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If your label is highlighted in yellow, please send $15.00 to the Puget Sound
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JUNE 1988
1988   NEW OFFICERS

JUNE,   1988   VOL. 7   NO. 6

MEMBERSHIP $15.00 PER YEAR
NEWSLETTER PRICE: (FOR NON-MEMBERS) $1.50 PER ISSUE
BUSINESS CARD AD: $5.00 PER PUBLICATION

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NEWSLETTER	:	BARB WIEDERHOLD,SEATTLE,WA.	522-6558
LIBRARIAN	:	CYNTHIA BECKER, SEATTLE,WA.	361-7025

JUNE MEETING:

DATE: THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 1988   TIME: 7:00 P.M. SHARP
PLACE:KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON LIBRARY, 406 KIRKLAND AVENUE

JULY MEETING
THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1988

THE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD NEXT TO THE LAST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH...WE WILL TRY
TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THIS SCHEDULE...SOME MONTHS HAVE 5 THURSDAYS CAUSING THE
DATES TO BE MIXED UP...SO, RULE OF THE THUMB....NEXT TO THE LAST THURSDAY OF
EACH MONTH...

Well, to begin with I wish to thank all of you who have taken the reins and continued in my absense. This shows that we truely are a club. Thank you Doug Rose, Tom Wynne, Barbara Wiederhold, Cynthia Becker, John Kannisto, Rick Lewis, Al Gomen, Keith Johnson, and all the others I have forgotten to mention. The future looks great because of you.

I am sorry to announce the Tri-Cities 99er's have decided to close their club. A very sad announcement indeed. Gary Cleveland has done this by majority vote at their April meeting. All members are welcome to use our BBS, come to our meetings, etc. I would hope they will indeed keep in touch with each other for support.

Barbara Wiederhold has a list of members who will help with the upcomming convention in September. Thanks members! Cynthia Becker has put some exciting new material in the library. I'll leave it up to her to let you know what it is.

I will leave tomorrow for Chicago on a business trip. I will be gone for 2 weeks and be back for the next meeting. I'm going to try and get ahold of the Chicago users group if possible. It looks as if I won't be there for one of their meetings. It would have been nice.

I could use some input from the members. We have on file hundreds of newsletters from other groups. The question is how to get this information to the members. Anyone can drop over and peruse to their hearts content, and I will try and copy some of the important things for handing out at the meetings. Some of it will appear in our newsletter, but not all, as we must do our best to contribute. We've got some real winning clubs out there. TI is not in any way fading out. But it needs your support.

A new data base is on its way for the TI. It is disk based and should be the biggest and greatest ever for this machine. Yes, this is for the TI. It can however be used on the Geneve too. See, the guru's like Mike Dodd, Peter Hodie, etc, aren't switching, they are writing for the TI world. Great eh? We've needed a professional data base for some time. I thought it would be called "First Base", but that might have changed. It should cost around $25. Stay tuned for a review!

The BBS is really humming lately. I should say both our clubs, and to a higher degree, QACS. If you get a chance, get on them with a modem. You don't have to leave a message, just read them. Then press W for who's been there. They are from all over the nation, and even Milan Italy. 784-4142, and 361-0895 (QACS). If I don't call it twice a week, I miss messages because it holds only 100 messages at a time. The latest updates to programs are usually present. What a great way to keep current. I should say try, as I think I'm behind at the present time. Wow, what great stuff. If you are reluctant to sign on because you don't know the ropes, let a member know. Once you're into it you could become addicted. It's great, and it's free (paid for by UG dues.) QACS, from sales at the Queen Anne Computer Shoppe.

We have been asked to contribute to the UNDB (User Group Newsletter Data Base.) It should catagorize articles in all of the nations newsletters as to where they are. It uses a starter kit which uses PR Base V2.1 from Mike Dodd (an update of William Warrens PRB). He is the author. Lets see if we can get going on it. PR Base V2.1 is Geneve compatable.

Here we are for first summer meeting. I hope you enjoyed the last meeting and I hope you enjoy the next one comming up also. Again we are having some more demos of Xbasic utilities. I will be showing one of the PRESCAN IT programs and Doug PALMER will show a collection of assembly routines that interface with Xbasic. Cynthia Becker our new librarian will give us another update of the library and a demo of one of the new exciting programs that she has found in her BBS journeys. So, bring a few dollars with you too.

CONVENTION '88 SEPTEMBER 23/24, 1988

Barb will be here again to give us Convention Updates, along with a few ideas and suggestions. This Convention is a good idea to promoteur computers along with selling software/hardware that each of us has out growing or no longer use. There are many new ways we can generate money for the club at the CONVENTION to be used in purchasing new hardware/software the club needs.

PHOENIX RAMDISK BACKGROUND 3-15-88
Copyright 1988 Ron G. Walters

As a relative newcomer to the TI community, I was flattered when the legendary Cynthia Becker asked me to do a piece on myself and the Phoenix Ramdisk for your newsletter. By way of introduction, ever since my graduate school years in the late sixties, I have been involved as a mathematician/physicist in many scientific applications of image processing and related technologies. This eventually led to an affiliation with Technicare Corp. in 1975 (since - purchased by G.E.), where I pioneered many of the breakthrough technologies used in todays C.A.T. Scanners and Magnetic Resonance Imaging systems. In 1984 I founded Dynamic Systems Research Inc., which provides a wide range of high level consulting services to primarily Fortune 500 companies and affiliates.

It is our intention to use the Geneve as the host CPU in state-of-the-art image processing applications. The Phoenix Ramdisk, which involves a hardware design modification of the standard HRD+ series, was born of my need for fast mass storage on the Geneve and the many delays in release of the hard disk controller by Myarc. Last December when I heard about the 1 MEG. HRD+, I contacted Bud Mills of Horizon to order one for my Geneve system, and was told he could sell me one but they won't really work on the Geneve because it's Ramdisk DSR was designed for 8 bit CRU devices (the new Horizons with the 32k byte chips use 16 bit CRU decoding). He added though, that Jim Schroeder was working on RAMDOS, a program which would patch the MDOS DSR to treat the larger Ramdisks as 80 track drives. This was great, but for one problem, DOS could no longer be booted from a Ramdisk configured this way. I ordered the 1 MEG. anyway and decided to modify it's design to also boot DOS.

The result was the PHOENIX (out of the ashes) RamDisk which would provide 800k bytes (the max. allowed by the 80 track bitmap) PLUS up to 256k bytes of "bootram+" on the same card AND at the same CRU address. The two Ramdisks can co-exist this way by sharing the CRU decoding and automatically sensing whether an 8 bit or 16 bit CRU request has been made. I then asked Jim Schroeder if he would modify RAMDOS so that it would toggle MDOS DSR's between the 8 bit and 16 bit devices, which he promptly did and made generally available as fairware, RAMDOS-P. I have provided the hardware modification and a comprehensive set of related software to Bud Mills, which is now available as the Phoenix option on the Horizon Ramdisk. I have also uploaded this software (which by the way is compatible with ALL Geneve/Horizon configurations) to Compuserve and Genie under the names PHOENIX.ARK and an update called CONFIG-PAK.

I currently have two full Phoenix Ramdisks on the system, providing over 2 Megabytes of mass storage (thats nearly 8,500 sectors !) in two slots. DOS boots in less than half a second and GPL loads in a couple. There's also a 40 Meg. hard disk waiting for a controller. What happens then? Well, the Ramdisk is faster than a hard disk and much easier to restore if your system, or you, wipe it out! The Ramdisks will be used for all system utilities and as workspace, providing increased throughput, reducing wear on the hard disk, and localizing otherwise costly disasters.

In so far as the future is concerned, we have an "in house" need for a floating point co-processor and a Hi-Res color digitizer. Because the digitizer must meet special requirements it is being designed here and is nearly ready for prototype. It will set a new standard in cost/performance and once patent apps. are filed, a version will possibly be released to the TI community. I am still exploring possibilities for a co-processor and would be interested to know if anyone else has a serious work-in-progress in this area.

Ron Walters

There is an expression with which we are all familiar and that is, WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS! And that is exactly the case with new software! I spent some time exploring the networks in the past several days, and have downloaded some of the most interesting programs you have ever seen! I did have some of these programs at the meeting (the 26th of May) but unfortunately, I was not able to go over too many of them with you!

This time, it is a different story! Let's take a look at what is new in the wonderful world of computing, shall we?

UTILITIES:

The most unique program I ever encountered is a program called FUCAT. What's a "FUCAT" I hear some of you inquiring? Well, I'll tell ya! FUCAT (written by Rick Grissom of Albuquerque, New Mexico) simply is an abbreviation for FILE UNDERSTANDING CATaloger. It prints a disk directory for your disk jacket with the filename, size of file, type of file (the manner in which it does this is quite unique to this program!),which you will find most helpful in your determination of "HOW IN THE HAY DO I LOAD THIS THING?" It identifies 3 file categories: e/a image files are labeled EA-OPT5. All Basic and Extended Basic programs are listed as BasicXB. If there are any programs coming under the designation of Gram type programs, they are labeled as Gram Kr. All else is listed as a Program. It will print out your label (if you accept the default designated on screen as (A) in whatever number of columns is necessary to the size of your directory. Otherwise, you can manually change it by pressing FCTN I.

To initiate the procedure, you first of all load the program; e/a option 5, and the filename is FUCAT. You must enter the drive number of the disk you wish to catalog. You will first of all see the information on your monitor screen. Then you have the option, if you wish, of (P)rinting it out to your printer. If a file is FRACTURED, it will show you that by the letter F as a prefix on a file. This, however, will not be printed out to your listing. When you select 'P' to print, the screen color will change to green, then back to blue. This program comes with documentation, and the author has provided codes that you can change to fit the type of printer you are using. He invites comments and or questions. This is freeware, so a donation would be appreciated. RICK GRISSOM, 379 ANTELOPE CR. SE, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87123 (505)292-0521

The next package is a file called GKIII and includes a nifty (doctored) version of DM1000! One of the biggest enhancements is the option to RUN a program from the FILE UTILITIES screen. Each prompt (single key) can be either upper or lower case. The COPY/MOVE/DELETE shows how many sectors have been marked for each operation. Page control is automatic. No more "N"s! This I love! The RUN a file is only possible with a Gramulator or Gram Kracker that has GK/UTILITY/III installed on it. (only the RUN option requires this) Errors on version 3.5 have been eliminated. FCTN-P to protect, FCTN-U to unprotect, and there is no longer any need to run the cursor all the way to the end of the line in order to achieve this! <phew!> The program comes with super documentation which I strongly urge you to print out and read!

FILEMASTER 4--V.2.2 is an extended basic program, which is pretty much self explanatory. It is a neat address book of sorts! Menu-driven. So no need for too many comments here. Just TRY IT!

ZODIAC...extended basic program from the NUTMEG 99er's in Ct. One of the contributing programmers is an assembly whiz-kid whom I knew from membership of he and his dad in the Boston Computer Society TI-99/4A user group, by the name of Aaron West. It is a neat program, and the collaberation of more than one person made it possible..it was a club effort! It is fairware so please take this into consideration. SEND $6 to NUTMEG-TI-99er's..C/O Janet Ryan, 10 Jolly Rd., Ellington,CT. 06029

PAPERSAVER is an extended basic program that scrunches down the print of a d/v 80 file and is supposed to save up to 50% of the paper needed to print

out a textfile. Written by R.J. Marlen, 3156 Pinebrook Dr., Arnold, MO
63010. He is asking $3.00 donation. Comes with docs.
     C99R4U---latest version of C99 files from Clint Pulley...add them to
your C99 disk (replace files of the same name)...documentation included.

MUSIC and GRAPHICS, and misc. programs:
     BEATLES...a neat package of 9 Beatles tunes. Written in extended Basic.
Has a LOAD file for auto/loading. It includes a file called ORDER_FORM..This
is fairware, so please send the author something if you use the program.
     BACH SONATAS...6 Bach sonatas...e/a written with an xb LOAD file.
selectable from a menu, the songs are loaded, played, and you are returned to
your menu.
     SNUG....a neat package from a user group in Germany, which was sent to
Lucie Dorais of the Ottawa user group, and which I downloaded from TEXLINK.
It has a LOAD file to auto/load from extended basic. The u/g would
appreciate comments,and are interested in exchanging newsletters, and they
offer help in hardware/software problems. Be sure to send them something for
the program.
     There is a neat package of 3 games plus graphics demos from Canada.
Also fairware, the programmer (games) is an 18-year old 'c' programmer by the
name of Jim Beck (10946-36 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, T6J-0B9 (403)435-2065
NINJA, PANIC, and RAMPAGE are the games by Jim Beck. LINES, RECTANGLES and
TRIANGLES are the graphics demos. Jim's Ninja game loads from xb, while the
other two load from e/a option 5 as do the graphics demos.
     I have the complete package from Clint Pulley of the "QUICK and
DIRTY...et al " that are a great programming tool for creating assembly files
for the 9640, and thensome....
     We have 2 games called BANDIT and KABOOM, plus a music program called
BANANAS. These files come with an xb LOAD file.
     I have on file (thanx to Don Walden) some music files by Bill Knecht,
Sam Moore, and few others...all on one disk.
     I have a print utility from the LA 99ers that prints out banners.
     I have a few bulletin board programs: PARADIGM by Mike Kimble and Travis
Watford, AFTER HOURS BBS program, and Scott Darlings BBS program, version 3.0
     I also am in possession of TEXLINK, a commercially sold program from the
Ottawa user group in Canada. I can demo it to ya, but if you want a copy,
you must purchase it directly from them. The cost is around $40 in U.S.
funds. Comes with great documentation!
     I am still awaiting the arrival of TELCO version 2.0...and as yet, have
not seen a trace of it. I know from conversation with Charles Earl, that he
had been doing the final de-bugging of the program, so all I can say is this:
IT'S COMING!!!!! When? DON'T ASK ME! No doubt about it, the 99/4A is far from
an ORPHAN! Just look at all these great programs still being written for it.
The problem is in the fact that user groups (and dealers) need to be more
VISIBLE to the general public who don't belong, and who are MODEMLESS! So
let's see what we can do to change all that!
     There is one thing or rather, one comment I would like to make at this
time, and it is this: WE ARE A SPOILED LOT! We have such talented youngsters
writing some of the neatest programs for us to use and enjoy, and they are,
in most cases, asking NEXT TO NOTHING for the program...We owe it to
ourselves to send a contribution to them. This will encourage them to not
only stick with the TI community, but to continue to write programs for us
and keep our libraries in a healthy well-stocked condition, if you know what
I mean! So much for ceremony!

     JUNE 16, 1988...NEW RELEASES AS OF TODAY:
     FUNELWEB VERSION 4.1, TELCO VERSION 2.0

     PRICES: 2 DISK SET(AT USER GROUP MEETING)$5.00 EACH SET

     DAT'S ALL, FOLKS! :)

"Texas Instruments Still Cares!"

It looks like TI still cares, four and a half years after they orphaned the TI- 99/4A. The toll-free number 1-800-TI- CARES is still working, and it is still possible to get replacements for out-of-warranty, non-functioning equipment. The cost, to replace a console costs $30.50, a 32K card $44.00, and a 10" monitor $100.00 (plus shipping costs for sending the defective item back plus, shipping costs for the return of the working, used replacement to you). Before sending any equiptment for repair or replacement it is recommended that you call them 1st and confirm both price and replacement availability. The address to send the non-working item is Texas Instruments, Inc., Attn: Repair Center, 2305 N. University Avenue, Lubbock, TX 79408,

Parts are also still available through TI. The TI parts dept. has a very wide variety of parts available for 99/4A owners. Most of the grom chips for any TI labeled cartridge may be ordered as well as almost every part in the console or PEB equipment. One item they have available is the grom port adapter for the console; the part number is 1049693-1, and the cost is $5.84. A few items are becomming scarce, such as the TP (thermal printer) parts. The TI writer grom is sold out. A TI part number helps, but is not required. They will accept orders by part description. The monitors were made by Panasonic and as such could be repaired by a shop that would have a similiar diagram and spare parts. You have to call a non-toll-free number for that: 1-806-741-2265 (or 1-806-741-2268).

Minutes from the May Meeting
By Tom Wynne, Secretary

The meeting had about 35 to 40 members in attendance. And started about 7:00. Because Chuck was on a business trip, Doug Rose was the coordinator of the meeting. First, the secretary (me) gave a report on what happened at the April meeting. Then Doug Rose gave a demonstration of the utility program called Neatlist which lists programs in Extended BASIC in different ways. Then Barbara Wiederhold (our newsletter editor) talked about how articles should be submitted. She said that the articles should be compiled at the end of the meeting. If you cannot attend a meeting and wish to submit an article, you can upload it to a BBS or mail it to the club's post office box.

John Kannisto gave a treasurer's report stating that we currently have $614.20 in our account. Barb Wiederhold then talked about the upcomming Convention in September. She says that it will be state sponsored and will have other vendors which sell equipment that will work with the TI. She says that VIPs are very important and we should have more to help with the convention. The convention will be held in the Seattle Center. Barb says that the room at the Seattle Center is around 5000 square feet versus the Holiday Inn room last year is only around 3000 square feet. There was also suggestions that we should, as a group, have something to show our membership like hats, decorations, disks, etc. We need your input! The Third Annual TI Convention - September 23, 24, 1988. Barb tells us that Texas Instrument's support runs out in October '88 but they were at the DALLAS FAIRE and mentioned their intention to continue support after that date.

REMEMBER, call 1-800-TICARES if you need assistance.

Doug Rose showed more Extended BASIC utility programs. He showed a quick demonstration of EZ Keys and XB Detective.

Lastly, I showed the VideoFlex demonstration that I created for the Dallas Computer show that Dave Miller of Miller Communications showed.

The meeting came to a close at around 9:00PM.

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        PUGET   SOUND   99er's
        TREASURER'S   REPORT
        By   John  Kannisto


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  G.Sjaastad        $15.00
  Queene Anne       $15.00
  R.Colton          $15.00
  R.Martin          $15.00
  R.Wilson          $15.00
       Total Dues           $90.00

ADVERTISING:
  Carnation Trout
    Farm & Nursery  $5.00
  Queene Anne       $5.00
       Total Ads            $10.00
OTHER:
  Disk Sales        $51.00
       Total Other          $51.00

BILLS PAID:
   Telephone(BBS)
     784-4142    ($10.03)
        Total Bills        ($10.03)

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BALANCE 6/5/88             $755.17
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BULLETIN BOARDS (PCPursuitable)

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  Keith Johnson, SysOp 300/1200..24 hrs
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  Ed Durffee, SysOp 300/1200 WILDCAT SOFTWARE
QUEEN ANNE COMPUTER SHOPPE(TIBBS)     361-0895
  Commercial BBS 300/1200..24 hrs.
  Barbara Wiederhold, SysOp
TROTHGARD TIBBS,Des Moines, Wa        824-6757
  John Brittingham, SysOp member of and
  supports TI Orphans at So.Center
  300/1200 24 hrs...
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 IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON
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  Let's SUPPORT our Washington BBS'!!!!!

PC Pursuit Sign/up (Voice)     1-800-835-3638
PC Pursuit Sign/up (BBS Number)1-800-835-3001
  $25.00 per mo.flat fee unlimited calls
GEnie                          1-800-638-8369
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From the Desk of the EDITOR:
Barb Wiederhold 522-6558
June, 1988

        I am so thrilled this month to see the OUTSTANDING participation
from members who have supported this news letter with their reports.
We now have the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and
Librarian getting their much needed reports compiled. As you can see
(read), they have made that most important contribution here to keep
you THE MEMBERS informed of what has been and is going to happen in the
ensuing months ahead. I have taken some information from my Bulletin
Board (QACS) uploads submitted by out-of-towners, as this is a way to
SHARE WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT YET....USE A TELEPHONE MODEM. Hope you
find these articles of interest. Also, I am so pleased to be able to
share with you, one our VERY OWN members' experience with past
employment in the company of TEXAS INSTRUMENTS in SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.
Let me say, RICK LEWIS, STARTED THIS PUGET SOUND 99er club, and we are
all so very fortunate to STILL HAVE RICK as an active member. Not only
that, he is the OWNER of a Geneve 9640 and PRESIDENT OF THE OFF-SHOOT
SECTION OF THIS CLUB 9640 SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP..more information to
follow as we get this section formed..
        Special thanks again, to Rick Lewis for the two articles he has
submitted for this newsletter. He really points out some of the things
we have OVERLOOKED in appreciating OUR TI99/4A VS. OTHER COMPUTERS, SO
READ HIS ARTICLE CAREFULLY, HE REALLY BRINGS THESE POINTS ACROSS. Rick
also will always be available for any further help you may need from
the BEGINNER TO THE EXPERIENCED 994/A USER..

SEE YOU AT THE USER GROUP MEETINGS...
>Barb<

The 99/4A is a remarkable story that isn't over yet. Even 5 years after being discontinued there are still hundreds of thousands of users of this remarkable device. The range of familiarity with the 4A is almost as wide as the range of users - everyone from the bare beginner with a garage-sale console up to the "power-user" with hard-drives, and everything in between. The number of applications is equally as broad - tens of thousands of programs run on the 4A from 9 year old musty databases to the latest in word processing.

No one or dozen magazines can adaquately describe this incredible diversity. Asgard Publishing felt that there were a lot of things that weren't being covered - that is why we created ASGARD NEWS.

What is ASGARD NEWS?

Well, for the owner of one or more Asgard Software products it is an indispensible source of tips, update notices, and new or related product information. It will tell you what's wrong and what's right about what Asgard Software publishes, and what we have up our sleave next for the TI community.

For the average user, it is a source of the most important news from the grapevine - what the "movers and shakers" of the TI community are doing now. It will keep you informed without you having to spend hundreds of dollars on telecommunications networks and phone calls.

For the person in the market for 99/4A hardware - it is an unbiased, nuts and bolts reviewer of the latest in TI technology. It will help you by dissecting a new device for you so YOU won't have to spend hundreds of dollars before finding out it's a lemon or a prize.

For every TI-99/4A owner, ASGARD NEWS is a forum where all the issues facing the 99/4A will be discussed - from every angle. It is a magazine of opinion that is an intellectual free-for-all. We'll deal with the hard issues - what is the significance of the Geneve? Is piracy killing software support? Where will the 4A be in 2 years? 10 years?? ASGARD NEWS invites anyone with a clear opinion on anything to speak up - and anyone who doesn't like what is said to write in response.

Finally, ASGARD NEWS is devoted to the non-programmer. It is a users magazine with an emphasis on "users". We recognize that 90% of 99/4A owners don't care about programming, and aren't interested in programming. All most users are interested in is getting the most from what they have, and finding out about things they don't have. They want to know what something is USEFUL for - what BENEFITS it offers - not feature lists.

In short, ASGARD NEWS is a news magazine for the 4A. We'll keep you informed, we'll outrage, and we'll prove you right or wrong. If you are interested in the 99/4A - this magazine will interest you.

This 16-32 page quarterly can be obtained until July 31st for only $6.00/4 issues - 50% off the cover price! Canadian, European and Australian owners please add $3.00 for air mail delivery.

An offer like this will never come again - take advantage of our special introductory price because soon it - like the Commodore Vic 20, the IBM PCjr and the Coleco Adam - will disappear.

MDOSTIP...
Just^For^Fun...

The following comes courtesy of Steve Mickelson, Editor of Newsletter
9T9, 109-2356 Gerrard St.   East,Toronto,M4E-2E2,Canada.:

    So you are bored with your Geneve and/or tired for waiting for the
final version of MDOS, with new features... well don't look now, but
there are a few undiscovered secrets hiding inside your current version
of MDOS. The following discoveries were found by fellow member, Gary
Bowser, who called me last evening and let me discover what happend on
my own 9640.
    First boot MDOS as usual. At the A> prompt enter the following
command XYZZY and see what you get. Not impressed? Well, we saved the
best for last, at the A> prompt enter the following command DIR JP: And
who says programmers take themselves too seriously!
    Now if I can only figure out what the R command in MYWORD is
looking for,(certainly not a REMIND ME file- I tried it). Playing with
it can disable disk drive #2, though. Anyway, I hope the JP swan gets
well soon.

Article for "TIps 99", the newsletter of the Puget Sound 99´ers.
Rick Lewis May 27, 1988

"WHEN I WORKED FOR TI": THE MAKING OF A TI NUT

It all started in November of 1979. I was trying to find a job to hold me through the holidays and keep my sanity
while going to UW. In the former I succeeded, while the latter is a matter of debate.

The job I found was as a part time salesperson at the new Texas Instruments retail store in the Alderwood Mall.
Originally it was intended to be a temporary, part time position just until the new year. In fact I just figured it
would look good on my resume when I was hunting for a permanent position. By the end of the year the other temporaries
were let go, but they decided to keep me. I was hired the same month the store received its first TI-99/4 computer.
As the months went by I found that despite my initial disintrest, computers actually had a certain entertainment value.

By the end of 1980 I was the resident expert on the computer, partly because the first manager (who knew his
stuff) was transferred back to Texas, and partly because few of the others had much interest. At first it was
extremely difficult to sell the computers because extreme lack of support from TI. They provided us with a few little
brochures telling of the wonderful peripherals and three dozen or so programs available, but in fact both the software
and the hardware were rather scarce.

I decided the only way I was going to learn about the 99 was to teach myself. Although I had no computer
experience except a course in FORTRAN on an outdated UW system, I was able to quickly pick up TI BASIC and the few
programs which were available initially. Even so, it was slow going on the sales front. The prices of the other
computers available at the time (the Apple II, the TRS-80 model II and the Commodore PET) were coming down and
availability was still a problem for the 99.

We got a manager at the store eventually, named Joe Curry. His arrival coincided with a buildup of software and
reductions in prices for the hardware. With all that came increased sales and new and exciting things like Extended
BASIC, which I quickly took to. In fact I started making a lot of demonstration programs.

One of Joe´s ideas was a response to a variety of enquiries from customers; namely the formation of a local
TI-99/4 users group. To this end we started assembling a list of everyone who had expressed an interest or bought
hardware or software from us and made a mailing. The response was good and the Puget Sound 99´ers were born. At first
the meetings were held in the TI store to get things started, and I held all offices until we could hold elections.
The bylaws stated that employees of TI could not hold office (to avoid conflict of interest), so I gladly stepped down
when others were elected. I still played an important role in meetings by giving talks and demonstrations.

With prices dropping further TI extended their distribution to various discount retailers like K-Mart and Jafco.
Unfortunately the sales force at such stores is less than optimum for marketing computers and providing the sort of
user support required for complex machines. As a result we started seeing a lot more people in the store who seemed
interested, but who ended up buying from some other store. We still made a lot of sales, though since we were able to
provide the sort of after sale support people were looking for, and were much more willing to go out of our way for
customers. Our store was top among the TI stores in 99 sales and I was top sales in our store.

In the middle of 1982 TI decided that it had two options open to it concerning the continued marketing of the 99;
open up hundreds of retail outlets, like Tandy did with Radio Shack, or sell the 99 only through other outlets,
especially discounters. They decided that it was better to close a dozen stores than try to open hundreds, so I was
out of a job.

Not long after this we had a guest speaker at a 99´er meeting. He was in charge of the new TI Computer Advantage
Club, and was telling us about how they were demonstrating in retail outlets and giving classes to the public. Being
out of work, I was interested. I got an interview and was hired. The first step was to go through an introductory
training class, which I did. To my surprise I already knew everything the instructor said, and even pointed out a
couple errors in the material. This was in November of 1982.

By January I was training all the TI teachers in the Seattle area. Soon they expanded operations to Portland and
I was in charge of training for the whole Northwest. TI provided course books for each of the classes we taught, but

from the first day it was painfully obvious to me that they were completely inadequate and were full of errors and omissions... so I made my own. I found that the classes responded very well to my material and made sure the instructors I taught were aware of the problems and were prepared to creatively deal with them.

In June I was promoted to West Coast Trainer, a position which was not in existence before I had it. TI kindly gave me a raise and sent me off to train new teachers in Hawaii, Alaska, Utah, California and more. In the fall of 1983 I was involved in a particularly exciting task: a complete rewrite of the Extended BASIC courseware. I made dozens of demonstration programs for inclusion in the manuals, and Raleigh Wallace and I wrote the text of the course. All this work was done in three days, but it was a work of art, far surpassing the previous version.

Shortly thereafter I was called to Lubbock for a conference of all the regional trainers and the corresponding administrative people. Each of us was to prepare a short demonstration to show some teaching method or interesting aspect of one of the courses. This sort of thing is right up my alley so I wasn't too worried about it. I made a quick demo on the plane on the way there. When we were all assembled I was surprised (and a bit concerned) to find that some of the trainers had made very elaborate demonstrations and printed up thick manual excerpts and other learning aides. It became clear immediately that they were much better at reproducing courseware than at actually conveying material. In fact a great majority of the demonstrations were rather boring.

Mine was a simple affair. There were no twenty-page handouts, no flow charts to follow, etc. They had set up a computer with a large screen raised above so everyone could see. I sat down and went through a five minute introduction to the DISPLAY AT statement in Extended BASIC and the interesting things you can do with it that aren't in the manual, such as a short routine to scroll text sideways across the screen. I was distressed to find that the reaction was just as I had found on my training trips... "Gee, I didn't know that!" These "trainers" were no better informed than your average teacher!

An interesting thing happened when we were there. TI had introduced the CC-40 computer not long before and was making Hexbus peripherals for the 99 so they would be able to exchange software (the CC-40 has a tremendously advanced BASIC language which is fully compatible with TI Extended BASIC for the 99), and I had read an article about the Hexbus in the "99'er Magazine". An engineer came in to tell us a few things about what was going on and he mentioned that there was going to be a memory expansion for the Hexbus system. I asked him how this was since the Hexbus had only a 4-bit data path. He looked surprised and said "Oh, well I see you've alread been told about the project, so..." and he proceded to tell us about all these plans for double sided double density battery-powered Hexbus disk drives, 128K RAM expansions with Hexbus ports on the back, and more. He also told us of the TI-99/8, the incredible computer of which they had already made 200 prototypes, and which was to be introduced in a few weeks. They had a wealth of information.

A couple weeks later TI decided to drop the 99/8. Apparently they were afraid that new comuters coming out at about the same time (like the Adam) would be too much price competition for it. In fact the TI-99/8 would have totally blown away anything on the market at the time, and is comparable to, although quite different from, the Myarc Geneve. For example, it had over 300K of ROM built in, plus speech, Advanced BASIC, Pascal, and the Hexbus system.

Not long after that I got a call at home. It was my local administrative supervisor who told me that TI had decided to drop the TI-99/4A and close down the Computer Advantage Club, dumping thousands of jobs there and in the Consumer Products Division which made the computer. This was quite a shock to all of us, but that story has already been told.

So that's my story. Now I'm a Geneve owner and I'm still somewhat active in the 99'ers. With any luck we'll all be TI'ers for a long time to come.