

CLEVELAND AREA TI99-4A USER GROUPS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER, 1988

OFFICERS	NORTHCOAST	TI-CHIPS	MEETING DATES	
PRESIDENT	MARTIN SMOLEY 1-257-1661	GLENN BERNASEK 238-6335	NORTHCOAST 1:30 P.M.	TI-CHIPS 10:00 A.M.
VICE PRESIDENT	ERNIE WALNAR 289-7742	RUSS SHIMANDLE 1-887-5330	EUCLIDIAN ROOM	NORTH ROYALTON LIBRARY
TREASURER	JIM MEKEEL 286-3179	LIN SHAW 235-3912	EUCLID SQUARE MALL	STATE ROAD & RT 82
MEMBERSHIP	CHUCK POULIN 731-6473	JOHN PARKEN 331-2830	THIRD SATURDAY	THIRD SATURDAY
	361 E. 280TH ST	4172 W. 217TH ST.		
	EUCLID, OH 44132	Fairview Park, OH 44126		
SECRETARY	CHUCK POULIN 731-6473	MARY PHILLIPS 582-4009	JULY 16, 1988	
LIBRARY(DISK)	MARTIN SMOLEY 1-257-1661	MARK McCAULEY 235-8888	AUGUST 20, 1988	
(TAPE & MODULES)	TOM NELLIS 475-4067	(TAPE) JOHN PARKEN 331-2830	SEPTEMBER 17, 1988	
(HARD COPY)	DICK ALDEN 1-352-9172		OCTOBER 15, 1988	
			NOVEMBER 19, 1988	

While you have been on vacation, gardening, fishing, managing little league, etc., there have been people working to make your fall and winter that you spend with your TI more challenging and exciting than ever before. There are too many new projects to carry articles about all of them in this month's newsletter, but will try to give you the high points anyway.

In the software area, absolutely the finest piece of software in years, is TI-BASE. Unless you have a background in dBASE, you cannot fully understand the impact of this package. In looking through reviews in other newsletter, I believe our own Marty Smoley has grasped more than anyone else the possibilities of TI-BASE. It is actually a downsized dBASE and anyone who has contact with that program which costs several hundred dollars and realizes that we can favorably compare it with a package that sells for under \$25, really says something. Marty is starting a series of tutorials in this newsletter to carry you through in learning TI-BASE. He has talked with Dennis Faherty (the author) several times and will be one of the beta testers for any new applications and upgrades.

Because this program will execute programs that write programs in command files and can gather information from several databases at once, you can take a simple name and address list (tied together via a code #) and turn it into an accounts receivable program, accounts payable, inventory, church membership, club membership, whatever your imagination can come up with. His demo at the Northcoast meeting was outstanding. Perhaps we will even have to get a TI-BASE SIG going.

SIGs (Special Interest Groups) are a way to keep a club going. If you go to meeting after meeting only to find that not nearly enough time is spent on areas of interest to you, a SIG is the answer. About half a dozen of us have been meeting since last spring learning about the different graphics programs. We contributed money to download graphics from GENIE and have shared those programs amongst ourselves.

Bernard Zuckerman of the NorthCoast group has offered to start a SIG for people who still have cassette-only systems, or who feel they are still beginners at EVERYTHING. Just as our graphic SIG is open to members of both clubs, I am sure Mr. Zuckerman would welcome both Chips and NorthCoast members. See his phone number in Marty's Executive notes and give him a call.

SIGs can be started for programmers in any language, Forth, Basic, c99, Assembly, or special packages such as Multiplan, etc. Don't feel left out, start a SIG!

For several months we have had Ron Markus of Ron's Computer & Video at the Northcoast meetings. Ron says the fact he is a TI vendor is one of the best kept secrets in Cleveland. He has a lot of the "Classic" modules that are hard to find, quite a bit of tape software for our unexpanded systems and well as the latest offerings. If there is something you haven't been able to find, give Ron a call at 676-6675 evenings and weekends.

At the August newsletter meeting, it was decided that you will be asked to participate in the development of a steering committee to see if it would be feasible to have a TI meet or conference here in the early fall of 1989. When we went to press with the last issue, we did not realize that Lima had already scheduled a second annual conference for May of next year. In order not to cause them any problems or conflicts, we have decided to look into an early fall conference for this area. About 4 people from each group will be needed to determine if a site can be obtained, if vendors would support, what dates are available, etc. Only if the report of this group is favorable, would we proceed.

Also, we have started to make tentative plans to meet as one group for at least one meeting a year. Since the Northcoast group was leaning towards cutting out a meeting next summer, look for that date (probably August) as when those who would normally attend that meeting, would be going to CHIPS. Hopefully, the next year, we could then invite CHIPS to Northcoast. It would certainly help break up the summer Blahs and we could all get acquainted.

Back to the exciting new projects for the TI. Please read thoroughly the conference report on digitizing by Ron Walters. It shows a lot of powerful applications can be generated with our machine. This is a local project and should give all of us a lift. If you pick up the newsletters on our exchange list, you will have heard of the AVANTI FORTH ENGINE developed by McCann Software (The Printers Apprentice People). This is rather expensive and probably of interest only to Forth developers, but Bill Johnson told us that two of those cards in the PEB Box would give you as much power as the CRAY (If you don't know what a CRAY is, look it up).

John Guion in Dallas has developed the P-GRAM. This is a GramCracker-like device on a card in the PEB which is software controlled. It is supposed to have most of the functions of the GramCracker and will be sold in a kit by Bud Mills. It will have 72K of battery-backed memory and includes an optional clock module.

A group in Canada has Adam software modules running on the TI. They have developed a Z80 emulator which is a card for your PEB (an you thought you would never fill all those empty slots!). They are still saying that if they can get Nintendo to license same, they can dump Nintendo cartridges with this same method. Just think how many TI's would come out of the closet on that one!

I have a demo of the new QUICK-RUN program coming from Asgard for \$9.95. This works differently than Pre-SCAN and the moment you load your program, it starts running. No more waiting on those 75-sector X BASIC programs to get started. I have not seen how the conversion process works, but the programs are resaved in a DF/64 format. I asked Edu-Comp if it has been issued yet, and as of the August meeting, they had not even seen the demo that I have from GENIE. This program is the next best thing to having a compiler. (It doesn't make your programs run faster, just start faster).

From Australia comes a new graphic program called GEE. (It's in our library already). It is similar to LOGO, but better. You do most of your drawing mathematically. You can use animation, and even save pictures in GRAPHX format and from there to TI-ARTIST or whatever. From Europe, I found a new program to compress X BASIC programs written in Turbo Pascal. The animation demo disk in last month's MICROpendium has also been added to the library.

Speaking of the library, we added about 30 more freeware programs this past month and six disks of X BASIC games. Mark McCauley has been feeding me stuff he had downloaded from Genie and I passed out 20 flippies (40 disk sides) to various librarians this past month for cataloging. There's no way you will run out of things to do this winter whether you want to start your own hardware project or just check out new programs. After five years of orphanage, we are still on a roll.

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EXECUTIVE NOTES - TI-CHIPS - MARY PHILLIPS, SECRETARY

The "cool" of the North Royalton library has been most welcome this summer of '88. Between 20 and 25 persons were on hand in July and August.

Our officers have not been idle. President Glenn

Bernasek actively promoted a joint venture for both Cleveland groups for next year. A committee will be organized to plan a Users Group conference similar to the one held in Lima last May. Members from Chips and Northcoast will serve on the committee. Target date is September of 1989.

Disk librarian Mark McCauley has been downloading programs from the Genie service. He has procured hundreds of programs for the Club library. Many of them are new versions of ones in use by members. Mark has updates available of the current library catalog. The catalog still sells for just \$5.00.

Tape librarian John Parken has also become cartridge librarian. New member Ken Lewis donated a large selection of modules. Thank you, Ken! It was decided that a borrowers fee of \$3.00 would be charged per cartridge with a \$2.00 rebate upon return to the library.

Demonstrations were given of commercial and member-written programs. Given good marks by Tom Thalner was "TI-Base", a versatile database program. A disappointing cartridge called "Strike Three" was shown by Mary Phillips with assistance from son, William.

Glenn Bernasek demonstrated his number generating program called "Ohio Lottery Games and Files." Although he hasn't won a big one yet, Glenn says the program has paid for itself.

Frank Bardy composed an adventure game on tape which he named "Escape From Computari." The player must make choices as he/she plays with sometimes deadly results! Les Kee explained more aspects of Extended Basic programming. His programs used the statements LINPUT and READ/DATA.

With the start of September, a renewed membership drive will begin. Postcards will be sent to TI owners in the area telling them of the availability of the user groups. Notices will continue to be posted on supermarket message boards. Perhaps someone has a good slogan for a bumper sticker we could have printed? The tutoring sessions after meetings will also begin again in September.

The chips want to say thanks to Carol Shaw for the banner she provided for our July meeting. We also extend our thanks to Harry Hoffman and Les Kee for their banners for the North Royalton Library's tenth anniversary celebration, and a special thanks to Harry Hoffman for making up the certificate of appreciation which was presented to Mr. John Wright - Library Administrator - at our August meeting. The certificate has been framed, and is on display in the library.

Gram Kracker Utilities I and II
Les Kee - TI-Chips

What follows may not be news to all but it was to me. A while back I obtained these two utilities to load into the GK I have (doesn't everyone?). After pretending a lot that I knew what I was doing, a successful loading was mine to enjoy.

To shorten the long story -- When I elected to use the Editor of the combined XBEA feature, I received a checksum error message. If I did not execute the Utility II, the editor functioned well. This note was written using that editor.

RAMDISK TIP
BY CHUCK POULIN - NORTHCOAST 99ERS

When I first installed my Horizon 384K ramdisk, I used the following lineup in my PEB: Slot 3, RS232; 5, 32K; 6 ram disk; 7, Corcomp disk controller.

It seemed that everytime of would quit DM1000 or Funnelwriter, the card would freeze the system. If I shut down the computer, most of the time I could re-access the card after a couple of minutes. Other times, I would have to remove the card and drain the memory and reload everything. This became very frustrating and I decided to try using different slots for my cards. I rearranged them as follows: Slot 3, ram card; 5, 32K, 6, RS232, and 7, disk controller. Since making this change, I have had no problems. This may help others who have been having similar problems.

THE PONY PILE
by Glenn Bernasek (President)
TI-Chips, Cleveland, Ohio

This is an article for the "Eternal Optimist". As you will read this article, you'll begin to understand why I called it "THE PONY PILE".

Let's start off with an article of mine, which appeared in the July/August Cleveland Area TI-99/4A User Groups' Newsletter. In this article, I stated that the Cleveland Area user groups should LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY of hosting a 1989 OHIO VALLEY TI-99/4A CONFERENCE. This was not meant to be construed as an effort to usurp the efforts of our friends in the Lima, Ohio, user group. If my comments caused any concern to anyone in the TI-99/4A community, please accept my apology. Nothing could be further from my mind than interfering with the immensely successful and well organized conference that the Lima User Group hosted this year. All I can say is that our newsletter (my article included) was in the process of being published at the time the Lima newsletter was in distribution. It was just a matter of timing.

However, since both the TI-CHIPS and the NORTHCOAST 99'ERS voted overwhelmingly to LOOK INTO the possibility of hosting such an event, that is just exactly what we're going to do. Only in the event that ALL factors are favorable, will we consider embarking on such a project. If, in fact, we do decide to commit our user groups to an undertaking such as this, we certainly will not propose or schedule it to be in conflict with any other user group's conference or fair. I certainly hope I've laid this question to rest once and for all! Again, please accept my apologies for any

QUICK TI-WRITER TIP

BY Anne Gaffner - A Newsletter-only member from Illinois

In a note from Ann, she discovered that if you like to use the .CD command to make comments about your transliterate files, etc. that you can just as easily use the carriage return symbol and anything following that will not be printed.

inconvenience or concern my comments may have caused.

Now onto a much lighter subject. After much thought and consideration, I have decided to take the big leap and go "public" with one of my programs. The program in question is my >TI-SHORT-SHEET III<. This is a 260-cell spreadsheet program (hence the name SHORT SHEET) that is well suited to the "average" homeowner or 99/4A user. I've been using my original version for two years to keep track of my utility bills, and I've yet to use more than half of it's capacity. This is what I mean when I say it's well suited for the "average" user.

This is the Extended Basic version that I promised the Chips I would write. This is my first attempt at writing in Extended Basic, and boy did I learn a lot! Not only does >TI-SHORT SHEET III> run much faster and more efficiently, but it is much more powerful! Therefore, I'm offering this program to the TI users as Fairware, and asking for a \$5.00 donation if anyone finds it useful. This will include user registration and a complete user "Operation and Hints" manual. There are basic instruction lists built into the program. These should be clear enough to allow the user to give it a try. >TI-SHORT SHEET III> can be found on Genie BBS's as "S/SHEETIII".

When I said I learned a lot, I meant it! One of the tricks I learned was the built-in auto-boot capability of Extended Basic for cassette as well as disk drives. It's so nice to type in: RUN "CSI" and have the TI load and run the program in one easy step. That's right! TI Extended Basic has auto-boot for both cassette and disk drives! Just imagine the possibilities for anybody with a RAM disk! All they would have to do is type in ; RUN "DSKn.FILENAME" (Where n is the RAM disk drive number.) and have the PRESCAN of ALL variables, CALLS and built-in subprograms set for the first four or five lines of the program. Talk about FAST! I bet no sooner would you press <ENTER> after typing: RUN "DSKn.FILENAME", that your program is up and running! This is the only way I load my programs now.

Now it is time for a "Wish List" item of mine. Wouldn't it be nice to have a small keyboard buffer on the TI-99/4A? Just think, type in the auto-boot and all commands or menu choices in advance, and sit back and watch the program run! as of now we have to wait for the screen prompt in order to enter any commands or choices. The potential is staggering! Does anyone out there know of an add-on board, to the keyboard, that will accomplish this? If not, could it be done? Just some food for thought.

Have you determined why I called this article "THE PONY PILE" yet? Hint: What does an optimist say when he comes across a pile of horse manure? Answer: "With all this manure, there must be a pony in there somewhere!"

I hope I've provided you with a pony or two.

Thanks for the tip, Anne. (Note Anne's husband is running for Congress and she uses her TI for as much of the detail work as possible. Hope to have space soon to "Spotlight" her and her work. She also does graphics from counted cross stitch and has donated a disk full to our library. Her favorite graphics program is JOYPAINT99.

IMPORTANT TIPS

NorthCoast 99'ers - Aug. 25, 1988
Late information By Martin A. Smoley

If you missed this meeting you should really feel sorry for yourselves. The demo was absolutely the most informative, most articulate, most magnificent demonstration we have had in years, and it was given by me. If you believe that, and are interested in some choice land in Florida, please contact me at your earliest convenience. We did have a good meeting but the attendance was low, as expected. We had between 15 and 20 members present. As mentioned previously we are considering the elimination of one meeting in mid-summer because of low attendance. This would probably be the August meeting. If you have any comments on this matter, please contact us. As for the NorthCoast 99'ers Group, we are doing well. Almost all of our members are renewing their memberships with the club, we still have good attendance at meetings, and we have a lot of volunteers working in the background to keep our club thriving. With all the fabulous new software, like TI-Base, and hardware, like controllers for 40 Megabytes of hard drive, I can't believe that this computer was supposed to be thrown in the trash years ago.

ITEMS FROM MARTY'S MAJOR PLAN

Steve Weinkamer has volunteered to become Program Director for our group. The primary job of the program director is to get people to do demonstrations at the NorthCoast meeting. I will help him in his endeavor by supplying him with the names of members who have extensive knowledge of special TI programming. In other words, if you are good at FunnelWeb, or Multiplan, etc., so when Steve comes after you for a demo you might as well give up because we know where you live. Another item from my plan is this. Although I have not talked to Ken Gladyszewski as of the writing of these notes he is involved in the plan. I hope that Ken, as the caretaker of the club system, will be able to bring it to most of the meetings next year. This arrangement will remove two more burdensome items from the shoulders of your new president in 1989.

NEW SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

There will soon be a place for new members, or old members with basic systems to gather and work out their problems with the TI. Bernard Zuckerman is forming a Special Interest Group (SIG) for beginners, people who have just a console and tape deck, or possibly just a member who is having a problem understanding a program. Berny lives in South Euclid and his phone number is 381-4088. If you're a new member or just need some help, give him a call and join the SIG. I'm sure this group will be a big success in the coming months.

THE NEXT NORTHCOAST MEETING

At the next meeting Chuck Poulin will demonstrate BOOT/V4. This is a great utility loader that is almost identical to the Ramdisk Menu program, but it is used without a Ramdisk. I expect this program to be a big library mover when people realize what it can do. At the October meeting Paul Newmeyer will demonstrate PLUS. This is a TI-Writer or FunnelWeb enhancement disk. It allows you to produce elaborate documents with ease, because of its transliterate and control code implementation. If you write letters your going to like PLUS.

See you all at the next meeting. Marty

The information below may help you understand or fix a problem you may be having with TI-Base. First, there were problems with the print command in the original version of TI-Base. This problem was corrected in the 1.02 version. If you are not using version 1.02 or later, you should check with the people you purchased it from about possible updates. If you are using version 1.02, the following information applies to you.

The line below is a patch to version 1.02 and can be entered exactly as shown into your SETUP Command file. Type it in as the first line of the SETUP file as is, spaces and all, and resave the SETUP file to the program disk. SETUP will then make the patch automatically every time you start the program.

CHANGE 294A 295D P1 V1.02

I am going to lump the rest of this together.

You can use no more than 11 TRIM and ! (concatenate) statements in the same line or you'll get error messages. Also on the same line if you are using the command DISPLAY; or PRINT fieldname1, fieldname2, fieldname3, etc. the maximum number of fieldnames you can use is 8. If you try to use 9 or more, you will get the error message (invalid fieldname). And last but not least for now, if you scan the manual for examples of commands to quickly help write a line in a program you're working on, here's a manual problem. In the manual at the top of page 3-15 you could extract the line LOCAL A N 5.2 as a good way to initialize a local. "I did." It's very wrong, and what's wrong is the period between 5 and 2. If you try this you will get the message (no more local space available) or something to that effect. The correct line should read LOCAL A N 5 2 using spaces and definitely no periods. The correct example for LOCAL is located on page 4-4 at the bottom.

NorthCoast 99'ers User Group

The NorthCoast 99'ers have decided to open their doors to users across the United States. If your group has collapsed, or you never had a group to begin with; if you would like access to a club library of 3500 plus programs, or perhaps you would just like to be sure that you will receive all of my future tutorial directly by mail, you can do these and many more things by joining the NorthCoast 99'ers User Group. A full membership is only \$15.00, or a Newsletter subscription is only \$10.00. With the \$15.00 full membership we have a \$1.00 library copy donation for one floppy disk with both sides containing programs. The dollar includes the cost of the disk and we can mail disks at a reasonable cost. The \$15.00 and \$10.00 membership cost refer to the continental United States. You can send your membership fee to me, Martin Smoley, 6149 Bryson Drive, Mentor, Ohio, 44060. Make all checks payable to NorthCoast 99'ers User Group. I'll expedite your membership personally.

Good Luck. Marty.

**TI-BASE - From INSCEBOT
TUTORIAL By Martin Smoley
NorthCoast 99'ers - July 25, 1988
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I am reserving the copyright on this material, but I will allow the copying of this material by anyone under the following conditions. (1) It must be copied in its entirety with no changes. (2) If it is retyped, credit must be given to myself and the NorthCoast 99ers, as above. (3) The last major condition is that there may not be any profit directly involved in the copying or transfer of this material. In other words, Clubs can use it in their newsletters and you can give a copy to your friend as long as its free.

The last article I wrote on TI-Base was a review in the July/Aug. newsletter. In that article I told of many problems I had with the PRINT command and other functions of TI-Base. I also said that I thought these problems would be corrected, and many improvements would be made. I'd like to say that the second of those two statements is now the most important. I received (Via Deanna Sheridan) a copy of TI-Base Version 1.02 and a four page letter from Dennis D. Faherty it's author. In the letter he related to 10 previous errors that had been corrected (one of which was the PRINT error) and to a multitude of improvements and refinements he wanted to make on TI-Base. This information has made me ecstatically happy. I feel that TI-Base will become as popular as TI-Artist and at some point will be so popular that you will be able to get COMMAND FILE routines from your club library just as you can now get Multiplan Screens or Extended Basic programs. TI-Base is a great enhancement to the 99/4A.

And now the TUTORIAL folks. First some housekeeping. The letters TIB will refer to TI-Base. MT: will signify the beginning of some text which should be considered Marty's Theory. Marty's Theory should not be taken as fact, but as my interpretation of an item. FYI: designates text that is For Your Information. FE will stand for For Example. DP will stand for Dot Prompt. <E> means press ENTER. (FEL) means Further Explanation Later, and last for now is ">", the greater than sign. I will use ">" when program segments are displayed at the left of every line. The position immediately to the right of the ">" will be column one. Take the example >12345. You should think of the number 1 as column one. The > does not exist. It is for reference only, the same as when you type in an XBasic program, at the head of each line you see > but it is not part of the program.

Let's get started. The first thing you do is make backups or copies of the original TIB disks and put the originals away in a safe place. If the originals arrived without the write protect slots on the disks being covered, do that first, then make your copies. The program will read and write to all of the disks used in the database process so you cannot writeprotect them. This means that you shouldn't use original disks and you should make copies of everything at the end of every work session. Backing up doesn't matter a lot at this point, but if you lose a data base with three or four hundred names in it, and you don't have another copy, you're in for some agonizing re-appraisal.

Having stashed the originals put your copy of the TIB system disk in Drive 1 and a newly initialized SS/SD disk in Drive 2. Then select Extended Basic and TI-Base will auto load. It takes a couple of minutes so be patient. After loading, TIB will ask for the date. This will be MM/DD/YY or Month, Day, Year. Enter the date, and use zeros, it's good procedure. FE, July 9, 1988 would be 07/09/88. TIB will then save the date and DO the program called SETUP. FYI: In this system DO replaces the XBasic RUN (more or less). When SETUP is executed you will be left with a bunch of junk on the screen and a dot "." at the bottom left corner of the screen with the cursor flashing next to it (see SCREEN ONE). FYI: I will at least partially explain any new item we encounter as they occur. I will also try to proceed "Top-Down" in programming and explanation.

```
>001 *           Welcome to TI-BASE
>002 *           QUIT will terminate TI_BASE
>003 *
>004 SET DATSISK=DSK2.
>005 DISPLAY STATUS
>-----
>DATDISK = DSK2.           Database files on DSK2.
>PRGDISK = DSK1.           TIB System Disk = DSK1.
>PRINTER = PIO.           Printer port PIO/RS232 etc.
>LINE = 080                Printer page width (Columns)
>PAGE = 056                Printer page length (Lines)
>HEADING = ON              Print all headings
>TALK = ON                 Echo commands to the screen
>SPACE = 01                Space between fields
>RECNUM = ON               Show record numbers
>LSPACE = 0256             Space available for LOCALS
>DATE = 07/09/88          This is the Date you Entered
>-----
>006 *           FUNCTION (7) for help.
>007 RETURN
> .                       [ SCREEN ONE ]
```

All of the lines with line numbers (001-007) are part of the command file called SETUP. The lines without numbers are part of the STATUS display. Lines 1, 2, 3, and 6 are comment lines and are made comment lines by placing an asterisk "*" in column one of any line. IMPORTANT: Line 2 could be misleading. QUIT does not refer to Fctn (Quit) in any form. You must never force the machine to quit or reset before you leave TIB by the proper procedure. Line 2 means type QUIT at the dot prompt and press enter. TIB will then take care of it's housekeeping (close all files, etc.) and exit to the TI system. Lines 4 and 5 are actual commands which can be included in a command file or typed in at the DP. FE type the following exactly at the DP

```
You'll notice that the
>SET DATDISK=DSK1. <E> word CLEAR, cleared the
>CLEAR <E> screen and DISPLAY STATUS
>DISPLAY STATUS <E> brought back the stuff
between the dashed lines.
```

You should also see that DATDISK now equals DSK1 (if all went well). If it didn't work, type it in again and be careful of spaces etc. When you have made it that far type the following.

```
This should reproduce
>DO SETUP <E> the original SCREEN ONE.
```

Continued Next Page.

REC LN	FN	MI SA	CT	ST ZP	PH	XP	GP	ID	ith	
0001	Aardvark	Grant	E. 9995 State Rt. 84	Geneva	OH 44014	1-465-9876	02-88	NOCO	0717851	ith
0004	Smoley	Martin	A. 6149 Bryson Drive	Mentor	OH 44060	257-1661	02-89	NOCO	0713831	ith
0003	Jones	Quincy	W. 37285 Burgandy Lane	Mentor-on-the-Lake	OH 44060	257-1029	08-88	NOCO	0820871	ith
0002	Whitman	Raymond (Slim)	A. 2574 East 254th.	Eastlake	OH 44094	951-2345	09-88	NOCO	0921861	ith
0000	Vivannovitch	Ellexie	I. 111 E. 98th. St.	Cleveland	OH 91023	541-5415	05-88	NOCO	0712881	ith

[SCREEN FOUR]

TI-BASE Tutorial Page 3

Having entered Y/es to enter data after the last screen, you should be in the APPEND mode, and you should see [SCREEN FIVE].

APPEND

```

LN          _____ 000
FN          _____
MI          _____
SA          _____>
CT          _____
ST          _____
ZP          _____
PH          _____
XP          _____
GP          _____
ID          _____

```

[SCREEN FIVE]

While entering data the previously described key functions are in effect. When you finish typing in the Last-Name (LN) pressing Enter will move you to the next field. You will notice that the numbers that run up at the far-right of each line are actually keeping track of your character position. The ">" at the end of line SA is telling you that there are more spaces for characters past the highlighted area. "In this case only one space." As you enter data and reach the end of the ID field, when you press Enter a new blank screen will come up. At that point the cursor will once again be in the first position to start entering another last name. If you are on the last data to be entered and at the end of the last field, do not press Enter. At that point you should press FCTN (8) to SAVE/QUIT. This does save, but it doesn't really quit, and you'll have to press FCTN(9) to get back to the DP. If you were

```

>CLEAR <E>
>USE T NAMES <E>
>APPEND <E>
-----
>CLEAR <E>
>USE T NAMES <E>
>EDIT <E>

```

NOTE: The EDIT is only usable when you already have data in the data base. I hope I have not been too confusing and you have been able to create the database and enter the data in screen four. If not, re-read this tutorial and consult your TIB manual. I'd like you to have a small database and be able to do something with it by the end of this tutorial.

Something I have not covered adequately up to this point is the phrase CLOSE ALL, and what's happening at the bottom of your screen in the highlighted area. I previously stressed the point that you must type the word QUIT at the DP in order to leave TIB. Doing so would cause TIB to look for and close any open databases before it quits to the TI system. When you are working with one database, and you would like to use another database you type CLOSE <E> at the DP. If you are working with several databases and wish to do something else, you type CLOSE ALL <E>. The highlighted area at the bottom of the screen will give you information on files that are open. This is particularly helpful when your screen is blank and the cursor is sitting at the DP. This information will consist of the name of a database which is currently open, and SELECTED (FEL), the record number which TIB is currently pointing at, and it will flash current system operations in the far right hand corner (FEL). My point is that if you see a name and some record numbers at the bottom of the screen, you should type CLOSE ALL <E>, before starting any new major tasks. Assuming that you have managed to create the database named T NAMES and have typed in the information shown in screen four, I'd like to run through a couple things that should be enlightening. Type

```

>CLEAR <E>
>CLOSE ALL <E>
>USE T NAMES <E>
>SORT ON FN <E>
>PRINT ALL FN,MI, LN
-----
>SORT ON LN <E>
>PRINT ALL LN, FN, MI
-----
>SORT ON ZP <E>
>PRINT ALL FN, MI, LN, ZP
-----
>SORT OFF <E>
>PRINT ALL FN, MI, LN, ZP
-----
>SORT ON XP <E>
>PRINT ALL FN, MI, LN, XP
>CLOSE ALL <E>

```

in the items at the left as usual. The system will give you messages as the data is being sorted, etc. Read the messages and observe the printout. I am attempting to show the unbelievable flexibility of this program. Merely by typing in a few lines of text at the DP you can sort the data on a different field, and print out only the fields you want, in the order you want. At this point you probably get confused by the different nature of this programming language. When you have used it for a while you'll think it's the greatest record keeping system to come out for the TI, bar none. With the use of the APPEND mode you can add as many new records as you wish, and with the EDIT mode you can correct or change any information in the database. FYI: Before moving on I want to fill you in on SCREEN FOUR. In order to get that printout, I previously set my printer to condensed print. I then entered SET LINE=134 at the DP: 134 was the only length that worked properly (I tried several). Then I typed USE T NAMES <E> and PRINT ALL <E>. I don't know where the end characters in each line came from.

Continued Next Page.

Now it gets interesting. We are going to create a small program, or create a COMMAND FILE. However, create is not the right terminology. The phrase is MODIFY COMMAND (filename) <E>. Filename is any name you would like to call the command file. It should be eight characters or less in length, and do not add any of the identifiers you may have picked up along the way (/C). Just type everything to the left exactly as you

see it. Take your time typing and allow

>CLEAR <E> time for the computer to do its
>CLOSE ALL <E> job each time you
>MODIFY COMMAND LBLS1 <E> press enter.

```
>* Command file LBLS1 "LABEL Prog."
>*
>SET TALK OFF
>SET RECNUM OFF
>SET HEADING OFF
>SET LINE=80
>CLEAR
>LOCAL TEMP C 40
>LOCAL BLNK C 1
>USE TNames
>SORT ON ZP
>TOP
> WHILE .NOT. (EOF)
>   REPLACE TEMP WITH "           ";
>   ; " Exp. Date " ; XP
>   PRINT TEMP
>   PRINT BLNK
>   REPLACE TEMP WITH TRIM(FN) ; " ";
>   ; MI ; " " ; LN
>   PRINT TEMP
>   PRINT SA
>   REPLACE TEMP WITH TRIM(CT) ; ", ";
>   ; ST ; " " ; ZP
>   PRINT TEMP
>   PRINT BLNK
>   MOVE
> ENDWHILE
>CLOSE ALL
>SET TALK ON
>SET RECNUM ON
>SET HEADING ON
>RETURN
```

```
>FCTN (8) This will save the command file.
>DO LBLS1 <E> This will run the file.
```

The information starting with CLEAR and ending with DO LBLS1 is everything you must type in to create and run a small program that will produce mailing labels from the database named TNames. It is that easy, and yet it is quite complicated. I will take the last half page of this article to give you some idea what's going on. The rest must wait until next month. I hope that what you have done so far has run successfully and your mind hasn't turned to mush.

The line MODIFY COMMAND LBLS1 <E> is the line that invokes TIB's Editor. This establishes that a command file is being created and will (if successful) be save to the DATDISK under the name LBLS1. At the time the file is saved the identifier /C will be attached to the name LBLS1 to produce LBLS1/C. This is why you cannot use 10 characters in the file name. Once you are in the editor the previously described keys are active (F1,F2,F3, Arrows, etc.). Lines that start with an asterisk "*" are comment lines. FYI: Don't use more than a couple comments, they eat up memory (FEL). All of the lines that SET something OFF are housekeeping. LOCAL TEMP C 40 initializes the variable named TEMP. TEMP will hold up to 40 characters (C). The variable BLNK can hold 1 character (C). At this point both variables are initialized blank or empty. We will refill and/or use them later. In the next three lines we are telling TIB to USE TNames and SORT that database ON the Zipcode field (ZP). When it is done we want it to go to the TOP, or beginning of the database. The next part of the program is a chunk. The chunk I refer to is everything from WHILE to ENDWHILE inclusive. This is the part of our program that does most of the work. When our program executes the word WHILE it does the whole line. This actually says to TIB, WHILE you do and ENDWHILE. If you do encounter the (EOF), or in this case the end of the database, then go to the next line after the ENDWHILE. The next line inside the loop will REPLACE the empty space in the variable TEMP with a bunch of blank spaces, the phrase " Exp. Date " and the club members Expiration Date (XP). The vertical lines ";" mean concatenate or stick together, the same as "&" in Extended Basic. So all three of those items are put into TEMP. Those items are then printed with the line PRINT TEMP. PRINT BLNK is the equivalent of "print a blank line". The next REPLACE takes FN (First Name), TRIMS off all the trailing blank spaces, sticks one space back (" "), attaches MI and another space (" "), puts LN (Last Name) on the end of that and sticks the whole mess into our variable TEMP. Now you see why TEMP had to hold up to 40 characters. The semicolon ";" at the end of these long lines is telling TIB that I couldn't get it all on 1 line and it should look for more on the next line down. TEMP is then printed as before. SA or Street Address is printed directly with no fancy stuff and the process is repeated for CT, ST and ZP. The blanks are thrown in for proper spacing to the next label. MOVE, moves the database to the next record and ENDWHILE sends you back to the WHILE statement to start over with the next name and address. The rest of the program is rather boring. When you finally run out of records the program jumps past all this to the CLOSE ALL. TNames is closed, everything you turned OFF is turned ON again, and the program is over. IMPORTANT, next month I will work with larger programs, using the FunnelWeb Editor/Assembler Editor. The program on this page (LBLS1) is about the best you can write using the Modify Command Editor. I will also get into the use of printer control codes. Control codes can be imbedded in the program with the FNLWB Editor, but not with the TIB Editor. I will cover some of the (FEL)s, Further Explanation Later and I will probably go over everything many times. In TIB there are several ways you can write a program to accomplish the same task. When I encounter that situation I will compare the previous program. This should give you more contact with TIB logical procedures.

Continued Next Month.

ASK C.T.
by C.T. Tibs, Cleveland, Ohio

Sometimes it seems as though things happen that defy explanation. This time, I have heard of several instances where 99'ers were having difficulty communicating with their printers, for one reason or another. To the best of my knowledge, none of these people know each other, and have completely separate problems. In light of this, I have decided that a short course on "Printer Talk 101" is in order.

Let's start off with a basic move. Find the appendix in your printer's "user?" manual. Somewhere in the appendix, there will be a table of ASCII values and their respective printer controls. Along with this, look in the manual for a rather short table of DOT COMMANDS (.LF, .MA, .CR etc.). Once you've located these items, remove them, or copy them, from the manual, and use the remaining "masterpiece" as a table leveler. Now if you're a printer repair technician or development engineer, go ahead and keep the book handy. You're about the only one who can understand it!

Now that I've said what I think about equipment "user" manuals, let's get started with a "short" USER'S course on printer communication.

There are normally three ways to talk to your printer.

1. The OPEN statement DOT COMMAND. This is in the form of OPEN #7:"PIO.LF=2.MA=8.LL=65". All this means is Open a channel #7 to my printer called PIO, and tell the printer to Double Space the lines (LF=2), set the Left Margin to the 8th column (or character) and allow 65 characters maximum in each line that is printed. In "Plain English", that wasn't too bad was it? However, the DOT COMMAND METHOD is highly printer specific. That is, not all printers respond to the same DOT COMMAND letters in the same way.

That's why I recommend that you locate the DOT COMMAND table.

2. The ASCII program, CHR\$(X), coding method of controlling your printer is a more "generic form of control, because there are quite a few common CHR\$(X) commands for most printers. All this means is that you can EASILY write your own program coding to control your printer as you wish. This coding can be obtained from the ASCII table, I mentioned earlier, probably located in the appendix of your user manual.

A short printer program might go something like this:

```
100 OPEN #7:"PIO"  
110 PRINT #7:CHR$(10);CHR$(10);CHR$(14);CHR$(16);  
    "OBTHIS IS INTENDED.";CHR$(15);CHR$(10);CHR$(10)  
120 CLOSE #7  
130 END
```

Line 100 opens channel #7 to a printer called "PIO".

In line 110: CHR\$(10) is a LINE FEED, CHR\$(14) is a SHIFT OUT or (in this case) DOUBLE WIDE print, CHR\$(16) sets the PRINTER tab to the 8th column (as determined with the statement "OBTHIS IS INDENTED.") and CHR\$(15) returns the printer to normal size print. Line 120 closes the channel to the printer, and line 130 stops the program.)

Now, think about it. This method isn't all that complicated, especially when you get used to what codes are and what they do.

Here's a little program that will call up the printer ASCII codes that will control your printer, and show you what they do. (Remember to have your printer turned on!)

```
100 CALL CLEAR  
110 OPEN #7:"PIO"  
120 FOR J=0 TO 31  
130 IF J=7 THEN 150  
140 PRINT #7:CHR$(15);"CHR$(";J;") IS:  
    ";CHR$(J);"40TAB";CHR$(J)  
150 NEXT J  
160 CLOSE #7  
170 END
```

(Line 100 clears the screen, 110 opens #7 to PIO, 120 sets up the loop for ASCII codes 0 thru 31 (These are actually PASCAL language values when talking to a printer.), 130 says, "If J=7, don't print it (can cause error hang-up) goto next "J", 140 prints to the printer normal size print (CHR\$(15)), the word "CHR\$(" the "J" value then ") IS: " to say, "CHR\$(J) is: ", ;CHR\$(J) says, "Do this.", "40TAB" says where and ;CHR\$(J) says, "Do it again.", 150 gets the next "J", 160 closes the channel and 170 is the END.)

Try this routine. I think you'll be surprised at what you get. And if you're REALLY curious, set the loop for: J=0 to 300. Boy, will you be in for a surprise!

If you look at the ASCII table while this routine is running, you'll find that you will be able to learn how to program your printer quite easily.

3. This last method of controlling your printer is through software ESCAPE key sequences and subsequent special printer control keys. This method can be highly software specific, in that one program might require a <CTRL/U> to escape to the printer command mode, while another would use something entirely different. A good example would be the printer control command keys in TI-WRITER. A good understanding of the software manual is necessary to utilize the operations available.

Controlling your printer doesn't have to be as mysterious as it would seem. All it takes is some reading, experimentation and a little help from your fellow TI-99/4A users or C.T. Tibs.

Drop me a note, and let me know how you're doing. Send your comments and/or questions to: C.T. Tibs, 13246
HARPER RD, STRONGSVILLE, OH 44135

Conference held on COMPUERVE at 9:00 pm Sunday 5-22-88 Jim Horn, sysop)

(JIM) Ok, Ron, while we are still gathering, and everyone is ready to capture. Even though we need not get formal yet, could you give us your opening information?

(RON WALTERS) I don't think many know me. Jim has asked me do this CO in order to introduce the TI community to some of the things that my company is doing that may be of benefit to TI users...both the 4/a and 9640. By way of introduction, I am a consultant in the medical imaging field and one of the early developers of the C.A.T. scanner and Magnetic Resonance Imaging systems which are revolutionizing diagnostic medicine today. I am also president of Dynamic Systems Research Inc. which develops technology in this field and licenses or sells patents to companies in this area such as Johnson Johnson, GE and their subcontractors.

For our in-house R&D we are using a 9640 with 2MB of Ramdisk (PHOENIX-HRD) which I have released to HORIZON, and

40 MB hard disk (not yet working...for reasons we all know <grin>). I have recently designed a Hi-Resolution Color digitizer which will function on the 4/a and 9640. This will surpass the specs. of any pc compatible "frame grabber" that I'm aware of. It uses a new technology for which we are filing patent applications, and it is currently in prototype phase. It will digitize, in real time, at viewable resolution of 512x424 pixels of 24 bits (thats 16 million hues for those who admire the Amiga) and provide display capabilities to match (especially important to those with 4/A's). My current thinking is to license these patents to other pc makers or third parties, because we are not hardware manufacturers, while producing the TI version in smaller quantities to cover development expenses...the TI version hitting the market first. Thats it, and I do not type that fast... so please bear with me!

(JIM) OK, I would like to ask you to expand on that just a tad, Ron.... On this product(s) that you have in prototype...could you estimate a cost... Along with your initial market thrust<without telling secrets>...

(RON WALTERS) I think we would be able to keep it under \$500 (JIM) in rangers of say, under \$10K, more than 10K. etc.

(RON WALTERS) it currently would take more than one slot... but if I do one or two custom chips, can get it on a board this would however involve a commitment on my part of 2000 systems

(JIM) Do you feel that the medical field is the first area of concentration?

(RON WALTERS) Im using this for R&D in the medical field as one of many new pieces of HW which I cant discuss, but the digitizer by itself... is of more general use

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron...is the color resolution a full 24 bits, or from a 24 bit palette?

(RON WALTERS) full 24 bits and real time

(STEVE BAUTE) I'm impressed! (RON WALTERS) its currently digitizing at 14 MByte/sec. Are we talking about a scanning device, a display device, or both? Elaborate for ignorant ones like me.

(RON WALTERS) a frame grabber...NTSC standard video,ie...it is constantly digitizing its video input...

(STEVE BAUTE) Guess that jives with the resolution you mentioned, correct?

(RON WALTERS) until told to freeze...BUT the data can be accessed without freezing Like a Dual Port memory

(STEVE BAUTE) Go ahead! Ron, I'm impressed with the speed as much as anything else...effectively, are you telling me that you can grab a frame every 1/30th...

(RON WALTERS) I'M using state of the art chips

(STEVE BAUTE) of a second?

(RON WALTERS) yes every 1/30 for full res.

(STEVE BAUTE) 14 MByte/sec? How do you manage that? How many bytes for a screen?

(RON WALTERS) well...I dont currently have a place to put it

(STEVE BAUTE) Right at 2/3rds of a meg, right?

(RON WALTERS) approx...1/2 MByte because of a HW compression algorithm(ie patent)

(OTTAWA) So a hard disk would be required?

(RON WALTERS) were looking toward apps. in the future for writable CD's. Hard disk for now (2,Ron Walters) unlike...other frame grabbers, this is a display driver as well... hence it can be used on the 4/a

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron, does that mean it can display in real time also?...

(RON WALTERS) yes

(STEVE BAUTE) and, if so, how fast is the RAM you're using...must be screaming mothers!

(RON WALTERS) its standard 120 ns. but 4 way interleaved for...an effective 40 ns or better

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron, you said that you're working on the medical end now.. does that mean you're thinking of possibly using the system...for digitizing and storage of standard X-rays? Know that there. .. is a certain demand in that area, even if perhaps... a simplistic use.

(RON WALTERS) yes, as you may know CAT scanners and MRI produce digital images to begin.. with and Digital Radiography has been around for some time... thus techniques are being developed for computer analysis of such images... and among other uses it would be useful to have conventional X-Rays ...in a digital format...I cant say what exactly we are doing tho..

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron, is there any provision for RGB as well as composite video input?

(RON WALTERS) I have designed it already for my board, but packaging will determine... whether or not it will fit on a comercial version...BTW this system sits on the bus, and so will be accessable randomly...like a Ramdisk

(OTTAWA) Ron, You can't say just what you are doing because it is undecided yet, or... (2,Ottawa) not ready to be publicly known? and...Do you see any applications for a casual user? That is very reasonable.

(RON WALTERS) there are several levels of propriety here...the medical application is strictly confidential...however the digitizer is... just one component in the system designed to meet our specific needs... while still being a general purpose I/O device for whatever our imaginations... can conjure up...

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron, was I dreaming, or did I hear you say that...you were targeting a price of approx. \$500 for the... capture board(s)?

(RON WALTERS) I think it can be done for that...of course my licensees will charge a lot... more but they have to pay me royalties <grin>...as far as the TI application... goes I had to design this for myself and do not intend to profit from... the TI community. By licensees I meant NON TI applications!

(OTTAWA) Can you project a cost to the end user?

(RON WALTERS) the \$500 target is to the end user...somewhat to make big blue et. al...take notice!...ga

(OTTAWA) Now, I'm sure they will.ga

(RON WALTERS) we will however go after patent infringements AGGRESSIVELY!

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron...I'm completely ignorant of the 9640 chip....

(STEVE BAUTE) but is the chip part of the design? or is your TI set up interfacing the board..to the 9640 via a bus?

(RON WALTERS) Steve, this is a general purpose device designed to be put on..."a buss" (not out of town<grin>) but currently on the 4/a compatible buss..it is easy tho to change interfaces...

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron...is on-board memory used? Or doe the computer have to provide that?

(RON WALTERS) it has on board memory which is effectively dual ported

(STEVE BAUTE) You mentioned that...sorry - forgot!

(RON WALTERS) so the CPU has simultaneous access

(OTTAWA) Are you writing the software for it?

(RON WALTERS) yes.... SW is a part of the key to this high level of performance at low cost...

(DBUG) send 33 \$500 for tv....impressi ve,has it gone to the 3.5 drive thoughts yet?

(OTTAWA) Will it be compatible with the 4/a, 9640 and

others?

(RON WALTERS) yes, compatible with 4/a and 9640... (2, Ron Walters) but would be the only practical display driver on the 4/a because of the... 4/a's inherent limitations... it would also, as a graphics display driver, open up GIF possibilities for the 4/a ...

(BOB) What stumbling blocks do you anticipate and when do you project we will see it?

(RON WALTERS) I have not yet interfaced it to my Geneve, because that's the easy part... such like a Horizon Ramdisk I/O ..packaging problems are the practical stumbling stumbling ie., do we have to do custom chips or two boards (custom chips are min \$15k plus an order commitment on our part)...

(STEVE BAUTE) Ron (as he tries to hide a sly little grin on his face)... you need a Beta tester for a TIPC interface, don't you...

(RON WALTERS) I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT!

(STEVE BAUTE) [just jokin', Ron]...does sound tvery\$ interesting, though!

(RON WALTERS) Its not outa the question Steve

(STEVE BAUTE) :-) Now just show\$ did you know I would ask that...seriously though, at a projected price of \$500...

(RON WALTERS) tele\$%\$y

(STEVE BAUTE) it sounds like a very cost effective product. [and I'm very much in the market for such a device]

(RON WALTERS) I do have a reputation for elegant solutions to problems (trying to hide ego<grin>) There seems to be an increasing desire for such... capabilities among hobbyists as well as professionals and many good ideas ... come from the independent vs. corp_ community...

(STEVE BAUTE) What kind of compression algorithm have you implemented in HW? Is it...proprietary? Or does it follow one of the many already in use?

(RON WALTERS) Sorry Steve but that is PROPRIETARY and one topic of patent...

(STEVE BAUTE) No problem, and understood. Just amazed that you can attempt compression....

(OTTAMA) Aw, Ron, you can trust _US_! <grin>

(STEVE BAUTE) at the speed you're grabbing frames at [of course, a soldering iron...]

(RICHARD) at least not the algorithm by itself!

(STEVE BAUTE) is a stranger to me]

(RON WALTERS) [That's right Rich. more like a process patent...see#4293912

(JIM) Richard, you had a comment?

(RICHARD) that's an old patent \$, Ron

(RON WALTERS) just an example

(RICHARD) my comment is a reminder that patents are utility algorithms, programs are copyrighted are utility have structure are not algorithms

(RON WALTERS) Im very familiar with the patent law and the precedents set... in HW related(or dependent) algorithms...it is beyond the scope of this CO..

(RICHARD) I meant independent type was not patentable..we agree.

(RON WALTERS) thats true...

(STEVE BAUTE) Off the patent stuff now , just wondering what the capture board..is like in use. I would assume that with it, you could capture. .. modify, and display some quite effective animation.... sequences with it, right ? At that speed... it has more to offer than just the resolution (which is excellent) .

(RON WALTERS) yes, it does answer the needs of animation

apps. if the sys. on which...it is used can keep up!

(STEVE BAUTE) Sounds like an IO device that is crying for a CD storage device. I assume...you've worked a little bit on interfacing it with one [grin]

(RON WALTERS) not yet Steve , but you can bet im thinking about it!

(DOUGLAS COLEMAN) SPpeakin of cd's wouldn't it be great if someone developed laserdiscs as a mass storage device for computers?

(RON WALTERS) already done!

(JIM) Already has three magazines for the field, Douglas.

(RICHARD) what device/s are you talking of and what machine is it for?

(RON WALTERS) real time video digitizer for 4/a and 9640

(RICHARD) isn't some one else doing that?

(RON WALTERS) sorry, did I answer wrong ?

(,RICHARD) is it the one connected to the 9938? (2,RICHARD) isn't someone else also doing that? is more correct.

(RON WALTERS) it sits on the buss...you are thinking ,I believe, of the VIDEOFLEX et.al.

(,RICHARD) yes, is yours frame capture?

(RON WALTERS) or the DIJIT sys

(,RICHARD) never heard of Digit doing such a thing

(RON WALTERS) real time 512x424x24bits

(,RICHARD) they never came out with their suppose 9938 for the 4A

(RON WALTERS) dont know about Dijit

(BOB) Interjection... DIJIT is planning such a thing...

(RICHARD) videoflex was doing a digitizer

(RON WALTERS) simple digitizer from VIDFLEX Dijit. They do not intend to do HiRes and real time color!

(RICHARD) Ron you should distinguish yourself with the tera frame grabber.

(RON WALTERS) I think I said that in the intro...

(RICHARD) As the rest of the PC community does separate digitizers and frame grabbers. Sorry, I was not here for that. About the bus, would you like to plug into other computer busses?

(RON WALTERS) I intend ti license patents for other busses... ti=to

(,RICHARD) why not defne your own bus and have an adapter for each computer.

(RON WALTERS) because its easier to design... (2,Ron Walters) a peripheral with a simple protocol and adapt to the various busses! Complex peripheral that is!

(RICHARD) but even the 4A bus differs slightly from the 9640 bus

(RON WALTERS) no prob!

(RICHARD) right, a complex peripheral with simple i/o protocol for easy adaption.

(RON WALTERS) this is so fast it can wait for the buss

(RICHARD) a simple protocol can hide any buffer then.

(RON WALTERS) right

(RICHARD) the protocol could expect there to be interrupts available, but knowing how some computers are designed should be

(RON WALTERS) I also designed the PHOENIX Ramdisk for the Geneve if there are anyquest.on that...

(RICHARD) the interrupts should be controllable.

(BOB) Well done, Ron.

(RICHARD) why not 1 farad capacitor like rave 99.!

(RON WALTERS) this is to be a non CPU dependent device

(J HORN) Got to toddle off. So we had better go to caos time

NINE MONTHS PREGNANT

or GRAND RAM REVIEW

Paul Newmeyer - Northcoast 99ers - Cleveland, Ohio

I finally got my Grand Ram Disk from DataBioTics. From the time I ordered it until I had it in my possession took nine months, the same time required to conceive, gestate and deliver a baby. And believe me, the pain required to ultimately hold a ram disk in my hands corresponded to the pain of birth.

When the baby arrived, I eagerly unpackaged it from its receiving blanket and cautiously examined it to see if it had been delivered with all its members intact. It had no body, so it stared at me with all its internal organs and plumbing exposed. My first task was to find out which end was the head and which was the... ah, the, ah, outlet end. After all, I wanted the right end sticking out.

My version, the 256K one, came with a real time clock. I installed it in my PBox bassinet and fired it up. What do you know, up came a purple screen structured after the fashion of the Johnson menu. It's Function 5 belly button enabled me to edit the menu to conform to my needs. Shift 1 catalogued a disk and sent it to printer; shift 2 viewed a file and sent it to printer. The clock keeps good time, but over many days seems to gain a little. After the initial post-natal delivery, I concluded that the baby was ok, so I put it to bed for a rest.

To my horror, when I later went in to play with the baby, it had dumped all its contents. At least when this baby dumps, there's no messy diaper to change. Who kidnapped my ram disk? This is a nightmare I have experienced at least 7 times in the past two months. I called DataBioTics about this matter, and they were not helpful at all. I received the feeling that they preferred to ignore my problem. Herein lies my major criticism of the Grand Ram--for no reason it loses its load and must be reloaded. For this reason, I must backup everything stored on it, and never know if I'll fire up with a TI title screen and empty Ram or if I'll get the Ram menu. When I'm in a hurry to use my computer for a project, this is a nuisance.

In fact, permit me to state this matter the way I really feel---It's a blamed pestilence. What's a battery back-up supposed to be for?

Now, let's look at the disk and its features. If it weren't for the frequent kidnappings I'd be delighted with the disk. It comes with two support disks, one of which contains the configuration program. I like this feature, since here you can simply set the print spooler, clock, calendar, disk names and sizes, and hot keys.

In the spooler, data can be stored at computer speed and sent to the printer as needed. The clock displays in the upper right hand corner of the screen. All files are stamped with a calendar, although at present nothing reads this stamp. The drives can be set 1 thru 9 and A thru Z. Each drive can be set to size up to the limit of the Ram.

The Hot Keys form a unique feature of the disk. You can set desired key combinations to perform the following functions: display or undisplay the clock, enable or disable the Ram on power up, turn spooler on or off, flush spooler, disable interrupts, and load programs.

More than one Grand Ram can be used in the PBox, and it can be used in conjunction with other Ram disks. The supplier claims it will work with the CorComp Triple Tech Card and the Myarc Hard Disk.

In the software provided with the Ram are a disk manager, and TI-Writer type editor and formatter.

Three things concern me: 1) The repeated and unexpected loss of Ram contents, 2) The difficulty in contacting or getting help from DataBioTics, 3) An occasional inability in running a Forth program with the Disk connected. Will DataBioTics be around to support or service this disk? Given my current difficulties, that's a BIG question.

On the other hand, it's a great disk and worthy of the name "Grand". When I buy a product, I like a quality product and a quality supporter of that product. At this point, I suggest that the Ram Disk is far superior to the DataBioTics company that delivers it.

When discussing philosophy with Adeimantus, Socrates said, "The philosopher holding converse with the divine order, becomes orderly and divine, as far as the nature of man allows; but like everyone else, he will suffer from detraction" (Plato's Republic: Book VI). Methinks that somewhere along the line, DataBioTics suffers from some detraction; but I doubt that it's with the divine. How else do we dare explain the fact that they fail to fully support such a fine instrument as the Grand Ram.

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