



Atlanta
99/4A
Computer
Users
Group

CALL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME II NUMBER 8

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Atlanta, Georgia

PRESIDENTS CORNER

Another month another newsletter, at least it's almost like that. We sometimes miss getting a newsletter out each month. Would you like to help prevent that?

If so then be at the next meeting and join a committee. The death of any Public Service group is directly related to a lack of people willing to put in a few hours per month to help out. If this club has been useful to you and you wish it to continue to be so, then you, yes you, will have to help.

So much for the lecture, now I can exercise my chance to sound off. It can be nice being a President with his own column to write, anyone interested?

Our group has never had a third party library, that people can borrow and return. At an early executive board meeting it was decided that, we were not organizing this group for that. I know that several groups have large libraries, available for members to "look over", and like it or not it tends to lead to some people making a copy of the program rather than purchasing it.

The author of that program spent a lot of time on it and he deserves to reap a reward from that effort, copying that program one time will not really hurt him, but if one copy is purchased and one hundred copies are made that both hurts, and is against both the morals that we all learned as children and the law of the land: the laws of copyrights. You would not want the belongings in your house stolen, and neither does the author of a program want his work stolen.

So, an author will try to protect his program with devices that will keep you from copying the program reading the program, or even keep the computer from knowing that the disk in the drive has a real program on it. Many more methods are being used and as each one is cracked new ones spring up. If it weren't so costly it could be considered a fun game. The ones who get it in the neck is the consumer: you and me. Just like the shoplifter who does it for kicks, the person who breaks into a program to spread it around is hurting your and my pocketbook.

We have even published one of the methods of removing one of the simpler protection methods. In our own defense it must be stated that this method was on the Bulletin Boards for over a year before we published it. So the only people who had not seen it were those who did not have modems. I break into most of the programs I purchase. My first excursion into breaking and entering was because a favorite game would not run when my disk was up and running. With a little work I now enjoy a favorite game without having to load it from cassette.

I break into a lot of programs. I just do not necessarily agree with the author's decision on how a program is to print, how the prompts should read, or what the length of a string array should be. I'm sorry if that offends the programmers out there, and I do not consider myself one of them. I can meddle with a program and have it do what I want, but I would not like to have to make my living writing new programs.

So you ask, what is this getting to. Well very simply, I do not like protected programs because I cannot get into them, and sooner or later the programmer is going to come up with a protection that I cannot break. I am going to purchase a program that will not do what I want and I will not be able to crack it and change it to do what I think it should do. But I cannot in all honesty ask any programmer to risk trying to sell his program unprotected, but I can ask you not to violate the copyright laws and not to break into programs just to spread it around. If fear of the copyright laws is not enough, then think of this: If the programmers writing for the 99/4A do not receive adequate compensation for their work, they will not continue to write and our computer is going to dry up and blow away without new works available for it.

MARSHALL

NOTICES

The Nominating Committee will be finalized at the November meeting in order for elections to be held by January. Nominations for the officer positions and chairman posts will be accepted from the floor as well as those interested in being on the Nominating Committee itself. If you are interested in any of the above please contact your officers at or by the November meeting.

PLEASE NOTE!

The Club telephone number has been changed. The new number is 933-2613. If you get a recording please note that the second message is the one that applies to the User's Group.

MEETINGS

The dates and times for meetings of the Atlanta 99/4A Computerr User's Group is the third Sunday of the month at the downtown Atlanta Public Library (off Margaret Mitchell Square) at 3 p.m. For those without a calendar handy: the meeting dates are November 17th, December 15th, and January 19th. At this time a December meeting is planned.

SOUTHSIDE chapter meetings are held the first Sunday of the month at the Clayton County Recreation Center in Jonesboro, 181 Lake Jodeco Rd., meetings begin at 3pm. The next meeting dates are November 3rd, December 1st, and January 5th.

The October meeting consisted of an informal TI Writer tutorial and a video tape presentation on modems. For more information call Billy Glass at 961-9199.

EASTSIDE chapter holds regular meetings every other month. The next meeting dates are the first Monday of the month, December 3rd and February 4th at 7pm. The group meets at the Clarkston's Womens Club, off N. Indian Creek across the tracks from E. Ponce DeLeon beside the Clarkston Baptist Church. For more information call Ralph Danson at 292-3427.

The following has appeared on several BBS systems around town. We are happy that Jim Rice has given us permission to reprint it here.

AN ASSEMBLY TUTORIAL ON DEVICE SERVICE ROUTINES

BY: Jim Rice

No matter what device it is you may want to use, be it a disk drive, printer, modem, or whatever other device you may have hooked up to your computer, it can be accessed through assembly language. All peripherals except for the cassette recorder are accessed through routines called Device Service Routines. I'll be calling them DSR's from herein. (It's much easier to type!)

DSR's can be tricky to set up. That's why I've written this article, to clear up the incomprehensible lore of the infamously confusing Editor/Assembler manual. I hope what follows will help you to understand how DSR's work. Once you understand how they work, they're easy to use.

When accessing any device in assembly language, the first step is to put a reference into your REF/DEF table telling the computer that you will be using a DSR. All you do is include the following at the start of your program:

```
REF DSRLNK
```

I will also discuss another routine called the LOADER. The format for the LOADER is exactly like that of the DSRLNK routine. To include the LOADER routine in your program enter the following at the start of your program:

```
REF LOADER
```

That's easy enough! The next step is more complicated, but shouldn't be any problem either. This next step is setting up a Peripheral Access Block(PAB). The format for a PAB is the same no matter what peripheral you wish to access. The format is also the same for both the DSRLNK and the LOADER routines. There are ten(0-9) bytes in a PAB plus however many characters there are in the device name of the device you wish to access. For example, a PAB for the printer using the device name of "RS232/1" would be 17 bytes long. Ten for the PAB data and seven for the device name "RS232/1."
1234567

The first nine bytes of any PAB must contain certain information. What each byte must contain is as follows:

| BYTE | BIT | CONTENTS | MEANING |
|------|-----|---|--|
| 0 | All | I/O Opcode | >00=open |
| | | >01=close | >06=save |
| | | >02=read | >07=delete |
| | | >03=write | >08=scratch record |
| | | >04=restore/rewind | >09=status |
| | | >05=load | |
| 1 | All | Flag/Status | |
| | 0-2 | Error code | |
| | | 000=bad device name | 011-illegal operation |
| | | 001=device is write protected | eg. operation conflicting with open attributes |
| | | 010=bad open attribute eg. incorrect file type, length etc. | 100=out of buffer space |
| | | | 101=attempt to read past end of file |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| 110=Device error eg. damaged disk, wrong parity for RS232. etc. | 111=file error. eg. file type mismatch, reading from unopened file, etc. | | |
| 3 | Record Type | 0=fixed 1=variable | |
| 4 | Data Type | 0=display 1=internal | |
| 5,6 | Operation Mode | 00=update 01=output 10=input 11=append | |
| 7 | File Type | 0=sequential 1=relative | |
| 2,3 | All | Data Buffer Address | VDP RAM address of data buffer to be read from or written to. |
| 4 | All | Logical Record Length | Logical length in fixed, max. length in variable. |
| 5 | All | Character Count | Number of characters to read from or write to a file at one time. |
| 6,7 | All | Record Number | Only for relative files. Which record # current I/O operation is being done to. |
| 8 | All | Screen Offset | Set to 0 for all peripherals except cassette. |
| 9 | All | Name Length | Number of characters in device name. |
| 10+ | All | File Descriptor | Device name eg. "RS232" or "DSK1.F1" |

Byte #0 is fairly self-explanatory. Example: Your data you would have byte #0 as >00 to open the file, then change it to >03 to write a record to the file, then >01 to close the file. You will always open a file with the first 3 bits of Byte #1 equal to zero so you don't get an error. Bits #4-#7 are set depending upon which setting you choose. Bytes #2-#3 should be set the the address in VDP RAM where you want the data you read or write to be stored. >1000 is usually the best place to start your buffer at because it is unused by any ROM or GROM routines. Byte #4 should be set to the record length you wish to use. It's the "00" in "Variable 00" to help clarify what I mean. For a logical record length of 00, you would convert it to hexadecimal and enter >50.

Byte #5 should be set to the number of bytes you wish to read or write to or from a record. A value of >00 sets this to the standard value (the value in Byte #4.) Bytes #6-#7 are set to >0000 unless relative files are used in which case, the record number you wish to read or write from is entered in hexadecimal. You may still read/write from the first record by entering >0000 even if you are using relative files.

Byte #8 should be set to >00.
 Byte #9 should equal the number of characters in the device name. For example, if your device name is "DSK1.F" then Byte #9 would contain >06 since "DSK1.F" is 6 characters long.
 Bytes 10+ contain the device name such as "DSK1.F". Bytes #8-#9 use DATA directives. Bytes #10+ use a TEXT directive.

Here is an example of a PAB:

```
EDATA DATA >0005,>1000,>5000,>0000
      DATA >000C
      TEXT 'DSK1.EXAMPLE'
```

Byte #0 gives the open opcode. Byte #1 says the file is a fixed length, display, input mode, and relative file. Bytes #2-#3 say the buffer address to read from/write to is >1000. Byte #4 specifies 00 as the logical record length. Byte #5 defaults (because it is >00) to 00 as the number of bytes to read/write at one time. Bytes #6-#7 set the record number to 0. Byte #8 is set to >00 as always. Byte #9 is set to 12, the number of bytes in the device name given in bytes 10+. The device name given in bytes 10+ is "DSK1.EXAMPLE".
 NOTICE THE TEXT DIRECTIVE USES SINGLE QUOTES!

The next step after setting up your PAB is to decide where to put your PAB in memory. Since the PAB is stored in VDP RAM, I recommend placing it anywhere between >0000 AND >0FCF. Placing your PAB's before >0000 will overwrite the character set and after >0FCF will overwrite your read/write buffer. Store the address you decide upon in an EQU directive with a label like this:

```
PABADD EQU >FB0
```

From then on, PABADD equals the address of the first byte of your PAB. This makes it easier to change a byte in your PAB. For example, if you wanted to change the number of characters your file will read/write at one time (Byte #5), you would change it like this:

```
LI R0,PABADD+5(for byte
                    #5)
LI R1,NEW VALUE
BLWP @VSWR
BLWP @VSWB
```

One other thing you must do when setting up a PAB is load a copy of the length of the device name into >8356. All you would do is this:

```
LI R3,PABADD+9
MOV R3,@>8356.
```

Two examples of file access, one using DSRLNK and one using LOADER follow. This is an example of writing to a file.

This example writes to the device "RS232/2". You may change the device name to fit your RS232 specifications. Remember to change byte #9 of PDATA to the new number of characters in the device name if you change it!

```
REF DSRLNK,VMBW,VMBR,VSWB * REFERENCES TO ROUTINES USED IN PROGRAM
DEF RUN * PROGRAM NAME
PABBUF EQU >1000 * FILE BUFFER STARTING ADDRESS
PABADD EQU >FB0 * PAB STARTING ADDRESS
STATUS EQU >837C * STATUS BYTE ADDRESS
PNTR EQU >8356 * ADDRESS OF POINTER TO LENGTH OF DEVICE NAME
IN PAB
SAVRTN DATA 0 * BYTE TO SAVE RETURN ADDRESS
PRINT TEXT 'This is a test for the TI-99/4A DSR routine.' * WRITTEN TO FILE
PDATA DATA >001Z,PABBUF,>0050,>0000,>0007 * PAB DATA
TEXT 'RS232/2'
EVEN * SETS ADDRESS BACK TO EVEN NUMBER
WRITE BYTE >03 * REPRESENTS BYTE TO LOAD IN BYTE #0 OF PAB TO WRITE TO FILE
CLOSE BYTE >01 *
MYREG BSS >20 * BUFFER FOR MY OWN WORKSPACE REGISTER
BUFFER BSS 00 * BUFFER TO READ/WRITE DATA FROM/TO FILE
RUN MOV R11,@SAVRTN * SAVE RETURN ADDRESS
LWPI MYREG * LOAD MY OWN WORKSPACE REGISTERS
LI R0,PABADD *
LI R1,PDATA *
LI R2,>20 ** LOAD PAB INTO PAB ADDRESS >FB0
BLWP @VMBW *
LI R6,PABADD+9 *
MOV R6,@PNTR * LOAD POINTER WITH DEVICE NAME LENGTH
BLWP @DSRLNK * OPEN FILE
DATA 0 *
MOVB @WRITE,R1 *
LI R0,PABADD * SET UP FILE WITH WRITE I/O OPCODE
BLWP @VSWB *
LI R0,PABBUF *
LI R1,PRINT *
LI R2,44 ** LOAD DATA TO WRITE TO FILE
BLWP @VMBW *
MOV R6,@PNTR *
BLWP @DSRLNK * WRITE TEXT TO FILE
DATA 0 *
MOVB @CLOSE,R1 *
LI R0,PABADD * LOAD DATA TO CLOSE FILE
BLWP @VSWB *
MOV R6,@PNTR *
BLWP @DSRLNK * CLOSE FILE
DATA 0 *
CLR R0
MOVB R0,@STATUS * CLEAR STATUS BYTE
MOV @SAVRTN,R11 * RELOAD ADDRESS TO RETURN TO
RT * RETURN TO E/A
END
```

This is an example of using the LOADER routine. It asks you for which of two programs you wish to have loaded into the Editor/Assembler. It will then load your choice. You will have to modify this to correspond to files that you have. NOTE: If your program doesn't automatically run, you will press enter after selecting your program, choose option #4(RUN) and enter your program name. The file will already be in memory. You may modify this to accommodate more than a two file selection

```

JEQ ALOAD * IF KEY PRESSED="1" THEN GO TO ROUTINE TO LOAD PROG. #1
CB R1,R2 * COMPARE KEY PRESSED TO "2"
JEQ BLOAD * IF KEY PRESSED="2" THEN GO TO ROUTINE TO LOAD PROG. #2
JMP KPREP * IF NEITHER KEY WAS PRESSED, GO BACK AND CHECK AGAIN
ALOAD  MOV R11,@SAVRTN *LOAD ADDRESS TO RETURN TO INTO SAVRTN
      LWPI MYREG * LOAD OWN WORKSPACE REGISTERS
      LI R0,PABADD *
      LI R1,ADATA *
      LI R2,>20 * LOAD PAB INTO >FB0
      BLWP @VMBW *
      LI R6,PABADD+9 *
      MOV R6,@PNTR *LOAD POINTER ADDRESS WITH LENGTH OF DEVICE NAME
      BLWP @LOADER *LOAD FILE
      JMP CLOSEF * GO TO CLOSE FILE ROUTINE
BLOAD  MOV R11,@SAVRTN *
      LWPI MYREG *
      LI R0,PABADD *
      LI R1,BDATA *
      LI R2,>20 ***** SAME AS ALOAD EXPLANATION
      BLWP @VMBW *
      LI R6,PABADD+9 *
      MOV R6,@PNTR *
      BLWP @LOADER *
CLOSEF MOV R6,@PNTR *
      MOV B @CLOSE,R1 *
      LI R0,PABADD * * LOAD CLOSE FILE DATA
      BLWP @VSBW *
      MOV R6,@PNTR
      BLWP @DSRLNK *CLOSE FILE
      DATA 0 * ..
      CLR R0
      MOV B @STATUS *CLEAR STATUS BYTE
      MOV @SAVRTN,R11 *RELOAD SAVED RETURN ADDRESS
      RT * RETURN TO E/A
      END

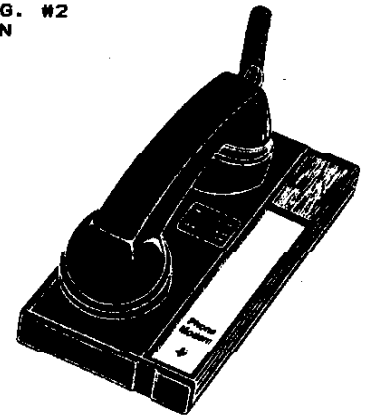
```

```

REF DSRLNK,VMBW,VSBW,LOADER,KSCAN
DEF RUN
PABBUF EQU >1000 *****
PABADD EQU >FB0 * BASICALLY SAME AS
STATUS EQU >837C * FIRST EXAMPLE
PNTR EQU >8336 *****
SAVRTN DATA 0
ADATA DATA >0005,PABBUF,>5000,>0000,>0000
      TEXT 'DSK1.EXAMPLE1'
      EVEN
BDATA DATA >0005,PABBUF,>5000,>0000,>0000
      TEXT 'DSK1.EXAMPLE2'
      EVEN
CLOSE BYTE >01
MYREG BSS >20
EXAM1 TEXT '1. EXAMPLE 1' * TEXT FOR CHOICE #1
EXAM2 TEXT '2. EXAMPLE 2' * TEXT FOR CHOICE #2
RUN    LI R0,34 *
      LI R1,EXAM1 *
      LI R2,12 * WRITE TEXT FOR CHOICE #1 TO SCREEN
      BLWP @VMBW *
      LI R0,98 *
      LI R1,EXAM2 *
      LI R2,12 * WRITE TEXT FOR CHOICE #2 TO SCREEN
      BLWP @VMBW *
KPREF  CLR R0
      MOV B @,>8374 * SET KEYBOARD SCAN TO ENTIRE KEYBOARD
      LI R3,>2000 * DATA FOR CHARACTER MASK
      LI R4,>3100 * ASCII VALUE FOR "1"
      LI R2,>3200 * ASCII VALUE FOR "2"
KCHECK CLR R1
      BLWP @KSCAN * SCAN KEYBOARD
      MOV B @STATUS,R5 *
      COC R3,R5 * CHECK IF KEY HAS BEEN PRESSED
      JNE KCHECK *
      MOV B @>8375,R1 *LOAD ASCII VALUE OF KEY PRESSED INTO R1
      CB R1,R4 * COMPARE KEY PRESSED TO "1"

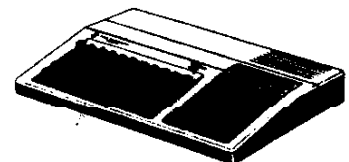
```

by adding more PAB's similar to those in the sample program, adding more key values to R6-R10 and R12-R15 and using a CB R1,R(whichever) and a JEQ (to your label) Your label should start a section with instructions exactly like those of the ALOAD or BLOAD sections of the program except for the PAB data label (eg. ADATA or BDATA.) Change that to the PAB label corresponding to the program name you have chosen.



You may have noticed that after every BLWP @DSRLNK, there is a DATA 0 directive. This is necessary and should be after every BLWP @DSRLNK in your program. Although these two programs are examples, they will both work for you with only slight modifications. All you must do to the first example is change the PAB byte #9 to the length of the device name you wish to use and change the TEXT directive right after it to the device name you want to use. The second example needs the same changes plus changing the TEXT directives with the program choices in it to the names of the programs you wish to run. Also, remember to change the two occurrences of R2 as 12 right after the LI R1,EXAM1 and LI R1,EXAM2 statements to the length of the new values you have changed EXAM1 and EXAM2 to. For example, if EXAM1 is changed to TEXT '1. DEVICENAME', THEN you would change the R2 right after the LI R1,EXAM1 to LI R2,13 because EXAM1 is now 13 characters long. It may be easier to delete the text around the examples and save the examples modified the way you want them to disk using the E/A editor. The program name for both examples is "RUN". I hope you have learned something from this tutorial. Good luck with assembly language and Happy Computing!!!

Jim Rice



O D D S and E N D S

These are some facts and rumors that don't fit into any other part of this newsletter. For lack of a better spot they are included here.

ITEM: The Wichita TIBBS is advertising a kit to build a clock card for the PEB. It keeps track of day, date, and time and the information can be accessed by a program. The card has a battery backup and eight multiplexed ports for outside signals. The cost is \$39.95 with the parts that you must buy yourself costing an approximate \$40 more. For ordering information contact the Wichita TIBBS at (316)681-3167 or write: MBP 5522 East Harry Wichita, KS 67218.

ITEM: Speaking of TIBBS; for those who are unaware, Ralph Fowler's 89C(425 5254) is capable of Uploads and Downloads for those using a TE 2. He is also using a CorComp double density controller card that has been modified to work with the Foundation 128K card. This version of the CorComp card is not available commercially. Ralph has a prototype.

ITEM: From Guy-Stefan Romano: Although there may be only about 4 stated versions of the TI 99/4A console; there are really more than that. While they were still being produced, the design was frequently updated. Chips were combined to take up less board room. The keyboards were changed to be less expensive to make. As a result, near the end, a different 99/4A was coming off the assembly line every two months. The newest black consoles have the keys squeezed closer together. You will notice that the O's are smaller and rounder. XOP1 and XOP2 which is referred to in the Editor Assembler manual, will not work on the newer consoles.

ITEM: Nice Touch! When you buy the MYARC Expansion System(Double Density Controller, disk drive, 32K memory, and RS232), it also includes a TI Disk Manager 2 module as well as a booklet similar to the blue booklets that come with a TI Expansion Box card.

ITEM: The TRI Cities User Group of Washington State printed an order form out of Computer Shopper. The order form is for the series of articles that Randy Holcomb wrote for Computer Shopper. The collection is entitled "The Innermost Secrets of the 99/4A". The cost is \$5.95. If interested, send check or money order to COMPUTER SHOPPE, P.O.Box F, Titusville, FL 32781.

ITEM: Domonique Melfi of Data Force wrote a utility program called DRAW-A-BIT. It makes colorful drawings very effectively, as all who have seen the demo will agree. Here is a thumbnail sketch of the program's history. It was originally submitted to TI, who sat on it for a few months. When it was returned to Mr. Melfi, TI reportedly stated that they were not interested in utilities. This 'utility' has

such a scope of applications that one engineer we know of uses it to draw electronic circuits. We hope to have him submit a review of the program in a future newsletter.

Domonique Melfi has a updated version called DRAW-A-BIT 2. Some of the newer additions include spray painting, automatic patterns, shadings, and a feature that will scale to size. For further information contact DATA FORCE INC., 10 S. 312 Hampshire Lane East, Hinsdale, IL 60621 or call (312)323-0179.

SPECIAL ITEM:

Because of the summer months, the Special Interest group for Assembly language has stopped its monthly get togethers. A S.I.G.(Special Interest Group) usually meets on their own at someone's house usually once or twice a month. There are frequently six or less people involved in a group because they tend to be area specific. A S.I.G. could be formed on any topic. The common ones are for Assembly Language, Extended Basic, Logo, and Forth. Anyone interested in reviving or starting a S.I.G. please contact an officer of the User's Group. Of course you can start one without contacting the group. Contacting us however would let us print the day and time's of your meeting in this newsletter.

ITEM: There is a group out there called the 9/4A National Assistance Group, National Headquarters, P.O.Box 298812, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33329. They have a 24 hour telephone line which is manned M-F 9-4. At any time beyond those normal working hours, you can leave your name and address with their answering service which promises that you will be called back. This group is a business that specializes in supporting the 99/4A computer. Members can call for a wide range of assistance, including technical support. Membership also allows you to buy products through their contacts at 5% above their costs. Example: diskettes 99 cents each.

The 99/4A N.A.G. was founded approximately one year ago by about eight PHD's. Dr. Richard Kurtz, who is sending our club more information, stated that they presently have 15,000 paid up members. More detailed information is expected to be included in another newsletter. For further information, write or call (305)583-0467.

THE TI BOOKKEEPER
PART I

When tax time comes up, most people begin to wonder just how much money they have made and, more important, how much they can deduct from that number. If you are not fortunate enough to be an Accountant yourself, you probably consult one about your taxes; particularly if you have income from any form of self employment. If you visit your Accountant with an overflowing box of receipts and check stubs, you should be prepared to receive a rather large bill from the Accountant in return. Can you blame the Accountant? Your Accountant has a preset hourly fee. If you him or her to spend time adding checks and receipts, that's fine, but don't expect a discount based on the type of work performed. This is why I recommend putting your TI to work on the basics and letting your Accountant do the more complicated work. Your TI is capable of generating all information your Accountant will need to prepare a tax return for your small business in a very short time. The initial investment of your time and the initial cost of the software will more than pay for itself the first year in most instances.

In this article, I plan to explain how to set-up and operate two bookkeeping software packages for the TI-99: a commercially available package, and one which I wrote. A listing of the latter will be included in a following part of this series.

The subject of bookkeeping will be divided in three phases: journal entries, posting to the ledger, and the preparation of the financial statements. A good understanding of how a manual bookkeeping system operates will help to better understand how to operate the computer system.

The process is not difficult to understand and is actually quite logical. The object is to list all transactions (usually taken from check stubs) in the order they were executed. The next step is to organize the list by account instead of by transaction (which you have just done in the first step). The final step is to summarize the accounts in financial statements. In the next part, I will explain how to list the transactions in order. This is the first step in the bookkeeping process which is referred to as entering the transactions in the journal. There is no need to buy special paper order. This is the first step in the bookkeeping process which is referred to as entering the transactions in the journal. There is no need to buy special paper or a bound book. Regular three-ring notebook paper and a suitable three-ring binder will be quite adequate. You will only use the manual journal until you have the computerized version running anyway.

PAUL JENNISON

R E P R I S E

The following two articles are reprinted from last month's Newsletter. Legibility was as difficult last month do to a poor ink ribbon.

ARCHIVA 300/600 Database
Distributed by AMNION STONEWARE
116 Carl Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94117

A database is a file that contains information to be categorized. A file of names and addresses would be a good example of a database. There are several programs available that use information like that, usually to print mailing labels. These programs are specific and therefore rather restricted in how they may be used. This is good for mailing out letters but not very versatile to apply to any other application that may come to mind. When it comes to all purpose database programs there are very few out there for the TI99/4A.

This is a review of one of them; ARCHIVA 300/600 by Guy-Stefan Romano, and in my opinion a very good one. Part of what makes me think so highly of this program is not just the program, but the support that you get after you buy it. Quite a lot for \$24.95.

There are two basic versions of the program available; ARCHIVA 300 or ARCHIVA 600. The 300 is for single sided single density drives and the 600 is for single sided double density or double sided disk drives. If you purchase the 300 and later upgrade your system; you can contact AMNION and change to the 600 version for little more than the cost of postage. If your disk gets burnt, mangled, spilt upon, or otherwise obliterated; you again can get it replaced for just the cost of a new diskette. AMNION STONEWARE is a company that is very service oriented. So much so that they will contact you after you have purchased the database program to make you aware of updates. Again, all it costs to receive your update is the cost of mailing your original diskette back to them.

This happened to me recently. I was informed that some improvements were made to speed up the sort routine and an enhancement had been added for ease in printing out records. This is the kind of support that you usually only hope for! to know that when you buy version 1.2, you won't be left out in the cold when new and improved version 1.3 is introduced. Sounds good, but as the late night TV commercials say, "But wait, there's more!". Your comments are actively solicited and considered by the company as you use their program. If you have a problem using ARCHIVA or believe that there is something wrong with it, you can call the HELPLINE number (415-753-5581) manned by Dr. Romano. I can personally vouch for the full support that you get from their HELPLINE. One section of ARCHIVA involving 'Repair Files' would not work for me. I tried it several times and could not get it to work as described. Either I was not understanding something and therefore doing it wrong or there was a bug in my program. I called Dr. Romano. He was concerned and promised to get right back with me after investigating the problem. First he tried doing exactly what I described. The program worked fine for him without an error. He next asked several others who had the program to try the same thing. In each case it worked fine for them without any error. At this point if I were he, I might have considered the person who told me that there was an error of simply not knowing what he was doing. G.-S. Romano however was still intent on checking out possibilities. Through further cross-checking he discovered that the particular Master Disk that my copy was dubbed from did indeed have that problem. He told me how to alter the program to correct that problem over the phone when I spoke to him the next day.

That folks, is support!

The ARCHIVA database program is menu driven, made to be easy to understand and implement. Data can be entered on up to 8 lines each 28 characters long. Each line can be considered as 2 fields (14 characters each) for further subdivision if you wish. In other words you can place data into 16 separate fields that can

be considered independently for printing or creating sub-sorted files. These two features; manipulative printing and creating sub-sorted files, are two great features of this program. More on this in a moment.

Your records are available to view sequentially (that is the order that you entered them) or you can sort all the records on what was entered into the first of those 16 fields. This means that you can, on a spot check basis, display or print certain records by specifying the record number or search or a partial word comparison of what is in the first field. If you enter peoples last names into field one as is common practice and you want to find someone named "Johannesberg", just entering 'Joh' should be sufficient.

Manipulative printing means you can print any field of data on any of 8 possible print lines, repeating a field several times if you wish. The following example illustrates my point. Here is the data as entered into the record, using only 12 of the 16 fields available. Ignore the periods. I'm just using them to indicate spaces.

```
Johannesberg.John.....
....Field1.../....Field 2..
147.Brick.Street.....
....Field3.../....Field 4..
Atlanta.....Ga.30325.....
....Field5.../....Field 6..
Exp.date.09-84Charter.Member
....Field7.../....Field 8..
Assembly.Group/Logo.Group...
....Field9.../....Field 10..
willing.to.speak.at.meetings
....Field 11.../....Field 12..
```

Here for illustration purposes is how the record could be printed out.

| Logo Group | Logo Group | Logo Group |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| John | Exp.date09-84 | Johannesberg |
| 147 Brick Street | | |
| Atlanta, | Ga.30325 | |

The very next record printed could start on the very next line or it could have as many as 100 lines in between. The program allows you the choice of normal or compressed printing.

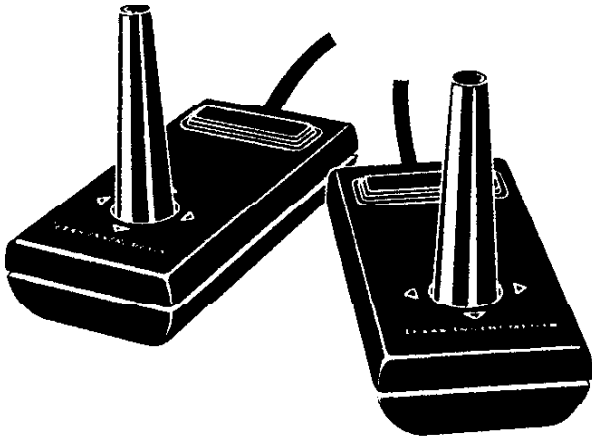
Imagine that you have a list of 250 names and addresses. Sure you can format address labels to send letters to everybody, but what if you just wanted to send letters to people in the Assembly Group. This is where creating sub-sorted files comes in handy. ARCHIVA will allow you to create a sub-sorted file on any of the 16 fields and allow you to use a relational comparison to 1 or 2 keywords. For my example that would be sort on field 9 all those records that equal 'Assembly Group' in that field. The resultant sort would give me a list of those Assembly Group people sorted alphabetically. (Remember, the Master List is sorted alphabetically by last name.)

ARCHIVA will allow you to add records or delete records. It will also allow you to insert a record into a particular spot. Imagine that you had 100 records and you deleted record number 27. You can later come back and reinsert that record back into the 27th position if you so desire. This choice in the menu is called 'Repair Files'. The ARCHIVA program itself is kept on one diskette while all records that you enter are on a separate diskette. It can be used with one or more disk drives without you having to specify which drive has the program or the data. A note to make: the disk that you keep your data on must contain only your data records. Don't put any other files or programs on that disk or your records will not fit. Using all available diskette space is how you are able have as many as 300 or 600 records.

In the letter I got from AMNION STONEWARE when I received the latest update; they asked me to comment to them how I thought about their including in the program the ability to do mathematical calculations on one field to another in a future update. This is the kind of company I like buying software from. I know value when I see it. Anybody else out there sharp eyed?

Since the time this review was written, I have been informed by Mr. Romano that the program has been improved. It will now sort on any field. It will also print taking out the spacings that are shown in the example. John Smith would now be printed in a cleaner fashion as John Smith.

Gary Matthews



REVIEW ON THE PROSTICK II

Is it possible for an adult (perhaps adult in number of years only) to out-score kids in video games? With the Prostick II and a little luck, it IS possible. Normally I am a skeptic when it comes plunking down my hard earned money, I tended not to believe the advertising copy about the Prostick II being the finest joystick available. What strengthened my skepticism was my trial of the WICO RED BALL. Although I understand that the current models are superior to those earlier models, I was unimpressed by the red ball's performance. The verticle movement of the Parsec ship was inconsistent and contributed to being destroyed prematurely. I returned the red ball for a replacement and found it was not a defect but an unfortunate characteristic of that joystick.

The major criteria I use in judging the value of a joystick is simple. In this order: 1) will it increase my scores? 2) is it responsive? 3) is it comfortable after long playing periods? 4) will it last or have to be replaced soon? The Prostick II meets these objectives and, in my opinion, it does deliver what the advertising copy promises. Because the screen graphics are highly responsive to slight movements of the solid feeling steel joystick shaft, increased game scores result. While the Prostick II is difficult to hold in the palm of the hand like one would hold the TI joystick, it can be held comfortably by the side, even by small hands. Also since the fire button is activated by the index finger rather than the thumb, the player's hand and wrist do not tire as quickly during fast and furious action. All of these benefits combined with the five (5) year limited warranty makes the Prostick II an excellent addition for the serious gamer. List price for one joystick and a TI adapter which will accomodate two Prosticks is \$ 29.95 although local computer merchants offer a better price. If you are classified an adult by the number of years you possess, the Prostick II may be your last chance to "beat the kids" at their own game.

STEVE BORDONARO

REVIEW ON GOTHIC PRINT

Public domain programs are amateurish... RIGHT? With all the assembly language programs floating around there's nothing much of interest in the users group library.....RIGHT? WRONG! Those who have taken advantage of the users group library know there are some outstanding programs available. One of these is Gothic Print (users group #MS0026). This program turns what you type on the screen into old english style print that resembles calligraphy done by hand. That's a pretty tall claim, let's take it step by step. Gothic Print (filename:Gothicprnt) is a 49 sector program that runs in extended basic. In order to load it, the following routine is necessary.

```
Type:
CALL FILES(1)      HIT ENTER
NEW                HIT ENTER
OLD DSK1.GOTHICPRNT
```

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A PROGRAM THAT NO ONE WAS AWARE OF. IT IS GOTHIC PRINT.

After running the program, the user will notice 27 blank spaces above an upper case alphabet, a lower case alphabet, and the numbers one to ten. The instructions are for the user to type a line (upper or lower case) keeping within the 27 character limit. After hitting enter, there is a slight hesitation before the printer begins to sputter and turn out professional looking Gothic print.

I use a Mannesmann Tally Spirit printer which features the square dot matrix print head. With a new ribbon, the results are exceptional. If you hold the printed page at arm's length, you would have a difficult time differentiating this computer calligraphy from documents done by hand. If you take out the tractor-fed paper and insert a single sheet of high quality bond paper, the results are even more impressive. The program is not without its quirks that might limit its usefulness for some. Someone with above average programming knowledge may be able to remedy these annoyances, but for now these are the limitations.

1) Even though the program gives you a 27-character line in which to type, it does not accept a line that uses more than 22 characters.

2) The program also does not accept a line of type if the last blank of the 27-character line is used. This is true even if less than 22 characters are used.

this is an example

3) The program overrides all directions given to the printer such as condensed, emphasized, doublestrike or right and left margin settings.

4) Printing a 22-character line one line at a time is rather time consuming.

Despite these limitations, the program's usefulness is only confined to the limits of your imagination. Possible uses are: 1) printing fancy party invitations; 2) printing wedding or birth announcements; 3) making your favorite quote or saying suitable for framing; 4) addressing envelopes for Christmas cards; 5) personalizing gifts such as books by inscribing on a pressure-sensitive label and affixing to the inside cover; 6) printing your favorite poem on parchment paper and having it decoupage.

These are just some of the many uses of Gothic Print. No doubt there are countless more ways the program could be used. An example of

Gothic Print has been included so that you may evaluate it, but you really should obtain the program so that you can see its many benefits for yourself. Once you have had a chance to put the program through the paces, I think you will agree there are some very useful public domain programs in the users' group library.....Gothic Print is one of these.

REVIEWED BY

STEVE BORDONARO

PRINTING LABELS FROM TI-WRITER

Perhaps the most practical single purpose for personal computers is word processing. In my business I find that I use TI-WRITER literally every day for individual correspondence to various clients. More recently I have begun to make use of the mail merge option of TI-WRITER to facilitate the expediency of mass "personalized" form letters. One factor that continued to bother me was that even though all my clients names and addresses were entered in files for the mail merge option, I still would have to manually type the envelopes or re-enter the entire file (now consisting of about 100 names) to another program in order to print address labels. Well after a bit of tinkering and a good bit of help from Gary Matthews, I believe that I have found a practical solution. It is possible to print labels from a TI-WRITER mail merge file. The following Extended BASIC program allows one to do just that. (The program could easily be rewritten to run in console BASIC as well).

TI-WRITER mail lists should be set up as described on page 113 of the TI-WRITER "Reference Guide". This particular program is set up to read up to seven lines per record of data. For example a mailing list file would be defined like this:

```
1 Company Namec/r
2 Street Addressc/r
3 City, State Zipc/r
4 Contact's First Namec/r
5 Contact's Last Namec/r
6 Phone Numberc/r
7 Alternate Phone Numberc/r
c/r
```

(Note: the c/r denotes the carriage return symbol used in TI-WRITER which cannot be properly reproduced here).

The last line "c/r" is in fact read by this mailing label program, but it is not printed. This line is used strictly to separate one complete record from another. Thus a typical list of records would look like this:

```
1 Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Groupc/r
2 P. O. Box 10841c/r
3 Atlanta, GA 30325c/r
4 Marshallc/r
5 Gordonc/r
6 (404) 953-2813c/r
7 (404) 998-7444 BBSr/r
c/r
1 Information Associatesc/r
2 P. O. Box 2287c/r
3 Acworth, GA 30101c/r
4 Boydsc/r
5 Conec/r
6 428-9858c/r
7 c/r
c/r
1 Texas Instruments Exchange Centerc/r
2 3300 NE Expressway, Bldg. #8c/r
3 Atlanta, GA 30341c/r
4 Doec/r
5 c/r
6 451-8558c/r
7 c/r
c/r
```

It should be noted that although this program could be modified, in its present form there must be a total of seven segments per file; if there are some segments that are not needed or unknown (as is the case with records two and three above where there is no alternate phone number, and in number three where the contact's last name is not known), they still must be indicated by their appropriate segment number, followed by a space, and finally by a carriage return. If any of these are omitted the program, which reads all data sequentially, may end up printing the phone number where the contact's name was to appear, or even worse, the company name of one record might appear where the contact's name of the previous record was suppose to be! It is okay to omit information, just make sure the line number is there followed by a space and a carriage return.

This program is set to make use of continuous form feed labels 4"x1 7/16". Although I'm sure other sizes could be used with little or no modifications. Try it and find out.

Upon running this software, you are first asked to enter the name of the file from which you wish to print labels. I (being in the motion picture industry and dealing mainly with local producers) most frequently enter the file name DSK1.L/PRODUCER (the "L" standing for local). The program will remain with this prompt until something is entered; a null entry will not be accepted, nor will it cause the program to bomb. Next you are asked to input the starting record number from which you wish to begin the printing of labels. The default value here is one, however any number up to 999 may be entered to start the printing further into the list of names. After this you are prompted to specify the record with which you want the printing to stop. Here again there is a

default value; this time it is "E", that is to say to the End of the file, but again any value up to 999 may be entered.

There is finally one more prompt to be dealt with; this one asks if you wish to print phone numbers and the default is no. This may seem like a peculiar option to have in a mailing label program, for certainly no one ever prints phone numbers when addressing envelopes. This is true, however I use this feature to print labels that I then apply to Rolodex cards for my desk directory. (By the way the 4"x 1 7/16" labels perfectly fit the standard Rolodex cards).

Upon making this last entry the program begins. It first starts by searching for the first specified record which it is to print and displays it and the record number on the screen while printing the label. (Phone numbers will always be displayed whether they are printed or not). This will continue until the specified ending number is printed or until the end of the file is reached.

You may find that this program prints a little slower than you might expect. This is due to line 360 which scans the first five record segments to delete any carats, "required spaces", as they are not printed but are instead substituted with the appropriate number of spaces. Please bear in mind that this scan is limited to only the first five lines of each record, that is the "company name" through the "contact's last name". By scanning only the first five lines, program execution speed is increased; besides it is highly unlikely that the "required space" character would be needed in a phone number, nor would it be such a problem even it did appear considering that such a printout is being used only "in house", as is the case with Rolodex files.

I hope that some of you out there will find this program as useful as I have. It sure beats re-entering all your files into another program just to print labels and is certainly better than manually addressing each envelope.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

100-220 Prompts for file, starting and ending records, and phone numbers. Also verify data entries and sets default values.

230-240 Opens specified record's file and printer port. Line 240 may need to be changed to accommodate your particular printer.

250 Specifies the type style that you wish your printer to use. Again this line may need to be changed to accommodate your printer.

260-310 Checks to see if the next record number to be input is the specified starting

record number and continues to count through the records until that one is reached.

320-380 Loads the first five lines of the next record to be printed and line 360 deletes the "required space" character. Also checks to see if this is the last specified record to be printed or if the end of the file has been reached


```

100 CALL CLEAR
110 DISPLAY AT(21,1):"ENTER
FILE NAME TO PRINT"
120 ACCEPT AT(22,5)BEEP VALI
DATE(UALPHA,NUMERIC,"/!@#%^
&*()-~[]?;{}<>");F#
125 IF F#="" THEN 120
130 DISPLAY AT(23,1):"STARTI
NG RECORD # 1"
140 ACCEPT AT(23,19)BEEP SIZ
E(-3)VALIDATE(DIGIT):START
150 IF START=0 THEN START=1
160 DISPLAY AT(24,1):"ENDING
RECORD #(or E(nd) E"
170 ACCEPT AT(24,26)BEEP SIZ
E(-3)VALIDATE(DIGIT,"Ee"):EN
DING#
180 DISPLAY AT(1,1):"PRINT P
HONE NUMBERS(Y/N)?"
190 ACCEPT AT(1,27)BEEP VALI
DATE("YN")SIZE(-1):P#
200 IF P#="" THEN P#="N"
210 IF ENDING#="E" OR ENDING
#="e" OR ENDING#="" THEN EN
DING#="STR$(10000)
220 ENDING=VAL(ENDING#)
230 OPEN #1:F#,DISPLAY ,VARI
ABLE #0,INPUT
240 OPEN #2:"PID"
250 PRINT #2:CHR$(20);
260 CHECK=CHECK+1
270 IF CHECK=START THEN 320
280 FOR Y=1 TO 8
290 LINPUT #1:A$(Y)
300 NEXT Y
310 IF CHECK<START THEN 260
320 FOR Q#START TO ENDING
330 FOR X=1 TO 5
340 IF EOF(1)=1 THEN 690
350 LINPUT #1:A$(X)
360 FOR XX=1 TO LEN(A$(X)):
IF ASC(SEG$(A$(X),XX,1))=94
THEN A$(X)=SEG$(A$(X),1
,XX-1)E " &SEG$(A$(X),XX+1,(
LEN(A$(X))-1))
370 NEXT XX
380 NEXT X
390 LINPUT #1:A$(6)
400 LINPUT #1:A$(7)
410 LINPUT #1:A$(8)
420 DISPLAY AT(1,1):"PRINTI
NG RECORD #";Q#
430 DISPLAY AT(7,1):""
440 DISPLAY AT(10,1):""
450 DISPLAY AT(13,1):""
460 DISPLAY AT(6,1):SEG$(A$(
1),3,LEN(A$(1)))
470 DISPLAY AT(9,1):SEG$(A$(
2),3,LEN(A$(2)))
480 DISPLAY AT(12,1):SEG$(A$(
3),3,LEN(A$(3)))
490 DISPLAY AT(16,1):SEG$(A$(
4),3,LEN(A$(4)))&SEG$(A$(5)
,3,LEN(A$(5)))
500 DISPLAY AT(17,1):SEG$(A$(
6),3,LEN(A$(6)))
510 DISPLAY AT(18,1):SEG$(A$(
7),3,LEN(A$(7)))
520 PRINT #2:SEG$(A$(1),3,LE
N(A$(1)))
530 PRINT #2:SEG$(A$(2),3,LE
N(A$(2)))
540 PRINT #2:SEG$(A$(3),3,LE
N(A$(3)))
550 PRINT #2:" "
560 A$(4)=SEG$(A$(4),3,LEN(A
$(4)))
570 A$(5)=SEG$(A$(5),3,LEN(A
$(5)))
580 A$(4)=SEG$(A$(4),1,(LEN(
A$(4))-1))
590 PRINT #2:"ATTENTION: ";A
$(4); " ";A$(5)
600 IF P#="N" THEN 630
610 PRINT #2:SEG$(A$(6),3,LE
N(A$(6)))
620 PRINT #2:SEG$(A$(7),3,LE
N(A$(7)))
630 PRINT #2:" "
640 PRINT #2:" "
650 IF P#="Y" THEN 680
660 PRINT #2:" "
670 PRINT #2:" "
680 NEXT Q#
690 CLOSE #2
700 CLOSE #1

```

390-410 Loads the last two lines of the next record to be printed and the "record separator" marker (c/r) which is not printed.
420-510 Displays all input information on the screen for each record just before it is printed.
520-600 Prints mailing labels and, if specified, phone numbers as well. Also deletes the line numbers from each record segment, merges the contact's first and last name, (line 590) and inserts the word "ATTENTION" before the contact's first name.
690-700 Closes all files when ending number is printed or when the end of file is reached.

Thomas H. Boisseau

A REVIEW

SPRITEmaker by John E. Brown

SPRITEmaker falls into that class of programs known as 'Utilities'. Utilities either produce what will be used in another program or can themselves be incorporated to run as a part of one. SPRITEmaker's purpose is to allow you to easily produce sprites which can then be used in other programs. Along the same lines, it can just as well design graphic characters which are not sprites.

The format that SPRITEmaker follows will be familiar to any who have used one of the several basic character design programs available, including those that are public domain. Once you understand that premise, you are quickly able to use this utility and to appreciate the differences between it and the many simple character design programs that exist.

Whether purposeful or coincidental, the resemblance to others of this type helps in learning to use it. The familiar 8 X 8 grid is replaced by a 16 X 16 one, for the actual drawing of the sprite or graphics character. The drawing itself is accomplished by 'turning on' the respective pieces of the grid. So far, the similarities have been noted between programs of this type; now we move on to what makes this program different.

SPRITEmaker has two main menus which allow easy maneuvering between its various options. The first covers everything that you may have ever wanted to do to a sprite. A sprite can be drawn, copied, modified, inverted, magnified, rotated in 90 degree positions, reversed completely, deleted, colored, placed at any position on the screen, and then be set into motion. Up to 12 sprites can be designed at one time and all 12 can be shown on the screen at the same time; in motion if desired. A sprite can also be displayed by entering the HEX code, instead of drawing it.

The second menu uses the sprite data that has been created. The Hex code of the sprites that have been drawn can be displayed. That same data can be saved to a file to be used with programs, or previously created sprite data can be input into the SPRITEmaker program for viewing or modification. Another is the 'Save Merge' option under the FILE menu. This option is described as letting you MERGE sprites that have been already created directly into an existing program that was SAVED with the MERGE option of Extended Basic. An addendum was

recently added to the 32K version to enable this option. The addendum also included a feature to allow the sprites to be graphically displayed on a printer.

One of the best recommendations for this program is its speed. Other programs do not offer the variety of sprite manipulation that this does, as well as the ease of use in moving through the menu. This program has a good deal of this variety, and gives you a fast response. There is no choice in the menu that does not give almost instantaneous results. This includes displaying the drawing or accomplishing any of the reconfigurations.

SPRITEmaker comes in two versions. A 16K version that works with Extended Basic and a cassette or disk; or the 32K version that requires extra memory and a disk. The 32K version uses some assembly routines to increase speed further.

For anyone that creates detailed sprites on a regular basis (for example game programmers) or anyone who would just like to create good looking sprite graphics easily, I would recommend this as a very good graphics utility program.

Now that the 'Review' is over, I can get to the really fun part, showing off a program that uses sprites created with SPRITEmaker.

The program listed below uses two sprites. The sprites are horses with wings, each sprite with the wings, head, and feet in a slightly different position. The sprites are shown at magnification 4 for about 20 seconds, then changed to magnification 3. When the sprites alternate while the program is running, the horse gives the impression of flying. A very good looking flying horse I must say.

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 CALL CHAR(96,"0000041B05
3B01314F8F8F1C30282410000000
00B86C62E0E0E0F824244880
00")
120 CALL CHAR(100,"03000C020
D0321514F8F0F3C5060A01000004
088BC6864E0E0E0F82412090
400")
130 CALL MAGNIFY(4):: CALL S
PRITE(#1,96,2,90,90,#2,100,2
,90,90)
140 CALL MOTION(#1,-1,18,#2,
-1,18)
150 FOR FLY=1 TO 40 :: FOR A
=1 TO 2
160 CALL COLOR(#A,1):: CALL
COLOR(#(3-A),2)
170 FOR X=1 TO 90 :: NEXT X
:: NEXT A :: NEXT FLY
180 CALL MAGNIFY(3):: GOTO 1
50
```

Gary Matthews

CLUB SALES

- Solid State Cartridges
Multiplication 1 \$ 25.00
Number Magic \$ 20.00
FORTH Language Package (two left)
members \$ 20.00
non-members \$ 30.00
Books and Magazines
Using and Programming the TI \$ 8.00
The Best Of 99'er \$ 18.00
99'er magazine Vol.1 No.6 \$ 3.50
Nov 82-Jan 83 \$ 3.50
99'er Home Computer Mag.
Feb 83-Nov 83 \$ 3.50
Home Computer Mag Vol.4 No.1 \$ 3.00
Home Computer Mag Vol.4 No.2 \$ 3.00
Home Computer Mag Aug 84 \$ 3.00
Hardware
Peripheral Expansion System
Box, Memory Expansion Card,
Disk Controller Card and
Disk Drive \$ 500.00
(this will be broken up if
there is enough interest)
Disks \$ 25.00
Twelve (12) Disks in a
front door plastic box.

TRADING POST

WANT TO BUY: RS232 CARD AND DOT MATRIX
PRINTER. D.J. MASLANKA 404-471-2508

FOR SALE: 32K TACHYON MEMORY EXPANSION
(STAND ALONE), \$85.00, MINI MEMORY PACKAGE
ASSEMBLER MANUAL INTRO TO ASM LANGUAGE, ALL
\$65.00, ADVENTURE CART. PACKAGE MISSION IMP.
TAPE, \$20.00, TI INVADERS, \$7.00, PARSEC
\$7.00, MUNCHMAN \$7.00, AND TI 55II CALCULATOR
\$10.00(BUTTON STICK) CALL 404-422-1336 OR
WRITE HOWARD L. O'BERG 152-B DODD, MARIETTA,
GA. 30060

FOR SALE: TI 99/4A WITH ITEMS LISTED AS
PACKAGE \$1,200.00.
EXPANSION BOX, RS 232 INTERFACE, 32K MEMORY
EXPANSION, DISK DRIVE CONTROLLER, DISK MEMORY
DRIVE, TI IMPACT PRINTER, SPEECH SYNTHESIZER,
TI WRITER WORD PROCESSOR, TEACH YOURSELF
BASIC, PERSONAL REPORT GENERATOR, PERSONAL
RECORD KEEPING, CHECKBOOK MANAGER, EXTENDED
BASIC, PERSONAL REAL ESTATE, HOME FINANCIAL
DECISION, TERMINAL EMULATOR II, PARSEC,
BLASTO, TI TOUCH TYPING TUTOR, QUICK COPY,
ALGEBRA PROGRAM, DISCS, PAPER. CALL JIM BARR
404-694-8136 AFTER 6PM OR WRITE 306 CHAROLA'S
TRAIL, COHUTTA, GA. 30710.

FOR SALE: STAND ALONE DISK CONTROLLER \$75.00,
MUSIC LIBRARY \$30.00 CALL PAT OR JIM HESTER
404-276-9209

JIM FOUST
A Conversation With

Every so often (but not as often as I would like) I get the chance to go by and see Mr. Jim Foust. For those of you who have not yet heard of the man, let me introduce to you one of the best programmers that I have ever met. He is also blind. That gives him a distinct advantage in understanding how to program for blind people; but don't let that mislead you. If you could program as well as he can, then you really know a great deal. You could call him a 'contract programmer' since he writes on commission for a number of people that he deals with. Don't restrict him to writing 'speech' programs just for the blind, though. He gets calls from a many who ask if they can get his programs with prompts for sighted people as well.

Jim Foust is in the process of having a distributor handle selling some of his programs. Some of those programs I might add are in the club's library. In all fairness I have asked him to not give the club the most recent enhanced versions of his programs. Otherwise considering how well the club's programs get scattered around, it could reduce any chance of his selling them. This way it shows what good stuff can be obtained through the club as well as demonstrating what Mr. Foust can do for those who may wish to contact him for his other programs, as well as getting the finished enhanced versions of what can be obtained through the club.

Before I speak about some of Jim's programs, let me ramble on about a few tips I learned when I saw him.

I always learn something whenever I go by his house. For example I try and take my Peripheral Expansion box with me whenever I spend time with someone from whom I may have the chance to pick up some programs. This time when I plugged my box into his console, it didn't work. After experimenting, we learned that the Foundation 128K memory card will not work with the White console version of the 77/4A. Since there is more than one version of the White console I cannot say that this is true for all, but be forewarned.

This may be taken for granted by other blind people but it surprised me to learn that the tape that is used in those label makers is good to use to make braille labels to put on disks, cassettes, cartridges, and so on. Jim uses the TI Speech synthesizer as well as the ECHO GP Speech synthesizer. The ECHO GP

can list programs and speak unlimited sounds in Extended Basic since it is hooked up through the RS232 instead of being limited to TI Basic as the TI Speech Synthesizer is when using the TE II. The ECHO GP sounds like Apple's speech since it is the same board. It comes with a 25 page manual with another 10 pages of Appendix, an RS232 serial cable and a power supply. It comes set at 9600 Baud but you can change it to 300 for the TI. It retails for about \$199 and if you cannot find a local retailer who carries it then it can be ordered from: STREET ELECTRONICS CORP. 1140 MARK AVE. CARPINTERIA, CA. 93103.

With the TI speech synthesizer the format is: OPEN #1:"SPEECH" and then LIST "SPEECH":100 (to list line number 100). The format with the ECHO GP is similar: OPEN #1:"RS232" and LIST "RS232":100. The speech that you hear is sing song which is different than what we are used to. Which style of speech is better really depends on your preference and your ear. One of Jim Foust's popular programs that he sells around the country is called CHURCH. As it sounds, it is used by a church for keeping records. He has a banking program that is also speech in either TE II Basic or Extended Basic using TI's TEXT TO SPEECH program. The bank program will hold about 900 records on a single sided disk.

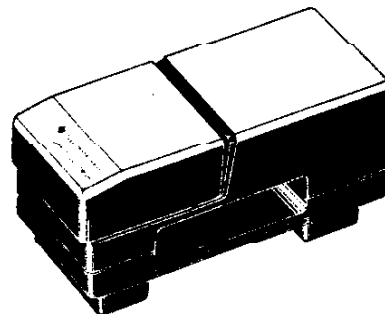
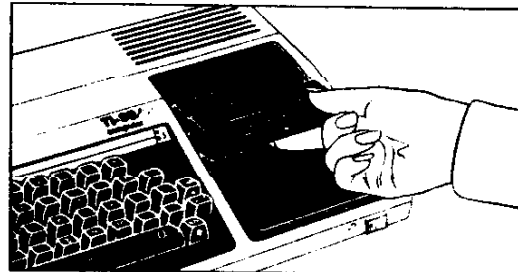
Another program is called UNIVERSAL. It is a database program. It is written for speech in TC II Basic. Depending on how big your records are you could have as many as 1400 records max.

It will take any entry except a ,(comma). One of Jim's pride and joys is his word processing program for the blind. The program is speech in TE II Basic. It can use uppercase and lowercase but just upper is recommended. When it speaks lowercase back to you it will spell it instead of pronounce it. Normally when dealing with 'strings' you cannot use commas. Jim has gotten around this by redefining the < to look like a comma. It has some very nice features that can't be described in such a general article such as this, so it will have to get a proper full review later. One thing that I will mention now is that he has his own version of a Word Wrap when entering a document. If the sentence you type goes beyond the length of the current string, it will automatically drop the overflow into the next line.

Before I finish with Jim's address and phone number I would like to mention that he was a speaker at the July COMPUTER FAIR organized by Ralph Danson of the EAST SIDE GROUP and that Jim was featured in the publication known as

the MICROpendium, one of the best publications we TI99/4A owners have going for us. To contact Jim Foust call 404-289-2856 or write 4167 HANES DRIVE, DECATUR, GA.

Gary Matthews



SURVIVAL

Those of you who are members of a TI users group or are reading this do to your interest in the 99/4A are hopefully more strongly motivated towards the survival of your machine than is the public at large. You had better be because the general public and owners of most other types of computers have considered us dead and buried for almost a year now. Even before the TI pullout, it was an uphill battle to fight the opinion that the 99/4A was more than a not so cheap, and then later, a cheap toy. Peripherals and software were mostly TI controlled and frequently unavailable.

Now, one year later, I still have to defend my machine every time I talk to a non TI owner. Besides trying to convince someone that this is the best machine available (YES, it is still available. You just won't find it in a K-Mart or Sears.) I must also convince people that it is still alive and even kicking pretty hard. There is more software out now than has ever been available before. There is more hardware available now with quite a bit soon to hit the market. If you are not familiar with the TI hardware and software situation, then contact a TI users group and talk to the members and officers.

I frequently speak to people who decry their lack of information about TI developments. These same people are surprised by my descriptions of the new software and hardware that has come out.

This article is about SURVIVAL. It is a plea to any and all 99/4A supporters out there. Production for this machine may stop, or just maybe continue on indefinitely. Rumors still abound! It will definitely stop unless there is more support from the 99/4A buying public.

Two excellent sources of information nowadays are MICROpendium, P.O.Box 1343, Round Rock, TX 78688 \$12 yearly subscription and The Smart Programmer by Miller's Graphics, 1475 W. Cypress Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773 yearly subscription \$17.50.

I put MICROpendium first because in it's less than a year's existence it has been produced consistently and remained high quality. MICROpendium is newspaper similar with news, reviews, feature articles, personal interviews, Users' Group tidbits, and advertisements.

The Smart Programmer is styled like a newsletter. It does not have advertisements but is instead aimed at those wanting to improve their programming and technical knowledge. A non programmer would still find this very worthwhile.

The jury is still out on what used to be the best support for the TI 99/4A, the Home Computer Magazine (formerly 99'er Magazine). In the most recent issue (available since

Oct. 84), it promises in the beginning pages to correct all its past mistakes. A number of faults that a magazine may have are listed. Those notable faults are: reviews biased in favor of advertisers and an inconsistent and unreliable publishing schedule. Gary Kaplan, publisher, does not actually come out and say, "Hey folks! The 99'er Home Computer Magazine has been guilty of this!". What he does say is as close to this as we could ever expect to get. The most recent issue is a distinct improvement over the previous three. Those three issues covered from December 83 to September 84. Three issues in ten months for a 'monthly' magazine.

Speaking of juries being out let's turn to the business that is called the 'International 99/4A Computer Users Group' run by Charles LaFara. I disagree with a number of their policies and the status of whether they will live or die remains to be seen. Even after making those statements, I must admit they were a viable force for bringing together programs, groups, and users from around the country. Reservations exist as to whether the Home Computer Magazine will exist three months from now, much less a year from now. Despite those reservations, I buy the magazine and inform others about it. I used to do the same for Charles LaFara's business.

At the present time we have two good sources: MICROpendium and The Smart Programmer. We also have two questionable sources: Home Computer Magazine and 99/4A IUG. If what we have available to us isn't supported by the 99/4A public at large, we will soon have nothing.

Going beyond publications, we have other avenues of support available to us. One of those is Guy-Stefan Romano's HELPLINE -(415)753-5581. This is a technical and general information source available at no charge.

Mr. Romano and his HELPLINE have been spoken of before in this and other newsletters. I mention it now to remind people of a real and viable service available to them. I also wish to make a suggestion. The Atlanta C.U.G. has included Mr. Romano on our newsletter mailing list. If other groups did the same, Mr. Romano would be kept better informed about TI information and developments around the country. The HELPLINE Guy-Stefan Romano runs is done as a Public Service. He receives no remuneration. His receiving newsletters from the various groups would benefit us all.

Another type of phone support that we have is modem. There are now over a hundred Bulletin Board Systems around the country which are running on the TI 99/4A computer. At another time we will publish a listing of some of them. The numbers are also listed on most of the TI boards. Right now a modem gives the TI owner a wide avenue to the 99/4A community.

Two other services available to those with modems are the SOURCE and COMPUSERVE. Both have special sections where TI related topics and messages are left. To participate in the one on the SOURCE type: POST R TI from Command level. To get to the TI SIG on COMPUSERVE type: 00 PCS27.

Don Bynum (SOURCE mail address- TI9998) was in charge of the Home Computer Division at Texas Instruments. Mr. Bynum is working to get the TEXNET feature of the SOURCE back up and running.

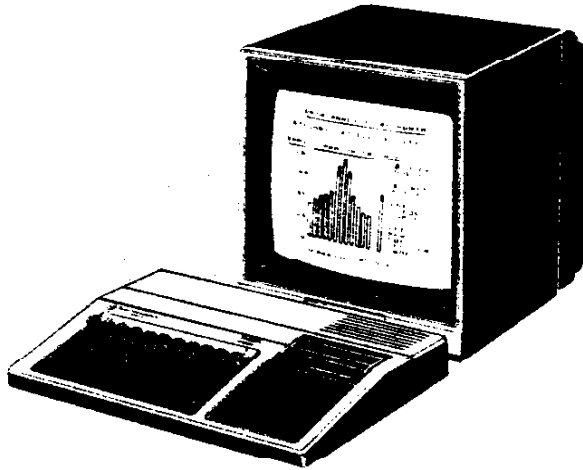
We, who own TI computers have some very good resources. I am just worried that those resources will not be supported and will consequently dry up and blow away.

There is one more very vital subject to be covered under the topic of what can we, the users do to support our machine so it will flourish rather than wither. That subject pertains to the copying of purchased software. Many people do it. We all know that. I don't really think that those doing it will stop. I am not in a position to lecture on the matter, but I can state my feelings. I feel that if copying becomes so very prevalent and accepted, it will kill the production of the quantity and quality programs we have begun to see on the market. I know, just like any realist knows, that copying will continue. I know that it is impossible to get people to turn down a good program that is just given to them from another at no charge. Copying may make you feel guilty but there is a much worse result. It is similar to cooking the chicken that lays the eggs that you eat. You may get a supper out of it, but you will not get any eggs ever again. Copying may do us in this way.

Is there a solution? If there is, it involves the people doing the copying spending money. Copying usually goes on in close knit 'circles' and there are many of these 'circles' around the country. Fact of life: Those doing the copying will not stop! If the people in one of those 'circles' each contributed money once a month and purchased software, the cost to individuals would be nominal yet software would be bought and paid for each month on a regular basis. The end result would be more money spent on programs and their developers. I know it is fantasy to think of all those many groups around the country who copy programs doing something like this, but I had to put my 2 cents worth in.

Support! Our computers will not survive if we do not support the Users Groups, information sources, 99/4A publications, and the software producers. I am one of those who "never say die", who will hang in there and cling to every ray of hope and rumor until past the point that there is no hope. I can only hope that I am not alone, so this computer will live.

Gary Matthews



**INFORMATION PLEASE
Newsletter Comments**

Few newsletters of the Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group (A9CUG) get published without me having some kind of article in it. I write these pieces for our group because there is almost always some new information, a subject on my mind, or a review that I feel should be brought to most people's attention and if I don't write something about it then I'm afraid it won't get mentioned. The newsletter that this group produces allows me to do that. Where else could I, a non-writer by trade, get a chance to have something that I have written so widely circulated. (This newsletter gets sent to over a hundred other User's Group as well as to our members.) An added benefit, from my point of view, is that occasionally another group will reprint what I have written for inclusion in their own group's newsletter. Writing for your group's newsletter is an excellent way to help out your club. It does not demand special writing skill or any other special ability. My own endeavors are proof of that fact. Most people have some information that they want to pass on, or a question that they would like to get answered. Usually they will talk about it to two or three people, then their concern passes, to be replaced by another matter more current. If these same people would write as well as talk then same information and concerns that before only reached a handful would now reach hundreds. Answers and responses may then be generated from other groups and a written record would be available to refer back to for the future. All those who do not have time to serve on a committee or to hold an office can definitely support their club by contributing to their group's newsletter. Everything that you have just read has not been idle ramblings. It has been on my mind for months. Almost every appeal for articles to be included in the newsletter that has been made to the membership at large and to a number of people that I have spoken to directly, has fallen on deaf ears. To be sure, some response does occur, and I thank those people very much. The truth is those that do respond are not enough. This club is, I believe, one of the best ones in the country. Even so that lack of support is a main reason that there were no newsletters sent out for the months of July and August. If just supporting your own club doesn't motivate you, then think of all the

fame and glory you'll receive by having your writings distributed across the country, perhaps even picked up and reprinted by other groups. Seriously folks, that possibility makes me feel good. Anything that I write now is written with that in the back of my mind. In fact I believe that this very article would read very nicely if excerpted from the beginning down to the line ending with "by contributing to their group's newsletter." All told, I am very proud of our newsletter. It consists mainly of original material, not just items copied from others. The newsletter is a binding force for all our members and it focuses in on our own group. On occasion it does also contain selections from other groups, which helps show that we are a part of the rest of the TI 99/4A world out there. This Newsletter is an important part of this club; with help it will remain so and even grow! Let me finish off this particular subject by quoting from a letter I received from Frederick Hawkins of the Lehigh 99'er Computer Group in Allentown, Pa., "First of all let me introduce myself: my name is Frederick Hawkins, and I pretty much write the Lehigh 99'er Computer Group's Newsletter..." "...I certainly envy your knack for getting contributions from members....". Mr. Fred Hawkins, we very much appreciate your letter. It is nice to have confirmation of other people out there working towards the same ends as we are. Every newsletter has the same problem; we are definitely no different, but we try. We do try.

Gary Matthews

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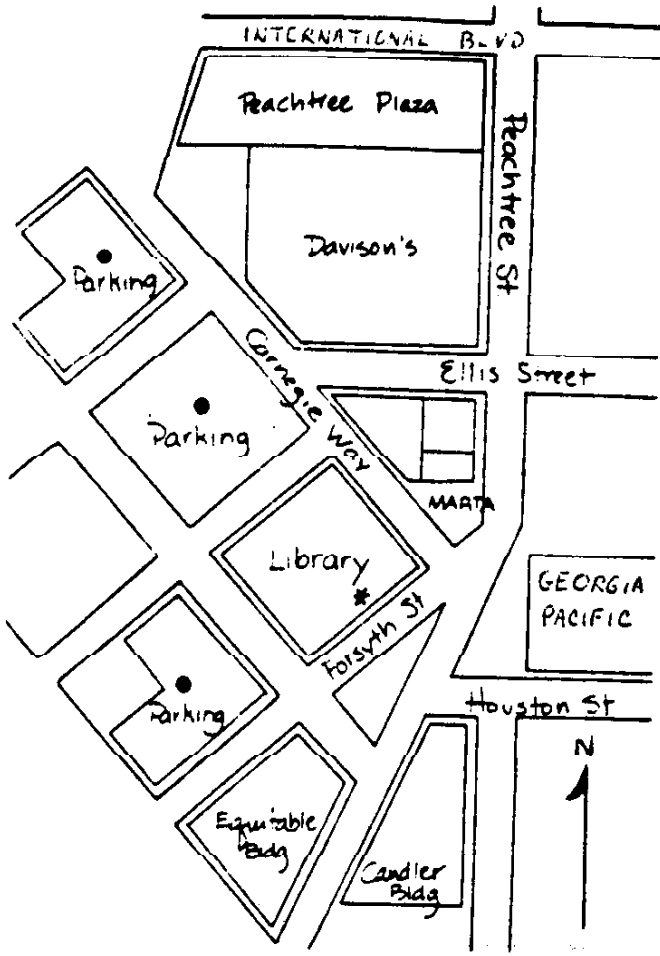
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Atlanta
99/4A
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NEXT MEETING:
SUNDAY, NOV. 17 + DEC. 15
ATLANTA PUBLIC LIBRARY
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FOR MORE DETAILS, CALL 953-2013
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