

SEPTEMBER

1987

MEETING SCHEDULE

HUG TIBBS - (713) 475-8909 24-hour BULLETIN BOARD

FIRST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH (2nd Sunday if 1st Sunday is on a holiday weekend)

AT THE NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1987 2:00 P.M.

St. John's School - 2401 Claremont

The September meeting has been set up as a "General Problem Solving Session". If you've got a problem with your equipment or software, NOW'S the time to bring'em up! There will also be some software demo's and impromptu reviews from various club members.

THIS ISSUE IN

Editors SoaPEBox Monitor Review . X-10 Power House HUG Classifieds

TI Mouse Review Cheap Tape Adaptor Frinter Buffer Review TI Vendor List - Part I

1987 HUG OFFICERS

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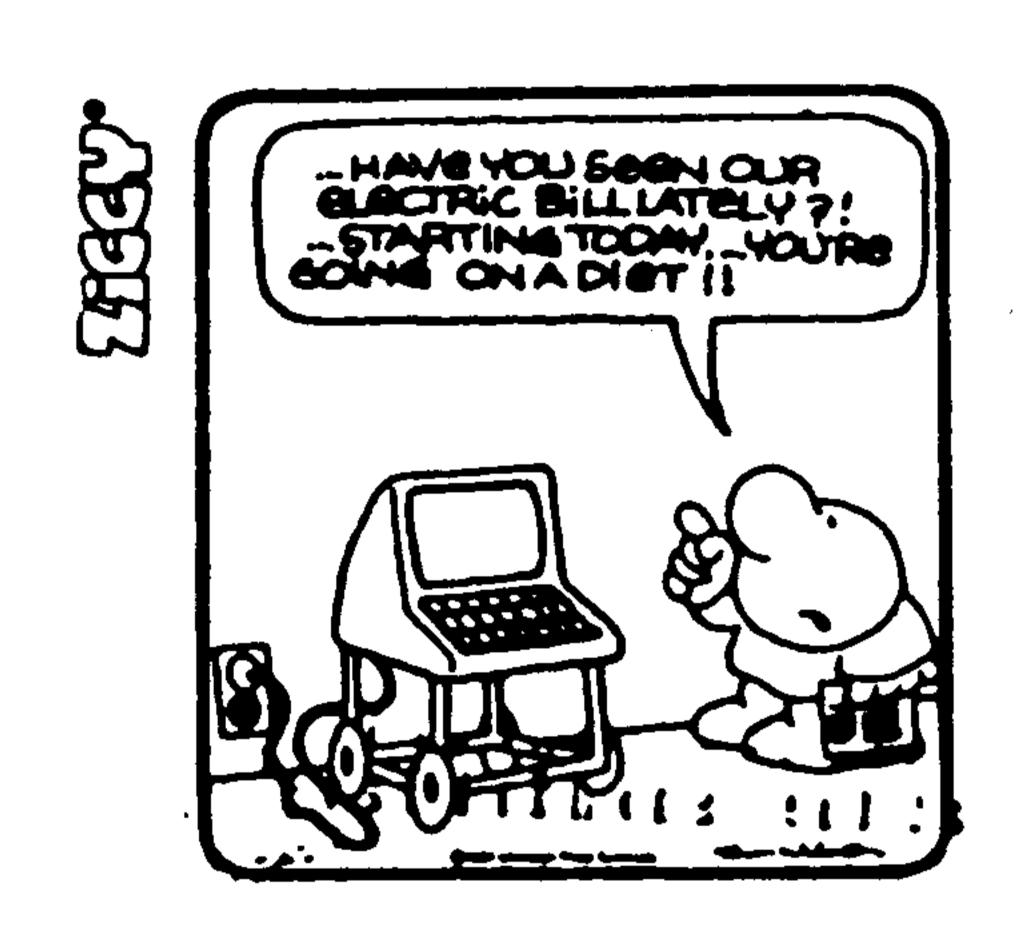
THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE HOUSTON USERS' GROUP. ANY OPINIONS OR ENDORSEMENTS ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHOR, AND MAY NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL OPINION OF 'HUG'. PERMISSION TO REPRINT GRANTED TO OTHER USER GROUPS. BUBBCRIPTION IS FREE WITH MEMBERSHIP.

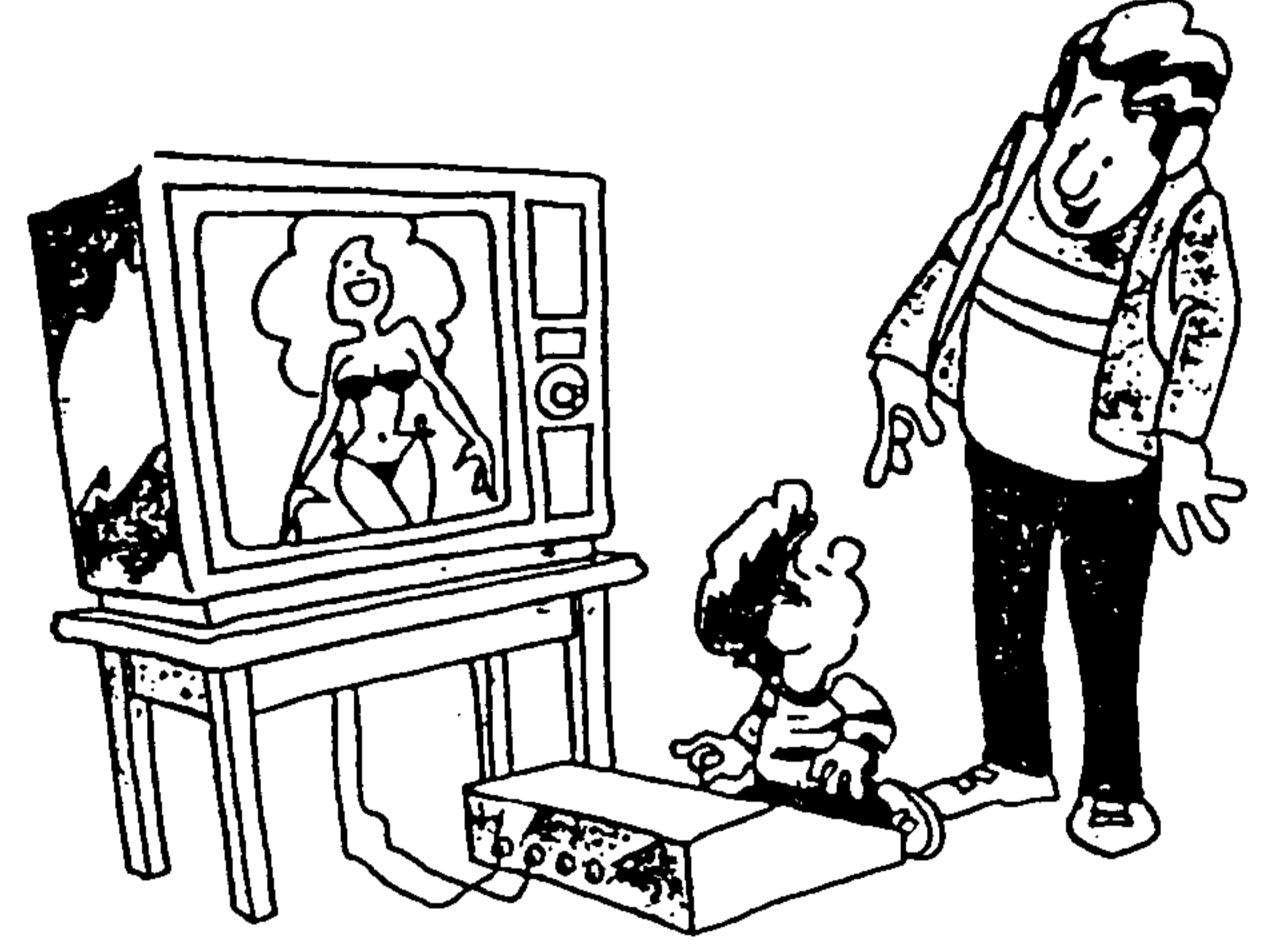
Editors SpaPEBox

With the passing of Labor Day and the resumption of school it appears that some normalcy is about to return to the world, if only my own. Now's the time to press forward with all the problems and questions concerning your II that you've managed to accumulate during the hot summer days. The monthly meeting is a GREAT forum for questions regarding the inner workings of the 99/4A and many software programs used therein. HUG's got lot's of folks with hundreds of hours of experience on many subjects (we've even got some experts, but most of them are too shy to admit it). So, to the next HUG meeting, bring your bewildered, your confused and perplexed! Your questions are quite probably the same as your neighbors, who like yourself has never raised them to the group for a answer. Look forward to seeing you there!

The "BEST HUG ADVERTISEMENT" contest failed to take off last month, probably due to competition with all the nice sunny days this past summer. We're going to postpone the deadline to the November meeting (11/01) to give some of the groups "out-of-pocket" more time to be creative. Check last months newsletter for further details.

For those of you who have been adrift in the open sea, for the past few weeks, you'll be glad to know all's well with the SysOps of the HU6-TIBBS and The Phoenix. Both Bill's schedules are returning to normal and they wish to pass on their appreciation of the HU6's memberships concern. (Come to think of it neither Bill was ever NORMAL to start out with, but that's entirely another matter - grin.) We look forward toward seeing them at a meeting in the near future.





"Daddy's not mad...Daddy just wants to know how you did it!"

Monitor Review

by Bill Rister - Houston User Group August 1987

COMMODORE Color Video Monitor, Model 1701

Commodore Electronics Ltd. Recent local prices vary from \$ 175 to \$ 250

This monitor features a 13° color screen with inputs for both the COMMODORE 3-cable connectors and the standard 2-cable connector. The set comes with the 2-cable RCA pin connectors and a 5-pin DIN connector which plugs directly into the TI-99/4A with NO MODIFICATION. The manual supplied is thorough except that it does not tell you which connector goes to which audio or video input (white to audio red to video).

The monitor is cool running and consumes less power than my old TV. Also, I had found that using the white (16) screen with the TV caused a flickering and jumping display. The monitor display is now rock-steady.

What You Missed Out On

For those of you who were unable to make last months meeting you missed out on a great presentation of the X-10 security system. Fortunately, Wayne Jobe was kind enough to provide a written review of the X-10 and I'm passing it along:

X-10 POWER HOUSE

by Wayne Jobe - Houston Users Group August 1987

As the name implies, the X-10 Power House will control the power to any part of your house (or yard). For those who can't start the day without their coffee, the X-10 can have it ready for you. When the X-10 turns on your radio and lights, you can bounce right out of bed knowing your coffee will be hot. All you have to do is pour it into your cup. The X-10 will remember to turn lights off when you forget and it will turn on lights when you are away. I am using mine to make sure my wifes African Violets are getting enough light when we're home or away.

This device will control up to 256 (16 * 16) separate modules that are connected to your house current. The computer interface has eight rocker switches for immediate control of eight addresses. One or all of the modules can have the same address. Each module can be addressed from A through P, and from 1 thru 16. The computer interface is programed via a GROM module with output through the joystick part (only the silver and black console) or programed via a software program through the RS-232 port (cable required). The computer interface has a battery so once programed it can be removed from the computer. The battery maintains the program and the time during a power failure. The manual says it can ride out a 100 hour outage.

Many modules are available for the X-10 system. The lamp module will turn on, of and dim lights (not for fluorescent). Appliance modles, including wall receptable and plug in varieties. There are wall switches, two and three way. There is a two-twenty volt module and a Thermostat controller that will set back the heat air conditioner while you're asleep or gone. Most modules cost less than \$15 (the thermostat is about \$40) and sometimes can be found at Sears or Radio Shack. M & S Computer Systems is also carrying both the Computer Interface and a few modules.

Besides the Computer Interface that controls up to 256 modules, there is a timer that controls up to eight modules and displays the time of day. There is a mini and maxi controller that have immediate control of 8 and 16 modules respectively. There is a telephone responder that will let you control modules over the phone. The Radio Controlled System available from X-10 will allow you to open garage doors, turn on yard and house lights, and even turn off burglar alarm systems. And yes even a burglar alarm system which accepts signals from alarm sensors and turns on specific appliances, such as telephone dialers, strobe lights, sirens, etc.

Programing the Interface from the CorComp Command Module is easy the first time. The Time mode is easy to set just select the menu item and follow instructions to set time, AM or PM (no military time) and the day of the week. The House mode is just as easy to set. It sets the address of the computer interface eight switches. It comes factory set to A and switches module addressd from AO1 to AO8. In the Install mode you select a location on the property, then select the type of appliance you want to control. Next you enter the module address that you have that device plugged into. The Operate mode allows you to turn modules on and off, dim incandescent lights, set times for things to happen around your house, at the same time any day, randomly when you're on vacation, or just once. The Review mode lets you look back at what you just programed.

The disk software version of the Programer does everything that the Cartridge does and more. The settings can be saved to disk so that you can load summer, winter, or vacation times as needed, without having to program each device. You are not limited to the rooms or appliances described by the icons on the cartridge. The disadvantages are that it requires a diskdrive, extended basic cartridge and a special RS-232 cable not supplied. this software is called Home Control 99 and is available for \$10 from EAGLE SOFTWARE, 1269 E. 348th St., Eastlake, OH., 44094

MicroStuffer PrinterBuffer

by Bill Rister - Houston User Group August 1987

While scanning a favorite computer publication, my eyes fell upon an ad I couldn't believe. Offered was a 64k parallel-to-parallel full-featured printer buffer for \$69 + \$3.50 S&H. The vendor even offers a toll-free order number and no surcharge for credit cards. This was too good to be true! Whipping out my trusty plastic, I dialed the number and asked the friendly person on the other end if there was a printing error. "No," she replied "the ad is correct."

In about five days, my order arrived via U.P.S. In the protected shipping carton was a well-written six page Operator's Manual, a 9VDC transformer and the object of the order - the buffer.

The MicroStuffer PrinterBuffer is housed in an plain tan plastic case measuring 6° W x 3-1/2° D x 1-1/2° H. On the front are a rocker on/off switch, two push-button switches and an LED for each switch. The push-button switches clear the buffer's memory and allow repeat printing. At the rear of the case is a female Centronics connector, a ribbon cable terminating in a male Centronics connector, and the DC power connector.

Following installation, using the buffer is as simple as typing "PIO" and pressing the ENTER key. Be sure power is off to your computer. Connect the power transformer to your AC source and plug its connector into the rear of the buffer. Unplug the printer cable from the printer and plug it into the buffer. Connect the buffer's cable to your printer. Power up your system and turn on the buffer switch and your printer. That's all there is to it! Anytime you enter a print command, the buffer will quickly absorb the data and begin feeding it to your printer. Meanwhile your cursor has begun blinking, indicating your computer is free to perform other tasks.

On power-up, all three of the buffer's LEDs come on. It is performing a self-test. Soon the Repeat and Clear lamps go off and the buffer is ready to accept data. When printing, if you wish to stop your printer for any reason, simply press the Clear button, which clears the buffer's memory, and turn off your printer. Or say you begin printing text and leave the room. Upon returning you find the printer has stopped but the paper had jammed, leaving you with no hardcopy. No problem! Turn off your printer, realign the paper, and turn on the printer. Press the Repeat button. The data has been stored in the buffer and will print you a fresh new copy. Perhaps you want more than one copy... you can repeat the buffer dump up to 255 times. What a timesaver!

This little machine has all the features of a well-known printer buffer selling for up to three times as much ... and performs the same tasks. I think so much of it that I have installed one on my TI-99/4A system and another on my PC system. For those systems utilizing a serial (RS232) printer, an inexpensive \$49 adaptor is also available.

CHEAP ADAPTOR

by Bill Rister - Houston User Group August 1987

You say you bought a 6E Slimline for \$ 30 instead of TI's version for \$ 70.... or you have a perfectly good Whizbang 3 recorder BUT you can't get it to automatically start stop when using it as CS1. Cheer up! For \$ 2.25 and a couple of spare items you can make an adaptor for yourself and a spare for a friend (the same item retails for up to \$ 10).

I used the following parts:

3/32" Submini Phone Plug (Radio Shack #274-292..pkg of 2/\$1.19) : About 6" miniature speaker wire.

3/32" Submini Phone Jack (Radio Shack #274-289..pkg of 2/\$.99) | Used 35mm plastic film can

Start by tying a simple overhand knot in the middle of the speaker wire (this will serve as a strain-relief). Punch a 1/8" hole in the center of the film can cap and bottom.

Seperate the two speaker wire leads about 3/4" on each end and strip 1/8" insulation from all four wires. At one end, solder 1 wire lead to the ground lug and the other wire lead to the positive lug of the female phone jack. Now insert the female jack through the underside of the film can cap and attach the jack's nut.

From inside the film can, thread the free end of the wire through the bottom of the can. Slip the male plug's insulating cap over the wire so that you may attach it to the plug after the wires are soldered. Now locate the free end of the wire you attached to ground on the jack and solder this free end to positive on the plug. (This reverses the polarity of the motor control.) Solder the other free wire to ground on the plug.

Screw the insulating jacket to the plug and snap on the can top. Insert the new plug in the remote control jack of your recorder, insert the CS1 black cable into the jack on the film can top and Viola! You have an adapter for less than \$ 1.25.

REPRINTED FROM The FLUG TI ROUNDUP Volume 1, Number 5 Forest Lane Users Group - January 1987

TI MOUSE - FROM MECHATRONICS
A REVIEW
by Richard Fleetwood

Until recently, most computer systems other than TI 99/4A had a variety of neat hardware that made them easier to use in many ways. The device most common to the BIG computers was a device called a MOUSE. The Apple MacIntosh was one of the first to initiate making the mouse a major part of the system, and it was followed by most of the other big computer manufacturers like Atari, IBM, and Commodore. Now thanks to Mechatronics, the TI 99 has a mouse it can call its own.

For those of you who have ever seen a mouse in action, or have no idea what a mouse is, here is an explanation. A MOUSE is a device similar in use to a joystick. The mouse is used to MOVE objects around on the screen with much more ease and exactness than could be achieved with a joystick. This mouse in particular is a small flat box, shaped to fit in the cup of your hand comfortably. It has four small flat teflon pads on the bottom of the unit that allow the mouse to slide over any flat surface smoothly and quickly. If you turn the mouse over, you will see a round opening out of which a very heavy rubberized ball hangs out and rolls over the table when you move the mouse around. The ball is the part of the mouse that makes contact with the sensors that transfer the data to your computer telling the cursor or icon which way to move on the screen. It takes very little effort to control the cursor, with an area of about 10 inches wide on your table giving you enough room to move the cursor from one side of the screen to another. On the top of the mouse are two push button switches. The one on the right acts as

a HOME key, serving to move the cursor to the upper left hand corner of the screen when pushed.

When you purchase the Mechatronics TI Mouse, you get a mouse, an AC adapter that provides power to the pc board contained within the mouse, an adapter that allows you to plug the mouse into your joystick port, a disk of several demo programs using the mouse, and a 20 page manual that explains all aspects of the mouse operation, and how to interface the mouse with your own programs. The programs on disk autoload with Extended BASIC, and display a menu with 4 different choices consisting of 1) BASIC, 2) TI DOS, 3) CALCULATOR, 4) BREAKOUT. Selecting TI DOS loads in a program that allows you to have a full disk access such as cataloging up to three drives, reading DISPLAY type files, loading XB programs, and protecting/unprotecting files. When a disk is cataloged, the filenames are displayed on the left side of the screen, along with an icon (picture) representation of the type of file that it is. A program file has an icon shaped like a sheet of paper with one corner folded over. A DV type file has an icon of an opened file cabinet drawer, while other kinds of files have other types of icons. On the right side of the screen are several icons for actual control of the TI DOS system. These icons are to read Display type files, load programs, protect files, catalog files, and remove an icon from the cursor of the mouse. These icons are represented respectfully as an eyeball with an arrow pointing at it, a TI bug (the TI logo you'll find just over your number 1 key), a padlock, three floppy disks with drive numbers on them, and a small

trash can in the lower left hand corner.

Say you want to run the program BREAKOUT, located on the disk that comes with the unit. If you are in TI DOS, catalog drive number one by moving the arrow-cursor to the disk icon marked number 1, and press the left mouse key. The program will catalog the disk in drive one, displaying the filenames and their icons for the different file types. BREAKOUT will have an icon that stands for PROGRAM file. Move the cursor to this icon and press the left mouse button. The cursor will pick up the icon, and then you can move it by rolling the mouse around the surface of your desk. Now carry the icon over to the TI bug (remember the TI logo?) and place the icon over the state of Texas on the right of the screen. Now push the left mouse button. The computer will clear the screen and proceed to load BREAKOUT into memory and autorun it. That's all there is to using TI DOS. The other functions of this program are equally as easy to use. BREAKOUT is a game that is available on all kinds of computers, as well as already being available in other languages for the 99/4A. With the mouse, it adds a new dimension to the game. CALCULATOR uses the mouse icon as a hand pointed finger to push the buttons on a calculator that is displayed in the screen. The manual notes that the TI DOS program supplied with the mouse is only a Demo program -- There is a complete TI DOS package available thru Mechatronics that is much more complete.

Interestingly, I just purchased the latest version of TI Artist, version 2.01. It came with a new DSR routine that I can load thru the INPUT option from the main menu that allows me to use the mouse to control the cursor and screen input. The disk even contains the source code. I loaded TI Artist, then loaded the MECHA file from the TI Artist disk (MECHA is the new DSR routine) and when it came back to the

main menu, I selected 1) and loaded the main TI Artist program. It took a few seconds to get my bearings and figure out how the mouse interacted with TI Artist, but that was no problem. What was a problem was that somehow the DSR did not completely interface the mouse with the program. I could move the cursor from side to side easily, but this quickly got boring with a multitude of horizontal lines across the screen. When I tried to move the the cursor up or down, the cursor movements in those directions was at best very jerky; at worst, nonexistant. I believe that this particular DSR file needs a little work. When using the mouse with the programs that come packaged with it, the action is flawless. But when using it for this particular purpose it was obvious that the TI Artist "Mecha" DSR Link still was in need of help. I hope to be able to use the Mouse with TI Artist soon because it would allow unbelievably more flexibility over using the keyboard or joystick.

Except for the inability to interface with TI Artist, which is no fault of the mouse or its software, but of the routine supplied with the TI Artist program, I could find no faults with the Mechatronics TI Mouse Package. The software is fully self explanatory and seems to be uncrashable. The manual though translated from German, and a little rough around the edges, but clear and precise in its layout is great help for setting up the system and using it. The Mouse itself is made of plastic, with stainless steel bearings for contacting with the internal sensors, and thick teflon pads should last a LONG time.

I rate the TI Mouse system an A+ for overall design, layout and use. If you are looking for an addition to your system that will be quite useful, then why not give this a try. The list price is \$119.00 but can be found for less than \$100 at several mail order suppliers. Give it a try!

TI Vendor List - Part I

John Willforth of the West Penn 99ers has compiled a comprehensive list of national suppliers of TI-99/4a products. Be sure to support these vendors who are faithfully supporting us. It's one more important way of extending the life of your valuable machine. The following is the first of two parts of that listing:

SOME SUPPLIERS OF STUFF FOR THE T.I. 99/A..... by John F. Willforth

I feel that some of you may have heard of a product or seen something that was demonstrated at a U.G. meeting, and would like more information about this item, or would like to sleep at nights, and pay for something that you are now using, but don't know where it came from. I've compiled this list of vendors, and hope that you find it useful.

22096

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INTERNATIONAL 99/4A SIG FOR EDUCATORS PROPOSED.

INTERESTED PERSONS CONTACT:

MRS. BONNIE L. SNYDER (OR TERRIE MASTERS OF L.A. UG)

62 S. ROOSEVELT ST.

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80932 1-303-578-1583 (AFTER 5PM COLORADO TIME)

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PENSACOLA.

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SOME GOOD STUFF...

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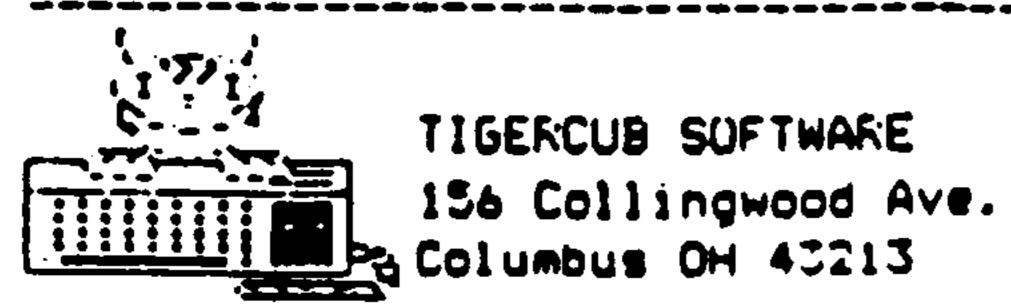
ASGARD SOFTWARE

ROCKVILLE. MD 20850 1-301-559-2429

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FULLERTON, CA 92631 1-714-738-5665



TIGER CLUB SOFTWARE has introduced Nuts & Bolts #3, containing another 140 subprograms in merge format. Contents include 19 screen character fonts, etc.; 17 screen display routines; 6 screen formatting, 8 plotting, 6 joystick and keyboard, 32 math, 4

time and date, 10 input and accept, 9string handling, 15 file handling, and 9 misc. routines. The 11 pages of documentation contain a programming example to demonstrate each of the routines. \$15. each for Nuts & Bolts #1, #2, #3.

ED. NOTE: These routines from Jim Peterson have been cited as the basis of many of the very best xbasic programs being used by TI'ers today.

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RAVE 99 Co.
                   Installs in the TI console in place of the TI keyboard, and will
                   allow a P.C./X.T. keyboard to (through the interface) drive the
  23 Florence Rd.
                   CRU chip in the same fashion as the Original TI keyboard, but
  Bloomfield, CT
                   without the many dual key depressions, and allows for a more
         06002
  1-203-242-4012
                   uniform familiarity with other systems. Available with/without a
                   keyboard, or in KIT form. Contact RAVE for current prices.
 ML SYSTEMS
                   This is another choice for an interface for P.C/X.T Keyboard
  P.O.Box 268
                   to the T.I. Console. This interface differs primarily in three
  Valley Falls, RI
                   areas. It is intelligent, and can have custom key encoding done
         02864
                   easily, it does not require that the T.I. Keyboard be removed.
                   and it is not available in KIT form.
ED.NOTE: Before you buy either, you should talk to some one who has used both, and
make your decision.
HARDWARE MANUAL FOR T.I. 99/4A SYSTEM..... IT DESCRIBES:
                                            * Custom chip design
   The BUNYARD GROUP * Console design
                   * TMS 9900 H/W organization * TMS 9900 instruction set
   P.O. BOX 53171
   LUBBOCK.
               TX * Interfacing pitfalls
                                           * Console schematics
            79453
                   * PEB Schematics
                                           * GROM simulator design
                   * EXTENDED BASIC MODULE description and schematics.
  $19.95
STATIC RAM CHIPS FOR RAM DISK, 32K, SUPER CART, DSR CARD, etc.:
  MICROPROCESSORS UNLTD., INC.
                                 6264LP-15 (8K x 8 Bit) chip 4 needed for 32K.
  24000 South Peoria Av.
                                 52256LP-12(32Kx 8 Bit) chip 1 Needed for 32K.
                                 They also carry most dynamic rams at very goo
   Beggs,
                   74421
  1-918-267-4961
  GREAT LAKES SOFTWARE, INC. * GENEVE
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  WALBRIDGE, OH 43465 FAST! Comes as bare board w/manual/software, or
  1-419-666-6911
                              assembled in either sasd or dasd models.
  Requires 32K, xbasic, disk, and a printer.
  P.O. BOX 296
  CLIFTON PARK. NY 12065
                              $19.95 + $3.50 S/H
```

This list is not complete by a long shot. I will add to it as the information becomes available, and accumulates to a page worth. I don't want to use all the available space in this newsletter this month. If you have some, please contribute. JFW of WP99

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MECHATRONICS PRODUCTS:

* EXTENDED BASIC II + * EPROMER * MORE.

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Ontario,

1439 Solano Pl.

TELECOMMUNICATING EQUIPMENT: Compuserve Starter Kit unopened \$25, Volksmodem 300 Baud MODEM, ac adapter, TI RS232 cable - \$40. Call Ron Hodgman @ (713) 358-8618 evenings.

SYSTEM: 2 silver consoles, PEB w/2 DSDD Qume drives, 32K, RS232, Corcomp DD Contrlr and TI Disk Controller, 2 Speech Syn., cassette recorder, widget, joystick, XB, Mini-Mem, E/A, TIW, Multiplan, Approx 25 modules, 200 disks of progs, magazines, extra PS for drives, also 300 baud modem. Everything for only \$450.00. Call Jerry Illing @ (713) 664-7059 (home) or (713) 666-9880 (office)

- - -

P-CODE CARD: W/ docs and software including Compiler \$150.

Leave asg for Gary Hux on HUG-TIBBS.

COMPLETE SYSTEM: Black & Silver Console, PEB, RS232, TI Disk Controller, 2 SS Drives, 32K, TI Modem, Printer, Joysticks, Cassette, Zenith Monochrome Monitor, spare console, books, disks. \$400.00 - GARY HUX (713) 991-0979 or leave mssg on HUS-TIBBS.

- # -

SYSTEM FOR SALE: Black & silver console, PEB, TI Disk controller, Myarc RS232, 32K, Speech Synthesizer, MBX system, XB, E/A, TIW, DM-2 and disk software. \$400.00 - ERIK KEELINE (713) 528-1425 or leave assg on HUG-TIBBS.

- # -

Teac SSSD 1/2 height Disk Drive \$40.00. - WAYNE JOBE (713) 654-6052 or leave mssg on HU6-TIBBS.

TI SYSTEM: \$300 Includes console, PBOX with quiet fan, 32K card, RS232, EA, XB, TI-W, Multiplan, cables, MANY disks, books, mags. Also:

Amdek CDLOR MONITOR: \$175, Anchor 1200-B MODEM: \$150 - DON LEWIS (713) 353-5295

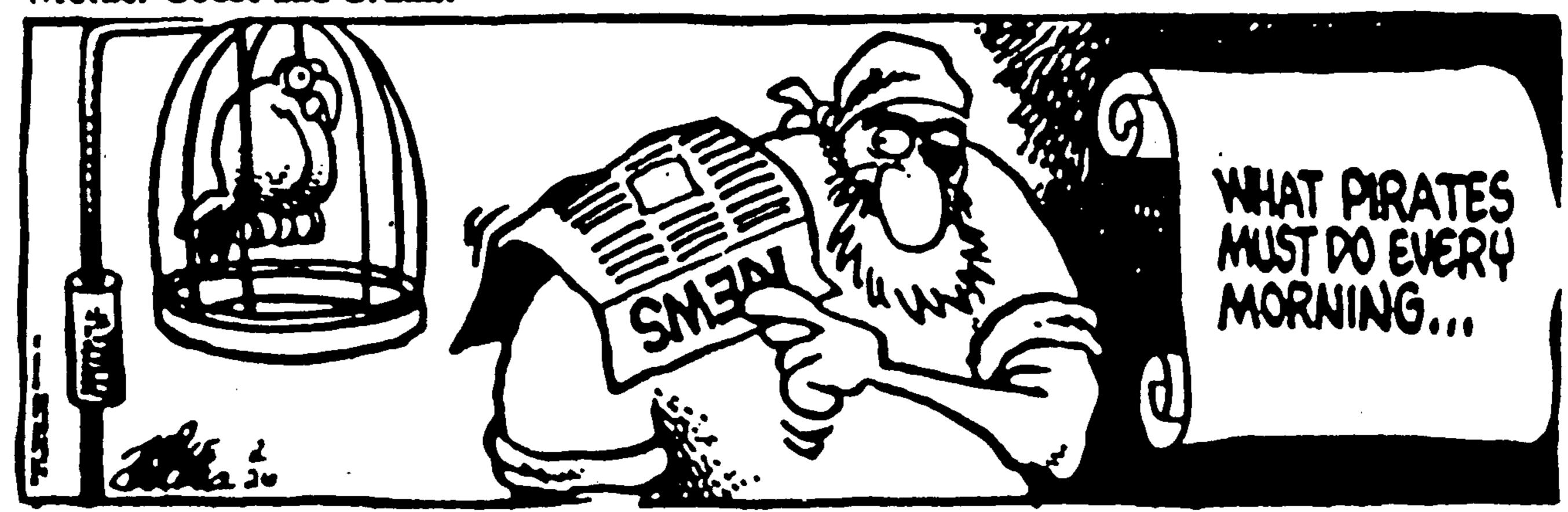
NEVER USED "NEW" SOFTWARE with manuals: 4A/TALK Terminal Emulator \$12.00, GRAPHX COMPANION III \$5.00, M6 NIGHT MISSION Game \$6.00 (cassette w disk version included on cassette). Also:

\$12, SAMS Tool Kit Series \$2.50, SAMS BASIC Ref. Manual \$3.50, SAMS Basic Tricks \$2. - BILL KNECHT, leave message on HUG-TIBBS.

W W W AAA N N TTTTT EEEEE DDD
W W W AAAAA N N N T EEE D D
WWWWW A A N NN T E D D
WWWWW A A N NN T EEEEE DDD

LISTINGS: Place your free "personal" advertisement here. Contact editor either through HUG-TIBBS, the newsletter return address or phone (listed on front page).

Mother Goose and Grimm



0000000000000000000 September 9 10 <13>14 15 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 0 0 October 0 SMTWTFS 0 0 0 (4) 5 6 7 8 9 10 0 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 o 0 00000000000000000000

<x>: HUG Meeting date

HUG Newsletter c/o Kim Peterson 13107 Bafing Houston, Tex. 77099-2244

Membership Renewal Status

(four digit code left of your name)

If code contains an asterisk:

*: Membership expires with this issue

**: Dues one month delinquent

***: Dues two months delinquent

LAST ISSUE: Membership Deleted

HUG MEETING LOCATION MAP

Entra	<pre>!<= Claremont !</pre>	: N : W*E : S
ce	Westheimer	l K
	: Buffalo :<= Speedway :	:<= r : b : v
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HUG MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual Renewal Fee: \$15, Initiation Fee (new members DNLY): \$10. New members receive 6 free programs from the HUG Library. Please send renewal and/or new membership fees to: Houston User Group, c/o Ruth & Sandy Herman, 6219 Sanford Road, Houston, Tx. 77096. Membership applications are available from Ruth or the club BBS: HUG-TIBBS @(713) 475-8909 Please direct any questions regarding current membership to Bob McCarthy @ (713) 955-7939

FIRST CLASS

DATED MATERIAL DO NOT DELAY