FIRST CLASS

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DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP

DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

> > > NEXT MEETING < < <

Saturday, 21 March, 1987

The Dallas Infomart

99er Connection BBS

24 Hours, 300/1200 Baud

214-272-2786

MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Day:

Main Program: Hardware SIG
Software SIG
Programming SIG
Guest/New Member Orientation Meeting

NEXT STEP Mini-SIG - April 3rd

ARTFUL INTELLIGENCE

SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS

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        EVENT                 DATE      TIME
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Infomart Meeting           3/21/87
   Software SIG            "   "   "  9:00 AM
   Main Meeting           "   "   " 10:00 AM
   Programming SIG        "   "   "  1:00 PM
Newsletter Deadline       3/27/87 Midnight
Executive Committee       3/28/87  1:00 PM
   Committee Chairmen     "   "   "  2:00 PM

NEXT-STEP MiniSiG         + 4/ 3/87  5:15 PM

NOTES:
   $ = Attendance Fee
   # = DTIHCG Membership Required
   + = Reservations Required
SIG = (S)pecial (I)nterest (G)roup
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9:00 - 9:55 Software SIG

10:00 - 11:55 Main Meeting

      10:00 - 10:30 Business Meeting

      10:30 - 11:30 Main Program: Hardware SIG

      11:30 - 11:55 Guest/New Member Orientation Meeting

12:00 - 12:55 LUNCH BREAK

1:00 - 2:55 Programming SIG

     Meeting room numbers can be obtained at our booth, or check the master list
posted on the two overhead projectors, located just past the Registration
booths. Children under age 16 MUST remain with their parents at all times, in
accordance with Infomart regulations!

     All meetings will begin promptly on the hour, since other groups may be
scheduled to use the room after us. Please be on time.

FROM THE OVAL OFFICER: Louis Guion

WOW! WHAT A PARTY! The Swap Party and Spaghetti "Party", I mean. If you didn't make reservations for the first-ever DTIHCG sit-down dinner and Library Swap Meet, you missed a real winner. And, even worse, if you were one of the 18 that made reservations and then failed to show, I have no sympathy for your missing a great event. This type meeting, where we combine easy access to a club service, like the Software Library, with a social activity, like a picnic, will be repeated again since it was so enjoyed by those that attended. My thanks to those of you that came and made it such fun, and all of our thanks to the fine kitchen crew led by Faith Johnsen and Jackie Guion with lots of assistance from the Johnsen family members.

Why, after the swap session closed, and before dinner, we even got to see a sort of 'private showing" of the Myarc 9640, presented by Richard Fleetwood. That was a last-minute opportunity, and was too good to pass up. Thanks for the show, Richard. This time out the library session ran like clockwork, even if my travelling console did come to grief from all the furious duplication going on. Yes, its smoke got out—and you know these computers must run on smoke since they refuse to perform whenever their smoke gets released! She is in surgery now, and will probably recover. Please, no flowers or pot plants; she's allergic to greenery.

Back to the swap session - Charlice Althar, the club Library Chairman, really had this one set up! Five machines to make copies of the club's public domain library. One system to run demonstrations or to make private swaps. It all ran to perfection. When the time ran out, we had volunteers willing to make some copies at home and on their own time for one of the members whose requests had not been filled when the clock struck six. That's great! Thank you, Charlice, for such a well organized activity. Thanks to all of you that ran systems, helped with registration, and provided the baby-sitting services, too! We couldn't do any of this stuff without you.

Those of you that attended the February 14th INFOMART meeting will recall that Vice-President Dan Johnsen conducted an informal poll about the support of DTIHCG members for a proposed Dallas TI Fair, tentatively scheduled for October 17th. The question was presented because Richard Fleetwood, the long-time sysop for, and new president of, the Forest Lane User's Group (FLUG), has for some time been pushing informally for such an event to be held locally. In the February issue of "THE FLUG TI ROUNDUP", the group's newsletter, Richard wrote an article/proposal covering this event. In this article he told why he wanted to have a TI-Fair here in Dallas.

1) To bring together the two Dallas County and one Tarrant County 99/4A user groups for a social event at which they could show what they can offer the public.

2) To bring to Dallas the well-known names in the 99/4A community.

3) To draw out of the woodwork those folks with neglected or abandoned /4A's.

4) To provide a showcase of, and a market for, the latest developments, software, and hardware for the computer.

5) To bring "ALL Texas user's groups together for the first time." (Newly expressed FLUG goal, March, 1987)

Richard went on to elaborate on each of these points, of course, but that is the main gist of the proposal's goals. These are great goals, and the project is a very worthy one. Of course he mentioned, at great length, the effort needed to put on such an event. I, having been previously involved with precisely such a gathering in 1978, have misgivings about the possibility of

pulling off such a large show in the short time Richard has alloted himself and his group. In my previous experience, an active committee of six dedicated people met weekly for over one and half years to set up and run a gathering which 347 out-of-town people attended. And, yes, it was a howling success, if I do say so myself! But, without the extensive planning, it would have been only mediocre.

Well, those of you present at our INFOMART meeting saw that we had about 1/3 of the people at the meeting who were interested in attending the proposed fair. Dan Johnsen continued and asked if there were volunteer workers to staff such an undertaking on behalf of the DTIHCG. In response to two different questions, one covering long-term assistance and planning volunteers and another covering workers to assist at the actual event, only two volunteers stood to be recognized. It is possible to deduce that there isn't overwhelming support for the fair from this DTIHCG sampling. I AM sure that those who want a fair to be held do, sincerely, VERY MUCH, want it to become a reality. Our DTIHCG poll showed, however, that there is a difference between wanting to attend, learn, meet national personalities, and buy new products as opposed to volunteer support and work by members not already up to their eyeballs in work directly supporting the club at the present time.

All you'd have to do to realize what a chunk of work the DTIHCG has planned for the rest of 1987 would be to look at the schedules being developed by various committee chairmen. The DTIHCG has four library sessions scheduled at which between 50 and 75 persons are expected to come and obtain multiple disk copies from the software library. Each library session will involve the need for at least five complete machine set-ups to cover the demand for public domain and freeware programs from the library. We have two sit-down dinners, a picnic, and a Thanksgiving/Christmas party in the works. There will be a total of 11 NEXT-STEP workshops held in 1987. Each NEXT-STEP will draw from 30 to 50 people. There will be 12 INFOMART meetings, and uncounted MiniSiGs are already scheduled or in the works. Why, just being an officer or Committee Chairman in DTIHCG can take as much as 20 hours a month if all of the scheduled meetings and functions are attended.

With this type of a workload, and with this extensive support for your Dallas TI Home Computer Group membership, the Executive Committee really had to wrestle its conscience to come up with the decision not to accept FLUG's invitation to participate in a fair. Given the relatively low level of member's interest and lack of enthusiastic volunteers from the folks attending, I recommended, and the Executive Committee agreed, that the DTIHCG not participate in the staging of a Dallas TI-Fair. The prime obligation of any group is to the paying membership that supports the group. DTIHCG's many programs in place, and the enthusiasm for them by the membership should not be compromised by taking on obligations to a TI-Fair. The obligation of the officers is clearly to support you, our members, in doing the things that have helped us to double our size and quadruple our enthusiasm in the last year.

Some of you newer members may not realize that there are three 99/4A user groups in the Metroplex. Our group, the oldest of the three, fell on hard times about four years ago, and almost withered away. We lost membership because, among other things, we failed to offer programs and services relevant to the needs of the group. It has been a steady climb back from those depths, first under the hand of Richard Roberts, our president in 1985, and then under the present group of officers for the last year. The Forest Lane Users Group, the smallest of the three groups, is also the newest group. FLUG only began to allow non-TI employees to join their group last year. Being a "closed" group had seen their attendance dwindle to about a dozen hardy souls before they "went public". They have enjoyed a continued growth in membership and activities since that time, although they no longer have any formal relationship with Texas Instruments, Inc. Their level of membership support for the fair is unknown to me, but I'm sure Richard Fleetwood, a simply SUPER volunteer himself, has some

people in mind. I hope he does, anyway...he is their BBS SysOp, President, Newsletter Editor, TI-Fair Co-Chairman, Software Library designer, Programming Contest promoter, and author of 75% of everything on their BBS and much of what is in their newsletter. In his spare time he runs his own company, Armadillo Bytes, specializing in products for the /4A. Does anyone know how he does it? I wish I had his energy! I believe that the third group, the TI Northeast Tarrant County 99er's User Group (NET 99er), is still probably the largest of the three organizations. While suffering a net loss of membership last year, they expect to soon be able to stop the slide under new president Gary Higgs, of Startext fame. At DTIHCG's February INFOMART meeting, their vice-president, James Crosson, announced they had 12 volunteers to help with a fair. Please remember that some of the members in these groups belong to two, and in some cases, even all three groups. This is great, since each of the separate groups has the ability to offer something different to it's members, but it does lessen the REAL pool of possible volunteers available to support a TI-Fair.

Now, what all this boils down to is that the DTIHCG will not be a co-sponsor of this fair. It does not say that we do not think such an undertaking has merit. It does! It does not say we are lazy. We have more programs in place for members, requiring more volunteer hours, than either of the other two groups. It does not say that we object to our members working for the fair. I encourage any DTIHCG member wanting to help to get in touch with Richard Fleetwood. I'll make the connection for you if you ask. It does not say that we won't attend. We will attend if the sponsoring groups still want us to, but can understand that they might prefer we stay away if we are not sponsors. DTIHCG would prefer not to be accused of participating in a "Little Red Hen" fable. It does not say we will not advertise the fair. We will carry, at no charge of course, advertisements in our newsletter, if they wish, and we'll put up a suitable notice on the club's TIBBS bulletin board system. All they'll have to do is provide suitable copy for the ads.

What we won't do is sponsor it and, by so doing, jeopardize the delivery of services to our members, who we view as our first responsibility and our prime reason for existing. The diversion of talent and time by DTIHCG is more than we are willing to commit to at this time.

If the NET 99er's and FLUG 'eel that they can benefit from this fair and attendant work and publicity, then they should proceed without us. Sometimes such a project can give clubs a 'ocal point for concentrating their efforts. It can serve as a lightning rod to attract and exercise talent, thus giving the groups a renewed, and real, vitality, purpose, and spirit that they might never attain without such an effort. I wish them well in this endeavor.

I just wanted you to know the "inside story" so that you'd be fully aware of why the DTIHCG won't be sponsoring the fair. It is not, as FLUG's newsletter has said, that we don't "want to share the load", it is that we have a full load now and feel that is enough for us to shoulder. I prefer to see us do one job well rather than two jobs poorly.

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Special Feature from the Editor

Bizarre Time Capsule Befuddles Experts! John Dvorak
(reprinted from the DEC Professional, March 1987)

You probably didn't read the story about the 'Reverse Time Capsule," because most of the newspapers thought it was a hoax. Who would believe that someone in the future buried a time capsule to be retrieved in the past? It was too wierd for most newspaper editors to use, if for no other reason than that the capsule contained a copy of DEC PROFESSIONAL dated March, 2002!

Believe it or not, there on the back page was my column! It was prefaced by the editor who said it was written as a warning to those relying too much on computers.

The magazine had shrunk in size to 30 pages. (From the current 180! gaj) When you read my column, you'll know why. Here it is in its entirety:

The Last Column by John C. Dvorak

SILICON VALLEY, March, 2002 — The newspaper racks stood in rows, empty. There was no news anymore. Cars sat abandoned in the middle of the street. A thick coating of dust made them all a brownish grey. Skyscrapers, once alive with important business, were dark, silent, empty.

The long runways at the international airport were overgrown with weeds. A couple of large commercial jets lingered on the runway waiting for the take-off that never happened. They couldn't move. In fact, nothing worked once the computers stopped.

The city and the rest of the world marked time until the computers came alive again, but no one expected they would. At first it was, "Just a moment sir, they'll be up soon." Then, "We're waiting for replacement parts." Finally it was, "Closed for business until computers come up." Some people still are waiting.

That was six months ago. The computers never did come up again and neither did anything else that was electrical. For some unknown reason the earth's magnetic poles reversed. It had happened once before, a few million years ago. No one expected it to happen again, and no one thought it would screw up all the theories of electricity too. But it did. Using "new magnets" some scientists had been able to create crude electrical generators, but not one scientist has been able to create a transistor that works.

It's become a comedy. The evangelists claimed it was divine intervention until they couldn't broadcast on radio or TV; then it became the work of the devil. Some insisted that the communists did it because the Russians have perfected a new magnet-compatible transistor. Some theorists insisted that flying saucers (carrying aliens fearful of a world war using the dreaded and potentially earth-cracking neon bomb) would create a hazard to interplanetary navigation. Reversing the poles took care of the threat.

Whatever the cause, it happened. I remember exactly what I was doing when it happened, too. I think everyone does. It was kind of like remembering what you were doing when President Spock was shot a few years back. When the poles began to reverse I felt funny, nauseated. Then I noticed that my brand-new, super CD player wasn't working. At first there was a terrible hiss. Then, nothing. Within a few minutes the lights went out; I thought it was a power fluctuation. As the day went on, everything started to go haywire. My microwave oven overcooked everything. My digital watch went blank. The VCR stopped working altogether. The telephones weren't working properly.

I decided to go to the grocery store. It was a real mess. The electronic checkout wasn't working. People were lined up and down the aisles, just waiting and waiting. The clerks didn't know what to do without the fancy price scanners.

I gave up and left for home. Then, my car's computerized fuel injection system began to fritz-out. I finally left it at an intersection and began to walk; the signal lights were out anyway. The bank was closed. It never did reopen. Lots of companies never reopened.

Hundreds of computer salesmen wandered the streets aimlessly, cursing their

useless demo units.

The blue collar workers were the lucky ones; life didn't change much for them. The post office never skipped a beat - the mail came every day, just as slow and late as ever. The railroads weren't affected at all - the old diesel engines still worked. The poorest farmers did the best. In fact, the more old-fashioned the business, the more likely it was to survive.

It's a disaster, especially for me. I have nothing to do but report layoffs and company closings for a small newspaper in Berkeley. I hate to write with a typewriter! I have an old friend who's a tomato farmer, and I hope to go into business with him.

Let this be a warning: Get out of the technology business! It was a sure lesson for me. My coach at the University of California Varsity Technology Writing Team told me I should learn a trade. He said I might not be able to write about technology forever. I didn't listen, and now I have to start all over as a tomato farmer. Don't let this happen to you!

SECRETARY'S MINUTES: David Martin

Last month's meeting of the Dallas TI Home Computer Group was held on February 14, 1987. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by President Louis Guion.

CURRENT BUSINESS: Reports were received from the various club officers and chairpersons.

President Guion announced that the following members had accepted the corresponding chairmanships.

Chuck Long	Membership Chairman
Tom Hall	MiniSIG Chairman
Bob Viering	Software SIG Chairman

Several positions remain open such as Programming SIG Committee members, Telephone Committee members, and Software SIG members. Any volunteers would be welcomed to become more active in the club activities.

Dan Johnsen explained in great detail the plans for the TI-Faire proposed to be held on October 17th, 1987. The planning of the faire is being lead by Richard Fleetwood, one of the club's members and he is requesting several members to assist him. Also, the club would be expected to contribute financially to the faire. An informal vote showed considerable interest in the faire concept, but when asked who would be willing to participate in the faire's organization, no one volunteered. The members were told that a final decision would be made by the Executive Committee based on the response observed at this meeting. Regardless of the committee's decision, anyone wishing to participate was urged to do so.

During the previous Infomart meeting several members requested copies of the roster containing the members' telephone numbers be made available to the membership. Therefore, Secretary Martin passed out rosters to the group. Additional copies may be obtained by request.

Charlice Althar, Software Librarian, announced a swap session to be held on March 8th at TD-Industries. The session will require a $5.00 copy fee and will be followed by a spaghetti dinner. The swap session is for members only (membersips may be obtained at the door), and members will participate in the dinner at no extra charge. Non-members can eat for a $6.00 fee, however those under six are freebees also. Reservations are absolutely mandatory and no exceptions will be made.

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AlphaTech Distributors continue to have Avatex modems on sale at a discount for club members. The 1200hc may be purchased for $109.00 and to show their thanks for all the previous purchases from club members, Musa Hammudeh and Zarine Lam donated a 99/4A to the club.

Infocom had a close-out sale on their adventure series for the 99/4A, so the club purchased one of each adventure. The games will be available for loans to the membership and the afternoon Infomart session would explain a little about the games.

Tom Hall announced that a Funnelweb MiniSIG would be held at Charlice Althar's home at 3:00 p.m., Sunday February 22nd. The MiniSIG would be limited to 10 participants; a signup sheet was made available for those interested.

A "Next-Step" is scheduled from 5:15 until 8:00 p.m. on February 27th at TD-Industries. This meeting has become a second club meeting and is conducted so that specific 99/4A related problems can be effectively addressed on a one-to-one basis. Members are asked to bring the problem and any related hardware and/or software to the meeting. However, the club assumes no responsibility for any mishaps that may occur as a result of trying to correct the problem.

PROGRAM: The main program was a presentation by member Greg Justice on langauges for the TI-99/4A. Particular attention was given to Extended Basic versus Assembly Language programs. Greg had several musical programs in both languages and pointed out the speed with which the programs loaded and played.

Seven guests attended the meeting with 5 joining the club.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.

FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Jackie Guion

None of the SIG leaders will be presenting the program for their own meeting this month. This came about for several reasons. It isn't necessary for either the SIG leader or person having an idea for a program to present the program. After all, if we expect someone to make twelve presentations a year, we could easily "burn them out" as far as their interest in and enthusiasm for our group are concerned. In addition, we have plenty of people with good ideas on things to do who aren't always capable of presenting a program on the subject they suggest. We would all hate to discourage these people from offering ideas on things we can do. Additionally, a number of our members are talented in several areas and it just wouldn't make sense to limit their contributions to just one area.

This month Dan Johnsen will be demonstrating TI Artist 2.01, Artist Extras, and Display Master at our Software SIG at 9:00 a.m. Those of you who didn't know Dan is an expert in this area just haven't seen all of his expertise or view yet. I'm looking forward to seeing this software shown. Those of you who don't usually make the early SIG at Infomart might want to make a special effort to see this demo. This software was sent to us for the demo by Inscebot, Inc. We'd like to thank them for this donation and hope that some of you will be interested in buying the program from them. They have offered DTIHCG a special price for the program if you are interested in purchasing it.

Our main meeting topic this month will be "The History of Dallas TI Home Computer Group". Although this certainly isn't a hardware topic, the main meeting of the group seems to be the ideal place to make those of us who don't know much about how the group was formed, what it has done in the past, and how we got where we are now more familiar with the group. Jon Hodges has agreed to let us use this time slot for this topic. Thanks, Jon, for letting us "borrow" your time slot.

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Bob Viering, our Software SIG leader, will be "wearing a different hat" this month as he leads the Programming SIG at 1:00 p.m. Bob had recently programmed an adventure game and will be telling us how to use the Adventure Editor to program these games. Bob says he had fun doing this and will be doing more adventure programming. Bob has agreed to answer any questions you might have about this topic.

HARDWARE SIG: Jon Hodges

LAST MONTH: We looked at the format TI used in our DISK OPERATING SYSTEM, where to find different information about a disk, and some of the restrictions placed on our disk drives. We barely mentioned data recovery before our time was up, so I'll just pick up where I left off...

I need to reiterate that the best way to recover a destroyed file or disk is to whip out the backup you made just yesterday. Even so, sometimes the last day's work would take longer to re-enter than it would to recover. So, to help you recover your honest day's work, here are some tips that may be useful.

1). If you find that a sector is "bad" it could mean that the controller came up with a different CRC number than was saved with that sector. A good disk copy utility will copy the sector intact, and tell you there was a bad sector read. Make a copy of the disk and see if you can read that file from the copy.

2). Get yourself a good sector editor that has good documentation. My choice is DISK + AID, and the documentation you get when you pay for the program is excellent.

3). When Sector 0 is blown but can be rewritten, copy Sector 0 from a freshly initialized disk, then copy the sick disk to the blank one. The bit map will be re-created by the disk controller. If sector 0 is damaged and cannot be written to, the task is a little harder. Each sector in use must be manually moved to the other disk, and then that disk must be copied to re-create sector 0. DISK + AID has a (M)ove sector function that allows you to move 35 sectors at a time to another disk. It sounds cumbersome, and it is, but it's a lot better than moving one sector at a time.

4). If you have a blown Sector 1, you will need to check sector 0 for valid directory sectors, arrange them in numeric order, and list their sector numbers in your new sector 1. If sector 1 is damaged, you will have to move everything to a new disk, as with a damaged sector 0.

NOTE: A valid directory is in a sector marked "IN USE" by sector 0. An invalid directory is in a sector marked "AVAILABLE" by sector 0. That indicates a file that was "deleted" (or so you thought). It and the sectors it points to are now available for re-use by the controller to store other files.

5). If you find that the allocated directory sectors were all used or at least contain invalid directory entries, you may need to search the entire disk for more directories. Remember, once those 32 reserved sectors are used up, the next directory goes in the next available sector. As directory sectors have a large block of 00s at the end as filler, it is easy to (S)earch for a string of 00000000. When you hit a sector with all E5s, that and the rest of the sectors will be blank.

6). If you have a bad directory sector, you have your work cut out for you. Follow the format for a similar file's directory when it comes to filling in the file status flags and record information. Make a list of the sectors in use by all of the other directories, both valid and invalid. Then start checking the sectors not on the list. If part of your file is still missing, check the sectors reserved (and since released) by the invalid directories. Part or all of your file may have been repositioned in those sectors after they were released when that file was "deleted."

If there are lots of unclaimed sectors, use this alternate method. Compare the sectors in use (from sector 0) to the valid directories' sectors. Yours will be the ones left over. This method is time-consuming, but accurate.

7). You have found all of your sectors. You listed them in order. They

are in five different locations. You try to decipher the file chain pointer information for multiple blocks. You pull your hair out...

Instead of trying to write a new file chain pointer block for a fragmented file, simply copy each sector to a freshly initialized disk, and make up ONE file chain pointer. It just might save your sanity.

8). Now you will need to be sure that the directory link map in sector 1 has this file listed correctly. If you remember the file name, the link map should be correct. If you think you may have some problem with it, name the file 'z' and add the sector number to the end of the link map list (be sure to delete the sector number from its old location and bump up any numbers that follow).

9). If you have a bad data sector, it could be easy or it could be hard. If this is a PROGRAM you are trying to recover, get out that documentation and study, because I cannot help you. If this is a DATA file you are trying to recover, replace the damaged sector with a sector full of asterisks (*******). Then go into the file and try to reconstruct the missing information in the area located by those asterisks. If the sector is damaged, you will have to alter the file chain pointer to include a sector that you can create at the end of the disk. If this is a non-TI WRITER file that cannot be called up to the screen, you might be able to salvage it by looking at the format of the other sectors in the file, but not always.

10). Remember Murphy's law #18-B, paragraph 2:
"Your disk drive will eat your disk only when you need that information NOW!"

One or two romps through Sector-EditVille should make a believer out of you when it comes to making regular backups. The time it takes is worth it when your important file goes belly-up.

While I have the floor, two of you that purchased the WIDGET Stabilizer Template I was distributing, got square feet that will not fit on the sides. If you want, you can cut one in two and use the halves. Otherwise I will be happy to replace the oversized feet. That's what happens when a product improvement is not thoroughly tested first. Sorry about that.

THIS MONTH: We had scheduled a leisurely look at new products, but postponed that program when Richard Fleetwood of ARMADILLO BYTES offered to demo a MYARC 9640 for us. Somehow the schedule got mixed up and MYARC sent the demo unit two weeks early. Those of you who were able to see the 9640 demo at the Library Swap / Spaghetti Dinner can appreciate the work that went into that. For those of you that missed it, we will try to have another demo later on. As for this month's program...

Have you ever wondered just how this user group got started? Do you think that to be president of this group you have to have a hearty appetite and always wear jumpsuits? Did you know that TI was involved with the user groups years ago? What was it like back then? Did we have any 99-4 pioneers in our group? Were we always this big and successful? Do you really care? In commemoration of the second anniversary of the 99ER CONNECTION, these questions and many others will be answered in a round-table discussion of "THE HISTORY OF THE DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP." Some of our long-standing members and some guest EXes will share with us what it was like back in the olden days of 99/4A's yesteryear, and look at how far we have come. Guaranteed to be interesting, informative, and humorous too.

Be there or B².

NEXT STEP MINI-SIG REPORT: Tom Hall

The NEXT STEP meeting was held on February 27th at TDI. We had several complete systems available. Activities included the Louis and Jon Hardware Wizardry Show, the results of which brought smiles of satisfaction to the faces of the participants. There was some tutoring on TI-WRITER and MULTIPLAN. Demos

were done on several programs, the only one of which I can remember was PLATO.

The next four NEXT STEP meeting will be at TDI. I think everyone who has been a member for over a few months knows how to get to TDI. So for you new members; Go North on 35E past LBJ (635). Take the VALWOOD PARKWAY exit; at the intersection go under 35 and back South on the access road. Keeping to the right look for a building with an Arcoaire sign (there is also a flag pole in front) this is TDI. Look for a big gaggle of cars out front.

The NEXT STEP Schedule is:

04/03/87 TDI 5:15

04/24/87 TDI 5:15

05/22/87 TDI 5:15

06/26/87 TDI 5:15

As you know the NEXT STEP meetings are unstructured; but if you have special interests/problems please let me know in advance, in order that an arrangement can be made to provide you assentance.

MINI-SIG REPORT

The February MINI-SIG was hosted by Charlice Althar and the subject was FUNNLWEB. More folks showed up than expected. It appears that there may be enough interest to have another MINI-SIG on FUNNLWEB. Other interest has been expressed on Sector Editors. There will be a sign up sheet at the INFO MART meeting for you to indicate which is preferred for the May MINI-SIG. As you may know we had an added attraction at the Library Swap, Richard Fleetwood demonstrated the MYARC 9640. We have a member who is anticipating delivery of his 9640 from the first production run. We will have a MINI-SIG featuring this 9640, shortly after delivery of his production unit. There may not be too much lead time on the announcement for this one, so watch the NEWSLETTER and the BULLETIN BOARD. We need to locate sponsors for the next MINI-SIG. Please let me know if you are interested. See me at the meeting or call 267-5987.

MY! CAN'T WE EAT!!! Louis Guion

Useless statistics anyone? In an effort to capture the true facts about consumption of comestibles at the Spaghetti Dinner on March 8th, I have used my measuring cup and calculator to document your eating habits. Here is what we did, and did-in!

To begin with, we handed out 51 tickets to the dinner, which was free to members. There were 61 dinner plates used, however, so some of you got seconds on a clean plate, I suspect. Then there were a few six-and-under kids who ate free. They did not require a ticket. For purposes of this discussion, I'm going to assume that 55 people actually ate. Now for the good part.

You consumed 29 pounds of spaghetti sauce, for a rate of consumption of 8.4 ounces each. And the label on the cans said you'd only eat 4 ounces each. Now we have a clue as to why so many of us appear to like to eat well. You ate almost twice what you were supposed to, according to "Betty Crocker". Now that goes to show that she doesn't know computer people.

As to the spaghetti itself, you got 12 pounds of the stuff. The weight was recorded BEFORE cooking, as it didn't stay around long enough after cooking for anyone to do silly things like weighing it. That calculates out to 3.5 ounces a head, dry. Again the package lies. It says a serving is 2 ounces, dry. Luckily, the cooks had watched you eat at Crystals, and were prepared.

Did I say prepared? Jackie had made 50.15 pounds of sauce, for example. Of course you 19 no-shows would have eaten 10 pounds of the sauce, so the true reserve we had planned on sauce was only 11 pounds! Not to worry, Dr. Kennedy, I'm going to see to it that Jackie and I buy the excess sauce from the club. That will insure that son John will have a taste of what we all enjoyed and the club will not have year-old frozen spaghetti sauce on hand when you take inventory in December. Besides, I can work on getting my figure more into a true "computerist profile" if I have ready-cooked raw material at hand.

Onward to the little things that make a meal. The faithful 55 consumed five heads of lettuce, four pints of tomatoes, eight loaves of French bread with two pounds of margarine (you expected butter?), two bunches of green onions, one pound of Parmesan cheese, four gallons of tea, six pots of coffee, and somewhere over a half-gallon of salad dressing. Well, we have to be imprecise somewhere, so "over" a half-gallon will have to do.

You topped that all off with cake. How much cake, you ask? Six cake-mixes worth, using 18 eggs. The icing required two pounds of powdered sugar, two pounds of margarine (no butter, remember!), and two jars of cherries. You say the cake wasn't all eaten when you left? Well, I can assure you that the clean-up crew and the kitchen staff have taken care of that problem by now, so we are going to put it on YOUR balance sheet anyway.

Oh yes, there were some especially hungry persons, apparently. They ate three stainless-steel forks and three stainless-steel spoons for dessert. Seriously. Well, at least they were missing when the washing was over. If they were not eaten, then I suggest you'all learn not to put shiny stuff in the trash cans.

Special thanks to Faith Johnsen, Dan Johnsen, Christopher Johnsen, Katina Johnsen, and to Jackie Guion. It was really they that made the delightful meal possible for the rest of us to enjoy. Honorable mention to Tim Althar who acted as the crew's official pack mule and general worker. I contributed by tasting the sauce, and making sure that the stale end-piece on the loaves of bread was always removed so that YOU could have a fresh piece. Special thanks to Greg and Joyce Justice for making TD-Industries available and for running the risk of having us eat spaghetti and sauce in a carpeted room!

Will we do it again? Yes, a RESOUNDING YES, we will. But no more stainless-steel eating!

LIBRARY CORNER! Charlice Althar

What a SUPER Library Disk Swap Party! Over 50 of our members and received well in excess of 500 copies of disks! We all had a lot of fun. Many, many thanks to all who brought and operated the systems, and all the other work, as well as to those who came for copies! It was especially nice to see so many of our newer members present, with several of them taking an active part in producing this event. To those who chose not to attend, you don't know what you missed! We had six complete systems set up, five of which were busy for 3 hours making copies of library disks. The sixth system was kept going demonstrating programs, answering questions regarding programs, and for private exchanges of disks between members.

Once again, we owe Greg Justice a huge THANK YOU for making it possible for us to have such a facility available for this meeting, as well as for helping so much with the physical arrangements, posters, etc. Thanks, Greg!

Our first Spaghetti Dinner was the perfect ending for our Disk Swap. We are indeed fortunate to have such marvelous cooks in our group! That was the best spaghetti and fixin's I've had in a long time, as I'm sure many of you will agree!

Just in case anyone received a disk copy which doesn't seem to work for any reason, please leave me a message via the 99'er Connection, STARTEXT, or phone. We want your programs to work, and we'll be glad to make another copy for you!

ADVENTURE LIBRARY: Adventure Man

The first month's operation of our new Adventure Library has gotten off to fast start. In February, enthusiastic members checked out eleven different games at our group meeting. Don't be left out in March! Contact me on the 99er Connection BBS or by voice phone (see the inside back cover of this newsletter) to reserve the game of your choice, or take your chances and see what we have available at the next meeting. Remember there are Fantasy, Mystery, Adventure and Science fiction games in three different levels of difficulty, offering something for just about everyone.

Lynn Nidiffer has agreed to become our Adventure Librarian, so I'll be turning it all over to him (just as soon as all this stuff reaches some reasonable facsimile of order). For March, see me; after that, you guys can pounce on Lynn. Happy adventuring, y'all!

BBS REPORT: Dan (Stubby) Johnsen

What! You have a TI Home Computer with an RS232 interface, but you've never used a modem? How can that be?

As difficult as that may be for some of to understand, I know that there is someone exactly like that reading this newsletter right now (YOU, maybe?). If you're curious about all this telecommunications stuff, but just a little hesitant to invest in a modem, I'VE GOT A DEAL FOR YOU. Any group member can check out a rare, but functional, antique, the TI Phone Modem acoustic coupler. If you have an RS232 interface and a standard telephone (Princess, Trimline, Time-Life Books and Garfield phones won't work, to name but a few), we can put you online and let you in on all the madcap fun of telecommunicating. The package includes the TE-II terminal emulator module and its manual as well as the modem and power supply. Contact me before the next meeting and I'll have the modem there for your pickup.

If you have decided to purchase a modem, don't forget to check out the current deal from our friends at AlphaTech Distributors. They generally offer our members a price break of a couple of bucks on the Avatex 1200 and 1200hc modems, so be sure to mention your association with DTIHCG. Latest rumor is that the Avatex 2400 is not TOO far off, if you're interested in that sort of speed.

And don't forget to give the 99er connection a call at 272-2786. We operate 24 hours a day at either 300 or 1200 baud and look forward to hearing from you and your modem.

    Stubby

SOFTWARE SIG: Dan Johnsen

This month we received our program for the Software SIG meeting in the mail. Totally without provocation of any sort from us, INSCEBOT, Inc. sent our group copies of TI-ARTIST 2.01, DISPLAY MASTER and ARTIST EXTRAS. Now don't get the idea that any old junk that comes in the mail is likely to become a future meeting topic; this stuff is good quality software that stands on its own merits and is worthy of presentation to you (even if we had to PAY for it!).

INSCEBOT (go ahead and try to pronounce it) says they are offering a

special group price schedule to us, but they don't mention their normal prices. No matter, the software is easily worth much more than the $15, $10 and $5 they are asking. Come see it for yourself at 9:00 AM and bring along a couple of bucks to order your own copies; we'll work out a group purchase if there is sufficient interest. If you've never seen TI-ARTIST, I think you'll really like it. See you there!

MY SUPPORT COLUMN: Imogene Osborn

VOLUNTEER EFFORT is what makes our club activities possible. My thanks to ALL who brought systems to FunnelWeb Mini-Sig, and Library Swap.

I think the weather kept some members from our Mini- Sig, but not our VOLUNTEERS! Come Rain or Shine.....

I have been trying to come up with a fair way to divide the Telephone List, maybe by area and exchange prefix? I will try to have this together by next meeting. I would like to have a rotating committee, so that maybe every other month it would be your turn or even better every two months. That would not take up too much time from anyone's schedule. What do you think? I have found that I get to know a lot of nice people that I might not have an opportunity to converse with, sooner this way! I know it makes me enjoy our club so much more with each person I get to know and learn with what interests' he or she may be involved. Seems to make things CLICK!

We have a Mini Sig scheduled for April 3rd. at TDIndustries from 5:15pm to 8:00pm, and a Next Step April 24th. We will need 4 systems for each event. I will be at the back of the room after the Main Meeting with my Volunteer Sign Up Sheets for all of the above mentioned, plus for help at our booth before meetings and also the Telephone Committee.

See you there, and I really appreciate all your help, we all do! We can't do it without you!

STANFILL'S STALL: Mike Stanfill

You may not know Jim Peterson unless you have read almost any of the multitude of newsletters I schlep around to the meetings. He was responsible for the 'Tips from the Tigercub', a very (and I mean VERY) entertaining column that he offered to all the users groups. Free! His columns dealt mostly with programming and it wasn't hard to see that he put an awful lot of time into them. Imagine two pages of very small, four-column type! Every month! Of programming that bordered on the phenomenal. Well, Jim has finally killed the column which is a loss to us all. It all boiled down to economics since the first couple of paragraphs of each 'Tips' advertised his 'Nuts and Bolts' software, disks full of Merge-file utility programs, and since not enough users took the info up on the offer, which resulted in negative cashflow, he decided enough was enough. Some folks may have felt Jim was a bit too mercenary, but not me. I'll miss oggling his amazing programs and many newsletters are going to have to work a lot harder to make up the empty space.

I thank you, Jim, for all your columns and wish you well.

I have taken the liberty of removing all the "Tips" columns I could from the newsletter collection and combined them into one, easy-to-read, folder. Come give it a look-see and, perhaps, check it out. I'll also have a handful of spare "Tips" for you to take and keep for your very own.

See you at the 'Mart!

My top ten reasons for writing programs for the TI99/4A:

(10) It keeps me out of the pool halls.
(9) It eases the grief I've felt ever since they cancelled 'Manimal'.
(8) Because I can't write programs with the vacuum cleaner.
(7) It was that foolish pact I made with the Devil. He said I'd be the
     worlds greatest keyboard player.......
(6) All those TI programs that glut the software stores jus: don't interest
     me all that much.
(5) I love that Downy-fresh softness when I rub them against my body.
     (Oops! That was from the "Why I love baby chicks" list. Sorry.)
(4) I wanna get rich in the FREEWARE market too!
(3) What else can I do when I'm in the bath-tub?
(2) I'm so ashamed by how much better my dog programs on his Commode-door.

AND FINALLY, THE NUMBER ONE REASON THAT I WRITE PROGRAMS ON THE TI99/4A IS:

(1) ALL THOSE FABULOUS BABES!

I hope by now that you've noticed the change in this columns title from the
hastily chosen "Tinygram Times" to the more satirical and tongue-in-chic'
"Funnyweb Farms". But fret not! I'll still be here with my usual Tinygrams for
your dancing and dining pleasure. Speaking of which, this months is actually an
improved (much improved) version of the very first Tinygram printed in this here
newsletter. Tinychar was my first and it has served me well for the past couple
of years but it just needed a little juicing-up, you know what I mean? So now it
uses joystick one to schlep the cursor around and the fire button to place or
erase the pixel of your choice. If you need a good character-definition program
you could do worse than this one. Enjoy patient ones!

```
1 ! *******TINYCHAR********
  *THE JOYSTICK VERSION**
  *******A TINYGRAM*******
  ****BY MIKE STANFILL***
  ****MEMBER DTIHCUG*****
3 CALL CLEAR :: DIM P(65)
4 H=-1 :: CALL COLOR(7,2,2):
: FOR X=2 TO 9 :: FOR Y=2 TO
9 :: V=V+1 :: P(V)=0 :: Q(X,
Y)=V :: NEXT Y :: CALL HCHAR
(X,2,79,8):: NEXT X
5 V=0 :: CALL CHAR(42,0$)::D
ISPLAY AT(11,1):"tinychar"::
"x=hexcode":"s=clear matrix"
: :"* ** *** ";G$
6 CALL JOYST(1,A,W):: X=X-(W
/4):: Y=Y+(A/4):: X=X+(X>9)*
*8-(X<2)*8 :: Y=Y+(Y>9)*8-(Y
<2)*8 :: CALL KEY(1,K,S)
7 H=-H :: CALL SPRITE(#1,79,
H+15,X*8-7,Y*8-7):: IF K=2 T
HEN 4 :: IF K=18 THEN N=-(P(
Q(X,Y))=0):: CALL HCHAR(X,Y,
N+79):: P(Q(X,Y))=N
8 G$="" :: IF K<>0 THEN 6
9 FOR M=0 TO 63 STEP 4 :: R=
P(M+1)+8+P(M+2)*4+P(M+3)*2+P
(M+4):: G$=G$&CHR$((48+R)-(R
>9)*7):: NEXT M :: GOTO 5
```

I would like to thank all of those who contributed to this month's
newsletter. You all did a FANTASTIC job! It's people like you who make the
editor's life much easier. I got a late start putting things together because
of all the weekend activities, in fact it is 3:45 am Friday morning as I write
this column!

To those that had trouble reading last month's issue, I am trying another
style this month. Please let me know if this is any better or worse. I have
done two things: to try and improve the readability: switched from 6 lines per
inch to 5 for the original print, and switched from Near Letter Quality to
Emphasized print. I realize after looking at the reproduction last month that
the NLQ mode is OK for full size originals but it gets rather muddied when doing
reduction. I think this will reproduce much clearer.

That's about it as far as this newsletter goes. Like I said last month,
ANYONE can contribute to this newsletter. Committee chairmanship is not a
prerequisite for being an author. There is a wealth of information out there
that is perfect for reproduction in this forum. I read a lot of it every day
and I'm sure you do as well. Also, I would like to get some more cartoons
relating to computers to use as fillers. They are much better (to me anyway!)
than homegrown graphics.

Since I have a little space left I'll report on all three, that's right
THREE mass buys of blank diskettes the club has made this year. Toward the end
of last year discussion arose in the Executive Committee meeting about where one
could purchase Colored diskettes. After doing some checking around town we
found them to be a little too expensive to consider a mass buy. As it so
happened, the club was running short on regular black disks and decided to
purchase 1000 realizing that it had been a while since we had done a mass buy
and that several library swaps were being planned. I checked around with
several vendors and found BOTH colored disks AND regular black disks at very
good prices. We bought 500 of the colored disks, 50 each of 10 colors, and sold
them in a couple of combinations. I'm pleased to report that as of today we
have sold all but 10 of them.

Now to the black disks, At the same time as the colored disk purchase we
bought 1000 (as I said before) and they have all been either distributed to club
committees (library, D-O-M, BBS, etc) or sold. The week before the last library
swap we were down to less than 200 on hand. So... I trucked over to the disk
store and bought another 1000! I took them all to the library swap and I know at
least 500 were sold there.

Fred Ferreira has volunteered to handle the sales and distribution of disks
in the future. If you need blank disks contact Fred either at the meeting or on
the BBS and he'll take care of you.

Last word about the disks: These disks are lifetime guaranteed Double
Sided, Double Density, made by major manufacturers, not cheap imported junk. I
know several people offer inexpensive disk prices, but I don't think any of them
can match the product we offer! If you have any problems with these disks PLEASE
let me know so we can take care of it. Based on the success of the colored disk
mass buy I suspect we may try to put another one together sometime this year.
Stay tuned for announcements about it.

Until next month,

=gaj=

THE TRADING POST: Any DTIHCG Member

The TRADING POST is a service provided for any non-commercial entity, to buy, sell, or swap any computer related product. Currently the service is available free of charge, and limited only in size to what is reasonable subject to space limitations. Ads will be printed ONCE per request. The deadline for requesting space is the same as the other newsletter columns, two weeks before the Infomart meeting.

FOR SALE: Complete TI-74 Basicalc system, with ALL available software (built-in BASIC, plug in modules for PASCAL and Statistics), cassette interface and recorder, printer +ac adapter, carrying case. ALL NEW with complete documentation and boxes. This is truly the state of the art in pocket microcomputer

        PRICE: $ 400.00 for the complete system
        CALL: Greg Justice
        PHONE: 214-240-6647

*"I know this may be an awkward time,
but do you recall him ever mentioning source code."*

CEOTICS 2

THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY IN COMPUTER SCIENCE: Jim Lasher

CD ROM'S, BY NOW YOU HAVE HEARD OF THE COMPACT DISC THAT ALL THE AUDIOPHILES ARE RAVING ABOUT. AS YOU KNOW IT IS A HI-TECH RECORD PLAYER USING LASER TECHNOLOGY. IF YOU HAVE BEEN IN A RECORD SHOP LATELY, YOU COULDN'T MISS THE STRANGE LOOKING DISCS WHICH REFLECT THE COLORS OF THE RAINBOW. WHAT HAS ALL THIS GOT TO DO WITH COMPUTERS? WELL THOSE VERY DISCS WILL BE SHOWING UP VERY SOON IN PLACE OF HARD DISK DRIVES WITH UP TO 600 MEGABYTES OF STORAGE, THE EQUIVALENT OF 3333.3 DSSD DISKS ON 4.7 INCH LASER DISC. THE ARTICLE IN POPULAR SCIENCE, FEB. 1985, SAID THAT THE FIRST ONES WILL BE ROMS WITH DATA SLANTED TOWARD BUSINESSES, INFORMATION FIRMS ETC. NEXT MONTH A LOOK AT MOLECULAR AND ORGANIC COMPUTERS.