

VAST NEWS

Newsletter of the VAST Computer Users Group

Volume 6 Number 6

June 9, 1990

TI World and Local News

(Compiled and edited from various sources including MICROpendium Magazine by Jim Ely)

RAVE 99 Professional Expansion System Still the BIG News

I don't have a lot of new news to report this month. The big news seems to continue to be the announcement by RAVE 99 last month of the NEW *PE (Professional Expansion) Box* for the TI and Geneve computers. Shipping of these units could be as early as the end of June **OF THIS YEAR!** (Myarc take note.) As was noted in last month's VAST News, 2 versions of the expansion box are available. The *PE/2-B* is for the user who is still using the TI-

99/4A console and allows you to put the "guts" of the TI-99/4A console into the expansion box. This one includes the RAVE 99 keyboard interface and keyboard. The *PE/2-A* simply replaces the current TI P-Box with no additional modifications. Prepaid orders for both models are being taken at this time. The prices are \$275 for the -A and \$325 for the -B. Each order must include \$12.50 for shipping and handling. Contact RAVE 99 at 112 Rambling Road, Vernon, CT 06066 or (203)871-7824

Software Company Ceases Operations

Donaldson Software, a producer of mainly cassette based software for the TI-99/4A, has ceased operations according to Floyd Donaldson of the company. A specific reason for quitting was not given. The company was based in Buckingham, Quebec, Canada. I'm sorry to see another company, that was making quality software for the TI, stopping its support.

Asgard, Again

This company continues to release new software for the TI every single month! This month we have several new games including *Castle Darkholm*, a two-part adventure set in a gothic

castle, and *Rattlesnake Bend*, an adventure set in the Old West. These two games are available on disk or cassette for \$8.95 each.

Also released is *Spell It!*, a spell checker to be used on any standard DV/80 text file. I won't go into much detail here as there is a review of this program on page 5 of this issue. It is available in various formats depending on the types of disk drives you have or if you have a hard drive. A three-disk SS/SD version with 25,000 words sells for \$24.95; the same version on one DS/DD disk sells for \$19.95, an 11-disk hard drive version containing more than 250,000 words sells for \$34.95. Shipping and handling is \$2.50,

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VAST USER GROUP MEETING

June 9, 1990

Pyle Adult Rec.
Center
655 E. Southern
Avenue
Tempe, AZ

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VAST BBS
(602) 433-2767

VAST User Group Information

The *VAST Computer User Group* is a support group for the TI-99/4A Home Computer and compatibles, but all computer users are welcome. We meet at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe on the second Saturday of every month. This month's meeting is on June 9th. The business meeting starts at 10 a.m. with socializing starting at 9 a.m.

The yearly group membership fee is \$15 which includes this newsletter mailed to your door!

Our meetings are open to all. Only dues paying members may vote in elections, hold offices or chair committees, or use the club library.

CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mike Grogan 272-4315

VICE PRESIDENT

Jim Ely Unpublished

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Mike Marfisi 491-1552

LIBRARIANS

Hazel & Wallace Knight . . . 938-5446

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jim Ely Unpublished

BBS SYSOP

Leo Baker 931-9010

Memberships now all expire on December 31. Persons joining in any given month will have their memberships pro-rated to the end of the year. Address renewals to VAST User Group, c/o 1425 E. Del Rio Drive, Tempe, AZ 85282.

The VAST Computer User Group BBS is in operation 24 hours a day. The phone number is (602) 433-2767. The board is setup per the guidelines established by the BBS committee. The software should be familiar to those of you who used the board before the last sysop changed it. It is PCBoard.

Don't be shy. Give it a try!

Deadline for submission of materials for this newsletter is the first Saturday of the month. Materials may be submitted in any form, but the preferred method is by modem uploaded to the VAST Users Group BBS. Please leave a message to the current newsletter editor so he knows the file is for him.

ADVERTISING RATES

COMMERCIAL

FULL PAGE \$12.00

HALF PAGE \$ 7.00

QTR. PAGE \$ 4.00

PERSONAL

Four Lines \$ 1.00

(30 characters per line)

Each line over 4 \$.20

ALL RATES ARE FOR *ONE* ISSUE ONLY!

Software programs are available from the User Group library at the following rates:

SS/SD disk \$ 2.00

DS/SD disk \$ 4.00

If a copy of documentation is required, a charge of \$.10 per copy page will be made. If the group supplies the disk, add \$1.00 to the above charges. We do have an exchange program for new software added to the library. Contact the librarian for further details.

DISCLAIMER: The VAST User Group can assume NO responsibility for the accuracy of the information in this newsletter or for programs or construction projects tried by its members or others. YOU try them at your OWN RISK! Any material herein may be republished by other user groups so long as credit is given to the ORIGINAL sources.

SECRETARY'S SLATE

MINUTES

VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP

MAY 12, 1990

The monthly meeting of the VAST COMPUTER USER GROUP was held on Saturday, May 12, 1990 at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center in Tempe. The meeting was called to order by president Mike Grogan at 10:00 a.m. All officers were present. The minutes of the April meeting were accepted as published in the April, 1990 VAST NEWS. The treasurer reported a balance of \$516.17 in our account.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BBS:

Leo Baker was not present so there was no formal report.

A discussion took place about the general operation of the BBS including the possibility of setting up separate file areas for different types of programs like games and graphics etc.

Jim Ely is going to try to download a newer version of the BBS program that we are using in order to evaluate it for possible use by the group. Jim will also upload a list of local BBS's.

Walt Brown pointed out that the club was still using his disk drive on the BBS. He would really like to have it back. A motion was made, seconded and passed to purchase a new half-height DSDD disk drive for the BBS. Dan Shell said it should cost in the neighborhood of \$75. Mike Marfisi pointed out that Dave Marfisi had 2 relatively new TEAC drives with case and power supply that he was selling. Mike will check it out and if the price is right he is authorized to purchase one or both.

There were no other committee reports

OLD BUSINESS:

We have purchased 100 blank disks for use by the library.

Bud Barnes and Mike Marfisi are examining the club constitution with the goal of cleaning up some loose ends. The biggest change being considered is splitting it into a constitution and bylaws. The bylaws would contain the day to day operating procedures like amount of dues, meeting time and dates, etc. Bylaws would be easier to change at a regular meeting without having to go through the formal procedure needed to amend the constitution.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mike Grogan brought up the idea of having a poster contest among the members to create a poster that could be used to promote the group. There was good interest so details will be worked out as to type of poster, amount or type of prize and who would judge the entries. A \$25 cash prize seemed to attract the most interest. Bud will see about getting a neighbor who is an art instructor at ASU to judge the posters. Bud was appointed chairman to work out the details.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 11:00 a.m.

Mike Grogan and Mike Marfisi then demonstrated the MUG Boot program and Virginia Davis demonstrated her Page Pro greeting card program.

Next month Bud will conduct a program on the finer points of Microsoft® MultiPlan®.

Respectfully,

Mike Marfisi,
Secretary

"NEWS,"

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U.S.; \$4.00 to Canada; air mail and other countries, \$6.00. For those persons who buy the smaller disk versions and then later buy a hard drive, an "inexpensive upgrade" to the hard drive version is available. Contact Asgard at P.O. Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20849, or (703) 255-3085.

Texaments, Too

A major upgrade for the TI Base database manager is now available as version 3.0 from Texaments. This is the first major update for the program in almost 2 years. New in this release are new directives, a report generator, the ability to alter the structure of a database without losing the data, expanded command line editing features, the ability to install command files into VDP memory and several modifications and fixes to existing directives.

This new version is available for \$24.95 plus \$2.50 shipping. Previous owners may upgrade to version 3.0 for \$14.95 plus \$2.50 shipping by returning their original disks (both **system** and tutor disks) with the **upgrade** fee. Anyone who purchased **TI Base** after April 1, 1990 may upgrade to version 3.0 for \$2.50 (the cost of shipping) by returning the original disks and a dated sales receipt. A documentation supplement will be sent with all upgrades.

For more detailed information or

to order, contact Texaments at 53 Center Street, Patchogue, NY 11772 or (516) 475-3480 (voice) or (516) 475-6463 (BBS).

From the Editor's Desk

It may seem odd, but happy Forth of July! Since this is the issue closest to the beginning of July, it must be appropriate. Also, June marks the beginning of Summer Vacation for the Kids. Please be careful driving as a lot of 'em are out and about and they are not watching out for you so you have to watch out for them!

In This Issue...

On page 5 is a review by Mike Marfisi of Asgard Software's new *Spell It!* program. Since I have not, as yet, found part 9 of the TI Writer help files by Stan Katzman (I have narrowed it down to 2 months in 1987, though, and still looking. . .), and not wanting to get out of sequence in the series, I have included some TI Writer Handy Tips on page 6. Our Disk Of The Month is also described on page 6, this month being RAG Software's MultiPlan Upgrades. I could have included **YOUR** article in this month's issue, but I didn't get it! So, that is all I have for you this month.

Something New...

I have ordered, and should receive by the meeting, if all goes

well, a hand-held optical scanner. If things work out OK with it, I will begin again to publish the member profiles and pictures in next month's *VAST News*. Be looking for it!

Upcoming Meetings...

Here is the calendar for the next 2 months. Our meeting dates are indicated.

JULY							1990						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31											

AUGUST							1990						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
				21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
				31									

Poster Contest...

As was announced at the meeting last month, we are starting a poster design contest this month. All of the rules and details are on page 7 of this issue. There are some nice prizes to be had by the winners, including a first place \$25 cash prize. Now is the time to put all that artistic talent to work for the group.

That's it for this month. See you at the meeting on the 9th.

Jim Ely, Editor



VIEWS AND REVIEW

SPELL IT by ASGARD

At the Tucson TI Fest West, Chris Bobbit announced the latest in a long line of software from ASGARD. Called *SPELL IT!*, it has been touted as the greatest advance in spell checking utilities for the TI. To the best of my knowledge the only other spell checker for the TI was the Dragonslayer version. So this is hardly a bases for a great comparison.

Spell It! is available in versions for SS/SD and DS/DD disks as well as a version for hard drives. The programs are the same. The difference is in the size of the dictionary available. The dictionary varies in size up to 220,000 words in the HD version.

The program is shipped on disk. The SSSD and DSDD version are ready to run after being configured for your system. The hard drive version comes on 5 DSDD archived disks and must be de-arc'd to 12 DSDD disks and them copied to the HD. This was done to save on disk and shipping cost. Also the present version of Archiver is not compatible directly with a hard drive.

When you get the program, it needs to be configured to your system. The instructions tell you to auto load the program from Extended BASIC and select "configure" from the menu. **WRONG!** Asgard screwed up here. The menu never appears because they forgot to put it on the disk. In order to run "Configure" you must go into Extended BASIC with your disk drive door open (or no disk in the drive - *Ed*). When you get the "ready" prompt, (insert the disk - *Ed*) close the door and enter RUN "DSK1.CONFIGURE". The program will run. Just answer the questions and save the results back to the disk. You will be telling the program where to find the *Spell It!* program, and where to find the file to be checked. Also you will choose the colors for your screen.

After you have created a document using any of the popular word processors or even *Page Pro 99*, save

it and then boot *Spell-It!*. You are asked for the file name of the document to be checked. The computer will load and scan the document and count what it calls "unique" words. Unique means the number of different words in the document. If a word appears more that once it is counted as one word. This speeds things up as the program won't have to look up 52 instances of the word t-h-e. Now each word is checked against the dictionary. If a word is not found it is "flagged" as a possible error. After the entire document is checked, the flagged words are displayed on the screen one at a time.

As each word is displayed you are given a choice of actions to take. You can A)dd it to your dictionary, C)orrect it, L)ook it up, skip to the N)ext word, go back to the P)revious word or V)iew the word in context.

If the displayed word is spelled correctly but is an odd word not found in the dictionary, such as proper names or abbreviations, you may add it to the dictionary by selecting (A) from the menu. To correct a word, select (C) and type the correct spelling. If you are not sure how the word is spelled you may choose to L)ook it up in the program's dictionary. You will get a list of words that the misspelled word might be. If for some reason you want to skip the word just hit N)ext and go on. If you need to back-up to check a word again, select P)revious word.

There will be times when you will want to see how the word was used in the file. Select V)iew and the screen will display several lines of text including the word in question.

After all corrections have been made the computer adds the new words specified by you to the dictionary, corrects the document and returns you to the title screen.

There are a few bugs in the program. The first one is the missing menu pointed out earlier. The second bug will affect only those with **MYARC** disk controllers. At this point the program will crash when you

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VIEWES AND REVIEWS

Continued from page 5

try to add new words to the dictionary. This is being fixed and new disks will be sent to all registered owners. You can get around the bug for now by booting the dictionaries to your word processor and adding the words directly.

All and all, this utility does just what it was designed to do and it does it well. Its value will depend on how much word processing you do and what kind of a speller you are. I do know that when our newsletter editor Jim Ely heard about this program he ran out and bought me one. He figures that he will be able to get the newsletter out 3 or 4 days sooner if he doesn't have to check my spelling! (*Editor's comment: Mike must not have used his spell checker on this file as I found at least 6 words that were misspelled in it. So much for having the program and using it!*) m.m.

TI Writer Handy Tips

(from the Hoosiers Users Group Newsletter Via the Brazos Valley 99'ers UsersGroupNewsletter)

by Bill Berendts

#1. Do you have a long file in TI Writer of which you want only a portion printed? You can laboriously go through loading the file into the console's memory and then deleting the lines you don't want -- OR you can do the following: Load the file into memory and determine which lines you want to print. Make a

note of the line numbers, then exit TI Writer and then go back to the command mode of the TI Writer editor.

Now, in the command mode, select LF (load file) then enter the first line number of the file you want to print, a space, the last line number of the file you want to print, a space, and the file name. Only the lines you have specified of the file you want loaded will load into the console. All you have to do then is save the "new" file under a different name and print it as a new file.

If you want to print multiple copies of one or more pages of an otherwise long file which contains many pages, this method will save you much time since the computer does not have to scan the long file page by page before printing the next copy of the page(s) you want.

Some of the files in the genealogy I'm working on contain as many as 20 pages, and if I have to update only one or two pages of the file, and want to print out 6 or 7 copies of the amended page(s), TI Writer would have to scan all the pages before printing each copy, so I use the method described above to save time.

#2. From one of the publications: When using TI Writer, if you want to place a slash (/) through the zero digit, use the .TL command thus:

.TL 48:48,8,47.

The number 48 is ASCII for the zero. 8 causes the printer to backspace one position and then print ASCII character 47 (/) each time the program encounters a zero. I have added this TL command to my heading file to accomplish this without having to think of it each time I type a zero in my compositions. b.b.

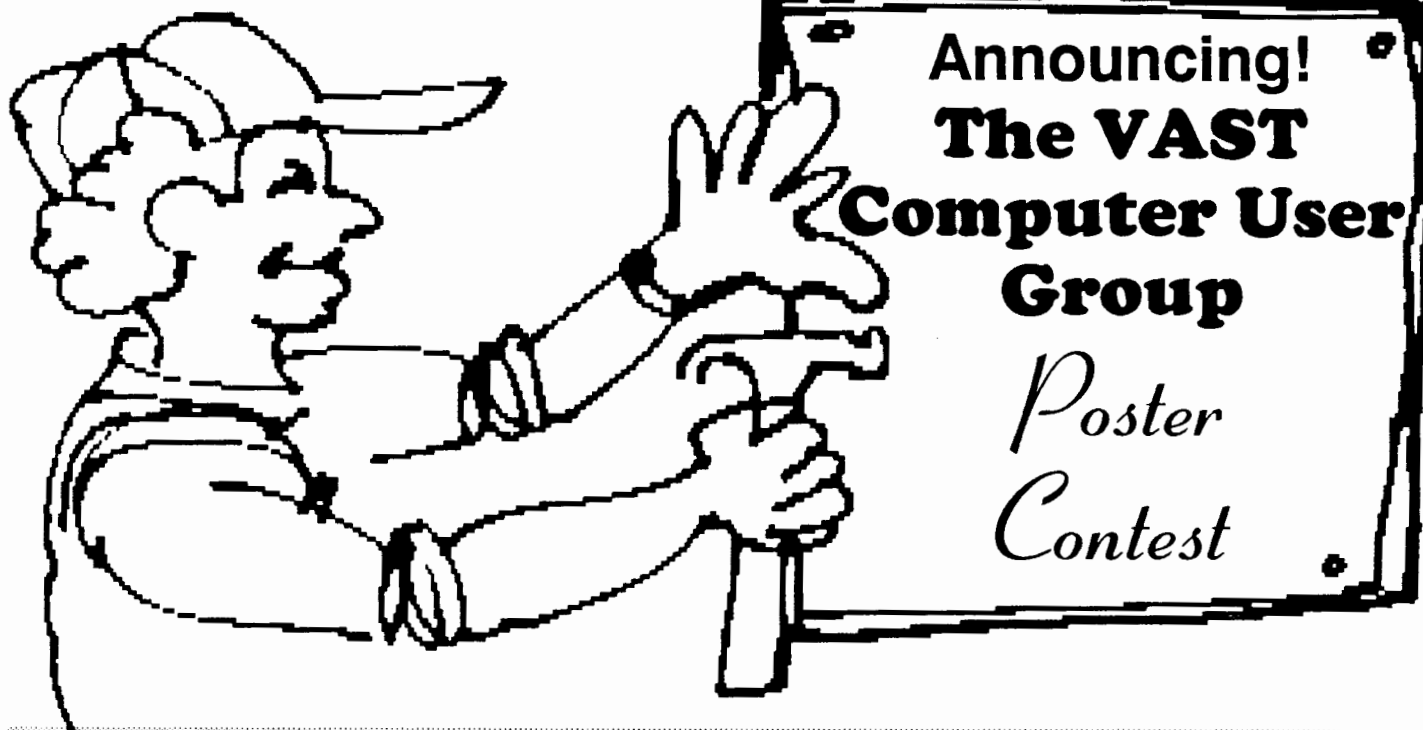
June Disk Of The Month

Since the program being presented this month is on the MultiPlan Spreadsheet program, we decided that an appropriate DOM for this month would be RAG Software's MultiPlan Upgrade disk. The updates on this disk allow you to change certain disk and printer defaults and save them permanently so they are always there the next time you boot the program. The major advantage of these updates, however, is an increase in speed in the program execution (by as

much as 50%!). Documentation and a special disk editor are also a part of the package. If you use MultiPlan, this is a disk you don't want to miss.

Also included on this disk is a demo of a new game from Asgard Software called **Rock Runner**. Mind you, this is just a demo of the program, not the program itself. The demo runs for approximately 20 minutes and gives you a pretty good feel of the program. Enjoy!





Artistic Contest For The Valley Of The Sun TI-99/4a (VAST) Computer Users Group.

PURPOSE

The aim of this contest is to choose an art work depicting the purpose of the group. The winning entry will be reproduced on a flyer and placed by the members of the group in strategic locations in an effort to attract new members.

RULES OF CONTEST

1. Depict in an artistic form the goals and purposes of the *Vast Computer Users Group* and the uses of the computers the club supports.
2. Entry must be on an 8 1/2" x 11" material that is reproducible on a "Xerox" type machine.
3. Entry may be:
 - a. Freehand drawing
 - b. Computer graphics
 - c. A combination of a & b
 - d. Any other art form that conforms to number 2 above.

4. Entry must be in black & white (because of reproduction difficulties).

JUDGING

Judging will be done by competent people in the art field.

The decision of the judges will be final.

PRIZES

There will be two prizes:

1. 1st. prize — \$25.00 CASH
2. 2nd. prize — 1 year renewal to VAST

CONTEST DEADLINE DATE

Entries must be in to Bud Barnes no later than July 31, 1990.

WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Winners will be announced at the August 11, 1990 meeting.