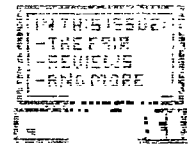




99ERS



TIC-TALK

Volume 5, Number 7

April 1987

Greetings to those of you in TI 99/4A computer land!!! This is your new editor speaking (or should I say writing). I thought I might take some time to introduce myself to everyone and give you a little of my background, so here goes. First, the personal stuff. My name is Keith Amann (but some of you already knew that). I am presently a sophomore (almost a junior) at the Colorado School of Mines. I'm majoring in Computer Science and minoring in Electrical Engineering. I have had my system for 4 years and have written most of the software I own, myself. This has not been an easy task especially since all of it is in some form of basic (I own assembly but have not had time to really sit down and learn it). I joined the group a short time ago (around March) and was totally amazed by everything that is available for the TI. I had thought that TI had left me out in the cold when I and behold what do I find but a users group, and local at that. On with the story, Mike Miller (your vice-president) had left a message on one of the 3EB's here in Denver and, after talking to him around one o'clock in the morning (I was just a bit excited), I found out about the groups next meeting and immediately fit it into my schedule. After attending the meeting (and discovering how far behind on software I really was), Mike conned, no talked me into taking the editorship, and so here I am.

I have seen two newsletters come out since I joined the group and have only seen around three articles that have not been written by the editor or someone in some other users group. I am sure that everyone who even works on their computer a little bit has discovered some little quirk or would like to know more about some particular subject. I want to here it all (I have a lot of catching up to do), and I'm going to do my best to read it all. But how can I do this, and how can I let others that are in my position do this, if I don't have any articles to put in the newsletter. I believe this newsletter is for your benefit and so I would appreciate more participation in it from you. I know that none of you are all knowing about this computer (if you were, you would have cornered the software market years ago), so why don't you send in an article stating what you do know or what you want to know and I'll see what I can do about it. I have some ideas for the newsletter myself such as software reviews, tips and tricks, technical articles, listings of new library programs, some of the latest freeware, and articles from our SIG groups (providing I can get their "leaders" to write up a couple of paragraphs every month and send them to me). Also I would like to ask you to send in any more ideas you can think of to help me out. Thanks for your attention and help.

Editor, Keith Amann

ANNOUNCEMENT

ATTIK

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ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS:

Articles for the newsletter are always accepted with an open heart. Please help support your newsletter. Send articles to:

Keith Amann
 17601 W. Colfax #50
 Golden, Colo. 80401

Articles covering all aspects of the TI-99/4A are accepted. **BE A SUPPORTER!!!**

The Rocky Mountain 99er's meet-the second Tuesday of every month. They meet at 2265 South Milwaukee, in Denver Colorado, at 7:00 p.m.

For more info contact: (303)289-7667, ask for Mark.
 24 hour BBS number:(303)288-3692

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

Below you will find an application for membership to the RM99er's Users Group. Active membership entitles you to Tic-Talk, up and download on TIK BBS, attendance and voting rights at regular club meetings, access to the RM99er's Library of Programs, special club activities, and special guest speakers for one year. Subscribing members will receive the Newsletter only. BBS members will receive priveleges on the Bulletin Board only. Make check or money order payable to Rocky Mountain 99er's. Send completed application to:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN 99ER'S USERS GROUP
 9248 PEARL STREET
 THORNTON, COLORADO 80229

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Check one: _____ :
 : Name: _____ Today's Date: _____
 Active Member: \$24 ___ :
 : Address: _____ Apt#: _____
 Subscribing Member: \$7.50 ___ :
 : City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 BBS Member: \$12 ___ :
 : Phone: (_____) _____ - _____ Renewal: Yes or No
 : (circle one)

.....

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A FLOPPY NATURE

(Or how to make a backup)
(copy of a cleaning disk)

The other day I had the unfortunate experience of losing a disk full of programs. It didn't happen all at once, I occasionally couldn't load a program here and there and sometimes got the error for no disk drive. In the end, all I got was a no disk drive error. Looking at the disk I found two circular gouges, one on the inside track closest to the hub and one towards the outer most track. I tried to move the disk inside it's jacket and ah ha! The problem was that of a cheap disk that jammed up. It could not even be turned by hand.

Well I had some very good programs on that disk and wasn't about to throw it out just yet. My first thought was to try Disk Fixer, after all that's what it was designed for, right? But, if the disk would not turn, then Fix could not even read a sector. Ok, so now what?

I carefully cut out the bad disk from it's jacket and inserted it into an empty Verbatim cleaning jacket. And Voila! it worked! I quickly backed up my makeshift cleaning disk on a good disk and was tempted to turn el-cheapo into a frisbee. But I decided to save it anyway, as a backup and a reminder of a great idea that actually worked.

So dig out that old frisbee and give it a try. Your trials will not turn into tribulations and you will occasionally find a use for your old useless cleaning jackets.

Jerry Finki

This article is courtesy of the HUGger Newsletter, October, 1994.

CALL WAITING AND COMMUNICATION

You may already know that if you have Call Waiting and attempt communications with your computer, a gremlin may sneak in and cause problems. The little beep that you hear when you have a call waiting may cause your computer to miss-read or to totally crash.

Some of us have put off calling the BBS until it is late enough to be safe from the CW gremlin; or we pass up downloading something because we know that chances are we won't get it anyhow.

Now there is hope! A way to keep Call Waiting and still get our sleep. Mountain Bell has announced "New, Improved Call Waiting." Before calling the BBS, just press the "*" button, then "73" if you have touch-tone; or dial "1170" if you don't; then dial the BBS. Your call will be free from the CW beep; the caller will get a busy signal. Call Waiting is reactivated when you hang up. Remember to dial the "*" or "1170" before each call you want to be free from interruption. If you have an auto-dial modem, add the "*" to each number in your call file.

Paul Dawson

LIBRARY

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The purpose of this column will be to review programs from the Rocky Mountain 99'ers club library, and to keep you informed on the status of the club library.

A FAIRWARE offering, "REDISKIT ver 1.1" by James Schroeder has been selected as the program to highlight this month.

REDISKIT is a program that will allow the user to copy a disk in a short period of time. It requires: memory expansion, 2 disk drives, and either XE, TI-Writer, Editor/Assembler, Millers' Graphics CorComp PROM chips, or the Gram Kracker. It will format and copy a SSSD disk in 47 seconds, or a DSSD disk in 1 minute and 37 seconds, using the TI disk controller (How is that for speed?)

This disk is in the club library in "packed form", that means that you need UNPACKER or ARCHIVER to unpack the files, in order to use the program.

The disk contains 7 files, including documentation, and will load to disk from BASIC (with Miller's Graphics (MG) CorComp PROM chips), XEBASIC, TI-WRITER 3 (Utility), Editor/Assembler loaders (#3), Gram Kracker loader (#1). After the program is loaded a title screen will appear. Press "C" to continue. The program will now instruct you to insert the "master and the copy disks" in drive 1 and 2, and then to press "C". The program will then "read" the format codes on disk 1 and format disk 2 accordingly. If the program encounters an error it will notify you, and allow you to quit or to restart the copy sequence.

A \$10.00 donation is requested, and should be sent to:

James Schroeder
2656 N. Holdon St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212

The Rocky Mountain 99'ers Club Library is in business. As of 28 April 1987 there were approximately 470 programs that had been checked out and cataloged by the librarian, Pete Rohrer and his staff. Program catalogs are available at the monthly meetings to assist you in your selections. Many of the programs are available in cassette form also.

Do you have programs that you would like to see included in your club library? Bring them to the meetings and contact one of the library staff.

Thanks for your support.

Ed Howard

THE FAIR

Well I don't know what anybody else thought, but I thought the fair was a great success. There were many dealers there offering everything from TI stuff to IBM and Atari. There were even a couple of guys selling disks that made some money, (I know, I bought two 10 packs).

The dealers for TI brought everything from manuals to hardware. Some, such as Jim Horn, brought us Compuserve, free for two days. There were many dealers that didn't come personally, but rather sent things to be sold on the consignment table, and were there some good deals there. Anyway, let's get started, there is a lot to cover and not a lot of room to do it.

As I said before, Jim Horn of Compuserve was there selling both literature and showing off Compuserve. On Saturday there were not too many people interested in seeing the board, although there were an interested few that made use of it. However, on Sunday I myself sat in front of a system tied into Compuserve for approximately five of the eight hours that I was at the fair. I would have to give this service a complement. Compuserve has several help screens with somewhat in depth descriptions detailing the various commands that allow one to move around the system. The library for TI is quite extensive and, although somewhat older than what might be found on GENIE or one of the others, it is very well organized. Each section contains specific types of programs or files. All in all, a very nice service well worth considering.

Franz Wagenbach of Mechatronics was there with many very nice, and useable products. The first was the Extended Basic II+ cartridge. This cartridge adds a whole set of commands to TI-Extended Basic, including a very nice set of graphics commands which include a histogram plotting command. There was also the 128K Gram-Card. This card is similar to the Gram Kracker but, according to people that have seen both, better. The card allows the user to dump cartridges to disk, edit memory, and can also be used as a Ramdisk! That's one you can't do with the Gram-Kracker. The card is upgradable to 512K and with all the options it offers, is well worth the \$200. Franz also had four other products there that I can remember off hand. These were the 80 column card, the 128K memory expansion, the mouse, and the Epromer. If you have a monitor to go with it, and you run a lot of business applications (including word processing) on your machine, the 80 column card is well worth it. The 128K expansion memory is another way to go if you don't like the Myarc or Corcomp versions. The mouse is incredible, there is no other way to put it, and the Epromer is something that everyone should have. You just dump your favorite programs into cartridge, and Voila! Instant access. The last positive aspect about all of these products, is the fact that they run independently of each other, without having any particular requirements. In other words, no more having to find out if the piece is compatible with some other piece of hardware that is in your system. Except one that I just remembered. I bought the Gram-Card, and for those of you with V2.2 tan consoles, before you buy this particular product you need to see about trading your console out. The Gram-Card doesn't seem to run properly with this particular console and I have no idea why, probably because of TI's changes to the console during this period. It's a simple matter to pick up a used console for \$20-30 (black and silver), and once this is done you should have no problems.

Our local supplier Mary Ann Holzer, of Creative Ideas, was

there selling various programs from everywhere. The main company that she was selling for (if I remember correctly), was Quality 99 Software. I bought Maze Maker, a very nice program that generates Mazes (there is no other way to put it). The mazes can range in size from a four by four block to over an 8x11 sheet of paper. For those of you Epson printers with Graphx or Graphx+ there is a special treat, the program accesses the built in graphics capabilities of the printer and uses them to print with. The rest of us get an asterisk, but still a very legible maze. All in all a very nice program.

Mike McCann of McCann Software was there showing off Printer's Apprentice. Although I did not get to see this product in action, I did see the after effect. One of the nicest newsletter pages that I have seen to date (and I've quite a few up to now). I didn't have the money to buy the program by the time I'd seen it, but if I had you would be reading a totally different newsletter. A program that is well worth the money if you print a lot of articles.

There was also a young gentlemen from Colorado Springs there, Erik Olsen. He had rented a table and was selling a couple of different things. His main program was called "Bubble Plane". It was an arial combat game that he wrote in Assembler, and I have to personally complement him on it. The graphics were very well done and the game was a challenging one. I recommend this program for anyone that likes games (or even if you don't like games). Erik is selling it for \$15 (I hope that's correct) and if you would like to contact him please write me a I will send you address.

On the consignment table Mike Miller was selling Aegard Software products. These include Fontwriter, Schedule Manager, and many others. Mike will be reviewing several of these over the coming months, so I'm not going to go into detail. Can't wait to see what you've got Mike.

I think I've covered everyone, if not, I'm sorry. I would like to once again thank everyone that came to the fair, and everyone that helped out from the users group. I think you all did a terrific job. I would also like to especially thank Mark Payne and Mike Miller once again. As president and vice-president they did an excellent job of organizing the fair and publicizing it. Got to go, I'm out of room. If I think of anything else that happened, or if someone thinks of something that I forgot, please send me a letter, and I will be sure to correct myself. Thanks again.

Keith Amann
Editor

REVIEW

MECHATRONICS EXTENDED BASIC II PLUS

The new Extended Basic II + from Mechatronics is a very unique cartridge. It contains 44K of preprogrammed memory and has many features added over TI Extended Basic. The new Basic contains many graphics commands, including video inversion, bargraph commands, circle and ellipse commands, and a command that actually draws a set of coordinate axis! These commands are accessed through the command "CALL APESOFT", which is the APESOFT graphic set. These graphics commands, therefore, do not reside in memory, you don't lose 2K of precious memory as with the TRITON cartridge (but that is another story). There are also many commands added to the regular command set. One of the commands, BHCOPY, allows the user to make a hardcopy (printout) of the screen, a built in screen dump utility! Actual calls to VDP have also been added to allow the user to actually load values into the VDP and they will show on the screen. "CALL WAIT" allows the user to initiate a pause in a program without having to use a FOR-NEXT loop. This delay will go from .2 to 327 seconds, and if you need that much time I don't know what to say. Another option that is very nice is the "CALL SPRON/OFF" command. This allows the user to start and stop sprites all at the same time, no more trying to keep a group together by constantly modifying their speeds! The last two options that I'll mention are the "CALL QUITOFF/ON" and the "CALL SCREENOFF/ON" commands. These allow the user to disable the quit key, without a CALL LOAD sequence, and the ability to turn the entire screen on or off without watching all the characters getting changed, watching the colors be redefined, or seeing a scrolling type of motion. You just do a SCREENOFF, set up your screen, do a SCREENON, and voila! Instant screen without the wait!

The cartridge sells for \$80.00 retail and can be ordered by contacting:

T.A.P.E. Ltd.
1439 Solano Pl.
Ontario, CA. 91764
(714)959-5906

Extended Basic II+ is fully compatible with all versions of the TI console, and also fully compatible with TI-Extended Basic. I have used it with most of the programs in my own personal library and have not had a problem with it yet. For next month, be prepared for a review on the Mechatronics 128K Gram-Card. I should have it by then and boy does it look good.

Keith Amann

Quickie-----

C-: This language is named for the grade received by its creator when he submitted it as a class project in a graduate programming class. C- is best described as a "low level" programming language. In general, the language requires more C- statements than machine code instructions to execute a given task. In this respect it is very similar to COBOL.

(This Quickie courtesy of Cleveland Area 99/4A Users Group, February, 1986)

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGE

One of our club members put this little challenge up on the bulletin board. You have a group of numbers that you want to display in column format. This is easily done using the IMAGE command in Extended Basic. The trick is to get the first line of numbers to print in double width like this:

23 34 45 56 67 78 89

and then to get the rest of the columns to center up under their appropriate header number. I think that I have it figured out, let's see what you can come up with. Send any solutions to the editors address on page 2, or leave him a message on the BBS.

If there is a programming problem that you can't figure out, send it to me and I'll see if I can't figure it out, put it up on the board for a group solution, or put it in this spot in the newsletter.

Keith Amann

CLUB SURVEY

This Survey is being taken so that the editor of the newsletter can get a better idea of what types of articles to include herein. Please take 15 minutes to fill it out and return to the address listed on page 2. Thank you for your time. Attach sheet if insufficient room.

The Editor

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

I own the following types of hardware and software: _____

I am interested in the seeing the following types of articles in the newsletter, indicate here if other than below: _____

Technical[] Reviews[] News[] Business[] Entertainment[]

Word Processing[] Education[] Languages[] Communication[]

I would be willing to help the editor in the following ways:

Assistant Editor[] Writer[] Technical[] Reviews[] News[]

I would be willing to help the Users Group in the following ways:

I bought my computer because: _____

Well here we are again, another month gone and the printing of a newsletter in the works. It would be an understatement to say that the month has been busy, that goes without saying, but along with being busy it has also been interesting and educational.

The two things that impressed me the most were A) the hardware (Mechatronic 128k Gram Karte), and B) the ASGARD software that I was able to demo at the faire.

Since I am still learning about the GramKarte, and know the software (ie...ASGARD), I will keep this article to software only.

For those of you waiting for installment two of my GENEVE article, it will have to wait until I actually have the unit in hand.

ASGARD software has many interesting packages to offer, and it was a hard choice, but my favorite, and the one that has the most to offer is SCHEDULE MANAGER...

The SCHEDULE MANAGER (SM), has a menu driven system that allows you to track up to a year of data (special dates, appointments, birthdays, holidays, etc...), in four month blocks.

It represents an integrated appointment book, calander, and notebook. The system is fully menu driven, and relies heavily on the use of windows, which can be pulled up at the touch of a button. You have full edit functions to ADD, DELETE, and SEARCH for data in either a book mode (as in book pages), or notebook mode (which falls under the calender section).

The search function allows for a search by special mark (where the system prompts you to either answer Y/N for special mark), or search by date (which to me is more specific). I find the search by date to be more exacting in that, if you have a month with 10 special marks, you will have to page through all of these before finding the one you want, It's major use would be if you simply forgot the date of the special day you were looking for.

Your utilities include creating, renaming, seeing, and loading a book. All of these functions fall in the calender area.

There is also a utility under the main functions area that allows for the customizing of your system, (one or two drives, pio or rs232 ect...), that can be saved to the disk permanently.

Also included is a print section that gives you the ability to print calender, notebook, and schedule entries. But by far the best feature of this time management system is the help function that resides in the Print area. This HELP option allows for "online" access to all the keywords in the SCHEDULE MANAGER'S operating system. You can get a full definition of any of the 32 keywords by simply typing in the first 4-5 letters of each word that shows up in the keyword-help menu. This saves you the time and effort of digging out your manual to leaf through 15 pages of information until you find what you were looking for.

Finally, a feature that really caught my eye when first booting up was the "enter name" option. Every time that you boot the system up after your first time it automatically will say your name, and ask for the date. This first prompt also includes the last date that you were signed on allowing you to keep a reference to exactly how much you were using it.

This system rates an A+ in running speed and ease of use, and the manual is written clearly and holds to the point of teaching you how to use the SCHEDULE MANAGER. A closing point should include that you make a backup copy immediatly upon opening the software package up. The very first time, and each time thereafter, that you boot the system up, the original system disk is updated and changed forever. So make a backup first, and then enjoy it.....

Until next month.....
Keep on Computing.....
Mike Miller

USING YOUR MODEM

After talking to several of you over the past several weeks, I have discovered that many of you do not have modems, or have them but do not use them. This is a situation that must be immediately remedied. Those of you that don't have modems, there are several very nice low priced modems on the market. They transmit at 300 baud, but unless you are a fairly heavy BBS user like myself, this won't matter. Radio Schaak sells a small 300 baud, simple to operate modem for less than \$50 (?), it does however need a cable, which I had made up for \$10. Last weekend (3/2-3/3/7), there were several 300 baud modems for under \$25. For those that want to go to something with a higher baud rates, I would suggest one of the following:

T.H.E. COMPUTER PROD. CO. LTD.
319 West Ontario St.
Chicago, Ill. 60612
120X Hayes Compatible \$119.00

Magtronics Inc.
55 N. Main
Logan, Utah 84321
1-800-232-6342
Avatex 1200 \$129.00

There are many others but not enough room to list them all.

The next item on your list should be a communications package that will be compatible with the type of system you are trying to access. The three most popular for the TI-99/4A are Mass-Transfer, Fast-Term, and 4A/Talk. I have all three and have seen no major differences between them. The one option that I suggest making sure your package has is the ability to catalog a disk, while still "talking" to the other system. Of the above three, only Fast-Term does not have this. The other option to make sure you have is several different types of transfer protocols. All the above have at least CRC error handling and Checksum. These are becoming standards, and are generally accepted on most boards.

The next thing you need is telephone numbers. Computer Shopper (available through Safeway) has an excellent list of BBS numbers. Here are a few of the ones that I use more often:

TIK BBS, Denver, Colorado, (303)288-3692
EODS BBS, Boston, Massachusetts, (617)331-4181
TIBBS NW, Bellevue, Washington, (206)641-6584

I have personally called both TIK and EODS, and have heard some excellent things about TIBBS NW. These are all up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer many services including: programming corners for problems, message sections for conversations, information about new products, and let's not forget the download and upload sections of the BBS, not to mention many others.

Give these a try, you'll be surprised how much you can learn.

The Editor

TIPS AND TRICKS

I was recently asked by our new editor to write an article that contained small, and sometimes unknown, tips about software and hardware. This will be an ongoing article. If you have a particular tip that you are looking for send it to the editor and he will get in touch with me, so we can get it in the next issue. Here are just a few of the ones that I've collected. Hope you can use them and I'll see you next month.

LOAD/SAVE

If you should type "OLD CSI" instead of "SAVE CSI" and pushed ENTER, when saving a program to tape, type shift - E and press ENTER. Note: Don't worry if you get an I/O error.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. To get computer to hold 24 lines of text on screen without jumping the first line off the top - put a semi-colon after the 24th line.
2. A minus sign(-) used in the statement DISPLAY AT or ACCEPT AT AT becomes the default value.
3. In BASIC and EXTENDED BASIC you can use * for the logical operator AND and + for OR (examp. IF (X=0)+(Y=0)then 1500).
4. To combine string variables, use &.
5. In BASIC, IF-THEN-ELSE statements must contain statement numbers rather than commands.
6. STR\$ changes numbers to a string.

Ed Howard

IN CONCLUSION

Look forward to new additions to the newsletter, and if you have any suggestions, write me, my address is on page 2. For next month expect to see more reviews on Mechatronics products, new and interesting software reviews on Asgard Software, and articles from our SIG leaders. Until next month I bid you Adieu!

The Editor

CLASSIFIEDS

Complete System. Console, p-box, RS232 by Myarc, 32K card, disk control card, 2 disk drives, one internal and one external. \$350.

Consoles for sale.

The club has several manuals for the TI available. If you are looking for a specific one let me know and I will see if we have it or can get it for you.

TI RS232 standalone. \$43.

Contact Mark at 289-7667 for more information about these.

T1994 A USERS GROUP

This publication is printed monthly for the benefit of the membership of the Rocky Mountain 99er's Computer Club. The Club and the paper are not for the benefit nor backed by any commercial enterprise. Both are non-profit in nature and are for the sole purpose of computer education. Any fees collected are used to defray any cost to maintain the organization. Neither the paper nor the Club have any affiliation with Texas Instruments. Any statements published in the paper are not necessarily the opinion of the membership.

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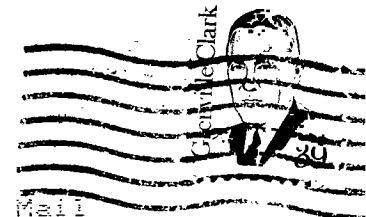
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ROCKY MOUNTAIN 99ERS

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: Please check the expiration :
: date on your label. This is :
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