
WEST PENN 99ERS NEWS

FRIST ADDITION

DEC. 1996



FOR THE RECORD BY PAUL BROCK NOV. MIN.

The meeting was quickly started around 7:10. As Mickey asked for full attention. Announcement of the last time that Mickey would be president. We at West Penn say thanks for a fine job! We will miss you.

Report by Mickey was that Office Dep. made some bad copies of the newsletter, and she was trying to correct the error. Corrections on the Nov. minutes was that Bill Clinton had other obligations and couldn't run for president. The treasurer report was very good. Mickey turned her attention to her demo while PIZZA was being ordered. Mickey also showed off all the nice gifts she received from distant TIERS. Norm gave a report on the latest fair.

Mickey turned the meeting over to the new officers. The library will be just brought back and fourth for future updates. It looks as though there will only be three officers, We are asking for all the help we can get. Thanks to those who did vounteer to take some of the equiptment home.

WE AT WEST PENN WISH ALL THE TIERS A

Merry Christmas AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WEST PENN 99'ERS CLUB INFO

Next Meeting Date: November 19, 1996
 Meeting Location: Penns Woods
 Civic Association
 Just off Route 30
 N. Huntingdon, Pa
 Time of Meeting: 7:00 P.M.



GENERAL ITINERARY OF OUR CLUB'S MEETING

6:45 P.M. Doors Open
 7:00 P.M. General Meeting
 7:45 P.M. Demos and New Info
 8:45 P.M. Questions and Answers
 8:45 P.M. One on One Help
 8:45 P.M. Socializing
 10:30 P.M. Doors Close

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FOR THIS MONTH

Son of the Disk of Dinosaurs ... Demo by Mickey Cendrowski
 Bride of the Disk of Dinosaurs . Demo by Mickey Cendrowski
 Disk of the Old West Demo by Mickey Cendrowski
 Disk of Medieval Times Demo by Mickey Cendrowski
 The Label Maker Demo by Mickey Cendrowski

LIST OF WEST PENN OFFICERS FOR 1996

President:	Paul Brock	412-478-2754
Vice-President:	Norm Rokke	614-264-6442
Treasurer:	Ed Mandich	412-824-5566
Recording Secretary:	Paul Brock	412-478-2754
Corresponding Secretary:	Paul Brock	412-478-2754
Librarian:	Paul Brock	412-478-2754
Newsletter Editor:	Paul Brock	412-478-2754
Assistant Editor:	Paul Brock	412-478-2754

The West Penn 99'ers Users Group is a Non-Profit organization, dedicated to encouraging the continued use of the TI-99/4A home computer.

Our membership fee is:

- * \$15.00 per year for an INDIVIDUAL / FAMILY membership.
- * \$10.00 per year for a NEWSLETTER ONLY membership.

Those having FULL memberships are entitled to the many extra benefits our club has to offer.

Some of those benefits are:

- * Demos of the latest TI-99/4A software.
- * Free copying of our West Penn 99'ers Disk Library.
- * Latest T.I. news - Local - National - International.
- * One on one help / Problem Solving.
- * Participation in our Module Lending Library.
- * Participation in our Video Lending Library.
- * Ribbon re-inking - for just \$1.00 per ribbon.
- * Various computer supplies - at a substantial savings.
- * Participation in our Coke / Pepsi Wars.
- * And ... entertainment by one of the biggest TI-99/4A supporters around.

We meet the third Tuesday of each month at the Penns Woods Civic Association in North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, at 7:00 P.M.

If you can't make it to our meetings ... at least become a NEWSLETTER member - and enjoy our NEW NEWSLETTER FORMAT - done ENTIRELY on a TI-99/4A computer.

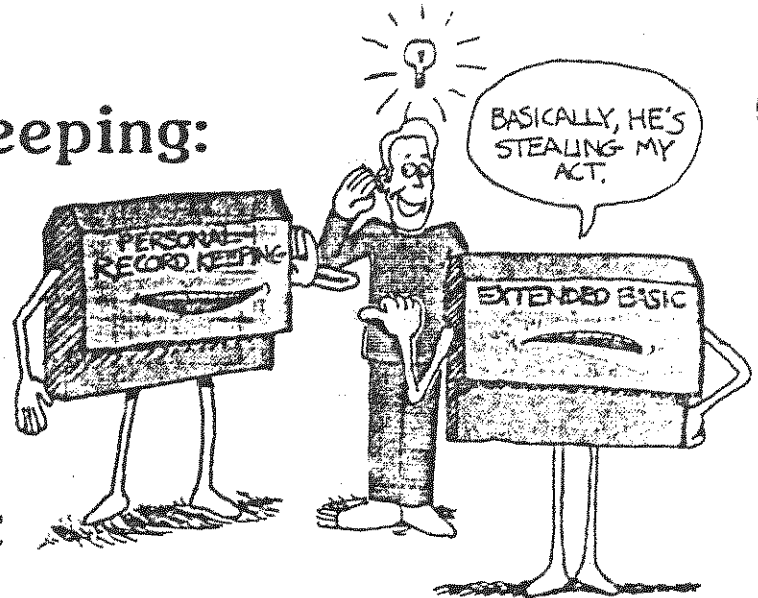
SEE PAGE 10 FOR OUR WEST PENN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.

The Secret of Personal Record Keeping:

Implementing

DISPLAY AT
and
ACCEPT AT

Without Extended BASIC



By Paul Karis

Some of you may have accidentally stumbled upon features of the TI-99/4 that are not described anywhere but which are nonetheless quite helpful. I did . . . and what happily resulted was a way to quickly print text to and accept it from anywhere on the screen *without* having to pass through loops or causing the screen to scroll.

Those of you with Extended BASIC already have this capability with the DISPLAY AT and ACCEPT AT statements. Now, you can have these powerful features in TI BASIC (the language built into the TI-99/4 and 99/4A computers) provided the *Personal Record Keeping* Command Module is inserted. This module which is quite powerful and versatile in itself (see Sept./Oct. issue p. 40-43) will interface with the console's BASIC routines and allow you to use two new statements: CALL D and CALL A. [Those of you without the PRK module but who happen to have the *Statistics* module should be able to use that instead—Ed.]

Before getting into the documentation, I should, of course, mention that you can also print anywhere on the screen without CALL D by handling the printing character by character using the subroutine given in the examples in your manuals—i.e., "Character Definition." The drawbacks of that method include lack of speed (the letters appear one by one), more cumbersome programming, and more memory space taken up.

1. DISPLAY AT — numerical data

CALL D(R, C, L, V)

R = row number of first character of print line
C = column number of first character of print line
L = maximum length of print line; must be ≥ 1
V = variable for the value of which is to be printed

R/C The R(ow) and C(olumn) variables are meaningful with values between 1 and 24, and 1 and 28 respectively (the print field 24x28 is used). Values below the minimum of 1 (0 and negative numbers) are treated as the value 1; Values above the maximum (24 or 28) are automatically subtracted as many times as is required to bring the result between 1 and 24 or 28; this result is

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3902 AA VEENENDAAL
The Netherlands

40'ERS MAG. VOL 1 NO 4

then used as the R or C value. This is a nice feature that eliminates many program halts of "BAD VALUE" that often results from careless programming. Data at the end of a screen line is not printed at the beginning of the next screen row as is the case with the CALL HCHAR statement.

- L The L position can be used with a fixed number (the maximum meaningful number is 28) or as a variable to which the function can be assigned in numerical data similar to SEG\$ in strings.
- V Instead of a numerical variable, you can also put a number in this position; it will then be printed on the screen in a position according to the rules above.

Example 1

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 V = 326525
120 CALL D(12, 10, 5, V)
130 GOTO 130
```

Of course you can explain why this program only displays 3265 in the middle of the screen. How would you have to change line 120 to give the full 326525?

2. DISPLAY AT — string data

Version 1: CALL D(R, C, L, S\$)
Version 2: CALL D(R, C, L, "PAUL W. KARIS")
Version 3: CALL D(R, C, L, CHR\$(N))

The variables R, C and L work as described previously under section 1, above.

Here especially, L can be put to good use as a built-in SEG\$.

Version 1: the string variables S\$ is printed
Version 2: the string between quotes is printed
Version 3: a complicated way of saying CALL HCHAR(R, C, N) that is merely mentioned here as illustration of the possibilities

Example 2

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 A$ = "THIS IS MID-SCREEN"
120 CALL D(12, 4, 19, A$)
130 GOTO 130
```

Continued on p. 4

3. ACCEPT AT — numerical data

The ACCEPT AT statement works similar to INPUT but can be formatted anywhere on the screen. The input prompt can be printed in the appropriate place with the technique of section 2, above. The built-in value checks are an additional feature.

CALL A(R, C, L, F, A, MN, MX)

R, C and L have been explained in section 1.

- F = function variable
- A = accept variable
- MN = minimum value
- MX = maximum value

F The numerical variable in this position assumes a value 1-7 depending on certain function keys being depressed. The values connected to these functions in this way should not be confused with the ASCII values of these functions that can be useful in CALL KEY statements. For completeness, I'll also tabulate the ASCII values here.

Function Key	CALL A value (F position)	ASCII value
TI-99/4A TI-99/4		
FCTN 5 SHIFT W — BEGIN	6	14
FCTN 8 SHIFT R — REDO	4	6
FCTN 7 SHIFT A — AID	3	1
FCTN 9 SHIFT Z — BACK	7	15
FCTN 4 SHIFT C — CLEAR	2	2
FCTN 6 SHIFT V — PROC'D	5	12
ENTER	1	13

CLEAR will not only give F a value of 2, but it also clears the input printing field on the screen, and is to be used when typed input is not yet entered and should be changed.

Warning: This means that if you write a program that continually loops to a CALL A statement, CLEAR cannot be used to break the program. Only QUIT or cutting the power will work then, but it will also erase your program in the process! The solution to this problem is to program your escape routine—e.g., IF F=3 THEN 10000 enabling you to use AID to bring the program to line 10000 which reads: 10000 END.

A The variable in the position of A assumes (accepts) the value you typed in much in the same way as the input variable does after you depress ENTER. The F variable, of course, then gets the value 1 since you have used the function key ENTER. If pressing ENTER when the print/input field contains no information (only "space"), F will take on the value in the above table, if one of the function keys has previously been pushed.

X The numbers or the values of the numerical variables in the positions MN and MX respectively determine the minimum and maximum values that A will accept, A gentle beep when pressing ENTER warns you if you try to step beyond these imposed limits. The screen, of course, will accept any numerical data, provided that the length does not exceed L (e.g., if L=2 and MX=10000 you still cannot get A to become more than 99 since the screen will not accept more than 2 digits). Since the plus and minus signs (+ and -) as well as the letter E (scientific notation) are all considered to be *numerical* input, they will also be accepted. String data, however, are not accepted by the screen at all when using CALL A in this way.

If MN=MX A will only accept the MN and MX value.
 If MN>MX A shouldn't accept any value at all, but illogically it does accept the MN value.

Example 3

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 CALL D(3, 3, 28, "ENTER 1, 2 OR 3")
120 CALL A(10, 25, 1, F, 0, 1, 3)
```

```
130 CALL CLEAR
140 FOR T=1 TO 500
150 NEXT T
160 CALL D(15, 3, 28, "YOUR CHOICE WAS ")
170 CALL D(15, 20, 2, B)
180 FOR T=1 TO 500
190 NEXT T
200 GOTO 100
```

4. ACCEPT AT — string data;

CALL A(R, C, L, F, A\$)

R, C and L are explained in section 1.

F is explained in section 3.

A\$ = accept string variable

A\$ The variable in the A\$ position is filled with the typed string information when pressing ENTER.

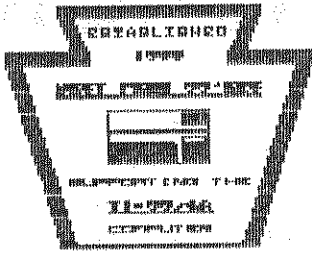
Example 4

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 M$="PLEASE ENTER YOUR NAME"
120 CALL D(5, 3, 26, M$)
130 CALL A(10, 3, 20, F, N$)
140 CALL CLEAR
150 FOR T=1 TO 500
160 NEXT T
170 CALL D(5, 2, 28, "THANKS " & N$)
180 FOR T=1 TO 500
190 NEXT T
200 GOTO 100
```

That should do it, fellow 99'ers. I've told you some "personal" secrets, and shown you their "BASIC" uses. Now you're on your own: It's your turn to apply these two new commands and perhaps, discover some additional ones.

[Note: In the event that Texas Instruments gets away from producing "hybrid" Command Modules (containing both BASIC and GPL coding), future releases of *Personal Record Keeping* will not offer the capabilities described in this article—Ed.]





WEST PENN

99ers

Sorry. If there is any mistakes, Mickey isn't checking my work any more and I have a little more to do. Now it is getting pretty close to Christmas and I am still way behind. As everyone knows that I have become president, and along with the responsibility. If I am unable to get the newsletter out on time I hope that everyone will bear with me.

I found an interesting artical about someone that was thing **GREEN-USE FEWER DISKS.** By Dick Bulmer of the KAWARTHA 99ers- Summer Vol 11 no 3. An interesting idea about Flippies. Maybe an old trick can start something new.

Like a Speeding Bullet

This artical comes from the Vast News (May 1993) by -Allan Nelson-

So you think that computers are fast? Well, the speed at which they operate is so incomprehensible that: if you were giving the computer data, and the computer was giving you data

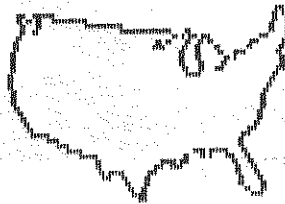
back & forth, it would take you each time (in computer time frame) , 8 years to respond. It seems fantastic, doesn't it? So, why do we need those costly, souped-up devices when our TI will do all this?

When ENIAC was built, it took 3000 cubic feet of space, weighted 30 tons and used 18,000 vacum tubes which incidentally, failed at the rate of one every 7 minutes! Just think what you have in a full system TI, and the little space it takes. Glad We have transistors and chips!

This is my frist try at being an Editor. I haven't recived any help on as yet. I am tring to put some interesting articals together. If you have any sugestions please contact me.

HUMOR

A truck driver ran off a bridge and into the river. When he was pulled out a preacher asked if all his sins passed before his eyes? His reply. " No, I wasn't under that long".



MERY
HAPPY

XMAS
NEW

8
YEAR
MADE IN U.S.A.

NEW ACTION! ACTION! ACTION!

CUBIT

Reviewed by Charles LaFara

Just as the International 99/4 Users-Group had predicted, third-party vendors are now beginning to produce high-quality software for the 99/4 home computer. We here at the Users-Group have just recently finished reviewing a copy of a new game from Artios Software. The game is called CUBIT™, and the game's action is based on a well known arcade game involving jumping from the top of one cube to another while remaining in the field of play. CUBIT is the result of the corroboration of Jack Carrel and Bill Gronos, names which you will recognize as experienced Assembly level programmers due to their work here at the International Users-Group. The game is written in Assembly Language and as a result there is lots of action and surprises.

Where most video and computer games require the player to move with as much speed and dexterity as possible, this game offers an alternative. When playing CUBIT, many times it is wiser to

sit where you are and wait for the proper time for your next move. We will let you decide for yourself. The graphics in CUBIT are excellent but as you have seen in the past, graphics do not always make the game. CUBIT offers to its owners not only action but also pure entertainment.

The main character in the game is called a BIT, and gameplay involves BIT jumping from one cube to another while changing the color of the tops of all of the cubes to a certain color, depending upon the screen level in which you are playing. This is not always as easy as it may seem because while you are trying to accomplish this task, strange and bizarre characters will try to impede or halt your progress.

The main enemy, BIT—BUSTER, is a vicious sort, and if you should jump the wrong way, you will become a victim of the fiery pit, located at the pyramid's base.

The amount of activity on the screen is representative of the quality of a game that can be developed when Assembly Language is used. There are multiple screens provided which progressively increase in speed and com-

plexity. For the more experienced player an option will allow you to skip earlier levels and receive bonus points for accepting the challenge of the advanced screens. CUBIT also allows for two player contests like many arcade games where players are allowed to alternate turns to achieve the highest possible point total. One feature unique to CUBIT is that several of the program controls have been moved to the joystick for your convenience, such as game resetting and level selection. CUBIT is being offered in three versions which include Extended BASIC, Mini-Memory and Editor Assembler. Each of these versions may be purchased either on diskette or cassette. If you do not have the Mini-Memory module a 32K memory expansion will be required for both the Extended BASIC and Assembler version.

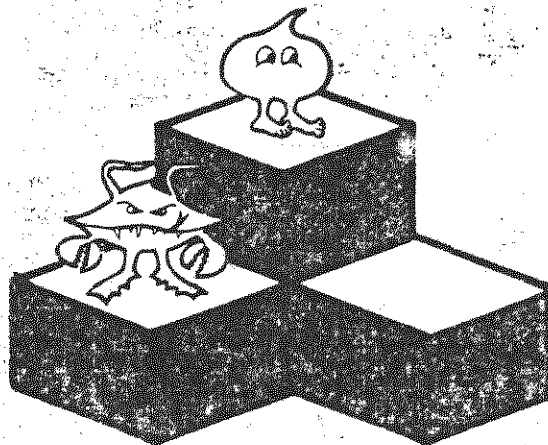
We are very pleased with the effort and forethought that has been put into this action-packed game and look forward to additional releases from Artios.

Artios Presents:

CUBIT™

The Best Game
Action Ever Presented
on the 99/4.

Written by Jack Carrel
and Bill Gronos



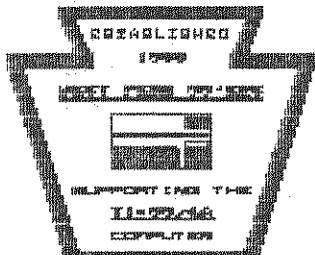
Specify the Version
you need:

Mini Memory on cassette
Editor Assembler/Extended BASIC on disk

Prices:

Disk Version \$23.95
Cassette Version \$19.95

Available in our
library (EX-BASIC)



WEST PENN 99 CLUB

This article comes from the disk of CIN-DAY U.G. MARCH 1992

HOW TO BUY NEW FLOPPY DISK DRIVES.

by Richard Roseen.

1. Check;for quality the main mechanical parts of the drive. They should be located on a solid die cast piece of metal. In other words solid metal structure throughout as the base of the drive that holds the motors,solenoids and other moveable parts. Avoid any drive put together with metal plates.

2. New drives should be sold to you in antistatic plastic wrap (usually tinted looking) and may have a fitted styrofoam container,will always be half hight density,at least two sided,at least capable of 360K double sided double density. 720K 80 track drives are now getting rare due to the newer 1.2meg. drives. 1.2meg. drives can be useable at 720K. (more on that later). New 3.5" drives are 720K. or 1.44meg. They should follow the rule of die cast body as above also. Newer 3.5" drives will have a thickness much less than a half hieght 360K. drive. Only the new Myarc HFDC has promise of possible drivers to support 1.44meg. 3.5" or 1.2meg. 5.25" use. Certain CorComp controllers have floppy disk controller chips that can handle the 1.44meg. data rate,but the device drivers who knows. No older Myarc disk controller will be fully capable of the 1.44meg. data rate because of the FDC chips they use. The above also prety much applies to the use of 1.2meg. 3.25" drives. The 5.25" 1.2meg. and 3.5" 1.44meg. drives can be used for 720K. storage with the

eprom driver support of the two Myarc controllers; however,if disk rotation speed cannot jumpered through lack of information on the drive options,you would be forced to live with odd ball 720K. format disks only readable by someone else with 720K. capability and 3.5" 1.44meg. drives.

4. Newest drives always have a directly driven disk rotation motor. This means you will not see any belt driven disk rotation.

5. Warrantee's: ask what the manufacture warrenty is. The warrentee should be at least one year from the date of purchase. Also,check to see what the seller's guarentee is on the drive. Typically the seller's guarentee is full replacement for 30 to 90 days,in addation to the one year manufactures warrentee. The warrentee will give you plenty of time to verify that you do not have a lemon drive.

6. Get the sellers business card with address and phone. Get a receipt in which you and the seller have a copy which must contain the serial number of drives bought and date as well as the cost. If the seller's address is on the reciet clearly that will substitute the business card. These requirements are necessary for the manufacture's warrentee and so you can later find the seller or manufacture for information. It is not always possable that the seller has info. on the drive,but it will not hurt to ask for data manuals,or schematics.

7. For quality look for heads mounted on assemblies that are

mounted to move rapidly not jerkily such as on two rails instead of one. For low mechanical noise or low clattering (increased reliability and longer life) look for solid movement of the heads assembly by a stepper motor through two following examples: Stepper motor that drives a screw shaft or two straps that wind on or off the stepper motor shaft and on or off of the head assembly as the heads move in either direction. Heads take the biggest beating in floppies and more often involved in alignment of a drive. An example of the stepper motor that drives screw shaft is the 3.5" 720K. Chinnon and Fujitsu. An example of the strap that winds on or off the stepper motor shaft and on or off the assembly is the Mitsumi 360K 5.25" drives.

8. 3.5" drives can be hooked up bare without the 5.25" bracket with 34 pin socket IDC (insertion displacement connector) connected to the square pins on the 3.5" drive. If this is done then the odd ball but findable 4 pin 3.5" drive power connector must be used. These are odd ball because they are not the same as the 5.25" drive power connectors. These connectors do not have a polarity tabs and can make difficult getting the proper polarity or orientation of the connector to plug in. Go for the works get the 5.25" bracket and the card edge adapter board that includes standard 5.25" power connector. These adapters may have a jumper for use on PC XT or AT clones, be sure to select xt.

9. Unless you have help from a GURU or user who has successfully installed and used the same drives, then get info. from the seller or manufacture on drive selects, other jumper option or features, and resistor packs. On some new drives the resistor pack is premenantly soldered to a high density logic board with a jumper to disable or enable the use of the resistor pack for installation as

lesser drive or drives on the chain. If such a drive is the last drive in a chain whose other resistor packs can be removed, there is no problem.

10. Buy or at least shop for any drive or power connectors or power supplies or casses as you may or may not need depending on what you already have.

11. The least expensive power supplies, drive connectors, cables, etc. are sold by vendors selling chips and electronic parts, not by the dealers of floppy drives. The chip parts dealer will have a lot of the necessary parts for home built linear supplies at the lowest total cost of parts. A general list for a linear supply is a transformer, AC line coard and plug, switch, filter capacitor rated above 2200uf (micro farads), bridge rectifier or diodes, linear regulators both 5 and 12 volt.

12. Power requirements: some 3.5" drives require less than 1 amp for 5 and 12 volts. Some 3.5" drives are very low power and some require only a 5 volt supply. 3.5" drives require the least power. New 5.25" half height drives never require more than 1 amp on 5 and 12 volt lines and can be as low as 1/2 amp, on the 5 and 12 volt line. Add the amperage required for each drive for each 5 and 12 volt line to check your power supply needs for your drives. Drives can be powered separately because the 34 pin cable will carry the common logic signal ground between all drives on the train and the computer. If building a linear supply be sure the transformer, bridge rectifier or diodes and linear regulator exceed your amperage needs. The transformer should be at least 12.6 VAC RMS and 6.3VAC RMS (transformers are commonly rated with RMS voltages at their secondaries).

Written by Richard Rossen.

CONTINUED PG (9)

> This information was kept in general as possible so as to guide the 4A buyer. How to buy used floppy drives could never be this informative. Anyone wishing to document their experience with a specific drive or drives is invited to do so by attaching this general artical. An archived document

> My preferences are Mitsmi drives 3.5" and 5.25" any density. These drives are the most quiet drives you will ever hear. They

have a jumper block to enable disable the resistor pack though have not verified the identity of the jumper as of yet. Another preference are the NEC 1036 3.5"720K.drives. They are small, quiet and durably solid, and I like any other 3.5" drive lightweight and low power. Also recommended Chinnon 3.5" 720K.drives. These are much the same as the NEC drives except for screw shaft stepper motor and extremely low power and 5 volt only operation make it better. These drives may be the lowest power in the industry.

HOW ABOUT THOSE STEELERS?



WEST PENN 99ers

THE DUES are DUE! If you know a friend bring him. We are going to have a great time. If the weather is too bad we will HAVE THE MEETING in January.

The president wishes everyone a

MERRY CHRISTMAS and a
HAPPY NEW YEAR



WIP MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please Check One

Newsletter Membership Full Membership
 No library Privilages Library Privileges
 \$10.00 Per Year \$15.00 Per Year

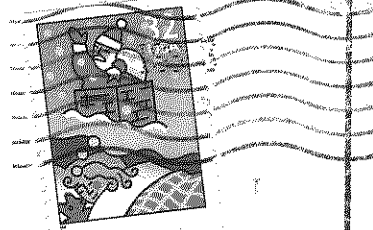
Complete ad Return to
 Ed Mandich, 304 Chicora St., East McKeesport, Pa. 15053

This Newsletter was composed in it's intrety
 Using A TEXAS INSTRUMENTS TI-99/4A COMPUTER

NEXT

MEETING DECEMBER 17TH P.M.

WEST PENN 99"ERS
 c/o Paul A. Brock
 General Delivery
 North Apollo PA 15673-9999



NEWSLETTER EDITORS
 Please note new address
 and update your mailing list

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