

VAST NEWS

for the VAST Computer User Group

Volume 8 Number 11

November 14, 1992

Know Your Candidates

At the last meeting it was suggested that those running for office submit a platform and that we publish that platform in this month's newsletter. Several of the candidates did just that and below are their stances...



RAY FRANTZ

RAY FRANTZ for President... WHY?

Why would a guy who has only been involved with computers for about two years, be asking for your vote for President of our VAST support group? I think the last two words in that sentence are my reasoning for doing so... SUPPORT GROUP.

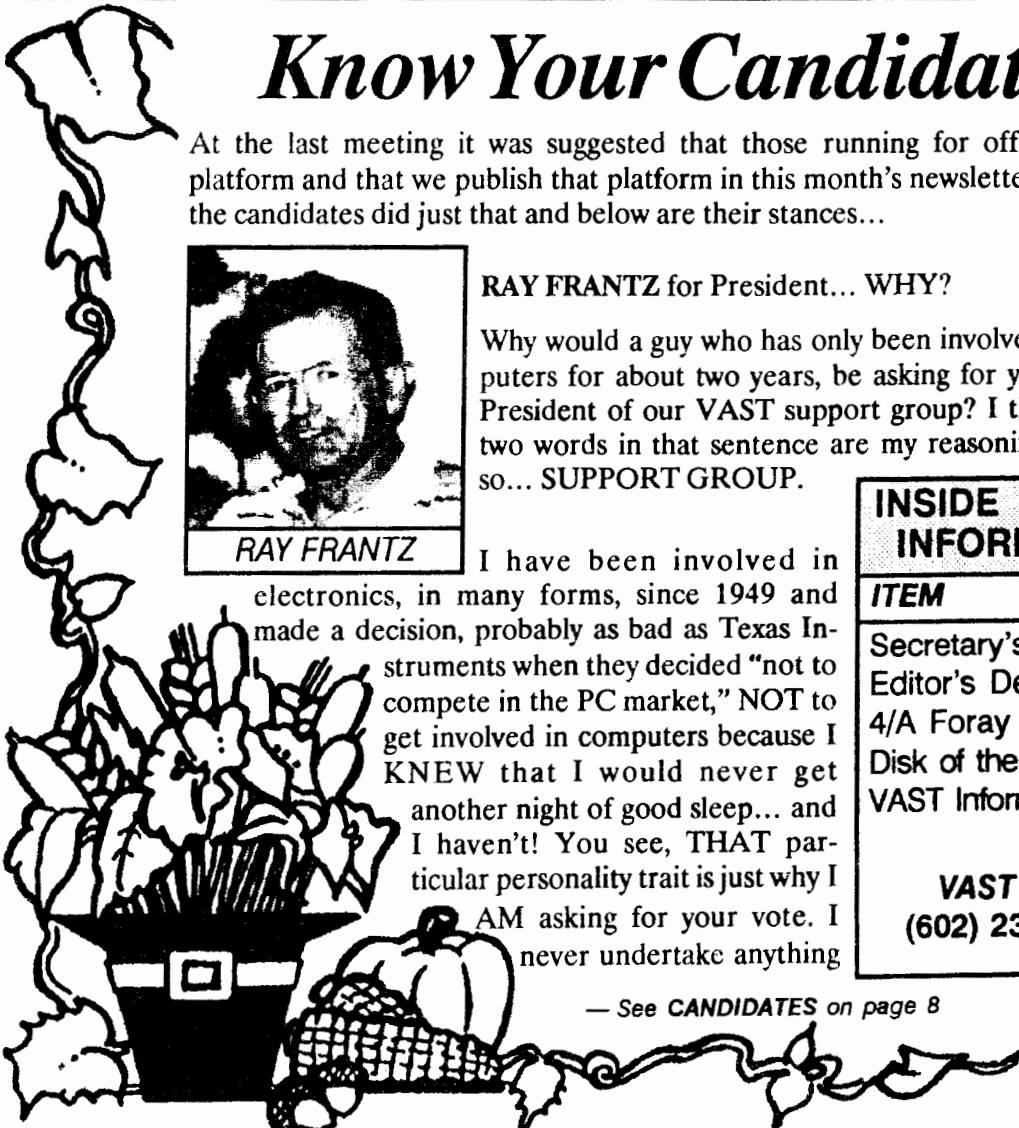
I have been involved in electronics, in many forms, since 1949 and made a decision, probably as bad as Texas Instruments when they decided "not to compete in the PC market," NOT to get involved in computers because I KNEW that I would never get another night of good sleep... and I haven't! You see, THAT particular personality trait is just why I AM asking for your vote. I never undertake anything

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VAST BBS
(602) 233-0790

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SECRETARY'S SLATE

MINUTES

VAST Computer User Group

October 10, 1992

The October 10, 1992 meeting of the VAST User Group was called to order by President Jim Ely at 10:02 a.m. Among the 22 people in attendance were the current officers and 4 visitors. Louis J. Tokar, one of the visitors, joined the club after the business meeting was adjourned.

The first order of business was the reading of the minutes of the last meeting. Secretary Tom Pfeffer noted that there were two mistakes in the minutes as printed in the newsletter. The dates listed were incorrect and should have read "September" in the first paragraph and "October" in the Program Committee report. The minutes were then accepted by a voice vote. Also accepted was the treasury report.

Jim then asked for committee reports.

LIBRARY: Hazel reported that the videotapes from the FEST WEST were available for members to check out of the library. She mentioned that the quality of the picture and editing were not very good but that the content was of interest. Jim mentioned that he may contact the Utah groups that are setting up FEST WEST '93 to tell them of the advantages of doing the videotaping themselves.

Also mentioned during the library discussion were the artwork programs by Virginia Davis. Mike Grogan suggested that the club advertise the programs in our monthly newsletter.

Jim said that he would include them in future issues.

PROGRAM: Bud Barnes stated that he did not have a program scheduled for the next meeting. He suggested that he would contact the gentleman that did the disk drive lecture last year for a repeat of his excellent talk. Hazel volunteered to do a Christmas program next month but it was suggested that she wait one more month instead. Ralph Rees was volunteered to present a demo of "Checksum" at the next meeting after the subject was brought up and he seemed to be the most knowledgeable.

PUBLICITY: Ray Frantz reminded everyone about the box of labels that is kept in the group locker at Pyle. He stated that he seemed to get the most responses by calling the names listed as opposed to running an ad in the paper. It was mentioned that of the 4 visitors that were present, one was from the newspaper ad, one was from a flier in a store, and the other two came as a result of a contact by Chris Taylor. Members commented that Chris is missed at our monthly meetings and that his contributions are always interesting.

PICNIC: Jim officially disbanded the picnic committee for the present citing that the timing was wrong for a picnic coming into the holiday season. He will reform the committee for a spring picnic.

RAFFLE: Gene Gipson was not present at

— See *MINUTES* on page 3

— *MINUTES*, from page 2

the meeting but he did send all of the raffle equipment. The raffle is now being run by Ron Vanover.

BBS: Jim mentioned that the number of calls should be picking up now that the phone company has ceased the toll charges. Why hasn't it? He stated that some of the other bulletin boards that he frequently calls have been tied up since the policy change went into effect.

NEWSLETTER: Jim stated that he would continue to place short key-in programs in the newsletter. He also mentioned that the next newsletter would have to be finished sooner than usual because of the upcoming election of officers.

Under the subject of **OLD BUSINESS**, Bud admitted that he had made a mistake and had forgotten the maps to our upcoming field trip at home. He promised to mail a map to everyone that was going to attend.

Also under old business, the slate of candidates for next months' election was filled. Nominated for the office of president were Jim Ely, Ralph Rees and Ray Frantz. Nominated for vice-president were Ralph Rees and Ed Morse. Running for secretary is Tom Pfeffer, unopposed. Members were reminded that they may also write-in a candidate for any office if they choose to do so. The ballots will be mailed with the newsletter and should be received approximately 10 days before the election. Members may hand carry the ballots to the next meeting or mail them to VAST.

Another topic of old business was the post

office box mentioned at the last meeting. Members were asked to make note of the new return address listed on their newsletters. Please address any correspondence to the new address.

There being no further business, Jim asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was officially closed at 11:07 a.m. A brief intermission was followed by the raffle and a demonstration of "Page Pro" by Wallace Knight.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Pfeffer
VAST Secretary/Treasurer



From the Editor's Desk

Happy Thanksgiving!

Since we are voting for officers this month, I thought this little piece would be appropriate...

How important is your one vote? Consider the following:

- In 1645 One vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.
- In 1649 One vote caused Charles I of England to be executed.
- In 1776 One vote gave America the English language instead of German.
- In 1845 One vote brought Texas into the Union.
- In 1868 One vote saved President Andrew Jackson from impeachment.
- In 1876 One vote gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency of the U.S.
- In 1876 One vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic.
- In 1923 One vote gave Adolph Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party.

Thanks to South Mountain Users Group for furnishing that bit of information previously published by the American Forces Press Services. Submitted to VAST by Bud Barnes.

IN THIS ISSUE

As you can see, most of this issue is taken up with information about those running for office. We do have several of our usual columns for you though. On page 5 is Ralph Rees' 4/A

Foray with a guest presentation written by Jim Peterson about "having it all" and on page 10 are the *Disk of the Year* programs. Hope you enjoy the issue.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Below is the 2 month calendar with our meeting dates indicated. Did anyone catch the flub in the December calendar last month?

DECEMBER 1992							JANUARY 1993						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						

VOTING

Your OFFICIAL ballot is enclosed with this newsletter. Please follow the instructions on the ballot and above all, **VOTE!** NO OTHER BALLOTS WILL BE AVAILABLE SO DON'T LOSE OR FORGET THE ONE YOU ARE SENT! See you all at the meeting. ♦

Just a reminder...

The **VAST BBS** can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (602) 233-0790.

This is a local call for most area residents. Give it a call for the latest information about



the VAST Computer User Group! And now it's **FASTER** than ever!

4/A Foray

by Ralph Rees

I found the following article in the November 1991 LA 99ers Topics newsletter. It was written by none other than Mr. TI himself, Jim Peterson. I have a good lot of the hardware that Jim talks about but when it gets right down to it, I really don't need it BUT being the tinkerer that I am, I gotta have it! It's a GREAT article! Read it and see where you fit in...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE IT ALL!

By Jim Peterson

Do the conversations at your user group meeting sound like a coffee break in Silicon Valley? Are you confused by talk of GROM's and GRAM's, puzzled by references to HFDC's, intimidated by discussions of megabytes and frightened by talk of burning EPROM's? Well, join the crowd, buddy - so am I!

There are basically three types of people interested in computers. First, there are those who use a computer to run programs, to accomplish something useful or just to have fun. I believe that those are still in the great majority, although we don't hear much from them.

Then, there are those who get their kicks out of writing programs, of creating software for others to use. There aren't too many of these left in the TI world.

And finally, there are those who like to tinker with the computer, soup it up, plug in doohinkies and thingamajigs, and talk in that strange language I mentioned above. I don't know how many of those folks there are, but they are certainly the most knowledgeable, active, and interested, and they tend to dominate the conversations and the printed material in the TI world nowadays.

I presume that those fellows also do actually run programs on their souped up systems. And, some of them must be skilled programmers, because many of their hybrid hardware creations would be useless without specialized software.

I'm very glad that those people are around. Once in a while they invent something that I actually find useful, and they are a lifesaver when my equipment breaks down.

But, don't be intimidated by all that high-tech talk, and don't think that the computer world is passing you by. There are so many things to do with a computer that no one could possibly find time to do them all. Do your own thing and don't worry about the rest.

I have operated a TI software company for seven years, and I also spend a lot of time writing programs, using the computer as a word processor, etc. I probably spend more time on my TI than 90% of the users. So, what does my equipment consist of?

I have a console with the Extended Basic module plugged in, attached to a P/box which contains a TI disk controller, two double-sided drives, the 32k card, RS232 card, and a Horizon Ramdisk. Also plugged into the

— See FORAY 4/A on page 6

— 4/A FORAY, from page 5

RS232 card is an old Gemini 10x printer and an Avatex 1200 baud modem.

I also have a speech synthesizer, a pair of TI joysticks, A TEII module and an Editor Assembler module, all of which I plug in occasionally when I need them; also, a cassette recorder and cable which hasn't been used in a long time.

I use Triton's Super Extended Basic module because it has some editing features which are useful when programming. It also has some limited plotting capability which I have never used - and have never heard of anyone who has. If you don't program, it would hardly pay to switch from the old TI Extended Basic. I also have the Mecha-tronics module but never got around to trying it.

I had a Gram Kracker but soon sold it and bought a Ramdisk instead. The Gram Kracker has fantastic capabilities if you have the skill and knowledge to take advantage of them, but most users don't seem to have done much beyond personalizing the title screen.

I had a widget, and I guess it is still collecting dust around here some place. It was a nuisance, and since I use XBasic 99% of the time I didn't need it. There are now widgets or "module expanders" that allow you to access more than one module from within a program. That is, if you have the skill to write such a program. I don't know that anyone has released such programs to the public domain, and I can't think of any practical use except to access TEII speech from XBasic - but you can do that with the Text-To-Speech disk.

The ramdisk is the one tool that I would not

be without. In order to assemble my TI-PD catalog, I screened over 4000 programs, debugged and modified, merged in help files, conversions to XBasic and loaders, and assembled over 400 disks of programs. It took me hundreds of hours of work - without a ramdisk it would have taken thousands of hours and I would not even have attempted it.

The ram disk enables me to switch from one program to another almost instantly, and with John Johnson's Boot program I can just as quickly catalog a disk or view a file. Mine has 256k of memory. I could get one with much more memory but I see no reason to do so; I have every program on it that I am apt to use even once a month, and it is only half full. That leaves plenty of room for temporary storage and downloading.

However, if you only use your computer to play games, do a little word processing and a bit of record keeping, a ram disk would be an expensive convenience rather than a necessity.

Since my ram disk is only half full, I would consider a hard drive to be about as useful as the mammalian appendages on a swine of the masculine persuasion. If I was running a BBS, sure - or if I was doing a lot of work with those memory-gobbling graphics and needed everything quickly accessible.

My old Gemini printer has been a faithful workhorse, although the hood over one sprocket wheel has lost its spring and is being held down by a loop of elastic cord. I will have to give it up soon, because the Gemini printer codes are becoming obsolete and I need to be

— See 4/A FORAY on page 7

— 4/A FORAY, from page 6

able to write and test Epson codes. But, I hate to give up these 79-cent typewriter ribbons and start getting ripped off on \$2.50 cartridges! As for a color ribbon, the temperature will have to go way down, down under, before I will pay for one of those.

Once in a while, when someone sends me a double-density diskful of stuff, I wish I had a CorComp disk controller. Otherwise, with diskettes selling for a quarter or less, it wouldn't pay to change.

If I ever get around to subscribing to GENie or Delphi, it would pay me to get a 2400 baud modem.

I can't think of anything else I need, and I don't want what I don't need. If I really wanted to play joystick games, I would certainly get something better than the TI joystick. And if the MIDI interface cable becomes a reality, I will be sorely tempted.

I can't see any advantage in putting the 32k under the hood, or anyplace other than where it is now. If I used speech a great deal, it would be nice to get rid of the synthesizer - but I know only one user that uses speech that much. I don't need a clock built in because I have a watch on my wrist. If I really did a lot of serious writing, an 80-column card would be wonderful. But then I would have to buy a monitor capable of displaying 80 columns. I certainly don't want to give up color, and high-resolution color monitors cost more. I would still want to use my old monitor for programming, because I like to write programs for folks who have basic equipment. I don't have room on my computer desk for two monitors, so I think I'll pass.

I'm a three-finger typist, so a RAVE keyboard wouldn't speed up my typing very much. If I really wanted an IBM keyboard and 80-column capability, I would throw in a few bucks more and get a Geneve.

So what about the Geneve? If I had an irresistible urge to run the few great programs that have been written for it, or if I wanted to explore its great programming capabilities, I would get one. But, I like to write programs for other people to use. When so few are interested in programs that I write for a computer that sold in the millions, why would I write programs for a computer purchased by a couple of thousand people?

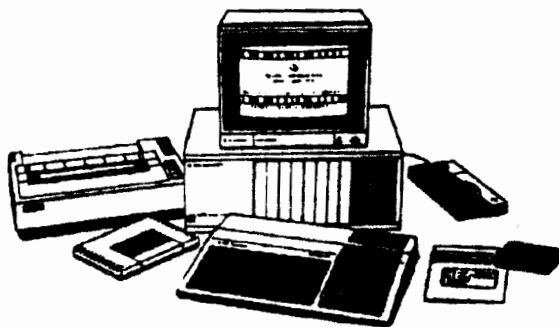
I am sure that many folks will disagree with what I have written. That's why I wrote it. I hope that they will disagree so strongly that they will immediately boot up Funnelweb and compose a blistering reply. But don't send it to me - send it to your newsletter editor. The newsletters are badly in need of more articles by more writers!

jp

That's It For This Month

FCTN =

—Ralph...♦



— **CANDIDATES**, from page 1

unless I KNOW that I can make it successful
BECAUSE I GIVE 100% !

SO, yes I am "INVOLVED" with computers and a club called VAST, that has become a large part of my life and the only reason I accepted the nomination to be a candidate for the Presidency is that I KNOW I can make many major changes that will enhance the workings of our Club.

I am going to present a few of the proposed changes that I would institute and as ROSS PEROT said at the first debate (out of context) "If my ideas are too radical for you and you don't want progress, then I don't want your vote!"

1. Promote methods of increasing our enrollment and encouraging membership from other Support Group members. I personally have brought in 5 families.

2. Institute, support and arrange "basic education in the use of the TI99/4A and Geneve" by actually forming SIG's (Special Interest Groups).

3. Work with the Newsletter Editor and committee on restructuring the format and contents of our Newsletter to make it more comprehensive rather than specialized.

4. Reformat the monthly meetings to allow for more "discussion" time for projects and information pertinent to the TI-99/4A, etc.

Provide an ANSWER for any question asked by any member... and to make the meetings more enjoyable for ALL ...attendance is off and dropping every month!

Since joining VAST a couple years ago, I feel that I have done my part in enhancing the image of the club from "volunteering" for any job that I felt I could handle physically. I had a club member design a LOGO for the FEST WEST Convention and I personally designed other artwork and manufactured souvenir buttons for sale at the FEST... with profits going to our club treasury. This club has GIVEN me more than you can imagine. My Doctors say "It's better than any medicine I could take." And it's TRUE... now Ray... it's payback time!!

When TI-99ing stops being FUN is when I stop attending meetings... and I don't want that day to ever come!

In closing, let me say that nothing I have said here should be construed to make anyone believe that present leadership is not doing a good job... but as someone brought up at our last meeting... "Let those that have been doing all the complaining run for office!" I took that personally, because YES, I do alot of griping... SO LET'S GIVE THESE GUYS THAT HAVE BEEN DOING ALL THE WORK A BREAK. Here's your chance to make me PUT UP or SHUT UP!

SO FEW HAVE BEEN DOING SO MUCH... DO YOUR PART... VOLUNTEER!!!
rf ♦

— See **CANDIDATES** on page 9

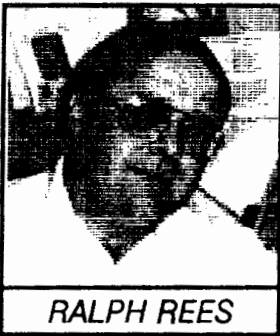


— CANDIDATES, from page 8

Ralph Rees is on the ballot running as both a presidential candidate and a vice-presidential candidate, a post he currently holds. Here is his presidential statement...

If elected President, I pledge to do my best to accomplish the following:

1.) Continue our ongoing mission to find all "LOST" TI'ers in our immediate area and promote our group in a way that they will want to become members.



RALPH REES

2.) Intensify our assistance towards "NEW" or "NOVICE" users, with questions and answer periods, special S.I.G.s and

demonstrations for the beginning TI'er.

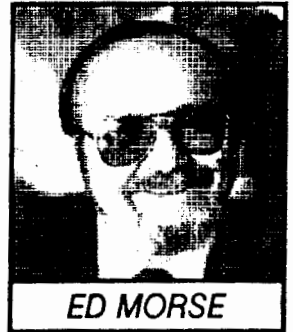
3.) Announce (if elected) an incentive plan to get members to participate more in our group, I.E. running and winning an elected position, occupying an appointed position, writing an article, review, etc., for our newsletter.

4.) To continue to support and use the TI-99/4A computer. rr ♦

Also running for Vice President along with Ralph Rees is Ed Morse. Here is his stance for that office...

If I am elected Vice President of the VAST Users Group I will defend the TI-99/4A against all naysayers whomsoever. I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office and

hope make some other noticeable contribution to the group. Thank you for your support. em ♦



ED MORSE

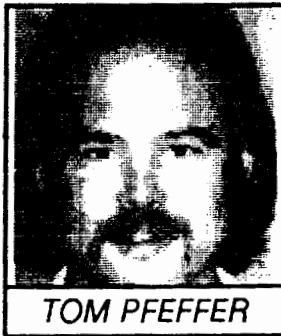
Two other people are running for offices.

Jim Ely, who is the current President of VAST, is running for re-election. He has been the President for one term and chose



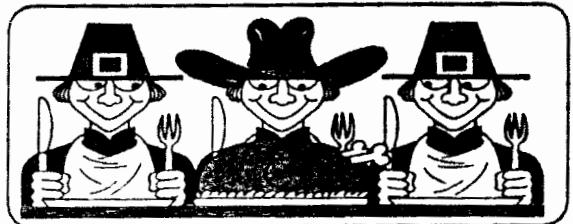
JIM ELY

not to make any campaign promises. Jim has been with the group almost from its inception, holding other positions in the group such as BBS SysOp (currently Co-SysOp to Mike Grogan), Vice-President, and currently Newsletter Editor.



TOM PFEFFER

Tom Pfeffer, who is the current Secretary/Treasurer of the group, is running for re-election to that post. He chose not to make a statement at this time because he is running unopposed for the position. je ♦





Build Your Own... Disk Of The Year.

By now you have had plenty of time to type in the previously published programs in this column and see just how nifty they are.

This month I have several more to peek your interest.

Here's a great example of the use of sprites and motion in a program.

```
1 REM * THE BLOB BY Jim Peterson *
```

```
100 CALL CLEAR :: CALL MAGNIFY(4):: CALL SCREEN(2)
```

```
110 CALL CHAR(96,RPT$("3C7EFFFFFFFFE3C",4)):: J=-1
```

```
120 FOR L=1 TO 28 :: CALL SPRITE(#L,96,16,L*4+20,10,0,L+8):: NEXT L
```

```
130 FOR L=1 TO 28 :: CALL MOTION(#L,0,L*J):: NEXT L
```

```
140 J=J*-1 :: GOTO 130
```

Do you yearn for the sounds of a GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK... but don't have one??? try this program...

```
1 REM *By Chick DeMarti, LA99'ers, from an idea by W. Berendt in the CIN-DAY NEWS 1989
```

```
100 FOR X=1 TO 6
```

```
110 FOR C=0 TO 30 STEP 2
```

```
120 CALL SOUND(-500,110,C/4,500,C,1250,C)
```

```
130 NEXT C
```

```
140 NEXT X
```

```
150 FOR C=0 TO 30
```

```
160 CALL SOUND(-500,110,C/4,500,C,1250,C)
```

```
170 NEXT C
```

And finally, for this month, try this for the sounds of "THE DEEP" !!

```
1 REM *Courtesy of Australia n Newsletter tishug, from LA99'ers. 1989
```

```
10 FOR R=1 TO 5
```

```
20 FOR X=1 TO 30
```

```
30 CALL SOUND(-1000,262,X)
```

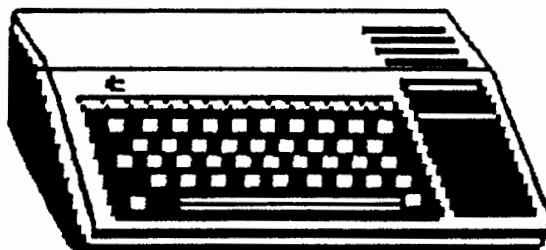
```
40 CALL SOUND(-1000,197,X)
```

```
50 CALL SOUND(-1000,111,X)
```

```
60 NEXT X
```

```
70 NEXT R
```





REMEMBER THIS?

TI-99/4A

**GET IT OUT OF THE CLOSET! LEARN TO USE IT!
LEARN TO LOVE IT!**

LOOK

**...WORD PROCESSING...SPREAD SHEET MANAGEMENT...GAMES
...DESKTOP PUBLISHING...DATA BASE MANAGEMENT...MUSIC
...MUCH...MUCH MORE! WANT MORE INFO?...**

CONTACT US! WE ARE HERE TO HELP! WE ARE THE...

VAST USER GROUP

**MEETING AT
THE PYLE RECREATION CENTER
SOUTHERN & RURAL RD.
TEMPE, AZ.
FOR INFO CALL**

940-0974

966-8374



VAST User Group Information

The VAST Computer User Group is a support group for the TI-99/4A Home Computer and compatibles.

The VAST Computer User Group operates a BBS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The phone number is (602) 233-0790.

CURRENT OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

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VICE PRESIDENT

Ralph Rees 869-8145

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Tom Pfeffer 940-0974

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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BBS SYSOP

Mike Grogan 272-4315

Send any correspondence to the address below.

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There is **NO CHARGE** to **MEMBERS** for **PERSONAL** advertising. Non-members will be charged \$1.50 per ad.

Please contact the Secretary/Treasurer for **COMMERCIAL** advertising rates.

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VAST NEWS

c/o VAST USER GROUP

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Newsletter Editors

Please Note

NEW Mailing Address

Above!

FIRST CLASS MAIL

RALPH REES
18815 N. 13TH AVE
PHOENIX AZ 85027

FIRST CLASS MAIL