THE SNUGLETTER

FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA USERS' GROUP

Vol. 6 - No. 3   March, 1988

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, Mar 14, 1988 - 6:30 PM

NEVADA POWER BUILDING MEETING ROOM

6226 West Sahara, Las Vegas, Nevada
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TI-XPO-88/TI FEST WEST
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A somewhat biased report by a less than disinterested party.

The TI-XPO-88/TI FEST WEST is over. From my point of view as meeting coordinator, the show was a success. During the show, I never spoke to anyone who wasn't having a good time. I had many compliments about the facilities, organization, and the general feel of the show. Thanks, it is nice to be appreciated.

What I'm going to do now is take you on a "tour" of TIXPO. We will stop at each booth along the way and look at all the "goodies". The first stop will be the registration booth at the entrance. Everyone who attended TIXPO filled out a registration card. The information from that card was then entered into the computer. The program saved the data to disk and printed out a badge for the attendee. The registration booth was manned by members of the Southwest 99ers from Tucson Az. I want to thank BJ and Jack Mathis, Ed Hallett, Ed McCullough, and Wee Eng (who's speedy typing ability meant there was never a line waiting to get their badge) for their help and support with this boring but necessary part of putting on a computer show.

Right next door to the registration booth was the Southwest 99ers own booth (sort of planned it that way). They had lots of goodies for sale. You could get blank disks, books, used hardware (including several printers), some multiple overlay strips for your console, custom badges for your user's group, and lots of software from their library.

Next door to the Tucson group was Bud Mills Services. Bud, who recently purchased all rights to Horizon Computer Limited, had Horizon Ramdisks and kits for sale in configurations ranging from 90K to 1 MEG. From what I could see, Bud's sales were quite brisk. I know at least 5 of the 384K kits were sold to SNUG members (bought one myself). The new kits are built on the same boards as the original Horizon Ramdisk. They use HM62256LP-12 chips which are the 32K version of the 8K chips on the original HRD. Bud's prices range from $38.00 for the bare board (you supply all parts) to $435.00 for the HRD+RAM ONE MEG kit. If you are not adept at kit building, Bud will sell you an assembled version for an additional $60.00 over the price of the kit version. I have been involved in building about 10 of the original HRD's and upgrading them to 256K. Today I finished building 2 of the 384K versions of the HRD+. I have to say that the new versions are somewhat more difficult to build than the earlier versions. If you are the least bit squeamish about kit building or have trouble reading, understanding, and following instructions, then I recommend that you order your HRD+ preassembled from Bud Mills.

Moving down the line, we come to L and M systems. This booth is manned by Les and Marie Merryman and their son, Anthony. Les is the west coast distributor for Myarc products. Les was selling 9640 Geneve computers, MY-ART with mouse, and the whole line of Myarc products. Les also had an accounting program that he demonstrated. He says he is trying to market it through Myarc and that it will require the Myarc protection card to run.

Right next to the Merryman's was Jack Riley from Myarc. Jack is the vice president of marketing for Myarc Inc. Jack had and was

demonstrating a WORKING hard/floppy disk controller card. He says the card itself has been complete and functional for some time now, but the software for it is still incomplete. Jack said that Myarc will no longer be releasing software or hardware that is incomplete. Even though the hard disk seemed to perform flawlessly, he said there are still a few bugs in the software that are preventing its release. Pressed for specifics, Jack showed what happens when you attempt to format a disk. Instead of formatting, a message comes on the screen telling you that you don't really want to do that because it will mess up your disk. As Jack says, there is still some work to be done before the card can be released.

Across the aisle from Myarc was the only "generic" booth at the show. Espanore Ltd. sells paper, ribbons, disks, disk boxes, and just about anything else you could think of in the line of computer accessories. Bill and Joann Poland were buried among boxes of computer supplies inside their booth. While they didn't break any sales records at the show, Bill told me that they had a lot of fun being in Las Vegas.

Next to Espanore was Franz Wagenbach of TAPE Ltd. Franz was demonstrating the line of Mechatronics products which include an 80 column graphics card (this card is external to the P-box), the TI-Mouse (which is quite easy to write programs for from Extended Basic), the Mechatronics Extended Basic with it's nifty graphics commands, the Gram Karte (a gram device that resides in the P-BOX), the TI INTERN book which shows the code inside the console, and a lot of books about the TI 99/4A.

Moving down the aisle, we come to Dijit Systems. Tom and Marilyn Spillane were there to greet all visitors and show off their Advance Video Display Processor card. This card allows you to display 80 column text and High Resoulution graphics on an RGB monitor. The crispness of the RGB display will make your mouth water. As with the Mechatronics 80 column card, this one uses the same Video Display Processor as the Geneve. As a matter of fact, Tom ran several demonstration programs on his system that had been written specially for the Geneve. I am not implying that a 99/4A with a Dijit AVDP card will be able to run Geneve software, but it does share a common VDP chip. At least some of the high res graphics programs for Geneve will function with this card.

Next to Dijit was Rave 99. Manning the Rave booth were John, Jill, and Gay McDevitt. Rave has several important hardware products for the 99/4A and Geneve 9640 computer family. As most of you know by now, Rave offers a replacement keyboard for the TI. These keyboards are IBM style keyboards and feature 105 keys, 24 function keys, numeric keypad, and optional reset and load interrupt capability. Rave also has a card to let you put your speech synthesizer into the P-BOX. This would eliminate one of the weakest links in the '4A expansion system by getting the synthesizer out from between the console and the p-box. It also gives us Geneve 9640 users a way to get speech back into our programs. Probably the most interesting product from Rave is their new memory card. This card is more than a memory expansion card, more than a ramdisk. It features 8K of RAM at >6000 (supercart). It has 8K of non-DSR ram for use when DSR inactive, 8K of System DSR RAM, and 8K of user DSR RAM which will page into the DSR space as required by the program, and up to 512K of RAM in banks of 8K (if I remember correctly) that can be either paged into the 32K memory space used by memory expansion or used as a ramdisk. Up to 4 of these cards can be installed into the P-box for access to up to 2 MEGS of ram. Software for this card is being written by J. Peter Hoddie, so look for some amazing things for it. One of the most interesting things about the Rave memory card is it's backup system. The card uses very low-power Ram chips which makes it a good candidate for battery backup. Rave decided to use 2 backup systems, 1 for short term, and 1 for long term. The long term backup is a lithium cell good for about 6 months or so. It's the short term approach that fascinates me. They use a 1 FARAD (that's right, I said 1 FARAD) capacitor for up to 5 days of backup power for their RAM. Not so long ago when I was taking my first electronics course in high school, I was told that a 1 FARAD capacitor would fill our whole classroom (and we had a large classroom). This capacitor is about as big around as a silver dollar and maybe 1 inch tall!

Around the corner and back to back with RAVE was L.L Conner Enterprises Computers and Electronics. Larry and Melody Conner were selling cables, IC chips (including some of the hard to find TMS9900 series chips), and computer accessories. They were also representing Texaments, and had TI-ARTIST and support packages for sale.

Next to L.L. Conner was J. Peter Hoddie. Peter was representing Genial Computerware, The Boston Computer Society, and, I believe, Asgard Software. Unfortunately, the package containing the Boston Computer Society library never arrived. Peter had shipped 3 packages to the show, but only 2 got here. I suspect that the other one spent the weekend in the UPS office here in Las Vegas. Too bad, the BCS library is quite extensive and well worth having at any TI show. Also in the booth with Peter was Jim Lohmeyer. I don't think either of these two got more than an hour of sleep during the whole 3 days they were here. They started writing a program together when they got here. By Sunday morning, they had it finished, complete with documentation. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first piece of software concieved, written, and distributed entirely during a computer show. They call the program Encode-it. This program will allow you to lock your programs, data files, or complete disks with a code phrase up to 32 characters long. Once locked, the only way to access them is with the code that locked them in the first place. Peter demonstrated several new pieces of software from Genial including Remind-Me and a not-yet-released data base program by Warren Agee (author of Total Filer) called First Base. Watch for this one when it is released! From what I saw of it, it will be a very impressive program when it is finished. Peter says the only thing to be finished now is the report generator.

Moving on down to the next booth, we encounter Ken, Karen, and Mike Hamai. They were here to demonstrate Databiotics new GrandRam card. The GrandRam is a Ramdisk that also has a print spooler and clock on board. There are also ports for an Analog to Digital converter and a cartridge emulator (neither of which have been built yet). There is a very professional looking configure program that allows you to set up how much memory you want to have for the ramdisk and how much for the print spooler. You can also set the clock, configure your printer, and set up a series of "hot keys" that allow you to toggle some options such as clock display and power up menu by simply pressing that combination. The GrandRam will be available very soon. I understand that 100 of the boards are being assembled right now and the first shipment will follow soon. The card that Ken demonstrated functioned well. Ken says you will be able to buy the GrandRam in sizes from 52K to 512K. If you buy the smaller versions, you can always upgrade by adding chips later.

Queene Anne's Computer Shoppe had the last booth in the center aisle. Barbara Weiderhold, Chuck Wynne and Tom Wynne were very happy to demonstrate the new Videoflex Expansion Box designed by Dave Miller of Miller Communications. This is a very clean looking IBM style expansion box with space for 8 TI expansion cards. With the shortage of TI expansion boxes and the advent of the Myarc Geneve 9640 computer, a box like this will soon become a necessity. They were demonstrating it with a Geneve 9640 computer card and MY-ART. Queene Anne's Computer Shoppe will be the distributor for these expansion boxes, and I believe they will be available immediately (don't quote me on that tho). They had also planned on demonstrating the Videoflex card itself, but the night before they left Washington, the prototype card quit working. This would have been the first "live" demonstration of the capabilities of this new card. Also planned for the Videoflex box is an IBM compatible "card" that will reside in the box but remain completely independant from the TI it shares space with. Details of this card are a bit sketchy at this point, but I am assured that such a card will be available soon.

Right across the aisle from Queene Anne was Bill Webb of the Rocky Mountain 99ers. Bill brought as much new and used TI equipment as he could cram into his van (so much that he bought a second booth because it wouldn't all fit into 1). This was probably the busiest booth in the show with bargains to be found and haggled over in every corner. Besides selling software and hardware, Bill sold user's groups. Whenever he sold an expansion system to a person who wanted to expand, or a basic system to a new user, he would find out where they were from and refer them to a user's group in the area. He came over to the SNUG booth and got a stack of our membership application forms to hand out to his Las Vegas customers. Whenever he found someone from our area who didn't know about us, he would send them to our booth or call one of us to talk to that person. Thanks Bill.

Next to the Rocky Mountain 99ers was a booth shared by the Tri-Valley 99ers and the TI Club of Oxnard (TICO). In attendance at this booth one could find Rodger Merritt, Ray Kazmer, and Steve Mehr. Rodger was demonstrating his "it" series of programs (Print-it, Picture-it, etc), Ray had his Woodstock program and some very impressive screen animation programs from Germany, and Steve was busy helping out with the fairware booth, booth-sitting for vendors, and probably trying to find some new user's groups to join. Visiting with these three gentlemen was a highlight of the show for me.

Moving on down the aisle, we come to the Great Lakes Software booth. Richard Paquette and Ernest Chandler were doing some very professional demonstrations of their products, Joypaint and Certificate 99. I had never seen either of these programs before and was very impressed with the quality and ease of use of both programs. Joypaint allows the use of an area larger than the screen for your graphics. You can scroll the screen right and left, up and down to work on various parts of your picture. There are dozens of different patterns you can use to draw or fill with. The whole program is icon oriented. You use the joysticks to select the icon representing the function you wish to perform, and then to move it to where you want to do the particular function. There are a LOT of functions, and I know I won't remember them all, but here are a few: You can draw lines, circles, elipses, and boxes. You can rotate, duplicate, erase, move, or magnify portions of your picture. There is an undo feature that seems to work after any of the other features. You can paint with different brushes, different textures, or with a "spraypaint" can. Or you can use the Fill icon to fill inside your designs with any of the dozens of texture patterns available. About the only thing that seemed to be lacking was color. There is an option to change the foreground/background color, but in the end, you are still painting in "black and white". Since this program seems to be oriented towards a printer anyhow, I guess that is not so important. This program is a nice companion for their other software offering, Certifica.e 99, which can print out a certificate complete with graphics and special character fonts.

Moving right along, we come to the LA 99ers booth. This booth was staffed by Terrie Masters, Tom Freeman, Gail Fair, and Fred Moore. They had software from their library, New software from virtually everyone who offers commercial software for the TI community, books on almost everything about the TI 99/4A. There had used hardware, modules, catalogs and probably a lot of goodies that I never even saw. They were good enough to donate a number of door prizes to us and left us with a collection of TI books for our own library. Thank you Tom and Terrie.

Last but I hope not least was the SNUG booth. Besides our own library and sales of TIXPO 88 hats (quite good looking hats if I do say so), we also had Regena helping people with programming problems, demonstrating her software, answering questions, and drawing

names for doorprizes. Also as part of our booth was a Fairware booth which was operated by Ken Gilliland. Ken had the latest updated Fairware available for copying all during the show.

Thank you to all the vendors, User's Groups, and attendees who came to Las Vegas for our show. I hope you weren't dissappointed. I know we weren't! If you are interested in any of the products that I have mentioned, you can contact the vendors at these addresses:

Southwest 99ers
P.O. BOX 17831
Tucson, AZ 85730

Bud Mills Services
166 Dartmouth Drive
Toledo, OH 43614

L and M Systems
2330 E. Ave. J-8 #173
Lancaster, CA 93535

Myarc, Inc
PO box 140
Basking Ridge, NJ 07902

Espanore Ltd
7270 Belle Aire Ave
N. Hollywood, CA 91605

T.A.P.E Ltd
1439 Solano Place
Ontario, CA 91764 (USA)

Dijit Sytems
4345 Hortensia St
San Diego, CA 92103

Rave 99 Co.
112 Rambling Rd.
Vernon, CT 06066

L L Conner Enterprises
1521 Ferry St.
Lafayette, IN 47904

Genial Computerware
Box 183
Grafton MA 01519

Databiotics
PO box 1194
Palos Verdes Estates Ca
                    90274

Queene Anne's Computer
6102 Roosevelt Way N.E.
Seattle, WA 98106

Rocky Mountain 99ers
P.O. BOX 12605
Denver, CO 80212

TICO
3183 Kelp lane
Oxnard CA 93030

Tri-Valley 99ers
306 Flittner Circle
Thousand Oaks CA 91360

Great Lakes Software
804 E. Grand River Ave
Howell MI 48843

LA 99ers
PO box 3547
Gardena, 90247

Asgard Software
PO box 10306
Rockville MD 20850

Texaments
53 Center St
Patchogue, NY 11772

SNUG
PO Box 26301
Las Vegas, NV 89126

I want to thank the following vendors for their donations of door prizes to the TI-XPO-88:
Myarc Inc ....2 MY-ART programs with mice
Bud Mills Services...............................1 HRD+ ramdisk kit
Genial Computerware.............................Choice of software
T.A.P.E. Ltd....................................TI Intern book
L.A. 99ers.......................................Books and Tiny Logo Carts
Palace Station Hotel............................Hat and T-shirt
Las Vegas Convention Authority.................Tickets to "Jubilee"
Asgard Software................................5 new pieces of software

I know there were many more donations than I have listed here, but I don't have a list of all donations. Many of the door prize donations came in Sunday afternoon while we were actually giving away the last of the original door prizes. Thank you one and all for making the TI-XPO-88/TI FEST WEST a success!

32-B OR NOT TO BE?
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TIXPO-88 is over! I can hear the cheering and the sighs of relief from all of us that were involved in this mammoth production. Well mammoth may be a bit strong, but it fits considering the size of S.N.U.G. I have heard several people ask if there will be another show next year, and the usual response was simply a dirty look. (post-natal depression?) It may be a little early to start thinking about doing it again, but consider the advancements that our little TI system has made in the last year, and try to look ahead at what may be (probably will be) available this time next year.

Two of the biggest disappointments of the show were that the Myarc Hard Disk Controller Card was not available for purchase at the show (although Jack Riley did demonstrate it) and that the Videoflex Card was not yet finished. These will certainly be ready VERY soon. The Grand Ram was shown with prototype software that Ken Hamai was given just the night before and was therefore not shown to it's best advantage. There could possibly be add-on equipment to utilize it's expansion slot. J. Peter Hoddie (AKA the white tornado of the keyboard AKA the fastest fingers in the west) and Jim Lohmeyer sat down for a few hours on Saturday afternoon, wrote an Assembly program called Encode-It, and had it for sale on Sunday at the show. At this rate there could be 365 (no breaks please men) new Assembly programs available by this time next year! Les Merryman demonstrated some of his new business programs and stated that Myarc had plans for lots of new software. (Which will be protected by an expansion box card protection system.) Jack Riley of Myarc made mention of PASCAL and Advanced Basic being near completion, updates for MDOS, GPL, My-Art, and a programmers development package (PDP). Ray Kazmer will be trying to put programmers together who have developed seperate methods of fast animation and color routines which could possibly lead to games with graphics such as we have never seen for the TI. For the wild rumor department, we have heard of a 10 MEG chip which could fit in a cartridge and allow you to run ANY program from ANY MACHINE on your TI system. Also, a reliable source told me that Myarc has a Geneve up and running with new faster (high dollar) chips at 20 Mhz and that they are designing a machine code named the 32-B (guess what that stands for) which will utilize the TI-99000 CPU chip and run at an incredible 30 Mhz! To quote: "It will blow the doors off of the IBM 80386." OUTRAGEOUS!!!

So let us not be too hasty in condemning the idea of a TI-XPO-89. It may be a very good year.

-Bob Sherburne-

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF TI-XPO-88!
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Supporting User Groups in Attendance:

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L.A. 99ers...................Los Angles,CA.
SouthWest 99ers..............Tucson,AZ.
Boston Computer Society......Boston,MA.
Rocky Mountain 99ers.........Denver,CO.
Ottawa TI User Group.......Ottawa,Ontario,Canada.
Tri Valley User Group........Westlake Village,CA.
San Fernando Valley 99ers.....Glendale,CA.
Brea 99ers...................La Habra,CA.
Puget Sound User Group.......Edmonds, WA.
TICO(TI Club Oxnard).........Oxnard,CA.
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TI User Groups Represented by Attending Members:
(other than those listed above)

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Tacoma 99ers.................Tacoma,WA.
Hoosier User Group(HUGGERS)...Indianapolis,IN
TI Riverside User Group.......Riverside, CA.
Front Range 99ers............Grand Junction,CO.
User Group of Orange County...Fountain Valley,CA.
Slave User Group.............Salt Lake City,UT.
S. Calif. Computer Group......El Cajon,CA.
PUNN(Portland Users of 99's)..Portland,OR.
San Francisco 99ers..........San Francisco,CA.
Kansas City Area 99ers.......Kansas City,MO.
San Diego Computer Society....San Diego,CA.
Vast 99ers..................Glendale,AZ.
Northern Nevada 99ers........Reno,NV.
North County 99ers...........Escondido,CA.
Club 99.....................Covina,CA.
Washington,D.C. TI UG.........Washington, D.C.
Toronto 9T9 User Group......Toronto,Ontario,Canada
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Bug 99ers...................Laguna Hills,CA.
MADHUG(Minnesota/No. Dakota)..Grand Forks,ND.
South Bay TI User Group.......San Jose,CA.
Pomona Valley 99ers..........Chino,CA.
Chicago Users Group..........Chicago,IL.
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   (If we missed someone let us know)

Software/Hardware Vendors:

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Bud Mills/Horizon RamDisk.....Toledo,OH.
L and M Systems/Myarc 9640....Lancaster,CA.
Espanora,Ltd./Comp. Supplies..N. Hollywood,CA.
Great Lakes Software/Joy Paint Howell,MI.
T.A.P.E/Megatronics..........Ontario,CA.
RAVE/Keyboard-RamDisk.........Vernon,CT.
DIGIT/RGB-TI connection.......San Diego,CA.
L.L. Conner/soft-hardware.....Lafayette,IN.
Queene Anne Computer Shoppe...Seattle,WA.
Regena/books-software........Cedar City,UT.
Steve Mehr/Ken Gilliland......Fairware Booth
L.A. 99ers/soft-hardware......Los Angles,CA.
DataBiotics/GrandRam .........Palos Verdes Est.,CA
Rocky Mtn 99ers/soft-hardware Denver,CO.
Tri Valley/soft-hardware......Westlake Village,CA.
Genial ComputerWare/software..Grafton,MA
MYARC,Inc./Geneve 9640.......Basking Ridge,NJ.
Triton/Triton Turbo/XT........San Francisco,CA.
SouthWest 99ers/soft-hardware Tucson,AZ.
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Software/Hardware Demonstrations:

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J. Peter Hoddie/software......Genial ComputerWare
Ken Hamai/GrandRam...........DataBiotics
Regena/programming/software...Regena
Les Merryman/9640-software....L and M Systems
Bud Mills/HRD+ 1 meg RamDisk..Bud Mills Services
Barb Wiederhold/VideoFlex.....Queene Anne Computer
Franz Wagenbach/80 col. card..TAPE/Megatronics
Tom Freeman/software..........LA 99ers
Ray Kazmer/computer animation Author of WOODSTOCK
Jack Riley/HrdDisk Controller Myarc,Inc.
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                    Attendance: 228

SPECIAL TREASURER'S and LIBRARIAN'S REPORT—MAR 88
by R. J. BIEBER

TI-XPO-88 APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS !!

For all intents and purposes TI-XPO-88 was a successful adventure for SNUG. Preliminary indicators show we won't go bankrupt. Because all of the bills have not been received, I can't make any accurate predictions. However; my belief, based purely on estimates, is that SNUG may have turned a small profit.

The only area we may loose in is the special purchase of 100 hats for TI-XPO-88. SNUG has to sell a minimum of 29 of the 31 (?) remaining hats at $6 each to break even.

Any TI-XPO-88 committee members or SNUG members who have outstanding bills PLEASE submit them to the Treasurer by meeting time (14 March 88)!! I would appreciate 2 copies made from the originals or give me the originals and I will make copies. Also, please include a letter with a brief explantion for each expense. I'm not a mind reader!!

MARCH '88 MEETING !!

SPECIAL REMINDER: The 14 MARCH '88 SNUG MEETING and all future meetings will be held in the Wengert Community Meeting Room located at the rear of the Nevada Power building, NW corner of Jones and W. Sahara Ave. Enter the parking area from Sahara and go to the back parking lot. The room is accessible thru exterior doors in the rear of the building. SNUG has reserved the meeting room from 6pm until 10:30pm.

BULK DISKETTES:

SNUG again has bulk diskettes for sale. The price for packages of 12 diskettes which includes Tyvec sleeves (?) and labels (?) is as follows: SNUG members - $6.00 per package or 2 Packages for $11.50. NON-MEMBERS - $7.00 per package. First come, first served.

8K RAM CART PROGRAMS

For those of you who purchased Dave Romer's Ram Cart/ SuperCart programs at the February meeting please check your disk(s). I may not have made copies of all of the programs for you. The programs came on two disks and in the confusion at the copy table I may have short changed a few people.

Reminder - Dave Romer hinted he'd like $5.00 per disk. It's up to you what you send to him.

MARCH DISK OF THE MONTH !

Due to TI-XPO-88 being held at the end of February and the fact that all of the TI-XPO committee members need a well earned rest, there will be NO Disk of the Month for March 1988.

MARCH'S RAFFLE

The Raffle Pot has gained some new contributions over the past few months. However, due to the pressures of setting up TI-XPO-88, the monthly raffle sort of fell by the wayside. With the purchase of some new items at TI-XPO-88 and the donation of other items by Vendors and User Groups, we now have a raffle pot with items of interest for all members.

SNUG is always looking for new/used items to include in the monthly raffles. Please look through your modules, books and assorted disks to see if you may have some item(s) to donate. Any and all items are welcome and appreciated.

That's all for this month. See you at March's meeting. -rj

FIXED ANNUAL EXPENDITURES:

SNUGLETter (Estimated cost per 100)
  Publication Costs ($43/Mo X 12). . . . . $ 516.00
  Postage ($22/Mo X 12). . . . . $ 264.00
P.O. Box Rental Fee ($22 Annually) . . . . $ 22.00
Bank Account Service Charge ($8.00/Mo X 12) $ 96.00
SNUG B/Board Phone Line ($11/Mo X 12). . . $ 132.00
Long Distance Phone Calls (Estimated). . . $ 80.00
Miscellaneous Expenditures (Estimated) . . .$ 90.00

TOTAL ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS (Estimated) - $ 1200.00

Annual Dues Collection: (Avg 30 Mbrs X $18) + $ 540.00

ANNUAL DEFICIT (Estimated)

To be recovered thru Fund Raisers, Disc
Copying Fees, Special Sales, etc.. . . . . . - $ 660.00

FUNDS BALANCE (as of 29 January 1988)   + $ 963.56
   (Includes $7.56 Jan 1988 Service Charges)

COLLECTIONS (during Feb 1988)

Membership Dues (Regular $18 X 2). . . . . $ 54.00
Unlimited Library Access Fees ($25 x 1). . $ 25.00
Bulk Diskette Sales ($12.50/Pkgs x 1). . . $ 12.50
Disc of the Month (Sales). . . . . $ 6.00
Disc/Program Copying Fees. . . . . $ 26.00
FunnelWeb Ver 4.0 Donations. . . . . $ 15.00
Sale of 1 donated TI-Keyboard. . . . . $ 1.00
Undeposited Funds from TI-XPO-88 . . . . . . $ unknown

                        (Sub-Total) + $ 139.50

EXPENDITURES (during Feb 1988)

Publication Cost (SNUGLETter)-(R. Johnson)
  Feb 88 . . . . $ 47.54
Postage (SNUGLETter Mailings)-(R. Bieber)
  Feb 88 . . . . $ 22.00
P.O. Box Rental Fee (Mar 88 - Feb 89). . . . $ 22.00
Cost of 100 TI-XPO-88 Hats (SNUG Funds). . . $ 434.60
Paid TI-XPO-88 expenses. . . . . $ 446.35

                        (Sub Total) - $ 972.49

FUNDS AVAILABLE (as of 29 Feb 88)

Checking Account (General operating funds). - $ (112.08)#
TI-XPO-88 Trust Fund - for unpaid bills . . + $ 456.65
FunnelWeb Donations Trust Fund. . . . . . . + $ 80.00
  J.J. Menu Donations Trust Fund . . . . . . + $ 35.00

(Bank Balance)>> + $ 459.57

PROJECTED EXPENDITURES:

TI-XPO-88 - Estimated Unpaid Expenses . . . > $ 500.00
  Bank Account Service Charge (Feb Estimate). > $ 8.00

NOTE: Because all of the expense receipts have not been received by the treasurer, TI-XPO-88 fund balances could not be calculated for this month's report.
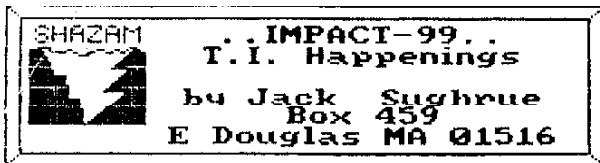
GOOD OLD DAYS

PART I: ANCIENT RITES
"Long, long ago in a world far away...."

In the computer world, the "Good Old Days" are measured in minutes, not in decades (as with real life). So in a real-life decade, the computer world has lived eons.

Public broadcasting ran an hour-long program called "Computer Graphics" a few months ago. It assaulted the senses; it was so mind-boggling. These incredible graphics were used for media, manufacturing, medicine, were fun, and MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), where some of the most advanced computer activities in the world are going on, including a 64 x 64 x 64-foot total computer environment which is simply called The Cube. But the research on Artificial Intelligence performed by some of these most creative scientific geniuses on Earth is where the limits of imagination cease to exist. There are other technical institutes in America and worldwide (particularly in Japan) that are investing large amounts of time and money in AI development. The world is already a completely different one for us than it is for these unusual folk. Reading about the fascinating AI future is the most flabergasting reading I've ever done. (And it gave me an oppurtunity to finally use "flaberqasting" in a sentence.)

There is nothing in our lives today that doesn't have a computer relationship. There will be nothing in our future that will not contact computers in some way. All "things" such as books, beds, bowling balls, and bananas have to be shipped and stored and sold and bought. Computers. Optimum growing and harvesting time (bananas and the wood for beds and books) are computerized. Computers help design books and bowling balls and beds and help in the manufacturing.

A walk in the country? Well, unless you live next to the place of the walk (in a house with VCRs, TVs, microwaves), you have to drive in a car (with computerized engineering) to even get to it.

I really tried to think of something in my life that is not affected by computers. I have a library of old P.G. Wodehouse books written, I'm certain, on mechanical typewriters and set by typesetting machines and printed on mechanical presses and bound by mechanical equipment -

all from the 50s and 60s.

Now, if I read any of these books at night at home, I realize some computer is sending me energy and keeping tabs of how much I use.

But, if I squeeze into an old pair of dungarees from my middle-age (pre-computer manufacture) and, barefoot and barechested, go lie on our lawn in the sun to read as humans were intended to, I have the nagging sensation that I'm not fully out of the computer world yet. I try to ignore the cars driving by, the planes flying overhead, the sounds of some silly teenyboppers bopping down the street blaring their silly noises through a boom box.

And, eventually, Wodehouse captures me, and I am computer-free for a few hours.

Maybe.

If the phone doesn't ring; if the neighbor doesn't start up the thundering smoke machine he calls a lawn mower; if nobody offers me a cool, refreshing beer (grown, harvested, processed, canned, delivered, advertised, and sold by our friend, the computer).

Maybe then.

But all this sounds like I don't love my computers. I do. I DO! If they are taking over the world, as I'm certain they are after reading some of the latest AI books, then I want them to know I am on their side!

All this thinking about how quickly and completely computers invaded our lives began at the last meeting of our M.U.N.C.H. User Group. One of our new members (Yes, we are getting new members!) asked what life was like in the old days of the club. Well, the 4/A hasn't existed for a decade yet, so I didn't have any trouble recalling.

Before the 4/A existed, TI generously loaned me a chicklet-key 99-4 to use for a year in my 5th-grade classroom. We probably had the first computer in an elementary classroom in America. It was great! The kids and I learned to have the computer do calculations. (The 4 had a calculator built in as one of the original screen options.) We learned how to make the computer fill up the screen with our names. We learned to delay with FOR/NEXT. Things like that. There was no software at all and only a xeroxed attempt at a manual.

But it was fun. And very difficult! (I hear the chuckles out there. Think for a minute. NOBODY had a computer. No library. No small business. No stores. No schools. No homes. Making your name come up on the screen was no easy task at first. Still, it was better than watching the test pattern on TV for hours when TVs first came out, but that is another story.) I think it was a 4K prototype. Black and white IV. I can't recall sound.

When I finally bought my first TI, I was floored by the features and by the wonderful keyboard. As a touch-typist I found it much more convenient than the chicklets or the membranes on those early computers (though it still took me an awfully long time to master the peculiarities of it).

The features! For one. it had great things built into it that I didn't recall or learn from the 4: NUM, RES, all those sub calls (SOUND, COLOR, etc.) that still make the 4/A one of the easiest programming computers ever to be made (though its unique BASIC caused many translation problems). It's biggest feature for me (as I still had a black and white TV and hadn't yet received my synthesizer free for buying six cartridges) was the ability to save the programs. A tape recorder. We lost everything on the 4 when we shut it off, but now everything could be saved. The manual even had programs we could type in free.

The manual, "Beginner's BASIC, was, to me, one of the most lucid, exciting tutorials I have ever seen. I can still recall the sense of accomplishment and wonder and awe I felt when I was able to create the stick figure and make it move. It was called "Mr. Bojangles," crude block graphics that alternated to create the illusion of movement. To me it was a crowning achievement of some kind.

I called my family in to see what I had done. The four kids looked and smiled and left. My wife appeared incredulous.

"Don't you like it?" I asked.

"You paid over $500 and have been up here every night for three months for THIS?"

She missed the point, I think. She was never one to understand compulsive/obsessive behavior. It doesn't run in her family.

Ah, well.

And I saved the program. I still have it. I just got up and pulled it out of the box of tapes in the corner of my computer room. It's called "Dancing Man," but I don't think I'll load it and run it. I'd rather remember things my own way.

I wonder if most of the young techie-whiz types who started off at the same time I did with the TI ever went through those infant and pre-school stages or if they just leaped into techiehood.

One of those types - a young man by the name of Bernie Miller - and I were in M.U.N.C.H. way back when. We both had our B&W TVs and tape recorders and we both had typed in the manual. He had been a charter subscriber to the old "99er" magazine, and I had bought an early book of programs by C.W.Engel, called "Stimulating Simulations for the TI-99/4A." Just seeing my computer's name on the cover of a book gave me a thrill the way we VW Beetle owners used to feel when a fellow Beetle driver would pass and toot in the early days of very few Beetles. A fellowship was being formed.

This was long before the big 1983/4 publishing boom for TI, when about 90% of all the 100-plus TI books were published. This is before Extended BASIC.

Bernie said he would type in some of the programs from "99er" and we could both try them out. I said I'd

do the same for the Engel book. It was a great learning experience for both of us, as the listings were not always very accurate. (Engel had done translations, so many BASIC terms were inaccurate.) Typing, trying to figure out what the weird stuff meant, looking up examples in the manual and reference book that came with the console, discussing the problems, and SOLVING the problems to create a finished, working program, was a fine thing to do. (Bernie did most of the solving, but I did a lot of the learning which he seemed to absorb from the air without effort.) I don't think this is a process most home-computer owners go through anymore. Too bad. It was a wonderful way to discover the depths of the computer and of oneself.

One day, almost a year, after Bernie and I started working as a team during our M.U.N.C.H. meetings and at each other's houses a couple times, Bernie announced that we had "over 100 programs!" Granted, a lot of them were simple screen graphics or variations of The Dancing Man, Guess The Computer's Number, and How To Amortize A Loan, but we did it! We had over 100 files and were thrilled.

And we had begun to put our own stamp on those programs. The flashes and whistles, as we learned how to use the techniques of animation and music and color (though I hadn't yet gotten a color TV).

I brought the computer back and forth to school and started to write flashcard programs for my class. With lots of glitter. My kids at home and at school began to take to it.

My two sons helped me debug programs. They began to see things I missed. I saw things as an English-major proofreader. They saw things as computer programmers would see them: symbols or patterns that didn't make sense; even electronic punctuation, which was so different from English.

Then I realized (this is in 1982/3 - and I had bought a second computer "for the kids" at home and a third for my classroom -) that I was of a different age, maybe an entirely different species. These youngsters had no awe of the computer. It did not fill them with wonder. And, though they would all do so much more with the computer than I could dream of, they wouldn't have so much fun doing it. To them, Neil Armstrong's stepping on the moon while I watched it live in my bedroom on another world in the wee hours, was no big deal. Neither is a computer.

To them.

It still fills me with awe and wonder.

(This is the first of three personal recollections about the 4/A's "Good Old Days" as seen through the eyes of a honest-to-goodness non-techie.)

Auto-Dialer

If you have a "smartmodem", one that will use the Hayes commands, you can instruct "FAST-TERM" to automatically dial your BBS, give your ID# and then respond with your password. You are then logged on to the BBS of your choosing and at the ease of keystroke or two. (3 or 4 actually)

First you must create a file with TI-Writer or one of the clones. Depending on the particular BBS and how many prompts they ask you, will affect the number of lines in the file. The following instructions will apply to our own BBS, but once you understand how this works it will be easy to create files for any BBS that you are using on a regular basis. The instructions here also apply to my Avatex 1200hc and may need a change or two for a different modem.

```
Enter the 1st line: AT
           2nd line:    ATDT6481247
           3rd line: (blank line)
           4th line: Your ID#
           5th line: Password
```

Save this file. (you can actually put it on the FAST-TERM disk) using this procedure. Do not use (S)ave (F)ile, rather use (P)rint (F)ile PF. Enter the device name as C DSKn.P where n = the drive number in which you have your FAST-TERM disk. The "C" prior to the DSKn.P will remove the carriage returns and TI-Writer data from your output file so that it will work as required. It will not work if you save your file with (S)ave (F)ile or SF. You can name your file anything you want. The "P" shown here is just an example. For instance you may have a number of different BBS's that you communicate with. You would need to have a different file for each of them.

Now let's put this procedure to work. Load up FAST-TERM and when loaded enter your defaults according to your modem. Next, enter FCTN N and respond with the Disk drive your file is on and the name of the file. Then Press FCTN , and answer (Y)es indicating that you wish to send a file line-by-line. Now hit the spacebar and the first line (AT) is sent to the modem. A second press of the spacebar dials the number and presto you are connected to the BBS. Our BBS now goes through preliminary informative messages pertaining to the working of the board and finally asks you to press any key to continue. That is the reason for the blank line in your file.

Now press the spacebar again and the BBS will ask for your ID#. Another press and a request for your PASSWORD. A final press and you are ready for anything you want to do on the board.

Charlotte TI 99/4a Users Group

FAST TERM OVERLAY

by Robert Simms

I have often thought I would like a larger overlay of various programs in which keys other than the top row have special functions. Fast Term is such a program, having numerous key combinations around the board which for some are difficult to remember. I had a 3X5 card near the computer for a while, until I mastered the codes. But it is easy to forget, especially if you don't run a program very often. Strips are fairly easy to come by. The diagram at the side can be cut right out of this page. I suggest you paste it on a piece of heavier paper--cover stock, etc.--then cut it out. Snip the dotted lines at the ends of the FCTN/CTRL strip, and when you put the overlay in place, you can slide the bottom edge of this strip down into the computer's slot for the regular overlay. The rest of the overlay should now lie in place. The "tails" on the sides are for whatever other information you might want to put there--you could even put phone numbers on it.

Bell				
Backspace	CTRL G	DUPLEX TOGGLE FCTN,SHFT	DILOG TOGGLE	FCTN B
Clear Log	CTRL H	FILE XFERS|	LOG START/STOP	FCTN.
Clear Screen	FCTN Y	XMODEM |NAME FILE		FCTN.
CR/LF Toggle	FCTN J	TE 2 |PRINT SCREEN		FCTN,SHFT P
	FCTN ,	ASCII |REVERSE ON CTRL O		

	BAUD	SPOOLER	PARITY	PTR.PORT	PTR.PAR.	PTR.PORT	PTR.BAUD	HOME CUR	....	40/80	QUIT
	DEL	BUFFER.	REV.OFF	BREAK	WINDOW-R	....	COLOR F	COLOR B	CAT.DSK.	WINDOW-B	

TIMER   FCTN K
WINDOW LEFT   FCTN L

FAST TERM overlay

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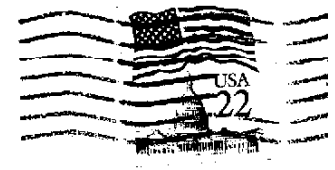
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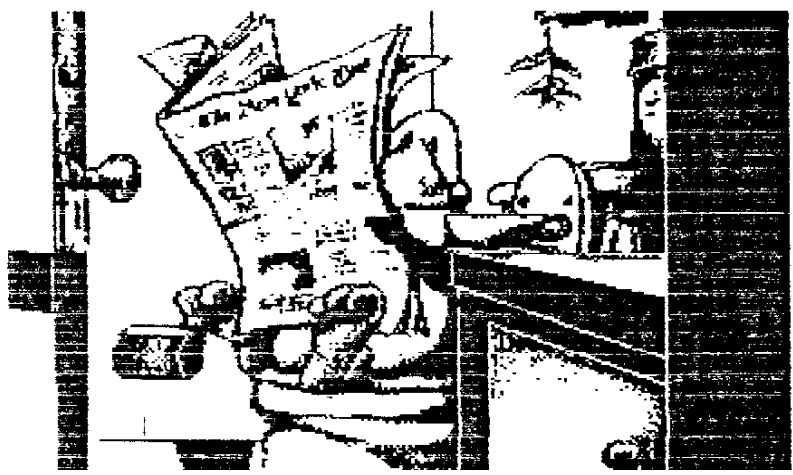
No job is finished
until the paperwork
is done!