

# C P U G N E W S L E T T E R

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## MINI-MINUTES

April 16 1987

Marty opened with a comment about the new format of our newsletter. The response was very favorable and gave encouragement to all of those present to contribute to the continuing quality of the paper.

Dave Ratcliffe mentioned the need for donations to WIZ-TIB for its' upkeep and growth. We would like to purchase a 1200 baud modem, however, the funds are a little short right now. (ED: If anyone out there has any extra funds or equipment they are wanting to donate to charity, let us know.)

Marty contacted other UGs in the area about our FAIR project. The overall response was favorable. The biggest hurdle is to locate a suitable site. Any one have an idea? How about a local school? Let Marty or Barry know of your suggestions, ASAP!

The general membership voted and approved the charging of a fee to copy the library. Marty explained that we have many members who, for various reasons, cannot make the monthly meetings. Now they and the rest of the members will be able to obtain copies of their selected programs from the library between meetings for a nominal fee. Barry Long is the new librarian and anyone interested may contact him.

Dave Ratcliffe has several new disks full of "FreeWare" for the library, and anyone interested in getting an advance copy should see him.

Compuserve has announced

special rates for the months' of April and May. \$6/hr. Bargain!

Nick announced he was still working on the group project (RGB output for the TI). He has the board wired and hopes to finish it by the next meeting.

the Group had an inquiry concerning our TI-Shirts from a national software dealer. Discussion was made and Dave will contact the company to determine quantity and rates. (ED: We still have some TI-Shirts left that members ordered and failed to pick up. We also have a few extra shirts for sale)

The General meeting closed and the members gathered around the several tables to observe the demos of the RAVE99 keyboard and the Geneve 9648 computer. (ED: Nick will have comments in this newsletter)

The meeting adjourned at 9pm with everyone enlightened as to the future of the TI computer.

Till next TIME  
Barry Long, Secretary

Don't forget, NEXT MEETING :  
THURSDAY JUNE 18th

### FOR SALE

TI99/4A SYSTEM INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

TI99 COMPUTER	\$38.00
PE-BOX INCLUDES:	
RS232 CARD	
32K MEMORY EXPANSION	
1 SS/DD FLOPPY DRIVE	
DISK CONTROLLER CARD (TI)	\$250.00
SAKATA 13" COLOR MONITOR	\$100.00
SHIH CORONA TP1 LQ PRINTER	\$300.00
EXTENDED BASIC (TI)	\$ 20.00
EDITOR/ASSEMBLER	\$ 10.00
MISC. DISK SOFTWARE	\$ 20.00

IF INTERESTED CONTACT:

DICK LAMISON  
Phone: 545-5268

# CPUG NEWSLETTER Vol 5 No 5 May 1987

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## Central Pa 99/4A Users Group

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### RAVE 99 MODEL 99/105 KEYBOARD

Review By David Nultberg

At TICOFF 87 in Roselle Park, NJ I finally was able to get a full size keyboard for my 99/4A. This review is being written using the RAVE 99 keyboard. The Model 99/105 is the only model currently available. Previous models with fewer keys have been discontinued according to the RAVE 99 representatives at TICOFF. There are three ways to buy a RAVE 99 Keyboard:

1. Keyboard and fully assembled interface circuit card. \$199.95
2. Fully assembled interface circuit card. (You supply IBM compatible keyboard.) \$149.95
3. Kit, including printed circuit board, instruction manual, RAVE 99 custom chips, and hardware to find parts. Requires about \$18 in easy to find parts and assembly. \$92.88.

A custom cover kit is available for \$11.95 to cover the opening where the old keyboard used to be. Also a load interrupt/reset cable kit is also available for \$6.95. Soldering on the motherboard is required for this last option.

Installing the fully assembled 99/105 keyboard is a snap. The first step is to disassemble the console and remove the old keyboard. The interface card is mounted where the keyboard was. The interface card plugs into the same motherboard connector as the original keyboard did. The console power supply is plugged into the interface card and a power cable from the interface card routes power to the motherboard. After plugging in the three cables, you reassemble the console. The new keyboard plugs into a DIN connector on the interface card. That is all there is to it! It took me a half hour to install mine.

The RAVE 99 model 105 keyboard is an enhanced keyboard similar to those available for IBM PC's and clones. The main alphanumeric portion of the keyboard is a modified IBM selectric typewriter layout. Added to the right of the keyboard are cursor control and numeric input keys. Along the top of the keyboard and also below the number keys are 24 function keys. The keyboard has two modes which are selected by the position of the shift lock key (not to be confused with the alpha lock key which is next to it). Mode 1 (shift lock up) sets the keyboard up for use with Microsoft Multiplan. All Multiplan commands can be executed by a single keystroke. In addition, the function keys are setup so that the old TI overlay strips can still be used.

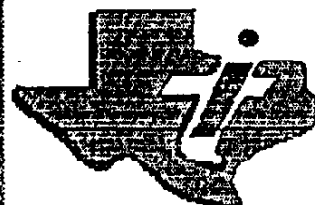
Mode 2 (shift lock down) provides one key entry of all TI WRITER commands. The following special key inputs are available in both modes:

105 KEYS    99/4A INPUT

CONTROL+F1    RESERVED  
CONTROL+F2    FCIN+SHIFT+P (FAST-TERM)  
CONTROL+F3    FCIN+SHIFT+I (FAST-TERM)  
CONTROL+F4    FCIN+SHIFT+X (FAST-TERM)

Installation of the RAVE 99 keyboard requires one additional step each time you power up your computer. After hitting any key to get from the TI color bar screen to the first menu, you must hit the escape key to set up the keyboard. You cannot continue until you do this. From this point on normal procedures should be followed. The original TI keyboard had more keycode capacity than it had keys. The RAVE 99 keyboard allows you to use these keycodes by pressing the ENHANCE key (missing key 1) or SHIFT+ENHANCE (missing key 2). Only missing key 1 is usable in BASIC or XB. A sample assembly program is provided in the manual to detect missing key 2.

I hesitated quite awhile before plunking down my cash for this fancy new keyboard. Almost \$200 for just a keyboard? After using this keyboard for over a week, I am convinced that buying it was the right decision. I use TI WRITER and FAST-TERM frequently. Typing documents is a pleasure with this keyboard. My speed is up and my number of typos is down. No more are three key combinations required to upload and download with X-MODEM. Another plus is now I can stash the console with that big PEB fire hose connector sticking out of it back out of the way. Now I don't lock up the computer by accidentally bumping that plug or moving the keyboard. The only piece of hardware that the RAVE 99 Model 105 keyboard won't work with is the MYARC GENEVE 9648. If you are interested in seeing this keyboard, I am tentatively scheduled to demo it at the May Central Pennsylvania 99/4A User's Group meeting.



WHO  
SAYS  
IT'S AN  
ORPHAN!

CPUG NEWSLETTER Vol 5 No. 5 May 1987  
Central Pa 99/4A Users Group

GENEVE NO SHOW AT CPUG

By Nick Varnalis

As many members know I have been trying to get Myarc to send us a Geneve computer so that we may demo it at one of our meetings. The first Geneve that was sent to us for demonstration purposes back in November of last year was literally a prototype board with jumpers all over the place and some kind of buss extension, which I later learned was because the pc boards were made with the buss reversed! Anyways that unit needless to say did not work, after about a minute the board blew up taking with it my disk controller card. Fine, I said, got the disk controller card repaired and I got a good ribbing about the whole affair.

A few months pass and TI-COFF arrives, with rumors that Myarc will be showing working models of the Geneve computer. Well they did have working models running and in last months newsletter I gave my impressions of the computer, I was impressed. Ah I thought now is a good time to get another machine for demo, now that it is actually running. The following Monday after the fair I called Myarc and was informed that yes they would send us one for our April 16th meeting to show. Great! now I could share my enthusiasm about the Geneve with the members of our group. Called Lou Phillips on Wednesday the day before the meeting, he said he would send one out that day overnight shipping. I asked him if it would work with the CorComp disk controller card, he said No, the unit he was sending me was one of the machines with an early ROM that required the Myarc card, but no problem "I'll send a Myarc card with the unit". I was assured the unit was a working system, and frankly I had no doubts, I did see it at TI-COFF working. He asked me if I

had an RGB monitor, I said yes, I have an Amiga monitor, great he said I don't have cables but I will send you the pinouts from the Geneve to the Amiga monitor, I was also told I could use the Amiga mouse for the paint program. I was ready, everything so far looked good, my only concern at the time was that the unit would arrive the day of the meeting which would not leave me with much time to learn the system, but I wasn't worried, I didn't anticipate any problems at all!

Boy was I wrong! The computer arrived first thing Thursday morning via Federal Express overnight. Quickly grabbing the box and running to my office at work I opened the box, and, yes there was the Keyboard, Manual, and Geneve computer, but no Myarc disk controller card, Great now what. Well first thing I did was to make a cable up for the monitor. The drawing that Lou sent me was very vague, and the cable did not work properly at first. It was later fixed at the meeting, but more on that later. I opened up the computer to take a peek inside. I noticed a couple of jumpers, no clock circuit and no sound chip, Why can't I get a real production model! But I still was oblivious to the problems that lay ahead. Later that afternoon Lou calls to tell me that he forgot to send me the controller card and asked if any of our members had one, I told him that I would try to get one locally but if he could still send me one in case I couldn't get a hold of one. No problem he says, I asked him about the computer, why no clock and why no sound, early unit, that figures, but I was assured the unit is a working computer. Later that day I got a hold of John Sterner and asked him to bring along his Myarc card, he said he would.

*Cont. on next page*

The moment of truth, I arrived at the meeting at 6pm with everyone asking me, "is it here?" I said it sure was, but for some reason I had a bad feeling about this. Maybe I should have waited for another night to give the demo, after all I didn't even have a chance to power the system up yet. This would be the first time. I set up the system hooked up the cable to the monitor, installed the Myarc card, powered up the system.... the disk drive light comes on.... the screen appears..... it works!!! No wait, the colors are off, the screen is supposed to be white letter with a blue background not white letter with a purple background, no big deal; cable problem. Ok, lets stall for time, Marty talks to the group while Cork, a fellow member and myself feverishly try to fix the cable. Now lets see this wire goes to this wire and so on and so on. Well we finally got the cable problem fixed. Ok lets try to load something off the disk. Now remember I didn't have a chance to see what was on the diskettes. Tried loading basic, now whats the file name, "hey Dave" our resident Sysop "catalog the disk for me". Ok lets try this file "GPL1", light comes on, no load, and so on. To make a long story short I didn't get to demo the Geneve, When I did load something it would constantly lock up. Could not keep the machine running for more than 38 seconds. Next day called Lou Phillips of Myarc and explained the problem to him, he couldn't understand it. Said it worked there no problems. Well after fooling around with the system for about 3 days I did manage to load a few programs such as TI-WRITER, Myarc Basic and the TI operating system, even loaded a few TI cartridges. I just couldn't get the damn thing to run for more than 38 seconds it was always locking up. I finally determined

related problem was occurring. The voltage regulators were extremely hot to the touch. I tried attaching heat sinks to them, but to no avail. I finally gave up trying to fix the machine. Needless to say I am extremely dissapointed that the computer was not working properly because it does look like it has a lot of power and capability for the money. Yes I will still buy one, but not until the machine is actually being used in the consumer market place. You might say I'm a fool but I still believe Lou will deliver the Geneve 9648 as promised.

#### TI RGB INTERFACE PROJECT HAS BUGS

Just to keep the members up to-date with the TI RGB INTERFACE project, as shown at the last meeting the board was completed and the only piece missing was the TMS9928 chip, which would allow the TI to be interfaced to an RGB monitor thus providing a very sharp display without any distortion at all. I finally got the TMS9928 chips but not without a lot of calling everywhere.

The TI console was modified to accept the TMS9928 chip and the appropriate cables were made. After hooking all the items together and turning the power on, I did get a picture but there is something wrong, either with the console modification or the RGB Converter itself. I do get a picture but the colors are way off and I cannot sync in the picture at all no matter what I try. I have been working on correcting the problem for over a week but still am not successful at interfacing the TI to the RGB monitor.

If there is anyone in our group who has experience with electronics and especially in Television work, I would like to get together with them and see if we can fix the problem. I will keep everyone posted as to how the project is going.

Nick Varnalis/Hardware SIG