net99er news

Newsletter of the North East Tarrant County TI 99/4A Users Group

NEXT MEETING:
SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 4th

CLUB OFFICERS

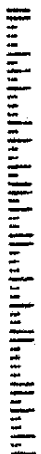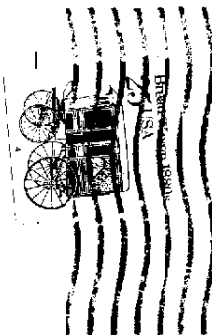|	
President	James Crosson
Vice President	Charlie Bathman
Treasurer	Lee Deforest
Secretary	David Shivers
Membership Chairman	Bill Duncan
Librarian	Joe Torres
Newsletter Editor	Tom Collins
TI-NET BBS SysOp	Phil Chappell

TI-NET 581-1421 $300/1200$—7E1—24 hours

File 13, yes I think I will call this column the new and glorious, super-fantastic file 13. On second thought how about just file 13, o.k., well now we have this accomplished I wonder if I should apply for a vacation from our club treasurer, old Morey Bags himself, Lee Deforest. Maybe not, there probably isn't enough money in the account to go anywhere, except maybe Waco, and who in their right minds would want to vacation in Waco. Alright if I can't take a vacation on the first month of my new job, well I guess I will just have to go to work.

For those of you who didn't make the last meeting this is to serve fair warning, someone elected me president, and I thought I was holding my hand up to go to the restroom. Heck, I was thinking of voting for Bill, thats what the newsletter said to do. Alright if I was elected to serve I guess this means that you all have less sense than I do. Cause I ain't never been a waiter.

Now, lets get down to business. In the past we were usually rocked to sleep by the reading of the minutes and the treasury report and and the state of the club as someone else would see it, but that's going to change. In the future I plan to have the minutes and treasury report and state of the club and all other club business wrapped up in the first thirty (30) minutes and get on with the show. For those that disagree with this, being a fair-minded man, I have a nice set of pistols with which to settle all arguments. One thing, however, I get the one with the bullets in the chamber.

In the past we also found ourselves wandering around the room for 10 to 20 minutes, instead of starting the meeting, like we should. This needs to be corrected, since we have paid for the time that only a few are getting to take advantage of. Next, the problem of people talking during the demo of the disk of the month and other club business. This needs to stop, because this detracts from the program and its not fair to those of you who are trying to learn something from the demo. I know in the past a number of people have come up to me and others and started asking me or someone else a question while someone else is trying to present a program. My solution to this problem is for people to ask their questions early, before or after the meeting or during the break. If you can not wait to talk to this person, please !! see if they will go out of the room with you to settle things, so that others will not be disturbed. Your consideration for others would be appreciated.

A number of people have asked me if I thought that the TI was dead. My answer is absolutly NO WAY!!! If I thought that it was dead, I would be ready to move on to some other machine, maybe. However, I have not seen another machine that interests me like the TI, except the new 9640. I mean after all there is still new software coming out and new hardware being made available every day. For those of you that have never used or seen a Ramdisk, you should take a look at one before you cast stones at this little machine. Speaking of which, I am placing the order for the boards tomorrow and hopefully we will have them in our hot little hands very soon. Also, Lee (Money Bags) is trying to get a deal worked out on the parts at a very good

purchase price, I'll keep you informed.

By the way, the last meeting we set aside an extra hour for members to show us some of their problems and give us a chance to fix them, if possible. However, the problem was one that required more ability than we could muster. In the future we will try some more of these problems, but we will set aside a certain amount of time for each problem and solution, so that everybody will get an equal amount of time. We also plan a library swap for the month of (March). For those that would like to stay and copy certain things from the library, please let us know who you are and if you want to stay the extra hour. Remember if we stay the extra hour, the club has to pay the extra money, which means we collect one($1) dollar from each participant that stays. At the next meeting which will take place at the N. Richland Hills Community Center at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 4, 1989 I plan to ask your help to make this club a better and more far reaching club than it has ever been before. To do this I need some people to volunteer to do some jobs for the club. These jobs aren't hard or require special expertise, just a little of your time and a little work. Just remember that if it was not for the club, how many out there would krow how to do anything with their 4A, its time for everyone to lend a hand and say yes, I want to help my club and each other for the good of 4A and all it means to us. Chip in, you'll like it and it will make you feel good, and besides you might just learn something. Lets make this year the best that the TI 99/4A has ever had, stand up and be counted, to coin a phrase, we're doing it all for you. Have a great year and see ya at the next meeting. The Pres James Croston

----- Editors Input -----

Another issue brings more discussion about TI Writer. WHY? Well to me TI writer has become one of the most useful programs for me and I dare say quite a few users. It has many good features and some faults. For the price and the system we have it is extremely versatile for just about every kind of word processing chores one would need. There are other word processors on the market and we hope to shed some light on these for the rest of the group. There is Word Writer, Writer Ease, Micro Word, and just recently released PRESS, which has the feature of WYSIWYG or 'What you see is what you get'. Word processing has come a long way since the advent of TI Writer. But it still one of the best. If you don't use it or have a printer, take heart! My son uses it for mass storage of his Baseball Card collection. A printer isn't mandatory for this type of use. But if you do use a printer give it a try. If you have children in school, printed homework is usually allowed and encouraged by some teachers. It shows the teacher that the student is developing in other areas as well as the host subject. homework printed this way is a lot neater too. I use TI Writer to produce the 99er News, and produce a printed page of all pertinent data for my job. I am also working on a TI Extended Basic Program that will produce a diskette catalog in DV80 format for use a disk cataloger for my library of disks. That's all this month, I hope to see ya'll at the next meeting!!! Tom Collins - Editor

As assistant librarian my duty is to provide the library to members of the NET99er computer club. In order to check out the library you'll be asked to sign for the library, and it must be returned within one week. Hope you enjoy every bit of the library as you possibly can. Please take the time to write down any errors you encounter with any dist you are working with. If you do come across any problems please let us know and we would be glad to look into it and try to correct any errors. Thank You.

Head Librarian ----- Joe Torres ------- 817-838-8640
Asst. Librarian --- Ken Dominiec ----- 817-656-1473

----- TREASURY REPORT -----

The month of Jan was very good for the club as we had six new members and a couple of old ones renew. We collected $ 480.24 in dues and other items and had expenses of $699.00 but we started the year off with $778.84 and that leaves us with a total of $560.08. - Lee De Forest - Treasurer

----- MEMBERSHIP REPORT -----

In December we had a good month with three members renew their membership. they are Ron Miller Mike Bowen and Rosie Steel. These members have been with us for some time and it's great to have them back for another year. Please look at your card or newsletter label to see if your membership is past due. Attendence total December - 24. January was a great month for the Net99er's we had 5 new members join us. We would like to welcome: Gail Young and

Robert Stromole
2121 Estrada Ptwy #911
Irving, TX. 78061

Frank Williams
216 Myrtle
Hurst, Tx. 76053

Michael Southern
3700 Horizon Pl
Fort Worth, Tx 76133

Chuck Tolsma
6841 Middle Rd
Fort Worth, Tx 76116

All of the Net99er members welcome you. Next month Bill Durcan will be your Membership Chairman and hope we can produce a current list of all the members. Attendence total Jan - 31 - Ken Dominiec

----- For Sale -----

3 Slot Captains Wheel Expansion System $30-\
3 Disk Drive External Power Supply $30-----see Ken Dominiec 656 1473
3 Black Keyboards $5 each------------------\
3 Biege Keyboards $5 each------------------\
1 External Disk Drive case and P/S $20------\
Clone XT Compatible Keyboard $20-------------see Tom Collins 738 2428
1 13 ' TI Color Monitor $100----------------\
1 RS232 Stand Alone $50--------------------see Lee Deforest 237 9746

Bill Duncan opened the meeting and welcomed all new members. The treasury report was read and accepted. Startext rates were discussed. Startext rates went down due to dropping stock quotes from basic rates and they absorbed the tax increase. Startext also contacted us to put on a demo at a future meeting. Nominations for officers were taken:

President   James Crosson
Vice Pres.   Charlie Bathman
Treasurer   Lee Deforest
Secretary   Dave Shivers
Member at Large Ken Dominiec

Officers were accepted by acclimation. Dues were raised from $15 to $20, this would include BBS access. This was accepted by the membership. Avatext 300/1200 baud modems would be a group purchase for $65 and $1.50 for shipping. The cable for the modems would be $7.50.

The admendment to the constitution on the subject of active member as stated in the last newslettter was accepted by the membership and copies of the bylaws will be handed out at a future meeting.

A club buy of ram disk boards for $30 from Bud Mills was discussed.

James Crosson did a demo of the disk of the month and there was a buy sell and swap before the break.

After the break Tom Hall gave out certificates of appreciation to all out going club officers, newsletter editor, and BBS Sysop.

The TI Writer program was given by Ken Dominiec and Phillip Chappel out of the information in the last newsletter. The extra hour was used to sector edit Chester Johnson's blown file on a disk. All the kings horses and all the kings men plus all who stayed couldn't help put Chester's file back together again. - your substitute secretary - Ken

----- What is it? -----

This month we will take a few steps back for the new users/members who recently joined the club. This will be a discussion of disk drives. First the obvious question - What is it? Well.....a disk drive is data storage device. An electronic file cabinet so to speak. If you have been using a cassette system to store your programs or data, you will be amazed at the speed that a disk drive saves and loads programs and data. If your program took 2 minutes to load from cassette, then it will usually take less than 30 seconds with a disk system. Remember that this time doesn't incluce the time needed to 'RUN' and for the computer to set all the variables, arrays and tables, we still have to contend with that, but still the improvement is nothing short of FANTASTIC. Now for the second question - Just how much of the system do I need to use a disk drive? This is a question with MANY answers. The first will be the use of a Stand Alone Controller. The computer cannot access a disk drive without one. It is a device that handles the data produced by the computer and directs it to the disk drive for storage. A Stand Alone Controller simply connects to the right side of the console via the I/O port. The second system is the Peripheral Expansion System. This

system is a box that will allow you use a Disk Controller Card. The system also has 8 slots for various other cards to be discussed in a later article. It performs basically the same as the stand alone system but it allows one use of Double Sided Drives (discussed later in this article). Finally there is the aftermarket controllers. These are made by Myarc and CorComp. They have a few more features than the TI offers such as Double Density. They can be had as a card or Stand Alone also. This covers the controller portion of this article. We now venture into the realm of Disk Drives. Again there is a multitude of drives available that will work with a TI computer. There actually too many to list here. I will try to explain what I am familiar with. My first system came with a Shugart 5 1/4 model 400L drive. It is what is called a SSSD (single sided single density). It is the least configuration for a system (the most basic). A word of note: Just about every Fairware and Commercial piece of software will require only this basic of a system, but read the documentation first before you buy if possible! The next step for one could be the addition of a second disk drive to your system. This can be done several ways. You can purchase a drive 'bare' or with a power supply. I have noticed that the surplus Tandy (Radio Shack) drive power supply with case are excellent for this purpose. The price usually $25 to $75 depending on where you shop. When adding the second drive I recommend that you have someone help with the connection and setup. It isn't complicated but it is frustrating to the novice. One suggestion is come to the meeting with your drives and ALL cables needed to connect it and pay the extra fee for the extra hour and we will help you as much as we can. More on the drives now.....SSSD (360 sectors in single density or 90K), SSDD (720 sectors in double density or 180K), DSSD (720 sectors in single density or 180K), and DSDD (1440 sectors in double density or 1440 sectors), sound confusing? It can be to the new user. These are the various 'configurations' that will be described for use with the Texas Instruments system. Keep in mind that to fully use your system, you don't NEED the most sector storage available or the most drives your controller can handle. Most systems now are setup with 2 drives and they are perking along happily with little problems for their owners. The double sided and double density options are simply the luxuries that most of us can't afford. Kinda like having electric windows versus hand cranks on our cars. You can pay for it but it can still be done less expensively. So here it is folks, I hope I answered a few questions for you and please don't hesitate to ask at the meetings. - TLC

On the HORIZON ----------

For all you electronics whizzes out there who ordered the HRD 2000+ circuit boards, some good news. Mr. Mills has assured us the cards will be shipped soon and we should expect them by the next meeting. There is also a deal in the works with Bud Mills for the parts kits sans ramchips and batteries of course. We'll keep ya'll posted and we'll also be planning a SIG to start building these boards. When it is up and running there is no comparison to a Horizon RAMDISK!!! Tom Collins - Editor

----- Magazines and other Publications -----

For those of you wishing to get a bit of first hand information in the TI world, the following is a list of the most popular current publications that deal with the TI-99/4A.   NOTE: These subscription rates may have changed! Contact the publisher for the new rate!

MICROpendium $17/Yr
P.O. Box 1343, Round Rock, TX 78680
The current leading TI-based magazine, featuring columnists, technical articles, latest news. 48 pages.

NATIONAL NINETY NINER $12/Yr
3535 S. H ST #93, Bakersfield, CA 93304
Basic Newsletter format, but on a national scale.

SMART PROGRAMMER/SUPER 99 MONTHLY $18/Yr
171 Mustang ST, Sulfur, LA 70663
A merger between two publications, combining a collections of tips/tricks and "Programmer" oriented tutorials.

TIPS FROM TIGERCUB - TigerCub Software VARIABLE
156 Collingwood AVE, Columbus, OH 43213
Small newsletter-type, featuring various tips on programming. Usually distributed to User Groups in trade for newsletter. Distribution cost varies with format and volume. Send $1.00 for catalog.

COMPUTER SHOPPER $18/YR
P.O. BOX 1419, Titusville, FL 32781-9990
Over 300 pages of various ads for hardware and components, in an 11x14 newsprint format. Only two monthly TI articles, but offering a wealth of hard-to-find bargains on hardware.

GENIAL TRAVeLER $30/6 Issue
835 Green Valley Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19128
A new idea in publishing, a Magazine-On-A-Disk. Each issue comes on a "Flippy" SSSD disk, to accommodate all equipment formats, and is crammed to the brim with 716 sectors of programs, tips, articles, etc.

----- Thanks and a Hat-Tip to the: -----

David Everitt
Sealed Air Corporation
4400 Diplomacy
Fort Worth, Texas 76155

For there recent donation of some excellent Anti Static Bubble Wrap for picking and shipping electronic devices and equipment. We appreciate the help. They have other types of packaging materials there too so if you need some, give them some business! - Prez Jim