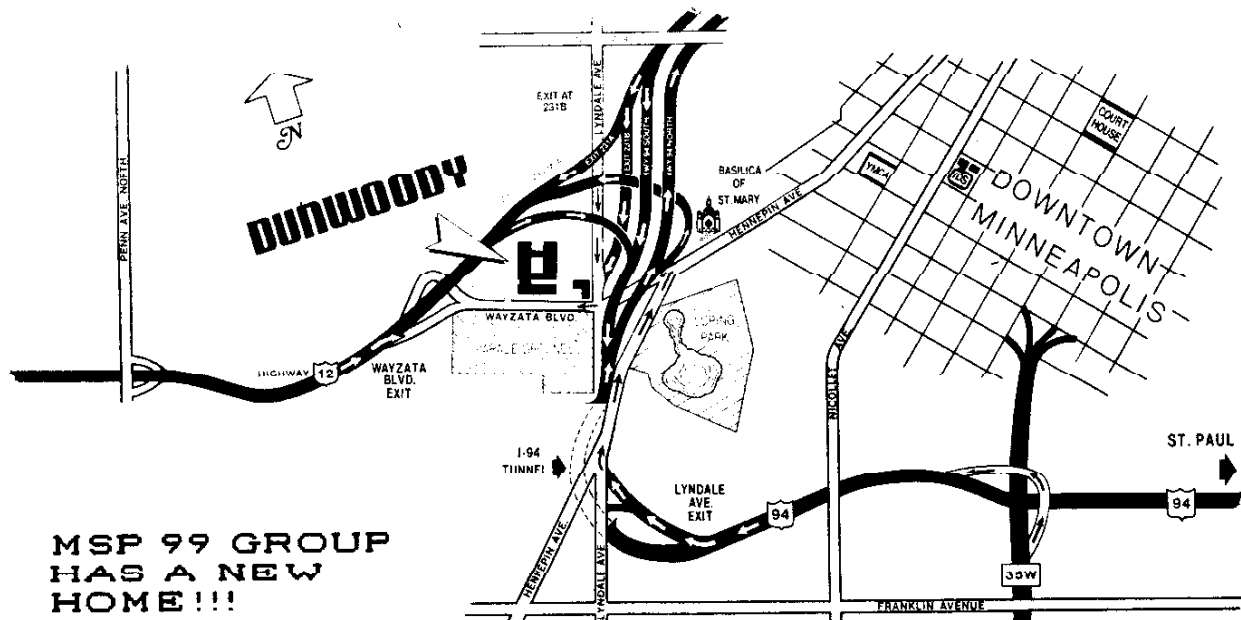


MSP 99

USER  
GROUP

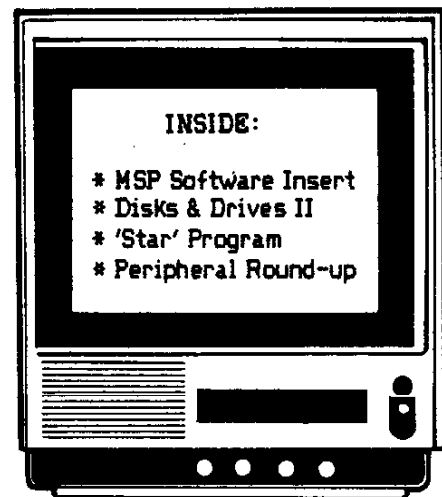
# THE MSP 99 NEWSLETTER



**MSP 99 GROUP  
HAS A NEW  
HOME!!!**

Beginning June 19th, the MSP 99 General Meetings will be held at **DUNWOODY INSTITUTE**, 818 Wayzata Blvd., Mpls., MN at 7:00 P.M.

President Joel Gerdeen has been looking for a new location since we learned Brown Institute would no longer be available to us. He devised an ingenious system of plotting all MSP member addresses to determine the most centrally located area. His analysis indicated the intersection of Interstates 94 and 35W was the exact point. Dunwoody Institute, located at Highways 12 and 94, meets all our requirements. Joel found the administrators to be receptive and helpful: a staff member will be assigned to assist us with our needs. There is a parking lot on the west side of the building and I understand we should use the west entrance. For exact location, refer to the map above.



The MSP 99 USERS GROUP meets each month for discussions and presentations that enable its members to be better informed about their computers. Users group members share and exchange information. Some members have a broad range of computer expertise; others are just beginning. We are not affiliated with or sponsored by any other group or company. Membership dues are \$12 a year for a family, \$10 for an individual, and \$50 for a sponsor member. You're welcome to visit a meeting before you join. For more information, call or write us.

USERS GROUP MEETINGS are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Dunwoody Industrial Institute, 818 Wayzata Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55403.

MSP 99 USERS GROUP  
P.O. BOX 12351  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55112, U.S.A.

PRESIDENT: Joel Gerdeen 572-0148  
V. PRESIDENT: Dick Dunbar 488-0153  
SECRETARY: Jon Todd 920-3263  
TREASURER: Brad Olson 786-1235

The MSP 99 NEWSLETTER is published eleven times per year, on a monthly basis except during July, by the MSP 99 Users Group. Members are encouraged to contribute articles for publication. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the MSP 99 Users Group, its officers, editor, or members. Materials accepted by the editor for publication in the MSP 99 Newsletter, including software listings, are believed to be in the public domain. Newsletter articles may be reproduced by other users groups if appropriate credit is given to the author (if one is listed) and to the Minneapolis-St. Paul 99 Users Group.

Newsletter Editor:  
Bonnie Burton, 431-6064  
Editor's Assistant: Jon Todd  
Newsletter Committee Members:  
Clarence Brockman  
Marilyn McPartlin

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: July 29

#### COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

If you want to work on a committee (Education, Equipment, Program, Publicity, Software, Newsletter), or have an idea for a program, contact one of the officers.

#### COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT RATES

Business firms that want to communicate with our members may do so by placing an ad in the newsletter. Rates are: Full Page (7-1/2 X 10-1/2) \$40; Half Page (3-1/2 X 10-1/2) \$30; Quarter Page (3-1/2 X 5) \$22. Each ad must be camera-ready in sizes indicated and paid in advance. Inserts (printed by advertiser on 8-1/2 x 11) may be inserted in the newsletter at \$20 per sheet. Contact the editor for information or to reserve space.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Before you move, please mail a change of address to the group at the above address.

# QUESTIONS?

Get the answers from the experts on

# COMPUTER TALK

KSTP-AM 1500 • Saturdays 5:05-6:00 PM

\*\*\*\*\*  
**MSP 99 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**  
 \*\*\*\*\*

- JUNE 19 --  
 (TUESDAY)  
 7:00-9:00

**EDUCATION SOFTWARE DEMONSTRATION!** This program will feature education programs from the MSP Software Library. Jim Smieja (Education software contest winner), Diane Kavanaugh (former MSP 99 president), and the Education Sub-group will demonstrate the latest in computer learning.
  
- JULY 28 --  
 (SATURDAY)  
 11:00 AM-EVENING

**ANNUAL MSP 99 PICNIC!** We have reserved the Lion's Club Shelter at Roseville Central Park for the day! Bring your picnic lunch and a dessert or salad to pass. Barbecue facilities are available and beer in cans is permitted. (No glass bottles, please.) The MSP 99 Club will provide soft-drinks and charcoal. Playground facilities and volley-ball courts are available. We will meet, rain or shine, so count on a day of fun!
  
- AUGUST 21 --  
 (TUESDAY)  
 7:00-9:00

**HOUSEHOLD USES FOR YOUR TI-99/4A!** We resume our regular Tuesday night meetings with an informative and fun program! How about letting your computer make the weekly menus? Or Keeping a running total of family expenses? Lots of good ideas for using your TI-99/4A.

**SUBGROUP MEETINGS:**

**ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE**--First Tuesday of month, 7:00 p.m., Bryant Community Center, Bryant Ave. and 31st St. Chair: Kern Steffenhagen.

**BUSINESS**--Second Tuesday, 7-9 p.m., Norwest Bank, Hopkins. Call Bob DeMars (544-6219) or Dick Clemetson (926-8083).

**EDUCATION**--At monthly MSP meetings. Chair: Jon Todd.

**YOUTH GROUP**--At monthly MSP meetings. Pres.: Scott Morgan.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

- Education--Marilyn McPartlin, 636-5663
- Equipment--We need someone.
- Newsletter--Bonnie Burton, 431-6064
- Program--Dick Dunbar, 488-0153
- Publicity--Dave Wunderlin, 544-8266
- Software--Ed Neu, 425-8744

**DIRECTIONS TO:**

**ROSEVILLE  
 CENTRAL PARK  
 LION'S CLUB SHELTER**

From Minneapolis go east on I-94 to 35W North. Take 35W North to Highway 36. Go east on Highway 36 past Rosedale Shopping Center to Lexington Avenue. Take the Lexington Avenue exit and proceed north to County Road C. Go east on County Road C to Victoria (less than one mile).

Go south on Victoria and take the Victoria entrance to Roseville Central Park. The Lion's Club Shelter is right there.

Hope to see you there!

## DISKS AND DRIVES PART 2

By T. D. Bell

(The following article is reprinted from the Central Ohio Ninety-Niners, Inc. Newsletter, SPIRIT OF 99 - MARCH, 1984.)

Disk technology is constantly moving forward and new types of drive systems have been appearing over the years that could make our 5-1/4 inch floppies obsolete (as well as the 8" versions). One of these new types is the 96-tpi (tracks per inch) format 5-1/4 diskette. It requires very high precision disks and disk drives to operate. Instead of the usual 40 tracks, it has 80 on each side. (Remember that disks are double-sided unless they don't pass stringent factory tests.) A double-sided, double density 5-1/4" disk of this type could hold one megabyte of information, or as much as an 8" DSDD disk.

The big development seems to be the reduction of size as well as an increase in storage capacity. Some disks that supposedly hold one Mb are under 3-1/2 inches in diameter. The not-so-wonderful part is the leaders in this technical research can't make up their minds on a standard size. There are presently three sizes: Sony's 3-1/2", Tabor's 3-1/4" and Hitachi's 3". These mini-disks do have one standard: they use a very high density cobalt ferric oxide magnetic coating rated at 135 tpi. With this very small size and with improvements in their circuitry, their drives can be powered by batteries. This means you could expect to see them in portables as well as in desk top models.

Finally, there is the Winchester hard-disk system (no, not the gun). Winchester was a code name used by IBM for a hard disk. Unlike the mini-floppies, this disk spins at 3600 rpm and the heads fly over the

surface. In fact, they are air-borne. Winchester's lay an extremely dense pattern of data because of the high speed. They sometimes incorporate multiple disks, called platters, with heads in single units that have capacities of 60 Mb or more. Now you know why they are expensive. Hard disks use the same coating as mini-floppies, except it is much thinner. This thin structure allows for very high data resolution. At this time, the cost of a hard disk drive for a home computer is prohibitive. As technology advances however, the cost should decrease. Prices in the \$1000 range for 10 megabytes are not unusual.

### DISK DRIVES

Now for the machinery that enables us to use the floppies - the drive. There are five main parts in a drive that concern the end user.

1. The main spindle which spins the disk at 300 rpm and is belt-driven.
2. The drive motor.
3. The read/write head (or heads).
4. The index/sector detector.
5. DC stepper motor to locate the head in the correct position.

The main spindle spins at 300 rpm thanks to two imported gerbils. Seriously, the speed is maintained by a tachometer and special servo system to keep it constant. When the drive address is selected, the drive motor accelerates to its speed of 300 rpm and stabilizes in less than 250 milliseconds. The motor also activates momentarily when the front latch is closed and when the system is booted up. It remains active for approximately five seconds. The motor is a 12v DC standard.

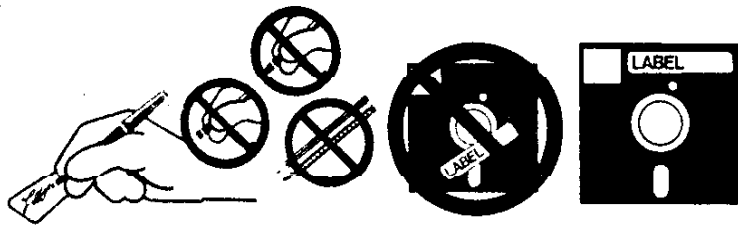
The read/write head assembly is positioned by a split band positioner mounted to a stepper motor. The head itself is a glass-bonded ferrite structure with a life expectancy of 20,000 operating hours. The head is held

in contact with the disk by a pressure pad not unlike those found in audio cassettes.

In DS/drives the second head acts as a pressure pad. When a file is selected, the head moves in or out from track to track making contact with the disk through the head access slot until it finds the requested track. After the correct track has been selected, the appropriate sector is located by the index/sector detector which is an assembly consisting of an LED and a PHOTOCCELL. The index hole cut in the disk jacket allows light from the LED to strike the disk or to pass through the index hole when one goes by. When the light passes through, it strikes the photo-cell, resulting in an electrical impulse that tells the computer the position of the disk and the sector the head is positioned over at that instant.

Finally, there is the write-protect switch. In some drives, depending on the cost or quality, there is a photo-cell and LED arrangement that detects the notch cut in the top of the jacket. If the notch is covered with a tape tab, the write protect switch disables the write electronics. (The operation is reversed for 8 inch disk drives.) This switch is operated by means of a mechanical finger to detect the open notch.

The following drawings will help you visualize the location of the various parts and their relationship to one another. In addition, the author wishes to thank Tandon Corporation for their help in preparing this article.



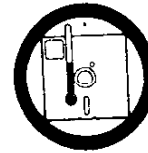
• Write on labels before affixing them to the jacket

• Use only fine line felt tip pens—never ballpoint pens or pencils.

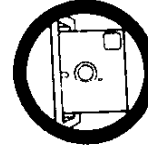
• Do not cover any jacket holes or openings with labels.

• Affix label directly to the jacket. Never place a new label on top of an old one.

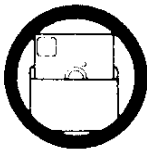
• Do not erase labels after they are placed on the jacket.



10°C-52°C  
50°F-125°F



Insert Carefully  
Insérer avec soin  
Sorgfältig Einsetzen  
插入注意



Protect  
Protéger  
Protégieren  
Schützen



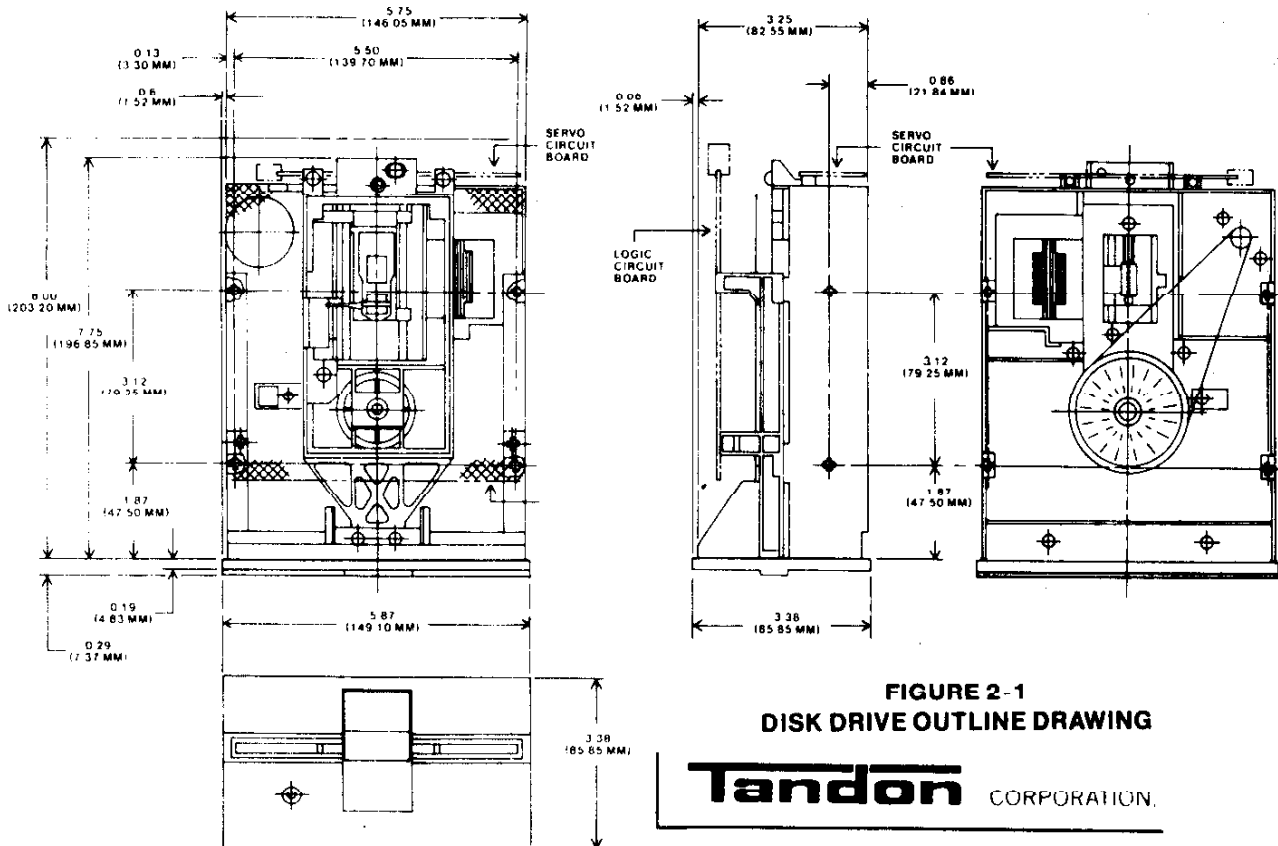
Never  
Nunca  
Jamais  
Nie  
绝对禁止



No  
No  
Non  
Falsch  
注意



Never  
Nunca  
Jamais  
Nie  
绝对禁止



- NOTES: 1. DIMENSIONS ARE GIVEN IN INCHES. METRIC EQUIVALENTS ARE IN PARENTHESES.
- 2. TOLERANCE ON ALL DIMENSIONS - 0.020 INCH, UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.
- 3. WEIGHT IS APPROXIMATELY 3 POUNDS (1.35 KILOGRAMS).

**SAMPLE TAPE TRICKS**

By George Madline

For those who either purchased the Basic Sample Tape the User Group is selling, or have purchased the Define Character program (U01010) separately, I have found that just adding or changing 15 lines will enable the program to rotate the defined characters to any of four positions you desire. This can be a great help when you want the same figure to face different directions. You need not refigure the hex codes for each different figure. Here are the changes:

```
190 DIM B(8,8,5),M1$(4)
630 PRINT "M=MOVE ON/OFF L=LEFT TURN"
```

Add these lines:

```
1205 IF KEY=ASC("L") THEN 3580
3580 FOR RV=1 TO 8
3590 FOR CV=1 TO 8
3600 B(RV,CV,5)=B(RV,CV,0)
3610 NEXT CV
3620 NEXT RV
3630 FOR RV=1 TO 8
3640 FOR CV=1 TO 8
3650 B(CV,RV,0)=B(RV,9-CV,5)
3660 NEXT CV
3670 NEXT RV
3680 GOSUB 3290
3690 GOTO 1030
```

After you make the changes, resave the program.

**COMPUTER FAIR REPORT**

By Dave Wunderlin, Publicity Chairman

Our club's participation in the Computer Fair, held at the Science Museum on May 12th, was a big success. We were able to assist several members and potential members with problems they were having with their TI Home Computers. The most popular game cartridges that we had were Burgertime and Star Trek. Microsurgeon received many comments because of its impressive graphics display.

I would like to thank the following members for all of their help in manning our display area: George Madline, Bob Hubel, Jon Todd, Scott Morgan, Norm Johnson, Tom Sneed, Jim Bukowski and Gerri Stillwell. Our thanks to Bill Lovegren, Joel Gerdeen and George Madline for the use of their equipment. Without all of their help our participation would not have been possible.

**STARS!**

By Jon Todd

For all you space jockeys out there, here is a program that creates a moving star field for backgrounds in your space games. The apparently smooth motion - even in TI BASIC - is caused by constantly redefining characters. The program does this in lines 360 to 430. Each character is redefined eight times, then the character next to it is redefined, and so on.

If you want to move the stars slowly, insert a delay loop such as:

```
375 FOR DELAY=1 TO 50
376 NEXT DELAY
```

If you want them to move faster, change the STEP value in line 370 to -2 or -3. This program runs in either Basic or Extended Basic, but will probably be more useful in Extended Basic, which allows Sprites (smoothly moving graphics characters). Good luck and happy spacing!

```
100 REM *****
110 REM * DRIFTING STARS *
120 REM *****
130 REM BY JON TODD
140 REM
150 REM MSP 99 USERS GROUP
160 REM P.O.BOX 12351
170 REM ST.PAUL MN. 55112
180 REM
190 CALL CLEAR
200 CALL SCREEN(2)
210 FOR I=9 TO 12
220 CALL COLOR(I,16,1)
230 NEXT I
240 FOR I=96 TO 123
250 CALL CHAR(I,"0")
260 A$=A$&CHR$(I)
270 NEXT I
280 FOR I=1 TO 24
290 X=RND*28+1
300 PRINT SEG$(A$,X+1,28-X)&SEG$(A$,1,X)
310 NEXT I
320 FOR I=8 TO 1 STEP -1
330 READ B$(I)
340 NEXT I
350 DATA 0001,0002,0004,0008,001,002,004,008
360 FOR C=123 TO 96 STEP -1
370 FOR I=8 TO 1 STEP -1
380 CALL CHAR(C,B$(I))
390 IF C<123 THEN 410
400 CALL CHAR(96,"0")
410 CALL CHAR(C+1,"0")
420 NEXT I
430 NEXT C
440 GOTO 360
```

**POOR RICHARD'S  
PERIPHERAL ROUND-UP**

By Dick Dunbar

**DISK DRIVE OMISSIONS:** Sometime after sending last month's PRPR article in for the newsletter, it occurred to me that, with the exception of the mention which was made regarding the Percom unit, there was really very little said about ordinary floppy disk units. I know from my own experience that this is an area which can be very confusing to the novice; for example, how do you know whether a particular disk drive that you see advertised in one of the computer magazines will work on your TI? I hope to address this subject in detail in a future issue of the newsletter; for now, it will suffice to say that a drive which is advertised as suitable for use in an IBM PC will work just fine in your TI, too. A drive which is advertised as being Apple-compatible is a different story, and should be avoided, as should Atari or (horrors!) Commodore-compatible drives.

**BE CAREFUL OUT THERE, BUT:** Last month, I listed a number of peripherals that are available or on the way from a variety of companies. The fact that a particular product or company was mentioned should not be taken as an endorsement of the product or of the company. I tried to include as many products as possible, so that MSP 99 members could get an idea of what was available out there. The market for TI-compatible peripherals is in a state of flux at the moment, with products being developed by a number of companies, some of which will not last long. As a result, it is probably wise to be cautious when purchasing from an unknown company.

However - if no one ever bought the first of a product, there would never be a second, and some wonderful products would never find the market they deserve. Therefore, you will not find me advising you to buy only from an established product or company. I have personally gone out on a limb twice to buy products when at the time the only information available was the advertising. In both cases, the Foundation 128K card and the Navarone Widget, the product turned out to be a good buy. In fact, I plan to do a  
(Continued on page 10)

**MSP 99 - 1984 SOFTWARE CONTEST ENTRIES**

The Software Committee wishes to thank and congratulate those who submitted programs for our second annual contest. The judges had a lot to choose from this year, and a hard time choosing in many categories. The list below shows all the entries with the winners in each category denoted by \*\*. These programs are available from the software committee. See the catalogue update in this month's newsletter.

If any winners have not yet requested the programs to which they are entitled, please send in those requests soon.

NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CATEGORY
Todd, Jon	**Racehorse Addition	Education - XB
Danley, Erik	Trivia I-Sports	Education - XB
Danley, Erik	Spanish	Education - Basic
Danley, Erik	Learning Basic	Education - Basic
Smieja, Jim	**Magic Spell	Education - Basic
Todd, Jon	**Adventure Skeleton	Prog Utility - B
Dunbar, Dick	**Txicat	Prog Utility - XB
Kennetmueller	Spyder	Game - XB
Kennetmueller	Bugger	Game - XB
Kennetmueller	Sewerman	Game - XB
Dew, James	Acey-Duecy	Game - XB
Madline, Geo.	**Graphland	Game - XB
Berke, Dennis	**Chinese Rebels	Game - Basic
Dew, James	Robo-Wars	Mini-Memory (Game)
Dew, James	Airdefense	Mini-Memory (Game)
Dew, James	**Caverns of Darna	Mini-Memory (Game)
Boyd, Paul	Home Owners	Business - XB
Boyd, Paul	Auto-Rater	Business - XB
Boyd, Paul	Universal	Business - XB
Boyd, Paul	**Client File	Business - XB
Boyd, Paul	Daily Log	Home Mngmt - XB
Sirovy, Mike	**83 Income Taxes	Home Mngmt - XB
Zelin, W.	**Music Staff Printer	Miscellaneous - XB
Stein, Jerry	**Biorythm	Miscellaneous - Basic

(Peripherals, continued)

review on the Foundation 128K card very soon. Watch this space if you're interested.

**NEW DEVELOPMENTS:** Since last month's column was published, there have been some developments in the world of TI-compatible peripherals - not as many as I had hoped, but some.

INTELLITEC has changed it's name to MULTICOM, Inc., and now offers a stand alone RS232 Interface, with serial and parallel ports and pass-thru, in the \$150 range. This is in addition to the PEB and stand alone 32K memory units previously offered. This company has advertised under the Intellitec name, and under the MULTICOM name, and now, in the latest Home Computer Magazine, as MULTICOM/INTELLITEC. I don't care what they call themselves as long as the products are good, and they keep coming.

MULTICOM, Inc.  
P.O.Box 1643  
Sandy, UT 84091  
(801)572-6272

ULTRACOMP SYSTEMS now offers a miniaturized stand alone RS232 Interface, with serial and parallel ports and pass-thru, in the \$120 range. This is in addition to their stand alone 32K memory unit previously offered. This company had plans for a series of interesting products for the TI99/4A before TI folded their tent, but have apparently decided not to expand their product line much beyond these products. Too bad.

Ultracomp Systems  
1001 Ogden Ave. #5  
Downers Grove, IL 60515-9228  
(800)528-6050 Ext.1216

MIKEL LABORATORIES, Inc. is a new entry in the Peripheral Round-up. This company, about which I have no knowledge other than ads in the HCM and in a catalog I received recently, is offering a stand alone RS232 Interface, with serial and parallel ports, in the \$100 range. This is about the least expensive unit I have seen for this purpose. However - the picture of this unit in the TRITON catalog looks like the unit is not a pass-thru, and nothing in the ads indicate that it is. This would mean that it would have to be the last unit in the daisy-chain attached to your console. That's OK, as

long as you know in advance and can live with it.

Mikel Laboratories, Inc.  
17360 Gramercy Place  
Gardena, CA 90247-5212  
(213)532-3029

TRITON PRODUCTS Company recently sent out a slick brochure advertising lots of products for the TI99/4A. When I received this brochure, I didn't look too closely at the name on it. I guess I assumed that it was from Texas Instruments or March Direct Marketing, who was supposed to take over the marketing of TI home computer products, and that everybody on Texas Instruments' mailing list had gotten one. Later I realized that it was from a company I had never heard of before. Closer inspection of the mailing label indicates that they did not get my name from the Texas Instruments mailing list. Therefore, since there is a possibility that some of you might be interested in this brochure who did not get it, I am going to pass along the address and telephone number of the company. The catalog contains a variety of software, both from TI and third party vendors, and some hardware.

Triton Products Company  
P.O.Box 8123  
San Francisco, CA 94128  
(800)227-6900

IN CLOSING I REPEAT: The mention of a product or company in this column does not constitute an endorsement by the MSP 99 Users Group in any case, nor by myself unless I say so directly.

I plan to make this column a regular feature in the newsletter, so let me know what you're interested in; I'll try to put together a column on any topic that has sufficient interest, even if it is about something other than peripherals. I can be reached at the following address:

Dick Dunbar  
1229 Maywood St.  
St. Paul, MN 55117  
(612)488-0153

See you in the next MSP 99 Newsletter.

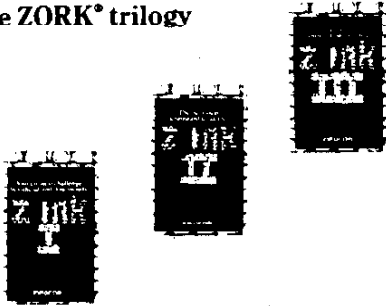


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Expansion Interface



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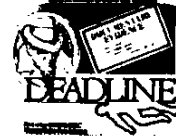
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THE ALPHACOM 81

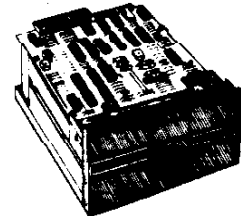
- Full 80-column width
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**JUST**  
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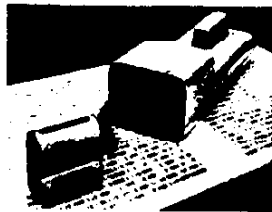
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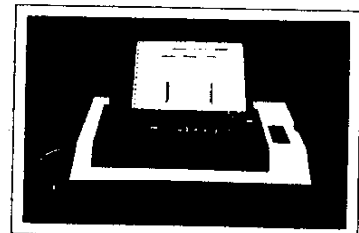
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## TIDBITS

\*\*\* We aren't the only ones who have moved. The TI Exchange Center has a new location effective June 1st: 11000 W. 78th St., Eden Prairie, MN 55344. Their hours are 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, M-F. Current prices to exchange a TI-99/4A are \$7 for a console under warranty and \$28.25 if your warranty has expired. These prices are subject to change. For more information, call 828-9393.

\*\*\* Bob DeMars, an MSP 99 User Group member, was a guest on COMPUTER TALK, Saturday, May 26th. Don't forget every fourth Saturday is devoted to the TI computer user.

\*\*\* Articles are needed for the August issue of the MSP 99 newsletter. Fresh out of ideas? How about a review of "Best of 99'er" or an Adventure column? Software reviews, articles on Forth, a consumer review of modems, or a 'Kid's Column' would be welcome. Hints, tips and comments can be used, too. Mail your copy to: MSP Newsletter, 7500 Germane Trail, Apple Valley, MN 55124, by July 23.

\*\*\* The Delaware Valley Users Group reports there may be a compatibility problem with the older models of the 99/4A and "Return to Pirate's Isle". When you drop the smashed oyster and later return to where you dropped it, the computer locks up. TI said the lock-up may occur in some older models, but performs correctly with the newer white faced 99-4A.

\*\*\* Triton Products Co. will be the chief reseller of the leftover 99/4A hardware and software. They assumed responsibility on April 1. Although TI kept a small portion of the inventory to support warranty and repair services, the sale to Triton represents TI's final disposition of the TI-99/4A home computer and its associated software and accessories.

MSP 99 USERS GROUP  
P.O. BOX 12351  
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55112

Address Correction Requested



## WANT ADS

Members may place want ads, at no charge, by calling Bonnie Burton 431-6064 or by turning in written copy of the ad at any MSP 99 meeting. Businesses may purchase ad space at the cost of \$1 per line.

TI Peripheral Expansion Box incl: Disk Controller, Disk Drive, 32K Memory Expansion, RS232 Card. Also Incl. TI-Writer Word Processor, many cartridges and books. Mint condition - new, Dec. 1983. Prefer to sell as package, best offer over \$550. Call Steve, 431-3821, evenings.

DISKS/TAPES -- Top quality blank disks and Ampex 10-min. tapes at users group rates. Box of 10, \$20; single disk, \$3. Tapes: 10 for \$5; 75 cents each. Tape boxes: 10 for \$1.50; 25 cents each. Mailing charge \$1 or pick up at meeting. Joel Gerdeen, 572-0148.

HELP WANTED -- Youth Group Leader. Prefer an individual who can provide direction and guidance in TI related activities. For information call Joel Gerdeen, 572-0148.

### BACK-ISSUES AVAILABLE MSP 99 NEWSLETTER

Only \$1.50 per issue. Submit your order by mail to:  
7500 Germane Trail  
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Enclose a check or money order made payable to the MSP 99 User Group and allow 2 - 3 weeks for delivery. (1982, 1983, 1984 issues available.)

SEE YOUR NAME IN PRINT! Write an article for the newsletter! Call Bonnie Burton, 431-6064, for info.



9900

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USERS' GROUP  
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