November 1983

Cedar Valley 99'er User Group News

OUR LAST MEETING

The regularly scheduled meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. on November 14 at the Junior Achievement Building. The November meeting of the Cedar Valley 99'er User Group was not in the usual format. The entire meeting was taken up with discussion of the recent announcement by Texas Instruments that they were leaving the home computer field and would no longer be manufacturing the T.I. 99/4A computer.

The consensus at the meeting seemed to be that there would continue to be support for the 99/4A and that the Cedar Valley group was probably more needed than ever before. Moreover, most people demonstrated their support by signing up for either a new or renewal membership for the coming year.

Although there was no formal program, a lively, tho unstructured, question and answer session was held, with most of the questions concerning the operation of the club.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

Bryan Hawkins

THE TREASURY

INCOME

	SEPT 83	OCT 83	TOTAL
Memberships	$470.00	$240.00	$710.00
Sale of Softw.	150.80	67.00	217.80
Sale of cass. t.	255.35	22.60	277.95
TOTAL	$876.15	$329.60	$1205.75

DISPERSALS

Receipt book	$ 3.00	$ 0	$ 3.00
Meeting rent	75.00	4.00	79.00
Postage	62.00	15.00	77.00
Checks charge	5.92	0	5.92

	SEP 83	OCT 83	TOTAL
C-20 t. purc.	336.90	0	336.90
Software purch.	12.50	16.00	28.50
Cassette recorder	67.59	41.60	109.19
Adv. (Gazette)	21.00	9.60	30.60
TOTAL	$583.91	$ 86.20	$670.11

ASSETS

Savings acct.	$ 5.00	0	$ 5.00
Cash balance	7.15	9.20	16.35
Ch. Acct. Bal.	280.09	239.20	519.29
TOTAL	$292.24	$243.40	$535.64

BASIC CLASS NOTICE

Recently, both by show of hands at the regular meeting and by questionaire attached to the newsletter, we have tried to determine if there was sufficient interest in a beginners TI BASIC class to warrant starting one. The answer to that seems to be positive, so one will be held starting in December. It will be held weekly, on either Wednesday or Thursday night, depending on the choice of the attendees. The class will start at 7:00 p.m. and last approximately two hours. It is expected to run for at least eight weeks tho it may require ten.

The course will cost $10 per person. However, the club has decided to pick up half of that cost, so the actual cost to each person will be only $5.

It is likely that the student body will, like all student bodies, try to cut class around Christmas time so the chances are that the class scheduled for that week won't be held. Again, it will depend on the wishes of the class.

To enroll, fill out the attached slip and send it in along with your check, to:

Bryan Hawkins
3615 White Oak Rd. S.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

The check should be made out to the Cedar Valley 99'er Users Group.

The CEDAR VALLEY 99'er USER GROUP NEWS is published by the Cedar Valley 99'er User Group in the Cedar Rapids area. Members are encouraged to contribute articles. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and are not necessarily those of the Cedar Valley 99'er User Group, its officers, editor, or members.

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BASIC CLASS NOTICE

The class described on page 1 is designed for the beginner and will build up from there. NO prior experience is required or expected.

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ENROLLMENT SLIP

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NAME:_____

ADDRESS:_____

_____

TELEPHONE:_____

CHOICE OF NIGHTS:
    WEDNESDAY?_____
    THURSDAY?_____

THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, December 12, 1983 in the Junior Achievement Building on Collins Road N.E.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

The program committee (myself) is always looking for new ideas and new ways to help our members get the most from their 99/4A's. Since we added so many new members last month (a trend that we'd like to continue), I thought it would be beneficial to review the topics we've discussed at previous meetings and then talk about ideas for future programs. I'm also asking for your input on what topics you think should be covered in our monthly programs.

Previous discussions were as follows:

MAY   Cassette recorder operation and use of data file commands (OPEN, CLOSE, etc.) were demonstrated by Kathy and Chris Kelly.

JUNE   Dave Beckwith gave a professionally done demonstration of the capabilities of Extended Basic.

JULY   Dennis Haeffner (D & N Enterprises) brought his full system to demonstrate the operation of TI's word processor program "TI Writer."

AUGUST   How to build your own RS-232 card, and all the problems associated with it, were covered by Dick Placensia. (He still doesn't have it done.)

SEPT.   Yours truly did a quick half-hour on the "Personal Record Keeping" module. It's useful if you find one on sale! How about someone writing down your feelings about the module for the newsletter?

OCT.   Roger Sokoloski introduced us to the wonders of computer communication through the telephone system. We learned about several local electronic bulletin boards in town, as well as the national data base systems.

NOV.   Membership night! No program.

My ideas for future monthly programs are: Adventure games (postponed from November), assembly language, TI's Multiplan spreadsheet, memory expansions, LOGO, the peripheral expansion system, Terminal Emulator II, printers, programming sprites, and home finance software. Now that TI has stopped hardware production, some of the above topics may be irrelevant. I need to know what you want to hear and learn about. What new areas can we explore? What knowledge do you have that you can share with the group? Hand me a list at the December meeting, or give me a call (395-1898 days). Please help us help you.

Jim Green

APPLICATION OR SOFTWARE MODULE
EXCHANGE?

Well, now that some of us have experience in setting the purchased modules to run, I'll bet the next question many of us are asking is "Where or how can I obtain additional modules?" If you were like me, you panic purchased the modules you could afford during the price cuts.

I would like to suggest a module exchange between owners of modules that would like to lend theirs in exchange for other modules. I would be glad to act as a coordinator to match up such owners. I would need the following:

1. A list of the modules you would be willing to lend.

2. Your name and address, and

3. The modules you would like to borrow.

I could then provide an ordered list of modules available at each meeting. Arrangements to exchange the modules would then be carried on personally between the exchangers.

or done after the monthly meeting. This would also serve as an icebreaker to introduce members to each other. So, if you are tired of your Munchman, Wumpus, or Reading and Spelling 3, there may be a deal to be struck.

Gary Bishop
377-9574

From the Los Angeles 99'ers:

If you need a border on all four sides, it can be written in two lines? Try it:
100 CALL VCHAR(1,31,42,96)
110 CALL HCHAR(24,1,42,64)

Or have you ever pressed ERASE by mistake and lost the whole line? Don't panic and above all don't press ENTER. Instead press FCTN P (the quotation mark) and ENTER. Your line will still be intact.

From the Los Angeles 99'ers who found this in the JUG, TI 99/4 JSC Users Group, Houston, Texas:

"The following was taken from the Sidney News Digest (Australia) Feb. 1983 Newsletter: 'Use the following subroutine to protect your SECRET programs on cassette or disk:

```
12 P$="<<<<>>>>"
14 CALL CLEAR
16 INPUT "ENTER SECURITY PASSWORD":PW$
18 IF P$<> PW$ THEN 32000
20 PRINT "CORRECT PASSWORD"

32000 CALL CLEAR
32010 PRINT "SECURITY VIOLATED"
32020 PRINT "PROGRAM ABAORTED!!"
32030 FOR I=1 TO 2000
32040 NEXT I
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Use lines 21-31000 for your program. Your password <<<< >>>> can be any codeword desired.'"

USING CASSETTE RECORDERS WITH YOUR TI 99/4A

After we have set up our computer for the first time and
have typed in some of the programs in the users guide or the
Beginning Basic book, it becomes painfully clear that we must
have a method of saving our work. At this point, you are in the
market for your first piece of accessory equipment, a cassette
recorder.

The first question is often, what kind to buy? Well,
perhaps you won't have to buy any recorder. Do you have an old
casssette tape recorder around the house? There is a good chance
that it will work with your computer. It's worth a try.

You will have to buy a Cassette Interface Cable. These are
usually available at Target or K-Mart and cost around $15.

Perhaps you don't have an existing recorder. In this case,
one recommendation would be that you buy a recorder that is
(supposedly) specially optimized for use with a home computer.
Both Emerson and GE have one out currently and they are both
available at Target. However, if you have a reason for buying
another type, by all means do so. Most recorders will work. The
only suggestion would be that you make an agreement with the
store that allows you to take the recorder back if there is an
incompatability.

In any event, make sure that the recorder you buy has at
least the following features;
1. Earphone or Auxiliary Speaker output jack.
2. Microphone Input jack.
3. Remote control jack.
4. Tape counter display

It is not necessary to have any sort of fancy Hi Fidelity
controls on your recorder. In fact, special circuits for
Ultra-high performance chrome or high bias tapes will usually
cause trouble.

Now, with your interface cable and recorder in hand, let's
set up to save and load programs. First connect the Recorder to
the computer, using the interface cable. The nine socket plug on
the cable plugs into the connector on the back of your computer.
It will also physically connect to the connector on the side of
the computer, but won't work. The recorder end of the cable has
two sets of plugs. One set has three plugs, which are attached
to wires colored black, white and red. This is the set we are
interested in for now. The other two wires, in the other set,
colored red and black, are not used at this time.

Plug the white wire into the recorder jack marked "Earphone"
or "Aux Speaker" or something like that. Plug the red wire into
the jack marked "MIC" or "Microphone". Plug the black wire into
the jack marked "Remote" or "Remote control". Notice that the
black plug is a slightly smaller diameter than the other two.

Now type in a short program that you would like to save.
Check that it RUNs OK and then, with the Alpha Lock key down,
type in SAVE CS1. A message will appear on the screen that will
tell you to rewind the cassette tape and then press ENTER. Press
the rewind control on your tape recorder and rewind the tape to

the beginning. If your cassette recorder just sits there and does not rewind, the chances are you have a recorder that is incompatible with your computer. If so, remove the black (remote control) wire from your recorder and try again. If the rewind works now, you are sure there is an incompatability.

You can live with this, especially if you are using an already owned recorder. If you are just buying a new one, take it back and get another make.

When the cassette is rewound to the beginning, press ENTER. Another message will appear on the screen, PRESS CASSETTE RECORD, THEN PRESS ENTER. Press the RECORD key on your recorder (some makes require that you press both RECORD and PLAY at the same time) and then press ENTER. Your recorder should start to run and you can hear the sound of the data being recorded thru the speaker in your TV. The massage on the TV screen will read RECORDING.

When the program has been recorded on the tape, the TV will beep and a message will appear that will tell you to PRESS CASSETTE STOP THEN PRESS ENTER. Do so.

If you have a recorder that is incompatible with the remote control function of the computer you can still operate. All you must do is press the recorder RECORD key and the computer ENTER key within about a second of each other. In this case, the computer will not be controlling the starting and stopping of the tape drive remotely. And, since the computer won't shut off the tape drive when the recording is finished, you must be around to do it. If not, the recorder will just keep running to the end of the tape, merrily erasing anything that was on there.

Now for the hard part. Set the recorder volume control to mid scale. Set the recorder tone control to full treble. Tell the computer you want to load a program from tape by typing in the command OLD CS1. The computer will respond with the message REWIND CASSETTE TAPE THEN PRESS ENTER. Do that. The computer message will then be PRESS CASSETTE PLAY THEN PRESS ENTER. Do that too.

At this point one of several things may happen. The program may load from the tape with no trouble. Or, the computer may stop the recorder (assuming a compatible remote control function) and print the message NO DATA FOUND. If so, increase the volume level slightly and try again. Alternatively the computer may stop the recorder and display the message ERROR DETECTED IN DATA. In this case, decrease the volume slightly and try again.

Although the chances are good that the NO DATA FOUND (volume too low) and the ERROR DETECTED IN DATA (volume too high) messages are good indicators of the proper volume setting, there have been cases where the ERROR DETECTED IN DATA message was displayed and a further increase in volume did the trick, so experiment!

In any case, when you have found the correct volume setting, mark it! You don't want to have to go thru that again.

If, after all the experimenting with the volume control, you
still can't get a satisfactory load, try experimenting with the
treble control. This is likely to be unrewarding, however, and
you may reluctantly conclude that your tape recorder just isn't
up to the job of accurately reproducing the rapid pulses of tone
that are required for data transfer.

If your recorder didn't work correctly on remote control
from the computer, it is probably because the polarity of your
recorder is reversed from the computer remote control switch.
This can be corrected with a simple adapter cable that your
remote control wire plugs into and which then plugs into your
recorder. Contact the User's Group for information on how to
obtain one.

If, after all this, you still can't get things to go right,
contact the User's Group. Someone there will be able to help
you.

Bryan Hawkins