputable mail-order firms like Zeos, Dell, Northgate, Gateway, and CompuAdd sell good PC's at low package prices, often pre-installing programs such as Microsoft Windows. Some will help prospective buyers to choose the right combination with a minimum of techie talk. In this marketplace, here's how the IBM and Tandy machines stack up.

Only tiny evils mar IBM's and Radio Shack's near total taming of the PC. A new user who forgets to plug in the "mouse" that comes with the PS/1 is greeted with little flashing arrows pointing to an "F1" on the screen - not the clearest way to signal the mistake. Referring to a setup diagram in the manual would have quickly cleared up the confusion. With the Tandy 1000 RL, you need a screwdriver to attach the cables, a minor one-time nuisance compared with the easy-to-turn thumbscrews on the PS/1. Both computers provide helpful on-screen tutorials.

Computerizing the soccer schedule has made you wonder whether you might run a small business from home. Or your teenager wants to produce long, graph-laden papers rather than the

## GIVING THE PC A HOME

( continued )

simple book reports of yore. Casual PC users have a way of becoming more sophisticated as their expertise and ambitions grow. The ideal home PC can take on more memory, accept an upgraded processor chip and otherwise expand along with it's owner. Neither the IBM nor the Tandy makes it easy.

The top of the PS/1 line comes with 1 megabyte of chip memory and a 30 megabyte hard disk - enough space to hold the programs that come with the PC plus about 15,000 double-spaced pages of text. That sounds like plenty for a home PC, and it may be, for now. But PC's are typically sold these days with bigger hard disks and more chip memory. Some critics have taken

IBM to task for using a microprocessor that's been around since the mid-'80s, since most of the new business programs, especially those that rely on increasingly complex spread sheets and graphics are being written for faster 386-based computers in mind.

The 1000 RL is designed around the 8086 microprocessor chip used in PC's nearly a decade ago, and the 512 kilobytes of chip memory can be expanded only to 768 kilobytes.

After wrestling with buying decisions, you'll face another one even before leaving the store. After all, you'll need to print out your work. How much is that printer in the window?

## THE FUTURE TI-99/4A

( continued )

The 4B has twice the load/save speed of the 4A. The 4B does'nt need the VDP to transfer disk to memory, it goes straight to CPU memory. Also it's 100% compatible with the 99/4A. The 4B software sets up a PAB like the 4A, but the 4A uses the VDP to transfer the data, so the 4B can run the 4A software.

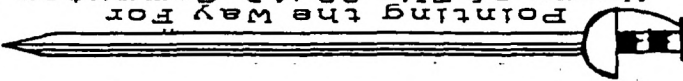
I just wanted to mention that from the average users point of veiw, he just wants to load and go. GPL combined with Assembly and hardware modifications like the 99/4B are the types of approches that will never create a bottle neck. Most of the hardware made for the TI is an attempt toward that. But it seems there is a real lack of knoweldge of GPL and what it is best at. Also as the console has most of it's memory devoted to it,

trouble only occurs when you are trying to avoid GPL in Assembly. Programs written in Assembly can be re-written to run from GPL and little change is needed. Imbedded Assembly run from GPL saves the area it runs from, runs, restores the area and continues. You can call it, use it, and return the to Extended Basic program just where it left off. Now I will admit that this method would slow down the original Assembly program. But we want convenience, speed, and compatibility! Not just speed. Besides this is exactly the kind of stunt we can do that the rest of Computers around can't do.

WE DON'T LOAD A DIFFERENT OPERATING SYSTEM!  
OUR OPERATING SYSTEM IS BUILT IN!  
 NUFF SAID! RICH

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Pointing the Way For  
Users of TI's 99/4A Computer



# WORDPLAY

The PUNN Newsletter

Next Meeting  
December //th 1990  
Starts at 7:00pm

Board Meeting  
December 18th 1990  
Starts at 7:00pm

All general meetings are held  
on the first Tuesday of each  
Month, at the PGE Building  
3700 S.E. 17th. Avenue  
Portland, Oregon

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