



THE PUG PERIPHERAL



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
PITTSBURGH USERS GROUP

OCT/NOV 1993

TI News By Gary Taylor

I was at the Chicago fair last weekend and picked up a few items of interest. The first being the "Mdos Final Release" for the Geneve. Release 1.52 comes in two flavors: the F version for floppy loading and the H version for the HFDC. Berry Miller of 9640 News told me that all known bugs have been fixed and that this was the definitive operating system for the Geneve.

The Dutch TI-Users Group was at the faire and I picked up a copy of their demo disk. It has some interesting programs on it that I will demonstrate at the meeting.

Bruce Harrison has discontinued selling copyrighted software. He is still writing programs but will release them to the public domain when they are ready. I picked up one of his latest called "Sandwich". The function of this program is to convert an option 3 editor assembler program an option 5 program. I will be demonstrating this program at the next meeting and it will be available for all who want a copy of it. It has docs on the disk.

As you know I bring a Corcomp mini expansion system to our meeting. It has a full height DSDD disk drive in the power supply case. At the end of the Chicago fair, Competition Computers sold two 1/2 height DSDD disk drives with power and data cables for \$20. I snatched up one of these and have installed it in the power supply case so we will have two drives for demos

at the meetings.

MS Express Software had two new products introduced at the fair. Both of them were authored by Mickey Cendrowski. The first is called Genealogy Plus!. This is a collection of TI-Writer templates and a TI-Writer database. There are two additional database files on the disk, one is in Personal Record Keeping format. the second is in TI-Base format. You can choose which database is best for you and create a database file containing the names cross referenced with their data sheets, lineage numbers, and charts.

I apologize to Mickey for not being able to recall the name of the second product. I think it was an anthology of Adventure games. Perhaps Mickey could bring it to the meeting and demonstrate it for us.

I purchased a copy of Ken Gilliland's manual on "How to use the Printer's Apprentice" which I will have at the next meeting. It is a tutorial guide which attempts to explain the functions of TPA.

The SCSI disk drive controller was not available. The SCSI was introduced last year at the fair and cards were sold without the DSR chip. A year has past and the DSR is still not available. A prototype was in use by Mike Miksimik creator of the MIDI interface.

The TI emulator has moved ahead another step. It now supports Sprites. Mike Wright demonstrated the TIPC software running on a MS-Dos compatible 486/50.



~~~~~ TI-101 ~~~~~

## OUR 4/A UNIVERSITY

by Jack Sughrue  
Box 459  
E. Douglas MA 01516

#6 THE COURSE TEXTS

In order for you to pass this course, Class, you have to have a decent working knowledge of the texts. Now, here is where we practice lots of flexibility (which, you may have noticed, abounds in this classroom). There are so many wonderful texts (and a few dogs) available for our TI, even now, that you should consider at least three for essential reading and the final projects. These will be worth one-third of your entire grade.

By texts I mean textware: the printed materials for your TI's. These would include your very best source, of course, the newsletters that come with club membership. This newsletter networking is THE BEST SOURCE of all because you are part of a group, even by long-distance mail.

Another essential source of educational and survival materials is the magazine devoted to your specific computer. There have been many, but there is only one left: *MICROpendium*. It's the only international source for all things (including advertisements) TI or Geneve. To own and use your computer to the fullest extent and not subscribe to *MICROpendium* is like owning a marvelous pair of eyeglass frames but not getting around to putting the lenses in so you can see properly. The subscription (from P.O. Box 1343, Round Rock, TX 78680) is only \$25 per year. Tiny price to keep your great computer great.

The third source is what we're discussing today, Class. And, yes, Ms. Bronte, this will include references to adult learners as well as to children.

The third source is the texts available. Note the word "available," Class. Availability of text written a decade ago may seem impossible, but not so. Most user groups have extensive libraries of texts for long-term loan. Individuals within groups sell off their text materials often. Such text materials can be found very inexpensively at every TI fair in America and Canada. And, again, *MICROpendium* lists agents and individuals from whom you may purchase lots of printed materials. For example, if you all look up here for a moment. I am holding the latest copy of THE magazine. Those up back can't see it, so I'll read it to you. "99-cent Book Blowout!" It's a publisher's clearance. You can buy books at 99 cents each. These include the following: THE ELEMENTARY TI, GAMES TI's PLAY, COMPUTER PLAYGROUND, PROGRAMS FOR THE TI COMPUTER, USING & PROGRAMMING THE TI, INTRO TO ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE, and Volumes I & II of GAME WRITERS PACK and STARTER PACK, both packs from England. Some come with disks and/or cassettes at additional charges. But the point is this: these are still new books that cost on the average \$12-plus when they first came out. They are still the same good books, still new to anyone who has not read and used them, and still available at almost giveaway prices. Not all ten of these books will suit every learner, but there is certainly something for everyone included in this collection. And that's just from the TEXCOMP ad (P.O. Box 33084, Granada Hills CA 91344; Phone: 818 366-6631). There are other advertisers in

classifieds that also offer all kinds of text materials. So, Class, the stuff is available to anyone who wants it.

And did I mention Barry Traver? No? Wow! How is it possible that we are practically through this semester on such an important topic as the TI-99/4a computer and I did not mention its greatest advocate, the man who has done as much for the TI as any spokesperson for any organization that I know of. Rather than list all Barry's writing and speaking and programming efforts, his work on BBS's and for various magazines, his appearances at numerous fairs, I will just mention the relationship he has to the present topic, though I'm not sure it might be better saved until we discuss things next class. Ah, well, what the hell. Barry has a wonderful educational tool in the form of a diskazine. This diskazine is called GENIAL TRAVELER. The "zines" have been nothing short of remarkable. Volume after volume have been rich with educational wonders and remarkable, big bonuses. You have to experience GT to appreciate the jam-packed series. There's nothing like it.

Though I've given you Barry's address in a previous class, I'm well aware that some of you have not taken careful notes. Barry can be reached at 835 Green Valley Drive, Philadelphia PA 19128. I think when you send off for your magazine subscription today, you should also send a note to Barry asking about the cost of the numerous disks in his volumes of great materials.

What made me think of Barry is that one of the disks includes the second most complete list of all TI publications there ever was. A little synopsis goes with each. The first most complete list was in a series called NEW-AGE/99 by some old geezer from Massachusetts. I can't think of his name now, but I'm sure you can find references to him when you go searching through newsletters. He did a lot of reviews, too, but I think he approached things more from a visceral level than an intellectual one. Anyway, Barry's your better source here because of all the other things contained in the GT disks.

Now where was I, Class? Oh, yes, texts and tests. You'll be having some of this on the final, so wake up in the back, stick your gum behind your ears, and listen up! With your pencils.

Before I go any further, TI-ing or otherwise, I have to insist you get your hands on a copy - any copy - of THE SECRET GUIDE TO COMPUTERS by a bizarre and hilarious genius by the name of Russ Walter (22 Ashland Street #2, Somerville MA 02144-3202). This 8X11, 600-plus page, mindbogglingly wonderful book for layman or technowhiz is bursting at the seams with all you'll ever need to know about computers. Now in its 16th edition, it's a steal at \$15, but if you order two they are \$12 each. Four or more are \$9 each, shipping and taxes (except Massachusetts) included, so hook on with some friends or your user group. Once you have this remarkable and remarkably readable book in your hand (considered the world's top-rated tutorial by a list of experts and novices as long as your arm and a lot longer than mine), you will never again be the same; nor will your computer. You simply have to experience "Russy-poo" in order to understand that this is THE essential book for any person who owns a computer.

That aside, let's look at some very specific educational text materials for our TI.

First, there's a problem. When we talk educational text material, we must eliminate the modules and anything related to LOGO, as we will deal with these educational items on a particular basis in future classes.

Second, we must define educational in the specific context with which we have been structuring these classes. That means we really have to eliminate the "learning" that comes only from learning about the computer. Texts that teach us how to write programs, for instance, or

texts that teach us how to balance a budget using our wonderful machine, are not really appropriate here, but typing in programs that specifically deal with education DO fit our class requirements. For example, the C.W.Engel book STIMULATING SIMULATIONS FOR THE TI-99/4A published in various forms from 1977 to 1984 by Hayden Publishers, was the first important educational tool for me. Not only did it have detailed instructions and flowcharts for each of the type-in programs, but it had enough errors from translating the programs from other computers to the TI that the intellectual puzzles of figuring out what went wrong and correcting it were wonderful educational opportunities. Many of the programs were "intellectual" games, rather than arcade. Later, with toots and whistles, they became more "arcadey" in other people's books, including other Hayden books. Hayden published the most TI-specific books. I wish they still did.

Ah, well. STIMULATING SIMULATIONS, though, is not the kind of text we need to locate and use for educating our youngsters and new oldsters.

The best book of the learning to program type is KIDS AND THE TI-99/4A, which also leads to some educational programs, too. It's the clearest, most direct, easiest "programming" book. Done in 33 lessons, it is still used in many classrooms today: not just with TI's but with other computers, also, and at very young grade levels. THE ELEMENTARY TI, mentioned in that TEXCOMP list earlier, is probably the best of that sort for adults.

But the kind of books which best exemplify the educational aspects of the programs typed in - in other words, the LEARNING FUNCTION - are the ones I'll hold up now and give a say a word or two about. Another one from the TEXCOMP 99-cent list is COMPUTER PLAYGROUND (Datamost's TI version). Although this can be classified as a beginner programming book, it is so unusual that the logic it teaches in an incredibly entertaining way makes it a real winner for any learner. (It's geared for Grades 2-7.) The book is a combination workbook/coloring book and deals with BASIC in such a puzzle-solving way that it becomes, itself, a complete course in thinking. It stands alone.

This is not to be confused with TI PLAYGROUND by Fred D'Ignazio, another Hayden book. Fred also wrote a similar book called TI WONDERLAND. Both books include programs written by students, and ALL the 40-plus programs are written FOR students. Each chapter is an educational game that is introduced with a section for parents and teachers and another for kids. Each game has one educational feature (such as subtraction) and follow-up activities that allow an almost unlimited number of modifications. The programs aren't just alphabet and number programs. Because it's a TI, the computer is able to have programs that teach color and music and drawing and hand/eye coordination very readily through these marvelously childlike and truly sophisticated programs. Very easy to type in and change all along the way. Lots of very positive rewarding, too.

Lest you think Hayden was the only publisher for TI - though I'd recommend you seek out their other books - there were many others, as you can see from these piles on my desk. Take, for example, TI GAMES FOR KIDS put out by COMPUTE!, one of the very best publishers of TI stuff, including Regena's two classics.

TI GAMES FOR KIDS proclaims its purpose right on the cover here: "Turn your TI into a teacher. Thirty-two games that teach and entertain, ready to type in and run."

This book takes the trouble to identify each of its activities by age level (3 to 17/adult) and educational function and subject: strategy, logic, memory, coordination, language arts, social studies, math, etc. (Strategy games include an excellent version of Fox and Geese, by the

way.)

As I look over these other books, it's hard for me to say which I would recommend the most for educational use. I have a public school teacher friend who still uses the TI in his class. His favorite educational book is TERRIFIC GAMES FOR THE TI99/4A by Hal Renko and Sam Edwards. Let's see, this is published by Addison-Wesley. It has small size and type but is plenty thick. It contains some neat little drawings, to which you people up front can attest, for the 30-plus games. There are some unusual ones here: Genius at Work, Escher, Rainbow Square Dance, The Wolf and the Five Little Goats, Shakespearian Shuffle, Mini Mancala, and so on. Good stuff.

Remember, now, most of these are not made to be super arcade games. They are made to be typed in - usually with lots of explanations and helpful hints - and are meant to teach something while entertaining. And they do that well.

One of the most popular books ever of this sort was (and is) Steve Davis's PROGRAMS FOR THE TI HOME COMPUTER, self published in large 8X11 format. Although the type-in programs included many utility programs, the majority were educational or verging on the educational (like "Bar Graph Printer" and "Talking Calculator," for examples). There are very few people who did not get hung up on the probability games like "Ten-Up" and "Lucky Seven" or the maddening "Echo" of Simon fame. He even has a "French Teacher" program and a "Speed Reader." One of the best.

Scholastic book publishers released a pile of multi-computer large format books, each containing about 40 programs for elementary school children to type in and use. Here's an example: COMPUTER OLYMPICS. Each of the books has a theme. This one is all Olympics. It opens with the torch that lights the Olympic Flame. There are programs that teach words in various languages; some that let you recall other records; some that require some math skill (like the weightlifting one) or word skill (like the rowing one). All are simple to type in, no matter what your computer, if you follow the rules on the various basics, and all are simple to execute. Actually, with the built-in motivation of the Olympics in Spain, this book on summer Olympics is perfect for teaching at home or school. Look into the other Scholastic books, too. They also teach you lots about the various basics, if you want to do some explorations. With the TI, though, you can easily slip in some color and sound not readily available on other computers listed in these books.

Because our time is running short and we only have a couple more classes this semester, I've got to finish off with these last two books, but, as you can see, I haven't even been able to talk about all these others in these piles. At the last TI fair I went to, I picked up additional copies of 19 different titles of TI books! (And paid a grand total of \$15, by the way.) Now everyone will be able to take two and give a two-minute review of each next time. You may come up and sign out two (or three, if you're interested in extra credit) to do for your reviews and your end-of-term projects.

Meanwhile, let me just mention these last two books. If you can get yourself a copy of Richard Mowe and Ron Mummaw's ACADEMIC TI, do it; even if you have to pay the full \$12.95. It's worth it. Published by Reston in 1984 (one of the newer books mentioned today), it was one of the few books totally devoted to TI as an educational tool. It told parents and teachers how to get the very most out of our computer EDUCATIONALLY. When you read the articles and do the worksheets and explore the options from modules to disks to LOGO to word processing and so on, you will be astounded at how magnificent our machine is and how out-of-date it isn't. It still does all the educational things it was

geared up to do better than any other machine out there. Which is not to say it is as sophisticated as some of the biggies, but what it does educationally it still does better than anyone.

And the last book. Remember this, anyone? Ah, it's good to see so many hands up. THE BEST OF 99er is still around a lot of fairs and user groups. It's 368 8X11 pages are jampacked with all the goodies that made the 4a the prize goodie of all. And Regena was really kicking up her heels in this one. Do you recall "Name That Bone" and all the Homework Helpers? The Computer Assisted Instruction was so popular with the TI then, the term was simply CAI. And everyone understood it. There was so much of it around for parents, teachers, and other kinds of humans. The BEST OF 99er is one of the very best.

So. Class. unless there are any questions, come and sign up for your books and ... Yes, Mr. Shakespeare? What do I consider the Mother of All TI Books? Hmmm. Well, my personal favorite for more reasons than I can begin to list, including some super educational reasons, has got to be Paul Garrison's THE LAST WHOLE TI99/4A BOOK: PROGRAMS AND POSSIBILITIES, published by Wiley Press in 1984. Even after all these years it is still my preferred TI piece of textware. It's 460 pages are lucid, witty, intelligent, relevant, and very worthwhile. The tutorials and the programs are excellent. They DO provide unlimited possibilities for growth. I never loan out my only copy of that one. Sorry.

Until next time then. Don't forget to bring your book reviews and all of your modules.



FROM THE LIBRARIAN. . .  
by Sue Harper

Hope to see everyone at the November meeting - want to let you sports fans know in October we kept up to date on the Steelers game, so there goes THAT excuse. And we all know that everyone needs some time with good friends!

At any rate, in October fifty disks were added to the library, many of them from the Lima fair, and others from other reliable sources (like Gary!) By the way, I think the whole TI community owes a great debt to the folks in Lima for all their hard work collecting software and making it so available to the rest of us. THANKS!!!!

Some of the new disks are for the Geneve, some for the TI, and hopefully, most for both. The latest edition of DM 1000 is here, and can easily be put on your Funnelweb disks to update them. More Page Pro graphics, TI Base tips, games like 4A Flyer and Death Drones, a program that will read any DV80 file and read it out loud to

you (speech required of course), music, enhancements to Extended Basic, a new Assembly tutorial, files for use with Sound FX, a resident screen dump program, Funnelweb 80 column editor and Funnelweb supplemental files, a 'cheater' file for TI Runner, a tutorial on uses for Funnelweb, and more!

And, as if those aren't enough, I have sixteen disks to review, categorize and add to the library in addition to eighteen disks that I was given at the meeting to add for November.

Currently, our library has over 1300 disks, and as you can see is growing every day. My friends, the TI remains the computer that the people refuse to let die! And new programs are popping up all over. Come to the meeting and check them out! And, if there is something you need help with, speak up, and there is bound to be someone there who has found and worked out the solution, and can help you do the same.

See you at the meeting . . .

## COMMANDLAND #8

by Sue Harper

Pittsburgh Users Group

As the weather turns colder there is more and more time to spend next to a nice, warm computer terminal!! How's that for a lead in???

I would just like to take a moment to express my surprise and pleasure at being mentioned in articles by Earl Raguse and also by Jack Sughrue. I consider my efforts at this column to be quite BASIC, no pun intended, but it IS a good one! I must admit that I never considered myself to be a 'programmer', just someone who knew a few things and wanted to pass the fun along. Thanks for the recognition.

Well, this month I want to help all you programmers with the use of five new words: TRACE, UNTRACE, BREAK, UNBREAK, and CONTINUE.

TRACE, UNTRACE, BREAK AND UNBREAK can be used either as commands or statements. CONTINUE, which can be shortened to CON is only used as a command and must never have a line number. (Quick review: statements occur in a program and must have a line number. Commands do not have line numbers, and tell the computer something to do before, during or after a program.)

TRACE tells the computer to print out at the bottom of the screen what line number is currently being read, before it is executed. Now, you may ask, why would anyone want to do that? Well, suppose you wrote a program, or received a program that would not work - perhaps half work and then crash. By typing in the word TRACE and pressing the enter key and then RUN (enter), the program will again begin, but when it crashes, you will see the line number of the last line that worked. This will allow you to skip over the sections that work and go straight to the heart of the problem. To get the computer to stop tracing the line numbers, simply type in UNTRACE (enter) with no line number, and the next program run will not have the line

numbers displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Using TRACE inside a program is easy. Just type in a line number as follows:

```
130 TRACE
```

UNTRACE in a program works the same way.

One problem with the TRACE command, is that it really messes with the screen display, graphics and words disappear under numbers and this can confuse some people. The first few times I used TRACE, this happened to me. I found it impossible to make sense out of anything because the letters, graphics and numbers were appearing and moving too fast. It is a command that takes some time to become comfortable with. So, give it a few tries.

BREAK is another debugging help. Without a line number before the word BREAK, the program will halt at the line number that follows the word BREAK. For example:

```
BREAK 120
```

If the first example is typed in after a program is in the memory, the RUN command will run the program until line 120 is reached, when the message:

```
>BREAK 120
```

will appear. At this time you can see if the bug has been revealed or if it is further on in the program. If you make no changes, CONTINUE will have the computer pick up where it left off and finish the program. But, if you edit the program and then type in CONTINUE, it won't work. Use UNBREAK 120, and RUN.

Using BREAK and UNBREAK in a program work the same way as they do outside a program, except BREAK can be just the word BREAK with no line number, or, if it is followed by a line number, the break will occur at that line. UNBREAK is never followed by a line number.

Enough words for now - next month some more about these, and examples.

## SUPER SPACE ACER

Copyright 1992 by Julius Software

A Review by Sue Harper

Pittsburgh Users Group

This game is indeed a fast action game, and I believe would be enjoyed by most if not all 'rocketship charlies.'

The program is written in C99 by Mike Ward, requires Editor Assembler or Supercart. Chose option 5 and type in DSK1.BOOT, and the title screen will load. Pressing the fire button on the joystick will load the game and begin the action.

In the game you are the Super Space Acer, and your mission is to destroy attacking vessels, and reach and destroy the mothership. Completing each level takes you to the next level which has the same format. There are five levels, and by destroying all five motherships, you win. There is a bit of help along the way, in the form of 'power-up capsules.' These add to your shields or your fire power.

The game runs very smoothly, with very nice graphics. The enemy ships fire weapons that follow you when you move, so just moving right and left does not work. Some real strategy is required here. To defeat the mothership, you must shoot out the engines. This, too requires more than just aiming at a big ship and hitting the fire button repeatedly.

These elements provide some unpredictability to the game, which is a welcome change to those who like a challenge, and grow tired of playing a game where the bad guy always goes the same way at the same speed. Also, for those interested in the history of the game, a 'short story' is included about how the daydream of Bob Shumway comes true as he becomes not a sixth class sanitation engineer, but Super Space Acer, hero of the skies. It may not win any literature prizes, but it's a nice touch.

Limitations with the game, documentation and such include the lack of an extended basic loader, even though there are over 100 sectors available. Also, there is no statement of add ons needed, other than the directions to put the game disk in drive one and to use Editor/Assembler option 5. I assume the expanded memory is also needed, but perhaps not. A last quibble is that there is no score. Either you win the whole enchilada, or just get GAME OVER. From my experience, gamers like to compare high scores. With this game, you can compare how many levels you got through, but there are no 'points' for hitting ships or any other action.

The game itself is fast, well thought out and interesting. It is available from MEDIA WARE SOFTWARE, 2141 NW 64th Avenue, Suite 15, Sunrise, Florida 33313-3950.



A Review by Gary Kuehn

Pittsburgh Users Group

## DISK OF THE ANCIENT ONES.

BY KEN GILLILAND

At the last P.U.G. meeting on September 12th. Gary announced that he would pass out copies of the software that was purchased at the Lima faire. The price of this software was free, of course that means that it wasn't really free, because we have to do a demo it at a future meeting and write an article for the newsletter. How easy this sounds, doesn't it?

In my haste I passed up some really good games and chose Ken Gillilands "Disk of the Ancient Ones". Little did I realize that the package had 4 disks until I opened it later that evening. (The first sign of trouble.)

Since I am using a Geneve some software can cause problems. I was anxious to see if this would work so I loaded up Extended Basic and put the program disk #1 and waited to see what would happen. Well, to my surprise and pleasure, I was greeted by a neat title screen that looked just great.

You are given 4 options with the title screen:

## A. An Historical Overview

This is a series of DV/80 files with information on ancient life.

## B. Scenes form the Ages.

A slide program of the pictures on the various disks. These pictures are in TI Artist I format and can be used by other programs as well. There are also pictures in P format to be used by TI Artist and other programs as well

## C. The Labvrinth of Minow Game

A great game in the Tunnels of Doom style. Find your way through a very hard maze to the exit. Watch out for the Minotaur!

## D. The Hieroglyph Translator

With this section you can write any phrase or name in English and it will be changed to Hieroglyphics. Print them out and pass them around. A neat tool for the Egyptologist. If only it were in reverse!

The only part of the program I had problems with was this last tool. The joystick and fire button worked sporatically but I was able to overcome this by playing with the keys until I found one that worked. I don't know if it is a Geneve problem or a program problem but I suspect the Geneve.

The pictures are very good, showing a lot of time was taken in the drawing process. The text files are informative and if you are a history buff, wait until you see your name in Heiroglyphics!

All instructions are clear even if you don't bother to read the manual first. The manual, incidentally, was written using The Printers Apprentice for MDOS by Mike McCann and looks just great.

Disk of the Ancient Ones gets an A.

THE PUG MEETS  
ON THE 2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH  
AT WHITEHALL BOROUGH COMMUNITY ROOM  
100 BOROUGH PARK DRIVE  
WHITEHALL, PA.



|               |         |
|---------------|---------|
| NOV 1993      |         |
| S M T W T F S |         |
|               |         |
| 7             |         |
| 14            | MEETING |
| 21            |         |
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|               |         |

|               |         |
|---------------|---------|
| DEC 1993      |         |
| S M T W T F S |         |
|               |         |
| 5             |         |
| 12            | MEETING |
| 19            |         |
| 26            |         |
|               |         |

CLASSES BEGIN AT 3PM  
GENERAL MEETING BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 6PM

|              |               |              |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| PUG OFFICERS |               |              |
| Pres:        | Gary Taylor   | 412-341-6874 |
| V Pres:      | Rick Keppler  | 412-941-3559 |
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|             |                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| SCHEDULE    |                                 |
| 3PM....     | SET UP                          |
| 4:00PM..... | News + Demos From CHICAGO FAIRE |
| 6-8PM       | MEETING                         |

DUES \$15/YR



PITTSBURGH TI USER'S GROUP  
P.O. Box 8043  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216



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NOV 10th



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