THE SNUGLETTER

FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

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NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1986 — 6:30 PM

CHARLESTON PLAZA LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I've finally gotten most of the information that I gathered at the recent TI- FEST WEST sorted out. I'm now going to attempt to pass on as much of it as I can remember.

Among the new products on display were a new mouse for the TI. The mouse comes complete with control software and a demo disk. The demo disk has a "BREAKOUT" type arcade game on it that takes full advantage of the mouse. According to the literature I recieved, the mouse is compatible with some solid state command modules or with your own Extended Basic programs. It also says you can modify existing software to use the mouse. If you are interested in learning more or wish to buy one, there were two dealers at the show who were marketing this device.

T.A.P.E. LTD.	$98.95
1439 Solano Pl.	+ 4.50 S+H
Ontario, CA 91764	

RYTE DATA	
Box 210 Mountain St.	$98.00
Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0	+3% S+H
Canada	
(705)457-2774	

RYTE DATA also has a TI DOS Icon based disk manager and program loader for 99 MOUSE. PRICE....$25.00 +3% S+H

If you are getting tired of the big, ugly flat cable and connector that come out of the side of your console and go to the PEB, Silver Wolf Software says they have the solution to your problem. A 30 inch long cable (20 inches if you have the Myarc ram disk) that lets you put the original TI cable out of sight behind your P-BOX. It's available from:

Silver Wolf Software	$21.95
P.O. box 1544	+ 3.50 S+H
Rohnert Park, CA. 94928-1126	
(707)528-7866	

The 99 HOME SENTRY is the latest entry from CORCOMP. This module will allow you to interface your 99/4A with the X-10 POWERHOUSE Home control device. You can then use your '4A to program the Powerhouse to automate your home. Once programmed, you can disconnect your computer from the Powerhouse interface and it will function as programmed. For more info, contact

CorComp Inc.	no price
2211-G Winston Road	available
Anaheim, CA 92806	
(714)956-4450	

Now available for your TI ARTIST is a package of 5 disks called ARTIST'S COMPANION. These disks consist of 25 character fonts, 160 small original pictures (instances) and 30 large original pictures. Each character font and picture may be altered and interfaced with any picture or design of your choice using the TI Artist drawing system. Available from:

Texaments	$17.95
53 Center Street	+ 2.00 S+H
Patchogue, New York 11772	
(516)475-8480 voice	
(516)475-6468 BBS	

Texaments also sells TI Artist...$19.95
Artist extras.$ 6.95

EXTENDED BASIC...EXTENDED BASIC...There were two new Extended Basic cartridges at the show. One from

MECHATRONICS GmBH and one from MYARC. Both offer greatly expanded graphics features (access to bit map mode and 40 column mode from basic). We were treated to a demonstration of the Myarc XB II by none other than Lou Phillips himself. Lou explained how and why XB2 was written the way it was. One of the things that I had been wondering about was why they made it so you had to have their 128K card to make it work. The reason is simple. Since they wanted it to run fast, they didn't use ANY GPL code. That means that the whole thing is in 9900 ASSEMBLY language. GPL is a very compact language, but it is comparitavely slow in execution. By writing everything in ASSEMBLY, they realized a significant increase in speed. Unfortunately, as in most things, you don't get something for nothing. The tradeoff in this case was in memory usage. The object code for XB2 V2.0 is a whopping 50K long! Lou says that the soon to be released V2.1 will be even faster than 2.0.

Unfortunately, I was unable to get to see a demo of the Mechatronics cartridge, but according to their literature, it has many of the same features as the Myarc Extended Basic II but without the need of 128K memory expansion (and, I assume, without the increase in operating speed?!). Both Extended Basics are now being shipped. For more information, contact:

(Mechatronic XB II +)
RYTE DATA (address above)....$74.95
T.A.P.E. (address above)....$79.95

(MYARC XB II)
MYARC INC.
241 Madisonville Rd.
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
(available from mail order distributors)

Some other new products that are available from Mechatronics are:

PRODUCT	RYTE DATA	TAPE
128K Mem exp plug in with parellel port	$149.95	$149.95
128K GRAM card	$249.00	$249.50
GPL ASSEMBLER	$ 59.95	.....

As far as I know, all the products I have mentioned so far are currently available and are being shipped. There were also quite a number of new products announced that are not yet complete.

Craig Miller has announced a new card for the P-box that will allow you to attach an IBM style keyboard to your 99/4A. This card will make the IBM board look and function exactly the same as the TI board, but will also give you a separate numeric keypad, one keystroke function and control keys, quotation marks and apostrophe's that don't take a contortionist to type, and programable keystrokes! Think of it, you will be able to program several keystrokes (or a whole program) into a single keystroke! Considering the cheap prices of some keyboards, this looks like it might be a good investment for the serious user. As an added advantage, the IBM keyboards connect with a very small cable (no more giant flat ribbon taking up most of your desk). Craig says that the card is only weeks away from completion. He had hoped to have a working model for us, but due to unavoidable delays, he was unable to show it to us. For more information about this and other products from Miller's Graphics, contact:

Miller's Graphics
1475 W. Cypress Ave.
San Dimas, CA 91773

Lou Phillips, of Myarc, says that the new computer (Name still a low priority) is almost done. Since the Extended Basic II will be an integral part of the new computer, the priority has been to finish it before moving on to other projects. He says his company is committed to releasing the new computer, and that there are NO other projects in the works now to interfere with their getting it finished. He said that he hoped to have a running model by March 15. I haven't yet seen any reports from the east coast TI conventions, so I don't know if he succeeded.

Lou talked extensively about the operating system and hardware/software developement that is ongoing now. He says there will be mouse support, 2 meg memory space, and a D/A converter resident for analog RGB monitor. A C compiler is a high priority. He doesn't have the figures yet on the cable interface for the P-BOX, but says it will be priced to just break even. He showed us a prototype of the cable. It is ROUND and has a 90 degree connector on one end and a straight connector on the other. Since the operating system of this computer has already been covered in this and other newsletters, I won't go into it again except to say that the new VDP chip is being manufactured by Yamaha.

The only other thing Mr. Phillips mentioned that was new and exciting, was that he will soon be starting a monthly newsletter to user's groups. I for one am glad to see that he is finally going to try to slow down the rumours that have been flying for the past year by letting us know exactly what is going on!

Another product announced (but not ready for production yet) is a program manager written by John Keown. The program is cartridge and disk based and can catalog up to 11000 files. The cart gives it an extra 6K of RAM. The program is capable of adding or deleting files from the title screen. It uses multiple sub-menu's (user defined) and can load and run a program from the menu (if it is in one of your drives). The organization of this utility is, I understand, similar to a hard disk directory. The

program will sell for $25.95. Unfortunately, the cartrige (required for the program) costs another $69.00. Mr. Keown also described a VERY unfriendly protection scheme for his program that could cause you a lot of grief if he actually implemented it. He claims that on the third backup copy, his program will randomly search your drives and write to random sectors. If this is true, you stand to lose anything else you may happen to have in any of your drives at the time.

Mr Keown also says that he is working on other software to utilize his "6000+" module. A ROM/GROM to disk and back program and GPL interpreter were mentioned. For more info on this product, contact:

Pilgrim's Pride
5 Williams Lane
Hatboro, PA 19040
(215)441-4262

Another hardware offering at the FEST was a device called MAXIMEM. This device plugs into the cartrige port on your computer and gives you another 48K of ram and 8K of ROM. It will give you the ability to download ANY module to disk OR cassette. MAXIMIM works on your computer without modification. No additional power supply is needed. Maximem can also serve as a RAMDISK. There is a reset button and a disk manager built in. Maximem is available from:

Guy Gournay $145.00
146178 Can Inc. + 10.00 S+H
933 Delorimier
Longueuil, Quebec J4K 3M8 Canada

Maximem is also handled by Ryte Data (address above) for $125.00 + 3% S+H

There was talk of an 80 column card, 80 track drive DDS, and a new expansion unit with 5 slots and built in DSDD drives, but none of them were present at the show.

A new book called "INTERN" was at the show. If you are interested in what the operating system code for the TI looks like, or want to learn about GPL, you will be interested in this book. It sells for $17.95 and is available through either Ryte data or T.A.P.E.

I know that there was more new stuff (and a lot of old and not-so-old stuff) at the show that I haven't covered, but my notes have just run dry and my memory is starting to fail me. If I missed anything or anyone, it wasn't intentional.

If my message this month sounds a little commercial, it's because these products are important to the TI community and I wanted to present as much information about them as I had available (including prices wherever possible). Next month I will try to get back to my normal message.

I want to thank the LA 99ers and Terrie Masters for their hard work and dedication in organizing and hosting this show. I hope it wasn't so overwhelming that they won't want to do it again next year. Terrie called it "The FIRST ANNUAL TI-FEST WEST", so it looks like they are committed to doing it again. I hope so!

--John Martin--

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APRIL MEETING AGENDA

At this month's meeting we have planned to demonstrate several of the most popular FREEWARE/FAIRWARE/SHAREWARE programs. Some of the programs that will be demonstrated are:

NEATLIST..... Danny Michael
SCREENDUMP..... Danny Michael
FAST-TERM..... Paul Charleton
FUNNELWRITER.... Tony and Will McGovern
DM 1000..... Bruce Caron

All of these programs are in our library in the FREEWARE section. These are commercial quality programs and worth much more than the $10 or so asked by the authors. We will have several disks with these programs on them available at the meeting. If we run out and there is time after the demo's, we will make copies for any who want one of these programs.

The programs mentioned above are by no means all that are available, but we only have a limited amount of time to show them. The ones selected are the ones your officers are most familiar with and represent some of the diversity of quality software available through this unique distribution system.

If you recieve one of these programs, or ANY freeware program that is of use to you, PLEASE be sure to send the program author his money. If we fail to support these people, another source of good software will dry up. No one wants to spend the time it takes to develope quality software if he can't get anything for it!

--John Martin--

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: This issue is shorter then I had planned due to multiple demands on my time. John has provided most of this issue. Three TIPS FROM THE TIGERCUB are in this issue to bring us current. I bought TI-ARTIST at the TI-FEST WEST - but I have just started to learn how to use it. Hopefully future issues will have some extra graphics. SEE YOU AT THE MEETING!

The SNUGLETter is published monthly by the Southern Nevada Users' Group (SNUG). SNUG is a non-profit organization of individuals with an interest in all aspects of Texas Instruments' 99/4 & 4A computer, including all related hardware and software by third party vendors. The GROUP meets 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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