

DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP  
JUNE 1984

Meetings: 7:00pm, 3rd Friday each month  
At Northlake College, Room B-206, Irving, Texas

President: Robert Bayne -- Vice-President: Keith Althar  
Secretary: Richard Roberts -- Treasurer: Earl Bullock  
Editor: Robert Lee Hoffpauer

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 send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, ~~2000~~, Irving, Texas 75061.

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MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS: Dan Johnsen

A couple of meetings back, I volunteered to work with the 'program committee' (which didn't exist at that time). In order to get a better idea of the sort of meetings you would find appealing, all persons at the meeting were asked to complete a 'Membership Profile / Interest Survey' that I just happened to have with me. The results so far have been interesting, but far from overwhelming.

To date, we have 28 responses to the survey. Most all of those responding have a fairly extensive collection of hardware. The biggest surprise is that close to two thirds of the systems include modems. Only one third use communications software, however. I suppose the modems make nice bookends for the rest... Other common hardware items include disk and memory expansion (85-95%) as well as the speech synthesizer and printer (75-80%). Only a couple of p-Code cards and a couple of MBX systems were reported.

In the area of programming languages, almost everyone reports using BASIC or Extended BASIC, but assembler language and FORTH seem to hold the most interest as potential meeting subjects.

There appears to be a good deal of interest in telecommunications software (I'm sorry, I work on large IBM systems during the daylight and can't help myself) as well. Combined with the interest in modems, this seems to indicate a really 'hot' area for possible meeting programs.

Everyone seems to have responded honestly to the 'application preference' question. Over two thirds of our members admit to enjoying games (with about the same number indicating 'Utilitarian' as well). These were followed by Personal Mgt, Business, Education and Graphics/music.

When we acquire software, we seem to be twice as likely to purchase it as we are to write it ourselves. One honest soul (who chose to remain anonymous) admitted his preferred source of programs was piracy! Perhaps that's why the rest of us generally choose disk software over command modules.

A relatively large number of members indicated a willingness to participate in special interest groups for 'programming languages' or 'telecommunications', but then that's a subject for another article...

To round it out, there were a couple of suggestions for meetings devoted to hardware construction projects, and a general outcry for more organized meetings. Our illustrious president is making a very serious effort at implementing a little more organization without making the meetings too formal. He and all the other officers deserve our support and guidance in this effort.

SECRETARY'S MINUTES: Richard Roberts

The last meeting of the Dallas TI Home Computer Group was on May 18, 1984. The meeting was brought to order by club

Whoever becomes editor, I pledge my support and I will contribute an article or column each month. I think it appropriate to call the column, "BOB's BUGS," and I will cover any topics I think are of interest to you -- including FORTH, book reviews, commentary, and my opinions (which you may not find as interesting).

Speaking of FORTH, I know many of you are curious, but don't know much about FORTH. Let me warn you that FORTH is not an easy language to learn. Programmers who are familiar with LOGO will find some recognizable concepts, but FORTH is not LOGO. BASIC programmers, those who only know BASIC, will think FORTH is upside-down and backwards, too. They're right, it is. I am a novice programmer, at best; however, I think the effort expended mastering FORTH will be rewarded with the ability to write elegant and sophisticated programs which seriously rival assembly language for both versatility and speed, and which beat assembler hands-down in the ease of use and effort required to produce a given result.

NEXT MONTH: The History and Travels of FORTH.

president, Robert Bayne. At his request, each person in attendance, both members and guests alike, introduced themselves and discussed ways they use their computer.

The minutes from the previous meeting were read, and were followed by a report from Dan Johnsen about the membership survey, which is also discussed elsewhere in this issue. He sounded the call for the establishment of special interest groups in Tele-communications and FORTH.

Dan then introduced the speaker for the evening, Ross Williams, from the TI Exchange Center. Ross has a strong background in TI's technical division, having worked for that group while in Lubbock. He discussed the establishment of a trouble-shooting department at the Exchange Center, with the goal of reducing the large number of equipment exchanges. Several interesting points were mentioned. First, the RF modulator is the single most often exchanged item, due to the nature of it's electronics. Also, when a console is exchanged, a black console will typically be given for a black console, and a beige one for a beige one. However, there is a possibility that this will not happen. Some beige consoles will not run third party software, and it would be a good idea to check the console before leaving with it. Also, Ross indicated that the existence of the Exchange Center is guaranteed (supposedly) for at least five years, which would approximately take us through October 1988. A question and answer session followed.

#### RANBLINGS FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE: Dan Johnsen

Last month we pulled it off! A real program with a real speaker. We have a lot more interesting meetings planned for the future as well, provided, of course, that no major problems develop.

Its been a while since we've heard from Glenn Ashe and the Library Committee, and he is planning a 'state of the library' presentation for the near future. The software library seems to be one of the things that keeps this group going, so I know you will want to be there for that one.

We are working on getting some guest speakers lined up as well. Since both disk and printer hardware are fairly common to our members, we're aiming toward a program on the 'care and feeding' of your floppy disk drives as well as one that might enhance the use of your printer. I understand there have been some speakers from the various telecommunications services during the last year or so, but it might be time to hear from them again also.

I had really hoped we could get enough people interested to start a special interest group or two (can I say SIG from now on?), but the response was rather disappointing. I still would like to see a Communications SIG and am willing to help get it going, but we need a few more people than just Louis and John Guion (thanks to both of you, but I don't want it to be just the three of us). With more people involved, we could have undertaken a comprehensive review of the local BBS systems and given you a pretty good program. Oh well, I wouldn't ask anybody to do it all by themselves...

As you may remember, Robert Hoffpauer has agreed to provide a program for one meeting (after we come up with four). Does that mean you'll provide every fifth program, Robert? I've been working on some 'bit image graphics' on my Gemini printer and that, along with some printer control utilities, looks like a good candidate for a future program. We need someone that has developed a simple file management (or 'data base' if you must) system to give us a short presentation on it.

This is not all idle chitchat. We really plan to provide these kinds of programs, but we need a little (not much, just a little) involvement from you, the membership. Without it, we might as well tell Northlake to save their electricity...

#### THE EDITOR/ASSEMBLER: Robert Lee Hoffpauer

This is the last issue of our club newsletter that I will edit for some time. My perplexing problems persist. To be honest, I am so discouraged that I haven't had the heart to turn the system on since the last meeting. I am not ready to call it quits, but I don't have the desire to confront the problem, now. I cannot say when I will solve this problem; therefore, I must resign as your editor, effective with this issue.

I wish to thank Richard Roberts for his help in putting this issue of the newsletter to 'bed,' as they say in the publishing business; however, I don't think he should be expected to take over the job on a monthly basis unless he volunteers for it. We need a newsletter, and we need an editor. The job is not a great burden, a small one maybe. If you would consider being editor, or better yet, an associate, be at this month's meeting!

Whoever becomes editor, I pledge my support and I will contribute an article or column each month. I think it appropriate to call the column, "BOB's BUSS," and I will cover any topics I think are of interest to you -- including FORTH, book reviews, commentary, and my opinions (which you may not find as interesting).

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EMPTY SPACE! IT NEEDS SOMETHING.

WRITE US A LETTER.

DROP US A NOTE.

SHARE A TIP.

ANNOUNCE A DISCOVERY.

TRANSFER A FILE.

EXPRESS AN OPINION.

GET INVOLVED!