



DALLAS
TI
HOME
COMPUTER
GROUP

DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

Volume 7, Number 5 May 1, 1987

This newsletter is the official publication of the DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, a non-profit organization serving member/users of the Texas Instruments 99/4A HOME COMPUTER. For more information you are invited to attend our next meeting or send a SASE to: DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, PO Box 29863, Dallas, Texas 75229

>>> NEXT MEETING <<<

99er Connection BBS

Saturday, MAY 9, 1987

24 Hours, 300/1200 Baud

The Dallas Infomart

214-272-2786

MAY HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Day!	Inside the DALLAS 99 INTERFACE:
Main Prog: Programming SIG	Calendar of Events - 2
Hardware SIG	Meeting Schedule - 3
Software SIG	From the Oval Officer - 4
Guest/New Member Meeting	Secretary's Minutes - 6
	The Program Director - 8
	Hardware SIG Report - 9
	Software SIG Report - 9
NEXT STEP Mini-SIG - May 22	Adventure Library Report - 10
	Next Step Report - 10
	Mini-Sig Report - 11
	The Library Corner - 12
	Dinner!!! - 13
	Volunteer Column - 14
	Stanfill's Stall - 15
	Funnyweb Farms - 15
	The Trading Post - 18

Dallas TI Home Computer Group
PO Box 29863
Dallas, Texas 75229

TO USER GROUP EXCHANGE RECIPIENTS,
PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS!

+ +

+ +

FIRST CLASS



SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

EVENT	DATE	TIME
Infomart Meeting	5/ 9/87	
Hardware SIG	" " "	9:00 am
Main Meeting	" " "	10:00 am
Software SIG	" " "	1:00 pm
Executive Committee	5/16/87	1:00 pm
Committee Chairmen	" " "	2:30 pm
NEXT-STEP WorkShop	# 5/22/87	5:15 pm
Newsletter Deadline	5/29/87	Midnight
Speech-in-Console MiniSIG		
	+ # 5/31/87	2:00 pm
Software Library Time\$#	6/ 7/87	2:00 pm
Barbecue Dinner \$+#	" " "	6:00 pm
Infomart Meeting	6/13/87	
Software SIG	" " "	9:00 am
Main Meeting	" " "	10:00 am
Programming SIG	" " "	1:00 pm
Executive Committee	6/20/87	1:00 pm
Committee Chairmen	" " "	2:30 pm
Newsletter Deadline	6/26/87	Midnight
NEXT-STEP WorkShop	# " " "	5:15 pm

NOTES:

- \$ = Attendance Fee
- # = DTIHCG Membership Required
- + = Reservations Required
- SIG = (S)pecial (I)nterest (G)roup
- TBD = (T)o (B)e (D)etermined

Club Officers

President	Louis Guion	214-239-6829
Vice-President	Dan Johnsen	214-494-6770
Secretary	David Martin	1-214-370-3268
Treasurer	L. M. Kennedy	214-823-6590
Board Member at Large	Robert Jones	214-954-0365

Club Chairpersons

Newsletter Editor	Greg Justice	214-240-6647
Special Projects	Greg Justice	214-240-6647
Software Library	Charlice Althar	214-337-4840
Program Director	Jackie Guion	214-239-6829
Material Distribution	Walter Pearson	214-943-2439
Disk-of-the-Month	John Creviston	214-256-2721
SIG - Hardware	Jon Hodges	214-690-4428
Mini-SIG Meetings	Tom Hall	817-267-5987
Volunteer Organizer	Imogene Osborn	214-252-5985
CCD Representative	Lynn Nidiffer	214-228-4820
99er Connection SysOp	Dan Johnsen	214-494-6770
Newsletter Librarian	Mike Stanfill	214-320-2293
Membership Committee	Chuck Long	817-534-0990
Software SIG Leader	Bob Viering	214-???-????

THE TRADING POST: Any DTIHCO Member

FOR SALE: John Creviston has available several standalone peripherals that were Gene Mouser's. If you are interested in purchasing them contact John at 214-256-2721.

FOR SALE: 99/4A console (in the box) with speech synthesizer, Personal Record Keeping, Touch Typing Tutor, and Chess modules.

PRICE: \$ 75.00
CALL: Lawson Davis
PHONE: 690-8309

The TRADING POST is a service provided for any non-commercial entity, to buy, sell, or swap any computer related product. Currently the service is available free of charge, and limited only in size to what is reasonable subject to space limitations. Ads will be printed ONCE per request. The deadline for requesting space is the same as the other newsletter columns, two weeks before the Infomart meeting.

CEOTICS 4THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

IN CEOTICS 2 MENTION WAS MADE OF USING THE POPULAR CD OR "COMPACT DISK" NOW BEING WIDELY USED IN THE MUSIC REPRODUCTION BUSINESS, TO USE ITS ENORMOUS STORAGE CAPACITY FOR HOME COMPUTERS. INDEED A SMALL COMPANY CALLED PC/SIG HAS MADE UP A CD TYPE LASER DISK THAT HAS 10,000 PROGRAMS, OR ABOUT 600 MEGABYTES. THE COST OF THE DISK \$195, THE PLAYER OR IF YOU PREFER DISK DRIVE FOR IT IS MADE BY MITSUBISHI, SONY PHILIPS FOR A MERE \$1000, AND ALL THESE PROGRAMS ARE FOR!! YOU GUESSED IT "BIG BLUE" THIS AND OTHER THINGS WE'VE TALKED ABOUT ARE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE YEAR 2001. ACCORDING TO THE MAY ISSUE OF "RADIO ELECTRONICS" AN ARTICLE APPEARED NAMED "SOLID STATE TECHNOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY" IS PREDICTING THE GIGABIT CHIP, THATS 1000 TIMES 1 MILLION. CAN YOU IMAGINE OUR HRD'S FILLED UP WITH THOSE CHIPS? THESE CHIPS WILL BE 3 DIMENSIONAL OR STACKED ONE ON ANOTHER, SORT OF LIKE WE ARE DOING ON OUR RAM DISKS, BUT THESE WILL BE AL IN ONE PACKAGE. ALSO THEY SAID THAT THE CIRCUITS WILL BE SO THIN AND FRAGILE THEY WILL HAVE TO SHIELD THEM FROM COSMIC RAYS, BECAUSE THE RAYS WILL SCRAMBLE THE INFORMATION STORED ON THEM. NEXT TIME A LOOK AT THE NEW ERASEABLE LASER DISKS.

Dallas TI Home Computer Group

Program Schedule - Infomart

May 9, 1987

9:00 - 9:55 Hardware SIG

10:00 - 11:55 Main Meeting

10:00 - 10:30 Business Meeting

10:30 - 11:30 Main Program: Programming SIG

11:30 - 11:55 Guest/New Member Orientation Meeting

12:00 - 12:55 LUNCH BREAK

1:00 - 2:55 Software SIG

Meeting room numbers can be obtained at our booth, or check the master list posted on the two overhead projectors, located just past the Registration booths. Children under age 16 MUST remain with their parents at all times, in accordance with Infomart regulations!

All meetings will begin promptly on the hour, since other groups may be scheduled to use the room after us. Please be on time.

FROM THE OVAL OFFICER: Louis Guion

I have several happenings of importance to bring to your attention this month. The club has restocked on the fine diskettes you have been enjoying for the better part of a year now. A whole new shipment has just come in. Special Project Chairman Greg Justice has procured both the standard black diskettes and, in accordance with the sentiments you expressed at the April INFOMART meeting, a new and larger supply of colored diskettes. The black diskettes are selling at 40-cents each in packages of ten disks. The colored diskettes sell for 60-cents each, also in packages of ten disks. That translates to \$4.00 for a pack of black disks, and \$6.00 for a pack of colored disks. Also, as you requested, Greg limited his purchase to the brighter colors this time, and the packages are all of one solid color. There are no "assortment" packages this time out.

Greg will be turning the disks over to Fred Ferriera for sale at the May 9th INFOMART meeting. He tells me that these are the same SENTINEL disks we liked so much last time, so come on down and replenish your depleted stock of diskettes. We all owe Greg and his wife, Joyce, and two children, Jeffrey and Amber a big thank-you for inserting the disks and their labels/tabs into sleeves and bagging the result. A lot of work there, but it does make a much better package for you, the diskette buyer. Thanks, y'all!

As a result of the name-change fever I initiated last month with my change to NEXT-STEP Workshop (dropping MiniSIG) for our mid-month meeting, I've gone out on a limb and decided to change the Software Library Swap to Software Library SIG. This better describes what does NOT happen at the sessions which we hold quarterly at TDIndustries. While it was, and is, just fine for you to swap disks with your fellow members, the club has not sponsored it as a swap in the purest sense. The session is designed to give all members access to the complete software library of Public Domain and Fairware (freeware?) programs.

Now, on the subject of swap, we have had some fine contributions from members. I particularly remember some that Mike Stanfill, Tom Helm, Richard Roberts, Robert Jones, Dan Johnsen, Floyd Pemberton, and others have submitted. I'd like you to bring any programs that you'd like to see incorporated into the library to Charlice at the Software Library SIG on June 7th, or to any INFOMART meeting. The programs cannot be commercial, copyright, "for sale", programs. They must be public domain or fairware to be put in the club's library. I know she'd appreciate any such programs that are not in the library already.

We've had a very nice contribution to the club from hard/software dealer and fellow club member, Jim Leshar. At the NEXT-STEP Workshop on Friday, April 24th, Jim donated a used TI-99/4A console, a new TI modem, a complete TI-Writer and Microsoft Multiplan, plus a host of Command Modules and cassette tapes. The modules include Extended BASIC, Home Financial Decisions, Adventure, and several more. Membership Chairman Chuck Long has volunteered to inventory and

one number ahead of it. It's usually an 18. Thses control the speed! These can be anywhere between 1 and 256.(1=fast!, 256 sloooooow)

The original ASSEMBLY source code for this program was written using info gleaned from the newsletter library and converted into CALL LOAD form using a nifty little program called ACE. Next month I'll include the ASSEMBLY source code and give a few pointers on accessing sound in the ASSEMBLY arena. It's probably a lot easier than you thought.

Till next month, keep those cards and letters.

```
*****BALLPARK*****
*****A TINYGRAM*****
*****BY MIKE STANFILL*****
*****MEMBER DTIHCG*****
```

```
2 CALL LOAD(16376,83,32,32,3
2,32,32,36,246,"",8194,37,11
4,63,248)
```

```
3 CALL LOAD(9460,4,91,2,0,16
,0,2,1,37,44,2,2,0,70,4,32,3
2,36,200,0,131,204)
```

```
4 CALL LOAD(9482,216,32,37,4
2,131,206,248,32,37,42,131,2
53,4,199,3,0,0,2,3,0,0,0)
```

```
5 CALL LOAD(9504,152,7,131,2
06,22,1,16,231,4,91,1,0,3,14
0,26,144,36,3,134,13,144,18)
```

```
6 CALL LOAD(9526,3,142,15,14
4,18,3,141,17,144,18,3,131,2
1,144,18,3,141,17,144,54,3,1
41)
```

```
7 CALL LOAD(9548,23,144,54,3
,140,26,144,36,3,134,13,144,
18,3,142,15,144,18,3,141,17,
144)
```

```
8 CALL LOAD(9570,18,3,131,21
,144,18,3,141,17,144,54,3,15
9,191,223,0,68,73)
```

need to know:

- (1) Everyone who's interested in this thing be sure to bring your SS to the main meeting! We'll need this extra time to prepare them.
- (2) Sign up for the MINI-SIG with Tom Hall.
- (3) Give me your SS's and bid them a fond adieu'.
- (4) BRING THE CONSOLE THAT WE ARE TO PUT YOUR SPEECH IN TO THE MINI-SIG!!!!
- (5) If you like bring along your favorite soldering iron and we'll show you how it's done.
- (6) Space is limited to about 12 so it's first come, first served

AND MOST IMPORTANT:

(7) WE CANNOT ACCEPT LIABILITY IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG! Be assured that we'll pay close attention to details and that it's not the most difficult procedure in the world, but there's always the possibility of the unexpected. I can, personally, replace a motherboard or two, but if the SS gets fried I'm sorry. Again though, this is a worthwhile modification and it's wonderful to not have to mess with that darn thing hanging out the side and losing connection at the wrong time.

And now, this month's 'TINYGRAM'. Looks a little weird don't it? Well sir, it's something that I've been wanting to do for a loooooong time. An ENTIRELY, 100%, ALL AMERICAN CALL LOAD 'TINYGRAM'. 'BALLPARK' is a compilation of a lot of things, but what it is, mainly, is a music program, 'Take Me Out to the Ballgame' to be exact. The special thing about it is that it loads itself into low memory and STAYS THERE. The only thing that'll get rid of it is to type 'CALL INIT' which clears the area this type of thing is stored or shut off your console.

First thing though is ENTER the program. Then add:

```
1 CALL INIT
```

Save a copy and RUN it. In only a second or two you'll see the cursor flashing at you, this is your cue to type in IMMEDIATE mode:

```
CALL LINK("S")
```

and press ENTER. Instantly you'll hear those familiar strains. You can LINK to this program over and over if you like.

Now the fun stuff. Don't like LINK-ing to 'S'. No sweat. Go to line 2 and right after 16376 you'll see 83 (that's the ASCII code for the 'S') and five 32's. (ASCII number for the space symbol.) Just pick a six-letter or less word that you'd prefer to LINK to, break it down into it's ASCII characters and insert it in line 2 in the 83,32,32,32,32 space.

Also try this: From lines 6-8 everytime you see a 3 look

= 16 =

administer the software end of this donation. The hardware will be inventoried and checked for serviceability and then the Executive Committee will determine what to do with this material. If you see Jim downstairs at the INFOMART (he always has a table in the basement), please tell him how much you appreciate his helping us.

Horizon RAM-disk (HRD) fever has taken on a life of its own! We have just delivered a 10-kit order to the members and all ready we have two more people wanting kits! No sooner than I announce that SURELY all the people that want one have one, we find a whole new group that has discovered these wonderful devices. Perhaps part of the reason is the fine support we get from the vendors.

Let me tell you of the latest example of extra support. We order the parts kits from Bud Mills Services in Toledo, Ohio. On this last order the prices remained as they have been for some time now but Bud has added three diskettes of software to each parts kit. They contain the John Johnson "MENU" program. Complete! What a nice gesture, and one done at considerable expense in time and not a little bit of cost to Bud Mills, yet he continued to charge the "old" prices for his parts kits.

If there are possibly any more of you out there, and you must be a DTIHCG member to buy, and if you want one of these marvelous devices, we'll be placing another order. Yes, yet another one! This time we've got to do something about all this disk-swapping stuff that we go through to get you the copies of the three disks furnished for the HRD by Horizon. Then there are two disks furnished by the club to get you the latest stuff we know about. You've been swapping out diskettes each time, but it would simplify our lives if we just made a flat charge for the extra services of duplicating, etc.

Here's the new price schedule: A double-sided HRD (192K with Ver 06) will cost you \$153. A triple-sided HRD (256K) will cost you \$181. The 256K upgrade kit for the 192K HRD card, will cost you \$28. As in the past, John Creviston has an arrangement with a professional electronic assembler to build the kits for you if you don't feel confident of your kit-building ability. The present prices for assembly, so that you can budget for your purchase, are \$35 for the 192K kit and \$50 for the 256K kit. Please speak directly with John about this service.

In any case, save your pennies and join over 70 others in the Metroplex who run the Horizon RAM-disk. More details at the May 9th INFOMART meeting.

New member nametags are coming! At the April Executive Committee (E/C) meeting it was decided to use the club's roster program to generate name tags for the members. Dan Johnson is writing the software to make this a reality. The idea is to make life easier for a whole lot of us at the various large club meetings. Since the club's roster contains most of the officer's title information, including most chairmanships, it may even be possible to print the

= 5 =

office or chairmanship as well as name and membership expiration date on the name tag. Having a new name tag at each meeting will make it impossible for you to "forget" your name badge. Not having a name badge with the rest of us will tell you that your membership has just EXPIRED...and will provide the incentive to renew right then and there as sales of club merchandise can be restricted to members only - just like we have always tried to do. No name badge, no sale. It will make you more aware of visitors, who will not have name badges. Perhaps most important to some of our working members, it will make it possible to make out a receipt for stuff you buy, join, or donate. No more, "Uhhh, what's your name? I know the face, but I forget your name." This may still be TRUE, but at least it won't be obvious! No, we haven't forgotten the newly signed-up member, either. Their receipt will serve to enable them to make purchases, and we plan a "new member" temporary badge as well. Best of all, we won't wait for the CCD to do something!

Wow, have I just been impressed! I have just been looking at a professional paper published by our club secretary, David Martin. This paper covers "VIDEO DISPLAY TERMINAL WORKSTATION DESIGN". It covers things like "Nature and Effect of VDT work", "Work Station Ergonomics", "Illumination", and "Radiation". Some heavy stuff here. I can't say I understand a lot of the work, but you can bet it is correct since David is not only interested in and knowledgeable about computers but he is also a safety engineer for a major insurance company. Thanks for letting me see this paper, David. And as for those of you with a TV used as a monitor sitting on a big book in back, with one rubber foot missing from the front; please don't tell David what you are doing. I'd hate to hear a grown man cry.

Thanks to all of you for the fine support our club enjoys. See y'all on May 9th at INFOMART!

SECRETARY'S MINUTES: David Martin

Last month's meeting of the Dallas TI Home Computer Group was held on April 11, 1987. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President Louis Guion.

CURRENT BUSINESS: President Guion made several announcements concerning the "open forum" which would be held later in the day; the Computer Council of Dallas (CCD) meeting for club representative, Lynn Nidiffer, to attend on April 13th; and the officer and committee chairmen meetings to be held on April 18th at the Guion's house.

Member Mike Stanfill was recognized for his renditions of the club staff that contribute articles to the "Dallas 99 Interface" newsletter. President Guion took the liberty of placing the pictures on buttons to be worn by the staff during the meeting.

Lynn Nidiffer, CCD Club Representative, announced that badges, perhaps the old Infocards, would be provided for the members of the various clubs that meet at the Infomart. There was no specific date when the badges would be

we will need SEVEN systems this time. We had six last time, so this task should be easily accomplished, so please be considering bringing a system for this event. Let's start early! You can leave me a message on the 99er, Longhorn TIBES, Startext, or give me a call. We will need volunteers to handle the registration and to take the admission money at the Disk Swap and Dinner. Let's make this a TERRIFIC event!

As you may have already read, we have a Volunteer in the truest sense, Jim Leshar has donated a great new Hardware Library. This will be of great service to all Club members, who have a suspect piece of equipment and want to make a diagnosis, or just want to try something before making a purchase. Thanks again to Jim. Let's all remember that Jim is one of our vendors in the basement of InfoMart.

I will see you all at InfoMart, I will be in the back of the room, with my yellow sign up sheets. Ya'll Come!

STANFILL'S STALL: Mike Stanfill

The newsletter library is going through a few changes right now as I'm hard at work cutting and snipping and condensing everthing down into the all new:

BEST OF THE NEWSLETTERS!!!

To say the least it's more than I bargained for but we'll all be the better for the effort because as I've said before and I'll say again:

NEWSLETTERS ARE YOUR FINEST FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT!

See you in the funny pages.

FUNNYWEB FARMS: Mike "the Sinister Minister" Stanfill

STUFF TO GET OFF MY CHEST (Such as it is):

If you ENTER-ed last months TINYGRAM, Dulcimer, and couldn't get it to run, well, it's not your fault. It seems that I forgot that TI-WRITER formatter tends to lunch on certain ASCII characters, one of which is the caret symbol that you won't find sitting between the 1.059463094 and the (N-1) in line 2. A caret is the funny looking little 'up' symbol sitting at the top of the '6' key. Just add that to your listing and everthing will be hunky-dory. Perhaps even a tad more funky than dory.

I wanna thank everyone who joined in on my little fireside 'tinysig' at the last meeting. It amazed me that so many of you had an interest in putting your speech synthesizer in your console, but I'm sure that some of you were a little overwhelmed by this 'simple' operation. So to make it up to ya we're going to have a MINI-SIG just for this very modification. Me and the boys are gonna spend an afternoon a'soldering and a'tinkering for a lucky few of you. For the specifics of this MINI-SIG refer to Tom Hall's column, but here are a few particulars that we think you'll

no-shows who did not honor their reservations or who did not cancel in time to prevent the club from planning and cooking food in their behalf. We had 74 reservations from people that signed up on the usual Sign-Up Sheets. From this group 55 showed up and 19 didn't make it; a no-show rate of over 25%. Well, a non-profit group simply can't afford to have food on hand for the 25% of the people who don't show up to eat it, so I've devised a plan to help us avoid such a problem this time. Here is how it'll work:

Reservations cost \$5.00 for members, 2nd members (the second voter on a family membership), non-member spouses, and for guests or children 12 years of age or older. This reservation/dinner fee must be paid at the time you sign up for the dinner.

Reservations cost \$3.00 for all children who are 6 but less than 12 years of age. This dinner fee must be paid at the time you sign up for the dinner. Children of members that are under 6 eat free, but reservations are still required.

Now, for the "free" part! The member and 2nd member (on a family membership) will each be issued a two-part ticket. The second part of the ticket is worth \$5.00 cash when turned in at the barbecue dinner. Yes, the second part could be submitted as payment for your admittance to the Software Library SIG, if you want to do this. The first part of the ticket is good for dinner, FREE. All other classes of tickets, which do not have second parts, are good for dinner only; there is no cash rebate on other classes of tickets. This plan lets the members of the club eat dinner for free -- just like we promised in the heading!

A word about timely cancellations, O.K.? Yes, any class of ticket may cancel by notifying Jackie Guion (number on the inside rear cover) before 9:00 pm, Wednesday June 3rd. Any reservations that are cancelled before the deadline will be fully refunded upon receipt of the tickets that have been issued. Any reservations cancelled after the deadline, no matter how sympathetic we may be with your reasons, will not be refunded. The plain truth is that we want you to use your tickets and we want to have enough food to feed you but we don't want to have to buy a lot of food that no one shows up to eat! So sign up and come on out. We'll have a GREAT TIME!!

VOLUNTEER COLUMN: Imogene Osborn

Beautiful May Salutations To Everyone!

Now We are Ten! We have a new volunteer for the Telephone Committee, he is Rip Dowling. Thanks Rip. I have mailed the latest Telephone List out to our committee members, so we should all be ready to remind and inform club members of our next big event, the June Library Swap and Barbecue Dinner, June 7, 1987.

Speaking of the Disk Swap, it has been decided that we will need two systems for the Utilities section. Therefore,

available, and the final format had not been decided either.

For those members wishing to provide articles for the May issue of the "Dallas 99 Interface", the submitting deadline is April 24th. Any opinions about the readability of the newsletter would be appreciated also.

A new feature of the newsletter was the "Resource" page which reviewed the benefits of membership in the "Dallas TI Home Computer Group." This information will be printed in future issues on a periodic basis.

The keeper of the Infocom adventure games has been changed from Dan Johnsen to Lynn Nidiffer. If any members should desire to check-out any of the games, please contact Lynn.

Also, the club is trying to obtain a complete set of original Scott Adam's adventure games. Any members who wish to make a donation, contact Lynn.

A mass buy of TI-Artist software has been made with several extra copies purchased. Any member wishing to obtain a copy at the club's cost should contact Dan Johnsen.

Tom Hall, MiniSiG Chairman, stated that the next Next-Step Workshop would be held on April 24th from 5:15 to 8:00 p.m. at TD-Industries in Farmers Branch, that a Funnelweb MiniSiG would be held on April 12th, and a Disk+Aid MiniSiG will be held on May 3rd.

The March Disk-of-the-Month (DOM) contains several useful programs. Specifically, a machine language ARCHIVER program that is much faster than the previous Extended Basic version, a home utility recordkeeping program written by club member Floyd Pemberton, a program for testing the Speech Synthesizer, and several others. (I'll give a nickel to anyone who approaches me at the next Infomart meeting and tells me that they read this article.) The program Floyd demonstrated at the 9:00 meeting is an excellent program for maintaining natural gas, water and electrical utility data. The graph of the monthly usage, as shown on the monitor's screen, was particularly impressive.

Horizon Ram-Disks are still being distributed to members at a discounted price through the club. The 256K upgrades are also available for \$27.50. All members are encouraged to contact Jackie Guion for further details.

PROGRAM: Back by popular demand was Robert Jones giving a review of various diagnostic programs. He was ably assisted by John Creviston, head hog of the software pigs. The presentation began with cartridges capable of various diagnostic tests and finished with a quick demonstration of the Miller Graphics' Explorer program.

Seven guests attended the meeting with 4 joining the club.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m.

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Jackie Guion

Last month Floyd Pemberton did a superb job at the 9:00 AM meeting of the Programming SIG. My hat's off to you for both an entertaining and useful program. Thanks! I'd also like to thank you for allowing your program to be used on our April Disk-Of-the-Month. It is always a treat to be able to go home and operate the program you have just seen demonstrated.

The April main meeting program was presented by John Creviston and Robert Jones and covered some of the diagnostic programs available for the 4/A. Even if we aren't all as knowledgeable as these experts, it's nice to have them show us how to make these programs work for us. I'm always impressed when I see the power of some of the software designed for our little machine. Thanks for teaching us more about what is available.

What an array of equipment was brought down by Jon Hodges at the Hardware SIG. Jon checked the alignment and repaired several drives "on-the-spot", so to speak. He had the answers for a lot of technical questions. I think it is great that we have these people, like him, to help smooth the way for us. Thanks, Jon.

This month Jon tackles a much less serious topic, but one which is more aggravating by far. In his 9:00 AM Hardware SIG he will explain the theory and practice behind a diode used to modify the Alpha Lock key so that you can use your joysticks even with the Alpha Lock key down. This is one of those modifications that might have cost TI 3-cents if it had been done at the factory. It has been suggested that TI spent far more than that just printing "Make sure Alpha Lock is up" in all the manuals we each own! There will be a MiniSIG on May 31 which include this modification while the speech synthesizers are being installed in the consoles. You'll want to pay close attention if you want to do the modification yourself if you won't be attending the MiniSIG.

FONTASTICS and a Mikey-SURPRISE demonstration or program are in store for us at the main meeting this time. Mike Stanfill's FONTASTICS program won a Computer Shopper award in the April issue. DTIHCG is fortunate in that Mike has allowed us to feature FONTASTICS on the May D.O.M. Maybe Mike will tell us what the surprise will be in his newsletter column. Whatever else it will be, I can assure you it won't be dull! I'm really looking forward to this program.

Do you know what MBX stood for? Well, it was the Milton Bradley game system's trademark, that's what it was. Software Chairman Bob Viering will be demonstrating the system at 1:00, and should have time for some hands-on experience. What made the MBX so fascinating was the fact that the game could be voice controlled through a headset microphone. Bob will have many of the special game cartridges manufactured for the system so you can see how they all ran. Be there!

-jlg-

= 8 =

way of the Bar-B-Q sauce! So bring your disks, or plan to purchase them from the Club on arrival, and don't forget to bring any software you are willing to share with other Club members. We plan to have 7 systems available, one of which will be available for demonstrations and private swaps between members. Membership in DTIHCG is required; new members are welcome to join at the door. The copying tends to get rather hectic toward the end of these sessions, so the earlier you can get started, the better!

A sign-up sheet will be available at INFOMART. We encourage you to sign up, so we will be better able to make plans. If you don't sign up, call me and leave a message that you'll be there! The \$5 deposit for your dinner reservation can be used for your fee for copying disks. Please be sure to sign up for each event separately.

MEMBER'S FREE BARBECUE DINNER: Louis Guion

It seems like it was just last week that we had a great spaghetti dinner following March's Library SIG. Even though I still feel stuffed from that great dinner, it was almost three months ago and the activity was called the "Library Swap" back then. Now the "swap" name has changed and the menu is new. This time out we'll be dishing out barbecue; a Southwestern favorite enjoyed by most everyone. Here are the particulars:

PROPOSED MENU

barbecue beef or ham
ranch-style beans, potato salad or cole slaw
coffee, iced tea, bread/buns, pickles, onions, and relish

Date: June 7th Time: 6:00 pm
Place: TDIndustries, 13737 Stemmons Freeway

Members, Guests, and Family all are welcome

Reservations are required. The last date to sign up is Sunday, May 31. If you can't sign up with Jackie Guion in person, then make sure you mail your reservation, with full deposit or payment, to arrive at the club's P.O. Box 29863, Dallas 75229, by the deadline date. The last date to cancel reservations and receive a refund is Wednesday, June 3.

Oh!, you caught that "free" in the heading and then the "refund" in the last paragraph, did you? Well, you read correctly in both places. As one of our goals this year the Executive Committee has set out to provide a quarterly social gathering with either club SUBSIDIZED or FREE food served to the current members at each gathering. The purpose is to get out the family unit for an evening of congeniality and conversation. We want to encourage the support of our membership's whole family group behind the DTIHCG and we want to give back something tangible to the members that make the club possible. What better way than through club sponsored dinners?

Our first attempt was the spaghetti dinner in March, which went very well except for the excessive number of

= 13 =

doesn't make any difference if the alpha lock key is up or down. And the cost of all this is ...FREE thanks to the generosity of the Executive Committee and the Club.

Be sure to read Charlice's column on the LIBRARY SIG. This is scheduled for 2 pm June 7th at TDI. Followed by a barbecue dinner at 6 pm.

There has been some discussion about the club holding a Garage Sale/Swap for T:99/4a hardware and software. If you think this is a good idea, let the club officers know how you feel about it. You know who the officers are, they are those 5 guys at every INFO MART meeting who are perspiring, looking worried and making everything run so smooth.

I want to quote something of interest, I read in **POPULAR SCIENCE**:

A light-bulb saver, a silicon diode in a disc-shaped casing, is attached to a bulb's base inside a lamp socket. Normally, power-line current flows through the lamp in alternating directions. The diode lets current flow in only one direction, reducing voltage across the bulb by 30 percent.

Lowering voltage by that amount cuts power consumption But Alexander Emanuel, a professor of electrical engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, says it also does other things that make the trade-off unacceptable.

One problem: current flowing in only one direction injects a component of direct current into the household AC supply. Large numbers of diodes could generate a bias current across transmission-line transformers, shortening the life of such units. The DC components can also corrode ground electrodes. That can impair the home's protection from high voltage peaks that could damage computers, VCRs, and other electrical appliances.

LIBRARY CORNER: Charlice Althar

Work has begun on the quarterly update to our Software Library. We have a number of programs to add to our collection, but we really need more! Many of our members have access to bulletin boards across the country, which have many public domain/shareware programs available for our orphan computer. If you are one of these lucky people, how about downloading a few and donating them to our library? We'll be glad to swap you a blank disk in exchange for one containing programs, and you'll be helping all of us! Thank you, in advance!

We've scheduled our next Software Library SIG for Sunday, June 7, at 2:00 PM, and hope many of you will be joining us for both this important event and for the Bar-B-Q Dinner to follow it! We'll be meeting at our usual place, TD Industries, 13737 N. Stemmons Fwy., in Farmers Branch. Cost will again be \$5 per person obtaining copies of disks. Copying will begin at 2:00, and will end promptly at 5:30, so that equipment and disks may be removed and put out of the

HARDWARE SIG: Jon Hodges

LAST MONTH: We had some fun looking at the basics of diskette drives, the way they operate, the signals that go back and forth between the controller and the drive(s), and how they are aligned and checked out by a technician. Some people could not believe that we use a signal called a "Cat's Eye" to check the track alignment. Well, it was there, all right. After the meeting was officially over, we looked at three drives to see if we could identify the problem and correct it. James Crosson had a drive that would not write. After checking it out, I could not find anything to point the finger at. I assumed it would be electronic, and recommended swapping the control board with a known good drive. Louis Guion could not let it go, though. He noticed that the head load pad did not have much pressure, and added some. After that it worked (thanks, Louis). We found that the drive that Tom Hall brought in had a problem with the track 0 switch. Sometimes it would get stuck and make the controller think it was already on track 0 when it might be far away, and naturally, the controller could not find the disk sector index on track 16. Ken Hanson brought in a drive that had some undefined intermittent problems. We could not find anything wrong with it. How about it, Ken? Is it still giving you trouble?

Louis mentioned that the weak link here is NOT electronic, but mechanical. With the exception of your keyboard, the disk drive is the most mechanical piece of equipment in your computer. Mechanical things wear. They also wear out. So it is logical to conclude that the great majority of the problems associated with drives will be mechanical in nature.

THIS MONTH: There you are, cruising along at 800 knots, when suddenly the enemy attacks from the left! You bank and fire, knocking out their lead ship. Pulling to the right, you fire again and hit the third ship. The second one dives, and you go after it. ZAP! It's a goner. The mountains are starting to close in, so you pull up. But your ship won't respond. What is it, a damaged thruster? You bank left, and your ship goes left. You bank right, and your ship goes right. You pull up, and your ship doesn't. But it's too late. You crash into the mountain and lose the game.

Has this ever happened to you? If you try to play a game with the game controllers and forget to make sure the [ALPHA LOCK] key is up, it will. This oversight on the part of TI is easily rectified, however. The addition of a diode to the [ALPHA LOCK] key can correct it, and that's what we are going to do this month. We will be meeting at 9:00, so come early, bring a notepad (for instructions) and a cup of coffee (to keep you awake). See you there.

SOFTWARE SIG: Bob Viering

There's not too much to mention this month. I missed the last meeting so I don't know how the Software SIG went in April. The May meeting is going to feature something I'm sure many of you have never seen. This one actually could be

considered hardware but since you can't do anything with it without it's special software, we thought we'd stick it in the Software SIG slot.

Have you ever heard of the MBX expansion system? Have you ever spoken to the MBX expansion system? This short-lived gem from Milton Bradley is one of a kind. Probably the only voice-recognition game machine for any home computer, it allows you to play games simply by speaking into the headset microphone. It's certainly the least expensive voice-recognition system around. Unfortunately, it's not being made anymore so if you want to get one, you'd better hurry. Come on out to the meeting this month and hang in there until 1:00 pm for an interesting demo of this system.

ADVENTURE LAND: Lynn Nidiffer

Every so often in life, something outstanding comes along, such as a Leica Camera or a McIntosh amplifier...and now we have INFOCOM INTERACTIVE FICTION! You know as soon as you open the game package, with it's clever literature and accessories, that you're in for a special treat!

We all know what visual impact a motion picture can make, but those of us that are old enough to remember, know what wonderful visions were stirred by RADIO and by reading (a lost art?). Such is an Infocom Game...here's what they say: "It's like waking up inside a story! Load Infocom's interactive fiction into your computer and discover yourself at the center of a world jam-packed with suprising twists, unique characters and original, logical, often hilarious puzzles.

For the first time, you're more that a passive reader. You can talk to the story, typing in full English sentences. And the story talks right back, communicating entirely in vividly descriptive prose. What's more, you can actually shape the story's course of events through your choice of actions. And you have hundreds of alternatives at every step. In fact, there's so much you can see and do, your adventure can last for weeks and even months!"

If your imagination has been peaked, you're in luck. Our club, for the benefit of its members, has purchased all of the available Infocom games. A member may borrow a game for a month. Just think, a game with all of the original background materials and instructions! The games will be available at the Infomart meeting. We must thank Dan Johnsen for originating this purchase, and organizing the Adventure Library.

The Infocom Motto - "A human never stands so tall
as when stooping to help a small computer."

NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP REPORT: Tom Hall

Notice the name change? It was felt that adding WORKSHOP to NEXT-STEP would be more descriptive of what really goes on at these meetings. NEXT-STEP is where you bring your problems, to get them diagnosed, fixed, or explained. No

problem is too small nor too large for the experts. And there always are several experts at NEXT-STEP to help you. In case your problem is getting software to run, we always have three or more full systems available.

The March NEXT-STEP meeting was very busy and talkative. Louis and Jon were dissecting the innards of PE-BOXES and Disk Drives. Someone was demonstrating Modems and Bulletin Boards. The time passed so quickly, it seemed like 30 minutes instead of 4 hours.

By the time you read this, the April 24th NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP Meeting will be past. So let me talk about the May 22nd meeting. This meeting is at TDI and will start at 5:15. Some folks can't get there right at 5:15 on the dot. So if you are shy about arriving late, don't worry, you will have company. To get to TDI Industries, go North on 35 past LBJ. Take the Valwood Parkway Exit. Double back (go South) on the access road for a couple of blocks. TDI has a big flag pole in front of the building and ARCOAIRE on the side of the building.

For those few of us, who plan ahead, the June NEXT-STEP WORKSHOP is planned for June 26th. July 24th is the date of the July NEXT-STEP.

MINI-SIG MADNESS: Tom Hall

FUNNELWEB II on April 12th at Ron Schvab's home, with Dale Kaliser leading us, was almost as well attended as the 1st MiniSig on Funnelweb. Dale and Ron did a good job on this meeting. Their efforts are appreciated.

SECTOR EDITING (DISK + AID) is the subject of a dual MiniSig to be held on May 3rd. Thanks to Greg Justice and Rip Dowling for sponsoring these Sig's. This is the first time we have tried holding 2 Sig's, at the same time, on the same subject, at two different locations. As of this writing, there were only 3 places open. So, indications are, that this Sig will be filled to capacity.

SPEECH IN THE CONSOLE is the subject of the May 31st MiniSig. You may remember Mike Stanfill discussing this at the last INFOMART meeting. The interest has been so great that Mike has volunteered to lead this Sig. We will have at least 5 qualified experts available for soldering, and to supervise those brave souls who are capable of doing their own soldering. If you intend to get someone to install your synthesizer for you, be sure and bring it to the May 9th INFOMART Meeting. It will have to be prep'd before it can be installed. And bring your Console to the Sig on May 31st. This meeting will be from 2pm till 5pm at JIM STEWART's office, near Resturant Row. East of I35 and South of Walnut Hill. Exact directions will be available at the regular INFOMART meeting. We probably will have to schedule attendance in two shifts. Members must be scheduled on the Sign Up Sheet to attend this meeting.

As an extra, you can get the fix to the Alpha Lock Key done at the same time. When you run games, with this fix, it