news net 99er

TI-99/4A

Next meeting July 13th
At the Hurst Public Library
9 am till 11 am

Northeast

Tarrant

Home Computer

Users' Group

Devoted to the

TI-99/4A

<u>President's Page</u>

We are off to a roaring start for the summer. A computer class began June 15 with twelve participants. We all arrived with our equipment and lots of extension cords. The interest is still strong for learning about home computers. All ages are joining in the search for more information.

Our involvement in a Computer Fair for User's Groups was well received at the last meeting. A much appreciated group of volunteers signed a list to work in our booth. Forum 303 Mall is the place to be on June 29. Open from 10 AM to 8 PM. Gerry Myers is taking the lead and will set up for the club. Anyone who can, please come by and add some voices to the group that will be there.

Do we have anyone with the time and the expertise to use the bulk mail service? We are searching for someone to prepare the newsletter for the mail and take it to the Post Office. Please call me if you would like to know more about this post.

Don Bynum will be our guest at the July meeting. He will be selling TE1200 and FORTI. Harry Littlejohn and Blaine Randal from TI Swap may join Don. It appears we will have a colorful and interesting program.

I am still waiting for a reply to my letter to GRAPHX. I asked for a price list for a larger order. I hope by the next meeting we will know the exact price that we will have to pay.

Congratulations to Helen Cook for winning the TI-WRITER.

Jo Lambert

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<u>NET 99ER HOME COMPUTER USERS GROUP</u>
Minutes, June 8, 1985

President Jo Lambert called the meeting to order. Treasurer Charles Bathman gave a financial report that showed $599.35 in the group's account.

President Lambert reminded anyone who borrows disks from the library to not leave them in hot cars this summer.

Treasurer Bathman said a new members orientation meeting will be held June 18 at the Flight Safety Building at Bell Helicopter. This meeting will be used to acquaint users with their peripherals - how to connect them, how to use them, etc. Starting time will be 7 p.m.

Gayle Foster will teach Basic classes this summer, and will need at least 12 to be able to hold classes. All ages are invited to these classes. Gayle, who teaches computer literacy at Colleyville Middle School said there will be six meetings of two hours each from 10 a.m. until noon. Dates are June 15, 22, 29, July 6, 20 and Aug. 3.

There was a drawing for a TI-Writer and Helen Cook won.

Bathman said that Forth documentation still is available for $10.

President Lambert reminded everyone that former TIer Don Bynum will be the guest next meeting and will be selling several programs as well as commenting on the 99/4A.

After a buy, swap and sell session, a demonstration was given of GRAHPX, a program written by two Australians and being offered for $30 if five buy it. The program is similar to Super-Sketch, except it offers many more features, including a ZOOM, a save to disk and a print option. Bathman said he would check with the authors on a better price if more members wanted the program.

Member Jim Stewart relayed his experiences of visiting two diskette manufacturers, and passed on information about making "Flippies." He said he was warned that when a single-sided diskette is flipped to use both sides, that any dirt particles collected by a pad on the inside will be dislodged if the diskette spins the other way.

Stewart also gave a demonstration of a graphics definition program written by Al Gober, and said the program CHARDEFREU would be in our library.

Robert Wessler demonstrated his Trivia 99er game, pitting four teams against each other. This Freeware also is in the library.

Wallace Harrison, owner of A-Z printing company in Irving offered some tips on using Star printers.

President Lambert then adjourned the meeting.

> Respectfully submitted,
> Charles Clines, Secretary

TIMELESS TECHNICAL TIPS
by LeRoy Thompson

When I began the search for a replacement GROM port connector, I didn't expect to encounter any great problem. However, I have been unable to locate any locally. There are many connectors with gold-plated contacts listed in catalogs. But they are all special order which involves a minimum buy. I was also alerted to another technical problem. When a connector with gold contacts is soldered to a tin-plated circuit trace a phenomena known as gold migration begins and it ends in corrosion. It appears now that this project will be dropped. It is suggested that you follow the advice of Richard Roberts in his TI column on STARTEXT. He suggests that you order Part No. 1049693-1 [$5.84] from Texas Instruments Dealer Parts, PO Box 53, Lubbock, TX 79408. This will hopefully get you the complete sub-assembly that you need for dependable cartridge connections.

I have one of the new Myarc 128K cards on order now. I am
eagerly looking forward to its increased features. The idea of
having both a printer spooler and a RAM disk at the same time is
intriguing. I have been told that the printer spooler function works
only on the serial ports if you have a CorComp double density disk
controller. The 128K card is also supposed to have a receptacle for
external power to preserve the information on the RAM disk. A
feature such as this could make the card much more useful. This will
all have to be confirmed later.

There are many rumors circulating now. The best is that the NEW
COMPUTER will see the light of day and we may be able to purchase one
in the fall. There are so many technically-oriented rumors that you
can have almost any configuration of computer that you can imagine.
Latest stories are that it will be a 128K machine [expandable]. It
will have an 8088 [IBM] co-processor option. It will have graphics
info remotely stored in memory and called by a DSR which will give
more effective memory in many situations. It will of course have a
Super XB and maybe even a REAL compiler. It will also have a 4A
compatible mode and will make extensive use of the PEB. Let's all
keep our fingers crossed that nothing de-rails this train and that we
can celebrate this Christmas with a compatible upgrade for our 4A's.

Rumors from the CorComp direction: they plan to announce some
new products in July [that's almost now]. First is their version of
a P-code card. Then there is another miniaturized multi-function
unit. It is supposed to have the functions of clock, calendar, 64K
printer buffer and have room to insert the guts of a speech
synthesizer. This could be an interesting product depending on the
price.

While on the subject of rumors, reliable sources indicate that
Personal Peripherals, makers of SuperSketch, may be in bankruptcy.
Someone told me that he had called them to place an order, and was
told by an accountant that they no longer manufacture anything. I
myself have tried to contact Steve Roubik, but his phone has been
disconnected. We'll just have to wait and see if they will try to
make a come back.

There is a new concept of software distribution coming to the TI
scene. I talked with Don Thomson of M & T Utilityware recently. I
will hit only the high points of his plan for fear of not getting it
right prior to his announcement. The new approach is called
Shareware [that's not Freeware]. You are still encouraged to make
copies of the disk programs and distribute them to friends. The
difference now is that you also encourage your friends to register
their copies [probably $20] with your number attached. This
registration fee will buy you updates [of which there are some] and
your own registration number so that you, too are now a distributor.
At this point, the originator will rebate [probably $5] to the person
whose number was used in registering. This rebate will extend to the
second tier. As you can see, this sounds like a Shaklee pyramid in
the making--however, it reportedly has worked well with minor
variations on other computers. Don stated that all of his current
customers will receive their registeration numbers and an explanation
soon.

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REVIEW OF SKETCHMATE
by LeRoy Thompson

When I purchased a copy of SketchMate by Amerisoft International
I eagerly looked forward to the use of it. At first I had a few
problems loading it and getting a response from it. After trying
again and maybe a little bit of reading it seemed to work OK.

This software package requires memory expansion, disk drive,
widget and the Super Sketch. Use of E/A, MiniMem or Extended BASIC
is required to load the program. I used E/A to load it. I was
immediately greeted with a title screen which greatly resembled the
title screen of Super Sketch except it said Sketch Mate and prompted
me; switch to the Super Sketch position on the Widget. At that point
I could use the Super Sketch normally to draw, fill, clear, and
trace. When I was ready to save the new screen to disk, the Sketch
Mate came into play. You bring up 'Mate' by going to a SS menu,
select SHOW and hold down the LIFT key on SS. While holding the LIFT
key, you press 'S' on the keyboard to save the screen to disk. You
are then prompted for a filename on a line at the bottom of the
screen. After entering the filename, the screen is saved in two
files in memory image format [PROGRAM]. The first contains the
imagery and the second contains the color info. The second file is
named the same as the first with the last character's ASCII code
incremented.

The procedure for loading a screen from disk is the same except
that 'L' is used in place of 'S'. When you have everything just
right, you can then call up the screen dump section. It is also
accessed in a similar manner by using a 'P'. This screen dump is
double size and includes color weighting via patterns. This means
that a red area prints out with a different texture pattern than does
a yellow area. You are given capability to change the printer name
and the shading patterns.

I thought that now would be a good time to transfer some of the
old Super Sketch screens saved on cassette to disk. I have had some
more artistic friends to draw for me and I saved it on tape. Well I
loaded Sketch Mate, brought up Super Sketch and loaded the tape files
to put Garfield on the screen. And there he was! Now to save it to
disk. I called up SHOW, selected it, and held LIFT while pressing
'S'. NOTHING happened. It was just as if Sketch Mate had vaporized.
This was mystifying. I tried it again with the same results. I
tried it on another computer system with the same results. I tried
it again using the draw then save approach--It Worked! This was even
more mystifying.

Well, I didn't know anybody at Amerisoft International so I
contacted Steve Roubik, the original author of Super Sketch. Yes, he
had heard of Sketch Mate and had even helped them test it. He did
concede that he had never tested it exactly as I had. He contacted
the author of Sketch Mate and they consulted. Within a couple of
days, he called back with an explanation. When Super Sketch invokes
the cassette load routine, it disables the keyboard. After that, it
has no use for the keyboard, therefore it remains disabled. The
Sketch Mate writers were working on a patch to get around this

problem. In the space of nominally two months, I have heard nothing
and I am beginning to question the value of my purchase.

     In summary, Sketch Mate does everything it promises to. It just
doesn't do those things you would normally expect to be thrown in
without mention. Such as: there is no compatibility between tape and
disk with in the program. If these limitations are suitable to you,
then it is a recommended purchase.

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                   TIPS FOR THE TI-WRITER(er's)
                        by Gary Fuquay

     A couple of month's ago I wrote an article on printer control
thru the TI-WRITER. I did not include it in the newsletter because
it would not print thru the formatter due to the control codes in it.
Instead I put it in the club library in a file called XLIT/DOC.

     Some of you do not like to use TI-WRITER because of the
windowing feature, and the line numbers, and having to type in format
commands for each letter. I'm here to tell you, there's an easier
way! To eliminate the scrolling window, go to the Command mode and
use the TAB command. Set your right hand margin to 38. Now go to
the Edit mode and use FCTN 0 to turn off the line numbers. There!
Now you will be able to see everthing you type without that
bothersome scrolling window.

     Now, on to the format commands. This pesky little problem is
really very simple to eliminate. You can make a 'header file' of
format commands that you often use and save them to disk in a file
named 'format', or, whatever you wish. For example, and I am going
to use a colon instead of the period in this example, for obvious
reasons.

     :FI
     :LM 6;RM 72
     :IN +32
     John Doe
     120 Roundtree Rd.
     Ft. Worth, Tx. 70000

     June 19, 1985

     :IN +0
     Dear Sirs,
     :IN +5
     :IN +32
     Regards,(or any closing)
     John Doe

     Now, save this to disk, and when you get ready to write a

letter, just load it into the editor. Go to the line with :IN +0,
enter Insert mode, type in the name and address of the person[s] you
are sending it to. Go to the line with :IN +32, enter Insert mode
and type in the body of your letter. This may seem a little
complicated at first, but it's really very easy to use.

        If you have any questions, please write them down and send them
to me, I will try to answer them in the next edition.

        Happy TI-WRITING!

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                            ** GOOD NEWS **

        The following Good News comes to us courtesy of Chuck Mansfield,
and Good News it is indeed. Chuck had a conversation with Lou
Phillips, president of Myarc, on 6/20/85. This is the essence of
that conversation.

        Lou was very friendly and open during the entire conversation.
He said that the financing was settled for the new computer 6-14, and
he was ready to start production. He doesn't know how many units
they will make, but they should have several thousand machines out by
Christmas. He does not have the GPL from TI, and will use their own.
None of the computer will reside in the Expansion Box. It will have
128K RAM, expandable to 512K, and will have an optional IBM
co-processor. It will read MS-DOS and TI disk formats. It will not
have an IBM Graphics card, for the graphics can be duplicated thru
software. The graphics will not be memory resident, it will be
called thru a DSR. This will free memory space when graphics are not
in use. He Has two business programming firms who are interested in
producing business software such as a spreadsheet and word processor.
They have requested a machine to start prototypes. He will make an
announcement in September or October and the machine will be in
production at that time. He still has no idea of the price for the
machine.

        Since the CES show, they have made significant modifications to
the keyboard to make it even better. You can now place the keyboard
in your lap. It is about the same size as in the 99/4A. It will
have "windowing and multi-tasking" much like the MAC. It will all be
compatable and very powerful. Also, the Myarc DSDD card will be
compatable with the new machine. They will announce another product
early next year which will be self explanatory.[?]

        He showed a new product at the CES show called XBASIC2, a
cartridge which does the same things as the TI XBASIC and much more.
It has a compiler to machine language, but it must be used with the
MYARC 128K card.

        Marketing will be done through their normal distribution
channels such as the big mail order houses and local dealers. They
will have a large dealer base.

        Our thanks to Chuck for this encouraging news. I know that he
will continue to keep us posted on the latest developments as he
receives them.