

THE  **SNUGLETTER**  
FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

Vol. 3 - No. 4

April, 1985

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 8, 1985 - 6:30 PM

CHARLESTON PLAZA LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

APRIL, 1985

Before I get into the President's Message this month, I would like to thank Nancy Bates for her excellent presentation last month. She made LOGO look easy, which it's supposed to. I'd also like to thank Steve Buchanan for his short and to the point explanation of flowcharting. Has anyone thought of a good project for his group program yet?

This month, we have decided to devote the entire meeting time to Bob Boyette from Computer Magic. Bob has agreed to give us an in-depth look at the TI-WRITER word processing package. I have had several requests for a presentation on TI-WRITER, and as far as I know Bob Boyette is the local authority on the subject.

I would like to suggest that you make a note of any questions you would like to have answered so that you won't forget to ask them. Also, I think it would be a good idea if you brought along your TI-WRITER manual so you can follow along while Bob explains the various commands and utilities.

If you do not already have the TI-WRITER updates, bring along a blank initialized disk, and if we have time at the end of the meeting, I will make copies for you.

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\* The SNUGLETter is published monthly by the Southern Nevada Users' Group \*  
\* [SNUG]. SNUG is a non-profit organization of individuals with an inter- \*  
\* est in all aspects of Texas Instruments' 99/4 and 4A computer, including \*  
\* all related hardware and software by third party vendors. The GROUP \*  
\* meets at 6:30 PM on the second Monday of the month - currently in the \*  
\* Clark County Library meeting room, 1726 E. Charleston Blvd. [Charleston \*  
\* Plaza Mall.] Visitors and guests are welcome to attend the meetings. \*  
\* Information on membership is available at the meeting. \*  
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I'm still looking for people who might be interested in giving a demonstration or review of a software package or program that they are familiar with. How about the new 128K memory expansion with RAM-DISK capability? Anyone out there got it yet? Maybe the ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS from Miller's Graphics? The Navarone Data Base? There are many other possibilities. Call me!

Good news! SNUG is finally going to have a club system. Gordon Leonard has offered to sell his spare computer (it's never even been out of the box) to the club for what he paid for it (\$47.00 + tax). Steve Buchanan, our treasurer has sent the money to the National Assistance Group for the expansion system, and will soon be purchasing the disk drives. I have found a Public Domain bulletin board program called II-COMM that is available for the asking (\$1.00 postage + blank disk), so it's possible that we could have the club running on it's own equipment by the May meeting.

That's it for this month, remember:

--NEXT MEETING APRIL 8 -- 6:30 PM -- CHARLESTON PLAZA LIBRARY --

BRING YOUR II-WRITER MANUALS!!

JOHN MARTIN

\*\*\*\*\* QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS \*\*\*\*\*

I received the following letter from one of our members. It has the honor of premiering our question/answer column.

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Enclosed is a portion of brochure received by me from the 99/4A assist group. This group advertised in the small Home Computer Magazine. I joined for \$10 (per year) just to see what this group had to offer. Maybe it would be of interest to group members (SNUG).

I would be interested in someone explaining the 128K card. The ad is not all that clear to me. A sample question I have is as follows:

Suppose I have a huge program written in Extended BASIC, and have the 32K expansion module. The program will not "fit" into my system. What would the 128K card or 256K system do for me? What does the ramdisk operation do? Do you know any member with this 128K exp. card? If so, maybe he would give us a demo.

Another thought I would like to present is the possible list of members familiar with other languages for other computers. For example, I am trying to convert an Apple II program to II 99/4A. When trying to run it, I get "Syntax error", or "improperly used word in line xxx."

Do the above questions and comments represent the type of input that is desired for the newsletter?

Bob Cluberton  
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Bob, I going to take a crack at some of your questions where I have some knowledge.

On using the 128K memory for larger programs - I doubt that it will allow a larger than 32K type program unless the maker has some pretty sophisticated DSR programming on the memory card. This is due to the internal working of the 99 allowing it only to only address 32K of memory. If the memory card could use a technique called bank switching (i.e., going from one section of 32K to another section of 32K) it might be possible, but I've not yet heard of it being done on the 99.

Ramdisk - This is a term used for a section of memory which acts like a disk drive when storing programs or data as files. The internal programming of the memory card is set to look to the computer as though it were a floppy disk drive to the rest of the computer. At first this may seem like a silly technique - to duplicate a disk in memory - however, the speed of access to the two devices, memory and disk, must be considered. The computer can access the memory chips at many times the speed at which it can access the floppy disk. It is possible to speed up the operation of a computer which is "floppy disk bound", i.e., it has to do a lot of reading and/or writing to a disk, by causing these operations to a solid-state memory which acts like a disk to the rest of the computer's operations. A computer with a smaller program memory space can have its ability increased greatly by using the ramdisk feature to CHAIN from program to program very quickly, making the computer appear as though it has a much larger capacity than it does in reality. (I saw this done on another system which had only 12K available for program space but used a hard disk to chain programs in and out for a business type inventory system. In the time you could snap your fingers twice it would switch from one program to another - and the ramdisk should operate faster than that. Initially, of course, the programs have to be read from the floppy disk to load the ramdisk before it can work and any extensive memory changes must be saved back to the floppy or they will be lost when the power is turned off. No, I don't know of anyone with one of these - is there anyone?

I'm sure that we have members who are familiar with other languages - I've used several other dialects of BASIC, Microsoft and North Star a lot, but not much in Apple. There is a book out comparing the different versions of BASIC, but the newest version, of course, no longer specifically mentions TI's (so what else is new.) SNUG needs someone to collect and compile this info for this type of need - any volunteers?

And YES!!! this is the type of input for the newsletter. (At this time - two days prior to going to press - ANY input is desired. But, in all seriousness these are good questions as many of newer and lesser knowledgeable members probably know little about this topic. (Editor)

\*\*\*\*\* NOTE FROM THE EDITOR \*\*\*\*\*

Steve Buchanan wants to let everyone in the group know that we are planning a group purchase of TEAC 55B double-sided/ double-density half-height disk drives for \$109 per drive. These are bare drives. A case with power supply that will hold two of these drives is also available for two of these drives for \$22.50. So, if you are interested BRING YOUR CHECKBOOKS!!!! The next meeting will be the only opportunity to take advantage of this offer. SNUG will be ordering two drives in this order for the group system.

I stopped at Computer Magic last Saturday (3/30) to find out what was new. Well, first, they are having a sale on some of their TI modules. As they were busy it was difficult to get info, but this is what I found on sale: any Milton-Bradley \$20; Slymoids, \$5; Moonmine, \$6; Addition Subtraction I, \$10; Alien Add. and Minus Mission, \$7.50; Plato units, \$30; and the tape Adventures were going on sale (I'm not sure on prices.) Second, they have just about finished a remodelling with added display space. Third, they had a Myarc 10 megabyte hard disk for the TI. They had ordered it for a customer and had just unpacked it for check-out. It never was turned on before I had to leave (as I said it was busy.) They also were delivering a CorComp micro-expansion system to a customer. They were briefing the customer on its use and it appeared to work much like my p-Box based CC disk controller. In other words, much like an expanded TI-99.

I have finally brought up the modem which I got from a fellow member. I could write a whole newsletter on that experience! But to keep it short - if you must cut a custom cable make sure you write down what the wire connections were first. That will prevent a lot of frustration. Next, don't trust the obvious. For example, I bought a RS232 Y-cable and had the the modem hooked through it. As I found out after some aggravation, the Port 1 and Port 2 Y's were reversed. (Maybe that's why it was only \$6.50! And try to get a modem to work on the wrong port!!!) Now I can receive submissions for the newsletter on the phone. (No more excuses on not having 22 cents or an envelope! I'm making it as easy as possible!)

Another discovery I made this past week concerns the Tax/Investment Record Keeping module. It doesn't recognize the PIO as a printer port. So don't grab it on sale if you don't have an RS232 or TI Thermal Printer or don't plan on getting a serial to parallel converter. I may end up building one. (That story should be good for two newsletters if it goes as well as the modem!)

Another item of possible interest. The last issue of The NATIONAL NINETY-NINER, October, 1984, which I have seen (mailed in Jan., 1985, contained an announcement from Morning Star Software. I am including the first part for your information and thought prior to the meeting.

"Morning Star Software contacted our organization to release news of a discount to Users Groups and their members. A ten (10%) percent discount is being offered off the \$595.00 list price of the CP/M card (\$535.50 discount purchase price ; software carried by Morning Star. Each Users Group receiving this newsletter is requested to announce the offer to their members."

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There are a number of requirements to be met; a group purchase through the group, etc. The software titles listed are C-BASIC, BUSINESS MASTER, PERSONAL PEARL, SUPER WRITER and SEEKEASY. When published there was no time limit on this offer so it may still be good. Considering the review which HOME COMPUTER MAGAZINE (Vol. 5, No. 2) presented in the just mailed issue, I thought that there may be some interest in this offer.

This is also in the same issue of The NATIONAL NINTY-NINER - "Individuals and Users Groups cannot purchase a subscription to Tigercub's Tips. (I hope some of you have seen those - and tried some of them - in the other Users Groups newsletters. Ed.) The Tips are available only for the exchange of a Users Group newsletter. Jim Peterson has a special offer for anyone interested in obtaining their personal copy of Tigercub's Tips #1 to #14. The tips are available on disk for a cost of \$15.00 (includes all shipping and handling charges). The Tips disk includes fifty (50) programs, routines and files. You may obtain the Tips and programs from Jim at the address listed below. While you are ordering the tips and programs, why not include an extra dollar (\$1.00) and obtain a copy of his Catalog. Credit is graciously provided for this charge by deducting \$1.00 from your first order of programs. Contact Tigercub at: Tigercub Software, 156 Collingwood Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 42313. (614) 235-3545."

SNUG PHONE LIST

Last Name	First Name	Phone
1 BIEBER	ROBERT	878-3167
2 BILLIMORIA	DINSHAW	362-8760
3 BUCHANAN	STEVE	363-1043
4 BUCKLEY	FRANK	871-0165
5 CAMPBELL	GEORGE	564-1586
6 CLUBERTON	BOB	362-1644
7 COMPTON	WILLIAM	
8 DeMILLE	JEFF & MARY	361-2897
9 FLIEGMAN	EVERETT	451-2776
10 GRIMES	JESSIE	870-3824
11 GROFT	LANCE	459-5200
12 GUISE	RALPH, DAPHE	458-2926
13 HUFFORD	ROY, BEVERLY	387-6300
14 JOHNSON	RUDY	871-9583
15 KUDER	BRIAN CRAIG	643-0290
16 LEAVITT	JOSEPH	382-1409
17 LEONARD	GORDON	384-2302
18 MARTIN	JOHN	647-1062
19 MATTHEWS	JAMES	641-6202
20 MAURICE	JOHN	646-3690
21 MERKLE	RONALD	367-6475
22 MITCHELL	DON	736-1644
23 PULLEN	STAN	452-7218
24 QUICK	TSGT DAVID	644-2469
25 RIGGS	NORVAL	642-3022
26 SHERBURNE	ROBERT #57	642-6972
27 STRUM	GREGORY	736-9473
28 TILLEY	GEORGE	456-5735
29 URBAN	ANDY & RUTH	451-9652
30 WAITERS	FRANK	384-3124
31 WILSON	LANCE	648-6452
32 YULE	LARRY	363-6802

The following is from the LAWS of COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

- 01 LAWS OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMING
- 03 ANY GIVEN PROGRAM, WHEN RUNNING, IS OBSOLETE.
- 03 IF A PROGRAM IS USELESS, IT WILL HAVE TO BE DOCUMENTED
- 03 IF A PROGRAM IS USEFUL, IT WILL HAVE TO BE CHANGED.
- 03 ANY PROGRAM WILL EXPAND TO FILL ALL AVAILABLE MEMORY.
- 03 THE VALUE OF A PROGRAM IS PROPORTIONAL TO THE WEIGHT OF ITS OUTPUT.
- 03 PROGRAM COMPLEXITY GROWS UNTIL IT EXCEEDS THE CAPABILITY OF THE PROGRAMMER TO MAINTAIN IT.
- 03 MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PROGRAMMERS TO WRITE IN ENGLISH AND YOU WILL FIND OUT THAT PROGRAMMERS CANNOT WRITE IN ENGLISH.

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\* SNUG OFFICERS 1984-1985: \* Newsletter Editor: \*  
\* Pres.: John Martin - 647-1062 \* Rudy Johnson - 871-9583 \*  
\* V.P.: Gordon Leonard - 384-2302 \* Newsletter submissions can be \*  
\* Sec.: Bob Sherburne - 642-6972 \* sent to P.O. Box 26301, Las Vegas, \*  
\* Treas.: Steve Buchanan - 363-1043 \* Nevada 89126. Articles using II- \*  
\* Librarian: Bob Bieber - 878-3167 \* Writer on disk are ideal. You \*  
\* Membership: ? \* may also phone articles with a \*  
\* \* modem also a preferred method. \*  
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FUTURE MEETING DATES:

MAY 13  
JUNE 10  
JULY 8  
AUGUST 12

Southern Nevada Users' Group  
P.O. Box 26301  
Las Vegas, NV 89126-0301

TO:

FIRST CLASS