



AIRPORT AREA COMPUTER CLUB
POST OFFICE BOX 710
CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108

The next meeting will be on Sunday April 2, 1989
at 6:30 PM in Room 22, John Jay building, Robert Morris
College. Ask the guard for directions.

April

Newsletter

1989

Airport Area Computer Club
P.O. Box 710
Coraopolis, PA 15108

This Month: Like our last meeting, there is no set program. We almost certainly will not have Chris back to provide so much of the program, but the floor is open to everyone to demo software they have. I will bring a number of disk programs to show, and from our experience in the past few months, there will be plenty of programs which you have not seen. I have already heard from one member that he must work on Sunday, April 2, so we will need YOU to help fill the room! In advance, I will note that we may well change the date for the May meeting. I believe that I will be out of town on the first Sunday in May. More about that to come.

We were most fortunate at the March meeting to have our date conform to the Spring vacation period for Chris Pratt! He brought a wealth of things to our meeting as well as his talent. The surprise was his display of the Texas Instruments CC40, an early laptop computer. The CC40 appeared just before TI decided to leave the consumer market. It is very small and lightweight, and battery powered. While the keyboard is a bit small, it is still quite functional. I was personally very impressed with the companion printer, also battery powered and absolutely silent. It produced excellent output in either of two modes: inked ribbon on regular paper, or thermal output on a roll of special paper. While I have not had a laptop, from reading it seems to me that the CC40 was very advanced for its time. The computer came with modules which contained word processing, communications, games, etc.

Altogether, a very interesting aspect of TI's venture into consumer computers. Jim Finnie brought back his demo of "music visuals" in which a tape recorded piece of music generates colorful images on the screen in synchronization with the music's beat. It had been more than a year since he first showed the program, and several had not seen it at that time. Louis had also shown a similar concept in one of last year's meetings. Gary showed a friend's point of sale program which he uses every day in his business. The fellow wrote it himself in BASIC and it keeps the records of his business quite satisfactorily. The TI99/4A is very powerful when properly utilized. It was the first 16 bit commercial computer. I brought a number of game modules, some of which were new to some members. Fortunately, Chris Pratt was available to demo them for me. I had not gained any proficiency in these modules, and it was most interesting to me to see what a practiced player could do. I had never seen the inside of the castle in Slynolds! I continue to slim down my TI99 collection of software.

To date I have been eliminating those modules which I have never found a need for. I have yet to start thinning the disk programs. I still have not planned to get rid of the TI99, but eliminating the "excess" materials does make it far easier to see what is left and find the programs you want when you want them in a hurry. Like February, I have not had the TI "up" since the meeting, although I will almost certainly have to take it out of the box to do the mailing labels for this newsletter. As most of you now know, I use my Atari ST when I want to do most tasks at the house now and the IBM XT clone at the office. I don't use the TI Professional much these days - there is never enough time to work with the computers and the Pro has always been limited by the software available for it. It was better than the IBM, but not compatible and software developers naturally wrote for the "market". TI is said to have converted all of its in-house Pro's to an 80286 machine that is IBM compatible, primarily for the increase in speed (from 4.7 MHz to 12 MHz). The conversion permits continued use of the box and monitor and at a cost which is very competitive with new 80286 machines. The company which makes the new boards is clearing FCC approval and I just may convert the Pro to that configuration. I will be giving up all of my Pro software, but having the machine compatible with my office machine would be a tremendous advantage. It would let me type text here at the house and output it through Ventura Publisher at the office on my LaserJet printer. That would definitely make book production easier than now.

Frankly, I am typing this article on the Atari, using a Public Domain program. When I am finished typing I will attempt to import this file into a "publishing" program (Fleet Street Publisher) and print it out on the dot matrix printer. Like all publishing program, it is complex because it is full featured. Not as complex as Ventura, but the same general idea. To date I have only been through the tutorial on Fleet Street. Even following the manual step-by-step I made a couple of errors in formatting. You may see a couple of slips if I indeed to output this through the publishing program. It allows choices of fonts, type sizes, graphics, etc. I suspect that I will go lightly on graphics attempts as this is being written on Easter and we meet next Sunday, so I have to get this done to get it in tomorrow's mail. And my wife does not plan for me to be at this all day! I have shown the first couple of issues of Asgard News at our meetings. I would admit that the first issues were not all that impressive. I just received the 4th issue and it is another matter! It is newly designed, output on a laser printer, and 24 pages of good material. It remains a quarterly publication, and they have a special offer on the subscription rate for now: \$9 for 4 issues to Asgard Publishing, P.O. Box 10697, Rockville, MD 20850. With Micropendium still does an outstanding job, we have

excellent support for the 99 in magazines - amazing for the history of the computer. If you have any interest in current developments for our computer - or just wish to support a worthwhile endeavor, I would encourage you to subscribe. I would like to show you some material from the magazine, but obviously must observe the copyright laws! One article points out that the 99 is ten years old in 1989, ancient in computer terms. The depth of products still being developed for the machine is truly amazing. There is a disk magazine for the Geneve now, 9640 News, \$5 for a trial issue from Beery Miller, 5455 Marina Cove #1, Memphis, TN 38115. With the shortage of programs for the Geneve, this could be a big help for owners. Tenex has long been a major distributor of commercial programs and hardware for the 99. Word is that Tenex may discontinue the TI line. It has already made a major expansion into IBM products, and probably the purchases of TI products has continued to decline, despite user group support of the machine. Triton took over the TI inventory from TI, and was in a way the "official" source of that stuff, although it did not press the issue in its catalogs. Triton has been acquired by a software developer, and, for example, is now the distributor for Infocom games. A recent development is that Triton is dropping most of the Corcomp line. It appears that Corcomp has stopped development on any new 99 products, although the existing items are still available. Without Triton's distribution, these products could lose much of their access to the market. Mechatronics of Germany is said to be stopping production of 99 products. They were never very successful in distributing them in the US, but they had some fine goods. Lack of interest was not cited in the decision, but conversion of the manufacturing capability to other lines. The late delivery of PRESS triggered my decision to give up on the Geneve. The product is still undergoing development at this date. It is good that the designed is working out all the bugs and adding features, but most unfortunate that the product was announced too soon. The product's sales will be hurt by the error I suspect. The program still sounds like a great one for the Geneve.

One of the disadvantages of typing text in one program and then importing it into another is that one has no idea of how much space this will take when it gets printed! I feel certain that I still have lots of space left in this issue, but I have just been sitting here typing away with no clue as to where I am with respect to the pages in the finished article. Of course, that is why one must start using a program; that is the only way one learns how to work with it. I do apologize for any rough edges which appear in the finished newsletter as a result of my experiment. At least my first work in the program led to very nice output from a dot matrix printer. After I import this into the publishing program I can draw boxes for headings and choose different type for the headlines, and scale them to larger sizes without affecting the text at all. I am supposed to be able to select two or three columns and "flow" this text in without having to do any reformatting other than selecting the size of the column to start with. Of course, if I am not successful in my Fleet Street experiment you may see this as straight output from the word processing program - complete with ragged right margin. Since there are no documents for this program, if I am not successful in saving it to disk when I finish writing, you will almost certainly see a VERY small newsletter!

