

# DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

Volume 14, Number 5

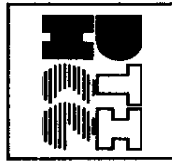
May, 1994

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

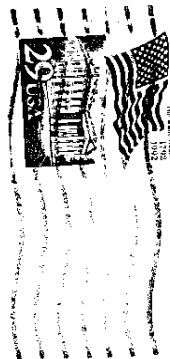
Reprints of our articles are allowed, but must give credit to DTIHCG and be complete.

\*\*\*NEXT MEETING\*\*\*  
Saturday, May 21, 1994  
at the Dallas INFOMART  
I-35 E at the Oak Lawn Exit



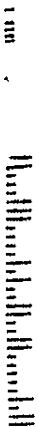
DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP  
P.O. BOX 29863  
DALLAS, TX 75229

\*\*\*ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED\*\*\*



FIRST CLASS

PHONE THE 99'ER CONNECTION BBS  
24 Hours, 300/1200/2400 Baud  
(214) 233-1750



## DTIHCG'S MAY EVENTS

- 21 DFW XCHANGE SATURDAY at INFOMART  
Oak Lawn @ Stemmons  
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—remember to Fly Your Flag!



## DTIHCG'S JUNE EVENTS

- 3 NEXT STEP  
JOJO's off Stemmons Fwy (I-35 E)  
1415 Motor Street, 5:15 PM
- 3 NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE
- 4 1st Saturday Sidewalk Sale  
Ross Ave. at Central Exp., 5:00 AM
- 14 Flag Day—remember to Fly Your Flag!
- 18 DFW XCHANGE SATURDAY at INFOMART  
Oak Lawn @ Stemmons Fwy. (I-35 E)  
Time: 9:00 AM  
Program: To be announced
- 18 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Who: All Officers and Chairpersons  
Time: Following XCHANGE SATURDAY meeting
- 19 Father's Day
- 21 First Day of Summer

## OLD DSK1.

By Dan Lowe



Last month I started off my article with a reference to the fact that although it is now Spring it is still cold outside - 35 degrees. Well, guess what, it is still Spring outside but it has warmed up to 45 degrees. How about that; a change of only 10 degrees. If this trend keeps up we just might have a really cool summer. Wouldn't that be nice; just cool, balmy summer days without the 100-degree plus days. But don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. This cool weather, although unusual, is still very nice. And if I get too cool, I can always turn up the heat.

If you were at our last INFOMART meeting (Saturday, April 23, 1994) you will remember that we were a little late getting started. As a matter of fact, we've been a "little late getting started" more than once. Some of our DTIHCG members like to attend more than one meeting, or least drop in on other group meetings going on at the same time as ours. Therefore, we need to make every effort to start our DTIHCG meeting ON TIME, at 9:00 AM. Accordingly, I'm revising our meeting schedule as follows:

- 9:00 - 9:30 Q/A Session; Library Checkout; Activity Sign-up
- 9:30 - 10:00 Business Meeting and Open Forum Discussions
- 10:00 - 10:30 Break; Visit Vendor Area Downstairs
- 10:30 - 11:30 Program
- 11:30 - 12:00 DOM Demonstration
- 12:00 - 1:00 Lunch; Social Hour
- 1:00 - 2:30 EC Meeting
- 2:45 Return Monitor to Storage Area

Of course this means that you coffee heads will have to skip that second (or third) cup of coffee, but what the heck - look at the money you'll save. Or, BYOT (bring your own Thermos). Seriously, lets all pitch in and make this work.

Starting on time will help everybody.

## HERE WE GO AGAIN

First it was the TI-99/5, that mysterious computer in the realm of "now you see it, now you don't." In the latest issue of MICROpendium (April 1994) there is yet another article about this critter describing some of the computers features, its inclusion on the world-wide Internet and elsewhere. And now comes a letter from Phil Van Nostrand, 430 Shadow Creek Dr., Seabrook, TX 77586, also in this current issue of MICROpendium, which reads as follows:

"I acquired two orphan Hitachi half-height disk drives that use 3-inch disks (NOT 3.5-inch). I would like to have more than the one disk that came with them, but have not found anybody that had even heard of such an item. The disk is labeled AMDISK III 3" Floppy Disk and is an Amdek product made in Japan. They are double-sided and can be flipped over to use the second side, since the drives are only single-sided. The drives are compatible with the TI cable and power supply and work fine at single or double density. Any info would be appreciated."

Well I'm with you, Phil; any info WOULD INDEED BE APPRECIATED. I know of hard disk drives that work with the 99/4A, but a 3-inch? During my travels in computer stores, thrift stores, garage sales, etc. I've seen the AMDEK name on monitors but never on drives. What about you; if you can help Phil out drop him a note. I'm sure he'd appreciate it. But I, for one, find it fascinating that first pops up the story about the 99/5 computer, and now, a 3-inch disk drive that appears to be compatible with the TI. What a coincidence? Stranger than fiction? Only the shadow knows!!!

## ENOUGH ALREADY

How many times have you sat down at the dinner table, taken a bite or two, a gulp of tea or coffee, only to have the telephone ring. So you interrupt your meal, go over to the telephone, and are greeted with . . . "Hello, how are you today! That's great. My name is Joe Blow and I'm calling you as one of our lucky winners" etc., etc., etc. This has happened to me several times and I'll bet it has happened to you. Well, you see, there is this guy, Michael Jacobson, who had been called several times, three times within five months - twice after telling the caller not to call again. By the way, Michael is co-founder of the Center for the Study of Commercialism, a Washington, D.C.-based consumer advocacy group. The group lobbied for last year's passage of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, designed to protect people from nuisance telemarketing calls.

And what did Michael Jacobson do you ask? Well, he filed a suit in D.C. small claims court, alleging the caller had violated this act and asked for \$2000 in damages. Without conceding violation of the law, the caller settled out of court for \$750.

O.K., Dan, this is all very interesting (you say), but what does this have to do with a TI-99/4A? Just this: Mr. Jacobson's group is offering a "Stop the Calls" kit, which includes an explanation of the new law and how to use it. The kit can be obtained by sending \$3 (covers postage and handling) to CSC, 1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C., 20009. The group's phone number is (202)332-9110. So, next time you are typing a letter, memo, or other tome via TI Writer on your trusty 99/4A and you keep getting these calls, with this kit you can now ZAP 'em good. Although getting these annoying calls with my mouth full of mashed potatoes is bad enough, I find it equally as bad when trying to type - jump up to answer the telephone, slam down the receiver, get back to the computer and try to remember if I saved-to-disk or not (most times, NOT). So you see there is still justice in this world. Just ask Michael.

Guess that's about all the damage I can do for now, so I'll leave you with this thought:

## THE THING TO TRY WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS IS AGAIN

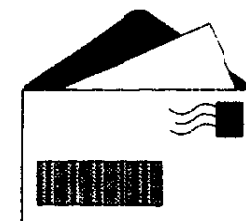
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## UPDATING THE DATABASE . . .

by Charlice Althar

We're very happy to have received RENEWALS this month from ANN GRESHAM and ROBERT COX. Thanks, ANN and ROBERT, and we hope to be seeing more of you soon!

We've also updated our database to reflect address changes for a couple of our members this month. We appreciate your keeping us informed of these changes as they occur.



## NEXT STEP REPORT

Lively discussions abounded at our most recent NEXT STEP, held Friday night, May 6, at JOJO's. One topic that seems to be inevitable at these gatherings is why more DTIHCG'ers don't attend these meetings, as well as why more don't attend the meetings at INFOMART and the mini-sigs we sometimes offer. The consensus appears to be that if they attended, they would learn more by accident, just through being physically present, than they could learn by a disciplined agenda of study. Think about it! Maybe you really ARE missing out on something!

MATTIE and TIM talked quite a while about how to start your own business, and sales-related careers, including computerized catalog sales. DAN and JACKIE discussed allergies, especially JACKIE's dislike of honey bees (and their sting). Both DAN and MATTIE were recipients of printer buffers from the backup closets of LOUIS and JACKIE. Now, DAN can more easily print multiple copies of TOM's favorite . . . "Vote for Bill & Hillary." The use of the printer buffers was discussed, specifically the fact that the Formatter in TI-WRITER can be instructed to print only one copy, allowing you to regain control over the computer to do other tasks, while additional copies can be printed through the print buffer. And the buffers are compatible with any parallel printer.

JIM STEWART and CHARLICE talked about hard disks, and the pleasures derived from having a larger one than previously owned. After talking about reformatting said hard disks, LOUIS tutored us on interleaving, as well as some of the utilities available for formatting the hard disks, including Disk Manager, FDisk, Format, Partition, thereby possibly saving JIM many hours of work.

Another topic of discussion was future INFOMART programs. DAN is working on a special presentation aimed at kids and grandkids of DTIHCG members. Read more about this elsewhere in this Newsletter. Also, reasons by our INFOMART meetings need to start on time—so our members will have time to visit the Vendors in the basement, and visit meetings being held by other groups. Across the table, ROBERT JONES and TOM explored several means of controlling their local squirrel populations, including the use of such various concoctions as cyanide ant poison, and a homemade garlic and pepper concentrate. TOM told of squirrels who actually dug up garlic he'd planted. LOUIS says he just waits for the squirrels to "walk the wires" just that much too close to a transformer.

We also registered a couple of membership renewals, and a change of address. And expressed concern that JIM LESHNER was under the weather and unable to be with us, which has rarely ever happened in YEARS! We missed you, Jim!

Comments were also heard around the table on other fascinating subjects—about the use of Stacker vs. Double Disk, single baked potato vs. chicken fried steak with baked potato, growing garlic, backup tape "sizes", free lemon and free sugar for iced tea, and TOM's Roundup spray shields. And gardening. CHARLICE agreed with DAN that that's a job best done by OTHERS, whereupon DAN informed CHARLICE that she is "awful smart to have been born naked."

We'll have another NEXT STEP at JOJO's on Friday night, June 3, starting about 5:00 P.M. We hope more DTIHCG'ers will join us as we continue helping each other to take our NEXT STEP in computing.

## KIDS'R US

Have you heard about our program for July? Well, if not, let me clue you in. This year, for the first time, we are planning a SPECIAL EVENT, a special program designed for and dedicated to the kids and grandkids of all DTIHCG members. DTIHCG kids are invited and welcomed - kids from elementary school, junior high (middle) school, and high school. We will have computer games, question and answer contests, prizes, goodies to snack on, etc. And, if successful, this "kids day" will become an annual event.



Notice the word "successful" in the last sentence above; THAT IS THE OPERATIVE word. Obviously, for this event to be successful, we'll need a large turnout of little people. And this is where you come in. I need some indication of just how many of you, your kids and/or grandkids plan to come. Your input will help us to plan what type of games, amount of goodies and snacks, etc. So please drop me a line at the address below no later than the end of this month (5/31/94). Or, if you prefer, you can call me at (214)276-0240 before 9:00 PM (I go to bed early).

Object of this event is to entertain the kids and have fun; it's not intended to be a learning experience but rather a "controlled" party. So make your plans now to attend and let me or any of the DTIHCG officers know you plan to come.










Dan Lowe  
1514 Greentree Lane  
Garland, TX 75042-4648



# DTIHCG ACTIVITIES

May 15 - June 25, 1994



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <p>May 15 SIMONE FIORAMONTI IS A KEY MEMBER</p>	<p>May 16</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>May 17</p> <p>✕</p>	<p>May 18</p> <p>○ FQ</p>	<p>May 19</p>	<p>May 20</p>	<p>May 21</p> <p> Xchange Saturday</p> <p>Armed Forces Day</p>
<b>DTIHCG REUNION IN OCTOBER - SPREAD THE WORD</b>						
<p>May 22</p> <p>Get new Software from the library</p>	<p>May 23</p> <p>♥ Rosemary Clooney - 66th B'day</p>	<p>May 24</p> <p>○ FM VICTORIA DAY (Canada)</p>	<p>May 25</p> <p>Ralph Waldo Emerson - 1803</p>	<p>May 26</p> <p>★ James Arness - 71st B'day</p>	<p>May 27</p>	<p>May 28</p> <p> EC MEETING</p>
<b>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION WEEK</b>						
<p>May 29</p> <p>© Bob Hope - 91st B'day</p>	<p>May 30</p> <p>CONFEDERATE HEROES ' DAY</p>	<p>May 31</p> <p>○ LQ Joe Namath - 51st B'day</p>	<p>June 1</p>	<p>June 2</p>	<p>June 3</p> <p>NEXT-STEP (Room Reservation) 5:15p Jo-Jo's on Motor St 10:00p Newsletter Deadline</p>	<p>June 4</p> <p> 1st SATURDAY SIDEWALK SALE</p> <p>5:32a Sunrise</p>
<b>COME TO NEXT-STEP FOR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE HELP</b>						
<p>June 5</p> <p>Jim Leshar is our Resident TI99/4a Dealer ☎ 821-9274</p>	<p>June 6</p> <p>'D ' DAY - 1944</p>	<p>June 7</p>	<p>June 8</p> <p>Don't drink and drive.</p>	<p>June 9</p> <p>● NM</p>	<p>June 10</p> <p>Don't forget to renew your membership</p>	<p>June 11</p> <p> Buy your blank disks from DTIHCG</p>
<b>If you move let us know your new address, we care.</b>						
<p>June 12</p> <p>George Bush's 70th Birthday</p>	<p>June 13</p>	<p>June 14</p> <p>☞ Flag Day</p>	<p>June 15</p>	<p>June 16</p> <p>○ FQ</p>	<p>June 17</p>	<p>June 18</p> <p> XCHANGE SATURDAY</p> <p>9:00a 'til 2PM</p>
<b>MAKE FLAG DESECRATION A FELONY</b>						
<p>June 19</p> <p>Father's Day</p> <p></p>	<p>June 20</p> <p>5:31a Sunrise 8:31p Sunset</p>	<p>June 21</p> <p>SUMMER begins</p>	<p>June 22</p>	<p>June 23</p> <p>○ FM Happy B 'day icc ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ *****</p> <p></p>	<p>June 24</p>	<p>June 25</p> <p> EC MEETING</p>

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

## BEGINNER PRINTER

### Block Graphics #2 (Continued!)

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 mode, the reason is, the printer in this mode makes straighter columns. I tried it in bi-directional and 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.

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);" ";
```

So far, the above is what we accomplished with our program last month, entering the program code in either Basic or Extended Basic. Now, as promised, we will design our large character or word in TI-WRITER then transfer it to the program to print it out. If you have typed in this program from last month, make a copy of it under another name and we will use it later and you won't have to type it in again. Now, load your version of TI-WRITER, and first type in one row like this:

```
500 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
```

Then with the cursor on the next line below, press CTRL 5, press Enter then CTRL 5 again, repeat this until you have as many lines as you wish. Then re-number all the line numbers in sequence in 10s and when finished, it should look like this:

```
500 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
510 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
520 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
530 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
540 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
550 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
```

[ 12 ]

```
560 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
570 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
580 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
590 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
600 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
610 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
720 DATA 224,224,224,224,224,224
,224,224,224,224,224,224
```

Then save it to disk as a blank template. Since this one is 12 X 12, I name it TEMP12X12 for a filename. Then save it again under another name, and keep this one as a master to copy over and over again.

Print this to your printer and draw anything you want over this template on your paper, then change the 224s to 239s where ever a line of your drawing crosses it. We will make this first one very simple and easy, making a large "TI" in the print-out. When you have a full vertical row to change to 239, do this: Use RS, or Replace String. Page 87 in your TI-WRITER manual tells you how.

In this example, for the T, do this at the command line after pressing RS:19 20 /24/39/ This will change all the 24s in that column (columns 19-20) to 39, then do the same for the I, but use 39 40 /24/39 (changes columns 39-40).

```
500 DATA 239,239,239,239,239,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
510 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
520 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
530 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
540 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
550 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
```

[ 13 ]

```
560 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
570 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
580 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
590 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
600 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
620 DATA 224,224,239,224,224,224
,224,239,224,224,224,224
```

Now we change it to a merge format. With lines 500 to 620 only, saved to a disk, let's use the name TEMPTI. Look thru your utility disks and find a program called XLATE. It is on John Guion's SUPERDISK for sure and proly on many others. Run XLATE in Extended Basic, answer the first prompt by typing in: DSK1.TITEMP. At the second prompt, type in DSK1.TITEMPM indicating the merge format. This will write to your disk a DV163 file which is a merge format. Then type NEW to clear the computer and load the program above in the normal fashion, in Extended Basic. After that type MERGE DSK1.TITEMPM and just like magic, your program is ready to run and print, **BUT FIRST, SAVE IT BACK TO DISK** under the name e.g. TIBLOCK.

Now you can just go as far with this as your imagination will allow you to, using longer DATA lines, more of them, and different characters in your printer manual.

Next month, we'll have our final installment in this series on block graphics. Should you need any help call or write to:

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

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## WHY IS DTIHCG SO SPECIAL?

As I've been reading messages on the 99er Connection about the reunion the Dallas TI Home Computer Group is planning at our regular October meeting this year, I find myself thinking more and more about some of our past. I also wonder what the future holds for our group. I am certain, however, that DTIHCG will continue to be unique among TI user groups in many ways.

Why do I feel that we are unique? A lot of other user groups have been in existence for years. A lot of other groups have more than one meeting a month, have aBBS, have members that have been active for years, and have social activities from time to time.

One of the things that makes us different is that for years we were one of three user groups meeting within a thirty-mile radius. DTIHCG was one group and met in Dallas or Irving; the NET 99ers (NE Tarrant County User Group) met in Ft. Worth or the mid-Cities area; and FLUG (TIs Forest Lane User Group) met at one of the TI plants in Dallas. For years FLUG membership was limited to TI employees. At times, there was also at least one more TI-99/4A group at a TI plant in the area with membership limited to those who were employed by TI.

For several years, the NET 99ers were the largest group. They had more than 250 members at one time. DTIHCG membership never reached 150 members. I've never heard how large FLUG was during its peak, but it no longer exists although it was once large enough to hold a TI Fair. The last NET 99er meetings I am aware of had less than 6 people meeting at a member's home.

We haven't survived just because we've been lucky although luck has certainly played a part in our success. Hard work by our officers, committee chairmen, and other volunteers have played a large part in our success. Good decisions have helped -- including the one made in December, 1985, to move our meetings to INFOMART and become part of a recently-formed coalition of user groups that had decided to unite and all have meetings on the same day at the same place.

Both the Apple Corps of Dallas and the North Texas PC User Group were having trouble finding places large enough to handle their meetings and provide space for vendors to sell their products when leaders of the two groups decided it made sense to join forces. They invited several other groups to become part of a larger group that would all meet at the same time and place. Each group would have access to meeting space, the vendors would be accessible to all of the groups, and each group would retain its own identity and control of its own affairs. The new group would contract for a building and audiovisual services, relieving some of the chores of each user group. The member groups would provide volunteers that would do some of the setup work necessary on meeting day. Table rental income from the vendor area would pay the bills. Each user group would be free to charge membership fees. All meetings would be open to anyone wishing to attend and no attendance fees would be charged for any meetings held as part of the event. Each group would provide a representative and an alternate representative to the board of the group that became known as the Computer Council of Dallas (CCD). These representatives met once a month to promote user group activities and to keep things running smoothly at INFOMART on what became known as Super Saturday. User groups involved range in size from under thirty members to over 900 members for the Apple Corps of Dallas and over 2,000 members for North Texas PC UG.

This arrangement has had both benefits and drawbacks for all of the user groups involved. The CCD and its successor DFW Xchange Corporation were able to rent meeting space at INFOMART for one Saturday a month. There was more public exposure for each of the user groups. With each of the groups inviting its members and others to meetings, we've had at least 3,000 users in the building some meeting days. With so many potential customers, vendors are interested in renting table space. There are over 100 eight-foot vendor tables in use plus large Disk of the Month areas for the Apple and PC user groups. Vendors sell everything from computer paper, labels, printer ribbons, modems, diskettes, and drives to complete computer systems. DTIHCG member Jim Leshar sold TI-99/4A equipment in the vendor area for years and sent his customers upstairs to our meetings after they had made their purchases.

One of the drawbacks of meeting under this system is having meeting dates that are not the same Saturday every month. The building has been rented at a reduced rate since the contract gives INFOMART the right to accept more lucrative bookings during the year as long as we have one Saturday each month for meetings. Each meeting date is firm only 120 days in advance. In spite of what some of you may have heard, INFOMART has never donated the meeting space -- it has always been rented. The relationship has been mutually beneficial. We get use of the rooms in a beautiful, hi-tech, state-of-the-art building with everything (lights, heating & cooling, even elevators & escalators) controlled by computers. They get excellent publicity for a building that was planned to be used only for computer-related businesses. The result is a meeting day that has to be seen to be believed! Meetings start as early as 8:00 a.m. and end as late as 3:00 p.m. The cafeteria is open from about 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The vendor area opens at 8:30 a.m. and closes after lunch.

Volunteers from each user group involved make all this possible. Some of the required volunteers help distribute microphones, white boards and markers, and room schedules before meetings start or return them after the event. Others help set up the vendor area downstairs and do other jobs in conjunction with the vendor area. These volunteers are how each user group pays for its meeting space.

The arrangement with INFOMART means each user group needs additional volunteers during the month for other things too. Because of changing meeting dates, we must send out a newsletter each month to be sure our members don't show up on the wrong Saturday. This is especially important since some of them drive more than 100 miles to make some of our meetings. We need people available to answer questions about the group from those who see our sign on the kiosk and stop by the meeting room with questions. Of course, we still need all the usual volunteers every other user group in existence needs too. When we moved our meetings to INFOMART, we had 53 members. Our membership doubled to 106 the first 12 months we met there -- mostly because of the additional exposure we received by being where other user groups were meeting. We still have more members than we



had when we started meeting at INFOMART, including several that don't live in the Dallas area.

Our group discovered long ago that it is difficult to answer all the questions asked at our main meetings. We also discovered that we need a large number of volunteers to do all the jobs in the group. We started having an additional meeting each month at a different place so that we could meet the needs of as many members as possible. These meetings were originally planned to provide hands on solutions to problems our members were having. For a long time we had three or four systems set up at each Next Step meeting. As the group began to shrink in size and more of our members who were good at providing solutions to technical problems began to use other computers, Next Step meetings became more of a social event. We have continued to provide as much support as possible for those who attend these meetings -- and they are still the best place to have some types of problems solved. There have also been other benefits of having such meetings.

Many of the first people to buy expanded TI systems bought them because they were interested in the technology offered. Others bought them because they had a need for the things a computer could do. Most of those people now use a computer with new technology. Some of them earn their living by using these other computers on a daily basis. As a result, many of them have joined a second user group so that they can receive the help they need with their other computer systems. And some of them provide some of the volunteer labor that DTIHCG needs to survive. They haven't asked DTIHCG to demonstrate other systems at meetings. They aren't trying to convince anyone to change computers. They have asked questions about other systems or programs at lunch or at Next Step meetings. They have also been there to answer questions newer TI-99/4A users might have.

Why do these people continue to attend DTIHCG meetings? The answer is quite simple. DTIHCG and its members contributed a great deal to their computer knowledge and skill. Although some of them rarely use a 4A, they are still appreciative of the help they received in the past and would like to continue to do something for the group. Some of us have worked together over a long period of time.

During that time, friendships that are very important to many of us were formed. How important are these friendships? Some DTIHCG members value them enough that these friends are considered part of their extended families. Others feel closer to these friends than to some members of their own families. We've visited with each other as we worked out computer problems. We've gone to meetings and dinners together. We've been there to celebrate good news and offer sympathy when needed -- whether the occasion was a new job or a lost job, a serious illness or accident, an approaching wedding or a divorce, a new baby or a death in the family. And because of that, a lot of us want to continue to do something for the group.

Jackie Guion, May 11, 1994.

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## 1994 LIBRARIANS

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VIDEO LIBRARIAN	ROBERT SMITH	903-693-5588

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.