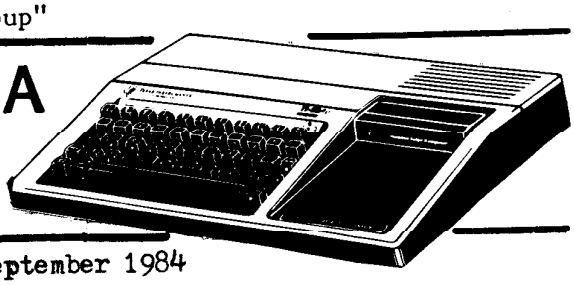
"Indiana's First Recognized 99/4A User's Group"

MIAMI COUNTY AREA 99/4A HOME COMPUTER USER'S GROUP



Vol. 2 No. 4 P.O. Box 1194 Peru, IN 46970 August/September 1984

CORCOMP EQUIPMENT WITHIN OUR GROUP

For anyone who is considering upgrading their present Texas Instruments Computer systems with some of the new Corcomp equipment, please note that we have two members that either now have, or soon will have Corcomp equipment. Jerry Rowe has the new 9900 Disk Controller Card that he will soon be using in the TI P E Box along with the Foundation 128K Memory Expansion Card. Jerry Clasby advises us that he has just placed an order for Corcomp's 99000 Expansion System (the big one).

Jerry Rowe has found that the new disk controller card will not work with the 128K card but advises that Corcomp is aware of the problem and will make the necessary corrections in aprox. two weeks. From looking through the manual, however, he is very excited! He uses a IBM PC at work and says the Corcomp card is better than anything that IBM has to offer. If you want to talk to Jerry about this card or the 128K card catch him at the next meeting or give him a call at (317) 664 1994.

Our second Jerry advises that his 99000 system is on back order because production has not started on this item yet. Corcomp says that this expansion system will be avaible in September or October and they plan on shipping orders to User's Groups first. Jerry Clasby can be reached at our meetings also or by calling (317) 981 2068.

See how handy a User's Group can be?

SOURCE CODE for TI-FORTH. UPGRADE for MULTIPLAN. UPGRADE for TI-WRITER

In August Texas Instruments sent us yet another "care package". This one contained two diskettes containing the source code for Forth along with an instruction sheet. Also included was a diskette that contained upgrades for both Multiplan and TI-Writer.

Multiplan has been speeded up some (Tom Wier says not much) and a auto-repeat feature has been added to the curser motion.

TI-Writer has been given true lower case letters and the form feed has been eliminated while using the Formatter (no more scrap paper for the kids). One file provides a default value for your printer type of "RS232.BA=1200.LF" while another gives a defalt of RS232.BA=4800.LF." One of our members has written another file to give the default of "PIO.LF" also.

If any of this software is of interest to you, it can be coppied on your disk at no cost if you are a member. Pretty good deal don't you think?

PRESIDENT'S CORNER #4

Is Home Computing a winter time sport? It would seem that way. As I sit here trying to think of something to write, I have come to the realization that I can't remember when the last time that I had my computer turned on. The first half of the summer was spent between Little League games or practices and mowing 49,000 square feet of lawn. Then came vacation, eleven days and 4400 miles in the car with two fighting grade schoolers. What I needed was a little push to get me interested in computing again.

Our last meeting provided that "Little Push". At that meeting we had a new member join our ranks. His name is Jerry Rowe and he is from Marion Indiana. Jerry came to the meeting with an Assembly Language program that he had written and plans to market. Imagine that, here was a guy who can program in assembly language! I thought that all those people lived in far away places and were members of the Pittsburgh User's Group. After giving the matter some more thought, however, I remembered that we have at least two other members who can find their way through a TMS 9900 Assembly Language Program. All this has prompted me to dig out my books on Assembly Language programming and give it another try. After all, if they can do it, why can't I?

By now you probably have guessed where all this is leading. It's another appeal to those of you who are becoming inactive in the Group to rethink the situation and get involved. The User's Group can offer you an incentive to keep things going with your computer. Let's face it, they're too expensive to sit around unused.

Dave

KNARR SELLS SOFTWARE

Jim Knarr, son of John Knarr owner of Microworld Computer stores in North Manchester and Peru, has sold a computer program "Micro Typist, Touch Typing Tutor" to Blue Sky Software Inc. of New Jersey. The August 20, 1984 edition of the "Wabash Plain Dealer" reports that Jim will recieve an initial $500.00 plus future royaltities. Jim also took this program to state competition at the Association of Indiana Media Educators Media Fair where he won best of category and where he was advised to market it.

Jim is a senior at North Manchester High School and he has been programming since his sophomore year. He has experiance with Radio Shack, Texas Instruments, Apple, and Commodore 64 computers. "Micro Typist" is written for the Commodore 64 and makes extensive use of graphics and sound. Jim's first major program was written for the Texas Insturments computer and was called "Music Trainer" and it taught tone recognition and musical terms.

You may remember that Jim is a former member of this User's Group. The next time you are in Micro World be sure to congratulate Jim.

HOME COMPUTER MAGAZINE

A nasty rumor is floating around the User's Group network. The word is that Home Computer Magazine is in big finantial trouble and some look for them to fold in the near future. Nobody from the magazine is saying anything but we all have noticed how late the monthly (?) publication comes out. For those of us who subscribe, we can only hope that these rumors are unfounded and we can continue recieving the magazine. Time will tell.

NEW TENEX CATALOG

You should have recieved your new catalog from Tenex Computer Express. The new catalog has 48 pages and is just full of quality hardware and software for Texas Instruments Home Computers. This is just another indication that the market is still hanging in there for our little computer!

There are two things that you should note as you look through this excellent publication. First take a look on page 22. There you will find nearly a half page ad for a piece of software called "The Genealogy Workshop" written by Les and Cindy Cattin. That's right, the same Les and Cindy that founded our User's Group. Secondly please notice that Tenex is purging their mailing list. If the mailing label does not have T5A above your name you will have to notify Tenex to get your name on their permanent mailing list.

Tenex can be reached by writing to P.O. Box 6578, South Bend, Indiana 46660 or by telephoning (219) 259 7051.

A NEW 99/4A MAGAZINE

A new monthly magazine for TI-99/4A owners will be available on September 1, 1984. **SUPER 99 MONTHLY** is the name of the magazine. In a telephone conversation and subsequent letter Richard Mitchell, Editor, stated that his publication will fit nicely between this newsletter and Craig Miller's THE SMART PROGRAMMER. To quote Mr. Mitchell, "My publication will be primarily a user's periodical with limited news coverage."

The newsletter is a commercial venture but will not accept advertising. It will contain 12 pages of information each month. The subscription cost is $12.00 for 12 issues. A special price of $11.00 is available if 10 or more members of a Users Group subscribe and have the issues mailed to the same address. For further details or a subscription, contact the publication at:

SUPER 99 MONTHLY
BYTEMASTER COMPUTER SERVICES
171 MUSTANG ST.
SULPHER, LA 70663

AMNION HELPLINE

Amnion Software of San Francisco has established a helpline for TI-99/4A owners. Dr. Guy-Stephan Romano is available to answer any question about the 99/4A, provide information on hardware and software quality, and sources where both may be obtained. Dr. Romano may be contacted by telphone or letter. The firm requests that each written inquiry contain a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the purpose of returning your answer. The Helpline service is free to everyone whether you own or use their software or not. You may contact Dr. Romano at:

AMNION HELPLINE
116 CARL STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94117
(415) 753-5581
HOURS: 9AM TO 3PM MON-SAT

MICRO-BIZ HAWAII
98-1409 D. KAAHUMANU ST.
AIEA, HAWAII 96701
(808) 488-9491

This firm is very interested in contacting the Users Groups to market their software. The firm has a free catalog available at the address listed above. They offer a 15% discount on all orders of $100.00 or greater. The firm will be releasing new software titles and will notify catalog holders by mail.

A special offer is mentioned inside the catalog. If five software titles are ordered and shipped on the same disk, you pay full price for the first selection and reduce the next four or greater purchase prices by $2.00 per title. Contact owner George Nishimura for any further information you might desire.

Reprinted from L.A.U.G. Newsletter

TIGERCUB SOFTWARE

The Group's mailbox contained a very disturbing letter from Jim Peterson of Tigercub Software this month. Jim has been running a kitchen-table software company from his home in Columbus, Ohio for quite some time now. He sells a line of low cost but quality software for those with a TI computer and a casette recorder. The programs are written in unprotected Basic and are all original programs written by Jim himself. Currently he has over 130 programs avaible at $3.00 each. His catalog sells for $1.00 and this price is deducted from your first order.

In addition to the software buisness Jim also publishes a two or three page newsletter each month entitled: "Tips From The Tigercub". These newsletters are not sold but are sent to the User Groups on an exchange basis. The idea is to promote the software buisness. You probally will remember seeing various programming hints or tips in this and other Group's newsletters that say that they are from Jim Peterson, now you know where they came from.

In his latest newsletter Jim talks about some points that we should consider. It seems that during July he recieved 31 requests for his catalog and only 9 of these were the result of his newsletter. He is concerned that all the newsletters that he sends to User Groups are not circulated within the group's membership. His attitude now is that he no longer can afford to send newsletters to groups that give no indication of them reaching the membership.

We have a file of most of Jim's past newsletters and from personal experiance I can recommend them as very good and informative reading. Please feel free to check-out these newsletters from our correspondance files. You also might consider a software purchase, after all $3.00 isn't too bad is it?

USER GROUP LIST FROM TI

Texas Instruments has sent a revised User Group listing to all those on their mailing list. At least that would seem to be the case because I recieved one in my mail on August 20th. The list is a six page (both sides) listing of all the Groups, listed by state or Country. I noticed that they still have our old address listed. We really should let them know about our new address.

I think that we can expect some more letters inquiring about joining our group now that people have our name and address avaible. We can also expect that anybody who has anything to sell will be in touch with us as well. This should provide us with some interesting mail to read.

SPELLING CHECKER FOR TI WRITER

Those of you who own the TI Writer Word Processer, please note that the User's Group has information on a new piece of software support for Writer. The product is "99/4 AUTO SPELL-CHECK" by Dragonslayer American Software Co. It uses the utility option of Writer to check your text against a set of dictionaries on their two diskettes and then makes the necessary corrections within your text. If you are interested in this product we have a copy of the manual in our correspondance library.

ADVANCED ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE DEBUGGER

In June a Mr. William H. Barniea from Texas Instruments sent another of TI's very welcome "care packages" to all the User Groups. Included in this package was a a piece of software (disk) called "Advanced Assembly Language Debugger". This product was announced prior to the withdraw from the market but was never manufactured. TI has now declared this product free to the public and they hold no clames to it. They add the usual disclamer about no warranties etc.

To use this product your system requires the following: TI99/4A, Editor Assembler, Memory Expansion, and Disk Drive. An optional RS232 and Printer would be helpful for a hard copy printout for some operations. Documentation for this product is on the disk in a file called "Help" so by printing this file to a printer or the screen you have the instructions.

The following is a dirrect quote from the "Help" file mentioned above:

"The SUPER-BUGGER is a very sophisticated and powerful debug tool wich can provide functions usually only avaible on very expensive development systems requiring special hardware. SUPER-BUGGER allows you to actually step through your machine language program, executing each machine instruction one at a time. Enabling you to examine the logic of your program as it is being run. As each instruction is executed, the SYMBOLIC interpretation is displayed on the screen in the same format as it occurs in your assembly source listing, providing a trace of instruction execution."

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this piece of software Tom Wier (librarian) can make you a copy on your disk at no cost if you are a member.

FOUNDATION REVEALS 80 COLUMN CARD

The company that has been selling a 128K card for the TI99/4A has changed its name and is introducing a new product to the TI home computer market.

Foundation Computing, formerly known as Foundation, has developed an 80-column card for the TI Peripheral Expansion Box. The card will come bundled with the Companion word processing program, modified for an 80-column display. The company is also looking into producing other programs for the 80-column card, including a terminal emulator.

According to company official Bill Hunter, the card has been in development since last January. Although prototypes are available, production versions are expected to be produced by the end of July, with delivery to begin in August. Foundation Computing was waiting for delivery of controller chips for the card in early July prior to actually assembling the card.

The card will resemble TI-manufactured cards, Hunter said. The company is also going to start marketing its 128K card in a case that is identical to TI peripheral cards, he said. Hunter said this is because the company wants its products to "look as officially TI" as possible.

The 80-column card can be used with a number of currently available programs in a limited way, according to Hunter. With programs such as Microsoft's Multiplan spread sheet, users can produce an 80-column display of data on the screen by accessing the card as a device in much the same manner as a user would access a printer. Although users can display an 80-column screen in this way, they must actually input the data in the normal 40-column Multiplan mode.

According to Hunter, the 80-column card can provide users with an 80-column display using virtually any program that can access a printer.

The 80-column version of Companion will be able to access the 80-column card directly so that input can be done in an 80-column mode.

Those interested in ordering the card may contact Foundation Computing at (415) 388-3840. Hunter says that the company is taking names but not payments on the cards. When they become available, he says, those who submitted their names first will be given the first opportunity to purchase the card. The card is priced at about $250.

Reprinted From MicroCompendium

P.J.'s CONSOLE COMMENTS

Dave Renkenberger dropped me a note with three questions. The first question was regarding a "random" problem with his console. It seems that on occasion it would "lock up" during program execution. At other times the unit would perform normally. He replaced the console but a diagnostic check indicated that it was O.K.. The question is: Why did this faulty unit check out O.K.?

Intermittent problems are the most difficult to diagnose. You just cannot find a problem if it goes away. A troubleshooter must try to force the problem to re-occur or just wait for it to happen. If the problem does not re-occur during diagnostic checks then the unit will check out O.K..

Second question: How can he protect his unit from a static zapp?

Here are a few steps that may help:

1. Buy a humidifier. Dry air helps promote static charges; a real problem in winter months. The more humid the air, the more difficult if is to accumulate a static charge.
2. Treat the work area with a commercially available anti-static spray.
3. If you use a metal desk touch it before you touch any of your equipment. Also run a ground wire from your desk to a metal water pipe or similar earth ground.
4. Consider an anti-static mat for under your work area. These are available from many computer and office supply dealers. Some of these products, however, are quite expensive.
5. Take your shoes off before you walk over to your computer. Your body will not be as well insulated and will not as readily hold a static charge.

Last question: How can one of those nasty static charges get through a plastic (insulating) keyboard and into a computer's sensitive circuits?

A plastic keyboard may provide insulation for a couple thousand volts. A short walk across your living room carpet can produce charges of 20,000 to 30,000 volts. This great a charge can travel between the keys in the keyboard or through any crack in the computer case. Only 10 to 15 volts need reach some computer components to cause permanent damage.

Keep the questions coming!!! Send all correspondence to: Paul L. Johnson, c/o Miami County Area 99/4A Home Computer Users Group, P.O. Box 1194, Peru, IN 46970

FOR SALE

Household Budget Management	$8
Editor Assembler Manual	$5

Contact Tom Weir at 472-3192

WANTED: A Standalone RS-232 Interface for a TI-99/4A Computer
Contact Paul Johnson (317)472-4636 after 5:00

NEW PRODUCT ANNOUNCEMENT

DFX-PRINT, a bit image screen print utility
*** 100% 9900 ASSEMBLY ***

This is the most universal, the most useful, and the easiest to use of all the currently available screen printing utilities for the TI-99/4A HOME COMPUTER!!!

DFX-PRINT will load from the EDITOR ASSEMBLER, MINI-MEMORY, AND EXTENDED BASIC cartridges.

Hardware requirements are: disk drive and controller, 32k memory expansion, RS232 peripheral, and compatible dot matrix printer.
Compatible dot matrix printers are:

1. EPSON printers with graphics option or any printer with compatible control codes such as the TI-99/4 printer, the GEMINI 10X, the PANASONIC, the BMC, and many others.
2. The PROWRITER 8510 and compatibles
3. The OKIDATA 92 and compatibles

BUT ********** THAT'S NOT ALL!!!!!! SCREEN PRINTS WITHOUT PROGRAMMING OR PROGRAMMING KNOWLEDGE!!!!!!!
DFX-PRINT can print the screen of a BASIC or XBASIC program at the press of a function key without any modification of the BASIC program!!!(99-4A only) It will also print using the LOAD interrupt of the 9900 if special hardware is present. It will also print to a DISK FILE for printing later or at a friends house. DFX-PRINT can print the screen of a BASIC program run including the TRACE function. DFX-PRINT requires no memory that BASIC uses so the largest programs will run.

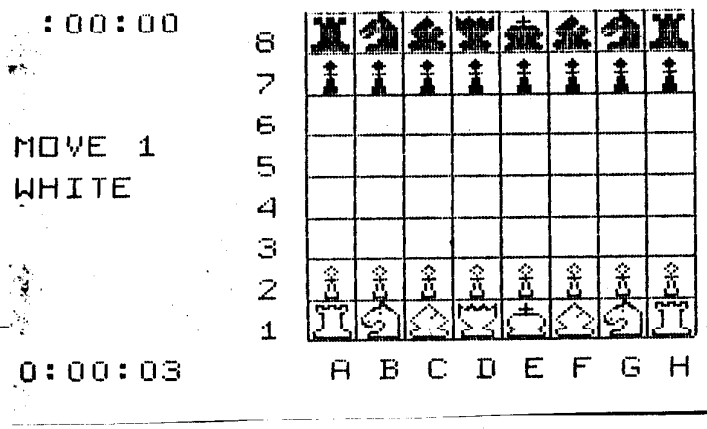
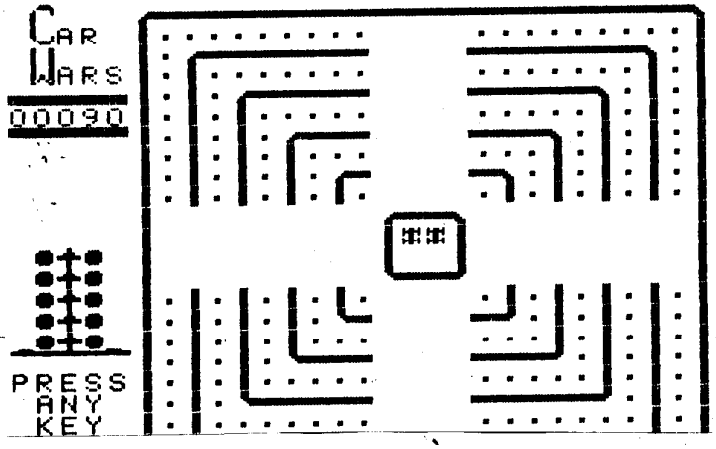
BUT ********** THAT NOT ALL EITHER!!!!!!

If the LOAD interrupt is available, DFX-PRINT will print the screen of SOME SOLID STATE SOFTWARE such as:

TAX INVESTMENT RECORDKEEPING, DISK MANAGER 2, MUSIC MAKER, VIDEO CHESS, MUNCH MAN, HOPPER, and many others.

ALSO>>>>>>>> A version is available for the MINI-MEMORY, cassette recorder, and RS232 interface. This version will print to the above printer and to disk but does not support the LOAD interrupt nor will it print the screen of any SOLID STATE SOFTWARE.

Version 1.0 of DFX-PRINT does NOT print sprites.
>>>> Demonstrated at: Miami County Area users group meeting <<<<
>>>>>>>>INTRODUCTORY OFFER ** LIMITED 7 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE
To order send: $ 24.95 for the disk version POSTPAID
$ 19.95 for the cassette version POSTPAID
Add: 5% Sales Tax for Indiana Sales.

To: DATA FLEX SOFTWARE
4420E 100N
Marion
Indiana 46952

All orders shipped as soon as possible but allow 4 to 6 weeks. Allow extra time for personal checks to clear. Money orders and cashiers checks accepted and orders sent out in one week or less normally.