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XBASIC Quick Reference Sheet

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TI BITS * by Jim Swedlow

1.5

ON DISKS AND DRIVES

A while back the Disk Poctor attended one of our meetings. He had a number of interesting things to say. Since some of you missed it. here are a few of his comments.

- o Don't clean your drives until you need to. Your system will tell you when it is time - you will have trouble reading disks.
- o When you do clean your drive, use any brand name commercial disk drive cleaner and follow instructions.
- o if this fails, you need to have your drive cleaned professionally. If you want to try yourself and you have a double sided drive, be careful with the second read/write head. It is very, very easy to bend the bracket to the point that the head oust be realligned.
- o He has tested the amount of residue left on heads with brand name disks (\$1.00 + each) and the cheepies (\$0.25 or so). He found no difference. This doesn't mean that they are of equal quality, only that the cheepies are not dirtier.
- o He opposes flippies for single side users. His point is that when you flip the disk and it runs backwards in its cover, dirt is loosened and spun into your drive.
- o His overall advise is the first rule of engineering: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

SOME MORE THOUGHTS ON BACKING UP DISKS

Over the years I have mentioned the importance of backing up your disks. Simply put, disk drives eat disks. On the first weekend of October. I was working on some letters. This was the weekend where the temperature was well over 100 degrees. I blew both my word processing disk and my data disk.

I had a backup of the word processor. but it was not configured. That night, after it cooled down a bit, it took me about half an hour to recreate a working disk. The data files were simply lost'.

The moral? Keep two back ups of your program disks. One of the disk as you received it (the master) and one of your configured working disk (back up working disk). Don't forget to back up your data disks every now and then. This will save you time and aggravation next time your drive gets hungry.

ANOTHER TI-IBM CONNECTION

I have three TI's and an IBH clone. I use all of my computers. As I sit here typing, it is on the good of 48 keys that II so kindly gave us.

i upgraded my clone to color and bought a Magnavox RGB Menitor 80. It has two inputs, composite and RGB. On the front there are the usual picture controls and two buttons. One lets you switch from a color monitor to a green screen. The other changes input mode from RGB to composite.

I wondered how my nice new monitor would work with my Ti. ! plugged my T! monitor cables into the composite inputs, leaving the clone RGB cable in place. Guess what, the Magnavox works with both the IBM and the Tl. At once. I can have both running and switch from one to another with the front switch (RGB to composite).

TI WRITER'S INCLUDE FILE

One of Tl Writers nicer features is include File (.!F). It has a few limitations, but it extends Tl Writers capabilities.

TI Writer cannot work on large files. No books in one file here. As you reach the size limit, the time it takes to load and save files increases markedly. Include File to the rescue.

Suppose your have written two chapters of your next book. Your named your files CHAPTER1 and CHAPTER2 (very original). At the end of Chapter 1 (the very last line), add this:

. IF DSK1.CHAPTER2

Name CHAPTERI for the Formatter and it will print both chapters. All the formatting commands you set for Chapter 1 will be used when Chapter 2 is printed, so you don't have to restate the margins and such.

Ah. you finish Chapter 3. No problem. At the end of Chapter 1, add another line:

.IF DSK1.CHAPTER3

You cannot do this at the end of Chapter 2. as you can't chain these commands. Also note that you must specify the drive number (DSK1 in this case).

from ROM Jim Peterson (8)

I prefer to make a master file (called CHAPTERO) will ail or the . IF commands:

- . IF DSK1.CHAPTER!
- .!F DSK1.CHAPTER2
- . IF DSK1.CHAPTER3

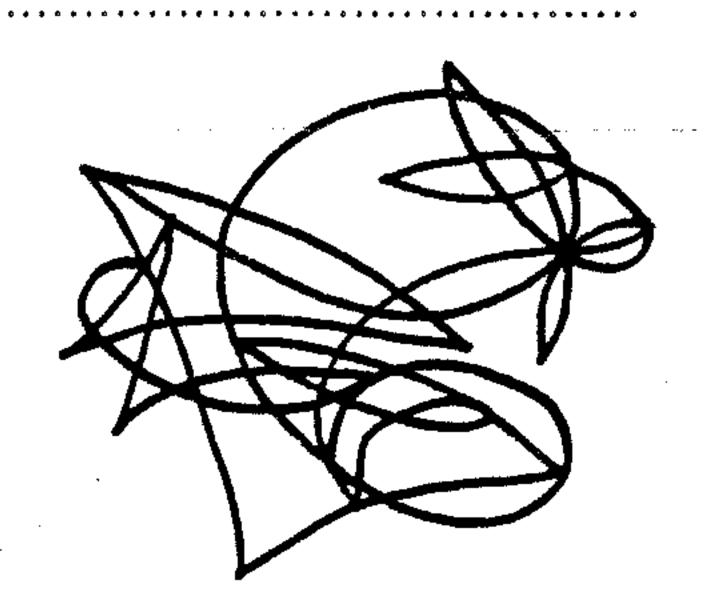
Before (not after) your . IF lines, put in your format, header and footer instructions. How you have all of your format commands in one place that is easy to find and edit.

Enjoy.

ABOUT FLIPPIES

by N. Armstrong

My first expansion system (I traded a sailboat) included three disk drives. Siemens FDD100-58. These are hard-wired dual-sided (flippy) drives. They have two index sensing and two write protect circuits that allow writing on either side of the diskette (notch up or notch down). I have been using these drives and both sides of my diskettes without problems for over four years. prepared on these drives can be read by 90-percent of the drives in use on Ils.



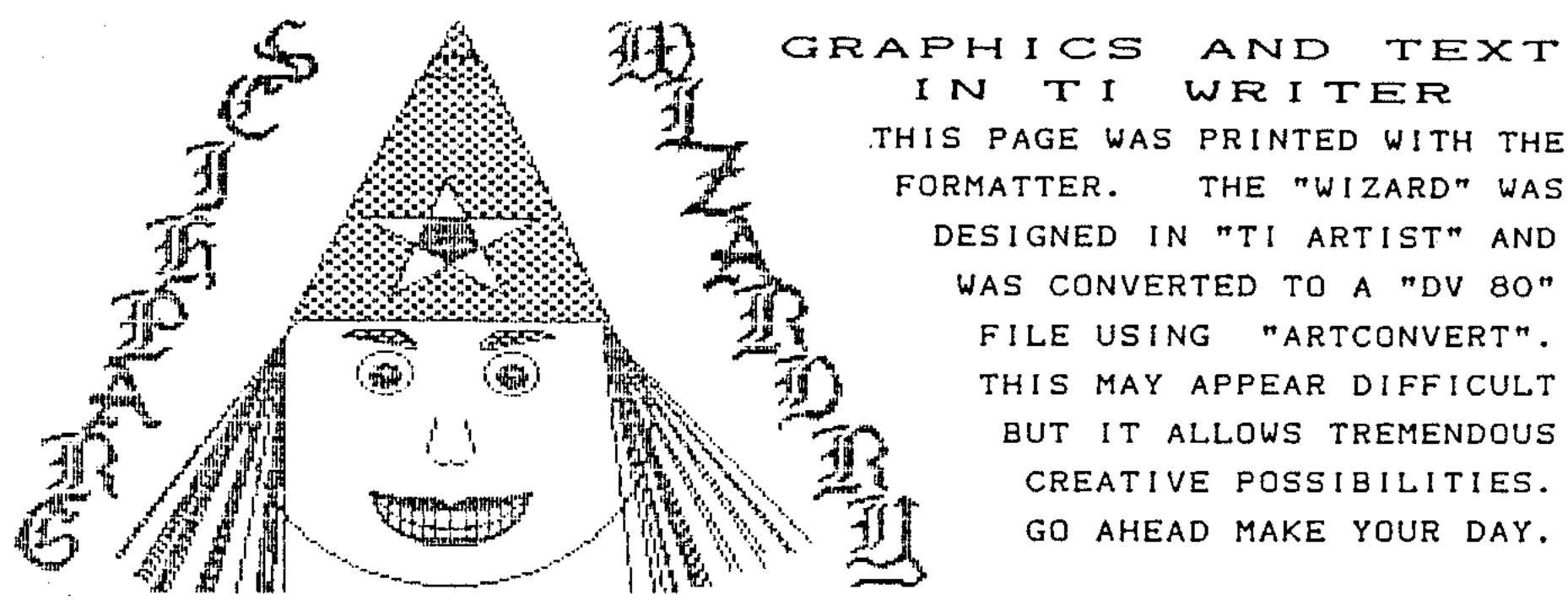
"TIPS" concluded

SUBEND

And a new way to wipe the screen -

1 CALL CORNERWIPE (30) 29000 SUB CORNERWIPE (CH):: F OR T=1 TO 24 :: CALL HCHAR(T ,3,CH,T+4):: CALL HCHAR(25-T ,32-T, CH, T):: NEXT T :: CALL CLEAR :: SUBEND

MEMORY FULL



IN TI WRITER THIS PAGE WAS PRINTED WITH THE FORMATTER. THE "WIZARD" WAS DESIGNED IN "TI ARTIST" AND WAS CONVERTED TO A "DV 80" FILE USING "ARTCONVERT". THIS MAY APPEAR DIFFICULT BUT IT ALLOWS TREMENDOUS CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES. GO AHEAD MAKE YOUR DAY.

Graphics may be used in "TI-WRITER" documents if printed through Formatter. To do this you would transliterate the Graphics commands and print codes. Transliteration is a process by which any letter or punctuation can be changed by the formatter to print or do something else. If you transliterate the letter "A" to be a "?" then everytime the formatter encounters an "A" it prints a "?". You could also let the "A" cause the printer to form feed, double strike, etc.

The procedure is to use .TL, space, ASCII value of letter you are changing, semi-colon, then ASCII codes of the replacement. An example would be that a .TL 65;27;75;6;0;255;129;129;129;129;255 would print a square | box everytime you use an "A" (ASCII 65). The "27;75" puts it into single density Graphics mode. The "6;0" tells the printer to expect 6 characters and 0 blocks of 256 chrs. The 255 will fire all 8 vertical pins while a 129 fires just top and bottom pins.

A .TL can be followed by as many values as can fit on a line. This is valuable if you wish to design a full page letterhead. If you did use 480 Dot Columns and were able to fit 20 print code values after each .TL it would still take 24 transliterated chrs per line. Using the small letters you would have 24 .TL then 1 line abcdefghijklmnopgrstuvwx followed by 24 more .TL and 1 line of a-x until you completed the full height of your letterhead.

This may produce a big file but a letterhead or signature file, after it has been saved, can be added to your letter by just a 1 line ".IF DSK2.LETTERHEAD" or ".IF DSK2.SIGNATURE".

The only thing different you will have to do is use PlO.CR in the formatter. This will also require a .LF after each line of text. If you format the text file back to disk first the .LF will be there else use CTRL U shift J and enter after each line.

Okay so you think this sounds difficult and tedious. There are now programs that will convert "TI-ARTIST" Instances to a "TI-WRITER" file. I have an excellent program called "ARTCONVERT" by Trio+ Software. It is menu driven and easily converts 1 or merges 2 instances into 1 file. This does all the work for you including transliterating all chrs back to normal. It also lets you choose where across the page you want the picture. This disk may be ordered from TENEX for \$ 9.95.

This signature or one bigger can be developed by writing your name on graph paper. Mine is 1 chr or 8 dots high and 120 chrs in length and printed in double density. Use small grid paper and block off either 8 or 16 blocks high. If you are planning to use double density then stretch your signature horizontally when you write it.

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SUBTRACTION FLASH CARDS

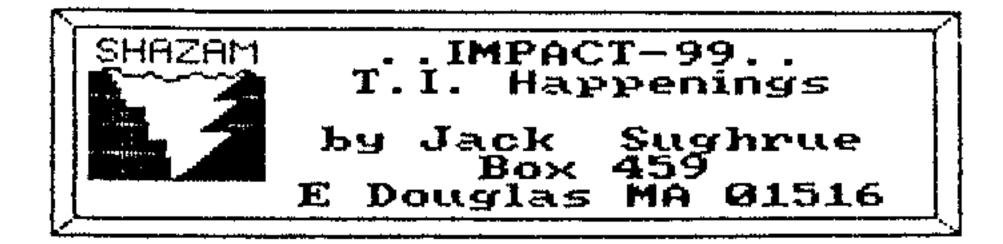
by Tony Falco

Programs, like movies, have sequels. The flash card program that appeared earlier in this newsletter will have many sequels. As my son, about to enter grade two, progresses through school I will edit it for drill at whatever math he is doing. The listing below will produce two digit subtraction problems, with or without borrowing. To enter it easily edit the MAKE YOUR OWN FLASH CARDS program. Delete line 120. Change lines 20,30,90,100,110,130 and 170. Add lines 175,295,296,297 and 298.

10 CALL CHAR(104, "FF80808080 8080FFFF010101010101FF") 20 DISPLAY AT(12,7) ERASE ALL :"Borrow (Y/N) N" :: OP\$="-" 30 ACCEPT AT(12,20)SIZE(-1)V ALIDATE ("YN") BEEP: BOR\$ 40 CALL CLEAR :: CALL FLASH :: CALL CHAR(95, "0000FFFF") 50 DISPLAY AT(3,4)SIZE(-6)BE EP: "RIGHT:" :: DISPLAY AT (3, 15) SIZE (-6): "WRONG: " 60 DISPLAY AT(5,10)SIZE(-6): "SCORE:" 70 FOR J=12 TO 15 :: DISPLAY AT(J,1)SIZE(-25):" ":: NEX TJ 80 DISPLAY AT(13,7)SIZE(-1)B EEP: OP\$ 90 GOSUB 295 100 C=A-B 110 DISPLAY AT(12,9)SIZE(-LE N(A*)):A* 130 C\$=STR\$(C):: M=MAX(LEN(A \$),LEN(B\$)):: N=MAX(M,LEN(C\$)) 140 DISPLAY AT(13,1)SIZE(-5) :" " :: DISPLAY AT(13,7-M+LE N(A\$))SIZE(-10):OP\$ 150 DISPLAY AT(13,9+LEN(A*)-LEN(B\$))SIZE(-10):B\$ 160 DISPLAY AT(14,8+LEN(A\$)-N)SIZE(-10):RPT\$(CHR\$(95),N+ 2) 170 ACCEPT AT(15,9+LEN(A*)-L EN(C+))SIZE(-LEN(C+))VALIDAT E(DIGIT, "Q") BEEP: D\$ 175 IF D*="Q" THEN 280 ELSE D=VAL(D\$) 180 IF D=C THEN R=R+1 :: CAL L SAY("#THAT IS RIGHT"):: CA LL DELAY(200):: 60T0 250 190 DISPLAY AT(12,19)SIZE(-L EN(A\$)):A\$ 200 DISPLAY AT(13,17-M+LEN(A

\$))SIZE(-1):OP\$

210 DISPLAY AT(13,19+LEN(A*) -LEN(B\$))SIZE(-LEN(B\$)):B\$ 220 DISPLAY AT(14,18+LEN(A\$) -N)SIZE(--9):RPT\$(CHR\$(95),N+ 2) 230 DISPLAY AT(15,19+LEN(A#) -LEN(C\$))SIZE(-LEN(C\$)):C\$: 240 CALL SAY ("#THAT IS INCOR RECT"):: CALL DELAY(700) 250 S=INT(100*R/(W+R)+.5) 260 DISPLAY AT(3,10)SIZE(3): R := DISPLAY AT(3,21)SIZE(-3)) : W 270 DISPLAY AT(5,17)SIZE(-4) :STR\$(S)&"%" :: GOTO 70 280 CALL SAY(STR*(R)):: CALL SAY("CORRECT AND"):: CALL 8 AY(STR#(W)) 290 CALL SAY("NOT CORRECT"): : CALL CLEAR :: END 295 RANDOMIZE :: A=INT(89*RN D)+10 :: B=INT(99*RND)+1 :: IF B>A THEN 295 296 A*=STR*(A): B*=STR*(B): : IF BOR ** "Y" THEN 298 297 IF SEG#(B#, LEN(B#), 1)>SE G\$(A\$, LEN(A\$), 1) THEN 295 298 RETURN 300 SUB DELAY(X):: FOR D=1 T O X :: NEXT D :: SUBEND 310 SUB FLASH :: CALL SCREEN (12):: FOR Z=1 TO 8 :: CALL COLOR(Z,2,15):: NEXT Z 320 CALL COLOR(9,2,2,10,12,1 2):: CALL HCHAR(1,1,104,768) 330 FOR Z=2 TO 6 :: CALL HCH AR(Z,5,32,22):: NEXT Z 340 FOR Z=10 TO 18 :: CALL H CHAR(Z,3,32,27):: NEXT Z 350 CALL HCHAR(7,6,96,22):: CALL VCHAR (3, 27, 96, 4) 360 CALL HCHAR(19,4,96,27):: CALL VCHAR (11,30,96,8):: SU BEND



6000 OLD DAYS

PART III: THE DARK AGES

Were the Dark Ages really awful for all the people who lived through them? I mean, if I were a serf would I never have had any happiness if I truly didn't know about such things as freedom and rights? That's the impression we keep getting from everything we read about the Dark Ages (which were not called that, of course, except in hindsight).

Might we not be living in the Electronic Dark Ages right now? Might not some future generations (free of a flesh body thanks to robotics and the research into Artificial Intelligence) refer to us as primitive; what with degenerating bodies, minds cluttered with trivia and obsessions, politics of death rather than life, slums, homeless, terror, war, famine?

But might WE not think this is a pretty cool age? And we pretty cool cats? And Life a gas? (If not downright totally wicked awesome rad.)

So we come to the eve of orphaning of the 4/A. That infamous date (was it really a Friday the 13th?) will linger on in many memories. The doomsayers leaped from what they thought was an abyss and began chanting, "Dark Ages. Dark Ages.")

I can clearly recall reading the announcement in the papers and saying, "Forsooth!" (or whatever was the proper expletive in those days), and going home that evening and taking the cover off my console and looking at it for a long time. Like Ol' Dog Tray, 4/A and I had been buddies for a long time. Now it looked like the last roundup.

"Wait a minute!" I thought aloud. "This computer still works. It's still better than an Apple or IBM or Commodore as is. There's no one down in Texas who is going to snap a switch that will shut off the 4/As instantly worldwide. We still have over 2 million owners. We still have software being made, books being written, and, best of all, my user group is still intact."

We're well into the second half of that decade now and we're not dead yet. Not by a long shot.

There have been some remarkable misjudgments by publishers and software and hardware companies. I think, for example, that the biggest mistake came when companies and the user groups eliminated the non-techies. Forgetting about them. Magazines like SMART PROGRAMMER overestimated the number of techies who would be interested in such things as internal schematics or such

software as Advanced Diagnostics. Once the market was quickly saturated (some estimate TI techiehood as high as 10,000 people worldwide, out of a possible 2 1/2 million owners) that was it. Software, for the most part, was just not being made for the regular user. As a result, lots of software companies died (as did lots of Fairware projects). Pirates were blamed for all these deaths. There was piracy, no doubt about it; but the pirates, for the most part, were the very techies who were a small part of this very small part of the TI community. No non-techie would pirate Advanced Diagnostics, for example, even if they knew how (which would make them a techie), as it would serve no purpose in that person's computer life. Nor would they pirate "Popeye" because they wouldn't have the technical ability to do so.

I think piracy has been overated as a cause of death. Particularly as there is no corpse.

I know of many people in our user group (and this has happened at least nationwide) who left, first, because they believed the doomsayers; second, because they didn't understand the nature of undergrounding; and, finally, because the rest of us had bought RAMdisks and DSDDs and 512s and 6Ks and were getting into Assembly and were discussing GRAMS and GROMS and other such things. Our workshops were turning into boring nightmares of technical jargon and fast-moving files flashing across multiple screens.

The general feeling of these enthusiastic techies was expressed often and loudly at faires and conferences and club meetings: "If you don't want to join the 20th Century and update your system, then get the hell out!"

As simple as that.

The tape recorder crowd who needed a slower pace or didn't have the money (or desire) for upgrading the system, was left in the lurch.

So were those who only wanted cartridges for software application: PERSONAL RECORD KEEPING, MULTIPLAN, LOGO. The one exception, of course, was TI WRITER.

I rembember one meeting where a speaker talked for 45 minutes on Eproms. I didn't know what they were and no one in the audience knew (either before or after). Or cared. Fewer of the old regulars came to the meetings. There was no longer anything for them. Each time we lost a few more members, my heart would sink. Without the user groups, I knew, there would be no II. The machine would still work, but there would be no community, no sharing, no fellowship.

We tried raffles and other bandaids for a while, but we didn't bring back the oldtimers. And there aren't any newtimers.

Or are there?

The TIs are still in the homes of many people. If only young people could be encouraged to take an interest.

Many of the techies (if they've not already done so) are going to leave the TI for greater techiehood. This is too bad. They left behind some great things. But they left behind (in those cases where there were club

takeovers) many dead groups. Some of us are not technically oriented, nor will we ever be. There are a lot of 99ers out there with tape recorders; a lot of 99ers who have never used FORMAT on their TI WRITERs; a lot of 99ers who wouldn't even care to own a GRAM KRACKER (which is great for them as 6K isn't made anymore). However, we non-techies can be assets to our groups. We can contribute and have lots to contribute.

What did we do in the old days of before and after the orphaning that was so different?

We went to our user groups as a social occasion, a monthly night out. I think that came first for most people. The 4/A was our commonality. It was social. We talked and shared and learned. We were all, more or less, in the same boat. Those who knew a bit more than we did helped us. We did not feel excluded.

I went to a large TI group last year with the intent of joining. When I got there I felt very uncomfortable. The members did not introduce themselves, nor did they ask me to "come on over" and chat. Nothing. The meeting was disorganized, but when it settled down, nothing happened. There were no workshops, no plans, no anything. Except for five or six men (a couple rather famous in the TI community) who kind of held sway, loudly cracking inside jokes as one or the other of them talked a little bit about what's on their BBS, about Eproms (Dawn Eproms, I say!), about how to wire in an XB chip to your console (using all the terms but without a chart or graph). Everyone (except those five or six) was bored to tears. I couldn't understand why anyone even came to the meetings. I didn't join, though I belong to quite a few groups.

When I went back to M.U.N.C.H. I noticed our meetings were getting like that (though not yet as bad).

When meetings started to get down to three and four members present, I knew drastic changes had to take place.

So what did we do to renew membership and keep it active?

First, we started having user workshops. Things we normal types wanted the computer for. Most people want to do something with wordprocessing or graphics. (PRINT SHOP is, after all, the most popular home computer program on the market - for other computers.) Desktop publishing it's being called, and it is just that. We started giving workshops on FUNNELWEB and PLUS! and CFS and TI-ARTIST and FONTWRITER, primarily, because people owned these programs or were seriously considering getting them, and they wanted to know how to use them. They wanted to go slowly and in small groups and ask lots of questions and have things shown a few times. People have a mistrust of manuals, no matter how simple. (The ones that are very simple seem too wordy; the ones that are thin seem to assume too much knowledge on the part of the user.) People like to see things in operation. They

don't <u>care</u> how the TV or the car or the microwave or the washing machine work. They only want to be able to use the things. For most people, this is also true of computers. And for the TI in particular because most purchasers bought it for home and as their first computer experience.

We tried to provide for these 99ers, but we first had to get them back.

We improved the newsletter: increased the number of pages, eliminated the repitious or irrelevant materials, tried to jampack it with goodies from all the exchange newsletters and add graphics and PROGRAMS TO TYPE IN whenever and wherever possible.

Next we mailed them to ALL former members inviting them back to the fold.

We had coffee and goodies available.

We greeted each new or returning visitor at every meeting and pulled them right into the pre-meeting group discussions.

And had signs made up. A batch was given to each member present to put anywhere and everywhere.

We increased our raffles; brought back our text library, our long-forgotten tape library and dubber, our disk library.

At each meeting we begin with a social time (to talk, eat, look at the stuff for sale, for loan, for raffle), pull everyone together for a general filling-in of what the workshops that night will be and a filling-in of what's happening in our computer's world. Lots of jokes and fellowship. Then we have a short, semi-formal meeting (president, treasurer, secretary) and conduct the workshops. Meetings begin officially at 7. Most members arrive by 6:30. We end abruptly at 9.

We gave a list of all members names and addresses and phones to all members.

There is much outside—the—club contact. Many members belong to other clubs, too, so there is a greater sharing. If members show an interest in Eproms, for example, they can bring it up at a meeting and request a workshop for those interested.

The heart and the brain of the user group (for ALL user groups) is the newsletter. Without it, there is no real user group. It is the connector of members. It is the communicator. It is the touchstone and signature of each club around the world. The newsletters are as individual and quirky as the editors whose remarkable dedication continues to turn them out. You can tell from the newsletter if the club is friendly and worth joining.

The main ingredients in successful user groups are the four F's: FUN, FELLONSHIP, FOOD, AND FRIENDLINESS. When groups get away from these qualities, they're fading into the shadows. However, as M.U.N.C.H. is proof, with a little effort a group can leap back into the light.

[This is the last of a 3-part article on personal experiences in the TI world.]

MUNCH OFFICERS AND NUMBER President/Mail W.C. W. Vice President Helen Secretary Al Cecu Treasurer Jim Com Editor/Lugger Jack St Adv Prog. Chair Dan Rom Smilers PLUS! of Library Al/Lisa Disk/Nwsltr Lib Louis/H Tape Librarian Walter Old Programs Pliny to Sarcophagus Oh, Mum	RS (all in 617 area) yean 839-4134 Holmes chini x 869-2704 ughrue 476-7630 gers 248-5502 whers ALL ARGUNG Cecchini delen Holmes Nowak the Elder	PRIMETIME BBS (617) 397-9563 Helen Holmes, SYSOP >message base >on-line golf game >downloads >info files >soon to have IMPACT/99 >list of government agencies >and much more N *** *** *** *** *** *** *** *** ***
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LIBRARY NOTICE

PLEASE RETURN ANY ITEMS BORRONED FROM OUR LIBRARY. He are still missing a considerable number of books, tapes, disks, and so on belonging to <u>YOUR CLUB</u>. Do a little clearing around your computer area (or any places you'd be apt to set things aside). If you locate any library materials (or if you'd like to donate any you no longer use) please come with them to the next meeting. He don't care how long you've had them out. There is no fine. But it would be FINE if other members could have a chance to borrow these things. Godzilla is watching you!

ADVERTISING RATES:

Double Page (10.5" by 8") \$25.00 per insertion
Full Page (5" by 8") \$13.00 per insertion
Half Page (5" by 4") \$7.00 per insertion
Quarter Page (5" by 2" or
(2.5" by 4") \$5.00 per insertion
Classified (non-commercial) ads are FREE for MUNCH members.

...RAFFLE...

Every month we have this peachy-keen raffle of all kinds of neat stuff given by our generous members and friends. All kinds of software and sometimes hardware are given away free each meeting. The dollar donation helps to defray some of the costs of our monthly rent at the clubhouse, so all members who participate help a lot. Donations are happily accepted. Remember: YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO MIN!

JUNE SALE

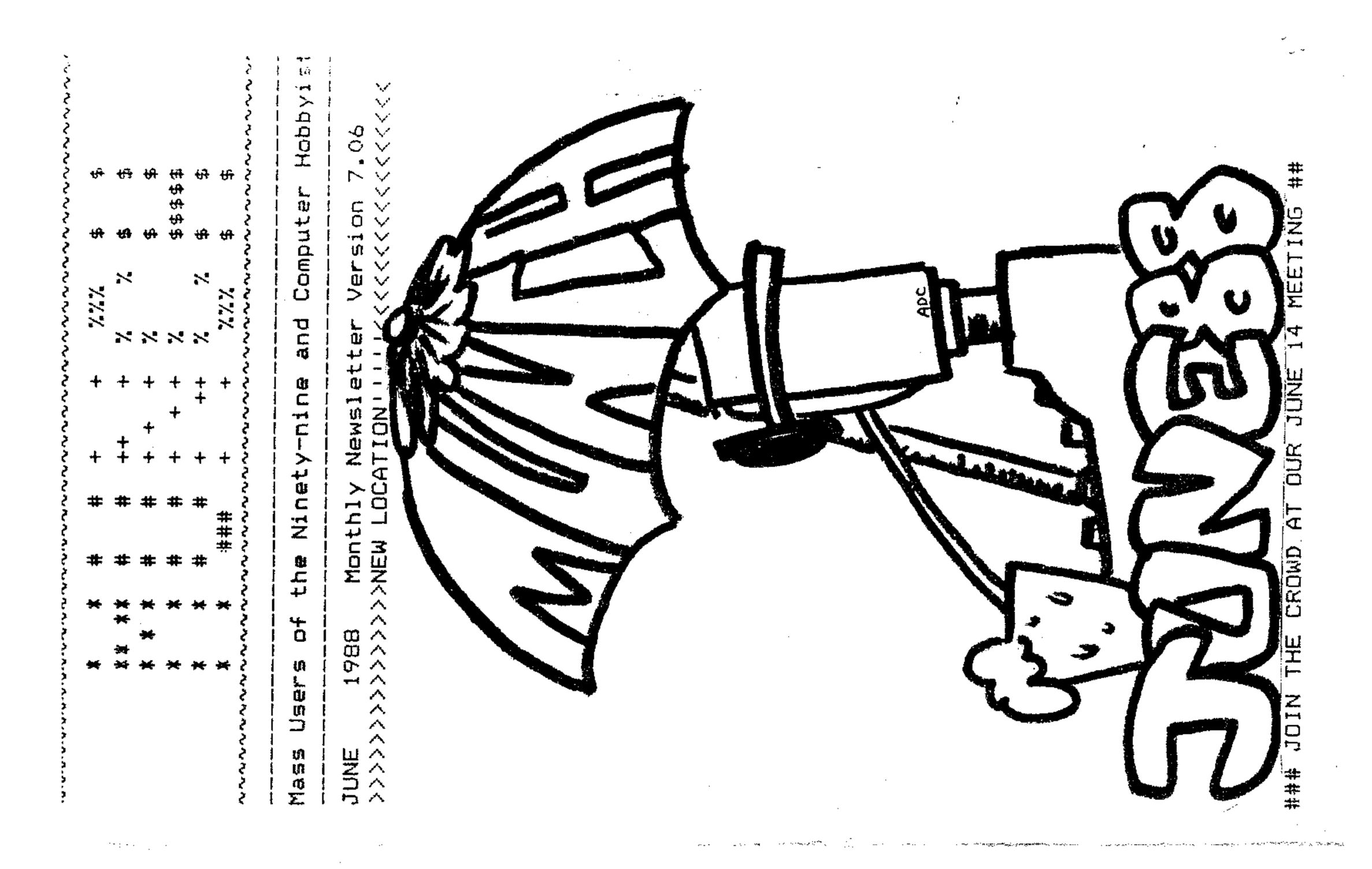
Another chance to sell any used consoles, P/Boxes, cards, tape recorders, interface cables, ANYTHING related to your computer system. Also bring any <u>original</u> tapes, cartridges, disks, texts, or other soft/textware. Be prepared to buy a lot and sell a lot. Please come with prices marked on the items. Call Jack Sughrue to let him know what you will be selling. Next month you may find that TI thing you've been needing.

NEWSLETTER

<u>BECOME IMMORTAL!</u> We are looking for articles, cartoons, love letters, programs, lists, old banana peels: in short, anything from the members which can be printed in our newsletter. Text items preferred on SSSD disk through TIW. Printed items also accepted. Share your interest or expertise with other members. Mail all items by the 3rd Tuesday of each month to Jack Sughrue, Box 459, E.Douglas MA 01516. Disks will be returned at the next meeting.

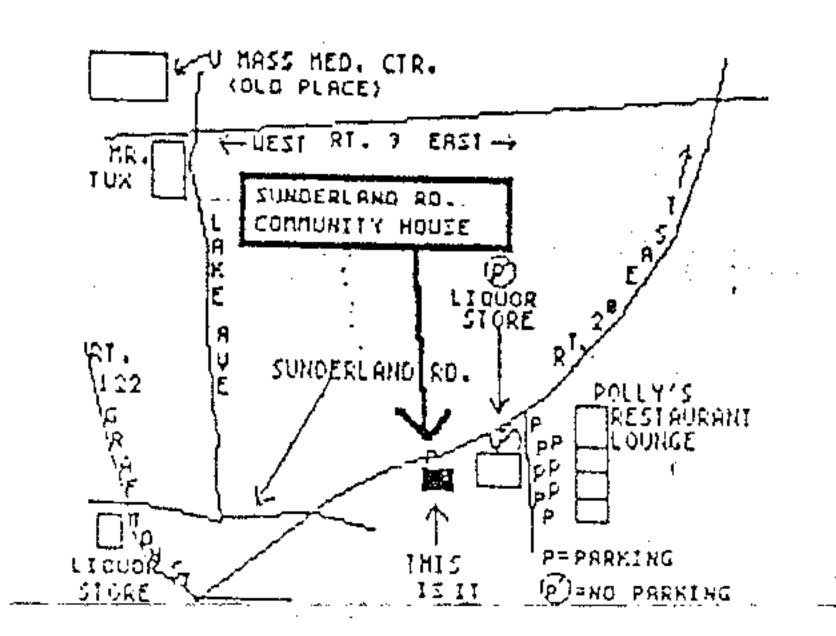
NEWALS + RENEWALS

NEWALS are \$15/year plus a one-time \$10 inititation fee (which includes a choice of ANY club disk free); RENEWALS are \$15/year. Members have full use of disk/text libraries, free workshops + assistance, 12 full issues of M.U.N.C.M., voting privileges + more! Subscription alone is \$10/year. Mail check to address on cover.



M.U.N.C.H.
P.O. Box 7193
560 LINCOLN STREET
WORCESTER, MA. 01605
Next Meeting: JUNE 14

FIRST CLASS



2nd : NEW LOCATION
TUES : SUNDERLAND RD
of the : COMMUNITY CTR .

Month - ROUTE-20