Next meeting August 10th
At the Hurst Public Library
9 am till 11 am

Northeast

Tarrant

Home Computer

Users' Group

Devoted to the

TI-99/4A

President's Page

I hope everyone enjoyed having Don Bynum as our guest speaker for the July meeting. We certainly had a good turnout at the meeting. A thanks to all that helped prepare the equipment for his presentation. It still amazes me that we have so many capable people willing to step forward and give a hand when we need it. A thanks to Bill Duncan for coming early to open the doors so that we could get an early start.

I was in need of some ideas for the newsletter this month so I began to read some of the newsletters that have come to us from other clubs. There is a world of information to be had from these newsletters. We have notebooks full of these newsletters for everyone to read. Please take advantage of this service. Ken Dominiec is the one to see about using the notebooks.

My technical knowledge is limited but I know we have others out there who can contribute to our newsletter. We are truly in need of more input for our newsletters.

In hopes of helping with the library I joined Gayle Foster in an effort to learn about COMPANION from Gerry Myers. He has given us his time and knowledge to help us in this endeavor. I think Gayle and I both came away with a sense of accomplishment. We did learn so very much! A thanks to Gerry for the help

We have a TI WRITER AND an EDITOR/ASSEMBLER, one of which we will use to raise money for the club. We will again use the envelopes.

Our program for the August meeting will be a look at some of the programs available in our Library.

We will be meeting August 10, 1985.

Till next time,
Jo Lambert

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HOME COMPUTER USERS GROUP
July 13, 1985

President Joe Lambert called the meeting to order and introduced Don Bynum, former Texas Instruments employee who helped develop the 99/4A.

He gave a history of the 4A and of himself, and answered questions.

He also brought along a 99/8, and said that he's surprised at the interest in the machine considering that no one will ever get one. He said only 250 were made.

Bynum said the machine has 64K RAM, and is expandable to 16

megabytes. The microprocessor runs at 10.5 megahertz, and the Medfly Basic allows access to all of the computer's video modes _ including bit mapping and sprites.

He said the price of the 99/8 would have been $595. As impressive a machine that it is, he said, however, that he doubted if TI would ever re-enter the home computer market. He also doubts that the company would ever sell the computer to another company.

Bynum explained the plusses and minuses of the 4A, and tried to explain why TI failed in the home computer market. He also said that because of so much software piracy, that he doubts if much more software will be written for the machine.

Bynum gave a demonstration of his FORTI music system program and offered the software-hardware package for $150 to members. Regular price is $199. He also had other software, including the Terminal Emulator 1200 package, he was selling. The TE1200 software was $19.95.

A swap, buy, sell session followed Bynum's program.

President Lambert then adjourned the meeting.

> Respectfully submitted,
> Charles Clines,
>
> Secretary

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TIMELESS TECHNICAL TIPS
by LeRoy Thompson

You just can't believe what some people say. Just last month I told you that I had abandoned the project of finding a replacement GROM port connector. Well, I didn't really. I persevered and finally found some. At first glance, it looked like I had paid for gold plating and didn't get any. At second glance (under magnification) I could see some gold. But face it--30-millionths of an inch of gold can't look too impressive. By the way, these connectors had selectively gold-plated contacts. The solder tails were tin plated for compatible soldering.

Armed with my new connector, I attacked the right-angle adapter with my soldering iron and braid. The plated-thru holes in the circuit board have little spare metal and wicking the solder ALL out proved to be quite a task. I resorted to a screwdriver for a pry bar. I finally got the old socket out and cleaned the board. Next, I installed the new socket and put this poor console back together again for the first time in two months. That night I spent a couple of hours working with assembly language and exercising this console. The next night I wanted to use something in Extended BASIC. I proceeded to attempt to load it and could only get crashes. I tried the same cartridge and disk on the kid's system and it worked OK.

I disassembled this console again and examined the right-angle adapter again. I noticed some poor-quality solder joints and touched

them up. No change in performance. Finally I got out the trusty ohm
meter and checked. Sure enough! I had torn open one trace under the
socket when I pried the connector off. A jumper wire repaired the
misdeed.

    After all of this messing around assembling and disassembling
the console, I noticed that my local keyboard did not respond with
the right letters all the time. Sometimes it didn't even respond. I
plugged in my remote keyboard and it worked perfectly. Closer
examination revealed that one of the wires in the keyboard harness
was broken from too much flexing. I installed one of many spare
keyboards and PRESTO the computer was well again. And we all lived
happily ever after.

    As I mentioned previously, I have a Myarc 128K card on order. I
STILL have a Myarc 128K card on order. I understand that they are
selling quite fast, but I still hope to get one soon.

    Speaking of Myarc--the rumor mill sez that WHEN the new machine
comes to life, the CorComp double density controller card WILL NOT
work with it. HOWEVER, the Myarc version will. Wonder how come.
Must be marketing or something.

    Speaking of CorComp cards--mine died. It finally refused to let
the 4A move into start up. I returned it to CorComp for repair about
the end of June. After going to the trouble of calling and talking
to the recommended person, ALL I got was a RMA number and the
directions. They told me to enclose a $50 check with the card and
the RMA number and they would repair and update it and return it
within 2 weeks. Repeated questions about what I might try were not
satisfactorily answered.

    I wrote a letter explaining my problem. While in the process of
writing, I mentioned that I questioned my intelligence for spending
another $50 on the card when I might want to spend it on something
worthwhile. I also mentioned that I would like a schematic if I
could get one at a reasonable cost. I packaged it all up and went to
the UPS place. I would not have bet a nickel that I would have ever
seen my $50 or my card again. However in approximately 3 weeks I
received a card back. Even with my nasty comments and personal
check, I had a card that worked! I also had a schematic for no
additional charge. I really can't tell if they updated it or not.
The chips are dated 7-84 and 9-84. I would like to hear if there are
later ones. If anyone wants a copy of the schematic they are welcome
to it.

    Now realizing the need for a double density backup, I have
ordered the Myarc multiple density disk controller card. As a matter
of fact, I ordered it just about the end of June when my CorComp card
died. I hope to get it soon and I hope to have a review of the card
for next month.

GOOD NEWS
by Gary Fuquuy
Chuck Mansfield contributing

    There is good news and bad news this time. Fortunately, there
is more good news than bad, so let's get the bad out of the way and

go on to the good.

The bad news is for the owners of the Corcomp disk controller cards. The word from Myarc is that the card will not be compatible with their new computer. Why? I guess only Lou Phillips knows. The other part of the bad news is that a former Corcomp employee says that the 'PHOENIX' never existed, it was only 'vaporware'.

Now that we've got that over with, let's get to the GOOD NEWS! There isn't a lot, but it's the quality that counts!

First of all, the discontinued TI VDP chip is of no consequence. It's features have been duplicated without patent infringement. The revised keyboard for the new computer is coming along nicely. Also, speech capability will be an option, not resident in the machine.

Extended Basic Level 4(formerly called Extended Basic II), will be out sometime toward the last of July or early August. The documentation is being written by Craig Miller. The cost to a New Jersey users' group is $64.00.

Myarc is developing a 512K card for the /4A, and is presently taking orders for it. The cost will be $295.00. The 128K card is being delivered to the New Jersey users' group for $175.00.

Myarc is actively soliciting ideas for a name for the new computer. If you have an idea, catchy or otherwise, send them to:

Myarc
241 Madisonville Rd.
Basking Ridge, NJ 07970.

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