
Mass Users of the Ninety nine and Computer Hobbyists
March 1986 Monthly Newsletter Version 5.3
MARCH
ADC

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Apologies are in order! If any hardship was caused from me cancelling the February meeting, I am truly very sorry. That storm caused driving to become very hazardous as the day went on. I really didn't think of calling off the meeting until I was headed home from work. I kept hearing on the radio that this was cancelled and that was cancelled, accidents here and there, and conditions expected to get worse. And they did. While I am crazy enough to trudge through most anything, I had to think about the safety of our members. I certainly wouldn't have wanted anyone to get into an accident.

Now, the cancellation didn't cause you to miss anything. We are simply pushing all of February's agenda to March, and maybe adding an item or two.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Wm. Corson Wyman for helping me to get out the February newsletter. We worked on it from early evening until 1:00 o'clock in the morning. Normally, it doesn't take that long. However, we had a tremendous amount of typing, editing, and reformatting to do. Anyway, thank you Corson.

SPECIAL NOTE: Our Newsletter printer, Keith Rushlow Printing, deserves a very big THANK YOU. He donated the 1500 flyers for the New England TI Faire, of which we are a part. Keith, we sincerely appreciate your help in making this Faire great.

How much MUNCH dedication do you have??? We need a new newsletter editor, membership chairperson, and someone or some people to bring the Group's hardware to each meeting. Let's discuss it at the meeting. I know someone will volunteer to help with these tasks. I would be willing to assist anyone who volunteers for one of these assignments.

Check further in this newsletter for more information on the New England 99 Faire. Peter Hoddie submitted a nice write-up.

That's all I have for now. See you at the meeting.

---------- Bruce Willard, Pres. ----------

LIBRARY NOTICE

Please return all borrowed materials to the MUNCH library at each meeting. This will give other members a chance to enjoy our collection of "text-ware" as much as you have !!! THANK YOU !!!

AGENDA for March 18, 1986

7:00 - 8:00 Open Demonstrations
New Member Registration
Software Exchange (members only)
Special Interest Group meetings
Basic Programming -- as required
Assembly Language -- by Dan Rogers
Kids Corner -- with (to be announced)
Multiplan -- by Hector Beaudreau

8:00 - 8:20 Raffle
Business Meeting:
Approval of Minutes
Treasurers Report
Committee Reports
Old Business
New Business
Announcements

8:20 - 9:30 CONTINUATION of:
Special Interest Group Meetings
and Open Demonstrations and Discussion

***** SPECIAL GUEST *****
Peter Hoddie from the Boston Computer
Society, TI Group
GRAM Kracker demo by Peter Hoddie

Plan for April meeting:

Training on Microsoft's Multiplan
by Hector Beaudreau -- Final Lesson
Continuation of other SIG's

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NEW ENGLAND 99 FAIRE

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Boston Computer Society TI-99/4A User Group will sponsor the New England 99 Faire on April 5 from 10 AM to 6 PM at the Diamond Jr. High School in Lexington, MA. Other user groups involved in the faire include: MUNCH from Worcestor MA, the North East 99'ers from Providence RI, the Greater Brockton TI User Group, Club 99 from Attleboro MA, Magnetic from Andover MA, Connecticut's Nutmeg 99'ers, the New Hampshire 99'ers, Maine's Downeast 99'ers, and others.

Featured speakers include Lou Phillips of Myarc, Barry Traver of the Genial Traveler, author of Fast-term Paul Charlton, hardware designer Richard Roseen, Asgard Software's Chris Bobbitt, Jim Horn and Jonathan Zittrain of Compuserve's TI Forum, and Boston Computer Society founder Jonathan Rotenberg. Mark Hoogendoorn, author of one of the first TI BBS programs, will speak on his work. Milo Tsukroff, whose programs have appeared in Compute!, will speak on his MITI-CALC and MITI-PLAN programs. Other demonstrations include TI-Writer, Multiplan, Graphx, Asgard's Graphx Companion, TI-Artist, GRAM Kracker, Myarc's Extended BASIC II, BASIC programming techniques, console cleaning, Personal Record Keeping and Report Generator, a robot arm for the TI, Advanced Diagnostics, Myarc's hard disk system, CompuServe, the BCS TI99 BBS, and much more.

There will be a dealer area featuring products from Tigercub, Myarc, Asgard, John J. Meshna, and many excellent local firms.

Admission to the show is $3, and $2 for children age 6 to 12, and free for children under 6.

For more details, travel directions, or dealer information you may write to: Boston Computer Society, TI-99/4A User Group, One Center Plaza, Boston MA 02108 or call J. Peter Hoddie, faire coordinator, at (617)353-7369.

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ADVERTISING RATES:

Double Page	(10.5" by 8")	$50.00 per insertion
Full Page	(5" by 8")	$25.00 per insertion
Half Page	(5" by 4")	$15.00 per insertion
Quarter Page	(5" by 2" or (2.5" by 4")	$10.00 per insertion

Classified (non-commercial) ADs are FREE for MUNCH members.

TEXTWARE/SOFTWARE REVIEWS

by J A C K S U G H R U E

There are so many new, so many excellent software and textware items coming out for the TI it is truly impossible to keep up with them all in a monthly column. There are new and wonderful things from *ASGARD and MILLER'S GRAPHICS and COMPUTE! and TIGERCUB* and other old and some new companies (like *GENIAL COMPUTERWARE and MIDNIGHT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS*). Not to mention the wonderful (in the old sense of the word) stuff put out through the Freeware and Fairware forms of distribution.

Let's look at products from a new company and from an old company: *MIDNIGHT EXPRESS and TIGERCUB.*

The former has put out a book (or book/disk combination) entitled *CRACKING THE 99/4A*. The book is $12.95. The combo is $16.95. Disk alone is $6.95. Add one dollar for shipping. (*Midnight Express Publications Order Department, PO Box 26941, Austin, Texas, 78755*)

CRACKING is edited by Brian Prothro and features loads of programs and tutorials by Prothro and many others.

The 170-page 6x9 paperback devotes the first 37 pages to tutorials using the build-upon-a-program-step-by-step approach: an excellent approach. You have a fine program at the end of the tutorials. This section includes discussions on how to make programs user friendly, what structured programming is, how to make linked lists. The rest of the book contains programs (those which appear on the disk) and very appropriate descriptions and helps before each program. There are five Games (The "Seek and Find Puzzle Generator" actually creates those "word find" type games and is better than any other of that type I own - that includes Regena's and TI's.); three Home programs (two of which I would call utility); two Speech programs (one a good editor); and six Utility programs (two in *ASSSEMBLY*, believe it or not!).

Some of these 16 programs (not counting those in the tutorial sections) are familiar: Checkers, Othello, Checkbook Management, Graphics Generator, Super Catalogger. But, for the most part, these versions are superior to any other versions I own or sufficiently different to be interesting.

Take "Hangman," for example. This version (XB, optional speech) has an automatic scoring system that gives additional points for guessing a word *before* all the letters are filled in. I've never

seen that done this way before, and I really like this feature. The program shows which letters have been guessed, has an entry correction possibility, performs automatic "rounds," has the ability to enter phrases, words, or short sentences, contains an automatic blank removal guard. And gives the player the opportunity to play against time (with the player choosing the interval).

Because blank spaces are allowed in phrases and sentences (with up to 24 letters and blanks), you may devise a "Hangman" game that is just film titles or famous authors. Excellent features in this game. And, although "Hangman" is far from the best program *for ME* in this book, I would have happily paid the combo price for this version of this game. For the "Seek and Find Generator" I would have paid double.

"S and F" allows up to 35 words of 10 characters or less. This lets you build just about any puzzle you want. I used it first to put in all the names of my fifth-grade class. They loved it. Then I started on the names of bones (after they had used Regena's "Name That Bone" program from the old 99er). Then I did a Halley's special with all kinds of celestial terms. And so on.

The hardcopy printout is very easy to read, gives you word list and answer key, too, like the original TI wordfind puzzlemaker. But this is faster, holds more, looks better, allows you to play on screen as well. (See the 99/4A puzzle created by this program in this issue (or next issue if room is not available).)

Room limitations prevent me from going into detail about the utility, home, business, assembly, tuturial, and speech sections. They are also fine, *really fine!* I hope Brian has great success with this publication. Maybe it'll encourage others to get back into textware for our fantastic machine.

From all the praising I've done of Jim Peterson's TIGERCUB SOFTWARE over the years, one would assume I had a share in the company.

I don't.

But Jim's one-man operation still manages to keep up a very steady supply of some of the most practical and interesting ideas for our computer. His regular "Tips from the Tiger" columns, which appear in user periodicals throughout the country, have been a source of marvelous information and exciting routines for a very long time. Last year Jim put out a disk of these "Tips" from the first year and a half of his columns. The disk was (IS!) great. As a companion seller at the time, a second disk, "NUTS AND BOLTS" was put out. This was (is) a diskful (over 100) merged subroutines that could be plugged right into your programs. Frankly, I think this is certainly THE most often used disk I own. "NUTS" comes with lengthy documentation.

NOW!

Now there is a Volume II of each of these extraordinary disks. And, if it is possible, they are even better than the first two.

"Tips" starts from #15, so no "Tips" are missing. These are priceless. But for me the BIGGIE is, of course, the "NUTS AND BOLTS" merged utility subprograms. There are 108 in VOL.II and provide even greater range to displays (always the first set I try out). There are Bigbanners and Boxes and Blinkers and Curtains and Explodes and Flipflops and Titlers of all kinds. And even a Zoop!

The Character Sets are even more bizarre than VOL.I and as much fun to put into your programs.

Then there are whole sections devoted to Joysticks and Math and Graphs and Self-Changers (I *love* these!) and Sound Effects and Word Processing and Graphics and Programmer Utilities and File Handling and Menu Routines (Very handy, these.) and Sorts and Shuffles and even a Miscellaneous Section with a subprogram called "Moon" in it.

I have to be honest; there is no way I can even *begin* to use all of these marvelous subprograms (and it takes about 4 months just to try them all out), but I enjoy having them done and done so well. It's surprising, too, how often I've used some routines I never thought I had a need for. "Nuts" does that to you.

These are excellent buys: "Tips" sell for $15 each Volume; "Nuts" sells for $19.95 each Volume. ($37 if you buy both.) Shipping and handling included.

TIGERCUB SOFTWARE, 156 Collingwood Ave., Columbus, OH 43213. And, while you're at it, throw in an extra dollar for Jim's latest catalog. It'll be deducted from your first order. The catalog is loaded with programs of ALL kinds. Over the years I bought lots and lots of games and utilities for school (mostly), home, and self-help. (But mostly FUN!) I never received anything from Tigercub that I was not pleased with. A superb company to deal with, albeit a one-man-show.

You probably couldn't make a better investment.

(I wonder how many consoles Jim owns. He must have gone through quite a few in order to discover all the things he shares with us month after month.)

I still wish he'd publish all his "Tips" as a book. If you do, Jim, put me down for Copy Number One.

Next month: more old and new: ASGARD SOFTWARE and GENIAL COMPUTERWARE, two blockbuster companies.

" ... ... FCBFFLE... ... ... FCBFFLE... ... ... "

In January John Shoikour (little John, as I call him) won the raffle, PICNIC PARANOIA. Congratulations, John!!!

The March raffle (February meeting having been cancelled) prize will be a ten-pack of OMNI Resources diskettes, donated by OMNI Resources of Millbury, MA., or a twelve-pack of cassettes, donated by Hector Beaudreau of Bailey's Audio Visual in Worcester. OR the winner could choose ??????? (to be announced at the meeting). Come and see what ??????? is!!!

I would like to take this time to thank all of the people who donated merchandise to MUNCH to help us keep operating at a peak level. Again, thank you.

The raffle is open to all who attend. The drawing will be held just prior to the business meeting. Remember:

***** YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN *****

Bruce Willard, Pres.

****

MUNCH OFFICERS AND NUMBERS (all in 617 area)

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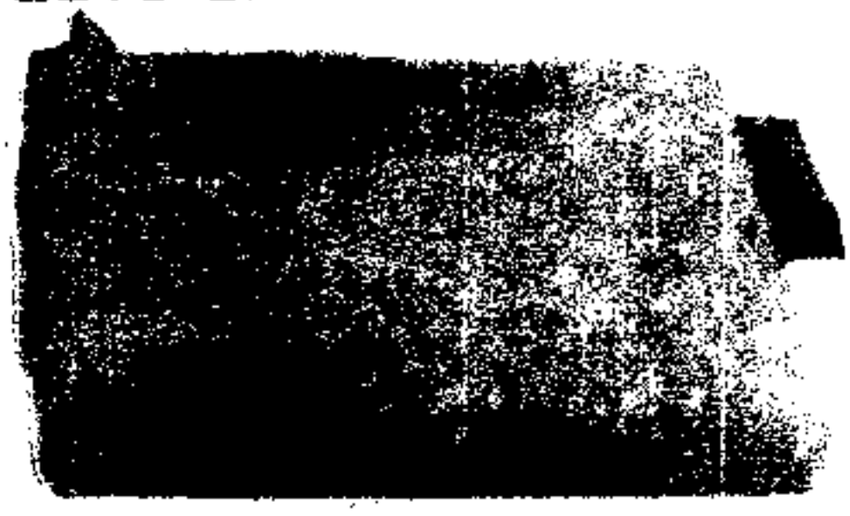

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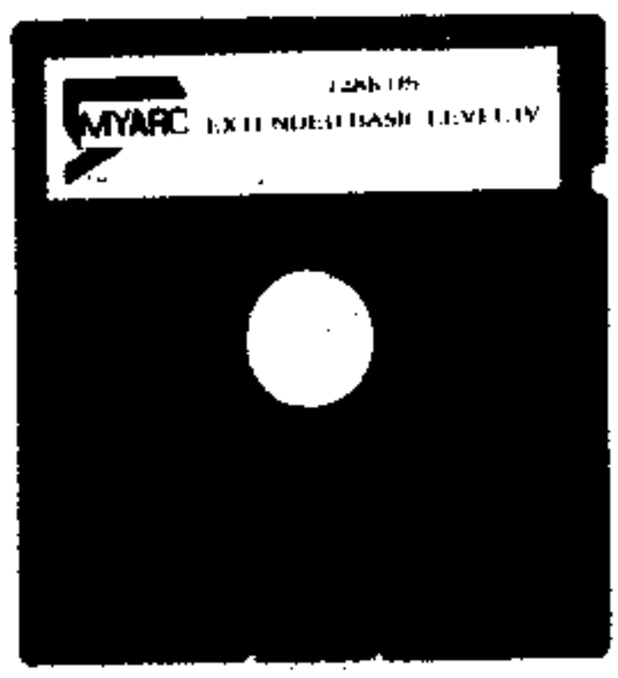

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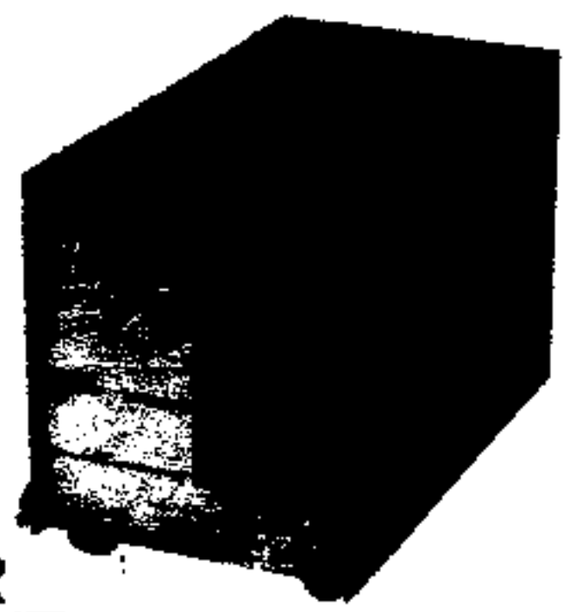

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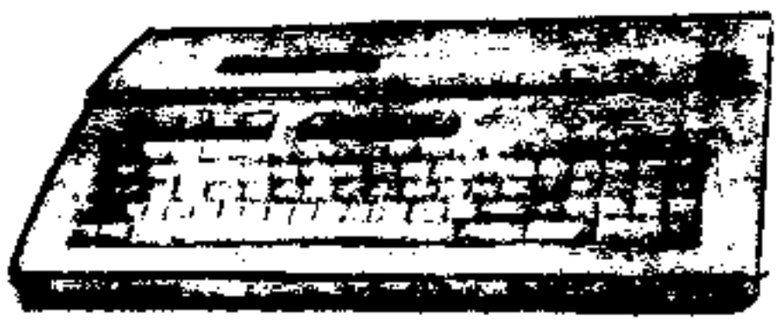

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COMMANDING YOUR PRINTER

by Tony Falco

I have gone to my manual to find how to print compressed characters with one-eighth inch line feeds for what seems to me at least a thousand times. This can be a real pain. It's such a trivial activity, and as I scanned the summaries, I thought why not translate the codes into subprograms that I can CALL by name. I could then use everyday names like CALL SMALL, CALL TINY, or CALL LINEFEEDSIZE.

You can use the program to set up your printer or you can delete the main program (lines 10 and 20) and resequence the rest to whatever line numbers are convenient. In the second case you can use the CALLs as commands to your printer in your own programs and not have to remember or look up special codes. The program works on parallel printers which use EPSON MX80 control codes. (GEMINI, T.I., etc.)

```
10 OPEN #1:"PIO" :: PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"@
" :: CLOSE #1
20 CALL MENU :: GOTO 20
1000 DATA 1-SET MARGINS,2-TINY,3-SMALL,4
-ELITE,5-REGULAR,6-LINE FEED SIZE,7-END
SESSION
1010 !-------------------------------------
1020 SUB MENU :: CALL CLEAR :: FOR T=1 T
O 7 :: READ A$ :: DISPLAY AT(2*T+3,8):A$
 :: NEXT T :: DISPLAY AT(22,2):"PICK ONE
"
1030 CALL KEY(0,K,S):: IF S=0 THEN 1030
1040 IF K<49 OR K>55 THEN CALL SOUND(50,
440,4):: GOTO 1030
1050 K=K-48
1060 IF K=1 THEN CALL GETMARGINS(LM,RM):
: CALL SETMARGINS(LM,RM):: GOTO 1130
1070 IF K=2 THEN CALL TINY :: GOTO 1130
1080 IF K=3 THEN CALL SMALL :: GOTO 1130
1090 IF K=4 THEN CALL ELITE :: GOTO 1130
1100 IF K=5 THEN CALL REGULAR :: GOTO 11
30
1110 IF K=6 THEN CALL LINEFEEDSIZE :: GO
TO 1130
1120 IF K=7 THEN CALL CLEAR :: END
1130 RESTORE :: CALL CLEAR :: SUBEND
1140 !-------------------------------------
```

```
1140 !-------------------------------
1150 SUB TINY :: CALL CLEAR :: OPEN #1:"
PIO"
1160 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(51);CHR$(10)
1170 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(83);CHR$(1)
1180 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(15)
1190 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(71)
1200 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(69)
1210 CALL FONT :: CLOSE #1 :: CALL CLEAR
 :: SUBEND
1220 !-------------------------------
1230 SUB GETMARGINS(LM,RM):: INPUT "LEFT
 MARGIN (1-80)? ":LM :: INPUT "RIGHT MAR
GIN (1-80)? ":RM :: SUBEND
1240 !-------------------------------
1250 SUB SETMARGINS(LM,RM):: OPEN #1:"PI
O"
1260 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(77);CHR$(LM)
1270 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(81);CHR$(RM)
:: CLOSE #1 :: SUBEND
1280 !-------------------------------
1290 SUB SMALL :: CALL CLEAR :: OPEN #1:
"PIO"
1300 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(15)
1310 CALL FONT :: CLOSE #1 :: CALL CLEAR
 :: SUBEND
1320 !-------------------------------
1330 SUB REGULAR :: CALL CLEAR :: OPEN #
1:"PIO" :: PRINT #1:CHR$(20)
1340 CALL FONT :: CLOSE #1 :: SUBEND
1350 !-------------------------------
1360 SUB ELITE :: CALL CLEAR :: OPEN #1:
"PIO" :: PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(66);CHR$
(2)
1370 CALL FONT :: CLOSE #1 :: SUBEND
1380 SUB FONT :: DISPLAY AT(10,5)ERASE A
LL BEEP:"ITALIC=4  STANDARD=5"
1390 CALL KEY(0,J,S):: IF S=0 THEN 1390
ELSE IF J>53 OR J<52 THEN CALL SOUND(10,
110,4):: GOTO 1390
1400 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);CHR$(J):: SUBEND
1410 !-------------------------------
1420 SUB LINEFEEDSIZE :: DISPLAY AT(10,1
)ERASE ALL BEEP:"N/144's inch....1/6=24/
144":::"1/8=18/144...ENTER N->" :: ACCEP
T AT(12,23):N
1430 OPEN #1:"PIO" :: PRINT #1:CHR$(27);
CHR$(51);CHR$(N):: CLOSE #1 :: SUBEND
```

A first look at
Myarc's Extended BASIC II

By J. Peter Hoddie

Note: For a complete description of XBII please see the article I wrote after the 1985 TI Faire in Chicago. The following article is NOT a review but a look at this exciting new product.

The purpose of this article is to explain the new Extended BASIC II language from Myarc. Please note that I did not use the word cartridge. Extended BASIC II (XBII) is much more then just a cartridge and, in fact, much more then just a language. To run XBII you need a Myarc 128K or 512K Memory Expansion card with a special XBII eprom in it. If you currently own a Myarc card you will need a new eprom which will be provided when you purchase XBII. You also get a disk and a cartridge. To run XBII you need all three pieces. The disk contains a series of files which make up the over 48K of assembly language code that make up XBII. The eprom contains another 8K (I believe) and the cartridge contains nthing at all. That is not to say that you don't need the cartridge. The cartridge has 8K of RAM in it. What happens is that when you go to the title screen with the XBII cartridge in place, the Myarc memory expansion card writes the contents of the cartridge out to the cartridge. This happens in a blink of an eye so you never even know it happened. Now I'm not 100% sure why Myarc choose to put XBII together this way but I suspect it was to make upgrades easier. As you will find out, if you read on, XBII is not a completed product, and at least on more update wil be required. By making the cartridge 'soft' Myarc only has to change the eprom on the memory expansion card and the disk. They don't have to worry about the cartridge. Thus only two things to worry about instead of three. You may ask, if the cartridge is RAM, why do I need it at all? Why couldn't I just run XBII out of the Memory expansion card? The answer, as near as I can tell, is that you can't execute assembly code that is mapped into the cartridge space (>6000 to >7FFF) out of the PE box. But I'm not sure of this. It may be that Myarc needed that extra 8K of RAM as RAM and not ROM where they couldn't store data. I really don't know, this is only ;speculation. But now that I've explained the hardware aspect of XBII I will now get into its features.

XBII is supposed to be 100% compatable with TI's Extended BASIC. You should be able to take any XB program you've written, load it into XBII and watch it run. This does work in many cases, however because XBII is not yet finished it fails in just as many cases. XBII does not yet support DEF statements, user defined CALL/SUB statements, the MIN and MAX functions return erroneous data sometimes, you can not pass variables to assembly language in CALL LINK statements, and once in a great while the language will

just lock up for no good reason. Now that is ALL the bad news. All of these problems will be fixed in the near future. Quite frankly, however, I am VERY impressed with XBII s. It is a great product and has a lot of potential.

The most notable feature of XBII is its graphics capabilities. In regular TI graphics mode (what you get in TI Extended BASIC) you now can define all 256 characters, use all 32 sprites, and define all color sets. This means that programs that worked in TI BASIC but would not run in TI Extended BASIC will work in Myarc XBII, not to mention the extra added characters beyond even what TI BASIC supplies. In graphics mode 2 you get text mode. True 40 columns. And the PRINT, DISPLAY AT, ACCEPT AT, and the rest of the screen display commands still work. You can even edit your program in 40 columns. This is really great. You can see so much more of what is going on while you are programming. Finally there is graphics mode 3 which is bit map. You can access every pixel on the screen individually. You can draw lines, points, circles, rectangles, check the color of a pixel, write text horizontally or vertically, and fill with a color, all using simple XBII CALL statements. Furthermore, although the documentation says it doesn't support it, you get automotion of sprites in bit map mode, something that just isn't that easy to do. A future upgrade of XBII will allow you to fill with a character pattern as well as a color.

Another of the exciting features of XBII is the CALL MARGINS command. This CALL lets you set up windows on your screen. You just do a CALL MARGINS and give the screen boundrys you want to use (example: CALL MARGINS(10,20,1,20) would set up a window using rows 10 through 20 and columns 1 through 20. All statements which access the screen in graphics modes 1 and 2 then act only on that window with that window's upper left corner being considered the point (1,1). You can even do a CALL MARGINS when entering a program if your TV cuts off part of the picture. This command makes adding status lines, help areas, and all sorts of neat program features a breeze.

XBII also has CALL PEEKV and CALL POKEV commands to let you directly access memory in VDP (screen) memory. Previously this was only available in TI BASIC with the Editor/Assembler cartrdge in place. There is a new VALHEX function which does hexadecimal to decimal conversions. For example "A=VALHEX("FF") would set A equal to 255. There is a FREESPACE variable which returns how many bytes of space are left but right now it always returns a zero. You could use it to check if your program is running out of memory like: IF FREESPACE<100 THEN PRINT "Running low on space .

One pleasant surprise is that the LIST command is now at least 50% faster. Listings zoom by at lightning speed. You can pause the listing with the space bar but wow!!

Now the biggest and best feature of XBII was supposed to be that it was FASTER then TI's XB. It is. But not that much. But there is a VERY good reason for this. XBII is supposed to suuport integer variables. This means that the variable is only capable of storing numbers from -32767 to +32768 and no decimal values. Furthermore integer variables take up only 2 bytes of memory wheras floating point (regular) numerical variables take up 8 bytes. Also the computer can understand integer variables easily since that is what it uses internally. Thus integer variables are faster and more efficient. Unfortunately they have not yet been implemented. When they are, that's when I think XBII will really shine. Then it will really be fast.

Now another thing people expect from XBII is the ability to write longer programs. They figure if you got a 128K card in the PE box then you should be able to use some of that, right? The answer is yes . . sort of. XBII gives you 24K of programs space. If that sounds like all you got with TI XB, you're right. Except that in TI XB that 24K also had to hold all numerical variable and all sorts of other data. IN XBII it holds ONLY program. You have an additional 24K for numeric variables and another 24K for string variables. So with a little creative programming you can fit TONS of stuff in there. You can also (although it doesn't seem to work in this version) define how much assembly space you want by doing a CALL INIT with a byte count. So to reserve 9000 bytes of assembly space you do a CALL INIT(9000). When you do a SIZE command, you are told how many bytes of PROGRAM, STRING, and VARIABLE space you have left.

XBII comes with a very complete manual. It is more of a reference guide then a tutorial but it is very clear. It is very similar to TI's manual for their XB except that the new commands are listed and additions to existing commands are explained. The examples are clear, complete, and easy to follow. The only flaw is that the manual doesn't list which commands don't work. I guess this means that they will be finished real soon now.

That just about covers my first impressions of XBII. Overall I think Myarc has done an excellent job on this product although it is definately not finished. The good news is that it will be very soon as the story goes that this is almost identical to the version of BASIC that will be in the new computer so it has to be finished soon. It is a great programming enviroment. I wrote a draw program in bit map mode complete with fill, circle, line, box, and color commands in about 2 hours. Small things have been considered. You can now say RUN A$ where A$ is the name f the program you want to RUN. You can say OLD FRANK and XBII will look for a file on DSK1 called FRANK. There has been a great deal of attention to detail and quality in XBII, its just a matter of finishing it up now. XBII is here FINALLY and it looks like it'll do everything Myarc promised.

If you've got questions, comments, or otherwise you can write to me at: Boston Computer Society, TI-99/4A User Group, One Center Plaza, Boston, MA 02108.

BAD NEWS FOR LOCAL TI-99/4A OWNERS

TI WALTHAM'S LAST DAY OF OPERATION IS MARCH 18, 198

THEY ARE CONSOLIDATING THEIR SERVICE CENTERS INTO LUBBOCK, TEXAS. AFTER THAT DATE ALL SERVICE WILL BE HANDLED BY MAIL.

Bruce Willard, Pres.
(WHILE ON WAY TO PRINTER)

* * *

"COMPUTER QUERIES"

Question:

Answer:

If any of you have any problems or questions about our computer, this is where to find the answers to them. Send your question to one of the editorial staff or drop it at the Video Connection on Lincoln St. and it will be printed in the newsletter with an answer. If, in the unlikely event, we cannot find the answer in a reasonable amount of time, we will print it here looking for the answer out there in TI land. I know that I don't have all the answers. How about you???

M.U.N.C.H.

560 LINCOLN STREET

WORCESTER, MA. 01605

First Class

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IMPORTANT NOTICE
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March meeting will be on March 18, 1986
at University of Massachusetts Medical Center
(Come to the VISITORS entrance and follow the signs for MUNCH...)