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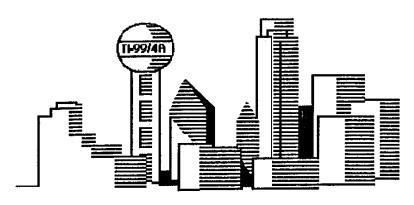
P.O. BOX 29863



DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP



FIRST CLASS



# DALLAS 99 INTERFACE

Volume 13, Number 7

July, 1993

This newsletter is the official publication of the DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP, a non-profit organization serving our members and other users of the Texas Instruments 99/4A HOME COMPUTER. For more information you are cordially invited to attend our next meeting or send a S.A.S.E. to:

> DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP P.O. BOX 29863 **DALLAS, TX 75229**

Reprints of our articles are allowed, but must give credit to DTIHCG and be complete.

> \*\*\*NEXT MEETING\*\*\* Saturday, July 10, 1993 at the Dallas INFOMART I-35 E at the Oak Lawn Exit

#### DTIHCG'S JULY EVENTS

- 3 Sidewalk Sale, Ross at Central, 5 am
- 4 Independence Day
- 10 SUPER SATURDAY AT INFOMART
  - Oak Lawn @ Stemmons
  - Time 9:00 am
  - Program: Time Management by Dave Axberg
  - 1:00 pm MiniSiG

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING** 

Time and Date to be announced

23 NEXT-STEP

JOJO'S On Stemmons at 1415 Motor Street, 5:15 pm



#### **DTIHCG'S AUGUST EVENTS**

- 6 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
- 7 Sidewalk Sale, Ross at Central, 5 am
- 21 SUPER SATURDAY AT INFOMART
  - Oak Lawn @ Stemmons
  - Time 9:00 am
  - Program: To be announced
  - 1:00 pm MiniSiG

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING** 

Time and Date to be announced.

#### DTIHCG'S SEPTEMBER EVENTS

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
NEXT-STEP
JOJO'S On Stemmons at
1415 Motor Street, 5:15 pm

#### SHAKING THE BUSHES

#### by Mattie Bush



As we head into the summer months, things dealing with the computer seem to slow down a bit. This seems also true for the BBS.

I have had the time to keep with the new Software and Hardware that is in the works. I called and talked with some of the authors and hardware persons who are dedicated to what they are doing for the 4A world. At the INFOMART or Officers' meetings we discovered that there are few regular TI or Geneve users. We don't want to forget our "roots". This has been an emphasis or concern that I have had for several months. If we are supposed to be primarily a TI User's Group, we need to have some input from members who are day to day TI users. All of the officers still have a TI or Geneve (or both) set up, but they rarely see action these days. These high-speed, multi-megabyte, super video graphic monster machines that we're switched to are very addictive! It is very difficult to plan a meeting when no-body wants to be involved in the planning process that has kept up with what's new for half of our group. What we need are a dedicated TI user or two to help plan the meetings. Or help with the Volunteer work! As long as there are still members who plan to continue using the TI-99/4A, they should be represented. The only way that this can happen is if we get someone to step forward from our group.

Sorry that my time has been taken up by some personal things these past few months. This has prevented me from doing the things I like doing best. My article is short, and sorry about the rambling that I have done.

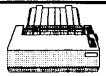
I or WE just want our TI group to continue on. Please won't some of you VOL-UNTEER to help keep our group going? If we don't keep up our ATTENDANCE at our INFOMART, we will lose our room to a very much smaller one. So get the lead out and kickin' high. Let's see at least 75 people at our JULY 10th meeting at 9:00 AM in ROOM 1061. This is SHAKING THE BUSHES signing off until next time. "KEEP ON COMPUTIN"



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#### **BEGINNER PRINTER**

#### DOT GRAPHICS 93X by Jim Lesher



Let's see if we can take some of the mystery out of DOT GRAPHICS. Until now it has been a mystery to me, so we will be going thru this together. Starting on page 90 in your Gemini 10X user's manual you will find they are throwing a lot of numbers at you which at first mean absolutely nothing to most of us. So let's start with the program below and try to make some sense out of it.

Line 130 dears the printer of all previous commands and at the same time sets the printer to a line feed of 6/72", with the escape A and CHR\$(6). Line 140 of course tells the computer to read 2 lines of DATA.

Line 150 is where we really start into the DOT GRAPHICS. Referring to page 96, we have an escape 'K" which puts the printer in the mood for low density dot graphics. The CHR\$(014) tells the printer the number of columns we will be using. Now understand, columns in "dot graphics" is not the same as normal columns, this time it means columns of dots, which in this case is 480 dots for 8 inch wide paper. This density is determined by the letter 'K". The CHR\$(0) determines the number of columns to be printed (255). Referring back to page 91, a table is provided for this. For example, if we were to print the face in the 400th column then we would replace CFR\$(0) with CHR\$(1) and if you have a Gemini 15X you could print the face in the 800th column, which would require a CHR\$(3) to be substituted for the CHR\$(0). However thru experimentation, I find that if you go more than 114, errors start generating in the picture. But for now lets keep it simple, this is giving me a headache.

These 3 lines determine how many columns of dots will be used to print our picture and where it will be printed horizontally on the page. Again the CHR\$(014) is the number of columns of dots in your picture.

Look at line 250 in the program, there are 14 numbers separated by commas. The picture is less than 255 dots wide so we use CHR\$(0) at the end of line 150. In the program below we are not spacing over any so we have 000 in line 160, and our line 190 also reflects the column width of the picture. Suppose we want to place the picture in column 20. We simply add 20 to the CHR\$(014), which would be CHR\$(038) and replace the 000 in line 160 with 020.

100 REM TO place the face in another column:

110 REM CHANGE the (014) in line 150 to be the sum of the (000) in line 160 and the (14) in line 190.

[3]

120 OPEN #1: "PIO", VARIABLE 255 130 PRINT #1:CHR\$(27); "@"; CHR\$(27); "A"; C HR\$(6) 140 FOR LINE-1 TO 2 150 PRINT #1:CHR\$(27); "K"; CHR\$(014); CHR\$ (0): 160 FOR SPACE-1 TO 000 170 PRINT #1:CHR\$(0): 180 NEXT SPACE 190 FOR COLM-1 TO 14 200 READ C 210 PRINT #1: CHR\$(C); Remember to fly your flag . the FOURTH OF JULY! 220 NEXT COLM 230 PRINT #1:CHR\$(13);CHR\$(10); 240 NEXT LINE 250 DATA 14,16,34,64,140,140,128,128,140 ,140,64,34,16,14 260 DATA 224,16,232,68,34,18,18,18,18,34 ,68,232,16,224 270 PRINT #1:CHR\$(27); "@" 280 CLOSE #1

Should you need any help call or write to:

Jim Lesher / 722 Huntley, Dallas TX 75214 / 214-821-9274

IF YOU WEREN'T AT NEXT STEP, BUT WANT THE LATEST INFORMATION ON ASGARD'S NEW EXTENDED BASIC 3, HANDOUTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT INFOMART!

## BELIEVE IT OR NOT...





by Jackie Guion

Some of you may remember hearing about a disagreement between Louis and the manager of Mr. Gatti's at our March E/C meeting. The result was that the E/C got kicked out because, the manager said, "That guy has an attitude". Well, maybe he did or maybe he didn't. The manager had already told Mattie that we could not continue to meet at Mr. Gatti's unless we had at least ten people that ate from the buffet afterwards.

While Mattie was digesting that piece of news, Louis and I had walked in bearing our orange "Fast Feast Buffer" mugs which had been sold with a guarantee of perpetual free refills. The manager had hailed Louis not two steps inside the door with an announcement that refills would henceforth cost 99-cents and that under no circumstances were they still free. Well, Louis took that announcement as a call to battle and proceeded to "explain" to the manager that the mugs had been sold with free refills on a "forever" basis and that the time period had not ended. No explanation moved the manager, who, with her husband, had just taken over the Walnut Hill Mr. Gatti's franchise. Having failed to persuade the lady manager, Louis switched his attention to her husband, also in a Mr. Gatti's uniform. While he gained some sympathy with the man, it was obvious who ruled the roost in this pair's business relationship. No free refills were forthcoming.

Giving up the effort at getting Gatti's to honor their promise, Louis headed for the E/C meeting room only to find the lady manager just exiting the area. At the table sat a rather stunned-looking crew. The woman had just informed them that they were "no longer welcome at Mr. Gatti's; that the man at the counter had an attitude." Mattie told Louis that he had gotten us kicked out of the place. (She also said it didn't make any difference since we would be unable to continue to meet there unless we could get better attendance at the E/C meetings and have more people stay to eat afterwards.) Of course Louis feels that he was just the catalyst that caused our banishment. He thinks he just gave the manager the excuse she was looking for.

When he got home, he sat down and wrote a two page letter to the Office of The Mr. Gatti's President, in Kerrville, Texas, explaining the situation to them and asking them to let him know whether or not the refills we paid for when we got our buffet meals should have been free. Mattie had been upset enough that she wrote a letter to the Dallas Mr. Gatti's office. Mattie mailed her letter a few days later. Louis waited until late April to see if his attitude changed. When it didn't, he updated the date on the letter and mailed it to the franchise headquarter's address I had gotten at our public library.

In May I was surprised to hear someone from the Mr. Gatti's Pizza office in Kerrville leaving a message on our answering machine. Louis had not included a phone number on the letter since we screen all incoming phone calls. Mr. Gatti's had gotten the phone number from information and was calling to let him know that they had had "extensive discussions" with the manager of the franchise on Walnut Hill Lane and that all refills were to be free. I picked up the phone and talked to the woman calling. She even wanted to know if there was anything else that we felt needed to be done! She even asked us to let her know if there were any additional problems at that location in the future. I told her she had done more than we expected since we had only expected a letter letting us know the policy on free refills. I did not mention the limited selection at the salad bar under this management nor

did we discuss how many should be required to eat before we were given a place to meet.

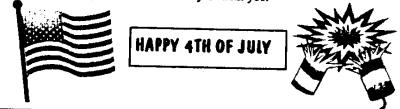
We don't know whether or not our E/C Meeting will be held at Mr. Gatti's in the future. The location of the meeting will probably depend on how many people are expected to attend. What we do want you to know is that at least one company still believes in keeping a promise it made to customers at least four years ago when we first purchased our mugs!

## **UPDATING THE DATABASE...**

#### by Charlice Althar

WELCOME to our newest member, BRYANT KRAUSE of Mira Loma, CA, who contacted us for information about joining DTIHCG after reading our newsletter which is exchanged with a user group in California. Welcome BRYANT!

A RENEWAL was received this month from JEROME GRAHAM. Tlanks, JEROME, we're looking forward to another year with you!



#### A HANDFUL OF THANK YOU'S

A few months ago, several DTIHCG members and Officers became involved with helping the Multi-Handicapped class at Douglass Learning Center in Lawton, Oklahoma obtain some computers for their classicom. They now have available several TI-99/4A's, along with cartridges of early childhood programs, plus extra keyboards and grom ports for repairs. We became aware of this need through our former member Tom D'Amura, whose 5 year old daughter Cristina is autistic and attends this class. Obviously the match of computers and kids is successful, and they sent us a colorful poster which extends to DTICHG a "HANDFUL OF THANK YOUS". For our part, we thank Tom and the class for the opportunity to help. Be sure to look for the original poster which will be displayed at INFO-MART this month. A reduced copy is this month's "centerfold".



#### YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE IT ALL

by Jim Peterson



Do the conversations at your user group meeting sound like a coffee break in Silicon Valley? Are you confused by talk of GROMs and GRAMs, puzzled by references to HFDCs, intimidated by discussions of megabytes and frightened by talk of burning EPROMs? Well, join the crowd, buddy - so am I!

There are basically three types of people interested in computers. First there are those who use a computer to run programs, to accomplish something useful or just to have fun. I believe that those people are still in the great majority, although we don't hear much from them. Then, there are those who get their kicks out of writing programs, of creating software for others to use. There aren't too many of those left in the TI world. And finally, there are those who like to tinker with the computer, soup it up, plug in doohirkies and thingamajigs, and talk in that strange language I mentioned above. I don't know how many of those folks there are, but they are certainly the most knowledgeable, active, and interested, and they tend to dominate the conversations and the printed material in the TI world nowadays.

I presume that those fellows also do actually run programs on their souped up systems. And, some of them must be skilled programmers, because many of their hybrid hardware creations would be useless without specialized software. I'm very glad that those people are around. Once in a while they invert something that I actually find useful, and they are a lifesaver when my equipment breaks down.

But, don't be intimidated by all that high-tech talk, and don't think that the computer world is passing you by. There are so many things to do with a computer that no one could possibly find time to do them all. Do your own thing and don't worry about the rest.

I have operated a TI software company for seven years, and I also spend a lot of time writing programs, using the computer as a word processor, etc. I probably spend more time on my TI than 90% of the users. So, what does my equipment consist of?

I have a console with the Extended Basic module plugged in, attached to a P-Box which contains a TI disk controller, two double-sided drives, the 32K card, RS232 card, and a Horizon Ramdisk. Also plugged into the RS232 card is an old Gemini 10X printer and an Avatex 1200 baud modern. I also have a Speech synthesizer, a pair of TI Joysticks, at TE-II module and an Editor Assembler module, all of which

I plug in occasionally when I need them; also a cassette recorder and cable which hasn't been used in a long time.

I use Triton's Super Extended Basic module because it has some editor features which are useful when programming. It also has some limited plotting capability which I have never used - and have never heard of anyone who has. If you don't program, it would hardly pay to switch from the old TI Extended Basic. I also have the Mechatronics module but never got around to trying it. I had a Gram Kracker but soon sold it and bought a ramdisk instead. The Gram Kracker has fantastic capabilities if you have the skill and knowledge to take advantage of them, but most users don't seem to have done much beyond personalizing the title screen. I had a widget, and I guess it is still collecting dust around here some place. It was a nuisance, and since I use XBasic 99% of the time I didn't need it. There are now widgets or "module expanders" that allow you to access more than one module from within a program. That is, if you have the skill to write such a program. I don't know that anyone has released such programs to the public domain, and I can't think of any practical use except to access TEII speech from XBasic - but you can do that with the Text-To-Speech disk.

The ramdisk is the one tool that I would not be without. In order to assemble my TI-PD catalog, I screened over 4000 programs, debugged and modified, merged in help files, conversions to XBasic and loaders, and assembled over 400 disks of programs. It took me hundreds of hours of work - without a ramdisk it would have taken thousands of hours and I would not even have attempted it. The ramdisk enables me to switch from one program to another almost instantly, and with John Johnson's Boot program I can just as quickly catalog a disk or view a file. Mine has 256k of memory. I could get one with much more memory but I see no reason to co so: I have every program on it that I am apt to use even once a month, and it is cnly half full. That leaves plenty of room for temporary storage and downloading. However, if you only use your computer to play games, do a little word processing and a bit of record keeping, a ramdisk would be an expensive convenience rather than a necessity. Since my ramdisk is only half full, I would consider a hard crive to be about as useful as the mammalian appendages on a swine of the masculine persuasion. If I was running a BBS, sure - or if I was doing a lot of work with those memory-gobbling graphics and needed everything quickly accessible. My old Gemini printer has been a faithful workhorse, although the hood over one sprocket wheel has lost its spring and is being held down by a loop of elastic cord. I will have to give it up soon, because the Gemini printer codes are becoming obsolete and I need to be able to write and test Epson codes. But I hate to give up these 79-cent typewriter ribbons and start getting ripped off on \$2.50 cartridges! As for a color ribbon, the temperature will have to go way down, down under, before I pay for one of those.

Once in a while, when someone sends me a double-density diskful of stuff, I wish I had a CorComp disk controller. Otherwise, with diskettes selling for a quarter or

less, it wouldn't pay to change. If I ever get around to subscribing to GENie or Delphi, it will pay me to get a 2400 baud modem. I can't think of anything else I need, and I don't want what I don't need. If I really wanted to play joystick games, I would certainly get something better than the TI joystick. And if that MIDI interface cable becomes a reality, I will be sorely tempted. I can't see any advantage in putting the 32K under the hood, or anyplace other than where it is now. If I used speech a great deal, it would be nice to get rid of the synthesizer - but I know only one user who uses speech that much. I don't need a clock built in because I have a watch on my wrist. If I really did a lot of serious writing, an 30-column card would be wonderful. But then I would have to buy a monitor capable of displaying 80 columns. I certainly don't want to give up color, and high-resolution color monitors cost more. I would still want to use my old monitor for programming, because I like to write programs for folks who have basic equipment. I don't have room on my computer desk for two monitors, so I think I'll pass.

I'm a three-finger typist, so a RAVE keyboard wouldn't speed up my typing very much. If I really wanted an IBM keyboard and 80-column capability, I would throw in a few bucks more and get a Geneve. So, what about the Geneve? If I had an irresistible urge to run the few great programs that have been written for it, or if I wanted to explore its great programming capabilities, I would get one. But, I like to write programs for other people to use. When so few are interested in programs that I write for a computer that sold in the millions, why would I write programs for a computer purchased by a couple of thousand people?

I am sure that many folks will disagree with what I have written. That's why I wrote it. I hope they will disagree so strongly that they will immediately boot up Funlweb and compose a blistering reply. But don't send it to me - send it to your newsletter editor. The newsletters are badly in need of more articles by more writers!

(Reprinted from the Dec. '92 - Mar. '93 issue of The NEWSNET99ER published by the NET 99er User Group of Northeast Tarrant County, Texas. We hadn't seen this article before and would like all our members to have a chance to read it)

#### OLD DSK1.

#### By Dan Lowe



At a recent INFOMART meeting someone asked . . . "Dan, why don't you write an article for the Newsletter?" What? Me write an article in a computer-oriented newsletter? Why, I'm about as comfuter literate (or illiterate) as a snail in the Kentycky Derby. And what could I write about that could possibly be of interest to anyone reading this Newsletter? All you 99/4A VETERANS have already seen it all.

done it all, and know it all. And other members more knowledgeable than I already do hardware/software reviews and discuss other developments in the 99/4A world. So, what's left for me to write about?

Then, I had an idea; I can write about PEOPLE, PLACES, and THINGS that make up and relate to the world of DTIHCG. For instance, did you know that Tom Hall (people) just returned from vacationing on the Gulf (place), where he and Loan (another people) enjoyed the sea breezes while visiting relatives!

Or this - busy, busy Ann Gresham (one of our newest members) was gathering names and birthdays of other DTIHCGers while chomping away at our last Next-Step meeting at JoJo's. Rumor has it that she was gathering this data so she could send us birthday presents; thanks Ann.

And Charlice Althar had many great things to say about her recent class reunion of her nursing school days. It was 3 days of hugs, talks, visiting, and eating. Charlice says of 47 graduates that 32 showed up, and that's quite a turnout. Attendees came from California, Utah, Ohio, Florida, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and of course, Texas. The highlight was Sunday brunch at the Antares atop Reunion Tower. You can believe that is ONE time that Charlice decided not to "brown bag" it.

Just read a message on TIBBS from a Connie Thompson asking for help re: how to set up her 4A for BBS'ing. Seems she already has an IBM 386, but wants to also use her 4A and modern. Do you suppose she could possibly be a prospect for membership in DTIHCG?

And, as I said in the beginning, I'm not very computer literate, but I keep on trying to learn. And to that end, let me share with you an item I've just run across - ar audio cassette entitled "60 Minutes Toward Computer Literacy." (Works for me.) This tape is described as easy to listen to, entertaining, and easy to understand by using analogies to explain concepts. For example, one analogy compares the computer to a taxi driver. The passenger of the cab is the computer operator, who tells the driver where to go. The driver operates the controls that make the car go where it is supposed to. The cab driver is likened to a program, the car's controls like an operating system, and the car's engine is like the microprocessor. For more information, contact:

Business Film International 1397 Hope St. Stamford, CT 06907 (203) 958-2255

So there you have it, my FIRST article! And oh yes, I can't reveal the name of the person who asked me "Why don't YOU write an article?" I'd hate to see any harm come to anyone!!!

## PAGE PRO BANNER MARTR

K W E E VI

UI

by MARY LEARD

E E Most banner making programs

R W for the TI-99/4A are very
limited in what they do.

Many don't allow you to include

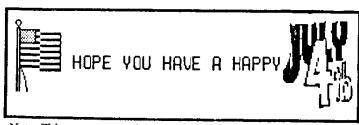
pictures or have a choice of different fonts. Some won't let you save the banner you have spent hours

creating to print out later.

PAGE PRO BANNER MAKER by Chris Bobbitt will let you put Page Pro pictures anywhere you want them in your banner. It is compatible with Page Pro Headline Fonts. It is easy to use and the banners can be plain or decorative.

You can create more than one banner and print them out one after another without stopping. The program can be purchased from:

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1423 FLAGSHIP DR
WOODBRIDGE, VA 22192
Price: \$12.95 + \$3.00 s&h



Note: This page was produced by Mary Leard, using Page Pro. -Ed.

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SECRETARY	CHARLICE ALTHAR	214-337-4840 214-375-9575
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VIDEO LIBRARIAN	ROBERT SMITH	214-276-3822
ADVENTURELIBRARIAN	CHARLES BROCK	214-210-3022

These people are DTIHCG officers and chairpersons. They help themselves and you, by giving much of their time in working to make this a better club for all of us. They attend the Executive Committee Meeting usually held the Saturday afternoon following the INFOMART meeting. Any interested member is invited to join us for the next Chairperson's portion of the meeting.

If you'd like to become more involved in helping the group, please let our DTIHCG President, Mattie Bush, know what you'd like 40 do.

Please take the time to thank these people individually for their efforts. It makes their job easier.