TI DBITS

MID SOUTH 88 USERS GROUP

MEMPHIS TENNESSEE

LEST THEY FORGET. .

JULY
1988

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TIDBITS

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PRESIDENT'S BIT

by Gary W. Cox

We enjoyed a fair crowd of people at the last meeting with Berry Miller demonstrating PC99.

I'd like to encourage everyone to attend this months meeting in order to support our group.

I'd also like to mention that MICROpendium subscriptions, now at $25, will soon go up to $35 in order to cover the costs of printing. If you have been thinking of subscribing, now is the time as a subscription is still $25 untill July 31st!

MICROpendium
P. O. 1343
Round Rock, Tx 78680

C ya at this months meeting. . . .

S O C K S

THOUGHTS by Chris Peterson
from the Fox Valley newsletter, September, 1991

Sometimes you just want to get away from everything. The news is bad on the boob tube and in the papers. The programs on the boob tube stink and the comics on the paper get a grimace instead of a smile.

To top it off you have to go work and it is Monday. Just like in the Sally Forth comic, Sally's rules of Summer, and I quote, "The nicest day of summer always falls on a Monday."

Now comes the big problem before you can go to work you must find a pair of socks that match and have no holes in them. To dream the impossilbe dream.

I'm afraid that I'm one of those strange people that doesn't go bare foot but has a pair of socks on his feet at all times. Did someone faint in disbelief, or was that a smart remark I heard?

I don't believe I have ever worn a pair of shoes without socks, in fact I sleep with my socks on, no joke. So you see for me what a great huge terrible problem it is to be without a matching, decent pair of socks.

Anyway here are some of my thoughts and ideas on those stinking socks.

* Socks should be washed daily if worn, they are not one of those things that improve with age. Unless you are an old billy goat with a sinus problem.

* I have a terrible time matching socks, thank God they don't come in right and left like shoes. I would never find the right sock, I would always be wearing two lefts.

* I think socks are designed so that the minute you put

them on you get an automatic hole where the big toe is. I once bought a pair of socks that had a five year warrantee against holes. It didn't take five minutes to get one.

* One of the laws of nature, and to me is the first law, is that socks disappear. They have a deal with the washing machine its a magic act, but puff they are gone. If I could figure how they do their act I would have a new career. I'm just dreaming because Houdini never did figure it out.

* Why don't they make socks like the old model T Ford cars? "You can have any color you want as long as it is black." At least that way I could match up the colors. Have you ever noticed how in the house all socks look the same color? However when you put them on and wear them in public, one seems to shout to the world, "look at this stooge, this fool's socks don't match." The sad thing is everone is pointing at you and snickering and you have no idea why. When you find out you want to die, just to find a hole and crawl in. I believe at a time like this I would pay a million dollars for a matching pair of socks.

* When I was ten years old I learned how to darn (sew up the holes) my socks. I think it called darning because of the effort involved. Anyway I'm too lazy to do it. I guess that is why there is always a hole in my socks.

* I'm glad we don't have to polish socks. Shoes are a big enough problem.

* With socks, the holes have it. I wonder do doughnuts holes and sock holes come from the same place?

* In my case, socks, don't leave home without them. But what to wear, stretch, nylon, cotton, acrylic, white or color? It is enough to make you want to go back to bed.

* I can wear wool socks and not itch, in cold weather there is nothing better. If I can find them.

* They have come out with double soled socks with twice the cushioning. Some people call them boot socks. Big deal, I always wear out the front before the bottom. Now if they would put steel belts in the toes like they do in tires that would be something.

* One of the biggest sins in the world is wearing white socks with a suit.

* 1000 socks and none match!

* Irregular socks, you get what you pay for. One sock fits perfect and the other one has the heel in the middle of the foot.

* The great sock conspiracy. Whenever you take off a shoe or shoes, whether to try on a new pair, or because you don't want to get mud in someones house. There is always a hole in

your sock. And you can't hide it. Everyone stares at it, but no one says a word about it. It is time to die.

To end this, let me say that the only place you are going to find anything perfect wil be in Heaven. In Heaven there will be perfect socks. As we will say about everything else in Heaven, "To God be the glory, Amen."

The above is from the Lamar Leader Newspaper. The author is a nephew and after reading about his tale of woe, I began to think about members in clubs. Lost socks and lost members. Where do they go? Have you been snickered at because of a simple question? Not all members are the same. Some are left and right. Some are dark and light. We don't take our shoes off, but sometimes we don't get the instruction clear and do we ask for a better answer to our question? I think not. Its a shame here these people in the club are trying the hardest they know how to explain a program and for some reason you don't get it. Do you stand up and say repeat that for me? No! Why not? How many times have you heard, "Keep your mouth shut and don't show how dumb you are." Well, if you never ask, you will never learn. If you remember we all started dumb. As Chris says, perfect programmers are in Heaven. Untill then I guess I'll have to just struggle along on what I have now.

Jim Deards Editor 73

THE WIDGET

from the pages of the PUG Peripheral, October, 1992

The Widget or Cartridge selector is a device for keeping three cartridges or Modules ready for use at the flip of a switch. This little jewel has the un-nerving habit of locking up the console when it is switched too fast, and without waiting for a few seconds or so. WELL, I have found that by holding FCTN =, the quit key on our 99/4A, that this does not happen while switching the widget. This seems to act as an interrupt allowing you to choose a new cartridge and carry on in the new cartridge without having to turn the console off or pressing the reset on the widget.

I have been using this combination for some time now and have only had one or two failures.

-NOTE- You MUST hold down BOTH the FCTN and the +/= key while switching for this to work. Takes about 3 thumbs and a couple of fingers (or vice-versa) to accomplish this but it works!

Paul Herman , , , PUNN

CONVERTING CALL SOUND TO MIDI SNF

by Jim Peterson

from the St.Louis SPIRIT of 99 newsletter, Mar. 1993

In his documentation for Midi Master 99, Mike Maksimik states that it is easy to convert CALLS SOUND statements to MIDI notes - in other words, to convert TI-99/4A Basic music to MIDI SNF format. He gives a suggestion of a subprogram to use for this purpose.

Unfortuantely, in actual practice it is far from easy - at least I have not found it easy, and I have ten years of experience in programming TI Basic.

Many programmers have written music for the TI, and each one tended to use his own method. Some did it the hard way, writing a CALL SOUND for each note. Others have used a single CALL SOUND but have virtually placed the frequencies in an array, or read them in from DATA, or assigned them to mnemonic variables, etc., etc. Some have used positive durations, others used negative durations with delay loops. Some have used the noise generator for bass notes and some have used all kinds of programming tricks for special effects.

Therefore, there can be no standard method of conversion.

In general, I have found that four out of five music programs contain complexities which make them impractical or impossible to convert. Most of the rest have required some modification or editing of either the program or the conversion routine. Even then, the results have not always been satisfactory.

One might ask, why bother with such conversion? The programmer had to pare down the XBasic music to only 3 voices, due to the limitations of the TI. Why not key in the SNF file from the original score, using all the voices that the writer intended? That's a good question - but, I can't resist a programming challange, so I just had to try! And, I have had great success with some pieces that would take forever to key in, such as Bumble Boogie and Dizzy Fingers.

It is fairly easy, in most cases, if the programmer has used my favorite method, putting the frequencies into an array and numbering the durations from one up. In that case, near the beginning of the program you will find something like this -

```
170 DIM N(36):: F=110 :: FOR J=1 TO 36 :: N(J)=INT( F *
    1.059463094 (J-1)+.5) :: NEXT J :: N(0)=40000 :: FOR
    R=1 TO 2
```

And the programming will look like this -

```
180 GOSUB 290 :: T=1 :: A=18 ::A B=15 :: C=6 :: GOSUB 290
    :: T=2 :: A=23 :: GOSUB 290 :: A=27 :: GOSUB 290
```

- where T is the duration, multiplied by a factor in the CALL SOUND, and A, B, and C are the subscript numbers of the array holding the frequencies, after each note going to a single CALL SOUND something like this -

```
300 CALL SOUND( T * 100, N(A), V1, N(B), V2, N(C), V3) ::
    RETURN
```

The following routine will convert such music, if the programmer hasn't done something unusual.

```
1 DATA 0C, 0C#, 0D, 0E@, 0E, 0F, 0OF#, 0G, 0A@, 0A, 0B@, 0B
2 DATA 1C, 1C#, 1D, 1E@, 1E, 1F, 1F#, 1G, 1A@, 1A, 1B@, 1B
```



```
3 DATA 2C, 2C#, 2D, 2E#, 2E, 2F, 2F#, 2A@, 2A, 2B#, 2B
4 DATA 3C, 3C#, 3D, 3E@, 3E, 3F, 3F#, 3G, 3A@, 3A, 3B@, 3B
5 DATA 4C, 4C#, 4D, 4E@, 4E, 4F, 4F@, 4G, 4A@, 4A, 4B@,
  4B, 5C, END
6 DATA S, E, .E, 5, .Q, ..Q, H, 9, 10, 11, .H, 13, ..H,
  15, W, END
7 DIM #N$(70), #D$(16)
8 READ A$ ::A IF @$<>"END" THEN @=@+1 :: @N$(@)=@$ :: GOTO
  8 ELSE @=0
9 READ @$ :: IF @$<>"END" THEN @=@+1 :: QD$(Q)=Q$ :: GOTO 9
10 DISPLAY AT(3,1)ERASE ALL: "SNF filename? DSK" :: ACCEPT
  AT(3,18): @F$ :: OPEN #1: "DSK" & @F$, OUTPUT
11 DISPLAY AT(5,1)"Music name?" ::A ACCEPT AT(6,1): @M$::
  DISPLAY AT(8,1): "Number of voices?" :: ACCEPT AT(8,19):
  @V$
12 PRINT #1: "("&@M$&"),"&@V$&",1" :: ACCEPT AT(10,1):
  "Delay?" :: ACCEPT AT(10,0): @DL$ :: PRINT #1:"DELAY="&
  @DL$
13 ! PRINT #1: "1,"& @N$(A)","&@D$(T): "2,"& @N$(B)& ","&
  @D$(T): "3,"& @N$(C)& ","& @D$(T) :: RETURN
14 ! PRINT #1: "4,"& @N$(A)& ","& @D$(T): "5,"& @N$(B)&
  ","& @D$(T): ","& @N$(C)& ","&@D$(T) :: RETURN
```

Key that in, save it by SAVE DSK1.MERGE, MERGE. Load the XBasic music program, make sure it starts with a line number higher than 14, and merge in that routine by MERGE DSK1.MERGE.

Find the line number containing the CALL SOUND. Bring line 13 to the screen. Enter it, use FCTN 8 to bring it back, replace the 13 with that line number, delete the ! and Enter.

The next step is optional, but try it. Delete the :: RETURN from the line you just moved. Then bring line 14 to the screen and use the same method to give it a lime number one higher than the CALL SOUND line. The conversion will now write an SNF file for 6 voices. There will be only 3 different voices. There will be only 3 different notes, but you could change the N$(A) to N$(A+!@) to raise it an octave, and assign different instruments.

Of course, if the program uses variables other than T, A, and C, you will have to change them in those two lines.

Near the end of the program, usually, you will find a NEXT, which goes back to play the music a set number of times; or you might find a GOTO to the beginning line, to keep playing it forever; or there might be a "play it again?" prompt, or even an END. In any case, just before that put PRINT #1:"END" :: CLOSE #1 :: STOP. If you want the music to play through more than once, it is better to duplicate the SNF file with the Funnelweb COPY function.

Now RUN it. Yu had best answer the delay? prompt with 1000 or more, because it will probably be giving you sixteenth notes that should be quarter notes. You can adjust that later.

Compile the SNF file. You may get some errors because the note length is a number instead of an acceptable symbol. See the line 6 DATA. You will have to rewite those as two notes with the second one tied. For instance, a 10 would be replaced with an H and another of the sane note with an -E.

When you have made those corrections, and adjusted the delay, if the music doesn't sound right, it is best to give up. The programmer has done something that would probably be difficult to figure out and duplicate.

If the programmer has used individual CALLS SOUNDs, or used some mnemonic variables, or read the frequencies from DATA, conversion may still be possible but there are more apt to be insurmountable prcblems. Mike suggests converting the CALLS SOUNDs to a user written subprogram names SOUND. This is not necessary, because a user-written subprogram having the same name as a built-in subprogram is recognized instead of the built-in subprogram.

However, it is essential that every CALL SOUND in the program has the same number of voices, becuase user-written subprograms must have a fixed number of parameters.

It is also essential that the duration values passed to the subprogram are numbered from 1 upward, or that they are divided down to those values in the subprogram.

If the programmer has used a single set of bariables in this CALL SOUNDs, you can solve the problems of differing numbers of voices woth this error trap -

```
11 ON ERROR 12 :: GOTO 13
12 CALL SOUND(T, A, 0, 40000, 0, 40000, 0) :: ON ERROR 12
   :: RETURN NEXT
13 REM
```

Substitute for A the variable name used for the first voice. The routine will add other vouces with an inaudible frequency, which ny conversion routine will recognize as a rest.

Otherwise, the following routine will rewrite a program which has been saved in merge format, adding extra voices to a total of three, with an inaudible frequency. When finished, merge the new file back in as a program. I think it is foolproof except in those rare cases where the programmer has used parenthesis within the parenthesis of the CALL SOUND.

```
100 DISPLAY AT(3,8)ERASE ALL: "MUSIC REWRITER" :: DISPLAY
   AT(5,1): "INPUT FILENAME?":"DSK" :: ACCEPT AT(6,4):IF$
   :: OPEN #1: "DSK"&IF$, VARIABLE 163, INPUT
110 DISPLAY AT(88,1): "OUTPUT FILENAME?": "DSK" :: ACCEPT
   AT(9,1): OF$ :: OPEN #2: "DSK"&OF$, VARIABLE 163,
   OUTPUT :: C$=CHR$(179)
120 PRINT #2:CHR$(0) & CHR$(0) & "@" & CHR$(190) &
   CHR$(200) & CHR$(5) & "40000" & CHR$(0)
130 X=0 :: P=1 :: LINPUT #1:M$
140 A=POS(M$, "SOUND", P) :: IF A=0 THEN PRINT #2:M$ ::
   GOSUB 250 :: GOTO 130
150 B=POS(M$, CHR$(182), A) :: M1$=SEG$(M$, 1, B-1) ::
   M2$=SEG$(M$, B+1, 255)
160 P=A
170 C=POS(M1$, CHR$(179), P) :: IF C=0 THEN 200 ELSE X=X+1
180 IF X=7 THEN F=C
190 P=C+1 :: GOTO 170
200 IF X>6 THEN M1$=SEG$(M1$, 1, F-1) & CHR$(182) :: GOTO
   240
210 IF X=6 THEN M1$=M1$ & CHR$(182) :: GOTO 240
220 IF X=4 THEN M1$=M1$ & C$ & "@" & C$ & "@@" & CHR$(182)
   :: GOTO 240
230 M1$=M1$ & C$ & "@" & C$ & "@@" & C$ & "@ & C$ & "@@" &
   C$(182)
240 X=0 :: M$=M1$ & M2$ :: P=A+1 :: GOTO 140
250 IF EOF(1)<> 1 THEN RETURN ELSE CLOSE #2 :: CLOSE #2
   :: STOP
```

Now, merge in this routine, which you have keyed in and

saved in merge format, into your music program. Find the end of the music and put in the line to print "END" nad close the file, as described aove. Also be sure you have modified the program, cr this subprogram, so that duration values run from one upward. For instance, if the CALL SOUNDs have duration values of 30, 700, and 1050, add T=T/350 to line 30010. Or if the CALL SOUNDs have durations such as T, T*2 and T/4, find the line number where T is defined and change it to T=4 so that T/4 will be 1.

Then run the program to, hopefully, create a workable SNF file.

```
1 DISPLAY AT(3,1)ERASE ALL: "SNF filename? DSK" :: ACCEPT
  AT(3,18):F$ :: OPEN #1: "DSK" & F$, OUTPUT
2 DISPLAY AT(5,1): "Music name?" :: ACEPT AT(6,1):M$ ::
  DISPLAY AT(81): "Number of voices?" :: ACCEPT AT(8,
  19):V$
3 PRINT #1: "("& M$& "),"& V$& ",1) :: DISPLAY AT(10,1):
  "Delay?" :: ACCEPT AT(13,8):DL$ :: PRINT #1: "#DELAY=
  "&DL$
30000 SUB SOUND(T, A, @, B, @@, C, @@@) :: IF W=1 THEN
30010 ELSE W=1
30001 DIM C$(12), N$(3000), D$(24) :: C$(1)="C" ::
  C$(2)="C#" :: C$(3)="D" ::A C$(4)="E@" :: C$(5)="E" ::
  C$(5)="F" :: C$(7)="F@" ::C$(8)="G" :: C$()="A@"
30002 C$(10)="A" :: C$(11)= "B@" :: C$(12)= "B" ::
  D$(1)="S" :: D$(2)="E" :: D$(3)=".E" :: D$(4)="Q" ::
  D$(5)="5" :: D$(6)=".Q" :: D$(7)="..Q" :: D$(8)="H"
30003 D$(9)="9" :: D$(10)="10" :: D$(11)="11" :: D$(12)
  =".H" :: D$(13)="13" :: D$(14)="..H" :: D$(15)="15" ::
  D$(16)="W" :: D$(17)="17" :: D$(18)="18"
30004 D$(19)="19" :: D$(20)="20" :: D$(21)="21" :: D$(22)
  ="22" :: D$(23)="23" ::D$(24)=".W"
30005 F=110 :: FOR J=1 TO 48 ::A I=INT(F*1.059463094
  (J-1)+.5) :: Y=Y-(Z=12) :: Z=Z+1+(Z=12)*12 ::
  N$(X)=STR$(Y)& C$(Z) :: NEXT J :: N$(0)="R"
30010 A=-A$(A<296) ::B=-B*(B<296) :: C=-C*(C<296)
30011 IF N$(A)="" THEN DISPLAY AT(24,1):A :: ACCEPT AT(24,
  8)BEEP:A
30012 IF N$(B)="" THEN DISPLAY AT(24,1):B :: ACCEPT AT(24,
  8)BEEP:B
30013 IF N$(C)="" THEN DISPLAY AT(24,1):C :: ACCEPT AT(24,
  8)BEEP:C
30040 PRINT #1: "1,"& N$(A)& ","& D$(T): "2,"& N$(B)&
  D$(T) : "3," N$(C)& ","& D$(T)
30050 PRINT "1,"& N$(A)& ","& D$(T): "2,"& N$(B)& ","&
  D$(T): "3,"& N$(C)& ","& D$(T) :: SUBEND
```

In order to provide a fast lookup table, that little routine is so wasteful of memory thgat it would even embarass a PC programmer, so you might get a MEMORY FULL error when you merge it into an unusually large program. It is written to allow for SNF notes up to 4A, which is higher than you are likely to need, so you can change the DIM N$(30000) in line 30001 to 2400 and the 58 in lire 30006 to 36 and still have three full octaves.

The SNF file being written is also displayed on screen, so you can see if you are getting valid results.

The subprogram requires note values to be exactly correct and sometimes they are not, due to programmer's error or the result of mathematical computations in the CALL SOUND. In this

case, the subprogram will display the bad value it has recieved and allow you to substitute the correct value from the table on page 124 of the Bdginner's Basic manual.

But, I can't begin to tell you about all the modifications you may have to make to a program or in order to overcome its particular problems. If you do not have some programming skill, I recommend you don't even try. Sorry, Mike, it is NOT easy!

FROM THE TEACHER'S DESK

by Dave Howell
from the pages of the ERIE U.G. newsletter, May 1993

TECHNOLOGY IN THE SCHOOLS: IS IT EFFECTIVE?

Not very long ago, there were many pessimists who answered "no". Now, however as the evidence piles up, technology is becomming a major factor in re-vitalizing the learning environment and student involvement.

At first, most laymen thought that the ultimate in school technology was having a computer for every student or, at best, a computer in every classroom. While that event would certainly be delightful, it was neither practical not an absolute necessity. School technology involves much more than that - like having the software systems and the school instructional infrastructure that efficiently meets the goals of te school. This means that all of the technology must, of necessity, tie together all of the other aspects of interactive media such as CD-ROMs, instructional television, instructional systems (ILS), networked courseware, interactive videodisks, and a host of other peripherals entering the market. Where will it end? Hopefully never! After all, technology IS change and that's what we should have been doing over the decades to match the technologies of the working world.

The use of ever-developing educational technology places the teacher in the role of director and coordinator in the learning processes of each student - very similar to "prescriptive teaching". To this end, teachers must be trained with the cirriculm. but this is a topic for another article.

Now what is the evidence which sas that technology makes a difference? Jay Sivin-Kachala and Ellen Bialo of Interactive Educational Systems Design, Inc., in New York, reported in Educational Learning that educational research conducted between 1990 and 1992 reveals that technology has had positive effects on both student learning and the learning environment. For example, two recent analyses of over 250 studies of computer-based instructir (CBI) is approximately 30 percent more effective in raising student achievement than instruction without computers. Similaraly, another analysis showed that instruction using interactive video is about 50 percent more effective that instruction without it.

Especially important are the benefits for students with low socio-economic backgrounds. In programs that place computers in student's homes and schools, the students grew in self-esteem and self-confidence. Likewise, in another study, students recieving computer-based instruction demonstrated higher gains in their concept of their own academic abilities than groups recieving only classroom instruction.

Since I use computers to teach word processing, I was interested in the results of an attitude study of inner-city third graders that compared a writing process cirriculm using word processing with the standard grammer-oriented approach to writing. Students in the process cirriculm that used word processing showed greater improvement in their attitude toward writing than those in the grammer classes.

Similarly, studies have shown that students working with math videodisc software and technology-based science activities demonstrated significantly less anxiety toward math and scored higher in curiosity than students recieving only traditional instruction in these subjects.

The ever increasing base of evidence leaves less and less doubt that educational technology can make a tremendous impact on turning around the so-called diminishing test scores of our school kids today and do so with significantly greater efficiency. Unfortunately, it will be very difficult to turn our schools around within the organization of most of our school systems today. School organization has been traditionally hierarchial, bureaucratic, and dependent upon textbooks and noninteractive lectures. The new technologies challenge this model, as well as some educators' fundamental assumptions about educational practices. We must redesign our schools as learning communities. But, again, this is another topic we cannot treat effectively in this issue.

CRAZY LANGUAGE "ENGLISH"

author unknown
from the Lehigh 99'ers User Group
reprinted in the ERIE 99'er U.G. newsletter,Apr,'93

We begin with BOX, the plural is BOXES,
  then the plural of OX is OXEN not OXES.
Then one is a GOOSE and two are called GEESE,
  Yet the plural of MOOSE is never MEECE.
You may find a lone MOUSE or a nest of MICE,
  yet the plural of HOUSE is HOUSES not HICE.
If I spoke of my FOOT and show you my FEET,
  and gave you a BOOT would a pair be BEET?
Then one may be THAT and two may be THOSE,
  yet HAT in plural would never be HOSE.
We speak of a BROTHER and also of BRETHEREN,
  but though we say MOTHER, never say MOTHERN.
The masculine pronouns are HE, HIS, and HIM,
  imagine the feminine SHE, SHIS, SHIM.
So ENGLISH, I fancy that you will agree,
  is the craziest language that you ever did see.

NO CONTEST ?

by Harold C. Hoyt,Jr.
from the pages of the St. Louis Computer BRIDGE, Mar. 93

Another book on the talk circuit is making me think about basic values. The book "No Contest, The case against competition, Houghton 1986 [316846]302.14/K78N by Alfie Kohn" questions the notion that Darwinian survival of the fittest should be the modus operandi of our culture. No Contest brings a strong case against "competition". Everything is competition, right? Who gets the first chair in the high school orchestra is determined in a fight to the death between contenders. The result is better music, right? In all other fields, the Darwinian survivor is better equipped to beat the competition into the ground, right?

The first area that we might question this idea is in school sports. Little league baseball has a bad reputation for making the kids that strike out feel bad. It may be the parents, but the attitude seems to be "Winning isn't the only thing, it's everything". As a person that has been both on the horse and under it in competition, I have both sets of memories. One that goes with that wonderful satisfying feeling that comes from beating the competition into the ground, and another feeling that goes with being completely beaten into submission. So, I can compare.

Neither feeling is very healthy, and I'm not certain how I feel about competition. On the one hand, we have to be world competitors to keep up our standard of living. On the other hand, one gets the distinct feeling of having been had, emasculated and used by the system, We have been seduced into believing that we should emulate the Japanese because they beat us into the ground for a while, so something that they are doing must be better than something that we are doing, right?

I don't think so. Our system is better. What they did do better, they learned from us by importing an efficiency expert from the Bell Labs so they could learn from us. It would be disaster for us to emulate their ant-hill siciety because we are a different kind of people. Our workers are supposed to take the blame for failures in manufacturing when the real problen has been a lack of leadership. I don't think their system is even very good for them. Too much competition produces winners that are arrogant and losers that don't feel good about themselves. Feeling good about yourself came into vogue with the hippies. As a puzzled person living in the Clinton era, I wonder about the notion that an automobile is not evaluated on it's engineering merit, but whether or not it was made by nice people.

But I digress. Companies that have been ripping off and abusing their engineering talent have been yearning for a way to measure creativity. If they could measure it, they could control it. The most creative people I've run into don't fit into a mold. Overpaid CEO's who have competed in a contest to see who can be the most obnoxious and won, seem to enjoy beating on their engineering help. Abusing the help enhances their feeling of superiority.

Does this have anything to do with people falling all over each other to accept offers of early retirement? The most

creative people I know have to be torn from their work, kicking and screaming by their spouses, etc. and forced to take a vacation. The traditional (reactionary, conservative?) view of the virtue of capitalism is the creation of real wealth in manufacturing something. The idea if using the lottery as a way of getting rich without producing any useful product is a kind of sick idea. Getting something for nothing by "taxing" compulsive gamblers has something to do with competition, macho, and major corporations losing their ability to compete. If I had an answer to what is wrong, I'd be doing more than writing this column. Maybe it has to do with this generation of leaders. I asked a loyal 25 year employee of Mc Donnell-Douglas who had been laid off: "If J. S. Mc Donnell were still alive, would his corporation be in this fix, even with the end of the cold war?" "Not in a million years," he replied. Success is an imperative. Failure isn't in the vocabulary of these founders of the giant corporations that made America great. When TI stopped it's home computer, the competition didn't win. We all lost. When IBM picked up the home computer market a little later, it didn't win either. IBM still hasn't figured out what they are doing wrong, but let me tell you, it will take more than a new operating system like OS2 to fix it. The people that have a vision of the future that could change everything are orthogonal to competition, and still aren't being encouraged, challenged.

Andy Rooney, of 60 Minutes, decried sneaky ways to get kids interested in math. Mr. Rooney feels the need to take his math cold turkey, memorize the multiplication tables up to 12 x 12 before a child would be allowed to touch a pocket calculator. I don't think so. Give the kid the calculator and sneak in the times tables. A kid that doesn't realize that he is learning something and just thinks that he is having fun, will beat his grim faced Asian competition into the ground and do so without exhibiting bad sportsmanship. What to do with the CEO that blamed our problem on Japan is another question.

FEEDFORTH August '92

by W. Leonard Tabbs
from the Southwest 99ers newsletter, August 1992

ABOUT LOST DATA. Nothing shakes up anybody more than having a program crash resulting in what may have been hours of work being lost. The constant lesson is, of course, to SAVE and SAVE often!! One hears of the horror stories of power-outages or interruptions that send mighty multi-Megas biting the dust. Even a home computer operator can be much chagrined. My own example was that I was entering titles as I searched through a volume. I didn't count the pages but it was 3 hours work to come up with 65 data entries. 65 entries is not a great amount but the searching for them took the 3 hours. At the end of the 3 hours I was finished and chose the SAVE option to get the 65 entries on disk. What I did not know was that the disk I happened to select to save the data to, had a bad directory. So, of course the program creashed. (I verified that the computer had recieved a valid FILENAME for saving purposes, so this told me something had to be wrong with the Disk). I was mad -- real, like. The bad disk had been good up untill this

point -- as a matter of fact it had very little on it. (No telling as to what made it go bad). So, now what to do? In my fury I restrained myself from smashing the QUIT button. Keep calm, I said. What can be done -- IF ANYTHING -- to retireve the information?

The program that I was using was a program in which you enter as many items as you wish (a mini database program) which will sort these items or print them out sorted, or unsorted, etc., as you wish. This program simply set up an array to accept the input items. So, when I cooled down a bit, I thought: THAT INFORMATION IS STILL IN THE COMPUTER! (as long a I didn't turnn it off!). How to access this information? I tried typing "CON" (to continue) but with this program, once it crashed, the computer only responds: "CAN'T CONTINUE". (For years I have thought that when you get this response, the game is all over: you'd have to do all that work over again). Well, I was still mad enough that I wasn't about to repeat that 3 hour ordeal if there was any other way out of it.

SO I SAID TO MYSELF: BEFORE I RERUN THE PROGRAM (or before I turn the computer OFF or putting it off untill later) PUT YOUR THINKING CAP ON. If the data is stored in an array, then even if the program crashed, the information must be still stored in that array! I happened to know I had entered 65 items. And I knew my array was represented by the STRING J$. So in command mode (program is still in crashed state -- I did NOT EDIT it in any way but simply left it the way it was) I typed: PRINT J$(1)

Lo and behold, my first entry still WAS in the computer. I typed: PRINT J$(65)

and sure enough my last entry appeared! Just to be certain it was ALL THERE, I typed: (This is all on one line, command mode with no line #!): FOR A=1 TO 65::PRINT J$(A)::NEXT A

Pressing ENTER caused this command to "RUN". There -- beautiful as ever was my list of 65 entries -- proving of course that the DATA entries were STILL IN THE COMPUTER! Maybe all was not yet lost. I thought a bit more. If only I could re-run the program, everything would be all right, but NO WAY! When you re-run a program, the computer clears all variables (arrys) and in effect, RESETS. This choice means the DATA is lost for good.

I thought, what next? I could have chosen to send this DATA to a Printer: The command line could then have been: (Still all on one line and no program line #!):

OPEN #1:"PIO"::FOR A=1 TO 65::PRINT #1:J$(A)::NEXT A

No need to add "CLOSE #1" unless you want to print the list more than once. In my case, I was working with a computer with no printer hooked up to it. Being too hot to want to bother with moving a printer, I pondered what else I might do. I could have chosen to copy the entries in long-hand and then re-enter them; I had salvaged the 3 hours work and this would only take a few minutes to re-enter them. COPY THEM IN LONGHAND? I said that was THE PITS if there was any other choice. I kept coming back, in my mind, that the DATA WAS STILL IN THE COMPUTER!! As long as I did not mess around with any program lines (Editing a Program Line aborts the program...) I still had the information safe and sound. What else could I do? And then I remembered that this was a chance to ry something new! (How does the saying go ... a pessimist throws in the towel in a time of disaster

whereas the optimist sees a challenge -- A CHANCE TO TRY SOMETHING NEW!)

I remembered my previous FEEDFORTH article some time ago when I was writing about how easy it was to enter simple memos and save them as DV/80 file. Well the mini database I was using saved the entered data as an IF/192 file. BUT THAT WAS WHEN THE DATABASE PROGRAM WAS PROCESSING ITS OWN DATA. As the program had crashed, this was no longer pertinent. FURTHERMORE, IF I COULD read that data in command mode (as referred to above) then these DATA items might be perfectly available to save as DV/80 memos! So, now with excitement building as I anticipated avoiding another 3 hours work or tiring my wrist out copying in longhand, I entered the following : (No Line #!):

OPEN #1"DSK1.SAVELIST",OUTPUT,DISPLAY, VARIABLE 80::
FOR A=1 TO 65::PRINT #1:J$(A)::NEXT A

You will notice that I did not add a file closing statement here. THIS MUST BE DONE! when the Disk Drive is through saving. The reason I did not include CLOSE #1 as part of the multiple statement was only due to my prior experience (for whatever reason I do not understand) that I had better luck if I waited and closed the file seperately after it had been saved. BUT DON'T FORGET!!!-- if you do not close that file, you will have saved nothing and instead of a DV/80 file description, you will see a DIS/FIX 1 (a super-screwup worthless file). So after my Disk Drive had SAVEd the data and the red light went off, I entered (Command Mode/ No Line #!): CLOSE #1.

On went the red light, the Disk Drive started up, and I knew that the file was being properly closed (and hence saved). MARVELLA, MIRACULOSO! When I checked the disk catalog: THERE WAS MY FILE "SAVELIST" as pretty as ever with a beautiful DV/80 file description, with all 65 data items comfortably aboard.

So this was another one of those days that turned out so nicely when it looked like it was going to be sheer drudgery. I had learned something new that I had never read anywhere or had anyone ever tell me -- that there was a way that you could salvage data in a crashed data entry program. Now I do not know that this applies to ALL data base programs -- most of the major DATABASE programs have their own protection against a BAD DISK. (Which reminded me: all I need in order to prevent this same error from occuring again with the mini database I was using is simply to add an "ON ERROR" statement in the right place to prevent this type of crash from happening again).

ABOUT LOST PROGRAMS DUE TO CONSOLE LOCK-UP.

"SAVEXT" -- If you do not know about this program -- can be a life-saver should your computer happen to lock up. With this SAVEXT program, if you follow directions carefuly, you can recover programs you have been entering, should your computer get nasty and freeze in "lock-up" before you have had a chance to save your work. A warning reminder with SAVEXT: To be able to use SAVEXT you must be sure NOT to turn your expansion system off. The console has to be turned off, of course, -- BUT ONLY THE CONSOLE! (This program was not appicable in the case of my DATA BASE loss described above (as far as I know) as the SAVEXT program works with a CRASHED COMPUTER not a crashed program.

DID YOU KNOW?

from the pages of the Suncoast Beeper, Oct, 1989

Did you know that a TERABYTE (Tbyte) is the equivalent ot 1000 Gbytes or one trillion bytes of information? A growing number of government and private agencies are finding an increasing need for data storage of this magnitude.

Did you know that over the next five years the movement towards increased disk capacity will lead to the introduction of "floptical" disks. These are microdisks (3.5") that are especially formatted and optically coated. A laser beam locates tracks on the disks, then magnetic heads read and write the data.

Floptical disks will hold between 10MB and 20MB of data.

Here is a cute little program from the Brandon, Florida Group.

try it

```
40 MSG$="BRANDON TI 99/4A USERS GROUP"
42 CALL SCREEN(2):: CALL CLEAR :: CALL MAGNIFY(2)
43 FOR I=0 TO 14 :: CALL COLOR(I,16,1):: NEXT I
45 CALL DELSPRITE(ALL)
50 DISPLAY AT(2,3)ERASE ALL:"TI BILLBOARD":TAB(13);"by":"
     Herman Nieuwendaal " : : " Enter message":" or name
     to display:" : : MSG$
52 DISPLAY AT(22,1):" Press ay key after all letters are
     in motion to abort."
55 ACCEPT AT(14,1)SIZE(-28):MSG$ :: IF MSG$="" THEN 55
57 CALL CLEAR
60 C=.868-LEN(MSG$)*.031+1
90 RANDOMIZE
120 FOR N=1 TO LEN(MSG$) :: CALL SPRITE( #N, ASC( SEG$(
     MSG$, N, 1)), INT( RND *( 14))+ 3,(N +( 28- LEN(
     MSG$)) / 2)* 6, N* 8):: NEXT N
130 FOR N=LEN(MSG$)TO 1 STEP -1 :: CALL MOTION(#N,0,-20)
140 FOR D=1 TO 475*C :: NEXT D :: NEXT N
150 CALL KEY(3,K,S):: IF S=0 THEN 150
160 DISPLAY AT(12,7)ERASE ALL:" Do another?:Y"
170 ACCEPT AT(12,20)SIZE(-1):X$ :: IF X$="Y" OR K$="y"
     THEN 45
180 CALL CLEAR
```

JUST A NOTE

by Annie Dillard

How we spend our day is,
of course,
how we spend our lives.

HORIZON TIP

from OSHTI, April 91

Now that I have my Horizon Ram Disk (HRD+) up to full capacity, 1.024 Meg it is a real problem when things apparantly CRASH! Here is a tip I read in a newsletter somewhere. I just can't remember where.

If your HRD locks up and won't access even the physical drives, DSK!, then you seem to be stuck to load in anything. The system will seem to work but the Disk Controller light and HRD light (LEDS) will be ON. Turning the console and PBOX off and on doesn't seem to work. This is what to do. Use the E/A module. Turn the PBOX and the console off. Then turn the CONSOLE ON FIRST! That's right, FIRST. Then turn on the PBOX ON WHILE HOLDING DOWN THE SHIFT KEY. Select option 5 from the E/A and load DSK!.CFG to configure your systen. Strangely enough the disk access reappears. The RAM disk directories are still intact as well and their contents are still there. Next, RELOAD the ROS you usually use. DO NOT throw out the existing information. Exit CFG and everything will be fine.

It saves having to dissassemble the HRD from the PBOX and doing other awful things.

It works for me. . . . Tom

USING TI-WRITER to L(oad) F(ile) RS232

by Charles Good
Lima Ohio User Group

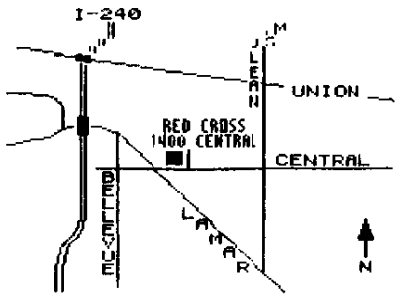
from the pages of the Milwaukee newsletter, Nov, 1992

You can hook two different kinds of computers together with a cable linking their RS232 ports. The TI serial printer cable available fron L. L. Conner and other sources will do the trick. You can then LOAD TEXT FILES DIRECTLY INTO TI WRITER (or use the Funnelweb editor) from a word processor program running on the other computer. You don't need a modem or a communicatins program, and the other computer doesn't have to be compatible with the TI. Here's how.

After cabling the two computers' RS232 together, boot TI Writer, type LF (load file) and <enter>, then type RS232.CR for the file name and press <enter>. The TI's screen will appear to lock up as the TI waits to recieve the file from the RS232 port. It may be necessary to specify a baud rate in the RS232.cr file name if the default 300 baud is not satisfactory. However, TI Writer (and Funnelweb) will not accept baud rates greater than 600.

With the other computer, save (or send) a text file already in memory specifying the serial port as the device. Text will then flow into TI Writer. When text transfer is complete, press FCTN/4 on the TI, and the recieved text file will be displayed.

Since I don't have the TI-99/4A Hexbus interface, this is how I transfer text from my CC40 to my TI for processing with Funnelweb and printing with my Star printer.



LOCATION MAP

WORKSHOP : to be announced.

PROGRAM BIT - third Thursday

JUL 15th , 1993

MEETING: 7:00pm - Red Cross Building - 1400 Central.

6:45pm - Doors Open

7:00pm - Meeting begins, general discussion.

7:30pm - Demonstration to be announced.

9:00pm - Meeting ends.

9:15pm - Late dinner at location to be announced at meeting.

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 2 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 2 free list, UG means user group and B 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 members. Library list is $1. Mail order disk library access is $2 for the first disk and $1 for each additional 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: JUL. 15, (3rd Thursday!)
WORKSHOPS: TO BE ANNOUNCED

24HR TI BULLETIN BOARD

The 9640 NEWS BBS 300/1200/2400/4800/7200/9600/12000/14400
Hayes. 901-368-0112

GROUP MAILING ADDRESS

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

LIBRARY ADDRESS

Jim Saemenes
46 Higgins Road
Brighton, Tn., 38011

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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