



DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

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Volume 10, Number 5

MAY 1990

This newsletter is the official publication of the DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER USERS GROUP, a non-profit organization serving the member/users of the Texas Instruments 99/4A HOME COMPUTER. For more information you are cordially invited to attend our next meeting or send a S.A.S.E. to:
DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP
 P.O. Box 29863
 Dallas, Tx. 75229

*****NEXT MEETING*****
Saturday, May 12, 1990
at the Dallas Infomart

+-----+
 Phone the 99er Connection BBS \$
 24 Hours, 300/1200/2400 baud \$
 214-233-1750 \$
 +-----+

INSIDE THE INTERFACE:

French Connection - Latchkey
 How Do You Use Your TI - Remote Access
 Take A Bow - The Value Of A TI
 Next Step Report



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Member of the
 Computer Council of Dallas

CCD Information Line: 746-3297

FIRST CLASS



OFFICERS

 * DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP *
 * MAY / JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS *

- SATURDAY 5 1st SATURDAY SIDEWALK SALE?
- FRIDAY 11
 5:30 pm Welcome Dinner at WYATT'S
 Josey Ln at Belt Line
 Bud Mills guest of honor
- SATURDAY 12 SUPER SATURDAY at INFOMART
 9:00 am Business Meeting
 9:30 am D'IHCG hardware auction
 9:40 am Open Forum
 10:00 am Main Program: Guest Speaker
 BUD MILLS on the Horizon
 Ram Disc (HRD)
 11:45 am Vendors/Lunch/activities sign-up
 Activities sign-up
 1:00 pm Special Sig: Guest Speaker
 BUD MILLS on memory expansion
 for the P-Gram card
- SUNDAY 13 MOTHER'S DAY
- MONDAY 14 CCD Corporate Director's Meeting
- SATURDAY 19 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
 at Mr Gatti's at SE corner
 of Marsh Walnut Hill
 1:30 pm Officer's Meeting
 2:30 pm Chairman's Meeting
 5:00 pm Recess and Pizza
- FRIDAY 25
 5:15 pm REX: STEP Technical Assistance
 Meeting : Morton Hospital cafe
 Research Row and Harry Hines
 10:00 pm Newsletter Article Deadline
 10:00 pm INFOMART room request due at CCD
- MONDAY 28 MEMORIAL DAY

- SATURDAY 2 1st Saturday Sidewalk Sale?
- SATURDAY 9 SUPER SATURDAY at INFOMART
 GUEST SPEAKERS
 CHRIS and DENNIS FAHERTY
- MONDAY 10 CCD DIRECTORS MEETING
- SATURDAY 16 EC MEETING (LOCATION TBA)
- SUNDAY 17 FATHER'S DAY
- THURSDAY 21 SUMMER BEGINS
- FRIDAY 22 NEXT STEP Assistance Meeting

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NEXT-STEP CHAIRMAN	ROSS WHITMORE	(214)-352-3889
B-E-S-T BOOK CHAIRMAN		

These people are the Club's officers and chairpersons. They all are invited to, and most attend, the three hour Committee Chairmen's Meeting (the officers meet for an hour and a half before that!) on the Saturday one week after the INFOMART meeting. In addition to just belonging, they serve themselves, and you, by giving freely of their time to make this a better club for us all.

Thank them individually, if you have the opportunity.

Consider this, as long as software remains in the \$20 to \$40 range and the capabilities continue to expand ... why consider anything but the expansion of the 4A? Based on the my estimated DTIHCG average user requirements Funnelweb, TI-Base, TI-Artist, MULTIPLAN, and TELCO should meet or exceed most user requirements.

The entry fee to enter the DOS community is approximately \$1,800.00; however, of that only about \$500.00 to \$600.00 is new money if you have upgraded your 4A to its full potential.

The real question is "What do you use your 4A for?" With that question in hand, our programs could be aimed at the most frequently used programs and their applications. Is it word processing for personal use or business correspondence? Is it database management for personal tax accounting or business for customer lists? Is it electronic spreadsheets for personal budgeting or business performance models? Is it TI-Artist+ for personal entertainment, i.e. birthday cards, maps to parties, etc. or business useage for organizational charts and project flow charts? Is it communications programs for accessing local BBS's; i.e. 99er Connection and NET99 or accessing subscriber services; i.e. CompuServe, Genie, STARTEXT, and Delphi for business research and national Email service. Is it scheduler programs for keeping personal calendars or business appointments and expense reports? Your DIRECT INPUT is what will determined the schedule for the 1990 programs ... do your part.

TAKE A BOW! BY SHARON REDDICK

Again this month we are highlighting another outstanding volunteer - Jim Leshar.

You'll never see him at Super Saturday INFOMART meetings as he is in the basement manning his vendors table. However, he is one of the groups most active members. For example, if anyone needs anything during a Super Saturday meeting, he gladly loans what is needed so that the presentations can go on.

Jim is a regular Next-Step attendee and always brings a system for us to use for demonstrations or instruction sessions. He brings new programs and versions of software to next step to help keep us up to date. He even brings cookies and other treats to tempt us!

He refers new members to the group. If you have a questions or problem and he can't help, he will direct you to those who can. He even writes newsletter articles!

Jim is a long time Dallas resident and has been active in the 99/4A community for many years. He is married and has grown children.

We appreciate what you do for us Jim. Thanks and TAKE A BOW!

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Hello everyone, and welcome again to an other installment of "THE FRENCH CONNECTION".

As of publication of this newsletter, what has become an institution among computer hackers and electronic do-it-yourselfers, is facing possible dismemberment. For those who make the monthly trek to "First Saturday" the specter of the flea market's demise is more than purely academic. A lot of folks have started to rely upon the wide variety of electronic components offered for sale (components that range from old electronic tubes to full fledged computers) and it has really be a seemingly unextinguishable source of all sorts of spare parts. But now the City of Dallas has decided (it seems) to "crack down" on the monthly garage sale and stamp it out of existence. The first suggestion was to fence the area under an expressway bridge where the vendors set up to prevent the offender to "degrade" that prime piece property. The gatherings continued. Now hints are being forwarded that citations might be handed out to those who are disregarding the City's warning. Perhaps the fact that this is a grass root gathering from which the City is not collecting any taxes is more to blame than any of the reasons of aesthetics stated by the City. And just maybe that the City of Dallas is somewhat hoping that some generous business will come forward and underwrite the whole deal, thus making it a profitable venture for the City. Whatever the reasons, this hardly looks like the decisions of a City interested in the revitalization of the downtown area. I am convinced that the "First Saturday" sale will exist in the future in some form. It might simply change it's address. We should know more later.....

Now, with this off of my chest, I want to thank and congratulate Jim Stewart and Billy Monroe for putting on a great show during our April INFOMART meeting. Jim's demonstration on how to configure your Funnelweb program was the best I had ever seen, and even I, a "veteran" of Funnelweb learned a few things....

Then there was the entertaining look at the offerings of the cartridge and cassette library as presented by our illustrious chairman, Billy. Thank you both very much.

THE VALUE OF A TI 99/4A

What's Your TI 99/4A Worth?
by David Axberg

Last month I took a look at the relative hardware and software value of our TI 99/4A vs the (I)tty (B)itty (M)achine - XT/AT variety. I realize that some of the pricing was based on "best guess". However, it was only intended to illustrate the options available to the TI 99/4A user and an approximate price for the hardware and software identified. It is true that with some time and due diligence you could probably better the illustrative prices ... and I hope the article has prompted you bargain hunters to seek out some of the more sophisticated equipment identified for the enhancement of your own systems.

There are some significant "in-common" components of the sophisticated TI 99/4A system configuration and the clone configuration. First there is the monitor. The 99/4A with the use of the Mechatronics or DIJIT 80 column capability allows the utilization of a RGB analog monitor. This same monitor may be used with most clone systems where a VGA color/graphics board is installed. This is classified as the mid-resolution (mid-res) display capability.

It should be noted that the installation of the DIJIT System Advanced Video Processor Card (AVPC) requires modification of the mother board in the console. However, it also allows the card to be placed in the Peripheral Expansion Box (PEB). The Mechatronics "sidecar" configuration requires no modification to any component of the 99/4A configuration and has only a "plug-in" requirement. Each of these components utilize the TMS 9938 video processor chip. This is the same chip used by the MYARC 9640 that gives it the 256 colors and the VGA level display graphics capabilities.

Second is the XT/AT 101 enhanced keyboard. The Rave99 interface board which is installed in the 99/4A console and displaces the existing keyboard. This allows the use of the clone keyboard. In the Rave99 documentation it is made VERY CLEAR there are TWO types of keyboards supported. One is the Rave99 "105" keyboard. The other is the "XT 101" enhanced keyboard. This is EXTREMELY important because each keyboard has its own version of the EPROM on the interface board. THE KEYBOARDS ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE unless you change the EPROM.

USING YOUR TI 99/4A

What do you use your 4A for?
by David Axberg

The real question is "What do you use your 4A for?" With that question in hand our programs could be aimed at the most frequently used programs and their applications. Is it word processing for personal use or business correspondence?

We have and a number of Mini-SIG's on TI-Writer and last week Jim Stewart did a brilliant job of explaining how to configure the new 4.21 version of Funnelweb. Should we have more information on this topic? How about submitting questions or identifying your most common problem in using your word processor?

Is it database management for personal tax accounting or business for customer lists? The group has gone through a metamorphosis of different database programs. First it was Personal Record Keeper (PRK), then it was PRBase, now it is TI-BASE. We have two of the most knowledgeable people anywhere here in our group Jon Hodges and Jim Stewart. And the June morning program is TI-Base by its author Dennis Faherty.

Is it electronic spreadsheets for personal budgeting or business performance models? Again, we have had a number of Mini-SIG's and programs illustrating the applications and procedures of the MULTIPLAN software ... but we may need to refresh memories or show the newcomers what it can do; let me know. We may do the same thing as suggested on the wordprocessor ... send in your questions or problems and we will publish them.

Is it TI-Artist+ for personal entertainment, i.e. birthday cards, maps to parties, etc. or business useage for organizational charts and project flow charts? This program has always been a mystery to me. Since I am not artistically talented, I must deal with TI-Artist in its most fundamental capabilities. I am looking forward to our June afternoon program with Chris Faherty, the author of TI-Artist, TI-Artist+, and Display Master to show us some of the secrets of working with computer graphics.

Is it communications programs for accessing local BBS's; i.e. 99er Connection and NET99 or accessing subscriber services; i.e. CompuServ, GEmie, STARTEXT, and Delphi for business research and national Email service. Last Febuary, we reviewed an overview of the programs TELCO, Fast-Term, and TI Terminal Emulator II. The purpose was to demonstrate the highlights of each of the software programs and the likes and dislikes of each. I have had a number of comments pertaining to users wanting more information about how the program worked, i. e. more information on the procedures associated with the operation of each of the programs. I need to know if this needs to be addressed as a program or simply a question and answer session.

Is it scheduler programs for keeping personal calendars or business appointments and expense reports? I have a tentative program for the review of Remind Me, Schedule Master, and Calendar for the month of July. I am anxious to see who uses calendars and how. This could be a fun program based on the current or anticipated use of these programs. I will be in more close contact on this one.

Your DIRECT INPUT is what will determined the schedule for the 1990 programs. The presentations to date have been of extraordinary quality. Jim Stawaart, Hugh McKnight, Billy Monroe, John Creviston, Terry Notley and Barry Boone have provided us with informative, entertaining, and thought provoking programs. I have truly enjoyed the result of their efforts.

In the months ahead, we can expect Bud Mills to share with us "Expanded uses for the RAMdisk", Jennis Faherty will demonstrate his new TI-Base version 3.0, and Chris Faherty will give us "The Secret of TI-Artist+". Still pending is the confirmation of Chris Bobbit of ASGARD and Tom Spillane of DIJIT Systems. Now is the time to be part of our group. Passive membership simply means that the active members enjoy the use of your membership dues. Be a part of the action. The more you do the more you learn, and isn't that part of why you joined? See you at Super Saturday!!!

FAST TERM MOD by Jim Stewart

When Fast Term comes up on my screen, the Flashing S annoys me, because it doen rot agree with the 1200 baud my mcdem operates at. But I've been too lazy to change it....well, not so much lazy as ignorant. Luckily John Creviston told me how to edit it, and it is really simple. First load your Disk Utils program and determine if your Fast Term program is listed as FT and FU or if there is a third part titled FV. Once you know this, load the Find String option under File Utilities in Disk Utils. You will need to tell it the name of the file, which drive the Fast Term program resides, and that it is an ASCII string you are searching for. Type in "DSK1." and ignore the second prompt for now. Enter. Next press enter again to accept the E default for Edit. Now you can use the arrow keys to position and correct the S to F, or the drive number could be changed if necessary, but only in the second DSK. location. As soon as you are satisfied with your change, press Control W and enter. Next use Function 9 to return to the menu, and you have completed this modification. Easy when you know how...right?

LATCH KEY by Jim Stewart

We gladly welcome 3 new Members and 2 Guests during April. Herbert Kelly is a unique addition to our Users Group. He is a raconteur, business man, tax expert and a computer neophyte. He may also be too busy to get to our meetings for a while, but we are glad to have him join us.

Even with Mattie Bush and Mary Leard greeting visitors and members, I didn't get to spend as much time as I would have liked with our two newest members. John Di Prima of Cedar Hill is fairly experienced with the 99/4A and is mainly interested in Word Processing, Business and Educational type programs. He has a 1200 baud modem, so we can expect to see him on TIBBS very soon.

Jerry Cockerham of Grand Prairie has moderate experience with the 99/4A, and won't make our meetings at times due to a work conflict. He has similar interests to John Di Prima, and has a 300 baud modem, so we can also look for Jerry on TIBBS soon. Jerry will be using TE2, so someone should help him get started with FAST TERM, which is certainly a better communications program.

Jeffrey Kuhlmann from Temple, TX attended our April meeting, and we hope he feels it was worth the trip. We did not get the chance to talk to Jeffrey to learn his primary interests, but we hope to hear more from him, possibly returning as a Guest, or in time even joining the DTIHCG.

Susan Thompson just bought a TI 99/4A in a garage sale and heard about our group way down in Austin. We are pleased to welcome Susan as a Guest, though far away, and will try to learn how we might provide support services not available to her in Austin.

Please be on the look-out for these new members and guests. Offer them the help we have all received, passing along the thrill and satisfaction in learning how to work with and sometimes even to master our beloved little computer. There are bigger and faster machines around, but none of them are as much fun to own and operate as the TI 99/4A. Good Computing!

PYRAMID POWER! BY CHARLICE ALTHAR

PYRAMID POWER PHONE LIST A familiar problem in most volunteer organizations is getting information out to members by means other than the regular newsletter. In past years, DTIHCG has used a Telephone Committee, primarily consisting of Jim Stewart and Imogene Osborn, to notify members of special events, etc. Can you imagine making 30+ phone calls to members? That's the kind of effort and time that has been spent by each of these valuable volunteers regarding many of our meetings and special events. Necessity being the mother of invention, these 2 members have come up with a way to share this responsibility with many more of our members. The result is our new "PYRAMID POWER PHONE LIST". Here's how it works: We currently have 37 members on the list as "callers"; other members are "callees". As our membership continues to grow, additional names will be added to the "caller" list. Each printed list is dated in the top right corner--when you receive a new one, discard any old ones! When our members need to be contacted, our President, Thierry Weber, begins the process by contacting the other 4 officers. He's the only person who has to make more than 3 phone calls! From there, each "caller" calls 3 others. Within a very short time, with minimal effort from any one person, each member is contacted.

If you are a "caller", when you receive a call that "the phone list is being activated", here are a few suggestions to follow:

1. Call the people listed to the right of your name on the list. Be friendly, identify yourself both by name and as calling from DTIHCG.
2. Give the reason for the call, and ask the person to call the people on their list if they are also "callers".
3. Make a note of any input you may receive.
4. If you can't reach someone within a reasonable time, please call the people they should call, so the chain won't be broken.
5. Please give us any suggestions you have to make this PYRAMID POWER more effective!

The officers of DTIHCG appreciate your help. We feel that asking many members to spend a small amount of time and make 3 phone calls once a month or so is a big improvement over asking 2 or 3 members to spend a great deal of time making a great many calls. Let us know what you think of our PYRAMID POWER. Your comments and suggestions are needed!

RESEARCHERS ARE BOOLISH TOO!

By Carney Mimms

Searching for information on-line is an entirely different skill from most forms of conventional research, largely because its principal tools are the principles of Boolean logic. As everyone who has used the "find" or "search" (or "change") features of a word processing program knows, all the computer can do is search for the strings of characters you give it. None of the complex associations that form in your mind as you skim or browse through printed material, however casually, will ever occur to the computer. No matter how often the computer is asked to search for information about "dogs" or "weather" or "philosophy" it will not begin to learn about fleas, thunderstorms, or Weltanschauungs. Leaving aside for the time being the brave new world of expert systems and other rule-based programs, searching for information on-line, that is to say looking for your needle in the vast haystack of citations and text, becomes a matter of trying to make intelligent guesses about what words are likely to be used by people writing about your subject. The tools that you use for broadening and narrowing the scope of your search are the familiar Boolean AND, OR and NOT.

To take a simple example, suppose you wished to search for articles containing information about dogs or cats, you would simply ask for articles that contain both the word "dogs" and also contain the word "cats". You might find this too general to suit you and decide that you were not interested in information about dogs or cats as pets. In Boolean terms, this would be expressed as ("dogs" OR "cats") NOT "pets".

As Art Byers article indicates, you can carry out combinations of these three logical operations to any level of depth you can express, right up to the point of incomprehensibility, for example:

((D OR E) AND F) OR (G OR (H NOT I))) AND A

Future articles will explain how to exploit the power of Boolean logic to get the information you want without getting lost in the logic searches like the above.

