

BITS, BYTES & PIXELS

LIMA 99/4A USERS GROUP



April 1994

Volume 10, #4

THE 1994 LIMA MUG CONFERENCE - REPORT #2 Friday evening/Saturday May 13&14 Reed Hall, The Ohio State University Lima Campus, Lima Ohio

As in past years this all TI/Geneve event is **TOTALLY FREE**. There is no admission charge and no charge for tables in the exhibit area. The Lima Campus is located just east of the city on the north side of State Route 309, 3 miles east of the junction of I75 and 309. There is ample free parking next to Reed Hall.

INFORMATION: To schedule a seminar, reserve free exhibit area tables, or for any additional information contact us in any of the following ways:

Write the Lima User Group at P.O. Box 647, Venedocia OH 45894.

Phone Dave Szimpl evenings at 513-498-9713

Phone Charles Good evenings at 419-667-3131

Send internet messages to cgood@magnum.acs.ohio-state.edu

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Friday May 13 4PM-8PM.

Saturday May 14 9AM-6PM with on site food service

DISK COPYING:

During the above hours a representative of any user group may make free copies of all disks added to the Lima software library since the 1993 MUG conference. We expect to have about 100 disks (about an equal number of floppies, DSSD disks) available for copying. Details of the contents of these disks will be mailed in mid April to those user groups likely to attend.

REGISTRATIONS TO DATE:

We have received requests for tables and/or seminar time from the following as of March 21; CIN DAY user group

Ramcharged Computers

Asgard peripherals, 1 table and seminar

Bruce Harrison, 1 table and seminar

9449 News, Barry Miller 2 tables and seminar

Mid South User Group 2 tables

Bud Mills tables and seminar

L.L. Conner enterprise

Competition Computer

Barry Traver table and seminar

CONSIGNMENTS:

We will have a "self service" consignment area for individuals wishing to sell stuff. Paper, markers, tape, and envelopes will be available. We suggest individuals mark their equipment with requested sale price and ask buyers to

leave the money in envelopes. The Lima User Group does not offer to provide security, nor do we offer to collect money on behalf of individuals using the consignment area.

VIDEO TAPES:

As in previous years all seminars will be video taped. We will copy these videos for user groups for \$5 per 6 hour tape (pays for the tape and postage) or \$1.25 per 6 hour tape if you provide your own tape. Tapes for this purpose can be left at the Lima table if they are will marked with the owner's return address. As of this writing we don't know how many video tapes will be required.

HOTELS:

Call the hotel of your choice about prices and make your own reservation. Many hotels in Lima have nice rooms for under \$40 per night. They are listed here in two groups; those at the most convenient location near I75 and route 309, and those a bit farther away.

Most convenient location, 5 minutes driving time to campus:

MOTEL 6 (This is the place where most people stay).
419-228-0456

HOLIDAY INN 419-222-0004

ECONOMY INN 419 222 1000

EAST GATE MOTEL 419-229-8085

DIELMAN'S MOTEL 419-225-2806

KNIGHT'S COURT 800-843-5A44

Other hotels a bit farther away

RAMADA 419-228-4251

HOJO INN 419-228-2525

QUALITY INN 800-424-6423

DAY'S INN 419-227-6515

BEST WESTERN 800-528-1234

TRANSPORTATION:

The easiest way to get to Lima is to drive. Lima has no commercial air service, but we will TRY to arrange free transportation for you from the airports of nearby cities. Arrangements are made by members of the local user groups in these cities. If you are flying to DAYTON OHIO (most who fly to Lima use this airport) phone Dave Szimpl evenings at 513-498-9713. If you are flying to COLUMBUS OHIO phone John Parkins at 614-891-4965. If you fly to FORT WAYNE INDIANA phone Homer Kipling at 219-483-8886. Unless arrangements can be made in advance with these people, you will have to rent a car and drive to Lima. Lima is served by Greyhound bus.

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AN ELECTRONIC BOOKSHELF FOR 99/4A USERS

by Charles Good
Lima Ohio User Group

I have access to a large on line library of books which I can download from an information system. I am volunteering to convert any of these books to an on disk format readable on screen and printable from a basic 99/4A with a disk system and 40 column display. After I convert these PC files to DV80 files in 99/4A format the text is nicely formatted in 80 columns and contains no control codes or strange printer formatting codes. Files are between 200-300 sectors in length, and thus cannot be loaded into most TI word processors. This should cause no problems because you don't want to manipulate these files. All you want to do is view them on screen, print them on your printer, and perhaps search for specific text strings. You can use either DSKU, or DM1000, or Funnelweb's Disk Review to do these things with these 200-300 sector text files. Viewing these files is best if you have an 80m column screen. However since the text is displayed on screen double spaced, this makes easy reading an 80 column line on a 40 column in which the left half of each line wraps around to a second screen line. Each original line shows up on screen as a double line of text with a blank line before the next double line of text.

I have already downloaded and converted all the Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur Conan Doyle. The entire series of 56 short stories and 4 books fills 27 DSSD disks unarchived and ready to read (disks 891-918 in the Lima software library).

Members of the Lima User Group can request anything from the following list. I will download and convert the requested titles to DV80 files. The Holy Bible and Sherlock Holmes stories have already been done. The conversion process takes some time, so be patient. Send your list of requested titles to me at the user group post office or internet address. The following titles are available. Everything is in the public domain. Either copyrights have expired or were never obtained.

1. Aesop: Fables, Paperless Edition.
2. Aesop: Fables, Townsend Translation.
3. Albert Hoffman: Problem Child.
4. Ambrose Bierce: Can Such Things Be.
5. Ambrose Bierce: The Devil's Dictionary.
6. Andrew Dickson White: Warfare of Science with Theology.
7. Anglican: Book of Common Prayer.
8. Anthony Hope: The Prisoner of Zenda.
9. Anthony Trollope: Ayala's Angel.
10. Artephius: The Secret Book (Alchemy).
11. Baroness Orczy: The Scarlet Pimpernel.
12. Beowulf (F.B. Gummere Translation).
13. Bible: Elberfelder Ubersetzung Bibel/
14. Bible: Holy Bible/
15. Booker T Washington: Up From Slavery.
16. Bram Stoker: Dracula.
17. Brendan P Kehoe: Zen and the Art of the Internet.
18. CIA: Psychological Operations in Guerilla Warfare.
19. CIA: World Fact Book 1990.
20. CIA: World Fact Book 1991.
21. CIA: World Fact Book 1992.
22. Carl Sandburg: Chicago Poems.
23. Chaos Industries: The Big Book of Mischief vl.3.
24. Charles Darwin: The Voyage of the Beagle.
25. Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol.
26. Charles Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities.
27. Charles Dickens: The Chimes.
28. Charles Dickens: The Cricket on the Hearth.
29. Charles G Roberts: The Forge in the Forest.
30. Charlotte Gilman: Herland.
31. Christopher Morley: Parnassus on Wheels.
32. Dale A Grote: Study Guide to Wheelock Latin.
33. Daniel Young: Scientific Secrets, 1861.
34. David Graham Phillips: Susan Lenox, Her Rise and Fall.
35. David Hume: An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.
37. Doyle: His Last Bow.
38. Doyle: Hound of the Baskervilles.
39. Doyle: Sign of the Four.
40. Doyle: Study in Scarlet.
41. Doyle: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.
42. Doyle: The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes.
43. Doyle: The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes.
44. Doyle: The Poison Belt.
45. Doyle: White Company.
46. Doyle: Through the Magic Door.
47. Doyle: Valley of Fear.
48. Edgar Rice Burroughs: A Princess of Mars.
49. Edgar Rice Burroughs: Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar.
50. Edgar Rice Burroughs: Tarzan of the Apes.
51. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Beasts of Tarzan.
52. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Gods of Mars.
53. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Monster Men.
54. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Return of Tarzan.
55. Edgar Rice Burroughs: The Son of Tarzan.
56. Edgar Rice Burroughs: Thuvia, Maid of Mars.
57. Edgar Rice Burroughs: Warlord of Mars.
58. Edwin Abbott: Flatland.
59. Eleanor H. Porter: Just David.
60. Ellen G White: Steps to Christ.
61. Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights.
62. Federalist Papers.
63. Francis Bacon: The New Atlantis.
64. Frank Norris: The Pit-- A Story of Chicago.
65. Frederick Douglass: Narrative.
66. Gene Stratton Porter: At the Foot of the Rainbow.
67. Gene Stratton Porter: Freckles.
68. Gene Stratton Porter: The Song of the Cardinal.
69. Geoffrey Chaucer: Canterbury Tales.
70. George Mac Donald: At the Back of the North Wind.
71. H Ryder Haggard: King Solomon's Mines.
72. HG Wells: The Invisible Man.
73. HG Wells: The Time Machine.

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74. HG Wells: The War of the Worlds.
75. Hakim Bey: T.A.Z. Temporary Autonomous Zone.
76. Harold Bell Wright: The Uncrowned King.
77. Henry Longfellow: The Song of Hiawatha.
78. Herman Melville: Moby Dick.
79. Horatio Alger Jr: Cast Upon the Breakers.
80. Horatio Alger Jr: Ragged Dick.
81. Horatio Alger Jr: Struggling Upward.
82. JM Barrie: Peter Pan.
83. Jack London: The Call of the Wild.
84. John Buchan: The Thirty-Nine Steps.
85. John Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress.
86. John Cleland: Fanny Hill.
87. John F McManus: The Insiders.
88. John Gay: The Beggar's Opera.
89. John Goodwin: E-Mail 101.
90. John Goodwin: Elements of E-Text Style.
91. John Milton: Paradise Lost.
92. John Milton: Paradise Regained.
93. John Stuart Mill: On Liberty.
94. John Stuart Mill: The Subjection of Women.
95. Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness.
96. Joseph Conrad: Lord Jim.
97. Joseph Conrad: Secret Sharer.
98. Jules Verne: Around the World in 80 Days.
99. Jules Verne: From the Earth to the Moon.
100. Jules Verne: Round the Moon.
101. Kate Stephens: American Thumb-Prints.
102. L Frank Baum: The Marvelous Land of Oz.
103. L Frank Baum: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.
104. Lewis Carroll: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.
105. Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking Glass.
106. Louis Leclerc: Does America Say "Yes" to Japan.
107. Louisa May Alcott: Little Women.
108. Lucy Montgomery: Anne of Avonlea.
109. Lucy Montgomery: Anne of Green Gables.
110. Lucy Montgomery: Anne of the Island.
111. Lysander Spooner: No Treason.
112. MIT: Jargon File.
113. Malaclypse the Younger: Principia Discordia.
114. Mark Twain: A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.
115. Mark Twain: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.
116. Mark Twain: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.
117. Mark Twain: The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson.
118. Mark Twain: Tom Sawyer Abroad.
119. Mark Twain: Tom Sawyer, Detective.
120. Mark Twain: What is Man?.
121. Marx & Engels: Communist Manifesto.
122. Mary Roberts Rinehart: Bab: A Sub-Deb.
123. Mary W Shelley: Frankenstein.
124. Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication of the Rights of Woman
125. Mormon: Book of Mormon.
126. Mormon: Doctrine & Covenants/
127. Mormon: Pearl of Great Price/
128. Nathaniel Hawthorne: The House of the Seven Gables.
129. Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter.
130. Norman Coombs: The Black Experience in America.
131. Norman F Joly: The Dawn of Amateur Radio in the UK and Greece.
132. Odd de Presno: The Online World.
133. Paul Tsongas: A Call To Economic Arms.
134. Plato: The Republic (Jowett Translation).
135. Quran: Quran
136. Rabindranath Tagore: Gitanjali (Song Offerings).
137. Ralph Parlette: The University of Hard Knocks.
138. Robert Louis Stevenson: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.
139. Robert Louis Stevenson: Kidnapped.
140. Robert Louis Stevenson: New Arabian Nights.
141. Robert Louis Stevenson: The Wrecker.
142. Robert W Service: The Spell of the Yukon and Other Verses.
143. Roget: Thesaurus of 1911.
144. Rudyard Kipling: The Jungle Book.
145. Saki: Reginald.
146. Saki: Reginald in Russia.
147. Saki: The Chronicles of Clovis.
148. Shakespeare: Complete Works/
149. Sinclair Lewis: Our Mr. Wrenn.
150. Sir Thomas More: Utopia.
151. Sophocles: Oedipus Trilogy.
152. Steven Crane: The Red Badge of Courage.
153. Thomas Hardy: Far from the Madding Crowd.
154. Tommazo Campanella: The City of the Sun.
155. Virgil: Aeneid (Dryden Translation).
156. W. Somerset Maugham: Of Human Bondage.
157. Walter Scott: Chronicles of the Canongate.
158. Walter Scott: Ivanhoe.
159. Walter Scott: The Keepsake Stories.
160. Wasserman & Solomon: Killing Our Own.
161. Willa Cather: Alexander's Bridge.
162. Willa Cather: O Pioneers!.
163. Willa Cather: The Song of the Lark.
164. William James: Essays in Radical Empiricism.
165. Winifred Kirkland: The Joys of Being a Woman.

DONE

THINGS THAT HAVE COME AND GONE
AND SOME THAT NEVER WERE

Part 1

Trivia collected by
Bill Gaskill
March 1994

Since that fateful Friday in October 1983, when the TI-99 Community was shocked by Texas Instruments' announced decision to abandon the Home Computer market, a host of people, peripherals, programs, publications, and other

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products (just a tiny bit of alliteration there, folks) for the 99/4A computer have appeared. Some are still here, some only passed before our eyes in a brief but bright attempt at life in the TI world, while others turned out to be promises which would never be fulfilled. Regardless of which category they fall under or into, all of them left their mark on the TI Community in some way. Herewith, are some that I remember.

-MG GAMES: Back in the days when Home Computer Magazine was still being published, and when I was still trying to accumulate all of the back issues to 99er Magazine, I remember reading a review of a Craig Miller game entitled Pharoah's Tomb. I was tempted to buy the program based upon the strength of the review, even at the \$20 price tag it commanded back then. But I never have been much of a game player on computers so I didn't make the purchase. Then, out comes the Disk and Cassette Special Edition to the Winter 1988 Triton catalog, and in it I find all the Craig Miller games on one disk (Triton #BHSY) for a paltry \$19.95. I couldn't pass it up. The MG games disk proved to be an excellent value. Unfortunately, Triton offered the MG Games in only this catalog, and then it disappeared. The games were still offered individually, but at a combined cost of about \$70.

Most 99ers know who Craig Miller is and they will acknowledge the contributions he has made to the TI Community since the early '80s. But not everyone knows what an imaginative and skillful game programmer he was. You would have to sit down with this marvelous collection of computer games to see for yourself.

MG Games came as a single diskette with a small flyer tucked into the sleeve that told how to load the games. There were no printed docs because each game allows you to view the rules on screen. The disk version that I bought contains six programs:

- Battle Over Titan
- Pharoah's Tomb
- Casino Blackjack
- Blackbeard's Treasure
- Alphabet Soup
- Crazy Fun House

I am going to tell you a little about each game but first I will tell you that Pharoah's Tomb and Crazy Fun House are my favorites. The reason is the level of difficulty that they offer. All of the games are incredibly attractive in their use of colors, sounds and sprites. The Alphabet Soup game, which is designed for younger computer users, probably in the 5-9 year old bracket, even supports speech. But my two favorites have such an added level of challenge, along with all of the other appealing attributes, that they win first prize in my book.

BATTLE OVER TITAN is a maze game of sorts where you attempt to move a drone across space without getting "zapped" by the bad guys. It works with the arrow keys or a joystick. The drone sometimes moves incredibly slow and the bad guys' phaser seems to have an uncanny knack for knowing where you are. I found the game to be well done, but the basic concept behind it was not as exciting as some of the others.

PHAROAH'S TOMB is simply incredible! Like Battle Over Titan it is also somewhat of a maze type game where you send your team of treasure hunters in to the tomb to grab the treasure and then get out. The trick is to not fall into any of the "invisible" trap doors and to not get caught by the ghosts that can appear. The game operates with the keyboard or joysticks, either of which is equally responsive. The colors used on this game are especially appealing.

When Pharoah's Tomb is first loaded you wait through an initialization period where wave after wave of ghosts (in the form of sprites) are thrown across the screen. Awesome and scary are two good adjectives to describe the sight. When playing the game you can unwittingly get blocked into the tomb by walls that are suddenly built up around you, but each member of your team has an air chisel to hack his way out. In a delightful teasing finale to the game you can display the location of all of the trap doors just before the game ends. There are a ton. It's no give away to show them to you though, since you couldn't possibly remember where they are next time you play.

Even though Pharoah's Tomb is written, like all of the games on the disk, in Extended Basic, it rivals any assembly-coded counterpart in fun, innovative programming and challenge. It alone is worth the price of the disk.

CASINO BLACKJACK is a neat game that offers multiple ways to play Blackjack along with allowing you to play against 1, 2 or 4 decks of cards. It even has a play and teach mode where you can learn the mechanics of the game while having fun playing at it. As the name suggests, Casino Blackjack is the game of 21, pitting you against the dealer. The sound of cards being shuffled is bafflingly real and the graphic depictions of the cards excellent to outstanding. If you like to play this game, then you have found it for the TI. It is as good as two such games I've seen written for the IBM-type of computer and better than a couple of others.

BLACKBEARD'S TREASURE is by far the most spectacular as far as graphics. The opening screen shows a 3-D view of you and your divers on a boat waiting to dive so that you can retrieve sunken treasure. The screen is a cut-away view that shows the water, the ocean floor and everything on it. The problems you have to deal with are the shark-infested waters and the giant crabs on the ocean floor. Here again, Craig has made excellent use of sprites to provide constant but variable speed motions from the threatening sharks and crabs.

The game operates with the arrow keys and lets you alter the movement of the diver up and down and left or right. You have total if not precisely responsive control over the diver. The lack of precise control is a bit of deliberate programming on Miller's part to make the diving effort more realistic. If you were actually diving you wouldn't be able to make abrupt stops or changes in direction. Blackbeard's Treasure doesn't let you get away with that either. It does however let you make diagonal ascents and descents and provides you with more than enough response to the keypresses to avoid trouble (if you're good enough). It's an excellent game that is targeted I think toward the 9-12 year old game player.

ALPHABET SOUP was a real surprise. It is as much an educational program as it is an entertaining game. I laughed at my own inability to gobble up the letters of the alphabet that I found myself chasing around the screen. Alphabet Soup is a Pac-Man type game that uses the joysticks and has an option for the speech synthesizer if you wish to use it. The program is written for the 5-7 year old player and it challenges the player to eat the letters A-Z with a cracker that, like Pac-Man, never stops moving his jaws. How Craig got so many different movements on the screen at the same time is a marvel, and in Extended Basic. This game is sure to be a winner with your little ones.

THE CRAZY FUN HOUSE is really a Pac-Man like game in that your goal is to gobble up a maze full of dots without getting "wasted" by the ghosts. The threats involve only one ghost at times or as many as seven. I found the single ghost to be the most troublesome, because he chases you from "hell to breakfast" as the saying goes. But if that's not bad enough, sometimes the maze becomes invincible and you stumble around blindly trying to get away from the creep.

While the description I just gave might seem to depict a basic Pac-Man challenge, it is not. The game is so well done in its use of colors, sounds and extremely responsive movements that it exceeds the appeal of the famous Atari character. It is simply a great game that will frustrate you at times, anger you at others and give you hours of enjoyment along the way.

-TRITON PRODUCTS COMPANY CATALOGS: Although Triton might have been around as a TI-99/4A vendor prior to the 1st quarter of 1984, I had never heard of them, nor had I ever seen any of their advertisements. But when Texas Instruments chose them to be the "fulfillment house" for any and all lingering obligations left over from the Home Computer business, they became a real and visible factor in our quest for hardware and software products.

I've used the Triton catalogs as a major source of information for my Collecting Cartridges manuscript and continue to refer to them today for descriptions, release dates, retail pricing and other bits of information of an

historical nature. Unlike any other vendor catalog except those produced by Tenex, the Triton catalogs were dated, used color photos in most cases, and contained excellent descriptions of the products being offered.

While I am sure I don't own all of the catalogs printed, I do have:

- Spring 1984,
- Fall 1984,
- Spring 1985,
- Fall 1986,
- Fall 1986 Christmas Edition,
- Spring 1987,
- Fall 1987,
- Spring 1988,
- Summer 1988 Disk and Cassette Software Edition,
- Fall 1988,
- Fall 1988 Christmas Edition,
- Winter 1988 Disk and Cassette Software Edition,
- Spring 1989 (educational cartridges on front cover),
- Spring 1989 (baseball diamond on front cover),
- Summer 1989 Disk and Cassette Software Edition,
- Fall 1989,
- Fall 1989 Christmas Edition.

In several instances, the Triton Catalogs are the most complete reference I've found for some of the really obscure products created for us over the years. For example, try finding much information on Magic Memory or the TI Workshop programs.

As most of us recall, Triton was purchased by Activision in 1990, which put an end to the Triton Products Catalogs. Although Terry Miller still carries on the tradition with the TM Direct Marketing catalogs, it's just not the same. I spent a lot of money with Triton over the years and a large part was due to the catalogs they produced. They not only listed what I wanted, but they also helped me to make an informed decision on whether a particular product met my needs.

THINGS THAT NEVER WERE:

-TI PILOT: Mention of this educational programming language first appeared in the March 15, 1982 IUG Price List, and in the TI Home Computer Program Library brochures produced during the first quarter 1982. But as we know, it was never to appear in the flesh, despite its "later in 1982" release date. TI PILOT required memory expansion, the p-Code card and disk controller to run. Fortunately for us, the late Thomas Weithofer provided the TI Community with a version of the PILOT language that Texas Instruments never did. (BB&P editor's note: The TI PILOT software is available on Lima software library disk 6A9A. We have a copy of the TI

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PILOT docs, redone from a "preliminary" TI original which we can loan to members. C.G.)

-The VIDEOFLEX and FRAME GRABBER cards for the Geneve from Millers Communications in Seattle, Washington. They were announced as being "under development" in December 1987, and were even reported as being shown at a TI Faire in Dallas in 1988, but if they are available yet, it's a well kept secret. Anyone actually have one? If so, please let me now and I will write a retraction.

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THINGS THAT HAVE COME AND GONE
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Part 2

Trivia collected by
Bill Gaskill
April 1994

More trivia about the people, peripherals, programs, publications, and products for the 99/4A that have come and gone in the last decade.

-99/4A NATIONAL ASSISTANCE GROUP: They claimed to be there to help us and provide us with new and innovative products, but they turned out to be a commercial venture that offered virtually nothing new and little that was innovative or even original. Remember when they promised us the "Super Computer--99/B Upgrade", which was supposed to be available in August 1985? What a joke! No loss when this Ft. Lauderdale, Florida based company turned their toes up.

-99ER MAGAZINE/HOME COMPUTER MAGAZINE/HOME COMPUTER JOURNAL: What can you say about these Emerald Valley Publishing Company offerings that hasn't already been said? Well, how about an excerpt from Mike Wright's TI-Cyc on 99er Magazine for starters?

"99er Magazine was the best of times, 99er Magazine was the worst of times. In the innocent days of 1983 we eagerly anticipated each new issue. We would spend long hours keying in Basic listings. We would spend even more hours trying to find the typo that kept the program from working."

"In retrospect, 99er was a beacon of blatant publishing amateurism. The rot started at the top with Gary M. Kaplan, a pontificating publisher who habitually resorted to the poor writing practice of using italics for emphasis. His other crimes included being a puerile pundit and, in the end, a cowardly crook who absconded with subscribers' money.

"The editorial integrity of 99er left much open to question. Could our informed source have been so blind that it could not see what was happening at TI? Or was it neglecting its duty to its readers? Perhaps the ad in Enthusiast 99 showing 99er in the back pocket of TI put the correct spin on the situation?"

Way back in January 1982, when Don Bynum introduced the Peripheral Expansion Box for Texas Instruments at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the infamous friend of 99ers everywhere, Mr. Gary Kaplan, predicted that the new device would be called a TI-Box (pronounced tie-box). Instead, as we know, it's generally referred to as the P-Box or PEB. I have yet to run into anyone who calls it a TI-Box!

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Bits, Bytes & Pixels

So much for predictions by people who pretended to know what was going on in the TI Community!

Despite the negativeness I feel for Emerald Valley publishing, (I lost about \$63 to them because I took a multi-year subscription in an effort to show support) I really did look forward to seeing their magazine in my mail box each month. Too bad...I would still be a subscriber had they not nuked me and so many others.

ACCESS ENGINEERING INC.: According to R/D Computing, this corporation was founded in the Spring of 1986 and was made up of Jim Horn, Chris Bobbitt and Richard Roseen. Their purpose was to manufacture products for the Myarr Geneve, including: AC Basic, AC Pascal, ADOS, AMOS (AEI Multi-Tasking Operating System), and I don't know what else. Too bad the Geneve never had an operating system dependable enough to produce anything for.

-ARRO-SOFT SYSTEMS: the Edmond, Oklahoma firm that supported the TI community for several years with products like Biorhythm, Las Vegas Bandit, SpaceMatch, Create-A-File and Amortize, appears to have gone the way of DATAX and has joined the hordes of computer users and third party manufacturers who now compete in the PC Clone market. I found their ad in the May 1990 issue of PC Resource. They were offering a Lottomaster program along with another application called Biowriter.

-While it's not much consolation to the TI-99ers of the world, the evidence seems pretty clear to me that virtually all "home computers" are being snubbed by the hardware and software manufacturers these days. It doesn't seem to matter whether you own the Commodore 64, 64C, 128, 128D, the Atari 400, 800, 1200 or 1400 XL, or even the Apple IIE or IIC. There just isn't the emphasis on this market that there once was. Obviously users aren't buying product at the low end of the market, or at least they are not buying with enough frequency to justify the cost of developing new products. We should REALLY feel fortunate in the TI-99/4A community to (still) have so many loyal companies willing to take a chance on us. The "Home Computer Market" of the '90's appears to be in PC Clones and to a somewhat lesser degree the Macintosh. Even the powerful Atari 51 and Commodore Amiga line of computers can't compete with the myriad of programs and hardware add-ons now available for anything that runs under an MS-DOS environment.

When Berkley Software developed the GEOS graphical user interface line of products for the Commodore 64 and 64C some years ago, a resurgence of sales surfaced for Commodore, but that subsided to the point where mass marketers like Target stores have now dropped home computers from their shelf space altogether. People just aren't buying those type of machines anymore. Hence they are also not buying the software designed to run in these environments. Sales are the source of profit and profit is the source of initiative and

innovation. If we in the TI community wish to stay alive, then we had better start supporting the folks that are trying to stay with us.

-CHILDRESS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTRACT: Jim Childress probably made a lot of money from Texas Instruments back in the days of the 99/4A. I have maybe twenty 8" x 10" color photos that his firm did of the 99/4A and its peripherals that show the Home Computer off in its best light. The Lubbock, Texas photography shop did many, many more. Unfortunately, they just recently cleared out their remaining inventory of 99/4A stuff and "threw it in the trash" because it had been too many years since Childress and TI did business. Mr. Childress told me there were about 700 photos in the lot that got tossed!

-COMPUTER 99/4A: Anyone who owns one of the beige colored plastic consoles can attest to the fact that they don't have a TI-99/4A label on them like our more familiar black and silver consoles do. Instead, they are called the "Texas Instruments Computer 99/4A". This naming change seems to have been adopted company wide in 1983 because all TI references to the 99/8 also show up as "Computer 99/8" rather than the TI-99/8 name most of us use.

If you look at photos of the Computer 99/4A and the Hex-Bus peripherals that TI had planned for late '83 release you can see why the console color was changed...it was done to match the color of the peripherals. But virtually everything else was changed in color too, including the TI joysticks, the cassette recorder, the Panasonic Color Monitor, the modem and even the facing of the Peripheral Expansion Box. Placed together, they made a very attractive setup.

Texas Instruments advertised Computer 99/4A as;

"Now with state-of-the-art styling. Sleek, compact, low-profile design and a comfortable, efficient, well-organized keyboard with full-travel, sculptured keys".

I've no idea how many Computer 99/4As were manufactured, but they seem to be rather hard to find. They were officially introduced at the June 1983 Consumer Electronics Show, and TI continued to produce consoles into 1984 to complete production runs, but I have never seen a "number" anywhere that indicates how many beige consoles were produced.

I did learn from the late John Guinn's P-Frame manual that some (but not all) of the beige consoles were produced with what TI called "Quality Improved" circuitry, which was TI's way of saying they changed the internal workings so that unlicensed third-party modules wouldn't run. But I don't know if this means that some beige consoles will run third-party cartridge programs and some will not. I've always operated under the impression that they would not,

because even 1983 Atarisoft ads state that some of their games will not run on consoles with the 2.2 operating system.

-CORCOMP PHOENIX (aka CC-99/64): Shortly after the "bailout" by TI the promise of a new compatible computer for the millions who purchased the TI-99/4A loomed on the horizon. The computer was to be manufactured by CorComp of Laguna Hills, California. They fed us information based upon an idea rather than anything that even closely resembled a product and we ate it up in our eagerness to want to believe that it was all true.

Dana Webb, then president of CorComp, first told us that the 99/64, aka the "Phoenix", would have two cartridge slots, but that was changed to three before the hoax ended. He told us the computer would have RS232, Disk Manager, 256 X 256 X 3 display resolution capabilities, and it would have Extended Basic, Speech, and ten octaves of sound generating as many as five voices built in to it. He even went so far as to say that the Phoenix would be offered with your choice of four different keyboards; a membrane style for kids, a calculator or chicklet style for young students, a standard style keyboard for general use and word processing and finally a keyboard with a numeric keypad. And we bought it all, the whole banana! The whole joke was so real at the time that advertisements actually existed from companies who thought they were going to distribute the new computer! Hah! Corcomp never even got to the alpha stage with the project, no less having a beta version available. Boy were we suckers!

-DATAx: This was a company best known for its TI-123, Da-Tax Auditor and The Brain programs. It was owned by Julian Achim, who apparently had some business relationship with a gentleman named Mike Bergen. I mention Bergen because he is the person who announced to the TI World in June 1985 that Datax was leaving the TI market and all of its software was being placed in the public domain. A short time later the whole story was retracted though. Wonder what was behind that?

I ordered the Da-Tax Auditor in October 1986 (I sent my money in like a dummy) and made several telephone calls over the next four months trying to find out why it never showed up. Finally, in January 1987 someone picked up the telephone and it turned out to be Mr. Achim. When I asked him about the status of my 4-month old order, he very calmly replied that he was busy working on the IBM version of the program and I would have to wait. I did get the program eventually, and it was also received in time for me to do my 1986 taxes. Nevertheless, I cried no tears when the company moved to Florida in October 1987 and eventually left the TI market.

-J and KH SOFTWARE: Jim Hollendar was one of the early "gurus" in TI assembly language who tried to pass his knowledge on to others and in many instances did, through the SXB Newsletter. The Arlington, VA firm also gave us Video Titles I, II, Video Titles II Accelerator, Video Titles III,

the Video Titles Combo, Super Extended Basic and Multi-Disk Informer. I don't know if Mr. Hollendar is still in the 99/4A support business, but we haven't seen nor heard from him in several years.

-MICROpendium's SPECIAL BROCHURE: How many 99ers found out about the existence of MICROpendium from another magazine? I did. I found what turned out to be John and Laura's only Compute! advertisement in the June 1985 issue of Compute! on page 105. I sent away for the free "Special Brochure" they offered and the rest is history. I've been a loyal reader ever since.

The Special Brochure consisted of 8 pages of material excerpted from existing issues of MICROpendium, done in the same newsprint material that has been the magazine's hallmark from day one. I might have to send it to the Smithsonian for preservation though, since it and all of my earlier issues are fading badly, despite the dry climate here.

-MYARC GENEVE 9640: Myarc did of course release the Geneve, but never as a fully functional computer. Although it was originally intended to be a standalone computer, as we know it turned out to be a computer on a card, usable only by owners of the Peripheral Expansion Box (PEB). Myarc struggled to make something out of nothing with the Geneve, with next to nothing as far as financial resources. The fate of the 9640, the world's oldest incomplete computer, seems to be sealed now that Myarc has officially closed its doors.

-NAVARONE INDUSTRIES: The California, no Texas, no California firm that produced some great products, but who never could find anyone who knew how to write, no less who knew how to spell! I don't think they ever did produce a truly professional instruction manual for any product they released, as long as they were in business. Even their Homework Helper manual has the photo of the TI on its cover reversed so that the cartridge port is on the left side of the computer. Nice touch, huh?

-OLYMPIC SPONSORSHIP: I'll bet you don't remember that TI was the "Official Computer and Calculator Supplier of the 1980 Olympic Winter Games"? It was, and the fact is proudly touted on many of the flyers and brochures that TI produced in 1979 and 1980. No doubt it cost them several million to do so.

-PHA 2500 SPEECH MODULES: These little known cartridges were designed to slip into the Speech Synthesizer to add new words to the device's vocabulary. In case you ever wondered, that's why the front of the Speech Synthesizer has a hinged top. But TI cancelled these cartridges in December 1981 and placed an official addendum announcing so in with all Speech Editor Command Modules and Speech Synthesizers sold after that date.

-R/D COMPUTING NEWSLETTER: Bruce Ryan's newsletter was designed for the hardware gurus of the TI Community and

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appears to have failed from the lack of an adequate subscriber base. As far as I know, there were 23 issues of the newsletter produced, which started in late 1985 and ran through mid-1987. He may have left a few people holding the bag when he shut RYTE Data operations down, but he did at least do us the courtesy of warning readers before-hand.

-SUPER SALES: In January 1982 Texas Instruments mailed a huge (14.5" x 11") 8-page flyer to all registered 99/4 owners offering 10% off your order of \$100 or more of software, 10% off the price of a Solid State Speech Synthesizer and your choice of \$25 worth of software when you bought the 99/4A Home Computer (presumably as an upgrade/replacement to your 99/4) for the bargain basement price of \$449. The flyer listed over 100 software programs for sale as well as the soon to be obsolete RS232 Standalone Unit, Disk Drive Controller and 32K Memory Expansion Unit. Pretty clever way to reduce obsolete inventory, don't you think? Oh yes, the offer expired Feb 28, 1982.

-TC-99: Remember this snazzy looking piece of hardware? I do. When I spotted its picture in MICROpendium my heart was pumping with great anticipation of a real TI-99 replacement until I read the article that went with the picture. Unfortunately, TexComp's TC-99 PC look-alike was a glamorous looking shell with only a Corcomp 9900 Micro Expansion System for the guts. But even worse, it was only an experiment and never intended for full production. Talk about building myself up for a fall? I kind of wish Jerry Price had produced the TC-99 anyway. I'd have bought one just for the looks.

-TEXNET: Funny, how we seem to have forgotten all about this pioneer telecommunications effort specifically for the TI-99 Community? It was first announced in Source World magazine in December 1980, but didn't actually go on-line until October 23, 1981. Nonetheless, it proved to be a marvelous forum for 99ers during its heyday and to this day is the only commercial on-line information service that could display graphics on the screen.

-TI COMPUTER CABEL: These 5.5' high by 4.0' wide pieces of furniture were used to show off the 99/4A, Expansion system and various cartridge programs, much like you see Nintendo and Sega do today for their systems. They were originally manufactured for the Consumer Electronics Shows that took place in Chicago and Las Vegas, but also appeared at the 99er Magazine TI-Fest in November 1982 in San Francisco. Word has it that Texas Instruments sort of got dragged into TI-Fest and once committed, pumped a ton of bucks into the show in order to make sure it was not a flop. I honestly don't know how true that is, but it makes for interesting conjecture.

-TI SOFTWARE SHOWCASE: Here again, furniture for use by TI's marketing department at the CES shows. This cabinet was also approximately 5.5 feet by 4.0 feet and deep enough to hold four software packages per rack for a total of 144

products per showcase in 6 by 6 layouts. The phulu I have of this display case suggests that it was introduced in late 1982 or early 1983 because all of the software displayed is packaged in the plastic cover/plastic tray that superseded the more common 1043601-1 packaging most 99ers are familiar with.

I don't know where "goodies" like this go when computers die, but I'm told that both Mike Wright of Salem, NH, and Joy Warner of Mt. Baldy, CA have rooms full of TI-99/4A showcase furniture.

-TIGERCUB SOFTWARE: Founded by retired military officer Jim Peterson, Tigercub Software was probably best known for the "Tips From Tigercub" articles that kept many a User Group newsletter alive. Peterson issued his first "Tips..." article in June 1983 and as far as I know continued to write until his untimely death on January 12, 1994. He leaves a void in the TI Community that cannot be filled.

-TRITON TURBO XT BRIDGE BOX: Remember this Craig Miller produced piece of hardware? It was an impressive looking device that connected your TI-99/4A console to a PC Clone chassis called the Triton Turbo XT. It appeared on the scene in March 1987 after a lot of secretive fanfare and speculation, mostly initiated by Craig Miller himself. He announced an un-named product that he had produced for a "major American company" on the TI SIGs like CompuServe's TI Forum. When the dust settled, the product turned out to be the Bridge Box.

When Triton first offered the Turbo XT one could purchase it with the standard PC keyboard, or with the Bridge Box. For reasons unknown to me, they would not sell the Bridge Box separately. It was an either or situation. The \$499.95 Turbo XT came with one or the other, but not both, not at any price. By the Summer of 1989 though, you could buy the Bridge Box for \$29.95 since Triton had stopped selling the Turbo XT and all of the related PC products. I wish I had bought one, just as a curiosity, but I didn't. Guess I'll have to be content with the pictures in my catalogs.

THINGS THAT NEVER WERE:

-The DEMON ATTACK cartridge that was supposed to be ported to the 99/4A according to Charles Lafara's September 1983 Enthusiast 99 article on new software for the 99/4A. Yes we got Super Demon Attack, but we never saw the original Rob Fulop authored Demon Attack program that generated \$15 million in sales for Imagic in the first three months of its life.

-The sophisticated DATA BASE MANAGER that Corcomp was supposed to release which was designed to take advantage of their "memory" cards. Remember the DBMS, word processor and

NEXT PAGE

spreadsheet they promised. The word processor promised probably ended up as WriterEase and the spreadsheet likely ended up as Console Calc (aka TI Planner), but the DBM never made it in any form. Most likely reason is because Galen Read was supposed to write it for them, but he "left town".

-IUG's REPROGRAMMABLE CARTRIDGE LIBRARY: Remember the claim by Charles LaFara that John Phillips' D Station program was only the first of many titles to come in the IUG cartridge library that was to be based upon the Romox Edge Connector Programmable Cartridge (ECPC)? Many of the titles that may have been planned for the IUG's ECPC library showed up in March 1985 under the Exceltec (aka Sunware) banner. Shortly thereafter, May 1985, the IUG went belly up.

- The MECC educational programs that were to be written for the 99/4A in 1982 and scheduled for a fourth quarter 1982 release. According to the June-December 1982 TI Price List, the titles were: Astronomy, Elementary Economics, Elementary Math and Science, Exploring, Math Practice, Metric and Counting, Natural Science, Science Facts, Social Science, Teacher's Tool Box and Word Beginnings.

According to Ms. Terry Leonard, who is one of only a handful of MECC employees who worked there in 1983, neither the MECC-TI agreement, nor the reason for its cancellation were common knowledge among the troops. So it looks like whatever dark secrets lurk behind the decision to drop the MECC products will apparently stay hidden forever.

-The "Programming Language" that DATAX was considering developing. It was to be a high level language that would appeal to the inexperienced user, but it was not going to be anything like Forth or Basic. Looks like it turned out to be just like ZIP, NADA, RIEN, nothing!

****DONE****

More Tips and Tricks
By: Andy Frueh, Lima UG

Remember when people would editing a line and accidentally erase it by pressing FCTN 3? The old advice was to type Fctn P, the " marks, and then press enter. You get an error then get your line back. There is an easier way to do this. Besides using any of the keys that when used alone on a line will generate an error, you can simply press FCTN 4 then retype the line number you accidentally erased and press the up or down arrow key.

And it's a similar thing with OLD CSI. You do NOT have to press Shift E. Just press E. I think the reason people were worried about losing a program is that the old 99/4 usually would lock up the system when an error in cassette loading occurred. This bug was fixed in the 4A. In fact, when loading, you see a "menu" of R)ead, C)heck, or E)xit. These apply whenever you have the option of pressing ENTER. Try it. Typing OLD CSI and instead of pressing ENTER, press C. Then go through the usual procedure. Instead of "R Reading" you see "C Checking."

This isn't a tip, just a question. Does anyone know what the two monitors that TI offered with the 99/4 looked like? The originals, I mean. I've seen the rare 13", but am not sure if the other model (10") is the same as the one we use now or not.

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