DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

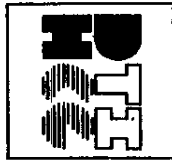Volume 14, Number 4   April, 1994

This newsletter is the official publication of the DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, a non-profit organization serving our members and other 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

Reprints of our articles are allowed, but must give credit to DTIHCG and be complete.

NEXT MEETING
Saturday, April 23, 1994
at the Dallas INFOMART
I-35 E at the Oak Lawn Exit

DTIHCG'S APRIL EVENTS

23   DFW XCHANGE SATURDAY at INFOMART
         Oak Lawn @ Stemmons
         Time: 9:00 AM
         Program: "Cyc"
23   EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
         Who: All Officers and Chairpersons
         Time: Following XCHANGE SATURDAY meeting

DTIHCG'S MAY EVENTS

6   NEXT STEP
         JOJO's off Stemmons Fwy (I-35 E)
         1415 Motor Street, 5:15 PM
6   NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE
7   1st Saturday Sidewalk Sale
         Ross Ave at Central Exp., 5:00 AM
8   Mother's Day
21   DFW XCHANGE SATURDAY at INFOMART
         Oak Lawn @ Stemmons Fwy. (I-35 E)
         Time: 9:00 AM
         Program: To be announced
21   EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
         Who: All Officers and Chairpersons
         Time: Following XCHANGE SATURDAY meeting
30   Memorial Day

OLD DSK1.

By Dan Lowe

WHEW!!!

Yes, that's exactly the way I feel. As I sit here at my computer trying to think positive (after all, I'm the one who's always saying . . ."Accentuate the positive") I can't help but wonder what's going on here. It's 35 degrees outside and it's Springtime already (I know it is because my bod is still suffering from setting the clock up one hour); I've just completed my income tax and I still owe; my truck needs to go into the repair shop AGAIN, not only for mechanical repair but to remove the black paint that someone sprayed along the side; and, the final insult, the city failed to pick up my garbage yesterday. Maybe I just should have stayed in bed, ALL WEEK!

Well now, after letting off some steam, I do feel better so on with this tome. If you were present at our last Infomart meeting you'll remember our discussion regarding the "social" aspects of our group. This discussion was the result of a letter received from one of our former members in which he described our group as "excellent," but also somewhat "social" in nature. Well, after some discussion, the group was in general agreement that "yes, we are somewhat social," but that seems to be the "glue" that holds this group together. And while we do socialize at our NEXT-STEP meetings we also fix printers (Kennedy), disk drives (Johnson), and try to unravel disk programs (Lowe). In addition, at the EC meetings (held after the close of the Infomart meeting, after lunch), we discuss and try to resolve issues pertaining to the group. So, I guess it just depends upon one's perspective, coupled with what each of us expects from the group. Announcements and demonstrations of new products for the 99/4A, YES; programs demonstrating new games/utilities for the 99/4A, YES; but, at the same time, if we can come together as a group, bring our families and break bread at JoJo's or Ryan's and have a GREAT time in the process, why not!

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

"Thanks" to Jim Stewart for his program at last month's Infomart meeting about his experiences with the 4A, and "Thanks" to M&M (Mattie Bush and Mary Leard) for their presentation of some of Ken Gilliland's work. If you missed this one you missed an informative and entertaining show. Jim Stewart led off the program by posing the question "Why do we keep coming back to DTIHCG; why do we keep

coming to the meetings?" Jim says he believes it's the emotional impact that the 99/4A has had on our lives over the years, PLUS . . . "The THRILL of victory and the AGONY of defeat." In other words, it's the thrill of having your program that you just completed actually work the first time you run it, OR, the agony of trying to discover why it didn't. He went on to describe how he had justified to his wife his first computer purchase, assuring her that after his first initial investment, that he would NEVER SPEND MORE THAT $100 from then on. As Jim said (amid howls of laughter from the audience) . . . "That was ONE estimate I sure missed; it was an interesting experience." He told several other interesting stories about his adventures with the TI, including the time he had several high-paid geophysical/geological engineers standing in line at a convention just to play a game on the 99/4A. As Jim continued, "These guys were accustomed to working with computers valued in the millions, but here they were, standing in line to play a game on the 99/4A". Jim concluded his portion of the program by saying, "I think you'll agree with me we only really started to learn about our computers when we found DTIHCG. Before that, we played games and experimented, but we really didn't have the opportunity to learn a lot about our computers until DTIHCG. And so, in closing. I guess my answer to the question 'Why do we keep coming back' is because we are committed to try and pay back that which has been given to us along the way."

FONTS AND BORDERS

The next act to take front and center stage was M&M (Mattie Bush and Mary Leard). These two ladies, working as a team, presented a fascinating display of the use of fonts and borders for letters, pages, and logos. With Mary sitting at the computer punching the keys Mattie described the graphic display of many different computer punching the keys Mattie described the graphic display of many different fonts and borders, ALL created by Mary "all by her lonesome." As Mattie explained to the group . . . "She (Mary) called me one afternoon last week so excited that I couldn't understand a word she was saying. I do believe her excitement was an example of what Jim Stewart referred to as 'emotional impact'."
Mary had written the codes and utilized the fonts and borders from programs authored by Ken Gilliland of Notung Software, and she had used TI Artist to convert instances to pixs. And, as if that weren't accomplishment enough, Mary also inserted captions on many of the pixs. Everyone really enjoyed the presentation as evidenced by the audience applause. One old-timer was overheard to say, "I think that Mary is a goldmine just waiting to be discovered."

TRUE OR FALSE

In last month's newsletter I wrote about the BIG JOKE that was going around in the TI community about a computer known as the TI-99/5A. Well, after reading an article written by Glenn Bernasek appearing in the April 1994 issue of the

CLEVELAND AREA TI-99/4A USER GROUPS newsletter I may have to eat some humble pie. Based upon information received by Glenn, the TI-99/5A does indeed exist and Glenn has photographs to prove it. Seems that there were only ten of these computers made, a rare item. So, if you ever come across one at a flea market or a garage sale, GET IT. You could wind up with a very collectable and valuable piece of TI history.

Guess thats all for now, so I'll leave you with this thought:

"Laugh and The World Laughs With You; Snore, and You Sleep Alone!

NEXT STEP REPORT

by Charlice Althar

April 8 was the date of our most recent NEXT STEP, with a lively group carrying on in the usual fashion, giving and receiving help while having a great time.

JACKIE and LOUIS GUION have been relocating all of the 4/A equipment used in the operation of our 99'ER CONNECTION BBS, and were detailing some of the many difficulties encountered in the process. LOUIS says, "Don't ever turn the P-Box off!"

Quite a discussion was going on between JACKIE, ROBERT, TOM, IMOGENE, CARL, and others regarding the pros and cons of UPS delivery and Priority Mail service by the U. S. Postal Service, including delivery techniques by each, time required, and guarantees. Did I hear someone say that the U.S. Mail guarantees "overnight delivery" to be delivered in 48 hours? I've been looking for a way to get more hours into a day/night, maybe they've got the answer!

JIM and DAN were overheard talking about the advantages, disadvantages, and costs of the DELPHI and GENIE BBS, while ROBERT and CHARLICE talked about converting TI-WRITER DV/80 files to ASCII files which can be used on a "clone" machine.

ROBERT and JIM worked on TOM'S modem, which now seems to be functioning without its previous difficulties. JAMES HOYLE and JIM discussed building materials, gardening, and wages, and JAMES told of his problems in moving from a 3000 sq. ft. house to a 1200 sq. ft. house necessitating a tremendou amount of attic storage, resulting in his "house compression algorithm", by which means he has

DTIHCG ACTIVITIES

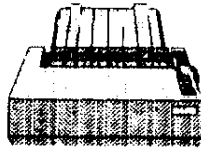## April 17 - May 28, 1994

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Apr 17 *IMOGENE OSBORN IS A KEY MEMBER*	Apr 18 ◑ FQ Patriots Day	Apr 19	Apr 20	Apr 21	Apr 22 It may rain today	Apr 23 *Xchange Saturday* 1:00p EC Meeting
Apr 24 Jim Lesher is our Resident TI99/4a Dealer Phone 821-9274	Apr 25 ○ FM Robinson Crusoe published 1719	Apr 26	Apr 27 Professional Secretaries Day	Apr 28 Happy Birthday - Catherine Lowe	Apr 29 Happy Birthday - Jim Stewart	Apr 30
COME TO NEXT-STEP FOR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE HELP						
May 1	May 2 ◐ LQ	May 3	May 4	May 5	May 6 **NEXT-STEP** Newsletter deadline Room Reservation 5:15p Jo-Jo's on Motor Street	May 7 *1st Saturday Sidewalk Sale* 4:53a Sunrise
May 8 *Mother's Day*	May 9	May 10 ● NM	May 11	May 12	May 13	May 14
DTIHCG REUNION IN OCTOBER - SPREAD THE WORD						
May 15	May 16	May 17	May 18 ◑ FQ	May 19	May 20	May 21 *Xchange Saturday Armed Forces Day*
May 22	May 23	May 24 ○ FM VICTORIA DAY (Canada)	May 25	May 26	May 27	May 28 *EC MEETING*
BOSS' WEEK						

HAVE YOU CALLED THE 99'er TODAY?   (214) 233-1750 - 24 HOURS

BEGINNER PRINTER

Block Graphics

Welcome to the fascinating world of BLOCK GRAPHICS.

This program should work on any printer. The characters used to print the blocks may be different on some printers, so you can look in your manual and find the proper number to use for the solid blocks. Or you may prefer another character other than blocks. Here is where your imagination can flourish, try some of the other characters in your printer to make these larger characters. What about a nice OMEGA symbol, etc.

For those who want to understand the mechanics of the program, this is what is taking place. Line 120 is using a U 1 to put the printer into a "unidirectional mood, yes MOOD. The reason is, the printer in this mode makes straighter columns. I tried it in bi-directional an it looks awful. Guess our printers are not precise enough to make straight columns in bi-directional, yet.

In line 130 "A" CHR$(6) tells the printer to use a line spacing of 6/72 inch or 1/12th inch, which makes the blocks touch each other vertically. We put line 140 in there to save paper. After printing something in the left column, you can bring up the line in edit mode and place a number in place of the (00) to move your creation over to where ever you want. To know exactly what number to use in there is determined by the number in line 160, the number 12 is the number of columns in your graphic, so you would want to start your next graphic somewhere beyond that. Like if you wanted your two graphics to touch each other, you would place a 13 in the Parentheses, (13) in line 140.

Line 150 is reading the 9 DATA lines at the bottom of the program. You can put many more lines of data in the program, just don't forget to change the 9 to how many lines you have and you can use many more columns also and there you would want to change the 12 to a larger number in line 160. If this is all too confusing and you want to understand this, call me after 6 PM week days and hope you can catch me on weekends. :) Then of course, line 160 counts the number of pieces of info in each Data line, and 170 reads the data lines and line 180 tells the printer what to print.

Looking at the DATA lines, we see the number 224, and in your users manual, page 237 in the 10X manual, it is blank. The numbers 239 you see are of course the solid blocks, hence the term BLOCK GRAPHICS.

Next time we will show you how to design your picture in TI-WRITER and then merge it into the program for printing.

Oh, BTW, this program was lifted out of the Gemini 10X owner's manual on page 173 and modified a little for this article.

```
100 CALL CLEAR
110 OPEN #1:"PIO"
120 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"U";CHR$(1
)
130 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"A";CHR$(6
)
140 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"M";CHR$(0
0)
150 FOR J-1 TO 09
160 FOR I-1 TO 12
170 READ A
180 PRINT #1:CHR$(A);
190 NEXT I
200 PRINT #1:" "
210 NEXT J
220 PRINT #1:CHR$(27);"";
230 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,239,224,239,239
240 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,234,224,233,239
250 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,239,224,239
260 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,224,224,239
270 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,224,224,239
280 DATA 239,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,224,224,239
290 DATA 239,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,224,224,239
300 DATA 239,224,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,224,224,239
310 DATA 239,239,239,224,224,239
,224,239,224,224,224,239
```

Should you need any help call or write to:

Jim Lesher / 722 Huntley / Dallas TX 75214 / or call 214-821-9274

TERMS FOR BULLETIN BOARD USERS

by Tom Wills
(reprinted from SouthWest Ninety-Niners/Jun '93)

The following are some of the BBS terminology as listed in the newsletter section of Cactus Patch. Not all terms are listed here due to space constraints. However, the terms listed here are terms that all users of bulletin boards should be somewhat familiar with. Strictly IBM terms are not included in this listing. I thought it would be interesting to look a little closer at the terms we use every day when telecommunicating.

ARC/Archive - A set of related files that have been compressed into one file. Also a program to perform the compression and un-compression. First developed by Barry Traver and then enhanced by Barry Boone.

ASCII - *American Standard Code for Information Interchange*. The standard code that uses 7 of the 8 bits in a byte to represent characters.

Asynchronous Transmission - The sending of data where the time lapse between characters varies. Start and stop bits are necessary to signal the start and end of characters so that each character is recognized.

Auto Answer - A feature that allows the modem to answer incoming phone calls without user intervention (the phone line goes directly from the wall to the computer).

Auto Dial - A feature whereby you can dial a phone number from your computer without using a telephone; the dialing tones are generated by the modem that is attached to the phone line.

Baud Rate - The speed of data transmission. Roughly equivalent to the number of bits per second being transmitted over a communications line. Modems generally operate at 300, 1200, or 2400 baud. 1200 baud would refer to 1200 bits per second being transmitted over a phone line by a modem, roughly 20-25 words per second.

Carrier - A continuous frequency signal created by the modem that carries a data signal between communicating computers over phone lines. A "no carrier" message means no connection.

Connect - A message verifying that you have established connection with another computer.

Download - Receive a file from another computer via a modem.

Echo - The appearance of characters (from your computer) on your screen. Full Duplex means that the characters are remotely echoed from the receiving computer; Half Duplex means that the characters are entered directly from your keyboard.

Full Duplex - Information is traveling to and from two separate systems at the same time (similar to talking on a telephone).

Half Duplex - Information travels in only one direction at a time between two systems. Transmission is alternated to allow two-way data flow. (An example of half duplex communications is a CB radio.)

Library - The collection of public domain and faireware software available to authorized BBS callers for downloading.

Logging Off - The communications exchange sequence necessary to finish a communications session with an electronic bulletin board. Abbreviated as LOG OFF on some systems.

Logging On - The opening sequence of communications necessary to begin a session on an electronic bulletin board. Abbreviated as LOG ON on some systems.

Menu - A selection of options for operating the computer.

Modem - (MOdulator/DEModulator). A device used to transfer data via telephone lines. The modem transforms binary signals from the computer into analog signals suitable for transmission over phone lines. In return, it receives signals over phone lines and demodulates them into binary signals that your computer understands.

On-Line - The state of being connected to a remote computer. You can access on-line files while connected to a bulletin board system.

Password - The secret word that you use to gain access to a bulletin board and to some BBS functions.

Protocols - The rules that standards committees set forth in standards documents, and programmers and hardware manufacturers agree to follow, so that there can be compatibility between different sources of hardware and software.

RS-232 or RS-232C - The standard computer hardware interface used for computer asynchronous communications connections.

Serial Communications - The transmission of data one bit at a time over a single electronic path line. Modems are serial communications devices, as opposed to parallel transmission, which uses parallel electronic paths to send characters. Data sent to most printers is in parallel form.

Synchronous Transmission - Data communications where the data bits in characters are sent at standard, fixed intervals. No stop and start bits are needed.

SYSOP - Bulletin Board SYStem OPerator, the person who runs and maintains a bulletin board.
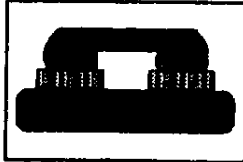
Terminal Mode - When a microcomputer acts not as a separate processor but as a keyboard and screen attached to a remote computer. This is done by a program called a terminal emulator.

Upload - To send a file to another computer via a modem.

User Group - An organization of microcomputer users with similar interests.

XMODEM - A protocol for transferring blocks of data via modem with a high degree of accuracy.

XON/XOFF - Protocol for controlling the flow of data. If you dial into a timesharing system in which many users simultaneously use the same computer and if the system is about to overflow, it will send an XOFF character to your computer. The XON character will be sent to you when the system is ready to receive again.

DO YOU REMEMBER ... ?

by Bill Gaskill, reprinted from the Lima, Ohio 99/4A User's Group Newsletter.

The "99/4A NATIONAL ASSISTANCE GROUP" claimed to be there to help us and provide us with new and innovative products, but they turned out to be a commercial venture that offered virtually nothing new and little that was innovative or even original. Remember when they promised us the Super Computer 99/8 Upgrade, which was supposed to be available in August 1985. What a joke! No loss when this Ft. Lauderdale Co. went belly up.

1994 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	DAN LOWE	214-276-0240
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TREASURER	MATTIE BUSH	214-637-4937
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NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE	TOM HALL	817-267-5987
NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE	JIM LESHER	214-821-9274

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SOFTWARE LIBRARIAN	ROBERT WATTS	214-353-9824
VIDEO LIBRARIAN	ROBERT SMITH	903-693-5568

These are your DTIHCG Officers and Chairpersons. They help themselves and you by giving their time and efforts to make this a better club for all of us. If you'd like to become more involved, please let our President, Dan Lowe, know what you'd like to do.

Please take the time to thank these people individually for their efforts. It makes their jobs more rewarding.