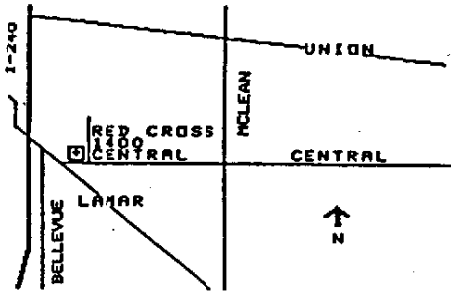


NOTICES

MEETING
7:00 P.M. *20th*
Thursday, October ~~15th~~
Red Cross Building
1400 Central Ave.

WORKSHOP
9am till Noon
Saturday, October 22nd
Location
To Be Announced

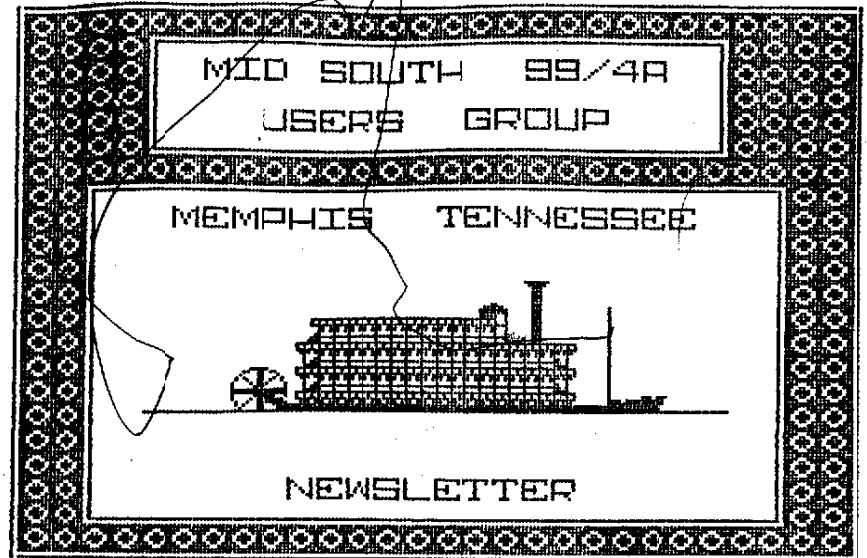


Mid-South 99 Users Group
P. O. Box 38522
Germantown, TN 38183-0522



FLOYD J. Pemberton JR
481 SPRUCE
Louisville, TX 75067

(SAMPLE COPY)



TIDBITS
OCTOBER 1988



T I D B I T S

OFFICERS

Mac Swope	PRESIDENT	901-363-3880
Richard Hiller	VICE-PRESIDENT	901-794-9945
Gary Cox	SECRETARY	901-358-0667
Bob Jones	TREASURER	901-363-9213
Michael Dorman	Midnight Hour BBS SysOp	501-732-5126
David Ferguson	Disk Librarian	901-795-3287
Richard Hiller	CO-Librarian	901-794-9945
Michael Dorman	Editor - Newsletter	501-732-5126
Gary Cox	Program Chairman	901-358-0667
Al Doss	Information and Assistance	901-743-6781
Mac Swope	Chairman - Equipment	901-363-3880

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IN THE NEWS

By Gary W. Cox

The CHICAGO TI FAIRE is coming up November 12, 1988 in Chicago, Illinois. This year the faire will be held at the Holiday Inn located at 3505 Algonquin Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 (312) 259-5000 (1-800-367-7336) which is not far from O'Hare airport. Free limousine service is available to and from O'Hare airport and the hotel. Hotel room rates are \$55 for single, \$55 for double and \$65 for Tower. Friday night, November 11th, a social mixer will be held from 8:00pm to 12:00pm with an admission of \$4. Saturday, November 12th is the faire from 9:00am to 6:00pm with an admission charge of \$4. Seminars will be held each hour in addition to the exhibitors on the convention floor. Also Saturday night, a dinner will be held from 7:00pm to 9:30pm with an admission charge of \$10.00. Sunday, November 13th, the Chicago TI Faire will be continued in Milwaukee at the Quality Inn located at 5311 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin from 9:00am to 5:00pm. For more information, call the Chicago User Group hotline at (312) 755-0351 (24hrs - recorded message) or Fair Chairperson Marcy Brun at (312) 695-9291. Their BBS number is (312) 345-4136 (new number).

Members of our group have attended the Chicago TI Faire for the past 3 years now. Those who have already expressed some interest in going to Chicago this year are: Mac Swope, Gary Cox, Bob Jones, Rick Glissor, Michael Dorman, Lynn Crow, Paul Howell, Richard Hiller, Pierre Lamontagne and James Bennington - not to mention a few wives are interested as well (there goes our wild party!). Also, several out of town members plan on seeing us there and those include Jonathan Leslie from Olathe, Kansas and Jim Johnson from San Antonio, Texas. If you are not mentioned in this list and are interested, contact Mac Swope or myself. Of course, the main concern is transportation in the form of cars... In the past we have taken several cars and split fuel and hotel costs in order to spend as much as possible at the faire. In the past we have usually left early Friday morning in order to reach Chicago by afternoon to attend the Friday night social mixer. We then left Chicago early Sunday morning to make it back to Memphis by Sunday night. As a suggestion for those who can not get off Friday, another shift could leave Friday night to arrive Saturday morning. It's a rough trip (ask Dicko) but it works... In the past we have even rented a motor home complete with a generator to operate our computers on the way to Chicago! We will discuss trip plans at this month's meeting.

Signed up to display at the Chicago TI Faire so far are Asgard Software, B and D Computer Supplies, C and G Drives, Chicago area TI users group, Chicago B128 Users Group, Bud Mills Services, Competition Computer, Data Systems, Genial Computerware, Genie, Great Lakes Software, Hunter Electronics, L.L. Conner Enterprise, Myarc Inc., National Myarc Users Group, Ottawa Users Group (the new DM 1000 is scheduled to be released at the fair), Rave 99 Co. and TI Users of Will County. Seminars scheduled so far are Chris

Bobbitt demonstrating new programs coming out by Asgard Software, Irwin Hott "How the TI is used by a Blind Person", Jack Riley presenting "Advanced Basic 9640" and Barb Wiederhold presenting "Video Flex". I am sure more vendors and more seminars will be scheduled as the time approaches.

Rumor has it that a new and improved DM 1000 is under construction. Changes in the program are rumored to be extensive, so extensive in fact, that the program may be called DM 2000 instead of DM 1000!

Texaments of 244 Mill Road, Yaphank, New York 11980 (516) 345-2134 has offered our users group a 15% discount on all their software. Plus, periodically special discounts will be offered. Currently, the Myarc Hard Disk controller is being offered for \$309.95 (\$299.95 in quantity). Texaments software products include TI-BASE, TI Artist, Designer Labels, Artist's Companion's 1 through 7, Display Master, Artist Extras, CSGD 1, CSGD 2, CSGD 3, CSGD Cataloger, CSGD User Disks 1 through 7, Rapid Copy, KB Detective among others. Coming soon will be Artist Companion #8, CSGD User Disk #8, Milton Bradley MBX Tester and Software Drivers among other new products. Texaments also plans a special support program (mentioned in previous newsletters) for TI-BASE owners.

Horizon Computer and Bud Mills Services have released a card called the P-GRAM card. According to their description, it will save and run modules compatible with the Gram Kracker or Cart-Save. The P-Gram kit is \$150 - with clock kit \$20 more. A fully assembled P-Gram is \$180; add an additional \$20 for a clock. For more information, contact Bud Mills Services, 166 Dartmouth Dr. Toledo, OH 43514.

Some discussion has been underway about increasing the toll free calling area for the Midnight Hour BBS. Currently those who live in Memphis, Tennessee and West Memphis, Arkansas can call the BBS without a long distance charge. The proposed increase would include the entire local Memphis area network. In other words, anyone who can call Memphis without a long distance charge would be able to call the BBS without a long distance charge. This change would include areas around Memphis such as Millington, Collierville, etc... This proposed change would be expensive though and we would need enough people in those areas interested in order to make it worthwhile. If interested, drop us a note to let us know.

Remember that rumor that we had in the newsletter a while back about Texas Instruments coming out with a new computer? That rumor has now apparently come true! Texas Instruments has announced a new computer. However, it's not exactly a "home computer" but a computer specifically designed for children. The computer comes with a built in voice recognition system which recognizes "yes" and "no". The system is not TI99/4a compatible though...

Have a version 2.2 console which will not run third party cartridges? According to W. Jaeger of "Bytes and Pieces" there is a cheap solution (\$3.80 plus \$3 shipping) which is to replace GROM 0 in the console. You will need part #1015960-1155 direct from TI. The chip is in a socket in the console so it won't even have

to be soldered. Also any other device which bypasses GROM 0 will also work such as a Gram Kracker or a GROM Buster device...

According to the Boston Computer Society newsletter, Corson Wyan of Genial Computerware of P.O. Box 183, Grafton, MA 01519 is close to producing a new expansion box for the TI99/4A. Since Rye Data has apparently (haven't heard from them in a LONG time) gone out of business (???), PEB's have been hard to find.

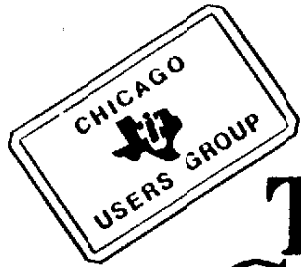
According to the August West Penn 99ers newsletter of Jeannette, PA, Program Innovators of 4122 Glenway Street, Wauwatosa, WI 53222 (414) 535-0133 is offering a new game called TI-TRIS. Described as deceptively simple, yet challenging, frustrating and maddeningly addictive, TI-TRIS was programmed by two Soviet programmers at the Computer Center of the Academy of Science in Moscow. The program was recently translated for the TI by Gene Hitz of the Milwaukee Area 99/4a user group. The program is available on cassette or disk and requires only Extended BASIC (memory expansion not required). Program sells for \$4.95. Speaking of the Soviet Union... Back in the early summer months, I had someone call me looking for an extra console for a relative who lives in Russia! It seems they use TI99/4a's there in their schools. Recently I had a teacher here in Memphis call me asking for information about TI99/4As that they use in their school. Looking around, you can find TI99/4A's users active in using their computers in most of the world. We even have members of our group in South Africa and Germany. The TI99/4a is alive and well!

I would like to end by asking for a favor. In December I will be graduating from Memphis State University where I am majoring in Computer Systems Technology and where I will be receiving a Bachelors of Science in Engineering Technology (BSET). The favor that I would like to ask is help in finding a job here in Memphis! Finding a computer related job here in Memphis may not seem like a big problem but the computer industry is not very strong here and many graduates in my category have had to move out of Memphis to find a job which I DO NOT want to do! If you can help me out in any way, I would greatly appreciate it!

FOR SALE

1 Black and Silver TI99/4a console, 1 gray TI99/4a console, Speech Synthesizer, 2 TI joysticks and assorted cartridges. Will take best offer. Call Kenny Rice at 393-4440 (local to Memphis). For outside Memphis the area code is (601).

Also check out the for sale table at the meeting for other bargains.



PRESENTS THE

6TH ANNUAL

TI Faire Convention



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HOLIDAY INN

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Friday, Nov.11
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Dinner
Sat. Nov 12
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Price \$10.00

For more info on the TI FAIRE or for Membership-Write:
Chicago TI Users Group,
P.O.Box 578341, Chicago,IL 60657
or Call our Hotline: 312/755-0051

DSDD PLATO CONVERSION

By Michael Dorman

Introduction

One of the things I have been quite interested in was converting Plato from the original Single Sided/Single Density format to Double Sided/Double Density. A while back, I ran across a text file by Charley Summerhill that explained just how to do that. The only drawback to his technique was that it required several tools to do the job. In his article, he used Advanced Diagnostics, Rapid Copy, the CorComp Disk Manager, and DISK+AID to convert Plato to DS/DD. Later, Barry Traver issued an Extended Basic program (PLATO/PREP) that simplified the procedure somewhat. This program and Charley's article were published in Barry's excellent GENial Traveler diskazine.

John Birdwell's Disk Utilities version 4.1 or higher contains all the tools necessary to make these changes without requiring the use of any other programs. This speeds up the conversion time tremendously. (The only possible exception to solely using Disk Utilities would be using a Rapid Copy to initialize DS/DD disks before beginning the Plato conversion process. However, Disk Utilities has a pretty fast initialization time without the verification process and has the advantage of being able to format as we go.)

This article gives the details of how to use Disk Utilities (DSKU) to convert Plato diskettes to DS/DD. The basic idea remains Charley's and I am grateful for the service that he has provided to the 4A community. For the purposes of this article, I will assume that you have a 2 drive system and that drive 2 is DS/DD. If you have a single drive system, the instructions will still work for you. Just use DSK1 when I refer to DSK2 and remember to change diskettes accordingly.

Plato Diskette Organization

Plato diskettes have a fairly simple disk protection scheme. The first is the disk protection that can be installed with Disk Manager II. This simply writes a "p" to sector 0 of the disk and can easily be changed with a sector editor. The second form of protection for Plato diskettes is a moved file directory. The directory normally resides in sector 1 and contains the file headers. However, on Plato diskettes the directory is in sector 359. Sector 0, which causes the disk directory to show the only file to be \$31, is not used by Plato at all.

We can view the actual catalog by copying sector 359 to sector 1. This will allow us to not only see the directory, but will also allow us to move or copy the files that are on the Plato diskette. After any changes, however, we must remember to copy sector 1 back to sector 359 since the Plato interpreter expects the file header information at sector 359.

Plato Program Titles

Since Plato packages generally contain 6 or fewer SS/SD floppy sides, most Plato programs will fit on a DS/DD diskette. There are a few that won't fit on one DS/DD. In fact, one course contains 14 sides. We will deal with this situation later in the article.

For now, use a package with 6 or fewer sides. Don't use one with only one side if you have others available. (If you don't, then you don't really need this anyway!) The instructions will use 4 as the number of sides in a package but it is easy to follow with any number that will fit on one DS/DD diskette.

Instructions

STEP 1: Load DSK1 and make backup copies of the Plato diskettes you are going to convert. Use the sector copy method.

STEP 2: Initialize a blank diskette in drive 2 as DS/DD.

STEP 3: Choose "Mark Sector" from the Sector Utilities menu. Mark sector >167 (decimal 359) on DSK2 as used. This will prevent us from copying files over the sector used for file headers for Plato diskettes.

STEP 4: Select "Edit Sector" from the Sector Utilities menu. After inserting the first backup Plato diskette in drive 1, select drive 1 and sector >167. Press CTRL-P to printout the sector.

STEP 5: Select "Edit Sector" to edit drive 1, sector 1. Enter the same information from the printout in step 4. This will copy the file header info to a normal TI format. This will allow us to copy all the Plato files to the new diskette.

STEP 6: Select "File Copy" from the File Utilities. Copy all the files on DSK1 to DSK2. Press CTRL-P to get a printout of DSK1.

STEP 7: Repeat steps 4-5 for the following diskettes. Copy all the files except TIMENU and \$! (these are duplicated on each diskette). When you copy DISKMENU from DSK1 to DSK2, increment the filename by 1 (e.g. DISKMENV, DISKMENW, DISKMENX). Press CTRL-P to get a printout of each SS/SD Plato diskette.

STEP 8: Choose "Edit Sector" and select DSK2, sector 1. Press CTRL-P to get a printout. Then, edit sector >167 of DSK2 to match that of sector 1. This restores the file header info needed by Plato into the sector the cartridge uses.

STEP 9: Using either the file editor or the file search options of the file utilities, find "BOOT" in the file DISKMENU. Change BOOT to DISKMENV. Find the string "Select another diskette" in DISKMENU and change to "Select Menu 2 of 4" (4 assumes that there are 4 diskette sides in this Plato package - adjust accordingly.) Do the same for DISKMENW - change BOOT to DISKMENW and change "Select another diskette" to "Select Menu 3 of 4". Repeat until the last file (DISKMENX) - change BOOT to DISKMENU and "Select another diskette" to "Select Menu 1 of 4".

STEP 10: Using the printouts of the Plato SS/SD diskettes, find the files that match DISKMENU-DISKMENX. They are the remaining filenames (excluding \$! and TIMENU). For each of these filenames, sector edit the file to change the string "DISKMENU" to the appropriate menu (i.e. DISKMENV, DISKMENW, and DISKMENX). Since the first diskette corresponds to DISKMENU, there is no need to change the files that are on that diskette.

Conclusion

You should now have a complete Plato program on one diskette - probably with room to spare! There are two occasions that might arise when making DS/DD Plato diskettes. One is the problem of diskettes that only have one program on a side. On these diskettes there is no menu to select from and the diskette autostarts. The method suggested by Charlie Summerhill is to use a DISKMENU file from another disk and modify it to use the program name used by the diskette (e.g. LISSON).

The other difficulty comes when the total files of a lesson add up to more sectors than are available on a DS/DD diskette. In that case, you will need to break the program up into 2 or, at the most, 3 parts. On the last DISKMENU file on each half (or third), leave the word BOOT and change the menu to say "Change Disk-See Menu x" where X will be the first menu on the next diskette. The BOOT causes the cartridge to go through a reboot sequence that reads the next diskette.

I'm looking forward to adopting the same ideas to 3-1/2 diskettes or, better yet, to a hard drive.

MUTUAL FUND RETURN

By Bill Gaskill

While there seems to be any number of 99/4A programs around for checkbook management, loan amortizations, mortgage projections or savings goals, few seem to be available for use in managing investment type information. I have seen a couple of nice programs for the stock market investor, but a more timely program today is one that deals with mutual funds. Kent Thompson has authored the best one that I have seen yet, called Mutual Fund Manager. It is a complete package that allows the user to store a data base of information on particular funds. It is available for about \$15 I believe from

Real Estate Projections
409 Elberon Ave. #2
San Pedro, Ca. 90731

If you are serious about mutual funds then this is the program to buy.

Mutual funds are perhaps the fastest growing investment vehicle

today. The reason for their popularity is the fact that they allow individual investors to put relatively small amounts of money into a pool of funds that is professionally managed, with little or no fees or commissions, compared to the alternative of investing through individual investment advisors or brokers. While I am not going to go into the intricacies and strategies of mutual fund investing, I will explain how one can get started with this comparatively new investment vehicle, and how one who owns shares or units in a fund can determine the rate of return on their investment. The Mutual Fund Performance program that follows this article can be keyed in and run with only 16K and Extended Basic.

There are actually several hundred mutual funds to choose from today and they come in various "shapes and sizes", meaning their ranks span the risk scale from low-risk conservatively managed funds, to high-risk, very aggressive funds, and the investment goals scale from Money Market Funds to the quicker yield sector funds. Which one(s) you decide to put your money into is usually based upon the level of risk you are willing to accept, your investment goals and the "track record" of the fund(s) you are considering.

RISK LEVEL:

The amount of risk you are willing to take is something you should determine before diving into mutual funds or any other investment vehicle. To determine your risk level you should consider:

1. How long you are willing (or able) to leave the investment tied up.
2. How devastating the total loss of your investment would be to your personal finances and to you and your family?
3. Whether you are investing for long-term growth or whether you need the investment return(s) for income?
4. How much money you have to invest.
5. How much time (or willingness) you have to devote to managing your portfolio.

INVESTMENT GOALS:

Your investment goals play a big part in how much money you will gain or lose on your investments and most often how quickly the gains or losses will occur. The theory being, if you are willing to take big risks (at losing your money) then you should realize big returns for taking that risk. Thus, if you are a risk taker, your investment portfolio would be heavily weighted towards Growth and Income type mutual funds. This is because these funds are geared towards maximum profit in minimum time. Your investment goals are what you hope to accomplish by seeking investing your money with a mutual fund rather than sticking with that passbook savings or Christmas Club account you may have used in the past.

CHOOSING A FUND(S):

If you have the resources and the patience, you can track a particular fund's performance by reading the Stock Market pages in your Sunday newspaper. Sunday papers are used because they usually have the most complete and accurate quotes for the previous week. Since the Market closes at 5pm on Friday, there is a whole day for the newspaper folks to get the information.

Tracking performance is a demanding task, but one that many investors use. It also has the disadvantage of not being able to tell you now, what the fund has done in the past. Past performance information can be had from the Fund's prospectus (if you want to trust it) or one of the "money" type magazines. Another method, which is a little more costly, but probably less risky, and certainly less demanding, is to subscribe to a "reputable" Mutual Fund Investment Newsletter. How you determine what "reputable" is, I will leave to you.

These newsletters are usually written by an "expert" or group of "experts" in the field of Mutual Fund Investing. Most often they employ a forecasting model that uses virtually the same method for determining Fund recommendations that you would use if you read the Sunday newspapers for a consecutive time period, past history (performance). However, they also consider many other variables that you and I might overlook or do not have access to, such as economic indicators, political climate, world prices etc.

Most newsletters create model portfolios that you may follow (emulate) in your investments. The models are based upon high, moderate and conservative investment risks. The higher the risk the higher the return. In investment jargon, high risk funds would be called "aggressive funds". That means that the fund manager(s) usually look for common stock investments in "un-favored" companies that they believe are going to blossom. So the fund buys low and then sells high when the stock goes up.

The newsletter is also a good place to begin your adventure into Mutual Funds since they list the names and often the descriptions of various funds that you might consider. Many newsletters also list the toll-free telephone numbers of the funds so that you may call and order a prospectus.

STARTING OUT:

Assuming that you have some method of determining which funds to invest in, the first thing to do is find out how to get in contact with the fund administrator(s). Virtually all mutual funds have toll-free numbers for use in requesting a Prospectus. The obvious place to look for these numbers is NOT in the yellow pages as one might think, but rather in the trade publications or in the newsletter of a friend who is already involved with Mutual Fund investing. Once you have the telephone number and are ready to make the call, be prepared to request information on specific funds (by the Fund's name). Most Mutual Funds are "Families" of funds. This means that there are several different funds under one administrator. This is necessary to meet the varying demands of the investing public and to optimize the use of investor dollars by having a broad range of investment types. Not everyone has the same investment goals, nor is everyone willing or able to

assume the same level of investment risk.

If you don't know the name of the fund you are interested in, since newspapers only provide cryptic abbreviations for them when they are published, ask for help from the person you talk to on the toll-free line. Don't be afraid to be a little humble and admit your novice status. A good Mutual Fund employee will ask you what your investment goals are or perhaps ask whether you would categorize yourself as a conservative, moderate or aggressive investor. Either way, they are trying to determine what type of fund you might be interested in, based upon your investment goals.

Once you receive the Fund's Prospectus in the mail (it's free), you can try to read it from cover-to-cover if you want to. Some are quite easy to read, some are like an accountant's nightmare and others are in-between the two extremes. No matter which type you receive, all will contain certain information that you should look for, since it directly affects you and the money you will be investing. The list that I am going to give you is based upon my concerns. Yours may be different or more demanding, so don't feel that I have listed ALL the questions you should be asking. However, at a minimum, I think you should look for the answers to the following questions:

1. How much (if anything) does the fund charge to join (the entry fee) and do they charge you to buy shares or units? In other words, is it a LOAD or NO-LOAD fund?
2. Is there a minimum time you must keep your money in the fund without paying a withdrawal penalty (an exit fee)?
3. What are the administrative costs? No fund operates for free. You pay someone to manage your money for you.
4. What are the redemption procedures and what kind of a hassle is it to sell out?
5. Do they require a minimum dollar amount investment?
6. Do they offer telephone redemption and/or telephone switching between funds in the same family? How many times per year?
7. What kind of reporting procedure do they have for shareholders and how often is it provided?

While all funds assess a management fee, many today do not require a sign-up fee. In other words, they are NO-LOAD funds. Some funds however have a "hidden" load, one that is assessed when you try to sell your shares. This is an END-LOAD fund, as opposed to a FRONT-LOAD fund. Front-Load funds charge you to get in. End-Load funds charge you to get out, especially if you do so in the first 1-5 years. Read the Prospectus carefully to determine which type you are considering investing with.

A very important consideration in your decision-making process is the amount or percentage of the fund's administrative fees. Most funds today, whether they are load or no-load types, assess a

"hidden" cost to you, in addition to regular administrative costs, that the fund uses to pay for things like their advertising and marketing. YOU pay for this because the law, under Securities and Exchange Commission regulation 12b-1 allows it. There isn't much you can do about it, but you can mitigate it by choosing the fund that has the lowest administrative costs otherwise.

An important part of the investment game is knowing when to dump your shares, when to sell out. Because you don't want to lose money, timing is critical. Thus, the fund that you are investigating should have telephone switching or roll-over privileges. This means that it should offer (and support) the ability to sell your shares in one fund, and either redeem them or roll them over into another fund, by placing a telephone call. If the fund provides for this only by mail, you must realize that you will still be on a sinking ship for the number of days it takes your letter to get to the Fund Administrator's office. Normally, you should be able to make a phone call, communicate your "sell or roll-over" order and then you are usually required to follow that up with a letter confirming the order. The important thing is for you to realize the impact on your money because of the difference in procedures. Time is truly money in these cases.

CALCULATING YOUR RETURN:

Assuming that you do take the plunge and invest in one or more mutual funds, you will want to monitor the performance of the fund so that you can determine whether or not the fund manager is making you any money.

The Mutual Fund Return program is aimed at doing that for you.

At the first prompt you will be asked for the:

Analysis Length In Months:

Enter a number from 1 to 24. This figure is used to determine the number of months involved in the analysis and to calculate an annualized return. If the current month is January 1987 and you bought into the fund in December 1985, you would enter the number 14, which is the number of months between December 1985 and January 1987 inclusive. You would count January 1987 as one of the months, even if the date you perform the analysis on is only the first day of the month.

The next prompt asks for "Beginning Shares". This is the number of shares that were credited to your account on the month that this analysis begins. If you are measuring performance from the first month you bought into the fund, make sure that the figure entered here is the one provided on your statement after any entry fees are deducted. This (and all remaining) information should be included on the statements that you receive from the manager(s) of the fund. Also, note that some funds use the term "units" instead of shares. They are the same thing.

The next prompt, "Share Price Then", asks for the price per share paid, on the month that the analysis begins. This amount should also be on your statement. It is the actual dollar figure cost of

each share purchased.

The next two prompts, "Ending Shares" and "Share Price Now", ask for the ending figures of the same type of information asked for above. Only these amounts pertain to the ending month of the analysis rather than the beginning month.

In the "Cash Dividends..." block, enter the dollar amount of any dividends or capital-gains distributions that were paid to you during the analysis period. Do not include any money that was re-invested. Enter a zero if no distributions were paid.

The next two prompts ask for:

Investments In \$ and
Redemptions Out \$

In the "Investments In" block, enter the dollar amount of any additional monies pumped into the fund since the beginning month of the analysis. Then, enter the dollar amount of any monies taken out in the form of redemptions. Enter zeros in both blocks if neither apply to the period of the analysis.

Once these figures are entered the program calculates an annualized return that is displayed as a percentage gain or loss.

```
100 @=1 :: CALL CHAR(95,"OOF
F"):: DISPLAY AT(2,@)ERASE A
LL:RPT$( " ",28):: DISPLAY AT
(22,@):RPT$( " ",28)
110 IMAGE ##.## %
120 ON WARNING NEXT :: DISPL
AY AT(8,6):"MUTUAL FUND RETU
RN"
130 FOR G=0 TO 14 :: CALL CO
LOR(G,16,5):: NEXT G
140 DISPLAY AT(3,@):"Analysi
s Length In Months:" :: ACCE
PT AT(3,27):AL :: IF AL<1 OR
AL>24 THEN 140
150 DISPLAY AT(5,@):"Beginni
ng Shares :":"Share Price Th
en $" :: ACCEPT AT(5,20):BS
:: ACCEPT AT(6,20):SP :: BI=
BS*SP
160 DISPLAY AT(8,@):"Ending
Shares :":"Share Price No
w $" :: ACCEPT AT(8,20):SIZE
(7):ES :: ACCEPT AT(9,20):SP
N :: CI=ES*SPN
170 DISPLAY AT(11,@):"Cash D
ividends":"Received Since":"
Beginning Month $" :: ACCEP
T AT(13,20):CD
```

```
180 DISPLAY AT(15,@):"Invest
ments In $"::"Redemptions O
ut $" :: ACCEPT AT(15,20):I
I :: ACCEPT AT(16,20):RO ::
RI=II-RO :: RI=RI*.50
190 SA=BI+RI :: SB=(CI+CD)-R
I :: SC=SE/SA :: SD=(SC-1)*1
00
200 SE=12/AL :: SF=(SE*SD)*1
00 ::
210 DISPLAY AT(18,@):"Rate o
f Return Is:"
220 DISPLAY AT(18,20):USING
11D:SF/100
230 DISPLAY AT(23,@):"Press
F9 to exit, or other key t
o compute another one" :: CA
LL KEY(3,E,F):: IF F=0 THEN
230
240 IF E=15 THEN 250 ELSE RU
N
250 CALL CLEAR :: PRINT "Pre
cise rate is:"::SF/100 :: STO
P
260 DISPLAY AT(18,20):USING
110:SF/100
```

SOAP BOX

By Gary W. Cox

This will be our last newsletter as this month will mark the discontinuation of our TI users group due to lack of interest... Statements similar to that are being heard from several TI user groups across the country due to decreasing membership and lack of interest by its members. For quite some time I had hoped that we would be spared this problem as attendance to meetings has been quite good. However, last month a startlingly low number of only 18 people showed up at our meeting! Since our group was formed more than six years ago, an attendance this low has never been recorded. It is very discouraging to the officers after spending a tremendous amount of time during the month working for the group then few people show up to a meeting. Meetings are the only way that we can tell that anyone is interested. If no one shows up we have to figure that no one is interested. If there is no one interested there is no need of doing all this work that we do!

Surprisingly out of town members are more active. I have phone calls from them asking for assistance. They call often to the Midnight Hour BBS, write letters, request programs from the library, write newsletter articles etc... Many of the out of town members have expressed regret that they can not attend our meetings while those who live in town do none of the above.

The point that I am trying to make is that we need the support of our membership to continue. Support in things such as call the BBS at least once, (if you have a modem) come to a meeting at least once every six months, write a letter, write an article, send us a postcard to let us know that you are interested, volunteer to help out in the group. Just anything but we need to at least know someone is out there. Sometimes I wonder if anyone even reads the newsletter as I sometimes even get questions about subjects already covered in the newsletter.

Our group is here to support owners of the TI99/4a and Geneve 9640 computers. Do you really realize what we have going here? I am not trying to put down any other brand users group but I doubt you will find as such going on in any of the other non-TI group as we have here. For example, one of the largest groups in town charges \$25 a year membership we charge \$15 (\$10 if you just want the newsletter). At one time that group didn't even mail out their newsletter. Access to their BBS is restricted to members only; Michael offers a completely FREE access system. Our newsletter is even larger than many other brand user groups. Many groups charge up to \$5 access charge to their library. Access to our library is FREE if you exchange your disk for ours at a meeting and it is only \$2 per disk if you order through the mail. Programs are also FREE if you download them from the BBS. We occasionally have offers of discounts on products. We help with equipment and software problems. Some people come to the meetings and other club functions just for the social aspect. We offer everything in our group at the absolute minimum cost necessary for us to survive

as we barely break even each month... Membership dues in our group has even decreased over the years with the addition of the \$10 option. I could go on and on but I hope you get the point.

If you let a TI user group die then it is going to be difficult to find support for that machine. If the groups start going, vendors will follow.

Many groups across the country are faced with this same problem. I had hoped that we would be immune to much of these problems. But now with attendance at a record low, we seem to be falling into the same category. Membership is down from a year ago from 95 to now 85 members while we still maintain a newsletter mailing to members and other groups, etc. of about 180.

What can you do to help? Participate in some manner. Even if you just come to a meeting once every year, at least we know that you are still there. If you know of someone else with a TI99/4A, please tell him about our group. We need to keep our membership up. Encourage former members to rejoin. Get the idea?

The alternative? Have you priced other computers lately? How about software for such machines as IBM compatibles. Several hundred dollars is nothing for a piece of IBM compatible software while we are paying prices ten times lower for programs that may do similar functions... Have you priced an Atari or Commodore system lately? Prices for those are almost as bad as for IBM clones! With the TI99/4A console and a cartridge you can have a fantastic game running without a lot of expensive equipment. You can pick up a complete TI99/4A system now days for around \$300. I also own an IBM clone (please don't stone me!) but I enjoy my TI99/4A much more. It's more friendlier, easier to use and the software and equipment certainly costs less than that of IBM compatibles. In fact, many in the group own other brand computer systems but still stick with their TI99/4A. While some other brand systems certainly can do more in some areas, you also pay for it. The TI99/4A is a great machine with whose potential is just now being tapped. Please don't let the TI99/4A die!

As a note of encouragement, I do not plan to let our group die. As long as I am here in Memphis and two people come to a meeting, I will make sure that this group keeps going. The TI99/4A is still the funnest and friendliest computer for me and I am still fascinated by what it can do... It's fullest potential is still far from being reached as shown by the recent addition of programs like Telco and TI-BASE. Our continued success or failure is up to you. That's the soap box for this month.

CASSETTE DATA FILES

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HINTS 'N TIPS: BASIC PROGRAMMING - CASSETTE DATA FILES

Some of you may not be aware that you can use your cassette

recorder to do more than just save or load a program. Your cassette can also store data files which can be read into the console by a running program, modified by the user, and saved for later reference. By learning to use the Basic commands OPEN, INPUT #, PRINT #, and CLOSE # you can open up new horizons with your TI-99/4A by being able to save and recall data from cassette.

One important point to get clear first is the concept of "Buffers". The word "buffer" is used to describe an area of computer memory (or hardware) that is used to temporarily store data that is to be written into and out of the computer. Buffers are required whenever the computer must talk or listen to another device which does not operate at the same speed or in the same manner as the computer does. For example, since you cannot type at computer speed, the keyboard on your machine uses a buffer to pass information to the processor. Similarly, a cassette recorder simply cannot handle data at computer speeds, consequently the computer must use a buffer to transfer information to the device. Briefly, a buffer is a block of memory of fixed size which is referenced by a numerical tag (you can have more than one buffer available). When the data is to be transferred, the computer will load the buffer with data until it is full. Then the same buffer is read by a device service routine at a speed which is compatible with the output device. When the buffer is emptied, more data is written into it until the data transfer is complete. An important point to realize is that the transfer of data from the buffer to the external device is done automatically only if the buffer is full. If the buffer is only partially loaded when the application program ends, this data could be lost unless you instruct the system to close all open files (buffers). This will cause the system to finish dumping the buffer to cassette. The last data item is always an end of file (EOF) marker.

When data is read into the computer, the process is reversed with the computer looking for the final end of file mark so that it knows when to stop reading the buffer and shut down the external device.

As mentioned earlier, the buffers have a numerical tag. In TI Basic or Extended Basic, you can specify a tag from 1 to 255 with each buffer being distinguished from others by the tag number. Buffer number 0 is reserved for system use and is, in fact, the keyboard (and screen) buffer as mentioned earlier. You can use more than one buffer at a time for different purposes, however the number of buffers that are open at the same time is limited to a default of three (3). If you need more than three (3) buffers open, use the CALLS FILES(n) command where "n" is any number from one (1) to nine (9). Note that this will limit you to a maximum of nine (9) open files or buffers at one time. The CALLS FILES command must be used in the following manner:

```
NEW  
CALLS FILES(n)
```

```
NEW
```

Now load your application program in the usual way and you will have the required number of files or buffers available. CALL FILES may not be used in a program; it must be entered in the command mode. Consequently, any program requiring more than three

(3) buffers must have the appropriate CALL FILES executed first. Each buffer that has been reserved occupies 518 bytes of RAM (except the first which takes up 1052 bytes) so it is wise to keep the required number of buffers as low as possible to conserve memory space.

There is one important thing that should be mentioned:
DO NOT USE A PROGRAM TAPE TO STORE DATA! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

You would not be the first to overwrite a program with a data file. It is advisable to maintain your data files on separate tapes, preferably one file per tape to avoid confusion.

OPEN # - This command prepares the system to transfer data to an accessory device. The buffer number (the TI manual calls buffers "files") is specified by you as well as the device name (such as CSI) to which the data is to be written. Additionally, you must specify the structure of the data file to be written on the cassette. Until you have become thoroughly familiar with the TI User's Reference Guide and you have gained some experience working with cassette files, always specify "CSI", INTERNAL, FIXED for your file structure. Furthermore, you must tell the system the size of the data strings to be written (so that it will know how to read the data back later) by placing 64, 128, or 192 after the FIXED notation. You must plan the maximum length of each data item to be stored; if you choose FIXED 64 in the OPEN statement and then write a data item 70 characters long, the last six (6) characters would either be lost or would overflow into the data of the next character string producing an unwanted concatenation or a "trashed file". On the other hand, if your string was only 60 characters long, the system would automatically pad the string out to 64 with dummy characters which are removed when the data is recalled.

CLOSE # - This statement will cause the computer to empty the specified buffer number of pending data by completing the transfer sequence. Treat OPEN # and CLOSE # statements like matched bookends. Do not place any statements between the two that would cause a transfer of the program control out of the program block defined by these two statements. If you experience a program error message during a file transfer sequence, DO NOT USE FCTN QUIT! ! ! This will cause all data in the buffers to be lost. Instead, type BYE, OLD, SAVE, LIST, or else EDIT a line number; any of these actions will cause the buffers to close properly.

PRINT # - This causes the system to transfer (print) data FROM the computer TO the device identified by and in the format specified by the OPEN statement whose buffer number corresponds.

The system is now fine tuned to eliminate noise. Enjoy the use of your system now that it has been fine tuned for its optimum performance.

The article was copied from the CLUB 99 Newsletter of November 1984. The newsletter is produced by the Attleborough, Mass., Users Group.

NOTICE

Information contained in TidBits is accurate and true to the best of our knowledge. Viewpoints and opinions expressed in TidBits are not necessarily that of the Mid-South 99'ers. We welcome any opinions/corrections from our readers. Articles may be reprinted elsewhere as long as credit is given to the author and newsletter.

GROUP INFO

Visitors and potential members may receive 3 free issues of TidBits while they decide if they wish to join (no obligation). On the top of your label is a code. A Y means you are a member, N means 3 free list, UG means user group and S means a business. Beside the Y is a date, one year from that date your dues are due. A dollar sign (\$) on the label will indicate that your dues are due. The library is open only to FULL (\$15) members. Library list is \$1. Mail order disk library access is \$2 per disk max of 5 disks per month order by disk number only. At meetings, library access is FREE if you exchange your disk for ours or \$1 per disk for our disks. Send all mail order library requests to librarian's address! Send dues and correspondence to group address.

CALENDAR

MEETINGS: October 20, November 17 (3rd Thursday!)
WORKSHOPS: October 22, November 26 (4th Saturday!)
c99 CLASS: Every Thursday except meeting night, location TBA.

24HR TI BULLETIN BOARD

The Mid-South Hour 3BS 3C0/1200 bd 501-735-9980
Dial 238-9980 from Memphis area for toll free call.

GROUP MAILING ADDRESS

Mid-South 99 Users Group
P.O. Box 38522
Germantown, Tn. 38183-0522

LIBRARY ADDRESS

David Ferguson
3377 Creighton Ave.
Memphis, TN 38118

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____ \$15.00 FAMILY
ADDRESS _____ \$10.00 JUNIOR (under 15)
CITY _____ ST ZIP _____ \$10.00 ASSOCIATE (N/L only)
PHONE(_____) - _____ : INTERESTS _____

EQUIPMENT, ETC. _____

Detach and mail with check payable to: Mid-South 99 Users Group,
P.O. Box 38522, Germantown, Tn, 38183-0522.