CLASSIC COMPUTERS

Working & Playing With Yesterday's Systems

TI-99ers In The '90s

Classic Computer Column by Barry A. Traver

Comprodine Is Alive And Well!

Contrary to rumor, COMPRODINE (COMputer PROgrammers' DIstribution NEtwork; 1949 Evergreen Avenue, Fullerton, CA 92635, phone 714/990-4577 12 noon to 9 p.m. Pacific time) has not gone out of business, nor do they have any plans to do so!

True, things have been a bit quiet recently. COMPRODINE does little advertising, the company has been absent from some major TI faires (including Chicago), and one of the partners, Steve Mehr, may not be as active in the company as he was formerly, due to some new interests (including one new interest in particular of the female variety, if I understand matters correctly from his partner, Rodger Merritt). Rodger assures me, however, that not only are earlier products still available from the company, but also COMPRODINE has "many new programs coming out in 1992, including games and color printing programs for color printer owners."

This news is encouraging, because COMPRODINE—though not as well known as Asgard Software and some other sources of software for the TI-99/4A—has come out with some excellent products, particularly in the line of games (I'll have more to say about that in a moment), practical utility programs (e.g., Class and Reminders by William Gaskill, as well as the easy-to-use Form Shop, a joint programming effort done by Rodger Merritt, Steve Mehr and Gene Bohot), and TI-Artist graphics programs (e.g., Paul Coleman's Artist Catalog, Artist Printshop, Border Maker and Giant Artist Posters).

Rodger Merritt himself, sometimes in conjunction with Adrian Robinson, has come out with a number of CSGD graphics printer programs (e.g., Cards 4All Occasions, Color Card, Color Flyer, Jiffy Flyer, Picture It, Pixease, and Print It+). Comprodine also carries software releases from Great Lakes Software (e.g., Certificate 99 and JoyPaint 99) and more titles that I have not yet mentioned (e.g., William Nelson's new graphics for CSGD and Certificate 99). So you can see from this paragraph that COMPRODINE has a rather extensive established catalog.

New From Comprodine For 1992

Most of the products I've mentioned thus far were released from 1989 to 1991, and all of

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TRS-80 Column

Classic Computer Column by Michael W. Ecker, Ph.D.

There are plenty of fine database managers in the PC world, but few left in the TRS-80 world. Misosys, Inc. (P.O. Box 239, Sterling, VA 22170; phone: 703-450-4181 or 1-800-MISOSYS for orders) covers both with version 2.2 of its LB database manager, aka Little Brother.

My Model 4 drive 1 is out, so I was forced to test the PC version instead. I found it a reasonable product, but a bit persnickety in its demands and ways of doing things. On the positive end I was very impressed with the ability to make modifications such as adding fields later. If you've ever constructed a database you know that you always forget something. This feature compensates for the need to use the manual.

The basic operation is via a menu structure of 15 choices, such as defining, naming and creating a database, adding records, searching records, sorting, printing, and the like. Press a number and ENTER to invoke the choice.

Given LB's requirements, I suggest contacting Roy Soltoff at Misosys about your system configuration to make sure it is appropriate. The price of LB is $99 plus $5 shipping.

No New Graphics

I have not heard from Lance Wolstrup of TRSTimes, so I have nothing new to report on Graphics 90, as outlined last column. I hope to hear from Lance soon.

But speaking more humbly of graphics, Selden G. Moore of Alexandria, Virginia, took time out to pass along a programming tip on the subject. Citing the book "Basic Program Conversions" by HP Books, Inc., he indicates that the Model III SET command can be simulated on a Model IV by using PRINT @ (x,y), CHR$(191). Here x and y specify the coordinates in the usual fashion... Thanks, Selden.

Games

For those newcomers who would like a very nice blackjack program, I'm partial to the one written by Hank Goldwasser and New Directions Consulting. Casino 21 is solely for the TRS-80 Models 1, 3, 4 (cassette tape or Model 3-compatible disk system). In fact, I liked it so much that I got his permission to distribute it. Now you can get a copy from Recreational Computing (909 Violet Terrace, Clarks Summit, PA 18411). Originally $20 to $30, Casino 21 Blackjack is being offered to readers of this col-

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T/S News

Classic Computer Column by Bill Ferrebee

Welcome to our latest round of gossip, news and reviews for T/S computers. We hope all is well with you and your computer.

To start off the column, let us tell you about the line of T/S2068 public domain software we will be offering to you. Available on Larken or Oliger disk (5-1/4" DSDD) or cassette, each volume will contain a variety of programs we think you will find useful.

Volume 1 contains the T/S Office Suite. The Suite consists of a word processor (TextWriter 2000 from Robert Fingerle), a spreadsheet program (ScreenCalc from Banta Software), a database (Unifile) and a mailing list manager (Mail from Mountaineer Software). A few surprises will also be contained on the tape/disk to fill out the volume.

Documentation will be provided for the programs, where available. All future volumes will contain documentation on disk. These will be in the form of textfiles for TextWriter, so it will be to your advantage to get Volume 1.

Volume 1 is available for $5.00 (to cover duplication/media/shipping) from Mountaineer Software. Please make checks/money orders out to Bill Ferrebee and send them to:

Mountaineer Software
Public Domain Software
749 Hill Street #9
Parkersburg, WV 26104

Be sure to specify Larken or Oliger disk or cassette. Also, this offer is being presented by Mountaineer Software, not Computer Monthly. Any questions concerning the offer should be directed to Mountaineer Software, not Computer Monthly.

We hope to offer future volumes on a quarterly basis. Watch for an announcement in this column before ordering them.

Understanding Desktop Publishing

The latest major software application available is desktop publishing. This genre of programs combines the disciplines of word processing and graphics, and enables one to become a "mini-publisher." Professional-looking newsletters, brochures, greeting cards, fliers and other assorted printed documents can be developed and produced with ease.

However, as with all forms of software, desktop publishing can be a bit confusing to the beginner. The terms layout, fonts, justification and orientation, to name a few, can leave some people bewildered.

TI 99ers

them are still available from COMPRODINE. Except for Pixease ($60 for full set), Artist Printshop ($25), Color Card ($25), Artist Cardshop ($20), Color Flyer ($20), Form Shop ($15), and Jiffy Card ($15), all of the titles just mentioned are available at the cost of $10 each, which is certainly reasonable! Actually, the price of William Nelson's CSGD Graphics is only $8, which is even more of a bargain.

If you order by mail, you should include $1 shipping and handling for each title, $3 maximum U.S.A. If you want some more information about these products, I recommend that you write for COMPRODINE's latest catalog.

COMPRODINE has already released four new titles in 1992: Paul Coleman's Artist Cardshop ($20), Quinton Tormanen's Mine Field and War Zone II ($10 each), and Steve Mehr's Backsteine Screens ($7). Artist Cardshop is COMPRODINE's "newest four-fold card-making utility...fast, flexible, easy and friendly," just as COMPRODINE describes it.

I've seen the results and was pleased. After you've designed the card, you can print it out, ready to fold, sign and send. If you want to print out 99 cards at the same time, Artist Cardshop allows you to do that. If you prefer creating your own cards rather than using "store-bought" cards, you should check out COMPRODINE's Artist Cardshop. I think you'll like it.

Assembly Games by Quinton Tormanen

So far I've dealt mainly with some "practical" programs available from COMPRODINE, but the company has time for "fun and games" as well. Apart from a Bingo program ($5) by Rodger Merritt, the games COM-

PRODINE carries are all written by one person, Quinton Tormanen. That's all they need, it seems, since he's a teenage programming wonder! All of the games are written entirely in assembly, and if you like games, they are definitely worth getting to know.

In 1989, Quinton released Living Tomb ($15) and War Zone ($10). Living Tomb is an adventure game with 3-D graphics, animation, speech, sound, pop-up windows, etc. War Zone, on the other hand, is a "shoot 'em up" arcade game, where you fly a F-15 fighter to recover lost territory.

In 1990, Quinton came out with Backsteine. If you like "Break Out"-type games, you should love this one because Quinton has added many new twists. The game comes with 50 different screens, but that's not all: there is also a built-in editor that will allow you to create your own screens!

Mine Field ($10) and War Zone II ($10) were just released this year. Mine Field is, in many respects, similar to the IBM game Minesweeper for Windows, but Quinton's game has more options and plays faster.

War Zone II (unlike the earlier War Zone) is set in the future. The life-like graphics include trees, fields, lakes, and roads with moving vehicles. According to COMPRODINE, "Greater logic is required of this arcade style game," so more than physical agility is required if you want a high score.

Well, once more I'm out of time and space, but I hope to have more news for you next month. In the meanTIme, keep on compuTIn'!

TRS-80

umn for a specially discounted price of just $9.95 plus $1 shipping in the USA. It plays up to seven hands—including automated ones, if you wish—with all the major conventions of betting and playing.

Also from Recreational Computing is Magic Math Plus, a collection written not just by me but also other authors. It is available with similar versions for TRS-80s (Model III mode), all PCs and compatibles, Sanyo 555s, Macintoshes and Apple IIs. All versions are menu-generated and include brain-teasers and surprises with such programs as the Game of N, Base Two Mind-Reading, and more. Note that the TRS-80 version is a double volume containing 40 programs in five menus on a self-booting diskette. Ordinarily $40 for TRS-80 version and $30 for all others, you may get a copy for your system for half price until the end of August 1992 if you mention this column.

Payments for Casino 21 or Magic Math Plus to address above may be made by check made out to Recreational Computing. Shipment is guaranteed within two days of receipt. For more information on these and other products, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request, and mention your computer make.

Sorry: Policy Change

Because of the shorter editorial space allocated to classic computers, it is no longer possible to print your letters asking for help in selling TRS-80 systems or in getting TRS-80 service or products. Where possible, I will excerpt letters of broad general interest, such as tips or availability of items of interest.

Next month we should have lots more. Until that next installment of Your TRS-80 Column, I offer best wishes for happy computing.

Dr. Michael W. Ecker is a Pennsylvania State University mathematics professor and computer journalist with over 300 publication credits. The author of two books, Mike is also editor/publisher of *Recreational & Educational Computing*, a computer recreations newsletter now in its seventh year ($27 annually for eight issues; $10 for three sample issues). He can be reached at the address for Recreational Computing in this article. (Include SASE if you need a reply.)