TI-99ers In The 90's

Classic Computer Column by Barry Traver

ANOTHER CHICAGO WORLD FAIRE!

The ninth annual TI International World Faire was held on Saturday, November 2, at the Holiday Inn in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, near Chicago. As you probably know, the "Chicago TI Faire" is regarded by many Tlers as one of the most important events of the year.

I was privileged to attend this year's "gathering of the clan" (to borrow a description from Hal Shanafield, President of the Chicago Area TI Users Group and Faire Chairman '91), and I can testify that 1991 was no exception. The Chicago Group is to be commended for doing another fine job, as is the Milwaukee Area TI-99/4A Users Group for sponsoring its own TI Faire at the Quality Inn in Milwaukee on the following day, November 3.

All in all, it was a very encouraging weekend for TIers, not only because of the introduction of significant new software and hardware products (and we'll be looking at some of them this month and next), but also because of the promise it gives that the TI-99/4A (and MYARC 9640) continue to show an amázing vitality with the promise of even more to come—yes, plans are already underway for a 1992 Chicago Faire! There is one thing that happened at the Chicago Faire that I find it difficult to report on, however. At the banquet on Saturday night, the Chicago TI Users Group awarded me "The John Birdwell Memorial Award for Lifetime Achievement in Computing," which I regard as a high honor indeed. John Birdwell was a great programmer and a great friend to the TI community, and it was a unique privilege to be photographed holding that award, with John's wife on one side of me and his daughter on the other. I am not sure that I was worthy to receive such an award, but I was very moved by the love and affection evident from the TI family.

What stood out to me was the fact that the TI is alive and well because (1) we truly are family with bonds that tie us to one another, and (2) we see talented new young programmers like Mike Maksimik (who presented the award to me) coming along to take the place of the talented older programmers (like John Birdwell) whose loss we deeply regret. As for the honor, I don't know what to say (it isn't very often that you'll find a preacher speechless!) except to say "Thank you" and to reassert my continued commitment to our TI family.

Chicago, Gary Bowser of OPA (Oasis Pensive Abacutors) demonstrated Don O'Neil's software/hardware for digitalized sound (although— unlike Mike Maksimik's MIDI MASTER 99—the OPA product was not yet available for people to purchase and take home from the show).

In the future, I expect to be telling you more about both of these, but this month I want to give you details about one specific popular new product introduced at Chicago: Barry Boone's SOUND F/X from Texaments (53 Center Street, Patchogue, NY 11772).

With its usual "understatement," Texaments describes this new product in this way: "Listen to your computer sing, talk, scream, and even play music tracks! With SOUND F/X you can play previously recorded audio files on a standard TI-99/4A or Geneve without any additional hardware! The most incredible software experience in TI history!" Well, I'm certainly skeptical about that last claim, but the "without any additional hardware" comment does set SOUND F/X off from its competitors-unlike the others, SOUND F/X requires no special cable or other special hardware (e.g., MIDI device, amplifier, or speakers). The significant thing about all three, however, is that they provide access to sound or music data files produced for other computers. For example, SOUND F/X includes a utility which "converts industry standard sound files originally recorded using IBM, Macintosh and Amiga personal computers into SOUND F/X files." As with its competitors, what you get from SOUND F/X depends upon how much memory you have for it to use: a Geneve 9640 will allow you more (i.e., longer) sound than a TI, and a TI with a "supercart" will allow you more than a TI without. Some sample "Sound Bytes" (recorded files for playback) are included with SOUND F/X, but if you want the program, I think you'll also want to get the additional Sound Bytes two/disk sets for \$3.95 each: Cartoons, Science Fiction and Miscellaneous. Texaments does have some special offers in that respect. You can order SOUND F/X with all three Sound Bytes collections for \$21.95, or all three Sound Bytes collections by themselves for \$9.95.

its CPU), these nine new games work exclusively on the Geneve, but it is encouraging that we're finally seeing some programs that take advantage of the specific features of that computer. And, if you're a Geneve owner, you'll be glad to hear that they all run directly from M-DOS (rather than running from GPL in TIMODE, for example).

Seven of the games are \$12.95 in price: Cave Explorer, Sea Terror, Space Champions, Submarine Revenge, Time Guardian, Train Twisterand Traffic Frenzy. Also offered is Jungle Terror for \$14.95 and Islander and Car Race (two games in one) for \$9.95. Texaments again has some special offers: any two games for \$22.95, any three for \$35.95, any four for \$48.95, or all nine games for \$79.95. For detailed descriptions of the games, I recommend that you contact Texaments (you can phone their office at 516/475-3480 or their BBS at 516/475-6463, or write to them at the address above) and ask them to send you a copy of their latest catalog.

BARRY BOONE'S SOUND F/X FROM TEXAMENTS

Some exciting things have been happening with reference to music and sound effects for the TI-99/4A and MYARC 9640. Mike Maksimik is the source of one of those striking developments with his MIDI MAS-TER 99, which was a very popular demonstration at Chicago. Also at

HARDWARE / Sanyo 55X News

- FROM PRECEDING PAGE SUMMARY

In this month's article I have covered quite a bit of information for our Sanyo 55X computers. In future articles I will continue to update readers of this column on any updates, fixes or patches to Sanyo 55X operating systems, hardware or software.

I welcome all readers of this column to write about anything you may think of as possible interest to other Sanyo 55X computer users. Usually, if it is interesting to you, it will be interesting to others. Send your letters directly to me at the following address.

John N. Logreco 722 N. Harvard Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90029

I would also offer to review programs that run on a Sanyo 55X MS DOS 2.11 computer. Programs that

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compatible video board mode. Send your programs to the above address.

PRICING AND INFORMATION ADDRESSES

For Sanyo 55X hardware, repairs and software write to:

Victor R. Frank Sanyo PC Hackers 12450 Skyline Blvd. Woodside, CA 94062-4541 Phone: (415) 851-7031

For Sanyo 55X software and Sanyo CPM computer information:

Dr. Tom Peet Newslink 6074 Bolamo Ct. Westervile, Ohio 43081

For hardware and software upgrades plus repairs:

John F. Farrow

NINE GENEVE GAMES FROM BARRY BOONE

Since they are written for the 9995 chip (which is contained in the

THE BRIDE OF ... THE DISK OF DINOSAURS?

If you saw the classic film The Bride of Frankenstein, you'll appreciate the cover of the manual for a new offering from Notung Software (7647 McGroarty Street, Tujunga, CA 91042): The Bride of the Disk of Dinosaurs (\$12). The cover features, yes, a dinosaur, but one with the same electronic hairdo worn by Elsa Lanchester in the great old Frankenstein film.

I personally love the cover, although in a sense it may be a bit misleading. It does rightly suggest that in the latest of the series—as in its predecessors, Disk of Dinosaurs and Son of the Disk of Dinosaursyou'll find a lot of fun and enjoyment (that's essentially true of anything done by author/artist/musician Ken Gilliland). But it's misleading if you take it to mean that you'll find in this set the usual unscientific misunderstandings and popular mythology about dinosaurs. As in other "fun" series by Ken (such as his earlier Disk of Pyrates), you'll find a production based on some serious research.

Which is to say that the Bride is intended to be, among other things, (dare I say the word?) "educational," although I fear that my mere mention of that itself may be misleading, since for many people "educational" and "enjoyable" are automatically a contradiction in terms. If the term "educational" bothers you, please







FROM PRECEDING PAGE sure you are not in the directory to be deleted.

Before you can remove a subdirectory you must delete all files in the subdirectory you want to delete first. You CANNOT delete a subdirectory even if it has only one file in it. After deleting all files in a subdirectory (DEL *.*), use the following examples on how to delete the subdirectory.

Example: RD LTR or RD SCROL

Before deleting one or more files in any subdirectory, do a DIR and list all files on your screen to make sure that there are no files you wish to keep. Deleting a needed file can be disastrous. The command "DEL *.*" is very dangerous if not used correctly. This command will DELETE ALL FILES in your directory! So be very careful in using this kind of delete command. Make absolutely sure that you are in the correct subdirectory or directory you want to delete ALL files in!

An easy way to tell which subdirectory you are in is to include this line in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file so it is run each time you boot up your computer. Add the line like this:

PROMPT \$P\$G

I usually add a space after the last "G" in the prompt command before hitting the return key. This places a space after the directory display. Your directories will look like this. For example: A:\SCROL> or B:\LTR> instead of just an A> or B>.

CHANGING SUBDIRECTORIES WITH WORDSTAR 3.30

The original word processors bundled with (Je Sanyo 55X, Word Star 3.30 and EasyWriter 1.3, do not know how to change from one subdirectory to another. In this case, you will have to change to the desired subdirectory before you run Word-Star 3.30 and EasyWriter 1.3.

Then when you save a file you type the drive name before the filename like this: B:filename or A:filename. Otherwise the two original word processors will merely save all files to the disk drive the program is on.

WordStar versions 4.0 up to 6.0 recognize subdirectories. You can change subdirectories easily from the Opening menu by cursoring down to the listed directories at the bottom of the screen and pressing the return key.

The default data disk drive can automatically be set in WordStar versions 4.0 to 6.0. I have all versions of WordStar from 4.0 to 6.0 installed to automatically use the B: drive as the default data disk when first starting up.

"ANYDISK" BOOT DISKS

Jack Farrow sent me a new version of his MS DOS 2.11 "Anydisk" boot disk for the Sanyo 55X in standard mode and video board mode. In it is a new formatting program compatible with the Anydisk boot disks for formatting Mitsubishi 1.2MB floppy disk drives. The 1.2MB floppy disks and drives are fully compatible with IBM "AT" computer 1.2MB formatted floppy disks.

Jack Farrow has modified the Mitsubishi 1.2MB floppy disk drives to work with the Sanyo 55X computers. These modified floppy disk drives can be purchased from Jack Farrow and from Victor R. Frank, editor of the Sanyo PC Hackers Newsletter.

Although you can buy your own Mitsubishi 1.2MB floppy disk drives, it is usually less costly to buy them from, and have them modified by, either Victor R. Frank or Jack Farrow. The modified floppy disk drive prices are usually around \$60. Check for the latest prices with the addresses at the end of this article.

UPGRADE KITS FROM **JACK FARROW**

1) VBSIM-1 Video Board Simulator. This small circuit board with special software allows most programs written for the IBM PC to run on the Sanyo 550/555. A new IBM compatible version of MS-DOS 2.11 is included. This disk operating system will boot up and run on either 40 or 80 track disk drives and works with A-OK DOS, DS DOS and 555ST DOS formatted disks. Installation is a simple plug-in task; complete directions are included.

VBSIM-1w/MS-DOS 2.11......\$45.00

allows programs that mix text and graphics on the screen to run on your Sanyo 550/555. A necessity for running Broderbund's Print Shop. For use with a video board or VBSIM only.

SANYO BIOS ROM \$15.00

555S Speed Board. Make your Sanyo 550/555 run twice as fast! Easily install without soldering using the easy-to-follow instructions. Compatible with all software.

•555S-2	*			\$40.00
• 8088-2	CPU	Chip	for	555S-2
(optional)		-		\$15.00

In a future article I will include about five or six more of Jack Farrow's upgrade kits, schematic diagrams, etc. Mr. Farrow continues to produce new software and hardware upgrade kits for the Sanyo 55X series of computers. As far as I know, Jack Farrow is the only person still actively producing and selling upgrade kits. Kent Schepler also sells Sanyo 55X upgrade kits. Mr. Schepler has a different pricing schedule than Jack Farrow does. Check for current pricing.

Jack Farrow even includes a patch for converting EasyWriter 1.3 to run on true IBM clones and for the Sanyo video board. The patching program is self installing. All you have to do is run the patching program on a copied EasyWriter 1.3 disk according to included instructions.

2) NEW! BIOS ROM for Sanyo 550/555. A new BIOS ROM chip that

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286-012 C&T BIOS \$67	Goldstar 3051 14" VGA 640 x 480, 0.51mm	\$209	4MB	4MB	1MB	1MB	1MB
386SX-H16 AMI BIOS \$170	Goldstar 1430 14" VGA 640 × 480, 0.31mm	\$289	64K	64K	32K	-	-
386SX-H20 AMI BIOS \$200	Goldstar 1460 14" VGA 1024 x 768, 0.28mm				IDE2	IDE2	IDE2
386SX-H25-32 AMI BIOS \$260	Supertron 1411 14" mono, paper white	\$99 States			40MB	40MB	40MB
386DX-025 AM1 BIOS \$375	Supertron 1421 14" mono, amber	\$99	5¼" 1.2MB	5¼* 1.2MB		1.2MB or 1.44MB	1.2MB or 1.44MB
386DX-C33-64 AMI BIOS \$420 386DX-S40-64 AMI BIOS \$440	Win 12HC 12" mono, amber	\$75	31/2" 1.44MB	3½* 1.44MB	-	-	•
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		\$289 \$329	1024 × 768	1024 × 768	800 × 600	800 × 600	800 × 600
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638 330 MB, 18ms, ESDI \$799	MGP, mono with parallel port	\$20 \$40	250W	200W	200W	200W	200W
Fujitsu	Oak VGA, 800 x 600, 16 bit, 256K Oak Super VGA, 1024 x 768, 16 bit, 512K	ecr.	Contract of the	1		0000	0033
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157A 42 MB, 28ms, IDE \$199		\$55	AND CAK		1.2 or 1.44 2S,		D/250W \$999
1144A 125 MB, 19ms, IDE \$409	Hedaka 2400 bps internal modern 9600 FAX send/2400 internal modern	\$95	1MB 64K	AMI IDE2	1.2 01 1.44 20,		
1239A 215 MB, 15ms, IDE \$645		\$160	1MB 64K	AMI IDE2	1.2 or 1.44 2S,	1P Yes 035	D/200W \$639
Toshiba	····= = += ·=· = ····= ·	\$385	1MB 32K	AMI IDE2	1.2 or 1.44 2S,	1P Yes 035	D/200W \$469
234 100 MB, 16ms, IDE \$369		\$649	1 1				5/200W \$409
Western Digital			1M8 -	AMI IDE2	1.2 or 1.44 2S,		6076
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WD280A 84 MB, 18ms, IDE \$290	AT I/O (2 serial, 1 parallel, 1 game)	\$19	1110	C&T IDE2	1.2 or 1.44 2S,	1P Yes 90	2/200W \$285
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32k cache	MS-DOS 3.3	ens I					
Keyboards	MS-DOS 4.01	\$68 Tel: (4)8) 732-199	U (4UX) /·	43-//3U I	·ax: (408)	132-1030
BTC 5339SX 102 key \$35	MS-DOS 5.0	\$75 `	-	- +			





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fact is that Bride of the Disk of Dinosaurs is a lot of fun. The two disks include over 25 TI-Artist art files (Pictures and Instances) depicting dinosaurs, fascinating text files, a slideshow and animation. sequences on these disks will not run correctly with a MYARC disk controller (although they will work fine with T? and CorComp controllers), but even if you have a MYARC controller, I expect that you'll still consider your money well

"If you've never tried out any titles from Notung Softeware, any of these offerings may be a good place to start..."

By the way, you can get the Dino-Family Pak—the original Disk, Son, and Bride—for only \$25, and no, there is no relationship between this "family" and the family of dinosaurs on a current popular TV show, except for the their both having enthusiastic fans.

Another new offering from Ken is Disk of Horrors (\$12 for three disks), inspired by the horror pulp magazines of the 1930s. In this set you'll find 30 TI-Artist art files, music ("Midnight at the Madhouse" by Larry Clinton), some animation (parental guidance suggested because of graphic depiction of violence which some may find offensive), and three original horror short stories by Ken Gilliland himself. (Ken doesn't claim to be a Stephen King, but you may find the stories "enjoyable," if you like stories of that type.) Incidentally, I should mention perhaps that the short animated

spent if you are an admirer of Ken's unusual and many-sided artistic talents. One more new title demonstrating those talents, by the way, is Fonts & Borders IV, some new TI-Artist fonts and borders as the name indicates.

Although it's not a brand new title (although Ken has just come out with version 3.0 with some major improvements), TI Casino (\$15) seems just now to be in the process of being "discovered." Like anything else Ken has done, this program is unique, and when Ken claims to offer "full-featured casino action," he really means it (including a nightclub complete with bouncer!). The games include Acey Deucey, Baccarat, Blackjack, Craps, Draw Poker, Kenoand Roulette (as well as Slot Machines, of course), so you'll have more than enough to keep you occupied. At any rate, this was one of the programs I heard some enthusiastic comments about at the Chicago

Faire.

If you've never tried out any titles from Notung Software, any of these offerings may be a good place to start (although if you're ordering by mail, you should also enclose a dollar or two to cover postage and handling),

FROM POP-ART TO A POP-CART?

Gary Bowser of OPA (Oasis Pensive Abacutors, 432 Jarvis Street #501-#502, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y-2H3) introduced an interesting new custom hardware product at the Chicago Faire: a POP-cart. "POP" stands for "Pile Of Programs," so a POP-cart is a custom-made cartridge (256K) that contains a "personalized" set of user-selected modules and/or program.

What advantages does such a POP-cart have? Let me let Gary tell you in his own words: "First, since the modules/programs are being inputted via disks at OPA, custom mods can be done to the original TI module, like converting TE2 for 1200 baud or changing 'TP' print options to 'PIO.' Second, since a POP-cart can go up to 2MB in size, you could have all your favorite modules at a single keypress via a unique new power-up menu. Third, it saves on power and [provides] ease of use for

uct replaces in purpose OPA's earlier GIZMO offering, which was more unwieldy and reportedly presented some technical problems. The cost of a regular POP-cart (128K ROM, 128K GROM) is \$95 U.S. (or \$105 Canadian). For the price of \$120 U.S. (or \$130 Canadian), Gary will even install in the POP-cart his SOB ("Son Of a Board"), which is an improved operating system for the TI-99/4A with many improvements. (I discussed SQB in a previous column here in Computer Monthly. If you missed it, you can phone Gary at 416/960-0925 and ask him to send you more details or an OPA catalog.)

AND THERE WAS MORE!

We'll have to postpone detailed discussion for a future time, but let me briefly mention that lots of other interesting things happened at Chicago (and Milwaukee), and I'll be telling you about a number of them next month. For example, Bruce Harrison of Harrison Software (5705 40th Place, Hyattsville, MD 20781-1727) presented a new game, Scudbusters, as well as an encryption and deciphering game, Code Breakers.

And there were new products presented by Beery W. Miller of 9640 NEWS and Bud Mills of Bud Mills Services, but we'll have to wait for next time to tell you about them, since I've run out of Time and space. Until we meet again, keep on compuTin'!

HARDWARE / HP LaserJet Fax

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quired equipment; after all, part of preparing a fax document for transmission is scanning a printed page. All the company would have had to do was build into the unit the logic and hardware needed to convert this scanned image into a PC graphic file, rather than transmit it over a telephone line or to a laser printer. Viola! Instant all-in-one fax/copier/scanner system. Imagine how folks would have stood in line to purchase such a miracle machine. Oh, well, maybe in a future product upgrade.

SUMMARY

There's no denying the impact of fax technology. It's changed the way we do business, by making it possible for any kind of information to be sent many ways, HP's LaserJet Fax advances the art of faxing to its next evolutionary phase. It may not be perfect, but the LaserJet Fax outshines 99 percent of the current alternatives. Once again, Hewlett-Packard has assumed a leading role in informationtransfer technology.

PRODUCT SUMMARY

Product: LaserJet Fax Manufacturer: Hewlett-Packard Company 16399 West Bernardo Drive San Diego, California 92127

(800) 752- 0900 Suggested List Price: \$1,895

Senior Contributing Editor Jack Nimersheim is a computer journalist those currently using a widget." In some respects, this new prod-

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GenSTRR™ 2000	PHILIPS 46105			
A multimedia ready CD-ROM drive plus 6 titles: Grolier's Encyclopedia,	CD-ROM combination AUDIO CD player features front panel controls of all			
Reference Library, World Atlas, U.S.	audio functions plus 6 great discal			
Atl ae , National Geographic's MultImedia Mammal s , and Languages	Titles include: Groller's Encyclopedia, Microsoft Bookshelf PC Globe (116 8)			
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	OMNIROM (KJV Bible, Movie Guide &			
Complete and ready to run on any j	morel), and a Selectware System issue.			
PC/XT/AT using a propriatary high (
speed interface board. Includes				
required CD caddy, driver, DOS extensions and cable.	using propriatary interface for PC/XT/AT (PS/2 MCA available)			
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OTHÉR	DRIVES			
Hitachi 17509 Ext. & SCSI Boar	d - Fastest\$749			
Toshiba 3301 & PC Interface - In				
Texel, NEC, Sony, Chinon	\$CALL			
MiniSCSI Parallel to SCSI Adapt	cer\$179			
A FEW	TITLES			
Family Doctor - home medical guide	- PC/MAC \$159			
Groller Encyclopedia 1990 (Itd qty)				
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