

# THE SNUGLETTER

FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

Volume 7 - No. 2

February, 1989

## NEXT MEETING

6:30PM MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1989

NEVADA POWER COMPANY MEETING ROOM

6226 WEST SAHARA AVENUE

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm happy to report that there has been a positive response to the pleading I've been doing concerning fattening the club treasury. Although there wasn't anything particularly interesting donated to the raffle pot last month, the members bought more tickets than usual, and every little bit helps. I'm unhappy to report that we seem to have a fairly stable attendance of about 13 or 14 members at each monthly meeting even though the membership list shows about twice that number belong to S.N.U.G. There is a hard-core of about 10 people who attend each month, and the rest of the group attends when there is nothing better to do... IF ALL of the members attended the meetings each month the "core-group" wouldn't have to carry the financial burden for the rest of you! How many times can you watch reruns of ALF anyway? Come to the meeting February 13th!

One of our members actually offered to donate \$50.00 to the club treasury if it would help out the group. This person has always attended the meetings on a regular basis and volunteered for jobs which no one else would take and helped out whenever he could. He has been doing his share all along just by showing an interest and attending meetings. I wish the satellite members would follow his example... Thank you for the offer, Sir!

George Campbell is now the official S.N.U.G. librarian. The library diskettes were turned over to George during the officers meeting on Monday the 23rd, so if you need a program or information contact George. Thanks again to Bob Bieber who carried the load for so long.

At the last monthly meeting Don Mitchell made the suggestion that the member phone list be modified to include the user numbers of members who contact the club BBS. Anyone who has been looking for a user number on the BBS and waited through a seemingly endless number of ".''s will find this a good idea... Any volunteers? Don?

Mike Lunsford will be leaving for a tour of duty in England very soon now, and is in the process of selling his TI components. Sorry to see you go, Mike...

Since PRESS is still in debugging, and EASY-KEYS is back-ordered (cough...), we will have to wait until March or later for the demo and raffle of these programs. I decided to order PICTURE TRANSFER, written by Paul Charlton and distributed by Genial Computerware, just in case there was nothing of interest to demo in March. (There is! See Cindy's column.) Thirty-two days from the time I sent the check the package arrived. (So I thought.) What I received was two SS/SD disks containing seven pictures, four of which I already have, a sample "script" file which allows the user to put on a "seamless" slide-show, and the PICTURE TRANSFER program itself. (Almost...) I also received a small booklet of documentation and a surprise! The "surprise" was a postcard self-addressed to Genial Computerware which had to be filled out with my name and address (and I thought I'd already sent that to them...) and sent back before they will send a copy of the program which will let me manipulate and save the artwork! In my opinion this so called "registration" is idiotic, time-consuming nonsense! What is the point in sending a DUMMY version of software to someone who has ALREADY paid? It costs twice as much for postage since the diskettes must be sent twice, plus the customer must pay for the price of the postcard and extra diskettes and put up with another aggravating delay before he or she actually gets the program. If there is some sort of copy protection scheme involved in this rignarole then I suppose they may be partially justified since Charlton has not received the money he deserves for all of the fine programs which he has created for the TI community. On the other hand, if this is someone's idea of a bad joke then all I can say is that it's a pity that common sense cannot be taught in college...

\*BOB\*

**ARCHIVER With a RAMdisk**  
 More than squeeze and extract  
 by George Tilley  
 Southern Nevada Users' Group

I got a surprise when I tried to load my RAMdisk with an archived file. It just happened to be handy, so I decided to extract the files from the archived-file instead of digging out my regular work copy. The surprise was that it took much less time to extract the files to the ramdisk than to copy them as I usually did.

This awakening happened while using a Geneve and a ramdisk. RAMdisks never hold everything you need for all the programs you want to run, so we are constantly involved with reconfiguration. I don't recall ever turning on a computer for the joy of reloading a ramdisk or reorganizing a bunch of floppies. Anything that helps with the housekeeping lets you get on with whatever you had in mind before you forget why you turned the computer on. Incidentally, if you don't have a ramdisk, check them out. A ramdisk is one of the best upgrades anyone can buy. We all have our preferences but any make, static or dynamic ram, is worth considering. A ramdisk makes running disk-based programs a new experience. It is sure to renew your interest in those functions you won't fool with because you have better things to do than sit around waiting to get the cursor back while the disk drives blink and whine (mine sounds like I'm grinding coffee). The ARCHIVER is well known for compressing and packing many files into a smaller, single file with all the obvious advantages for storing or down-loading files, but I didn't know it could be used in every-day routine operations to simplify and speedup some of the required procedures. You don't jump to a conclusion based on one experience, but the first "a-aha" creates an itch you have to scratch. The following chart gives a hint of what you might expect from a little scratching of your own.

Program	— Sectors —			— Load time —		
	File	Arch	%	File	deArch	%
				min:sec	sec	
TI-BASE v2.0	280	182	65%	1:45	38	36%
TUTOR II	352	89	25%	7:45	32	7%
TI-ARTIST	354	186	53%	1:38	43	44%
TELCO	266	145	55%	1:15	26	35%
ARCHIVER	33	26	79%	:05	4	80%
XBasicEA	340	282	83%	1:13	51	70%
Multiplan	317	299	94%	1:01	58	95%
MPHLP	158	95	60%	:28	18	64%
RELOAD6 *	552	425	76%	1:30	1:29	99%
Averages			66%			59%

\* ARCHIVERv3.02 plus Geneve programs: System/Sys, GPL, Autoexec

Comment: I used a telephone timer to check the loading

times. Sitting here watching the seconds tick off is about as motivating as watching grass grow, so I didn't repeat each one 3-5 times and take an average or attempt to satisfy any of the criteria set up for "studies" of this kind. I did, however, do TUTOR II 4-5 times. I couldn't believe the time difference of 7-min 45-sec vs 32-sec. The repeats were all within 2-seconds of each other.

In all cases extracting archived files is at least as fast, and in most cases much faster than copying the individual files. On a go/no-go basis using ARCHIVER all the time would be worthwhile; however, if you want to be selective, some generalizations might help.

Small individual files are not good prospects. A 75-80% rate that offers a one second (maybe) advantage would have to be repeated 433 times to equal the time saved by extracting TUTOR II once. Once again, it won't take longer, but you'll probably need a split-second stopwatch to measure the savings. I expected the programs that could be squeezed the most to load the fastest and in about the same ratio. That seems to be only partially true. TI-BASE and TUTOR II led the pack as could have been predicted. Archiver really does a job on fixed length (lots of padding) files, but there won't be many other ratios of 4:1(size) and 14.5:1(time).

The Geneve programs archive to about 75% but extraction and normal copy are a standoff.

Multiplan is also different, but then isn't Multiplan always different? Here there appears to be no significant difference in either size or time. It is not directly related, but in the process I found that I could save Multiplan to Ram and copy to floppy in about a third the time it took to save directly to floppy. The savings probably wouldn't be worth the extra effort for a small file, but for the 85-110 sector files, it saved minutes (for those of you who think that is too much file for Multiplan, data memory for the Geneve has been increased to 41K).

The worksheet for my income tax is a good example. It is an 85-sector file that Multiplan saves to disk in 2 min 1 sec; saves to ramdisk in 7 sec; and can be copied from ramdisk to disk in 25 sec. I can't even guess how many times I've taken the 7 sec instead of the 2 min route. Every time I run across one of those How-to-save-on-your-income-tax shows or articles I invest 7 sec to reload my worksheet and find out why it won't work for me. The advice is accurate and great for the circumstances described but never seems to fit me; nevertheless, I'll call up Multiplan, reload my TEN40 file and what-if the proposition. Who knows? One day I might get money back. At least, I won't loose any sleep the next time IRS invites me to an audit.

I've prepared some worksheets (templates) for the IRS Tax Table/Schedules, Form 1040, Schedules A,B,C,E plus worksheets for Standard Deductions and Social Security Benefits. These were designed to let those who seldom/never use Multiplan run the programs. If

You can load a program into Multiplan, use the GO TO: NAME command and find the recalculate key (FCIN 8), you can find the tax you owe on TAX TABLE. The other sheets require very little more. Regardless of your experience with Multiplan I hope to convince you that you can run the program without becoming a Multiplan freak and that it will be a big help with your income tax whether you do your own or get assistance.

**1WORDS**

by John Martin

This is a new oneliner program I wrote that counts the number of words in a D/V 80 file. There were several reasons for writing this program, none of which has anything to do with needing to find out how many words there are in a text file.

When you run this program, you will be prompted with "FILE?". Simply type in the drive and filename as in "D:\SK1.FILENAME". The program will give you a running count of the number of words in the file as well as displaying the current line that it is counting.

Here is the program listing. It is in 28 column format to match your screen display and make it easier to check your work as you go.

```

I X=N+A :: IF A THEN N=POS(X
$, " ", X) :: IF N=X THEN 1 ELS
E Z=Z-(X<LEN(XS)) :: DISPLAY
AT(9,A):Z,"WORDS": : :XS:YS:
YS :: IF N THEN 1 ELSE IF EO
F(A) THEN END ELSE LINPUT #A
:XS :: GOTO 1 ELSE A=1 :: DI
SPLAY ERASE ALL :: INPUT "FI
LE? ":FS :: OPEN #A:FS,INPUT
:: GOTO 1 !BY JOHN MARTIN
    
```

As is the case with all oneliners that I have seen, you must learn a couple of tricks in order to type this program in. Start typing the program just as you normally would. At the end of the 5th screen line, you will find that the computer stops accepting input and beeps at you. Press <enter>. Now, press FCIN 8 (REDO). Press and hold FCIN D (right arrow) to move the cursor to the end of the line. The cursor will now go past the point where the computer had stopped accepting input. Continue typing in the program normally. At the end of the 9th screen line, the computer will once again stop accepting input. This time, press <enter>, the number 1, and FCIN X (down arrow). This will once again bring the line up for editing. By pressing FCIN D once again, you will now be able to move the cursor past the point where the computer had stopped accepting input and type in the last line of code. I know, that sounds like quite a

lot, but it is really a simple operation. If you want the program but don't feel like typing it in yourself there is a copy of it (along with several other oneliners) on the SNUG BBS.

I have been asked to demonstrate this program and describe how it works at the next meeting. I had a great deal of difficulty getting the program to give me an accurate count in only 1 line. I will be describing some of the reasoning that went into designing the algorithm. I will also show some tricks that will help to keep the byte count down in your program. This is VERY important in a 1 line program because the MAXIMUM number of bytes that the computer will accept in 1 line is 172, and to get that many into 1 line involves even more steps than I have described already. Look over the code and see if you can figure out how the program works before the meeting. Have fun!

-John-

P.S. This file has 541 words in it.

**BBS REPORT**

By John Martin

I'm sure that it is no secret that we have been having trouble with the bbs again. This time the problem is in the CorComp Micro Expansion Box. Not only will it not allow access to the disk drives, but now it won't even let the computer power up! I have done as much as I know how to do with the tools and parts that I have, but have been unable to get it to work. Steve Buchanan wants to try fixing it before we send it off for repairs. Steve has a complete Micro Expansion Box at home to use for substitution, so he should be able to figure out which component is causing the trouble. With a little luck, we may be able to get the parts locally and save the cost of labor and shipping. For the last month, the SNUG bbs has been running on a borrowed disk controller, borrowed 32K, the club's spare P-box, and 3 dssd drives. I had to cut back on a number of things to get the system to run on this configuration, but the system has been running with all the more popular sections intact. If you should select an item from the menu and only have the menu reprint itself, you will know that is one of the things that I had to get rid of. I plan to bring the board back up to full speed as soon as we get the old expansion box repaired.

I have been downloading things from CompuServe again. This month, I got a new program from Ray Kazmer. It's called "VALENTINE", and is a sequel (sort of) to the Christmas card program that he wrote last year. In addition to our little friend, Woodstock, this program also features his girlfriend, Penelope. There is an evil troll named GROG who has captured

Penelope and taken her into his maze. Woodstock must rescue her before Grog can have her for lunch! As you may have guessed by now, this one is not just a demo, but an adventure type game program.

Another program I just got is a Genealogy program. It was written in Assembly language for speed and comes to us from Australia. I haven't had much time to work with it yet, but it looks like a very comprehensive program. I also got a new ROS fix for HRD written by Tony McGovern (Funnelweb), and an interesting experiment by Barry Boone that uses the internal sound chip to produce speech without the synthesizer. The speech produced is almost unintelligible, but it does sound like someone talking. Barry says that with some improvements in his algorithm and speech templates, the quality could be improved. I wouldn't sell the old speech synthesizer just yet though. I will have these programs with me at the meeting, and will demo some of them if there is time.

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR CASSETTE SYSTEM

by MICKEY SCHEFF

NUMBER 5

CASSETTE — TIPS — TRICKS — AND TIDBITS

PART I

This month's topic may sound a little strange to you... but I hope that it proves to be well worth reading... as I pass along what I've learned about computers the hard way... and what I've learned from my fellow T.I. friends.

Looking back on my very "first computer days"... it's hard to believe that I was once such a "Rookie". I knew absolutely nothing about computers back then (as you will soon find out!)

I will always remember the very first thing that I ever learned about the computer... and to this day I am still impressed with the fact! "The computer uses the same type of cassette recorder and cassette tape to store a "program" on... as you would use to record your favorite music on." With this thought in mind... I soon learned that it wasn't necessary to purchase "special data cassette tapes" for the computer... the "standard" C-60 cassettes will work just fine with your computer and they are so much more "economical"... than those "special computer cassettes!"

Over the years I have decided on using Maxell C-60 cassette tapes for my own personal computer use... but I will be the first to admit that there are a lot of other brands of cassette tapes that would work with your computer just as well. I would however, caution you against using any type of Radio Shack cassette tape (computer or standard) and any type of Certron tape...

as these particular brands of cassette tapes have been known to give people trouble in the past. Believe me, there is nothing more frustrating than finding out that a "program" which you just "saved" onto one of these types of cassettes... will not "LOAD" back properly from the same cassette at a later time! The reason for this particular problem occurring is that the program is being played back at a slightly different tape speed than which it was recorded at... thus creating a slight distortion in the sound of the tape. As a word of warning: using either of these two brands of cassettes may be hazardous to your present STATE OF MIND!

In keeping with my promise that I made last month that you would enjoy a good laugh at my own expense... just wait till you hear what I used to do! would you believe that I used to "load" programs into my computer... "run them"... and then "SAVE" them back onto their "original" cassettes... in the very same "location" as they were recorded on the tape in the first place. (Without ever even "editing" any of the programs!) Don't ask me where I ever got the idea that once you "LOADED" a program off of a cassette tape... that it was "physically" removed from the cassette tape... but that is the impression that I was under at the time back then. Of course, I plead that at that time in my "computer learning" I was not a member of any computer club... nor did I know anyone who even owned a computer... so I was left to struggle on my own and make a lot of mistakes along the way in the process. I did learn this the hard way... but I bet that I'll never forget it either: "If you are only "running" a program and you are not making any changes in the program whatsoever... it is not necessary to "save" the program back onto its original cassette... in its original tape location... because it never really left the tape in the first place!" It is always there ( unless you record over it!) you may laugh if you wish... but it's all a part of "learning"... and we all had to start somewhere!

Next month I will continue with the topic of CASSETTE TIPS — TRICKS — AND TIDBITS... as I try to pass along more of what I've learned the hard way... and what I've learned from my fellow T.I. friends.

In the mean time... if you need any help or have any questions concerning your cassette system... just give me a call (412-335-0163) and I'll try to HELP.

FROM THE EDITOR — I would like one of you SNUG members who is not otherwise active in the operations of SNUG to offer to take the copies from the printing and assemble the newsletter (fold, label and stamp.) I will continue to produce the labels and have them ready for the mailing. This would free several hours of my time to devote to the newsletter's content (read more.)

# SECRETARY'S REPORT MINUTES



January 9, 1989

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\* SNUG TREASURER'S REPORT - 31 JANUARY 1989  
\* (in lieu of 31 January 1989 bank statement)  
\* Karen Rodgers - Treasurer

\*  
\* The January meeting was called to order at 7:00P.M.  
\* by Bob Sherburne, President. Fifteen (15)  
\* members were present.

FIXED ANNUAL EXPENDITURES

* SNUGLETter (estimated cost per 100)	
* publication costs (\$10/mo x 12) . . . . .	\$ 120.00
* postage (\$25/mo x 12) . . . . .	300.00
* p. o. box rental (\$22 annually) . . . . .	22.00
* bank account service charge (\$8/mo x 12) . . . . .	96.00
* SNUG b/board phone line (\$11/mo x 12) . . . . .	132.00
* long distance phone calls (estimated) . . . . .	44.00
* miscellaneous expenditures (estimated) . . . . .	90.00
* total annual operating costs (estimated) . . . . .	804.00
* annual dues collection (avg 30 mbrs x \$18)	540.00
* ANNUAL DEFICIT (ESTIMATED)	\$ 264.00

\*  
\* John Martin did another demo of BATCH IT! hoping some  
\* of the bugs were worked out. He was able to show a  
\* couple of things the program is suppose to do, but  
\* all in all BATCH IT! was again a disappointment.  
\* John is going to list his grievances to send to  
\* Asgard when the disk is returned.  
\*  
\* Gordon Leonard brought in his C&S Maker  
\* (char&sprite). Gordon showed a very interesting and  
\* complete tutorial using chars and sprites,  
\* utilizing linked programs to show what can be done.  
\* Very interesting for those into programing and to  
\* those who want to go into programing.

\* FUNDS BALANCE (as of 31 december 1988) \$ 467.29  
\* (includes \$7.92 December service charge)

\* JANUARY RAFFLE WINNERS:  
\* -Rudy Johnson chose the Centepede Game  
\* -John Martin chose one of our TI-EXPO 88 hats

COLLECTIONS (during January 1989)

* bulk diskette/disc box sales	15.00
* disc of the month sales	3.00
* miscellaneous TI equipment raffle	26.00
* miscellaneous TI equipment sales	5.00
* (sub-total)	49.00

\* George Campbell is now our active Librarian. Once  
\* again, George, Good Luck! Bob Beiber is still doing  
\* some work on the library catalog.  
\* At the February meeting George Tilly is doing a Tax  
\* Program he wrote to use with MULTIPLAN. Bring an  
\* extra disk if you would like a copy.

EXPENDITURES (during January 1989)

* postage - January SNUGLETter	27.75
* demonstration software	15.70
* december meeting refreshments	11.05
* (sub-total)	54.50

\* John Martin is going to show us one of his 1 liners.  
\* He will break the program down so each part can be  
\* analyzed. This should make another good tutorial.  
\* Bob Beiber will do PreScan II and X-Basher.  
\* Sounds as if it will be a pretty interesting  
\* meeting. Hope to see you there.

\* FUNDS AVAILABLE (AS OF 31 JANUARY 1989)  
\* checking account (general operating funds) \$ 461.79

\* EZ-KEYS PLUS and PRESS still have not arrived.  
\* Hopefully we will have one of the programs for the  
\* March meeting and Raffle Pot.

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SECRETARY  
SNUG USERS GROUP

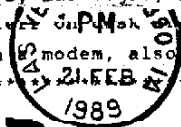
SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

The SNUGLETTER is published monthly by the Southern Nevada Users' Group (SNUG). SNUG is a non-profit organization of individuals with an interest in all aspects of Texas Instruments' 99xx & 99xxx based computers including hardware and software by third party vendors. The GROUP meets 6:30 PM on the second Monday of the month - currently in the Nevada Power Company, Wengert Community Meeting Room, 6226 West Sahara Avenue. Visitors and guests are welcome to attend the meetings. Information on membership is available at the meeting. Articles may be copied from the SNUGLETTER provided credit is given to both the author and the original source and that the article not be used for profit. (For-profit organizations wishing to use any articles from the SNUGLETTER will need to make prior arrangements with the Executive Committee of the Southern Nevada Users' Group.)

- \* SNUG OFFICERS 1988-1989:
- \* President: Bob Sherburne - 642-6972
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- \* Secretary: Cindy Mitchell - 871-0309
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- \* Associate Librarian: Lance Wilson - 648-6452
- \* Membership: ?
- \* Youth Liason: Kim Wellman - 454-1376

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- \* Editor: Rudy Johnson - 871-9583
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- \* Newsletter submissions can be sent to P.O. Box 26301, Las Vegas, NV 89126. Articles using TI-writer 3.0 P.M. are ideal. They may also be phone written with a modem, also a preferred method.



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