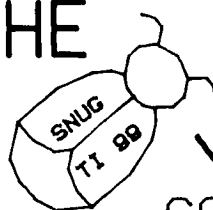


THE  **SNUGGLE** TER

FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

Vol. 5 - No. 1

January, 1987

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 1986 - 6:30 PM

CHARLESTON PLAZA LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

1987...A year that has great promise for users of the TI home computer. 1987 will be a year of great change for most of us. It will be a year that will see many of us having to make a decision about what direction we want to go with our computers. On the near horizon there are several different paths that we can take.

Down one path is the Geneve 9640 computer from Myarc. This computer will continue along the line of the 99/4A home computer. The microprocessor is of the same family (the '4A uses a TMS9900 while the Geneve uses a TMS9995). It will retain compatibility with the '4A so that your existing programs and hardware won't be lost.

Down another path is the soon to be released MS-DOS compatible co-processor board from MG. This board will give you compatibility with the IBM computer. There isn't much information available at this time about the card since Craig Miller isn't talking about it 'till it's ready for market. From what I've read in other newsletters, it sounds like there won't be much IBM software that won't run on the system.

Still another path would take you along the road that you are used to. There is still a lot of new hardware and software being manufactured for the 99/4A. Examples would be Ramdisk, 512K memory expansion, Hard disk, 80 column card with 9938 graphics capabilities, Mouse and mouse software, Gram emulators, new keyboards, GPL assemblers/disassemblers, and Graphics programs. There are many more, but the point is that even if you don't follow one of the other paths, there will still be plenty of ways to expand your system.

My understanding is that the Geneve is now in limited production and should be available soon. The MS-DOS card from MG will be produced by "a well known company" and will be announced officially on the 15th of Jan. I spoke to Craig Miller last week and was told that the device would be

available on time and in quantity sufficient to meet expected demand.

I find myself struggling to decide which system to go for. We have been waiting (patiently?) for over a year now for the GENEVE to come to market. We have been promised "next month" and "real soon now" till it doesn't mean anything anymore. We have seen empty shells of a computer, wire wrapped boards, and finally, a working computer, but still (to my knowledge) no computers delivered to us users. On the other hand, while I would like to be able to run all that MS-DOS software, if all I wanted was an IBM clone, I would surely have bought one by now. Since both of these systems are supposed to cost about the same (inexpensive by IBM standards, but not cheap!), it would seem that the decision will have to be based on what we want to do with our computers. If you want to be in the mainstream of computer technology, be able to run business software, and keep up with "Big Blue", then Miller's MS-DOS card is probably your best bet. If, on the other hand, you are more interested in expanding on the technology that you have been using right along, upgrading your graphics capability to rival the Amiga or Atari, increasing your operating speed, using your existing (familiar) utility software with 80 column format, or just being on the forefront of a new computer technology, then the Geneve would be the better choice.

Either system will still allow you to run your existing software and hardware. That should keep compatibility from becoming the determining factor in the decision as to which to buy. I find myself wishing that I could afford to buy both (actually I can't afford either, but I won't let that stop me).

ON TO NEW BUSINESS!!

The January meeting will feature a demonstration by Rudy Johnson of PR-BASE. For those of you who aren't familiar with it, PR-BASE is a data base management program that is rapidly becoming THE data base program for the 99/4A. Rudy

has had quite a bit of experience in setting up and running this program. He is currently maintaing the SNUG mailing list and is building up a database of TI related articles in several computer publications.

We will also be having another raffle at this meeting. This raffle will be somewhat different than what we have been having. Besides the Module software that we have been offering, we will also have a 300 baud modem, a set of joysticks (adapter required), and a package of DSDD disks available. Winner has his choice of either 3 modules, the modem, the disks, or the set of joysticks.

Since the week just prior to the meeting is the week of the Consumer Electronics Show, we should also have a report (or two) on the goings on there. I know of at least 4 of our members who will be attending the show.

OLD BUSINESS

The month of December saw another ambitious project for SNUG. We ordered the parts and modified a total of 9 Horizon Ramdisks (6 of them at a special Ramdisk Kit party). With these modifications, the Ramdisk will now support 976 sectors. There were a few tense moments when we realized that in order to initialize the Ramdisk to 976 sectors, one had to select double sided, double density from the disk manager program, but even the TI controllers were able to initialize them with no problems (whew). Many thanks to Edward Hallett of the Southwest Ninety-Niners for the schematics, descriptions, and ROS source code modifications to make this project possible.

That's about it for this time. See ya at the meeting.

--John--

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BBS REPORT

The SNUG BBS is alive and well!!

That's for all you SNUG members with modems who never call. Activity has once again dropped off somewhat. If the reason you don't call is because there doesn't seem to be anything going on, I think I can explain. There is nothing going on because you don't call! It takes an interchange of ideas and comments to make a BBS active. If you don't call, or don't leave a message when you do call, then there is no interchange and therefore no activity on line. There are only about 7 or 8 people who I consider to be active BBS users. Everyone else just calls to download a program or just look around and then log off. Call once in a while. We're the friendliest board in town!!

I have recently recieved a copy of the TIBBS program. I have had it on-line a couple of times over the last few weeks on an experimental basis. The program is a bit less friendly

than what we have been running, but it does offer more versatility and ease of maintenance for the SYSop (me). While the program itself works quite well, it doesn't lend itself to mofification very well. For reasons known only to himself, Ralph Fowler has chosen to keep his variable names and assembly link names totally abstract. This, combined with the almost total lack of comments within the program make it very difficult to make some necessary modifications to get the program to run on our system. I am confident that I can get it up and running, but am dissapointed at the unfriendliness of both the code and the program itself. Watch this column for further developments.

--John--

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ONE LINER

Here is a "one-liner" that reads DIS/VAR 80 files and displays them on the screen:

```
1 IF F THEN IF EOF(1)THEN EN
D ELSE LINPUT #1:X$ :: PRINT
X$ :: CALL KEY(0,K,S):: IF
K=13 THEN ACCEPT VALIDATE(CH
R$(13)):D$ :: GOTO 1 ELSE 1
ELSE CALL CLEAR :: INPUT "DS
Kx.FILE? ":F$ :: IF POS(F$,"
DSK",1)THEN OPEN #1:F$,INPUT
:: F=1 :: GOTO 1 ELSE 1 !BY
JOHN MARTIN
```

To enter the program, just type normally until the cursor stops moving and the computer "honks". Press ENTER, then press FCTN 8 (REDO). Move the cursor to the end of the line and continue typing. When the cursor stops again, press ENTER and then type 1 and FCTN X. this will bring the line up to edit again and let you type a few more characters. You may not have to do this if you don't put any spaces before or after the double colons or leave off the tail remark.

The program has some limited error trapping (makes sure you specify a disk drive instead of just a file name).

While the program is running, you can pause by pressing ENTER. Pressing ENTER again will resume.

-John Martin-

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PRBASE DEMO

As a preliminary to the demo of the PRBASE database manager that I will be giving at the January meeting, I thought that I would give you some idea of what to expect. I will give a demo of two of the databases which I am currently using to give you an idea of how PRBASE operates. John has already mentioned that I am keeping the SNUG mailing list and am developing an index of TI related publications on PRBASE. I will use both of these to show how PRBASE can be used.

If time permits I will also try to give some pointers on creating a database. So for all of you who have tried to use PRBASE - bring your questions. I doubt that I'll have time to develop any specific database, but answering a number of questions (maybe the same question in different ways) may give people who are attempting to use PRBASE guidance on avoiding pitfalls. I have found that some areas in the documentation are not very complete and will result in problems for the user if certain incorrect assumptions are made. I will try to point out those troublesome areas I have found to help others to avoid those problems.

I have not decided on the content of all that I will talk about (a really complete discussion would take many hours and would be better as a SIG or a workshop) but it will be a quick overview of capabilities and a help session if needed for those who have tried to use PRBASE.

- Rudy -

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IN THE MAILBOX

Now that SNUG's new mailing address has been published by TI in their last user's group mailout, SNUG is once again receiving flyers from 99/4A vendors for various products. Some of the recent ones include:

The Fall '86 Catalog from DataBiotics that contains descriptions of Average Bear Writer, The Label Maker, Paraprint, Disk Mater I, Miniwriter II+, Miniwriter III+, Super 4th, 4A/Talk, Superspace I and II, and Pilot.

Creative Filing System Version 5.0 from Mark Beck of the Jacksonville, Arkansas Users' Group. He has authored a database filing system with quite a few options when using it. A copy is \$10 plus the disks and mailing costs.

Disk Only Software offering Asgard Software's High Gravity educational game and Total Filer for cataloging TI Writer

text files. (Both these programs were written in c99.) Pre-Scan It, an Ext. BASIC utility to speed up the start of Ext. BASIC programs. Ron Albright's new book "The Orphan's Survival Handbook" and finally Myarc's Geneve 9640 computer (no price listed).

Recent issues of MICROpendium have, as usual much of value. The December issue confirmed a rumor that MG is discontinuing the Gram Kracker, several reviews one of which was on the Rave 99/101 new keyboard for the 99/4A, and a long article on the Geneve at the Chicago TI Faire (Nov issue).

As usual there is a lot more in the various exchange newsletters, but as usual I don't have time to write about all of the various items. You need to check them out yourself to find out what others are doing with their machines.

- Rudy -

THE BROKEN KEY

I hav# had my comput#r almost four y#ars now, and it works v#ry w#ll #xc#pt for on# k#y. I suspos# I shouldn't complain; th#r# ar# 47 oth#r k#ys I can us#. B#sid#s, what diff#r#nc# can on# k#y mak#?

Aft#r giving it som# thought, I r#aliz#d that th# k#yboard on my TI is similar to our club. Th#r# ar# num#rous m#mb#rs in th# club; som# ar# mor# 'visibl#' than oth#rs. Som# m#mb#rs participat#; som# won't participat# (or can't). I und#rstand thos# individuals, who du# to oth#r commit#nts, can't participat#. I also und#rstand thos# individuals who do not participat# b#caus# they f##l they can't mak# a diff#r#nc#. L#t m# assur# you, your participation do#s mak# a diff#r#nc#! F#rhaps you could r#vi#w a pi#c# of hardwar# or softwar# at a m#eting. W# can always us# an articl# - if it's important to you, it's important to oth#rs! How about donating a modul# or book to th# club so #v#ryon# can us# it? Th# possibiliti#s ar# not #ndl#ss, but th#y c#rtainly ar# many and div#rs#.

If th#r# is a moral to this story, l#t it b# that all m#mb#rs ar# 'KEY' m#mb#rs.

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