



Atlanta
99/4A
Computer
Users
Group

CALL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IV NUMBER 2

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Atlanta, Georgia

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1986

CALL NEWSLETTER
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Our second-term President, Gary Matthews, called our meeting to order. He made another apology for us not having an official meeting during the month of January, 1986. The Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library was closed due to the MLK Day activities here in Atlanta. The Users Group's new Officers and Committee Members were introduced for this year. The Treasurer's Report was given by George Sears.

An interest-type questionnaire was given out to all who came by George Taylor. Information gathered from the questionnaires will help the Program Committee have more meetings centered around what our interests are.

We also had three demonstrations. George Sears showed us how he uses his VCR along with his TI-99/4A to make home-made video titles, to save the procedure on loading computer programs that he is not familiar with, to save high scores in games, and for demonstrations for meetings.

Jim Hubbard demonstrated and explained several BASIC programs.

Melvin Carter showed the group a load interrupt switch and a screen dump program that he uses with it. He also explained how he uses them both with his computer.

Melvin L. Carter, Secretary

MEETINGS

The dates and times for the meetings of the Atlanta 99/4A Computer User's Group is the third Sunday of the month at the downtown Atlanta Public Library (off Margaret Mitchell Square) at 2 p.m. For more information call a club officer or 231-0992.

CALL NEWSLETTER is the voice of the Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group. P.O.Box 19841, Atlanta, GA. 30325.

It is published at least 10 times a year. The A9CUG is not affiliated with any commercial company or organization.

CALL NEWSLETTER is published by and for the members of the A9CUG to enhance their knowledge of home computers. CALL NEWSLETTER is composed of articles written and/or donated by members of our group and from articles appearing in other home computer users' groups around the world. Opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent those of the Officers or members of the A9CUG.

Permission is hereby granted to any users group receiving our newsletter to reproduce any article appearing in this newsletter, unless the article is otherwise noted, provided credit is given to the author and CALL NEWSLETTER. The A9CUG freely exchanges newsletters with other groups around the country. If another club would like to receive our newsletter but does not have one of their own to exchange; we will gladly send it to them. We do ask that they send \$5 a year or 50 cents a newsletter to help cover costs. Membership is open to family and individuals who own or are interested in using and programming home computers. Membership includes copies of this newsletter as they are published, access to the meetings of the main group and sub groups, and the groups Public Domain Library. Annual dues are \$15.00.

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STATUS OF THE CLUB / HISTORY OF THE CLUB

It seems appropriate for several reasons to provide a perspective of the club and its activities from the beginning to today. This is prompted in part by the book published recently by Ron Albright, The Orphan Chronicles. His book details the circumstances surrounding the development, marketing, and continued existence of the TI 99/4A. The Orphan Chronicles is enjoyable reading and is highly recommended to anyone who has a fondness for their computer and/or an interest in its story.

Ron's book does detail many events but can only be so specific when trying to cover all the aspects of the 99/4A. Our club, the Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group, is mentioned in his book under the chapter covering La Fara and the International Users Group. There is a more complete story concerning that episode than is told in the chapter. That story will be covered here.

Many other groups certainly have developed as has the Atlanta group. It seems time to go back and see what has happened. The newer members can pick up some history of the group they belong to; and the older members might learn as well. This writer is not invulnerable to mistakes so any comment or correction is welcome.

The first gathering was in November, 1982 in a meeting room at Perimeter Mall, just north of Atlanta. One hundred and forty two people showed up when we were expecting a couple dozen and would have been quite pleased to have that. The large turnout was the direct result of the hard work and heavy preparation done by Elise Kalfus Gordon and Marshall Gordon. Elise and Marshall caused the Atlanta group to come into being and did all the real work that is necessary to run a users group for the next two years.

I met the Gordons the same way a lot of TI owners met in those days. We all bought equipment from the same distributor who then was willing to pass our phone numbers to each other. This was the time when the expansion box cost \$190 brand new and the only thing in it was the card that was connected to the black interface cable. I called up Elise and Marshall and we were happy just to find someone else in town who had a TI 99/4A. They were already planning to start a users group. The first time we saw each other was a planned meeting at McDonald's. We lived far enough apart that it was one of the few places in between that we all could understand the directions to get there. This was where I learned about the work that was necessary to get things going. A club needs a club address, a club bank account, addresses of other clubs, a newsletter, recognition by TI, a regular meeting room, officers, and as the expression goes, a host of other things. This is only the list of things that had to be considered first. Elise and Marshall set all that up. It has stood the club well in later times. The Atlanta users group had several advantages because of those early efforts. The club address is A9CUG, P.O. Box 19841, Atlanta, GA 30325. Having a post office box instead of someone's home as the club address has given us a solid base of consistency from day one. Early on in the club's existence we had contact with numerous clubs around the country. Contacts with other clubs across the country were vital. That alone was worth its weight in gold as public domain programs were traded. Information on new hardware and software was very hard to come by; mostly because the majority was from TI with the announcement of new products coming long before they would be available. Remember, this was the time that any user written program written for the TI was a cherished commodity; everything that existed was either BASIC or EXTENDED BASIC.

After that first gathering in November, our first newsletter came out in January, 1983. It was sent out to all the addresses of other user groups we knew about and to those people who filled out forms whether or not they paid 'dues' to become members. A policy similar to that is followed even today. If a person's dues run out in January, we still send the February and March newsletter with a note indicating their expired status. Just like those early days, members are desperately needed. We appreciate every new member and hope to keep all the older ones.

When talking quickly to someone about starting a Users Group in their area or telling them about the start of ours; I will frequently describe it as a Busby Berkley production. Remember the Mickey Rooney/Judy Garland movie dialog, "We can put on our own show. My Uncle has a barn and we all can play the instruments, produce, write, and direct the show." It wasn't really like that but sometimes that is how it feels. Marshall Gordon was the President, I was the Vice President, with Elise being the Secretary/Treasurer. For the first two years nobody else even suggested they wanted to hold an officer's position. Even this year's election a couple of months ago had only one person running for each office.

I spoke with Elise last night after she read the first printed draft of this writing. She pointed out a number of people and facts that I had forgotten. That is because in the beginning my role was as an occasional helper on various projects. Elise and Marshall were the directors of what made the club grow and go. There were several people who helped greatly in some of the early accomplishments of the club. Bill Marczak was the first Club Librarian. Bill worked for Southern Bell. He and Mike Sidwell produced the first printed catalog of the public domain programs that the club had acquired. The actual printing was done on an ATT laser printer by Donald Stewart. Mike Sidwell was the first Education Chairman. He was responsible for a number of the programs presented at the monthly meetings. Another early worker was George Haney. George served as the first Program Chairman. For about a year we held 'organizational' meetings about every other month at someone's house. These informal meetings helped keep a sense of direction in the club. Sadly enough, this has not been done for the last 16 months. We hope to get it started again.

A lot of work was done when we first started, with Elise and Marshall definitely shouldering the lion's share of it. At that time Elise was trying to help others purchase equipment. First Elise would have someone tell her what they wanted to buy, she next went to the distributor to buy it, and then to the person to deliver it. Since that time the club has made an occasional group purchase but nothing as energetic as what Elise did regularly when we started.

Marshall would be the one on the computer, actually programming or learning the fine details on running a particular program. Elise kept track of the mailings and most of the physical organizational duties. An outcome of that early work is the arranging to have meetings at the downtown Atlanta Library. We have met there since January of 1983. It is a large capacity, very centrally located, well known facility.

The club's newsletter has since January, 1983 been a consistent 10 times a year production; and a pretty decent one. Tom Boisseau was the first Newsletter Chairman. A number of different people did the early writing and producing of articles. Elise would meet with Tom to get the newsletter pasted up, printed, addressed, stamped, and mailed. One of her coworkers, Carroll E. Burns, designed the logo that is still used on the newsletter. Carroll would also write an occasional article using the name K. Bitzer.

Marshall is currently handling the newsletter responsibility as virtually a one man job. He does get some assistance from one or two others but he is the one who will stay up till 3 in the morning to make this or that issue a finished product. All groups acknowledge that the club's newsletter should be a joint effort by several members. Unfortunately, almost every club realizes the task gets done by essentially one person. Right this very minute we are trying to get more help with the newsletter from club members, although as I look back over the last three years, that always seems to be the case. Whoever produces the newsletter shapes how the club is perceived by the rest of the TI 99/4A community. The Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group has been received rather well.

Several changes have occurred since those startup days. One big one is that we now send out the newsletter as bulk mail. That takes longer; approximately 10 days as opposed to the standard 2-4 days for a stamp. That is why club members will get a newsletter on Monday the 17th reminding them to come to the meeting Sunday the 16th. Finances dictate that bulk mail has been the better way to go since the cost is 12.5 cents a piece as opposed to a stamp of 22 cents. The club regularly sends out 335 newsletters per issue. The bulk mailing permit costs the club fifty dollars a year to license. It took us over a year to get one. That was caused by hesitancy and uncertainty. Once we set out to really obtain one it wasn't that hard and didn't hurt a bit. Other groups should get one if they don't already have one; however, note that you must mail a minimum of 200 pieces before it can be sent bulk mail.

During 1983 we made the acquaintance of Ralph Fowler. Marshall and Ralph first met each other over the phone and through the mail. Ralph gave Marshall many of those first public domain programs. Those programs from Ralph made up the bulk of the early club library. Ralph Fowler is a name recognizable throughout most of the TI world as the man who many think wrote the first-true bulletin board system supported by the TI 99/4A. Many people are familiar with the story of his calling TI asking for information when he first started writing the program. TI reportedly said sorry they couldn't help because it couldn't be done on the TI 99/4A. Ralph wrote one anyway and constantly improves his program. That program is thought by many to be the finest BBS written for our computer. Ralph has one feature that few other systems can claim: A Jerk Trap, a monitoring of foul language and habitual abusers. I believe his is the first and only BBS system that supports the Foundation 128K card.

The club now runs two BBS systems. The club supported one is run by Charles Dupree. That BBS is the program that Ralph wrote. The club's second BBS runs Mark Hoogendorn's program. Jim Fairchild supports the second one. The A9CUG claims both as BBSs for the club; however, we can only afford to pay the telephone bill for one, which is Dupree's. The club's association with Ralph Fowler has been up and down at times. It started out cordial enough but became chilly when Ralph suggested we sponsor his running a BBS for the club, as he had finished it to the point of having it up and running. The reason we did not support him was we were afraid and unsure of being able to afford the thing financially month after month. With hindsight we can say that it probably would have worked out fine. If we had gone that route we would have had our club's name associated with perhaps the most popular TI BBS in the world. As it happened, relations between Ralph and the club became very strained. As time went on, Ralph's TIBBS became very well known and the club survived also.

In 1984, the club made a decision that again did not endear itself to Mr. Fowler. The A9CUG thought it could finally financially support installing a phone line in someone's house and pay the monthly bill. This would be for the sole reason of running a bulletin board system. By this time the club had also accumulated enough parts to say it owned a 'running' TI system. Once the decision was made to do it and a reliable person found (Bob Willis) to keep up the bulletin board system, we had to decide which BBS to run.

Several other programs had been written to support a BBS on the 99/4A by this time. Some of these were commercial as well as public domain or minimum donation types. I approached Ralph Fowler for information about the cost and installation for his TIBBS. Ralph was helpful about what we needed. When the actual decision was made as to whose system to use, Mark Hoogendorn's public domain board was chosen. Again, it looked like the Users Group was avoiding supporting Ralph Fowler's system. No such slight was intended.

Bob Willis was the system operator for the club's first official BBS for a little less than a year. Bob was also the club's librarian and made copies of the public domain software for those who wrote in ordering it. More will be said on that later. Last year Bob Willis had to give up his duties as the club librarian and BBS SYSOP. Home and work commitments do not leave him enough time to still do those things for the club. When this happened we had to find another person to house and run the BBS. It took a few months to do this but the end result is that at the same time we also purchased Ralph Fowler's bulletin board program - TIBBS. So now the club is running two BBSs. Ralph's version is the club's official BBS#1; and Hoogendorn's is BBS#2.

It has been fun being involved with the Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group. It has been hard work too at times. One of those fun times was March, 1983. The club was still fairly young. Texas Instruments had a road show. The people who ran and presented that show were Ed Wiest (Users Group Coordinator), Allen Acree (Systems Software Manager in charge of Languages), and John Yantis (Head of Advanced Development and Strategy). The presentation consisted of a card that went into the P box and through a program written in FORTH, played quadraphonic sound. This was the Chariots of Fire theme. TI was riding high in those days before the pullout. Elise suggested that it would be a good gesture for us to take them out to dinner. The officers (Elise, Marshall, and myself), along with my wife and the TI representatives went to The Coach and Six restaurant Saturday night. Ed Wiest and company, courtesy of Texas Instruments, actually picked up the tab. For that special demonstration Sunday, March 22, the club rented space at Peachtree Playhouse, one of downtown Atlanta's local theatres. We were pleased to have about 250 people show up. Elise took out the only major advertisement we've ever had for that meeting. The advertisement appeared in the March, 83 issue of 99'er Magazine. That issue came out the same week as this special meeting. We received our copies of that issue after the meeting was actually held.

Most folks realize that a real users group is organized by a few people who actually do something else for a living and try running a club in their spare time. That is why there is so often these hot and cold spells of club activity. You only see results and accomplishments when there is one person who has the desire to complete a task and the motivation to push and shove others into helping them (unless they do everything themselves). An example of this is the Computer Fair held in Atlanta on July 28, 1984.

Ralph Danson, President of the East Side group, was the single person responsible for the Atlanta TI Computer Fair. Ralph would most certainly point out and name those who helped him in this effort but the fact remains that he is the one man who accomplished it. The Fair was very successful and drew people from Florida as well as Georgia. Meeting and exhibition rooms were rented at a local motel. It was arranged for speakers to give morning and afternoon lectures. Distributors were contacted to both provide prizes as well as display their wares. There was a continual bustle of activity going on all day ranging from entertainment to education. The success of the Fair speaks well for Mr. Danson and reflects well on the club. The regret is that someone with the same drive and desire has not stepped forth to get one going since then.

Another example of a good club activity is the 'Swap Session' held in May that same year. Although nothing as large or complicated as the Computer Fair, it still was appreciated as a good club program. The A9CUG has a Public Domain Library of programs as do most clubs. As the name implies, all it costs to obtain these programs is the effort. Most of the time these programs are requested/ordered by out-of-town or out-of-state people who hear we have them. This does bring in money to the club when these programs are requested through the mail. As time went on, it seemed like only nonlocal people ever made use of the club library. It was suggested that having a copying session for these programs would be a good thing to do during one of the monthly meetings.

The idea was to have several complete systems set up during the meeting and devote all the time to making copies of the programs that people liked. It actually turned out very well although in some ways it was a bit of organized chaos. We actually had 17 complete systems set up and running at that meeting. There were at least 4 complete copies of the library available for people to use. Since that time several members have stated that we ought to do it again. They usually get the same response from whichever officer they make the suggestion to, "That's a great idea, would YOU like to organize it to make it happen?"

The club's library as already referred to several times, has a Librarian. Bob Willis was the club librarian until just recently. Bob organized what is currently considered the club's listing of public domain programs. We had numerous Basic and Extended Basic programs (about 800) but no proper categorized listing of them. Bob Willis took those many programs, put them in order and then produced a listing that the club had printed up and made available. Bob and his son also have been the main people responsible for providing programs to those who have written to us ordering programs from the club, and they have done it very well. Before Bob Willis took over the program ordering aspect, Marshall Gordon made sure that the programs ordered were copied to cassette or disk and mailed back out. Most of the ones ordered were put on cassette since disk usage was not nearly as widespread at that time as it is now. This ordering of programs is what provided the club with a steady income. One hundred dollars a month is significant income to a club.

This filling of program orders from our published distributed catalog is what leads into our problems with La Fara and his "International Users Group".

Nowadays most everyone that is aware of 99/4A history knows that Charles La Fara ran a for profit business called the International Users Group (IUG). Until just before the end of that business, the IUG was presented as a dues paying membership group. The Atlanta Users Group and most of the other groups were happy to point to this nationally known organization that existed for the TI 99/4A users.

I really don't believe any of us cared whether or not the IUG was a real user's group as opposed to a business with a profit motive. It was an organization that was exclusive to the TI 99/4A and it had national recognition. The IUG was also the moving force that instigated the organization of a library of public domain programs. Those two facts were very important to users groups that had to compete with Atari, Commodore, and Radio Shack computers. It seemed as if they had plenty of magazine support on the newstands while we did not. The 99'er Magazine was subscription only. So... the IUG run by La Fara was a viable entity that we felt belonged to us, users of the TI 99/4A, and it was one of the few resources available at all. This feeling of goodness about the IUG began to change when La Fara started attacking some users groups.

La Fara sent a registered letter to an officer of the Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group in May, 1984. At the same time Charles La Fara made unpleasant personal phone calls to officers of the club threatening to sue them personally as well as suing the club. The essence of the letter sent by La Fara was this: 1) We violated the copyrights of the IUG's program catalog by using his program names and his program descriptions, 2) the program CACTI KILL was listed in our catalog but La Fara stated his magazine published the listing and it was therefore copyrighted by the IUG, and 3) that he previously warned our group by telephone that we should not do what we had done.

La Fara stated in his letter that he would file suit against us in Federal Court on July 1, 1984 if we did not meet the following conditions: 1) Send a written explanation to him of when, where, and how the unauthorized copying was done and who was responsible, 2) advise everyone who received our 'unauthorized' catalog that we did wrong and send La Fara a list of all those people, which he would then promise not to include in his mailing list, 3) tell everybody that we had done wrong, 4) send him a check to cover all our violations, and 5) promise never to do it again.

At first, we did try to look at the accusations from La Fara's point of view. There was an organization in Torrance, California billing itself as the 99/4A Program Exchange providing programs in the same manner as the IUG. This reportedly turned out to be a 'kid' who just copied the IUG's catalog, programs, and even the company's symbol; and then turned right around to sell the same as his own product. Many of the users groups heard about this and felt that La Fara was justified to take action against this fellow. The end result of that situation, so we heard, was that La Fara threatened this person and that he quit. We do know that no lawsuit was ever filed in this case.

It should be noted here that the impression many people and various TI groups that we contacted had, was that La Fara wanted it to appear as if he actually owned and had copyrighted the many public domain programs that he had been selling. The first IUG catalogs specifically stated that they made no claim on the programs and that they were all in the public domain. A later IUG catalog came out that La Fara claimed was copyrighted. His assertion was vague enough to not come out and say that he had copyrighted the programs, but it could be confused as such. La Fara was by this time selling special programs (the Master 99 series) that he claimed were copyrighted. La Fara's allegations against us were really his saying that we had violated his CATALOG, not his PROGRAMS. The appearance he gave was that he was after those who were wrongly using programs that belonged to the IUG.

The Atlanta Users Group did several things after receiving La Fara's letter. We very thoroughly examined the club's catalog which consisted of almost 600 programs. Of that number, two program descriptions were essentially identical to the descriptions published in the IUG catalog. Another six were similar enough to be noticeable. Of all the rest, only six others had phrases which could even remotely be considered close to those used in the IUG's catalog. The other 560 plus could by no stretch of the imagination be considered having any similarity to IUG's description.

The Atlanta Computer Group did another very noticeable thing besides writing a letter back to Charles La Fara denying his allegations. We published the letter that La Fara had sent in our newsletter which was mailed as usual to over one hundred other users groups.

That action brought a lot of response and support from individuals and groups across the country. One man whose name I regret I cannot recall, stated that he worked in Washington across from the building that contained copyright records. This man stated that he would be very willing to research any copyright to see who held it. Our return letter to La Fara had requested that he notify us which copyrights were being violated.

La Fara's allegations against us seemed less and less credible the longer we considered them. We were advised to countersue on the grounds of harassment and slander in the event of a suit actually being filed against us. La Fara or the IUG has never filed suit against the Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group.

It seems worth reporting several items of interest that have come to light since May, 1984.

A former employee of the IUG has actually filed a lawsuit against Charles La Fara in excess of one million dollars. The suit alleges that La Fara was marketing this man's software without his permission. Over a year ago, Charles La Fara sent out a closing notice for the IUG. He did this through what many of us called his 'Dear Friends' letter and in the same letter gave the impression that he had filed for both business and personal bankruptcy. I have been told by the individual who filed the lawsuit that La Fara had not filed for bankruptcy at the time of his "Dear Friends" letter and actually did not file business bankruptcy until over a six months after that. Even then the filing was not done until the courts ordered him to file personal and business bankruptcy.

At last report La Fara is still selling software by mail under the name Christian Software or something similar. Personal bankruptcy has not yet been filed which, I'm told, is a violation of the court order. There are many more details to the 'La Fara' story but to continue would be improper for several reasons. Hearing one source continue to harp on the same subject over and over makes their motives and credibility suspect. It is way past the time to consider the IUG and La Fara incident closed. As mentioned earlier, one reason for speaking about it is to cover the subject in more detail than was mentioned in Ron Albright's book, The Orphan Chronicles.

There are many people that help in making a club go. Not all of them get mentioned. In fact, if anyone becomes involved in a club with the hopes of getting some special recognition then I sincerely hope they have a stronger motive prompting them as well. This is said to point out that there are many people you never hear about or who are taken for granted which amounts to the same thing.

Bob Orr for numerous months during the last three years has operated the lights for the meetings held at the downtown Atlanta Library. He also recorded a number of those sessions on tape.

For the first two years the officers of the club stayed the same: Marshall Gordon, President; Gary Matthews, Vice President; and Elise Kalfus Gordon, Secretary/Treasurer. In January, 1985 some of the names were changed. Marshall took on the production responsibilities as Newsletter Chairman. We gained two Vice Presidents, Jim Hubbard and George Sears. Billy Glass became the Secretary/Treasurer. I became President instead of Vice President. This year (1986) the roster changed less than last. Same President; Jim stayed Vice President; George Sears became Treasurer; and Melvin Carter joined us as Secretary.

For about a year Bill Kleinsorge has been Publicity Chairman. He has mailed out notices about upcoming meetings to the radio stations and to the papers. Gunter Hirschler and Jim Hubbard have become jointly the Program Chairmen, and Ed Banovatz has picked up the banner as Library Chairman that Bob Willis had been carrying so well.

Marshall and Elise Gordon did not just attend and officiate at these monthly meetings for the first two years; they brought a station wagon full of equipment with them as well. Elise would set up a table near the auditorium entrance and have numerous issues of the 99'er Magazine, cassette tapes, diskettes, and various pieces of software and hardware for sale. This would bring in a little bit of money at the meetings. Elise ordered these 99'er magazines until their publishing schedule became too erratic to be worthwhile. Elise would collect the attendance money as well. The entrance fee was and is \$0.50 members/\$1.00 non members. Thirty to fifty people attended each meeting with the room rental being \$30 a month.

For the last year a great deal of the paraphernalia that Marshall and Elise brought is now being carted to and from each meeting by Jim Hubbard. The fact that he owns a van is in no way related to his becoming a club officer!

The sale of items at meetings was a definite plus to our group. Of the amount of money that it takes to pay the bills each month, the club is lucky to have occasionally that amount and enough for the next month or two in the bank.

The monthly finances are: \$30 room rental, \$35 mail permit postage, \$25 individual letter/etc. postage, two phone bills at approximately \$30 each, and \$125 newsletter printing. Considering the above, the A9CUG spends \$275 a month before taking anything else into account. Here are the yearly or nonmonthly expenditures: \$50 a year mail permit fee, \$10 yearly corporation fee, \$75 three or four times a year for diskettes, \$10 yearly address labels, and \$40 dollars at various times for odds and ends. Those odds and ends could really be anything. Examples would be: computer cables and keyboards for selling at the meetings, diskette mailers, payments to authors for software (We paid out \$200 for FAIRWARE to authors over the last five months.), books (Ron Albright's book The Orphan Chronicles is now in the club checkout library), envelopes, and a lot more items that I simply cannot recall at the moment. Without some source of money a club cannot continue. Our club has been lucky to have enough new members and renewals to allow us to hold our own in the "funds department".

Money is one thing but people and their participation are the soul of a club. Many of the people who have given a great deal of support to our club as well as other users groups are those you will rarely see at our local monthly meeting. Those are the people who write software and produce the many monthly newsletters we have received from other clubs.

Jim Peterson of Tigercub Software is an example of one of those people you will not see at a local meeting who have contributed to users groups. His two page monthly column is reprinted in more newsletters around the country than any other single person's. Sure he is trying to make a buck selling the programs that he writes, but that doesn't explain why he keeps doing it (for more than two years now) when from a financial standpoint he barely breaks even. Peterson, like many others, likes working with the TI 99/4A and he enjoys sharing what he has learned.

There are many others around the country who produce their own group's newsletter. These people in a similar manner do the same as Peterson yet with nowhere near the same name recognition. These people and their activity make the TI 99/4A a worldwide community instead of an isolated one. We all cannot belong to big groups with in-depth hardware knowledge of our machine, but because of newsletters we can feel like we do.

Another example of club support in our case is Boyd Cone, of Information Associates. He has on several occasions lent new equipment to the club to be shown at the meetings. This was new equipment that had just begun to be marketed and was so new that most people had barely heard about them much less seen the products. When Boyd Cone gets his hands on a working model of Myarc's computer, you can count on it being shown at the club's monthly meeting.

Sometimes club support has come in roundabout ways. In the last year a new shot in the arm occurred for TI owners. The production and distribution of fine quality software just plain snowballed through the channel known as 'Freeware' or as many now prefer to call it 'Fairware'. Whether this method will influence more authors to produce or the existing ones to continue is not known. It can be said that the spreading of this concept over the last twelve months has affected just about everyone. Self respect for this machine and the proof of what it can really do has unmistakably increased. Users groups can't help but profit from the increased role they are now able to play. Users groups have promoted Fairware by making it available as well as pushing for those who use it to donate to the authors.

As a Users Group the A9CUG is a good source of current information on the TI 99/4A. Programs are consistently shown demonstrating the latest and fanciest new hardware or software, as well as tutorials, and presentations on the basics.

The latest Fairware can be found available on disk or as information on where to order it.

There is usually a table set up with people selling equipment. There is always a table set up with the club's available potpourri of diskettes, magazines, etc.

Numerous three ring binders are frequently at the meetings full of current and past newsletters received from the other users groups. There are also three binders containing all the offers and advertisements that the club receives from vendors.

Dozens (usually hundreds) of pages of newsletters from other groups are hung on the walls for attendees to take home after the meeting is over.

One of the best reasons to attend a meeting is the face-to-face contact with others who enjoy using the same machine that you use. There have been many people and organizations who have played a significant role in our users group. Many support the group by coming to the meetings and paying their dues. Everybody is not going to become a committee chairman or stand up and give a presentation. The ones who support us by coming to the meetings and just being there are as welcome as they are needed.

Looking back on what has been written so far, I keep being reminded that I havn't mentioned so and so. The 99'er Magazine was good for groups during its more consistent 99'er days. Nowadays Micropendium is a reliable 99/4A exclusive publication that we can point to. The Super 99'er Monthly looks to be a good source of in depth tutorial material, if only it were allowed to advertise in Micropendium then both publications would benefit. The National Ninety Niner Association tried to be a bridge between groups. The IUG was a good idea that didn't make it. Then there are the companies that make products for the 99/4A, such as Scott Adams, Infocom, Millers Graphics, Myarc, Cor Comp, Foundation (may they rest in peace). I believe there are more honest companies trying to make a buck and help us survive than there are greedy, dishonest ones, that actually openly sell plagiarized software. Both types exist, and we as well as the other groups, try to make the TI community aware of them.

So many of these paragraphs have been rewritten by backing up and sticking more words between this sentence and that one. There are going to be people and incidents that I will not remember to include until it is too late. Besides, at the beginning it was stated that a book prompted me to write this; not that I was intending to write a book.

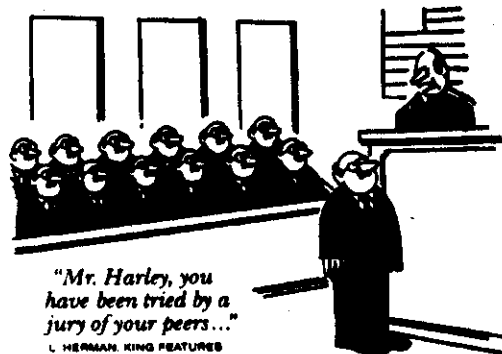
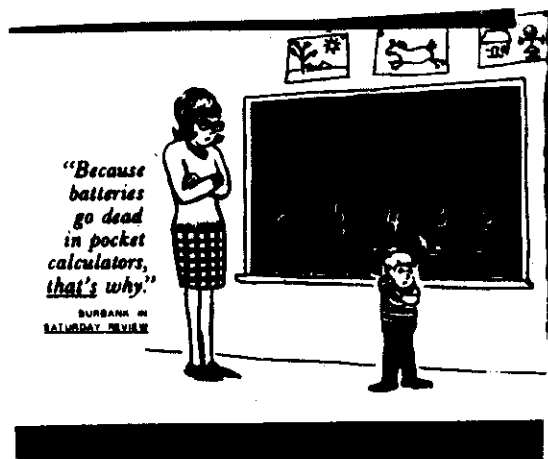
Here we are at the present; not doing too badly for orphans. The Atlanta 99/4A Computer Users Group is stable and a fairly strong group. We still receive two or three new members each month and I believe the group does what a users group should do: Provide support for owners of the 99/4A.

Gary Matthews

trading post

FOR SALE: TRANS-STAR 315 COLOR GRAPHICS PRINTER (PIO 7 colors/ New ink cartridge 8 1/2X11paper Tractor & Friction. \$100 Melvin Carter 997-2617 This is sold at a loss in EXCELLENT condition do to owner having bought another printer.

SYSTEM FOR SALE - \$480 CONSOLE, EXP. BOX WITH single sided drive, 32K & RS232 Card, Speech Synthesizer, Gemini 10X printer, E/A, TI Writer, some games, Multiplan, LOGO. Call Frank Warinner H-993-3072 W-885-3465

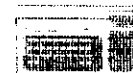


=====
 CLUB SALES
 Available at the Meetings
 =====

- TI FORTH Members \$20 Non-members \$25
 - By mail Members \$25 Non-members \$30
 - Diskettes \$1.00-\$1.50 Depending on brand
 - Diskettes in boxes - \$15.00 a box
 - Ribbon cable & connectors, Spare keyboards
 - Cassetes Tapes C-10, C-20, C-30 \$.90-\$1.10
 - Best of 99er Magazines as well as selected issues of Home Computer Magazine.
 - The prepared diskettes are: \$3 Mem. \$4 Non-mem.
 - (Some is FREWARE- Please Support the Authors)
- =====



PROGRAMMERS PAGE



(Ed's Note: As a followup to last month's article on "Print Using" we are including an excellent article from the "Topics" the newsletter of the LA Users Group.)

This short tutorial will solve some of your PRINT USING problems as it pertains to your printer. There are two ways to print the image away from the margin. One way is to leave the required blank spaces before the image statement.

```
Example #1: >250      #####.##   YTD $ ##
              ##.##
              >260 PRINT #2, USING 250:230.5
              5,299.95
```

Another way is to tab a single blank space. Example #2:

```
>250 IMAGE *TOTAL* $ #####.##
>260 TAB(5);" ";
>270 PRINT USING 250:990.95
```

In the program below, the semicolon in line 280 allows the Imaged amounts to be printed after the name of the month. Also notice, that to print more than one item on a line, the items must be separated by commas... NOT semicolons! (See line 290 and 340). Study the listing, make changes and experiment, and when you're thru, put this program in your idea book for later reference.

Good luck... Chick De Marti

(Ed's notes) There is another very good lesson in this example its contained on

lines 210 to 240. It allows you to add all of the items that you are listing to the screen in lines 190 and 200. It also allows you to add the totals down and across, these totals are necessary to complete the schedules shown below.

Getting back to the original program you could set your printer to 132 columns and have thirteen columns of 10 characters each. Enough to put the months on the top and the expenses down the left side. This opens some very interesting possibilities. I'll leave the ramifications to you, however if you do come up with an interesting application, I expect you to share it with the group.

The second program is an example of using the Print Statement and TAB to move the item printed to the column on the paper that you wish it to be. There is another way to do it, simply use spaces to pad the IMAGE statement so that the ##### (IMAGE string) moves into the correct column.

The third program is less elegant, the decimal point is not lined up, the numbers do not round off as they do when using the IMAGE format, and you are limited to using commas, which space the data to the next tab stop. However, you can use this method in basic, or extended basic.

If anyone is interested in more data on IMAGE and PRINT USING contact myself or one of the officers at the meeting.

Marshall

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 DATA JAN, FEB, MAR
120 OPEN #2:"PIO"
130 PRINT #2:TAB(10); "<* EXP
ENSES *)": :
140 PRINT #2:TAB(7); "Travel
Meals Total"
150 PRINT #2:TAB(7); "-----"
-----
160 FOR I=1 TO 3
170 READ M$(I)
180 PRINT M$(I): :
190 INPUT "TRAVEL ":AMT1
200 INPUT "MEALS ":AMT2
210 BAL=AMT1+AMT2
220 TOT1=TOT1+AMT1
230 TOT2=TOT2+AMT2
240 TOTAL=TOTAL+BAL
250 PRINT : M$(I); AMT1; AMT2
; BAL
260 PRINT
270 IMAGE #####.## #####.##
$ #####.##
280 PRINT #2:M$(I);" ";
290 PRINT #2, USING 270:AMT1,
AMT2, BAL
300 NEXT I
310 PRINT "YTD"; TOT1; TOT2; TO
TAL
320 PRINT #2:TAB(7); "-----"
-----
330 PRINT #2:"YTD ";
340 PRINT #2, USING 270:TOT1,
TOT2, TOTAL
350 CLOSE #2
360 END
```

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 DATA JAN, FEB, MAR
120 OPEN #2:"PIO"
130 PRINT #2:TAB(25); "<* EXP
ENSES *)": :
140 PRINT #2:TAB(21); "Travel
Meals Total"
150 PRINT #2:TAB(21); "-----"
-----
160 FOR I=1 TO 3
170 READ M$(I)
180 PRINT M$(I): :
190 INPUT "TRAVEL ":AMT1
200 INPUT "MEALS ":AMT2
210 BAL=AMT1+AMT2
220 TOT1=TOT1+AMT1
230 TOT2=TOT2+AMT2
240 TOTAL=TOTAL+BAL
250 PRINT : M$(I); AMT1; AMT2
; BAL
260 PRINT
270 IMAGE #####.## #####.##
$ #####.##
280 PRINT #2:TAB(12); M$(I);"
";
290 PRINT #2:TAB(20); : : PRIN
T #2, USING 270:AMT1, AMT2, BAL
300 NEXT I
310 PRINT "YTD"; TOT1; TOT2; TO
TAL
320 PRINT #2:TAB(21); "-----"
-----
330 PRINT #2:TAB(12); "YTD "
;
340 PRINT #2:TAB(20); : : PRIN
T #2, USING 270:TOT1, TOT2, TOT
```

```
AL
350 CLOSE #2
360 END
```

3.

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 DATA JAN, FEB, MAR
120 OPEN #2:"PIO"
130 PRINT #2:TAB(33); "<* EXP
ENSES *)": :
140 PRINT #2:,, "Travel", "Mea
ls", "Total"
150 PRINT #2:,, "-----", "----"
-----
160 FOR I=1 TO 3
170 READ M$(I)
180 PRINT M$(I): :
190 INPUT "TRAVEL ":AMT1
200 INPUT "MEALS ":AMT2
210 BAL=AMT1+AMT2
220 TOT1=TOT1+AMT1
230 TOT2=TOT2+AMT2
240 TOTAL=TOTAL+BAL
250 PRINT : M$(I); AMT1; AMT2
; BAL
260 PRINT
270 REM IMAGE WAS HERE
280 PRINT #2:M$(I);" ";
290 PRINT #2:,, AMT1, AMT2, , BAL
300 NEXT I
310 PRINT "YTD"; TOT1; TOT2; TO
TAL
320 PRINT #2:,, "-----", "----"
-----
330 PRINT #2:,, "YTD ";
```

340 PRINT #2: ,TOT1,TOT2, ,TOT
AL
350 CLOSE #2
360 END

PGM1-EXAMPLE

(* EXPENSES *)

	Travel	Meals	Total
JAN	360.90	245.40	\$ 606.30
FEB	80.18	26.00	\$ 106.18
MAR	378.85	266.78	\$ 645.63

YTD 1119.93 772.18 \$ 1892.11

PGM2-EXAMPLE

(Tabs)

(* EXPENSES *)

	Travel	Meals	Total
JAN	360.90	245.40	\$ 606.30
FEB	80.18	26.00	\$ 106.18
MAR	378.85	266.78	\$ 645.63

YTD 819.93 538.18 \$ 1358.11

PGM3-EXAMPLE

(COMMAS)

(* EXPENSES *)

	Travel	Meals	Total
JAN	360.9	245.4	606.3
FEB	80.18	26	106.18
MAR	378.85	266.78	645.63
YTD	819.93	538.18	1358.11

VCR TITLE SCREEN PROGRAM IN BASIC

by John Hedstrom

This is a simple program to title VCR tapes. It allows six lines of text (at rows 5,8,11,14,17,20) and 28 characters per line. To skip a line, press ENTER. The program will center each line horizontally and will then draw a border which is ASCII code *30 and it remains black. The computer can be hooked up to the VCR via the VHF antenna input (with modulator cable and VCR set to tuner) or via the Video In input (with monitor cable and VCR set to line) and the title screen can then be taped for any length of time.

```

100 REM VCR Title Screen
110 REM by John Hedstrom
120 REM December 3, 1984
130 CALL CLEAR
140 INPUT "Screen Color? " :$
150 INPUT "Foreground Color? " :F
160 INPUT "Line #1? " :L1$
170 INPUT "Line #2? " :L2$
180 INPUT "Line #3? " :L3$
190 INPUT "Line #4? " :L4$
200 INPUT "Line #5? " :L5$
210 INPUT "Line #6? " :L6$
220 T1=(30-LEN(L1$))/2
230 T2=(30-LEN(L2$))/2
240 T3=(30-LEN(L3$))/2
250 T4=(30-LEN(L4$))/2
260 T5=(30-LEN(L5$))/2
270 T6=(30-LEN(L6$))/2
280 CALL CLEAR
290 CALL SCREEN(S)
300 FOR C=1 TO 12
310 CALL COLOR(C,F,1)
320 NEXT C
330 PRINT TAB(T1);L1$ : : :TA
      B(T2);L2$ : : :TAB(T3);L3$ : :
      :TAB(T4);L4$ : : :TAB(T5);L5
      $ : : :TAB(T6);L6$ : : :
340 CALL HCHAR(1,1,30,32)
350 CALL HCHAR(24,1,30,32)
360 CALL HCHAR(1,1,30,24)
370 GOTO 370
    
```

PRINTER REDIRECT

Some of the older TI modules will not allow you to type in PIO for printer output. There may be a way out for the vast majority of TI Users who have parallel printers. Try typing in an invalid RS232 response when asked for the printer device name, something like RS232/8. When the program goes to print, you will get an error message, followed by an opportunity to change the device name. Now type in PIO and it should work correctly.

(Ed's note: The source for this info is unknown.)

From the newsletter of the Decatur 99'ers H.C. User's Group The BYTE LINE:

Ever wonder where your TI computer ranked with respect to the other computers in terms of computers being used in the home? The following survey was conducted by Future Computing Inc. for the national organization "News America Syndicate" to

which most major city newspapers belong. The poll was taken in the first half of 1985 Jan-Jun. Remember, this is home computers not including office.

The official ranking is:

1. COMMODORE: 30%
 2. TI 99/4A: 22%
 3. APPLE: 16%
 4. ATARI: 10%
 5. RADIO SHACK: 10%
 6. IBM JR: 8%
 7. MISC: 4%
- TOTAL 100%



HAPPY ST. PATRICKS DAY

* * Topics - LA 99ers * *

THE ORPHAN CHRONICLES

REVIEW

THE BEHIND THE SCENES STORY THAT SHOCKED OVER 2 MILLION PEOPLE.

RONALD G. ALBRIGHT JR. M.D. TAKES US THROUGH THE PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE TI 99/4A COMMUNITY. WITH HIS MANY INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS, TOUCHED WITH WITTY HUMOR, THE HISTORY UNFOLDS.

- CHAPTER 1 - ONE COMPUTER'S SAD STORY
- CHAPTER 2 - WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED
- CHAPTER 3 - THE INTERNATIONAL USERS GROUP
- CHAPTER 4 - THE REAL USERS GROUPS
- CHAPTER 5 - TELECOMMUNICATIONS
- CHAPTER 6 - SUPPORT? FROM WHERE?
- CHAPTER 7 - THE WRITTEN WORD
- CHAPTER 8 - FREWARE
- CHAPTER 9 - WHAT THE FUTURE MAY HOLD
- CHAPTER 10 - SURVIVAL TIPS

THE APPENDICES PROVIDE AN INVALUABLE REFERENCE WITH LISTS OF:

TI PRODUCED SOFTWARE, 129 TI BULLETIN BOARD NUMBERS, HARDWARE PRODUCERS, SOFTWARE PRODUCERS, MAIL ORDER DISTRIBUTORS, PUBLICATIONS, FREWARE PRODUCERS, BOOKS AND USERS GROUPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

A Few Excerpts from THE ORPHAN CHRONICLES

..... There are numerous stories surrounding Kaplan's relationships with his writers, recruited from grassroots TI users. Most were nonprofessional writers that Kaplan recalls "giving immeasurable professional help" to improve their writing skills. One of the most interesting sidelights of the 99'er Magazine tale was the story of "Regena". The byline "Regena" first appeared in the premier issue of 99'er Magazine and, in succeeding issues, became associated with some of the best programs that appeared in the magazine. Then, according to Cheryl Whitelaw, the real "Regena" (Regena was Whitelaw's middle name; she used the name initially to give her an easy-to-remember byline), Kaplan had the idea to make the identity of Regena a mystery. He played it up with frequent "Who is Regena?" fillers in the magazine. According to Whitelaw, the idea was acceptable to begin with, but, then, as it was drawn out longer and longer, it became a burden. Kaplan would not release the address of Regena to anyone and would not forward mail to her. Kaplan told her, finally, that her identity would be made known at a gala "unveiling" at the 99'er Magazine-sponsored TI-fest in October, 1982. But, as events would have it, not only was Regena not unveiled there, she was not even invited to attend. Further, Kaplan backed out of a deal with Whitelaw to produce her typing tutor software as promised.

..... As the recollections of other "former" 99'er Magazine authors has confirmed, their former editor was not very skilled at either employee or subscriber relations. Home Computer Magazine has not published the identity of Regena to this day.

THE ORPHAN CHRONICLES

Once again, I appreciate the chance to write a piece for the SHOALS Tidings. I wish all my friends in Alabama a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year!

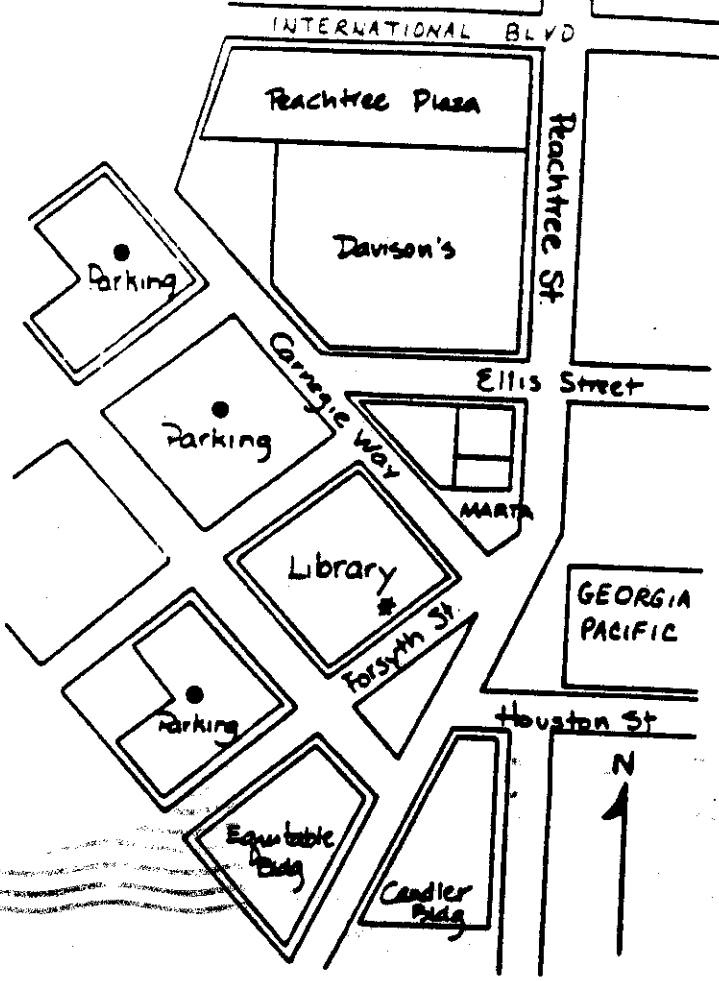
I think my third greatest computer thrill (by chronology - not importance; TI leaving the market was the first, and being named a CIS Forum Sysop was the second) has been the sense of fulfillment I had upon completion of my book, the "Orphan Chronicles". First envisioned as a project for a non-programmer to contribute something to the TI community; I just planned to write a small book, print up a few copies at work, and mail to my many /4A friends as gifts. But, like a lot of projects we start, it snowballed rapidly. As I got deeper and deeper into the story of the TI computer and its community, I found myself writing more and more. First from memory, then, I ventured a few interviews. I saw in the writings that I had prejudiced ideas about a lot of subjects and I wanted to see more than my side (I tend to be pretty hard-headed!).

The first person I interviewed was Charles LaFara, the owner of the International Users Group (IUG). That just had to be the first. I found Mr. LaFara, as I had been told, to be a very personable, and at times, a very candid man who shared with me the frustrations, mistakes and triumphs of IUG before its bankruptcy in early 1985. Next, it was Don Bynum. I had seen the Chicago UG's tape of their 1984 TI Faire where the energetic Bynum spoke, but I was totally unprepared for the greeting I got from Mr. Bynum. He, like LaFara, was frank, TOTALLY honest and forthright. He spent well over an hour of his busy job to review the history of the 99/4A at Texas Instruments and the conflicts that raged between he and Bill Turner. He was, truly, a joy to speak with. I will always be grateful to these two men. They were my first "professional" interviewees and proved to be two of the easiest to discuss controversial subjects with. I also admire them for another reason. As I did more and more interviews, it became obvious that there were several VERY insecure people out there in the commercial TI market. I got "conditions" after conditions ("I will do the interview IF you will send me your piece on me before publication", and "I will consent if you will send me a copy of the book", etc.) from many I interviewed. While I didn't tone down anything I wrote after I sent copies to these people, I always wondered what they thought they had to hide? One interviewee actually called me after receiving a copy of his interview, with rather strong insinuations that "I was treading on very shaky ground, legally" with some of what I wrote about him. I read and re-read that piece. And I'll be darned if I can find a thing that strikes me as unfair or untrue. So, it stayed the same - as written. I may be asking you to contribute to the "Free Ron Albright" legal fund soon, but honesty is honesty. Charlie LaFara and Don Bynum, to me, two of the most controversial subjects of the book, NEVER asked for anything. There were no "strings" to their interviews and they were truly enjoyed.

How did it get to be a "real" book? I called Craig Miller of Millers Graphics for an interview and told him what I was doing. He asked to see the book (not to see his piece!) and, after he read it, he suggested making it available to a wider audience. He offered to take the financial risks of publishing the book (almost exactly like the Extended Basic manual, 185 or so pages). And, while I've got sweaty palms for Craig (I have never been a gambler when it comes to money!), I agreed. Craig and his wife, Sue, have been a great help in digging up archival material for the book and supplying names of people "in the know" to call. I just hope that Craig doesn't lose his shirt on my account!

The book should be ready about the time you read this. It can be ordered through Millers Graphics (\$9.95 + \$2.00 shipping) and I hope you'll at least read someone's copy if you can't buy one yourself. I really mean it when I say the book was a "labor of love" for the TI community. Being a less-than-adequate programmer, I felt like a "user" and not a contributor when I ran all the great new software. The book is my way to try and give something back to the best bunch of computer junkies in the world - the 99/4A users!

Ron Albright [75166,2473]



Atlanta
99/4A
Computer
Users
Group

NEXT MEETING:
SUNDAY, ~~March 16~~
April 20
ATLANTA PUBLIC LIBRARY
3:00 P.M.

FOR MORE DETAILS, CALL 231-0900
(A DONATION WILL BE REQUESTED -
MEMBERS - 50¢, NONMEMBERS - \$/1.00)

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* DUES ARE DUE THIS MONTH
** DUES WERE DUE LAST MONTH
*** THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER