

CPUG NEWSLETTER

Volume 12 Number 4

99er

April , 1993

MINUTES FOR MONTHLY MEETING:

MARCH 1, 1993

At 7:30pm Tony called the meeting to order. There were 13 members present. He introduced a guest, Howard Bowman from Palmyra, who needed help with his TI console. He picked the right night to come because our travelin' man, Rich Lindway, was also there and was able to give Howard assistance. We welcomed Monty, too, who has not been able to get to the meetings.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the February minutes as published in the newsletter.

Rick read the treasury report and it, too, was accepted as read.

Tony then informed us of the following: Bill Chavanne has updated his TITax program for the current year and it is available; 3 new disks are to be added to the library - DM1000 v.6.1, Checklog, and a disk from Jim Peterson (sent in appreciation for receiving our newsletter). Jim also made mention that he has many disks for sale. Tony reminded all that these are shareware, and anyone using the programs should send a fee to the programmer for his work and interest in the TI.

The nominating committee gave its report. There were no additions, and the ballots will be mailed out to members not present, and counted at the next meeting.

Those nominated for the offices are:

President	Bill Robinson	Treasurer	Rick Rubin
Vice President	Bob Hench	Executive Board	Henry Swartz
Secretary	Dottie Swartz		John Maul

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dottie Swartz, Secretary

SPECIAL NOTICE**FIRST TI VIRUS -- NOT!**

As reported in the February issue of MICROpendium - The "I GOTCHA!" phrase turned up on only ONE disk, ROS 8.14, which is the Ramdisk Operating System from Gary Bowser and Horizon, the original disks. Gary Bowser related that the phrase appears when an "illegal device" is encountered by the ROS. It's occurrence is a legitimate "error message" from the ROS. A TI user was having a minor problem with his hard drive at one time, and apparently , it had somehow triggered the ROS "error message".

So we are sorry that Bill Gaskill wiped out several disks, but the good news is that there is not a TI virus.

E-X-P-A-N-S-I-O-N

by Andy Frueh and Mark Schafer
Lima UG and Bluegrass 99'ers

Ever since I started writing programs and these articles, I've been getting lots more mail. "And we thank you for your support!" I can't believe it. Most of what I get are requests for software, but I run into the occasional question. These below represent the kind of things I get asked about the most. I'll try to answer the most frequently asked.

No, this is not a collaboration. After each paragraph written by Andy, Mark (that's me) will write his response. This way, you get two opinions.

I HAVE A CASSETTE SYSTEM. DO I REALLY NEED A DISK DRIVE?

Believe it or not, there are people out there with cassette-only systems. The rest of us should not overlook these people. Of course, computers are supposed to be faster than us humans, but sometimes when I had to load from cassette, it seemed like I could type the program in twice as fast. If speed is an issue, a disk drive is a very good investment. One may also opt for RAM drives and new hard drives. The common disk drive is fast enough for me, and I never really had a space storage problem. When I do, I'll consider a new memory storage device. But, until that time comes, a disk drive is fine for me. As far as prices go, you can usually get a PE Box, controller, and an SS/SD disk drive for around \$150-250.

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SECOND OPINION: Yes, you need a disk drive. There is more than just speed to be considered. Most software only comes on disk. It's easier to write file manipulating programs with disks. Random access files can't be done on cassette at all. And you can't name your programs or catalog your cassettes.

WHAT'S A GOOD PRICE FOR HARDWARE?

For a typical PE Box, about \$150 empty (used). And good luck! Those things are very hard to find, and then, only as used models. A 32K card (TI) should run around \$75-\$100. The hardest card to choose is the drive controller. Plan for growth. If you feel having up to 3 DS/SD drives is good enough for you, the TI card at \$85-\$120 is the best buy. CorComp has a card that is somewhat better, but the top of the line is Myarc. If you're planning to add lots of storage, the HFDC (Hard/Floppy Drive Controller) is the ONLY way to go. Of course, you pay much more for it, but you have to pay for progress!

SECOND OPINION: These days, if you pay \$75 for a 32K card or \$85 for a TI disk controller card, you've overpaid. I know someone who paid \$75 for a loaded PE Box! Remember, we're talking about good prices, not typical prices.

WHAT ABOUT SPEECH?

There really isn't a whole lot that requires the speech synthesizer. Unless you're into speech games, or plan on using it for children (it's a GREAT educational tool for those who can't read), don't buy one. Don't get a speech unit thinking, "Oh, wow! Now my computer can talk!" That's a waste. Don't buy it simply for the glitzy special effects.

SECOND OPINION: There's more to a peripheral than what is available for it. I have one, and I like to write programs that use it. And never say, "Don't buy...". If the price is right, go for it. We recently sold two speech synthesizers at auctions, and they both went for less than \$10. If you can get one for a price like that, even a PASSING interest merits the purchase.

IS RS232 BETTER THAN A PIO INTERFACE?

Again, it depends on your potential growth. If all you will ever want to do is hook up a printer, than a PIO interface, such as the one by Axiom, is a decent buy. If you plan on getting a modem, the RS232 card is the only possible method. You may be able to get a sidecar RS232 from TI for a lot less, if you want to go that way.

SECOND OPINION: That's right. The only difference is what can be done with them, not how they do it.

WHAT IS THE BEST JOYSTICK?

The Epyx 500XJ is really good. It has microswitches so you feel and hear each move. It is also designed to fit in the palm of your normal-sized hand. Of course, you need an Atari-to-TI adapter to use it.

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SECOND OPINION: Big disagreement here. I have that joystick. It was advertised as not needing a diagonal lock-out for four-direction games. It doesn't need one because they're so darned hard to hit! I can't use it for games in which diagonals are important. As to the answer to the question, I wish I knew. I HEARD the Kraft joystick is good.

WHAT IS THE BEST SECTOR EDITOR?

Hands down, it's Disk Utilities. It has several interesting features, and doubles as a fully functional disk manager with welcome improvements.

SECOND OPINION: No argument here. I've seen four sector editors and much prefer John Birdwell's Disk Utilities.

Mark! This is fun! I like responding to someone else's articles like this. This is just what I felt like doing when I looked over this article. It gives me a chance to vent minor opinions without having to write whole articles about them. It gives readers another opinion to consider and it may be a reprint, but it's still unique! I might do this again, sometime. If someone else would like to do this, be my quest.

This article was copied from the August 1992 newsletter of the JSC TI-99/4A USERS GROUP

WE WILL LOOK FOR
YOU
 AT THESE MEETINGS

Circle your calendar with these meeting dates for 1993:

JANUARY	5,1993	JULY	5
FEBRUARY	1	AUGUST	2
MARCH	1	SEPTEMBER	11 SATURDAY
APRIL	5	OCTOBER	4
MAY	3	NOVEMBER	1
JUNE	7	DECEMBER	6 *-CHRISTMAS -*

All meetings begin at 7pm except Saturdays 12 noon at the CAMP HILL SHOPPING MALL COMMUNITY ROOM. The Group equipment will be UP and READY for use at approximately 1hr prior to meeting time.

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This newsletter is published monthly by the Central Pa 99/4A users Group. Material may be reproduced without permission, provided the author and the source are acknowledged. IF YOU DESIRE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRAL PA 99/4A USERS GROUP, CONTACT:

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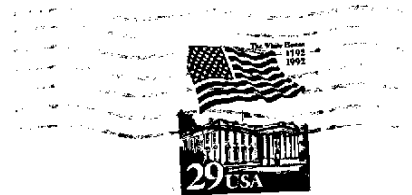
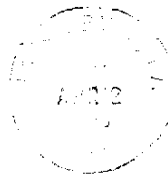
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NEXT MEETING: MAY 3rd, 1993 at 7pm *-MONDAY-*

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