YESTERDAY'S NEWS

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INSIDE INFORMATION

30 Years Ago...

Historical Information taken from Bill Gaskills TIMELINE

AUGUST 1990:

MICROpendium publishes V7N7 consisting of 48 pages.

Ken Gilliland forms Notung Software company in Tujunga, CA.

Texaments releases Starfleet Technical Drawings III.

F. Jay BucKley, Vice President and Librarian of the Grand Rapids 99ers, dies on August 13th.

Harrison Software releases version 2.0 of their Word Processor. The new version possesses the ability to be configured to run from a Ram DisK, plus it adds a Fctn H Key to "home" the active document and a Fctn B Key to "bottom" the active document.

Asgard Reflections replaces Asgard News. YN

TI Runner

By
Chris
Bobbitt

MICROPENDIUM
January 1985
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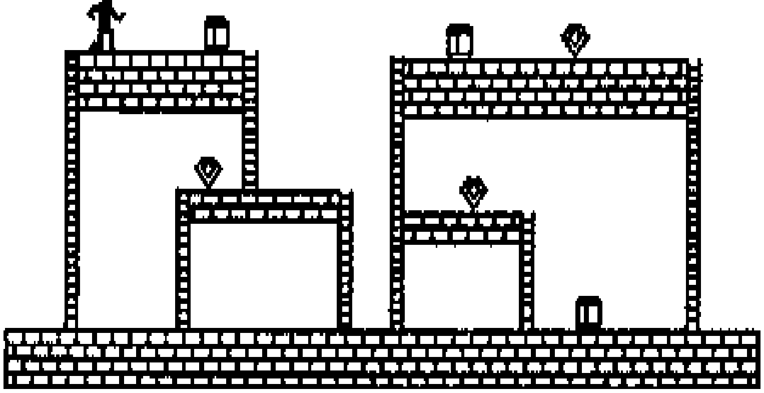


T199/4A users have been rather lucky in the past year that the big software companies Atari, Milton Bradley and others went ahead with their promises to translate their many fine products. After all, the 4A is a "dead" computer, resigned to the ash heap of history if you will.

That really isn't a fair description though. The tens of thousands (hundreds of thousands?) of remaining active TI owners represent a large, software hungry bunch of individuals, determined to follow their interests no matter what.

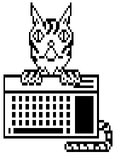
As I was saying, many of the better arcade games have been translated for the 99/4A. However, some of the best software is produced by small software companies, among them Sir-Tech, Sierra On-Line, Broderbund and Electronic Arts, to name a few. These companies generally do not have the resources or the incentive to translate their products for T199/4A owners. So, again, just as we used to have to rely on our own small, third-party manufacturers for versions of games such as Frogger or Centipede, we must depend on the ranKs of TI third-party companies to translate or adapt versions of other popular games for us on the TI.

One popular game produced by one of those small software companies is Loderunner. This program, originally a taKe-off on DonKey Kong, inspired an enthusiastic following among Apple II owners, and later Atari and Commodore owners. It's not hard to see why. Loderunner, as a game, requires the player to use far more strategy than DonKey Kong. Loderunner is much more difficult and considerably more varied. The original Loderunner had virtually an infinite number of screens, since it allowed the player to create his own. Loderunner has a whole different flavor than DonKey Kong there is no barrel jumping, the game is much more serious, and somewhat more violent. This Game of the Year for 1981 has been translated for the T199/4A by EB Software. It is called, as if to point out its roots, TI-Runner.

See "RUNNER", Page 3

TI CLASSROOM

TIPS FROM THE TIGERCUB NUMBER 15



By Jim Peterson

Since no one else ever reviews any of my software, I'll have to do it myself. WHITEWATER RUN is a raft trip down Whitewater Canyon, in 7 levels of difficulty. You must avoid running aground on the green shores, stay away from the black rocks, and do your best to stay out of the whitewater which may conceal other rocks. Every trip is different and none are impossible. The Greenhorn level is a short leisurely ride just for practice. Raftsman is a longer ride which surprises you with a sudden surge of fast water toward the end. Voyageur is a complete change of pace, as your raft leaps through the rapids. The next three levels are much faster, each with an increasing number of hidden rocks in the whitewater. Long Journey takes you through all six levels. Now also available in an Extended Basic version, very fast.

Most of the speed reading programs on the market are worthless, because they flash a phrase from their data file onto the screen and then require you to retype it exactly. Even if the data file of phrases is large, they will soon be recognized from memory rather than from reading. Also, the purpose of speed reading is to quickly grasp the meaning of a text, not the exact wording.

SPEEDER READER avoids these faults by assembling each sentence at random from files of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and modifiers. The result is an infinite number of different sentences, always grammatical but usually ridiculous. The sentence is flashed on the screen for whatever interval you select; then you are asked any one of several randomly selected questions about it. Where did the bald ballerina kiss the fat judge? If you can keep from laughing too much, your reading speed can be increased greatly.

JUNIOR SPEEDER READER is the same except that the sentences describe the activities of various animals, in simpler words.

Several people have sent me enhancements to my Menu Loader, and I greatly appreciate them. The trouble is, if I incorporated them all the program would take up about 25 disk sectors! So, I have borrowed some ideas, added a few of my own, and here is the result. It will list and load up to 99 programs, stopping at the end of every screenfull or stopping whenever any key is pressed and then offering you the choice of loading, deleting or quitting. It will ask you to verify a deletion by name before deleting it, and will display the name of the program it is loading. It also contains a feature to warn you if you are getting a bad count of disk sectors used - which I find happening more often than you might realize.

```
100 !by A. Kludge/M. Gordon/
T. Boisseau/J. Peterson/etc.
110 CALL CLEAR :: CALL INIT
:: CALL LOAD(8196,63,248)::
CALL LOAD(16376,67,85,82,83,
79,82,48,8)
120 CALL LOAD(12288,129,195,
126,165,129,153,102,60)
130 CALL LOAD(12296,2,0,3,24
0,2,1,48,0,2,2,0,8,4,32,32,3
6,4,91):: CALL LINK("CURSOR"
)
140 CALL CLEAR :: CALL SCREE
N(5):: FOR S=1 TO 14 :: CALL
 COLOR(S,7,16):: NEXT S :: C
ALL VCHAR(1,31,1,96):: CALL
COLOR(0,2,16)
150 OPTION BASE 1 :: DIM PG$
(99),T$(5)
160 T$(1)="dis/fix" :: T$(2)
="dis/var" :: T$(3)="int/fix
" :: T$(4)="int/var" :: T$(5
)="program"
170 IMAGE ##
180 DISPLAY AT(1,9):"DISKETT
E MENU"
190 ! IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN
ONE DISK DRIVE, DELETE THE !
 IN LINE 200 AND THE FIRST S
TATEMENT IN 210
200 ! DISPLAY AT(12,6):"DISK
? (1-3):" :: ACCEPT AT(12,19
)SIZE(-1)VALIDATE("123"):D$
:: D$="DSK"}D$}"."
210 D$="DSK1." :: OPEN #1:D$
,INPUT ,RELATIVE,INTERNAL ::
 INPUT #1:N$,A,J,K :: DISPLA
Y AT(1,2):SEG$(D$,1,4)}" - D
iskname= "}N$;
220 DISPLAY AT(2,2):"Availab
le=";K;"Used=";J-K:" Prog Fi
lename  Size    Type":"----
---------- ---- -------" ::
I,VT=0 :: TT=J-K
230 FOR X=1 TO 99 :: IF X/20
<>INT(X/20)THEN 260
240 DISPLAY AT(24,1):"Type c
hoice or 99 for more" :: ACC
EPT AT(24,27)VALIDATE(DIGIT)
:K :: IF K=99 THEN 250 :: IF
 K>0 AND K<NN+1 THEN 420 ELS
E 240
250 X=1
260 I=I+1 :: IF I>127 THEN K
=X :: GOTO 360
270 INPUT #1:P$,A,J,B :: NN=
NN+1
280 IF LEN(P$)=0 THEN 320
290 DISPLAY AT(X+4,2):USING
170:NN :: DISPLAY AT(X+4,6):
P$ :: PG$(NN)=P$ :: DISPLAY
AT(X+4,18):USING 170:J :: DI
SPLAY AT(X+4,22):T$(ABS(A)):
: VT=VT+J
300 CALL KEY(0,KK,ST):: IF S
T=0 THEN 310 :: FLAG=1 :: GO
TO 320
310 NEXT X
320 DISPLAY AT(X+4,1):" " ::
 DISPLAY AT(X+4,2):USING 170
:NN :: DISPLAY AT(X+4,6):"Te
rminate" :: DISPLAY AT(X+5,2
):STR$(NN+1)}" Delete"
330 IF VT=TT OR FLAG=1 THEN
350 :: DISPLAY AT(2,25)SIZE(
4):VT
340 FOR {=1 TO 10 :: DISPLAY
 AT(2,25)SIZE(1):CHR$(30)::
DISPLAY AT(2,25)SIZE(1):" "
:: CALL SOUND(-99,110,0,-4,0
):: NEXT {
350 DISPLAY AT(X+6,1):"    C
hoice?" :: ACCEPT AT(X+6,16)
SIZE(2)VALIDATE(DIGIT):K ::
IF K<>NN AND K<>NN+1 THEN 41
0
360 IF K=NN THEN CALL CLEAR
:: CLOSE #1 :: END
370 DISPLAY AT(X+5,11)SIZE(1
8):" #?" :: ACCEPT AT(X+5,15
)SIZE(2)VALIDATE(DIGIT):KD :
: IF KD<1 OR KD>NN THEN 370
380 DISPLAY AT(X+6,1)SIZE(27
)BEEP:" Verify - Delete ";PG
$(KD);"?" :: DISPLAY AT(X+6,
28)SIZE(1):"Y" :: ACCEPT AT(
X+6,28)SIZE(-1)VALIDATE("YN"
):Q$ :: IF Q$<>"Y" THEN 400
390 DELETE D$}PG$(KD)
400 CLOSE #1 :: CALL VCHAR(1
,3,32,672):: NN=0 :: X=0 ::
GOTO 180
410 IF K<1 OR K>99 OR LEN(PG
$(K))=0 THEN 320
420 CLOSE #1
```

```
430 CALL INIT :: CALL PEEK(-
31952,A,B):: CALL PEEK(A¦256
+B-65534,A,B):: C=A¦256+B-65
534 :: A$=D$}PG$(K):: CALL L
OAD(C,LEN(A$))
440 FOR I=1 TO LEN(A$):: CAL
L LOAD(C+I,ASC(SEG$(A$,I,1))
):: NEXT I :: CALL LOAD(C+I,
0)
450 CALL VCHAR(1,3,32,672)::
 CALL SCREEN(8):: FOR S=0 TO
 14 :: CALL COLOR(S,2,1):: N
EXT S :: DISPLAY AT(12,2):"L
OADING ";A$
460 RUN "DSKX.1234567890"
```

If you don't like my Tigercub cursor, just delete lines 110 (after the CALL CLEAR), 120 and 130. That routine for redefining the cursor has appeared recently in various newsletters without attribution, and I'd like to know who to credit for it. The secret of it is in line 120, where the numbers after 12288 are the decimal equivelants of the hexadecimal numbers (which are the hex equivelant of the binary numbers represented by the off/on pixels) used to redefine a character.

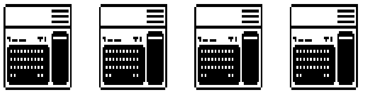
You may have noticed that all programs published in the Tigercub's Tips are in 28-column format, just the way they will appear on the screen. And they are printed directly from LISTed actual programs, so that they cannot contain typographical errors - don't you wish the computer magazines did that!? The problem is that when a program listing is merged into the TI-Writer buffer and printed in the formatter mode, the @@, &&, * and the exponent sign are treated as control characters, and strange things happen!

The following program will convert a program, which has been listed to disk with LIST "DSK1.FILENAME", into a file in 28-column format which can be loaded into TI-Writer, and will optionally substitute the left and right braces, ASCII 124 and the tilde for the @@, &&, * and the exponent sign, and trans- literate them so that they will print correctly in the formatter mode. However, for that very reason this program will not print correctly! When you come to line 280, type DATA shift 2, fctn F, shift 7, fctn G, shift 6, fctn W, shift 8, fctn A.

```
100 DISPLAY AT(2,4)ERASE ALL
:"28-COLUMN CONVERTER" :: DI
SPLAY AT(5,12):"by Jim Peter
son"
110 DISPLAY AT(7,1):" To con
vert a program, saved":"with
 LIST ""DSK1.FILENAME"",":"i
nto 28-column format which":
"can be merged into the text
"
120 DISPLAY AT(11,1):"buffer
 of TI-Writer."
130 DISPLAY AT(13,1):" Optio
nally with transliter-":"ate
d {, }, ¦ and ~ for cor-":"r
ect printing from formatter"
:"mode."
140 DISPLAY AT(18,1):" Do yo
u want to print the":"file f
rom the":" (E)ditor?":" (F)o
rmatter?"
150 ACCEPT AT(23,1)VALIDATE(
"EF")BEEP:Q$
160 DIM A$(1000):: CALL CLEA
R :: INPUT "What is the FILE
NAME?       DSK1.":FN$ :: FN
$="DSK1."}FN$ :: PRINT : :
170 INPUT "what is the new F
ILENAME?   DSK1.":PN$ :: PN$
="DSK1."}PN$ :: OPEN #1:FN$,
DISPLAY ,VARIABLE 80,INPUT :
: OPEN #2:PN$,DISPLAY ,VARIA
BLE 80,OUTPUT
180 IF Q$="E" THEN 190 :: PR
INT #2:".TL 126:94;" :: PRIN
T #2:".TL 123:64;" :: PRINT
#2:".TL 125:38;" :: PRINT #2
:".TL 124:42;"
190 FOR L=1 TO 1000 :: LINPU
T #1:A$(L):: IF LEN(A$(L-1))
=80 OR LEN(A$(L-1))=160 THEN
 A$(L-1)=A$(L-1)}A$(L):: L=L
-1
200 IF EOF(1)THEN L=L+1 :: G
OTO 220
210 NEXT L
220 FOR J=1 TO L-1 :: S=1
230 FOR T=1 TO 10 :: B$(T)=S
EG$(A$(J),S,28):: IF Q$="E"
THEN 240 :: GOSUB 280
240 S=S+28 :: NEXT T
250 FOR N=1 TO 10 :: IF B$(N
)<>"" THEN PRINT #2:B$(N)
260 NEXT N
270 NEXT J :: CLOSE #2 :: CL
OSE #1 :: END
280 DATA {,{,},},~,~,¦,¦
290 RESTORE 280
300 FOR W=1 TO 4 :: READ CH$
,R$
310 X=POS(B$(T),CH$,1):: IF
X=0 THEN 330
320 B$(T)=SEG$(B$(T),1,X-1)}
R$}SEG$(B$(T),X+1,LEN(B$(T))
):: GOTO 310
330 NEXT W :: RETURN
```

Now, if that's what I give away, isn't it worth a dollar to find out what I'm selling?
Happy hackin'
Jim P. YN

```
100 REM POOR MANS LOADER
        CREATES MERGE FILE
        NAMED CAT THAT CAN
        BE SAVED AS LOAD
110 CALL CLEAR :: PRINT "PRO
GRAM STATUS.......WORKING" :
: CL$="CLEAR" :: DIM A$(20):
: OPEN #1:"DSK1.",INPUT ,REL
ATIVE,INTERNAL
120 DEF LN$(N)=CHR$(0)&CHR$(
N)
130 DEF DI$(R)=CHR$(162)&CHR
$(240)&CHR$(183)&CHR$(200)&C
HR$(LEN(STR$(R)))&STR$(R)&CH
R$(179)&CHR$(200)&CHR$(1)&ST
R$(COL)&CHR$(182)&CHR$(181)
140 DEF IF$(N)=CHR$(132)&"K@
"&CHR$(190)&CHR$(200)&CHR$(2
)&STR$(N)&CHR$(176)&CHR$(169
)&CHR$(199)&CHR$(LEN(A$(I-64
))+5)&"DSK1."&A$(I-64)
150 FOR I=0 TO 20
160 J=J+1 :: INPUT #1:A$(I),
B,C,D :: IF I=0 THEN 170 ELS
E IF J>=127 OR LEN(A$(I))=0
THEN 180 ELSE IF ABS(B)<>5 O
R A$(I)="LOADER" THEN 160
170 NEXT I
180 CLOSE #1 :: EN$=CHR$(181
)&CHR$(199)&CHR$(28)&"PRESS
<ERASE> TO END PROGRAM"&CHR$
(0):: COL=1 :: L=I-1 :: OPEN
 #2:"DSK1.CAT",VARIABLE 163
190 PRINT #2:LN$(1)&CHR$(157
)&CHR$(200)&CHR$(5)&CL$&CHR$
(0)
200 PRINT #2:LN$(2)&DI$(1)&C
HR$(199)&CHR$(28)&"CATALOG"&
RPT$(" ",12-LEN(A$(0)))&"DIS
KNAME-"&A$(0)&CHR$(0)
210 COL=8 :: FOR I=1 TO L ::
 PRINT #2:LN$(I+2)&DI$(12+I-
INT(L/2))&CHR$(199)&CHR$(3+L
EN(A$(I)))&CHR$(I+64)&"--"&A
$(I)&CHR$(0):: NEXT I
220 PRINT #2:LN$(L+3)&CHR$(1
62)&CHR$(240)&CHR$(183)&CHR$
(200)&CHR$(2)&"24"&CHR$(179)
&CHR$(200)&CHR$(1)&"1"&CHR$(
182)&CHR$(238)&EN$
230 PRINT #2:LN$(L+4)&CHR$(1
57)&CHR$(200)&CHR$(3)&"KEY"&
CHR$(183)&CHR$(200)&CHR$(1)&
"0"&CHR$(179)&"K@"&CHR$(179)
&"S@"&CHR$(182)&CHR$(0)
240 PRINT #2:LN$(L+5)&CHR$(1
32)&"S@"&CHR$(190)&CHR$(200)
&CHR$(1)&"0"&CHR$(176)&CHR$(
201)&LN$(L+4)&CHR$(0)
250 FOR I=65 TO L+64 :: PRIN
T #2:LN$(L+I-59)&IF$(I)&CHR$
(0):: NEXT I
260 PRINT #2:LN$(2*L+6)&CHR$
(132)&"K@"&CHR$(190)&CHR$(20
0)&CHR$(1)&"7"&CHR$(176)&CHR
$(157)&CHR$(200)&CHR$(5)&CL$
&CHR$(130)&CHR$(139)&CHR$(0)
270 PRINT #2:LN$(2*L+7)&CHR$
(134)&CHR$(201)&LN$(L+4)&CHR
$(0):CHR$(255)&CHR$(255):: C
LOSE #2
280 CALL SAY("KEYBOARD IS NO
W WORKING"):: END
```



"RUNNER" continues...

Performance: TI-Runner is not exactly a copy of its model, Loderunner. There are some startling similarities and some differences. First, though, what is TI-Runner?

As mentioned above, TI-Runner is much like Loderunner, or at least it seems intended to be. In both games you start at a place at the bottom of the screen. The character that you move around and his assailants (the character is masculine in appearance) look surprisingly realistic. The characters themselves, both the victim (you) and your four attackers are shaped the same, differentiated only by color. Each character is a single color stick figure. The characters are very well animated and the jumping and running are extremely well done. Much like the original.

In both games you must move your character around on brick platforms connected by ladders. The object here is to pick up a variety of treasures and a number of all-important Keys. Once all the Keys have been obtained a ladder, apparently going through the roof, appears. Once you have climbed that ladder to the top, you go on to the next level. The object of the game is to obtain as many points and advance as many points and advance to as many levels as you can while avoiding your pursuers and other hazards. Each level represents a greater challenge than the previous level.

In this game the fire button serves a different purpose than in Donkey Kong. In Donkey Kong and its many clones your character jumps whenever the fire button is depressed. In TI-Runner, a hole is created in the platform the character is on, in the opposite direction the character is facing, i.e. behind it. Both the pursuers and the player's character can fall through these holes. The player may use these as a way to go through a platform, dropping to the next platform. Pursuers that happen to fall into one of the holes will remain there until the platform is rebuilt by the program a few seconds later. A neat way to delay your adversaries.

In Donkey Kong, falling off or through a platform generally spells doom to the player's character. In TI-Runner, jumping off a ledge is a very effective means of escape, faster than going down ladders. The player may also make multiple holes in the brick floor to go through it, while the pursuers will fall into the floor where the hole was made and remain there until the hole is covered over. If two pursuers fall into the same hole, one will remain to fill the hole, while the other will drop onto the next highest platform. If the player's character accidentally falls into one of his own holes, from he can't escape, or if he is touched by a pursuer, then the character seemingly melts into the ground, forfeiting one life. For each level you conquer, you obtain 1000 points and an additional life for your character. Any treasures obtained are worth 200 points each.

Almost everything about TI-Runner, from the action down to the graphics, is very much like Loderunner. In both games the screen is gradually destroyed and rebuilt as you go from one level to the next. The action is fierce in both and both respond perfectly to a joystick. Both the Apple IIe version of Loderunner and TI-Runner optionally allow use of the keys for input. In the Apple IIe Loderunner, the keys used are spaced rather far apart, while TI-Runner uses the arrow keys, ironic since Apple joysticks are three times the price of TI joysticks. The Apple IIe Loderunner has more pursuers than TI-Runner, and allows the user to create his own screens. which cannot be done with TI- Runner. TI-Runner has 50 levels, and I've never reached the top screen. For me, the number seems infinite; but maybe that just says something about my ability.

TI-Runner seems to perform without a hitch. After much play-testing, I didn't find a single error or anything that would qualify as a bug. The motion was so fluid that I had a difficult time telling TI- Runner from Loderunner. Great games are possible on the TI if the programmer tries.

Ease of Use: The program is relatively easy to use, however, loading any assembly language program requires some expertise. The program requires a disk system and memory expansion and either the Mini-Memory or Editor/Assembler cartridge. The Load and Run options are used to load the program with either cartridge. The program runs itself when loaded. The diskette must be left in the drive when the game is being played to allow screens to be loaded.

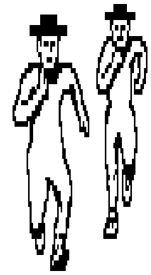
Game play is rather simple, but there are a number of special keys, including, mercifully, a pause key. Other special keys allow the user to skip levels, start over, quit or kill the character if he is trapped in a situation he can t get out of.

Documentation: The documentation is very complete. The program is covered in detail; everything from loading instructions to descriptions on how the player's character, designated Clyde, can be moved. The special keys are covered well, while the sections dealing with hole-making, or bombing, and scoring are superior.

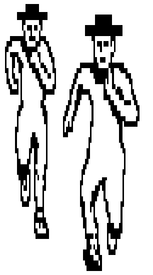
Value: I must admit I am a bit biased. I have been a big fan of Loderunner since I first saw it on my cousin's Apple IIe. I have spent many an hour being destroyed over and over; something very easily done since my cousin doesn't have a joystick. TI-Runner is a very good adaptation for the TI. and is of higher quality than some translations of popular games. This game proceeds very quickly, and can really wear out a joystick for those who like to play strategy/arcade games.

The graphics are very well done. The animation is almost the best I have ever seen on the TI. Joystick response is instantaneous, and the controls are easily mastered. If you are looking for a great game, after being spoiled by all of those excellent Atarisoft and Milton Bradley cartridges, this is the one.

It's a valuable game indeed to the computer owner seeking some mindless, but very entertaining, recreation. YN



TI RUNNER LEVEL EDITOR



MICROpendium
APRIL 1989 - VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3
By Bob Carmany

Okay, you have just finished yet another round of TI-Runner and once again it was a bit less of a challenge than the last time you played it. It seems that once you figure out the screen patterns, games become a bit boring, don't they? In fact, they usually end up at the back of the disk box and are relegated to the "once every six months" playing cycle. There must be some way to put some life into playing an old favorite. Well, there is!

The TI-Runner Level Editor will allow you to program an unlimited number of new and different screens and "juice up" the well-worn TI-Runner game.

Once you have decided you should get a TI-Runner editor program, the next question is: "Why should I get a commercial software program?" After all, there are a couple of "fairware" versions floating around that do the very same thing - or do they? Let's take a look and see!

Performance: Who said, "I have some good news and some bad news?" This software package is sort of like that and we will start with the good news first. The program actually works well. Everything does what it is supposed to (with a few exceptions to be noted later). Since it is an XB program with some Assembly routines tied in, everything moves quickly and smoothly.

The program is broken down into three basic segments. There is a Level Management portion with a sub-menu that allows the user to manipulate both the 50 original TI-Runner levels plus an additional 44 advanced levels. You can change any of them at will or create new files. There are extensive instructions in the documentation for creating your own levels. There are even some rather nasty hints for the devious mind - transparent ladders, anyone? In fact, you can change colors of the screen itself as well as the treasures and ladders that appear on it. One of the features I enjoyed the most was the ability to delete or copy individual levels without having to redo an entire file.

The second segment is the File Management section. This is something that the more rudimentary editors lack. Basically a disk manager program, it lets you select disk drives, create filenames, delete files or select the current file as your working file. It is nice to be able to manipulate the files you have worked on without having to exit from the program and crank up another program just to do some elementary disk maintenance.

The third segment of the program is a bit unusual. TI-Runner uses a screen file called "LEVEL28" to store the various difficulty levels. Prepare a Screen File for Play is an easy way rename the file appropriately without having to exit from the program. Just make sure you send it to the right disk drive!

All of these options perform well. Why the B ? Well, I would expect some errors (as opposed to bugs) in a noncommercial program but not in something produced commercially. Background becomes "backround" in the Level Management portion of the program. Inserting a space between the last character in each of the input prompts and the default choice would make the program much more pleasing to the eye. After all, we are expecting people to spend money on the program!

In addition, the menu options in the documentation don't match those on-screen in the File Management part of the program. Change Drive becomes Change Disk on-screen and Pick Current Screen File becomes Pick Default Screen File. I know, these are all minor points but the program should have been more closely proofread before it was released. Those are just the minor annoyances.

I also question whether the Prepare File option wouldn't be more logically included in the File Management part of the program than as a separate main menu option. Again, that is another relatively minor point.

The most serious shortcoming in the program is the error handling. For example, if you try to save a file too big for the available disk space, the program saves as much of the file as possible and then BREAKs with an ungracious "burp." A couple of ways exist to solve this problem and allow a more elegant and graceful exit.

Ease Of Use: The TI-Runner Level Editor is, on the other hand, a very easy program to use. Everything is menu-driven from selecting the options within the various program segments to selecting color changes for the ladders and treasures. You don't have to wade through reams and reams of documentation or experiment for hours on end to get the program to do what you want it to do. It is bug-free and with little preparation anyone can be creating his own TI-Runner screens within a few minutes of unwrapping the package. A resounding "A+!"

Documentation: The program comes with a booklet of some four double-sided pages. The instructions are concise and to the point. System requirements, introduction and descriptions of the program segments follow. The customary caution about backing up the program and "operating" on a copy is sound advice.

Each menu and sub-menu option is explained with a line or two of text. There is usually no need to go into more detail since you should be looking at the computer screen while reading the docs - the first time at least. There are a couple of pages of explanation about creating your own screens and, once again, the instructions are simple and to the point. There is no confusing jargon and everything is more than adequately explained. There are even a few hints to make your TI-Runner screen more pleasing (or more difficult).

The final segment of the documentation describes the File Management section of the program. Once again it is succinct and straightforward. The only anomaly was the mismatch between the on-screen menu selections and the documentation, pointed out previously. The descriptions of the various functions, however. were excellent.

Value: The value of a program is ultimately how much you use it. In this case, if you are one who enjoys playing TI- Runner, this program will be well worth the asking price. It has functions that the fairware editors for TI-Runner don't have and is easier to use than any of them I have seen to date. Quite frankly, I find the price just a bit high for the rather specific niche that this program occupies. But, then, it all depends on your perspective.

Final Grade: Documentation, simplicity, and ease of use arc the strongest points of the EB Software TI-Runner Level Editor. It can be mastered with a minimum of preparation and the fruits of your labors can give you many hours of entertainment. On the downside, the errors in the program shouldn't have escaped into a commercially released program. It is still a good piece of programming - remember C is average.

Note: The shortcomings in the program can all be corrected by anyone with a bit of Extended BASIC programming expertise. The XB portion of the program can be listed and the necessary changes made. Just make sure that you make the changes on a COPY of the original program and test everything thoroughly when you are finished. The point is, though, you shouldn't have to.

YN

TI RUNNER

ROCK RUNNER

MICROPENDIUM
May 1990
Volume 7
Number 4

By
Harry
Brashear

Good assembly language games have been in short supply lately. I am told the reason is that TIers don't like to PAY for games. Hogwash! Here's a good chance to prove the pessimists wrong.

Rock Runner is not only a great game, it brings a whole new graphic mode to the TI. I was shocked to find sprites with up to 10 colors without layering (placing two or more sprites over one another to get more than one color.) The end result is a technical breakthrough, and some of the most beautiful graphics I have seen.

The game itself is a lot of fun, putting one in mind of Anteater or DigDug. The object is to run this little guy around a scrolling screen; (looks equal to three wide by two high) picking up diamonds and points without letting a rock fall on his head, or getting attacked by a nasty critter. You are also fighting a time factor that wipes you out when it hits zero. I'm not a game person, but I spent a few hours with Rock Runner without getting bored to tears.

You work with 15 levels, running consecutively as you complete each one, but, if you like, you can start your game at any level, "A" to "O". This is a welcome feature because the intensity (my stress level) runs from sublime to ridiculous. Having the ability to start in whatever screen I left off with, instead of going through the whole game kept my interest up.

The only restriction is that you have to use the Editor/Assembler to load the game. It uses every bit of memory the TI has to spare.

Rock Runner is an A+ game in every respect; graphics, speed, interest holding, variation, whatever makes a good game. The nice part is that it breaks new ground. It was created by Eric Lafortune of Belgium, a brilliant TI programmer, and is being distributed by Asgard. I hope some gamesters are still out there because I would hate to lose Eric to another machine.

Don't steal it, buy it for a mere $12.95 plus 75 cents shipping from Asgard Software.

YN

VAST NEWS

The Newsletter of the VAlley of the Sun TI99/ers

Volume 9 Number 9 September 1993

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Whew! This month has been a real bear! Setting up the newsletter is a real time consuming task. It almost seems that all my free TI time was spent working on it! Anyway, I have the general format pretty much set up the way I want and I hope the membership will find it readable.
Please note that I borrowed heavily on the format that Jim Ely had used in the past (THANKS JIM!) .I liked the way he composed the newsletter so I set up pretty much the same way.

At this time I will do as all the newsletter editors before me have asked:
PLEASE SUBMIT AN ARTICLE!!!
There is only so much time I am going to able to spend putting together the newsletter so I need your help. The alternative will be a very small newsletter indeed.

I request that any article written be in a 28 column format to give me an easy way to edit and utilize them. All you have to do is go into your favorite word processing program and set your left margin at zero and your right margin at 28 or you can use the excellent program written by Bill Gaskill - PAGEFORM.
I also request that members let me know what they'd like to see published in the newsletter.

Ralph...

TI WORLD AND LOCAL NEWS

LOCAL NEWS

As some of you may know by now, Ray Frantz has had to resign as the President and Newsletter editor of our group. The reason given was due to a untreatable breathing difficulty. We wish Ray well and thank him for the many tireless hours he has spent doing things for the group.

INSIDE INFORMATION

VAST BBS
233-0790

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Yesterday's News Information

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

TI-99/4A HARDWARE

TI99/4A COMPUTER
MODIFIED PEB
WHT SCSI AND SCSI2SD
MYARC DSQD FDC
MYARC 512K MEMORY
HORIZON 1.5 MEG HRD
TI RS232
CORCOMP TRIPLE TECH
1 360K 5.25 DRIVE
1 360K 3.50 DRIVE
1 720K 5.25 DRIVE
1 720K 3.50 DRIVE

TI-99/4A SOFTWARE

PAGEPRO 99
PAGEPRO COMPOSER
PAGEPRO FX
PAGEPRO HEADLINER
PAGEPRO GOFER
PAGEPRO FLIPPER
PAGEPRO ROTATION
PIXPRO
PICASSO PUBLISHER
BIG TYPE
TI ARTIST PLUS
GIF MANIA

PC HARDWARE

COMPAQ ARMADA 7800
COMPAQ ARMADASTATION
SAMSUNG SYNCMASTER

PC SOFTWARE

DEAD WINDOWS 98SE
FILECAP
PRN2PBNS
IRFANVIEW
ADOBE DISTILLER
ADOBE ACROBAT

Yesterday's 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.