Vol.9 No.02   February 1991

NEW HORIZONS

NEWS LETTER

NORTHWEST OHIO COMPUTER CLUB FOR THE TEXAS INSTRUMENTS 99/4A

AND THE MYARC GENEVE 9640 PERSONAL AND HOME COMPUTER

This newsletter is published by New Horizons TI-99/4A Home Computer User's Group. Material may be reproduced without permission provided that the Author and the source are Acknowledged. For more information consult one of the following officers: Yearly Dues $15.00 per Family or Individual............
    THIS MONTHS MEETING FEB.09,1991 SATURDAY AT UNITY CHURCH 12:30 PM.
        Behind Wendy's off Secor Road on Executive Dr.

```
        TI-COM BBS....................1-419-385-7484

        PRESIDENT...Earl Hoffsis      1-419-475-8461
                    ADDRESS:  See Below

        VICE-PRES...Bud Hills         1-419-385-5946

        SECRETARY..Marilyn Schafstall 1-419-882-6870

        TREASURER..Richard Taylor     1-419-472-7298

        SOFTWARE LIB.John&Chris Demey 1-419-475-3871

        NEWSLETTER LIB. Burr Mallory  1-419-882-6769

        EDITOR....Marilyn Schafstall  1-419-882-6870

        TECH SUPPORT..Don Turner       1-419-474-6135
```

Lord let us pray
for PEACE but let
it happen only
in it s duetime.

N.W. OHIO 99'ERS USER GROUP
/FIRST CHURCH UNITY
3535 EXECUTIVE PARKWAY
TOLEDO OHIO 43606
ATT EARL W. HOFFSIS

Dallas TI Home Computer GP
PO Box 29863
Dallas, TX   75229

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Earl Hoffsis

The new year has begun with a fast pace as always. Ye president and newsletter editor 'toiled' till a late hour to get the January letter in your hands prior to the last meeting. With more experience, this should be a breeze!

During our last meeting, we decided that through sending copies we would make known the contents of our library to all, including those unable to attend the meetings. This project is underway.

The mail this month brought requests for information on the TI from the Bowling Green area and through a drop in, we have a potential new member who requested information about our club and plans to meet with us on the next meeting date. As you can see, we can still attract TI'ers through extending our advertising scope as mentioned at the last meeting. See copy of the MICROpendium article in this newsletter.

Let's give a hearty welcome to Richard Taylor in his capacity of New Horizon Treasurer! This will give your president more time to get involved in getting the information out to others.

We have a lot to offer through our library, newsletter exchange program, disk sales, and general expertise in various areas to our members and others in the TI computer field.

Come, and meet with us on Saturday, February 9, 1991, at 12:30 p.m.

NEW HORIZON MINUTES

January 12, 1991

The meeting of the New Horizon Computer Club was called to order at 12:35 p.m. on January 12, 1991, by our President, Earl Hoffsis. There were 15 members in in attendance by the end of the meeting.

Because the minutes were presented in the newsletter. The treasurer, Earl Hoffsis, made a correction to them concerning the balance on hand on December 1, 1990. It should have read $397.03, instead of $417.03. Roger Feinauer moved that the minutes be accepted as corrected; John Dewey seconded; minutes accepted.

Earl then gave the treasurer's report for January; after receipts and expenses we had, on January 1, 1991, a balance of $433.40. Bud Mills moved we accept the report as presented; Bill Tiep seconded the motion; report accepted.

Because Earl has accepted the President's position, it is necessary that we have a new Treasurer. Chris Dewey moved that Richard Taylor be appointed as our new Treasurer; Roger Feinauer seconded the motion. There was a unanimous ballot cast for Richard Taylor for Treasurer.

The January MICROpendium is available. There was an article about getting TI's "out of the closet" - unused ones, that is. It is possible that we could help some handicapped with unused TI computers. There was a discussion about putting an ad in the West Toledo Herald, requesting that owners of such computers make them available to the club, or

come to the meetings and learn how to do things they need. Roger offered to print a flier and Earl will make up the ad for the Herald. We will re-print the article elsewhere in our newsletter for all to read.

Since our membership has dropped some, and income is less, there was some discussion about finding a different place to meet that would not cost us $30.00 per month. It would mean moving equipment, but we did that in our early days, so could do it again. 13 members have renewed their membership.

There was discussion about our Library of TI materials. Chris and John Dewey have a list of its contents available for borrowing; Earl suggested that those be photocopied for each member to have a copy. It should also be available to to those who are not able to attend, and the materials made available to all, including the handicapped.

Burr Mallory also has the Newsletters from other chapters available for borrowing.

A set of joysticks was brought to the meeting for the person from last month who needed them. Bill Tiep donated a monochrome monitor for club use, wherever needed.

The 50/50 drawing of $11.00 was won by John Dewey, giving him $5.50 and the club $5.50.

Door prizes were a game disk, won by Illie Strobell, a mug, won by Dennis Majewski: and the club disk, Re-disk, won by Charles Strobell.

PRESIDENT'S DAY NOTES

From Plain Talk by Larry Hale

Most of us accept as fact that which is taught us. That may be why we believe that George Washington was the first president of the U.S.

Actually six presidents preceded him!

How did this happen? In 1781 while Washington was still fighting the last battles of the revolution, the colonies joined together in a loose union under the Articles of Confederation which needed a leader, and elected John Hanson "President of the United States in Congress Assembled". Washington wrote his congratulations to Hanson on his "appointment to fill the most important Seat in the United States."

Hanson resigned after a year because of ill health and six successors followed. It was eight years after Hanson's election that the 13 states ratified the new Constitution and Washington was elected under the Constitution. He was the only president we've had who was elected unanimously, and he was termed "The First President of the United States.

****

Bill Tiep moved, and Roger Feinauer seconded, that the Meeting be adjourned. So moved.

The afternoon meeting was concluded with Earl demonstrating a Mortgage program; Roger demoed Re-disk, which was this month's club disk.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Schafstall
Secretary

USING TI BASE   -   PART II

by Richard Taylor

There is a saying that goes "when all else fails read the instructions". This is especially true with this software. Before you even take the diskette out of the sleeve, and this is really tough, read the book from cover to cover. You will find that this is a little different from other softwares as it has its own language to make it work. This language is similar to basic with some differences. It takes a little getting use to, even for someone who programs. Beginners shouldn't worry because there is documentation in both the book and the tutor disk. In some ways you are ahead because you won't have any preconceived notions of how the program would go.

Now that you have read the book, (chuckle), you are ready to turn this puppy on. The very first thing you do is MAKE A COPY of the master diskette. Place the copy in Dsk1, then take option 2 of extended basic. If you are using E/A loader then take option 3, Dsk1.TIBASE. If you have mini memory then select option 3, then function 6, then option 1 Dsk1. TIBASE. After it is loaded it will ask you for a date. Enter the date in double digit format, 02/13/91. A setup file will then appear and a period will be at the bottom of the page. This is the command line on which you will do all your work. To start you simply enter "DO (filename)" and press enter. There are two ways to create the command file. One is by using the modify command. Type MODIFY COMMAND(filename) and press enter. You are ready to enter command code.

The second way is through TI-WRITER. This allows you greater flexibility. Do not use line numbers like basic. When done you save the file with PF (print file) to your disk. The filename cannot exceed 8 characters and you must put "/C" on the end of the name. You can also review command file in TI-WRITER. The command language, as you can see, does differ some from basic. However, it's also very similar, but the way it works is different. The language is sequential. That means it goes down the list. This is a little different from basic in which you can jump around with "goto" and "gosub" and "call sub". So when you plan your program you have to rearrange your thinking a little. The only way to repeat is the WHILE command. This allows repetitive items done till a condition is met. The CASE command allows you to branch to another command file. RETURN will come back to the last command file. You can nest five command files.

Now comes the hardest part, setting up your database(s). This requires lots of thought. You must set your objectives on what you want your database to accomplish now and in the future. You may use more than one database to fulfill your objectives, and with the command language you can mix and match at any time. You must keep in mind that you can have only 17 fields per record and 255 characters per field. You can have up to 16,129 records, or the limit of a diskette. You can have up to 5 databases open at any time. To open a database you type USE DSK2.VCR and the database VCR will be open in the slot that you are currently in. You can

CORRECTION to "GIFFY Picture Loader" Ver 0.7

Article by: R.J. Bieber - Southern Nevada Users Group

While attending TI-Fest West '90 in Tucson, Arizona I had the opportunity to talk with a very personable young man by the name of Barry Boone. Unfortunately I caught him just as the announcement came over the PA-system that he was about to speak in one of the conference rooms. However, before he dashed off I was able to see a quick demo of his "GIFFY Picture Loader" program, which I immediately purchased.

Barry said the program had one minor bug in it which he would fix Saturday night and have ready for distribution early Sunday morning. Barry had to leave early Sunday to catch his flight back home,

****

TI-BASE (continued)

select the slot also in the command file. To create a database you simply type CREATE (filename) with the file in the edit mode, and you can set up your perimeters for that file. After you are done push F8. It will ask you if you want to enter data at that time. Now that a database is open you add to it by APPEND. The record will goto the next one after the last field is filled or you F8. To stop F9. As you can see from the manual, TIBASE can also do file management as well from the command line, such as delete file, record, directory, sort and disk initialization. It is a versatile language setup. Next time we will look at a command file and try to set one up.

but I did get the corrected version of the program before he left.

A few days later, back in Las Vegas, I archived and dearchived both versions, ran a file comparision and found only one byte was different between them.

So for those of you who have the "GIFFY Picture Loader" Ver 0.7, there's an easy way to get Barry's correction without having to exchange programs. Just make the correction yourself as follows:

Using a sector editor such as DSKU use the Find String feature and look for the hex (>) string 06A0 2846 0760 or go to the sixth sector of the program and look for string 06A0 2846 0760 starting at byte >5A (decimal 90). Change the >46 at byte >5D (decimal 93) to read >9A. Your string should now read 06A0 289A 0760. Write the sector back to disk and you're finished. For those of you who aren't familiar with "GIFFY Picture Loader", the program will run on BOTH the TI-99/4A and the Geneve 9640 computers. A monitor is recommended. You have the option of loading either a GIF or TI-Artist format picture into VDP memory and viewing it on the screen, AND it will convert genuine GIF pictures to the TI-Artist format. The program is fast and easy to use.

BUSY!

BUSY!

BUSY!

ONE MORE TIME ON GENEVE
MONITOR CONNECTIONS

by Rudy Johnson - Southern
Nevada Users' Group

Since I started the President's Message, I received an RGB monitor which I ordered (from Scott Distributing, RD 3 Box 3166, Pottsville, PA 17901; order phone (800)447-0895.) The model which I ordered is a Magnavox 8CM515 priced at $210 plus $12.07 shipping. It is one of the preferred monitors for both the Geneve and the AVPC unit made by Dijit Systems.

I had to do some thinking on how to hook up the unit, as it comes with a cable to hook it up to a PC via a TTL port. The analog port is a 6-pin DIN type which has inputs for both horizontal and vertical sync signals. My dilemma was that my Geneve outputs a composite sync signal. So I wasn't sure which pins to hook up to which output pins on the Geneve. I had previously picked up a couple of the 8-pin DIN plugs that are required for the Geneve port but didn't have the 6-pin DIN plugs that go into the monitor. Fortunately I discovered that Radio Shack is now carrying both types of plugs, as well as a 9 conductor shielded cable. So I had the parts, but not the smarts (yet).

However, before I started to do any wiring, I took another look through the Geneve manual and got to the back part in Appendix E where the pinout of the ports are given. I happened to notice that in parentheses after the "Composite Sync" notation was included "Vertical Sync". I thought, "It's worth a try." So I connected the Geneve composite sync output to the vertical sync. input of the monitor (and all the other color, audio, and ground hook-ups to their match. Voila! It worked the first time!! After all the times where I have had to slave for hours over something that didn't work as expected, it was great to get something to work the first time. So the final pin to pin hook-ups are:

Geneve 8-Pin to 8CM515 6-Pin Signal
1 no connection +12 Volts for RF Modulator
2 3 and Ground shield of audio cable
3 no connection Audio (RCA type plug)
4 no connection. Composite monitor
5 4 Red
6 1 Green
7 5 Blue
8 6 Vert Sync (CSync on Geneve)
no connection 2 Horizontal Sync

I'm not certain, but I think that this model monitor also is delivered with a DB-9 type connector. I suspect that the pins would have to be connected in a similar fashion by following the pin outs given in the manual for that unit. I hopes this helps someone else in getting over the hook-up problem as I have seen some monitor hook up instructions that wouldn't work here and must have been garbled somewhere along the line as they made no sense in the hook ups that I know to have worked.

GETTING MORE TI'S OUT OF THE CLOSET DEPENDS ON THE HUMAN INTERFACE

By Randy Cook (Parsons, KS)
Reprinted from
MICROpendium, December 1990

The scenario is a common one. After buying a Texas Instruments 99/4A computer from the bargain table at a garage sale, the proud new owner begins the search. He or she goes into the local software store to browse at the available titles. He looks through the seemingly endless shelves of IBM, Apple, and Nintendo programs to find what software is for his TI computer. After a futile search, he turns to the sales clerk for assistance. Some are polite, and some sarcastic. Others didn't know that Texas Instruments made computers. This potential customer then leaves the store with the misguided opinion that no software exists for the TI machine, and that maybe it wasn't such a bargain after all.

As a reader of MICROpendium, you know this to be untrue. However, to the large number of second-hand TI owners who know nothing of the supporting TI community, this negative idea is the only logical conclusion.

Knowledgeable computer users must correct this view. With a little determination and effort, the average TIer can make a difference.

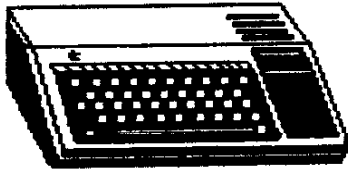Go to that local software store and talk with the clerk or owner. Realistically, it should be understood that you are not going to convince them to stock TI merchandise, unless of course you happen to be an exceptional salesperson. You might, however, get the store to direct those "lost TI'ers" to a reliable company or person who does have information on the TI. It has been my experience that most store owners will happily assist local users and user groups in publicizing and contacting the owners of specific computer types (even if they don't sell that brand). Mention the fact that the TI 99/4A uses 5 1/4 diskettes, just like the IBM and Apple. Many popular printers, monitors, and joysticks (for those owners of the Atari adapter) will also work with the TI. A printer requires ribbons and fanfold paper regardless of the computer it is attached to. An informed store owner will recognize the potential sales that are possible without the need to stock a single TI specific product. It is to their advantage to help you.

Another suggestion would be to advertise. Other groups do this, and the expense is minimal. A small classified ad in your local paper can draw a bnumbe of lost TIers out into the open. To those who respond, you can give the name and address of a few mail-order retailers to contact. A photocopied list o suppliers would give a concrete connection to the rest of the TI community. An example of an ad might read: "For information on finding TI99/4A software/hardware, contact John Doe at (123) 456-7890." The cost of 13 words at 25 center per word comes to a total of $3.25 (rates based on my own local paper).

But the best source for locating TI owners is through personal contacts. The number of TI 99/4As surrounding you might come as a surprise. With 2.5 million units sold, TI computers can be found in some very unlikely closets. Your job As a dedicated TI enthusiast is to clean those closets and prompt the owners to dust off that console and start making use of this powerful machine.

Keep your eyes and ears open. When you spot a familiar black and silver console, offer to help them with both your experience, and any public domain software that you might have. Be sure to tell the computer owner about the grea software titles and harware expansions that are now available. Give them information on mail-order retailers and of maga-zines like MICROpendium.

To convince them that their TI 99/4A is a better value than any video game machine or other more expensive computers, compare the $9.95 price tag of Atarisoft's Donkey Kong (price from Tex-Comp), to Nintendo's price of $44.99 or Atari's 7800 version for $24.00 (prices from Sears). Or any other piece of arcade, educational, or business software. Informing the public is the key.

We already know that the Texas Instrument 99/4A computer is still a great value, and has a promising future. Let the rest of the world know it too.

RS-232 CARD CONFIGURATION

From "The Breadboard" news-letter of the Tidewater UG

One of the major advan-tages of the TI-99/4A Home Computer over other PCs is the number of standard in/output ports available, par-ticularly the capacity for four standard serial ports which is unheard of with most computers. Many users are not taking advantage of this capability due to the incon-venience of having to send a functioning RS-232 card to TI in Lubbock for free but "PERMANENT MODIFICATION", as the TI RS-232 manual's adden-dum states.

The required modification is not really permanent except in the fact that it does require that a component on the card be unsoldered and relocated since TI did not provide a strapping block to facilitate the change such as CorComp did on their clone RS-232 card. The TI RS-232 card may be field modified for Primary (port 1 and 2) or Secondary (ports 3 and 4) operation by moving resistor R5 at the base of U15 between the upper (normal) position indicated by the component outline for primary operation, and the lower, un-outlined, postion at PTH1 for secondary use.

This procedure can be in-finitely reversed although a strapping arrrangement would would provide a better pro-tection for the circuit com-ponents if frequent changes are anticipated.