CLEVELAND AREA 99-4A USERS GROUPS

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1985

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GROUPS' NEWSLETTER ED. - MARK WOODWARD ((561-2967)

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NOTES AND NEWS

A SPECIAL INVITATION

The Solon Group would like to invite the members of the other groups to join them for their annual luncheon, Saturday, January 11, 1986 at 11:30 a.m. at Quinn's Restaurant, 33175 Aurora Rd., Solon. The cost for the lunch will be $5.50. Call Doris at 663-7386 before Saturday, December 21 and place your reservation. Don't miss this opportunity to visit with members from all four groups.

SINGLE-SIDED, DOUBLE-SIDED

A letter in the December 1985 issue of CHANGING TIMES came from Gloria Friedman of DAMOMICS (Development and Modification of Mini-Computer Software) in Elmira, N.Y. caught my eye and I'd like to pass the savings on to you. She said, in part that, "Single-sided disk drives ... read the side of the diskette that most people call the bottom, which is the side without the label on it. Most people carefully place their diskettes on the table, label side up. That is wrong. Ideally they should be stored vertically.

If you purchase single-sided diskettes and format them for double-sided use, you can expect to be just as reliable as double-sided diskettes. Users of single-sided drives can punch their disks for double-sided use, but they should be cautioned to punch the disk prior to using either side since there is a risk of bending the diskette during the process."

Watch the GRAY DRUG ads. They have been selling a box of 10 Certron 5.25" single-sided, double density diskettes for $8.88 + tax. And, they come in a plastic storage box!. I have seen the regular price listed at $9.99 and $12.99.

Is your name and address correct? If not, call Frank Jenkins at 283-8526 and have it corrected.

Executive Notes — Solon

DECEMBER

At our November meeting, Frank Jenkins gave the group an overview of T.I.WRITER. Frank explained how to format documents, how to use transliteration codes, and the basics of getting started with this versitile word processor. We all say "Thanks" for an informative presentation. This month, I will give a presentation on ADVENTURE GAMING. I know from reading the results of our user's poll taken earlier this year, that most members put games at, or near, the bottom of their computer desires. However, if you've never seen or used an adventure game, I think that you will be surprised at the challenge and engrossment that they can provide.

I have asked five members to form a committee to consider names for the nomination of 1986 officers. Elsewhere in the newsletter, you wil find a nomination form for your choice of officers, to be used by the committee in putting together a ballot. PLEASE take the time to fill it out and either mail it or bring it to the December meeting. It was deceided that we will once again be holding our annual meeting at QUINN'S in Solon. I urge all members to attend the annual meeting so we can get your input and your vote. We've missed some of you lately, and look forward to having you back!

It has been said, on many occasions in the past, that we need volunteers in all areas of the club. We have a large void in the program committee, and I would like to see someone take that position for 1986. Since our former program committee person left us, I've been planning the programs that we have each month. I really don't mind all that much, except that you guys have to see things that appeal to me and fit my interests. However, that makes me feel a little bit guilty and selfish. Wouldn't someone else like to feel a little guilty and selfish also, and volunteer to help? I know that each one of you has lots to offer to the group, and would like to see some of you volunteer to put on a program of something that interests YOU. [A favorite piece of software, a program you have written, some technique you've discovered, LOGO, MULTIPLAN, PERSONAL RECORD KEEPING, educational software, color printers, taxe preperation programs, book reviews, etc.] I KNOW that all of that knowledge is within the group. The rest of us want to know about it too!

For what it's worth....On several occasions in the last year or so, I've had the oppertunity to program on an Epson computer, which uses Microsoft Basic. I found, among other things, that the editing functions of this high end computer to be a totally frustrating experience, and more often than not wound up completly retyping the offending line. Also, trying to set up a program to read and write files, was a total imposibility because the user's manual explained very little, and was of no help at all. I know that any machine requires some getting used to, but even the people who use that machine heavily, complain about those things and many other user "unfriendly" aspects of the machine. The documentation that came with the word processor and printer, doesn't even mention how to access the different type styles or send control codes when using the word processor. My point is that it really makes me appreciate my T..I. even more for it's ease of use and much better user oriented documentation. [Do I sound a little bit biased?]

I hope each and everyone of you has a happy holiday season!
See you on December 14, Solon Public Library.

Steve Weinkamer, President

CHICAGO TI FAIRE

The Chicago TI Faire was held on Nov.2, 1985 at Triton College near Chicago. Tom and Judy Thalner, Ken Gladyszewski, and Martin Smolley attended from this area. Over 1700 TI-99/4A owners from all over the country were in attendance. Approximately thirty vendors of hardware and software, with both new and old products, were also there.

Key speakers were Craig Miller, from Miller's Graphics in California; Lou Phillips, from Myarc Inc. in Basking Ridge, New Jersey; and John Clulow, from New Horizons in Toledo.

Craig Miller began the day with a demonstration and explanation of the "Gram Cracker" which will be released in mid-December. The "Gram Cracker" is a plug-in "Super Cartridge" with 56K of battery-backed RAM and GRAM memory. This amazing piece of hardware will be valuable to everyone since it can be used with just the basic console and a recorder or the fully equipped system. It opens up the full power of the 99/4A, making it "your own personal computer".

Lou Phillips spoke in the early afternoon to an overflow crowd. He began by highlighting the newer products that Myarc has already developed for the TI and ended with a discussion of the new TI-compatible computer that will be released during the first quarter of 1986. He showed the group the prototype motherboard and keyboard which he stated will eventually be joined to form the new computer. No name has yet been selected but there has been some thought to calling it the "NOAH". It will have 256K of RAM , using TI's 9995 microprocessor and 9938 video display chips. This machine will be nearly 100% TI compatible and have amazing execution speed. Other features that have been mentioned are: 40-80 column, RGB-composite color, built-in RS232 ports, ability to use various locaters, ie. joystick, mouse, etc., compatability with most existing systems, viz. CorComp, Myarc, and TI.

The day's presentations were wrapped up by John Clulow from New Horizons in Toledo who demonstrated a RAM-disk that he has developed.

Video Tape (VHS) of the faire including all the main speakers is availbale for rental from:

EDU-COMP
327-6579

Rental fee - $3.00 plus postage
Call to make arrangements for viewing. Rentals are on a first-come-first -serve basis.

JUDY THALNER

The theme for this years Faire--the third such event-- was "Goin' Stronger Than Ever", although T-shirts were seen which said "I Adopted an Orphan." The Faire was very well attended with people 3 or 4 deep at most tables and standing room only for the featured presentations.

The New Horizons UG of Toledo presented its RAM Disk which has evolved from a hand wired prototype into a polished product using a custom designed printed circuit board.

Myarc gave details about its current efforts. Its major effort is on an enhanced extended basic which utilizes their 128K card and frees up the 16K of console VDP RAM for display purposes. This product is very close to being released. Plans for the new computer were discussed and a non-functioning prototype was shown. It is slated to be available at the end of the first quarter of 1986. From the information presented it appears to be quite a machine.

Craig Miller of Miller Graphics had a working model of his Gram Kracker and was taking orders for delivery in time for Christmas. This device allows any module to be copied to disk or cassette and utilizes 8K static RAM chips to replace the 6K GROM chips used in most TI cartridges. Sockets for 3 extra chips are provided to replace the 3 GROMS in the console which contain the operating system. This opens up our machine to many new sophisticated products. Along these lines work is progressing to release a GPL Assembler and Disassembler in early 1986.

All this for a machine out of production for 2 years--enough to make some take their 99/4A out of the closet. Yes--we're "Goin' Stronger Than Ever."

Ken

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Well, to all of you who were upset about not having the November meeting, we apologize. It seems that all of the people who run the meeting and those who normaly give presentations couldn't make it. We thought that it would be better to just call off the whole thing since there wouldn't have been much going on anyways. The meetings got a little slow over the summer months, but we are going to start things moving again. The one thing that we need the most is more PARTICIPATION. When all of you were called, you were asked if you would be willing to give a presentation. Most people said that they would rather not, which I can understand, because public speaking is a little hard. The fact of the matter is that our meetings have been slowing down because the same old people have been there giving all the presentations. At least give us some good ideas for presentations. Speaking in front of the group is not too hard. There isn't a person that you couldn't stand around and talk with after the meeting, so why be afraid to talk during the meeting? I don't mean to lecture, but we're running low on ideas, and really need your help.

Our next meeting will be our Christmas meeting, held on DECEMBER 21. All of your family is invited, since we're going to have a little "get together" after the meeting. We did this last year, and it was probably one of our best meetings ever. A reminder: Please try to bring some type of pastry or refreshment for after the meeting.

For the December meeting, we have quite a few things lined up for you. We're going to sign on to a bulliten board, and take you on a little tour, there will be a demonstration on GRAPHX, there will be a presentation on the PERSONAL RECORD KEEPING CARTRIGE, Steve Latza will discuss FORTH, the Thalners of EDU-Comp will be there, and don't forget about our get together after the meeting. From the looks of it, we will have a pretty good time. Make sure that you can be there!
** One last thing, at the Dec. meeting, please bring any hardware, software, books, cartriges, or anything else that you want to trade or sell. Maybe we can all pick up a few Christmas presents for ourselves!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
RICH POLIVKA

THE ADVENTURE REALM

"There I was, surrounded by four dragons. With my trusted sword, Swordking, I feared not, since I was in worse predicaments before. I quickly swung my sword, hitting one of the powerful beasts. They breathed their fire at me, but it had no effect. Knowing that I could not defeat them with my sword, I used my Staff of Power, which dropped two of the mighty dragons. The remaining dragons got the best of me, increasing my wounds drastically. With only five hit points to spare, I finished off the dragons. There was a chest in the room, so I cautiously opened it, luckily it wasn't trapped. Inside I found a healing potion, along with a hefty sum of gold pieces..."

The paragraph above is from my experience with the Tunnels of Doom cartridge. One can venture in the dungeon below for hour after hour. The game itself is very professional, rated among the best adventure games for other computers (i.e., "Wizardry" for the Apple) and many others.

Recently there have been more adventures developed for this excellent game. Most of them are less than $10.00 and are well worth the price (even a few as Freeware!). The best game which I came across was "Attack The City" which has totally different monsters, graphics, weapons, etc.

If you are having problems with any adventures or would just like to share some adventure tips, give me a call at 333-5829.

Till next time, happy 'venturing'...

Falimer the Elf
Dave Talan

The TI-Faire in Chicago was great! I was able to attend by hitching a ride with Tom and Judy Thalner of Edu-Comp. It was wonderful to see so much enthusiasm and continuing support both in software and hardware for our machine!

Those in attendance at the November meeting saw the pictures I took as well as a portion of the video tape obtained from the Chicago group by Edu-Comp. Please see my report elsewhere for a comprehensive report on the Faire.

Our Head Librarian, Deanna Sheridan, reported that the first installment of Amnion disks (educational, home/financial, engineering and utility) have been cataloged--this now brings us to 1500 programs. She is now working on 40 game disks and I am transferring the last part--25 music disks. When all of this is finished--hopefully around the beginning of the year, the total should be in excess of 2000!! Great job Deanna!!

Our next meeting has been moved up one week to Saturday, December 14th to allow for last minute Christmas shopping. It will be highlighted by an extensive library copy session using 2 or 3 systems making 1 or 2 copies at a time in 40-60 seconds per disk. Please check your catalogs now for those programs you would like to enjoy over the holidays. Valid membership cards will be required and copies will be limited to 5 per turn per member. A photocopy machine will also be available.

During the short business portion of the meeting new committies (publicity, library, equipment, project, program) will be formed and new officers will be elected for the coming year. As I announced, I will not be seeking office this time due to other committments although I enjoyed the job immensely and will find it hard to give up.

Our present officers have done a great job and except for the president have served for 1½-2 years. I think it is time to involve others and as such am recommending to the nomination committee and the membership that a new slate be elected.

We also will change keyboards and/or remove Grom slot burnishing pads for those members who bring their computer consoles and spare keyboards.

Please plan to make your Christmas computer purchases of hardware and/or software from our supporting vendors at this meeting.

Lastly, we received a letter from Navarone asking that any software donated to us through their Hi-Way program such as Paint-N-Print featured at our last meeting be made part of the library.

                                        Ken Gladyszewski
                                        President

P.S. The latest on the poor mans double density disk controller is that it is simpler than expected (no board modifications) due to an EPROM chip which is pin for pin compatible with the ROMS used on the disk controller. However, it requires 80 track 96 TPI drives and is not compatible with true double density operation. More about this as information becomes available.

Using "PRINT USING"
with your printer
By Richard Roberts
TI3552

One of the more obscure statements available with TI Extended BASIC is one called PRINT USING. Even more obscure is the fact that this statement can be used to format variables and constants that will be dumped to your printer. The Extended BASIC manual, on page 150, shows several examples of how PRINT USING can be used to format data for screen display, but nary a word of how to do the same with open files. It can be done, and is much more powerful than you may realize.

Any discussion of PRINT USING will require an understanding of the IMAGE statement, so if you are not familiar with it, you better brush up on it first. The PRINT USING statement uses IMAGE in one of two ways, either with a string expression, or a line number reference. I prefer the latter, as it allows for more flexibility, but since these different methods are explained in the manual, I will limit this to a few simple examples that are not shown in the manual.

```
100 TCOST=19.55
110 IMAGE ##.##
120 OPEN #1:"PIO"
130 PRINT #1,USING 110:TCOST
```

Running this sample program will effectively show how the PRINT USING statement will work with an open file. Of course, there are many other variations of IMAGE that can be used, so experiment with them and watch how it performs when line 130 dumps it to the printer. Shown below are a few more examples for use with an open file.

```
110 IMAGE "##.##      ##.##"
130 PRINT #1,USING 110:COST1,COST2
```

This IMAGE statement will allow you to print two (or more) variables at a pre-determined spot on the same line. The length of the string expression in the IMAGE statement can be as long as you wish, up to the limit of an Extended BASIC line.

```
110 IMAGE "#########      ##.##"
130 PRINT #1,USING 110:"TOTAL COST",TCOST
```

This version shows how you can format the printed line for string data as well as numerical data. A string variable could be used in place of the string constant, as below.

```
105 A$="TOTAL COST"
110 IMAGE "#########      ##.##"
130 PRINT #1,USING 110:A$,TCOST
```

It is also possible to place the IMAGE statement inside the PRINT USING statement, as shown below. First, delete line 110.

```
130 PRINT #1,USING "##.##":TCOST
```
or
```
130 PRINT #1,USING "######### ##.##"
:A$,TCOST
```

A few other points to remember include the fact that IMAGE and PRINT USING can be used to round off calculated variables. A single string expression such as "######.##" will round off and decimal align numbers as small as number at any designated location. This function could save many hours of algorithm development for accomplishing the same thing. So, in the long run, the PRINT USING statement is one that any programmer should be very familiar with, and use as much as possible.

RICHARD ROBERTS IS PRESIDENT OF THE DALLAS TI99/4A USERS GROUP.
SOFTMAIL WELCOMES TUTORIALS OR OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST THAT USERS MAY WISH TO SHARE WITH OTHERS. THROUGH EFFORTS SUCH AS RICHARDS WE MAY WELL ALL BE ABLE TO ENJOY AND BENEFIT FROM OUR ORPHAN AS LONG AS THOSE POOR SOULS LEFT HANGING WITH BANANA 9000 JUNIOR! MAYBE EVEN LONGER!

Thanks to

No. NJ 99 ers User Group

May 1985 Newsletter

When a good magazine comes along everyone should know about it. That is why I'm recommending a subscription to the following magazines. If you find one that appeals to you, send in the subscription information.

TI CHIPS USERS GROUP

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE TI-CHIPS USERS GROUP:

I regret to inform you of my resignation as President of the TI-CHIPS USERS GROUP.

I have had a lot of fun as your President and I hope to remain active with the group, but with the new job that I have, the work schedule will not allow me to attend as many meetings as I feel would do the group justice.

I have been with a lot of other groups and the key to success is to have the involvement of all the members, not just a few. If this group is to succeed, then every one of the members will have to pitch in and lend a hand, if only to get the flyers to your neighborhood schools and supermarket bulletin boards.

If you have a favorite game or program you like, then share it with the rest of the group and give a small presentation. If you are too shy, then just write it down and give it to one of the board members and they will see that it gets presented at one of the meetings.

If you would like to see a program, game, device, or how to maintain, clean, or protect your system, please let any board member know and they can see to it tha it gets presented.

It is up to you, the members, to keep this group going and just by letting us know what you would like to see, will do just that!

PLEASE GIVE US SOMETHING TO DO FOR YOU!!!!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Good Programming,
Bernard H. Gallagher

SOLON ELECTIONS

Please fill out this form listing your nominations for 1986 officers. Mail to our P.O. box or bring it with you to the December meeting. Elections will be held at the January meeting, and nominations can be made any time before that time.

NAME   OFFICE

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

____ Send me the next 12 issues of the **CLEVELAND AREA 99/4 USER GROUPS NEWSLETTER**. I am enclosing a check or money order for $6.00.

PLEASE PRINT.

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Mail to: TI USER GROUPS NEWSLETTER
          c/o Frank Jenkins, 19809 Gladstone Rd., Cleveland, OH 44122

*This subscription not necessary for fully paid members of the User Groups.

____ Send me a membership form for the following group:

    ___ Solon: ___ TI Chips: ___ Golden Crescent: ___ Northcoast.

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12.5
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CLEVELAND AREA 99/4A USERS GROUPS
P.O. BOX 1283
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44120

CHECK YOUR EXPIRATION DATE.
THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST ISSUE!

04/86

!! TIME DATED MATERIAL !!