YESTERDAYS NEWS

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 8 Established 2016 AUGUST 2017

30 Years Ago...

Historical Information taken From Bill Gaskills TIMELINE

AUGUST 1987:

DataBioTics announces Grand RAM and DesKtop Publisher. Although the DesKtop Publisher program does not give credit to its author, it has the looK and feel of a Galen Read creation.

Asgard Software announces the release of EZ-Keys by Harry Wilhelm and Missile Wars by John BehnKe, author of Tunnels of Doom Editor, The Volcano Fortress and The Haunted Mine.

John Johnson's MENU v6.3 for the Horizon Ram DisK appears.

Myarc considers producing the 9640 in a Macintosh-liKe case with monitor and 3 1/2 inch disK all in one unit. The plan is abandoned however. No formal announcement of the idea is ever made, but Myarc's JacK Riley will appear at the November Chicago TI Faire with a Sony monitor that has a 3 1/2 inch disK drive built into it, raising the question of just how close Myarc came to actually following through with the idea.

Charles KirKwood Jr. is chosen to become the c99 columnist for MICROpendium.

MiKe Dodd of the K-Town 99ers is chosen to become the Geneve columnist for MICROpendium.

Bowling League Secretary I program released by Pilgrim's Pride of Hatboro, Pennsylvania.

GRAPHX Slideshow by Paul Charlton and Ken Gilliland is released by Asgard Software.

Asgard Software releases a statement to clarify that his firm has no connection with Asgard Industries of Minnesota, a firm that specializes in Adam Computer products.

INSIDE INFORMATION

HANK MISHKOFF PART ONE

AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF TI'S ORIGINAL COMMAND MODULE PROGRAMMERS

By Charles Good
Lima Ohio User Group
November 1995

HanK MishKoff worKed on a lot of projects for TI between 1978 and 1983 relating to the 99/4, 99/4A and 99/8. As an independent contractor he wrote the code for some early TI education command modules, wrote the music for some modules (he is a musician), and wrote some of the 99/8 documentation. He also was an employee of Tronics, which is a company that sold 99/4A coputers through multiple layers of distributors much liKe Amway home care products are sold today. In addition HanK worKed in 1983 for LooKing Glass Software and was involved in the creation of some of the never released ET command modules. What follows is compiled from a telephone interview and (mostly) from a number of separate internet email messages sent between HanK MishKoff and Charles Good in late September and early October 1995. You certainly meet the most interesting people on the internet!

CG - Tell me about some of the early worK you did that relates to the TI Home Computer.

HM - I worKed for TI as a programmer on the 99/4 in 1978, and then again doing documentation (and some programming) from 1980-1982. (Oh yeah, I'm also a musician; a lot of the music on TI's programs -- especially the early ones -- was mine.) For about a year after that, I worKed with a company called Tronics, which sold the TI Home Computer on a multi-level basis. Following that, I did contract worK on various TI products for years. I'm not an engineer, so I may not have the Kind of info you're looKing for; but I was involved with TI Home Computer products for quite a while, and I'd be happy to share my reminiscences with you any time you're interested.

See "MishKoff", Page 1

ARTICLE BY BILL GASKILL

COLLECTING CARTRIDGES PART 2

COLLECTION PARAMETERS

Collection parameters are those guidelines that you set which define the scope of your collection. The most obvious parameter is number. How many of the 275 possible cartridges are you going to try to collect? Another parameter might be condition. Will only new cartridges in original packaging be acceptable, or will used cartridges without packaging be okay? Application type can also be used to define the scope of your collection. Perhaps you will decide to collect only educational cartridges, or only entertainment cartridges? In any case, it seems prudent to set collection parameters early on, so you can control the focus of what you are going to look for and therefore what you are willing to spend money on.

When your search for collectible cartridges begins you should examine any prospective purchase with consideration for:

- new versus used (condition)
- original packaging,
- cartridge design,
- cartridge color,
- label design, color and font,
- documentation, and
- program version or program content.

NEW VERSUS USED:

Since I've just begun to collect TI-99 cartridges, I go for new, unopened, in original packaging first, then accept something less when I realize I'm not going to find a particular cartridge in new condition anymore. You'll find this is the most costly way to go about building your collection and I don't recommend it unless you have the money to spend. Used cartridges with any packaging is more than acceptable for most collections I would think, since the purpose of having the original packaging is to show what it looked like, not what it was when it came out of the factory. Allowing used cartridges in your collection increases the scope of available purchases too, since you can spend your Saturday mornings "yard saling" for them, as opposed to having to try and find a vendor who still has new stock.

See "GASKILL", page 3

"MishKoff" continues...

CG - The following is quoted from the June 1980 issue of FORTUNE magazine and describes the situation at TI in 1979 as TI considered developing an advanced version of the 99/4 to be called the 99/7. Any comments on this?

"Internal competition ultimately put the Kibosh on the 99/7. TI's digital systems group, which is based in Austin and sells minicomputers to small businesses, argued that it should control development of the 99/7 because the machine was designed for small businesses. Besides, the 99/7 was so powerful and inexpensive that it would have cannibalized the low end of the minicomputer line. The squabble went all the way up to top management, which decided at the last minute to cancel the 99/7 introduction and transfer the project to Austin. There, the "not invented here" syndrome took over. Austin engineers started questioning the new product's technical and economic feasibility, and within six months, most of the project staff had left for other jobs in TI. Looking back on all this, an allumnus concludes, "They threw away the two pieces of gold and kept the lump of coal."

HM - Wow, this section is incredibly accurate -- I remember quite well when all of this happened.

CG - Did you have anything to do with the 99/8 project?

HM - Wow, does *that* bring back memories. I wrote the manual for that sucker; I didn't know that *any* of them were ever actually produced. I just went back and dug up an old invoice dated 7/7/83, in which I billed TI for my expenses in shipping them the final copy of the TI-99/8 manual counter-to-counter air freight (they must have wanted it *real* fast). If I remember correctly, I had worked on the manual all night (hey, I was a *lot* younger then), then drove to D/FW Airport in the wee hours of the morning to ship the manual to Lubbock. I seem to recall that the product was killed shortly after that; I doubt that the manual was actually printed.

Another nostalgia note: My invoice says that I shipped the manual to Monte Williams; Monte has since moved to Dallas, and now heads up Micrografx' documentation group.

CG - I have the 99/8 book you wrote! I have rough, not quite ready for printing, "Final Draft 09/15/83" of the "TI-99/8, Book 2, Programmer's Guide for the Computer 99/8". Much of it looks it was printed on a line printer. It's about 300 pages. I can send it to you if you are interested, no charge.

HM - I am definitely interested, thanks! That sounds like my book. It's probably slightly revised, since my records show that I shipped them *my* final draft in July.

CG - I don't have a 99/8 but I know some people who do. One friend has a hex bus disk drive, an armadillo interface, and a whole bunch of special memory expansion

cards that only work with his 99/8.

HM-- Well, I'm more amazed all the time. The very concept that you would personally know more than one person who has a 99/8 is stunning. Do you have any idea of how they got them? (Or why they would want them?) Did they work for TI?

CG - Did you do any work on the 99/2? I have one of these, complete with a built in hexbus interface that can use all the little hexbus peripherals that TI sold, and some they never sold. I also have a "Wafertape digital tape drive", serial number 0000007. I can understand why TI never sold the things. Mine doesn't work at all reliably.

HM - I don't think so. Let me take a minute here and search through some old invoices...

Nope, lots of charges for the 99/8, nothing for the 99/2. Did the 99/2 precede the 99/8? It seems to me that they provided me with a copy (possibly a draft) of the 99/2 manual, and I used it as the basis for the 99/8 manual. Maybe not.

CG - In the Spring 1988 Triton catalog NUMBER BOWLING is listed for $11.95 as cartridge #1030. It is one of the modules shown on the video tape I am sending you. Did you work on Number Bowling?

HM - I think I might have written Number Bowling, but I wouldn't swear to it. I worked on a few of the Scott Foresman programs, but I sure can't remember which ones right now.

CG - On December 15, 1994 Thomas Hartsig left a message on the comp.sys.ti internet newsgroup. He was commenting on discussions of recent sales and purchases by newsgroup readers of TI educational modules. "I wrote Addition and Subtraction 1 back in 1981. I had no idea people were still using these cartridges." Were you involved in that project?

HM - I always thought that *I* "wrote" it, but I guess that depends on how you define "wrote." Tom designed the module and "wrote" the specification; I "wrote" every line of code that went into that module.

CG - So why is Thomas Hartsig's name prominantly displayed on the title screen of Addition & Subtraction 1 and your name is found nowhere, not even in the documentation. Why are you given no credit?

HM - Here's a funny story for you (well, *I* think it's funny, anyway)...

All of the programmers were miffed when we saw that Scott Foresman wanted to put Tom's name on the title page of Addition and Subtraction 1. Not that we had anything against Tom (we had never met him, for one thing; and for another, his contract with SF *required* that they give him onscreen credit), but we had all been developing programs for the Home Computer for years, and not once had any of us been given that kind of visibility. We weren't angry, but we were annoyed.

When I had completed a first pass of the program, I flew up to Chicago to show it to the folks at SF; I knew that Tom was going to be there also. (I think that was the first -- and possibly the only -- time that I met him.) Just as a joke -- and to exact some small measure of satisfaction -- I changed the onscreen credit from Tom's name to mine, mostly to see how he would react (and, I suppose, in some obscure way, to make a point).

So I'm in the room with Tom and two folks from SF (Bob and Dee), and I fire up the program, and up pops the title screen with my name on it. I keep a perfectly straight face, like nothing's going on. Bob looks real surprised for a second, then he smiles, and I think he's going to laugh, but he covers his face with his hand for a second, and then he's got a straight face, too. And Tom, who is staring directly at the screen, doesn't react at all! I even find some excuse to keep the title screen up there for a few extra seconds to make sure he sees it, but there's no reaction. I figure that he's missed it, maybe he's been looking at the esthetics and hasn't noticed the switch. Bummer.

After a while, Bob and I leave to go talk about something else, leaving Tom alone with Dee. Later, Dee tells me that the second I left the room, Tom turned to her and said, worriedly, "I didn't know that *Hank's* name was going to be on the title screen!" Dee, who had figured out what I was doing, said something non-committal like, "I'll have to review that with Hank to see what's going on." I got a *tremendous* feeling of satisfaction after that; all I had been trying to do was to tweak Tom a little bit, and it had worked. Life is full of little victories!

CG - Did you do the music at the beginning of the Music Maker module? You can hear this music near the end of the video I am sending you. It is, I think, a Beethoven sonata.

HM - It's possible; I'd have to hear it to be sure. Actually, the main reason that TI hired me was because of my background as a musician; my programming training and experience were pretty weak at the time. When I went to Lubbock for my interview in early 1978, they were in a position where they were making this revolutionary computer with three voices, and yet they had nobody on their staff with any musical ability. I hadn't mentioned my muscial background on my resume, because it didnd't seem relevent to a programming job. And TI couldn't tell me anything about the product(or even admit that they were working on a home computer) because the product hadn't

been announced! Finally, in my very last interview of the day, someone asked my about the two-year hole in my resume. When I mentioned that I had been playing in a band, his eyes lit up -- although I had no idea why, and he couldn't tell me. Weird.

When I first started on the job, my first assignment was the Home Budget module; any experimenting with music was on my own time. I remember that I programmed the Minute Waltz to play in less than a minute -- it sounded terrible that fast, but it was a lot of fun. I also did a Bach two-part invention that was one of my favorite piano pieces; that may be what they later used on Music Maker. Then I started doing little bits and pieces for the Grammar module, which everybody liked so much that they decided to actually pay me for creating music (as long as I got my "real" work done on time!).

The piece I'm most proud of is a three-part piece I wrote for the Demo module. Unfortunatley, they chopped it up and only used pieces of it. I've recently entered the entire piece into MIDI format; if you have some way to play MIDI, I can send you the file as an attachment, if you're interested.

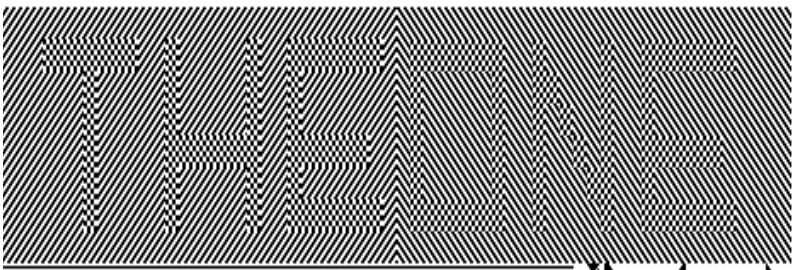
CG - Sure, send me the Demo module music in MIDI format.

HM - OK, here is the demo module music. I've attached three slightly different arrangements. I would have only sent you the best one, but I'm not at home, and I have no way to play them, and I can't remember which is which.

By the way, here's a funny story about that music, which was written for the Demo module. I left TI before the computer hit the market, and I was real excited when it finally began to show up in stores -- especially because a lot of retailers, having no idea of what else to do with it, just left the Demo module running in an "endless loop."

One day, I stopped into a computer store with some friends of mine, hoping to show off the computer -- and my music. They had the Demo program running, but the sound was turned off! I asked a salesman if they ever turned the sound up. "Yeah," he said. "When we're bad salespeople, they turn the sound on and make us stand next to the computer!" I had never realized that my wonderful music could get on your nerves after you'd heard it maybe 500 times...

To be continued next month



"GasKill" continues...

ORIGINAL PACKAGING:

The first modules produced for the TI-99 by Texas Instruments were housed in an 8.5" X 6" white cardboard box that carried TI part number 1037111-1. It looked similar to the cardboard cartridge box most 99ers are familiar with today, (TI part number 1043601-1) but came with a flip out front cover that made it look almost like a book. This design allowed a prospective buyer to pull the instruction manual out of the front cover and never have to open the box housing the cartridge. Inside the box one found the cartridge and any miscellaneous papers, such as the registration form, but there was no plastic tray like TI used on the 1043601-1 box. Instead, the interior had a glued cardboard panel to hold the cartridge in place, much like the boxes used by Atarisoft and Navarone.

My best guess at the life of 1037111-1 is that it lasted from 1979 to early 1981. Although I can't verify this through an official Texas Instruments document, the copyright dates on the 1037111-1 and 1043601-1 boxes bear out the years. Few TI-99 advertisements or promotionals ever included pictures of a cartridge's packaging though, so it's pretty hard to verify what month in 1981 the 1037111-1 box disappeared. My guess is that it occurred in early 1981 because TI tended to make major changes in the design of one component concurrent with the release or change in design of something else. Since the TI-99/4A upgrade to the TI-99/4 was introduced during the 2nd Quarter of 1981, it seems logical that the change in cartridge packaging came about at that same time of the year.

The cardboard box that most of us are familiar with carries TI part number 1043601-1. It is the one which has the display hanger on top and the "window" in front that is designed to show off the cover of the instruction manual. While it looks similar to 1037111-1, it is a quarter inch wider and a half inch longer at 9" X 6.25". Probably more noteworthy though is the fact that 1043601-1 introduced the plastic tray capable of securing the cartridge and any companion cassette or disk that went with the cartridge. The tray is significant because it also allowed Texas Instruments to box disk and tape software in the same type of packaging cartridges used. In the latter part of 1983 and into 1984 when the last TI-99 cartridge was produced, the tray, with only a plastic cover became the entire package.

My best guess at the life of the 1043601-1 packaging is that it lasted from the second quarter 1981 until the 3rd Quarter 1983 when it fell to the plastic tray with a heat sealed clear plastic cover. Virtually any cartridge software I've purchased, that was verifiably released in the 3rd or 4th Quarter 1983, or the 1st Quarter 1984, came in plastic. Had TI continued with the 99/4A I believe we would have eventually seen the end of cardboard packaging

for cartridges. Once TI's existing stock ran out, plastic would likely have replaced everything, including disk and cassette software packaging. In fact, I have a brand new copy of the Bridge Bidding I cassette software, a program originally released during the 1st Quarter of 1981, that came packaged in a green plastic tray and clear plastic cover. That tells me the product was pushed out the door in 1983, despite its original release date.

No matter how many plastic trays I've looked at, I have never been able to come up with one that carried a part number, so I have no idea what designation TI used for them. Most trays were black, but I have also seen tons of bright yellow ones, tan ones, mauve colored ones, green ones and red ones.

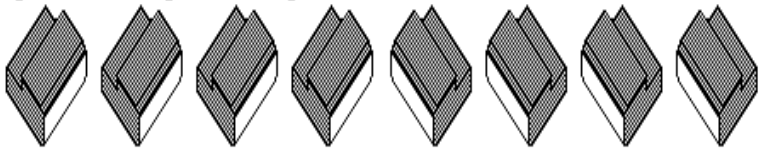
An aberation in software packaging from TI showed up in 1982 and carried part number 1051477-2. This was the 11" X 8.5" white cardboard box used to house the Scholastic Spelling Series modules. The interior was empty like 1043601-1, but no tray was produced to house the software. Instead, a huge cardboard framework was included that sure must have been costly to produce. Why TI decided to put these modules in such a huge box is beyond me?

The only other cardboard box used for cartridge packaging carried TI part number 1041342-1. It is the gray 8.5" X 6" box that housed Extended Basic. Like the original 1037111-1 white cardboard packaging, the 1041342-1's interior sported the glued panel to hold the XB cartridge in place, and it had the same 8.5" X 6" dimensions, but was a half inch thicker in order to accomodate the 224 page Extended Basic instruction manual.

The last of the original TI packaging used for cartridges was the albums or 3-ring binders (part numbers 1035947-1 and 1035947-0002) that TI used to house Editor/Assembler, the never released Foreign Language Instruction, Multiplan, SMU Electrical Engineering Library and all of the PHL libraries. The same binder was also used to house the instructor's manual for TI's Computer Awareness program.

1035947-1 was far and away the most common of the two albums made for TI by the McBee Company of Springfield, Mo. It is the off-white colored vinyl 3" ring size binder. 1035947-0002 is the same size binder, but came in a dark blue color. Inside the binder as most of Know, the cartridge(s) were housed in a clear plastic cartridge tray capable of holding up to four Grom Port style command modules (cartridges).

Next month we'll finish up with Original Packaging and begin covering Cartridges and Labels.



FROM  TO 

Editors Note: I have used the method described below with much success, as well as using the excellent TAPETODISK program by Col Christensen.

From User notes January 1987 MICROPENDIUM

Ray Kazmer, of Kazco International, Sylmar, CA, provides a User Note which, he writes, "will put to rest forever the continuing problem of how to transfer an over-sized file from tape to disk (and vice versa). The method described by Jerry Keisler in your 1986 December Feedback is one way to do it, but if you're as fumble-fingered and impatient as I am, I think you'll prefer this method.

To transfer an over-sized file from tape to disk:

1. In command mode, enter CALL FILES(1).

2. Load the program from tape.

3. After loading, enter CALL FILES(3).

4. Save the file to disk. It will be in I/V254 format and will run.

To transfer an over-sized file from disk to tape:

1. Load the I/V254 file from disk.

2. In command mode, enter CALL FILES(1).

3. Save the file (now in "Program" format) to tape.

TAPETODISK

1. Insert a blank initialized disk into drive #1.

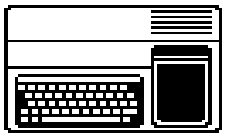
2. Load the tape to be copied into the tape recorder.

3. Enter CALL INIT::CALL LOAD(-31888,63,255)
   then NEW

4. Load the 10 sector XB program TAPETODISK and RUN it.

5. Press PLAY on recorder and press any Key on the TI.

The programs saved to the disk will be named PROGRAM/A, PROGRAM/B,etc until tape end.



Yesterdays News Information

Yesterdays News is a labor of love offered as a source of pleasure & information for users of the TI-99/4A & Myarc 9640 computers.

TI-99/4A HARDWARE

BlacK & Silver computer
Modified PEB
WHT SCSI card with SCSI2SD
Myarc DSQD FDC
Myarc 512K Memory Card
Horizon 1.5 meg RamdisK
TI RS232 card
Corcomp Triple Tech Card
1 360K 5.25 floppy drive
1 360K 3.50 floppy drive
1 720K 5.25 floppy drive
1 720K 3.50 floppy drive
80K Gram KracKer
Samsung Syncmaster 710mp

TI-99/4A SOFTWARE

PagePro 99
PagePro Composer
PagePro FX
PagePro Headline MaKer
PagePro Gofer
TI Artist Plus
GIFMania

PC HARDWARE

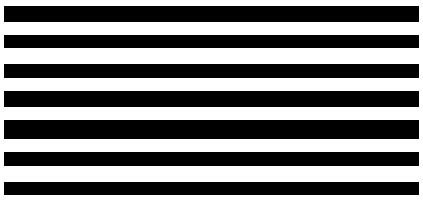
Compaq Armada 7800 NotebooK
Compaq Armadastation
Samsung Syncmaster 710mp

PC SOFTWARE

Dead,Dead,Dead Windows 98se
FileCap
prn2pbns
Irfanview
Adobe Distiller
Adobe Acrobat

Yesterdays News is composed entirely using a TI-99/4A computer system. It consists of 11 PagePro pages which are "printed" via RS232 to PC to be published as a PDF file.

Yesterdays News
c/o SparKdrummer
AtariAge forum
Phoenix, AZ. 85027



TI-99 4A