Southwest Ninety-Niners Newsletter
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TI99ers On-Line User Group
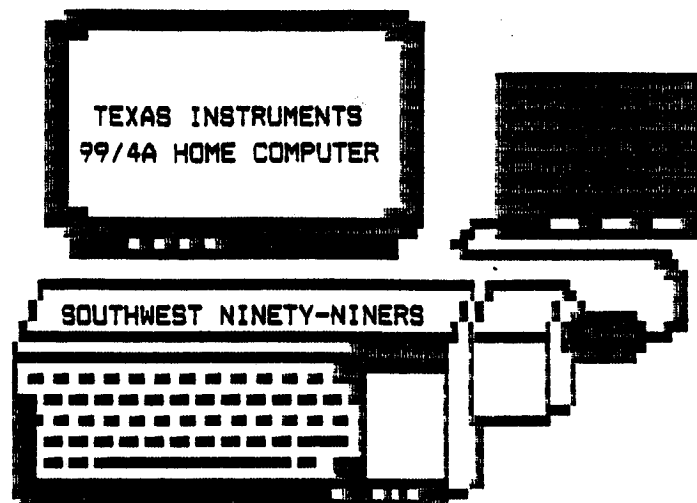
www.ti99ers.org

FEBRUARY 1986

P.O. Box 17831 Tucson, AZ 85730

<u>Officers</u>
John McCleary - President
Ed Hallett - Vice President
Wesley Eng - Secretary
BJ Mathis - Treasurer

<u>Newsletter</u>
John McCleary - Editor
BJ Mathis - Assoc. Editor

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS
99/4A HOME COMPUTER

SOUTHWEST NINETY-NINERS

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ATTENTION MEMBERS
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NEXT MEETING: February 4, 1986 at 7:30pm. Location-Tucson Fire Department Training Center on Ajo Way just west of Park.

DUES INCREASE: The officers have proposed an increase in the dues. It is proposed that new memberships be $20 and renewals $15. The constitution requires notification of the membership at least two weeks prior to a vote on this item. Therefore, a vote to approve the proposed increases will be held at the March fourth meeting.   The effective date of the increase will be March fifth if approved by the membership.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER
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Elections are over and your new slate of officers is listed at the top of this newsletter. I am pleased to serve as president for another year, especially when there are so many wonderful people in our club. Wesley Eng continues as secretary which is a real positive note for us all. New to the officers council are Ed Hallett as vice-president and B.J. Mathis as treasurer. We all look forward to a productive and growing year for the Southwest Ninety-Niners.   A special thanks to outgoing vice-president Tom Alquist and outgoing treasurer Jack Mathis. They represent the active member who makes a difference in our club.

You'll notice the dues increase proposal above. It seems we weren't playing by our own rules at the last meeting when we voted in the increase without two weeks notice to the membership. We had voted to institute the increase effective March 1st. That action is null and void and a new vote will be held as announced. For those of you who missed the annual meeting the rationale behind the increased dues is that at present we can barely meet newsletter expenses with the amount being collected. Additionaly, the club owns practically no equipment and should be acquiring some for meetings and demonstations.   We expect an increase in copy prices this year and equipment costs money. The only revenue we have is from memberships and renewals and some small amounts through group purchases. I hope all of you will consider the value of your membership and support this increase.

John McCleary
296-8198

On March 1st and 2nd Los Angeles Users Group is hosting a '99 FEST-WEST '86. There will be speakers from many of the companies now developing software and hardware that is TI-99/4A compatible. We have tried to call all of the Southwest Ninety-Niners to see if any are interested in going either individually or as a group, however, we have not been able to reach all of you. If you are interested please call me (747-5046) or Les (327-6437), we are hoping to have more details about hotels etc. soon.

Jack and I enjoyed the company of many of the members of Southwest Ninety Niners at our home the Saturday after the last group meeting. We all got together with the intention of sharing a potluck meal and watching the video from the Chicago TI Faire. The food was excellent and abundant. Watching the video together proved to be an impossible task. In order for everyone to attempt to hear what was being said we turned up the volume. This caused the sound to be distorted and very difficult to understand. Much of the information was technical and therefore could be very boring. However, I think most of us enjoyed one anothers company and cooking.

Jack and I watched the video of the Chicago TI Faire later. We found it to be so full of information that we could hardly keep up. In order to get the most out of the video I think it is something that should be watched several times in small doses. The small doses would allow you to understand each demonstration and absorb all they were trying to demonstrate. If you are interested in seeing this video it will be available soon for checkout from the group library. Wesley Eng is working on a transcript of the tape that should make it easier for all of us to understand.

As a group we receive newsletters from all over the USA and Canada. Wesley Eng and Les Neff have been going through the newsletters in an attempt to organize them and make them available for checkout from the group library. Wesley has informed me that at least part of them will be available at the next group meeting.

Although Ed Hallett has not received his Gramkracker, yet. There are some who have. The Gramkracker got its own place on Compuserve within 2 days of its emergence. MICROpendium is planning a regular column starting next month, and LA TopIcs already has a regular column appearing in their newsletter. It sounds like it is a wonderful addition to the TI-99/4A family. Now if only we can get some delivered to the Tucson area.

*BJ Mathis * 747-5046*

From Johnson Space Center - TI Users Group - By Edgar Dohmann

AT LAST!!! Thanks to Clint Pulley of Burlington, Ontario, Canada we now have a REAL high-level language compiler for the TI-99/4A at an affordable price.

Clint has developed a C compiler which he calls c99. This compiler is actually a subset of C and is based on the concepts and descriptions of Small-c. While it is a subset of C, it is a true compiler in that it generates TMS9900 machine code from source files written in C language.

I put C in the same category of languages as Fortran and Pascal. Basic was designed

to be an interpretive language and even compilers written for Basic suffer somewhat because the language was not originally designed to be compiled. FORTH and p-code languages approach machine code execution speed but because they generate code for a psuedo-machine, generally run a factor of 2 slower than assembly language programs.

Up until now, the only way to get machine code execution speed out of the /4A was to write your programs in assembly language (or buy an expensive Basic compiler and live with a unique version of Basic). Now, for the modest sum of $20 you can obtain a c99 compiler from:

Clint Pulley
38 Townsend Avenue
Burlington, Ontario
Canada L7T 1Y6

Clint has actually placed the c99 compiler into public domain for FREEWARE distribution. He encourages people to use and distribute the compiler, libraries, and associated software and documentation provided on the distribution disk. Other than the $20.00 contribution, he only asks for a complimentary copy of any useful applications programs developed with his compiler.

While $20.00 is more than most FREEWARE authors are asking, I think this one is well worth the price. From experience, I can tell you that developing a compiler is significantly more work than most other FREEWARE (and many commercial) authors have put into their programs. Furthermore, Clint's offering opens up a whole new realm of programming possibilities for us.

The distribution disk includes a 10-page manual which can be printed with TI-Writer or the Editor/Assembler. This manual explains how to use the compiler and libraries. If you need a C reference manual, there are a number available. Both SAMS and McGraw-Hill have published excellent C Primers, Prentice Hall has also published The Small-c Handbook by James Hendrix.

If you are already familiar with high level languages like Fortran or Pascal, I would recommend the book by Hendrix. If you are trying to step up from Basic to a more formal high-level language then I would recommend one of the primers on C.

Clint has released a second disk containing an optimizer for the c99 compiler an some sample application programs. One is a breakout type of arcade game which provides a quite impressive demonstration of the compiler's power.

Clint also promises to place everyone who sends him $20.00 on a mailing list to receive notices of new release. I strongly recommend supporting Clint in his eforts. His contribution is outstanding.

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MULTICOLOR MULTIPLAN
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This tip appeared in MICROpendium (March 1985), but the credit goes back to the Lehigh 99er Computer Group. Of course, all this information came from the manual that Microsoft wrote for Multiplan.

Choose the option to load Multiplan from the main menu. At the prompt to load the program disk files, don't press Enter. Press the Space Bar to see 12 choices for screen color. Each time you press the Space Bar, the colors change. When your color choice is on the screen, press Enter. At this point, the program disk files will be loaded from your Multiplan diskette. Your color choice will remain in effect only for the Multiplan session that follows.

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  TI-WRITER
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The Case of the Disappearing &

By BJ Mathis

When the & (ampersand) is put immediately next to a word in text the TI-Writer
formatter underlines everything up to the next space. If we want to have the
underline continue without using special commands we place carots (^) in the spaces.
The ^ and the & will not print, but the words will be underlined until the next
empty space. In order to print an & it must be entered twice.

On several occasions it has been necessary to use the & as part of a centered title
for a section of a report. The & (ampersand) has caused me many problems if I use
the .CE (centering) command. When I have tried to use & in italics in a centered
report title it has disappeared even though I have typed it in two or three times.
When I have used & in conjunction with a double strike command; the & and the rest of
the line have not printed at all. I have found that if I need to use the & as part
of a title that I want to be centered, I must place the entire line in the
appropriate position and not use the .CE command.

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  TECH NOTES
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*The following articles are available in the newsletters mentioned and may be seen at
any club meeting.*

Move the peripheral cable connector away from the side of your console
    (LA Topics - LA 99ers - Los Angeles CA)

Add a new keyboard that will allow you to put your computer in your lap
    (Lehigh 99'er Computer Group - Oct'85 - Allentown, PA)

Build a 16 cartridge capacity box ("Super Widget")
    (Lehigh 99er Computer Group Allentown, PA)

An update to the Super Cartridge (8K in the Editor Assembler)
    (LA Topics - Los Angeles, CA)

Technical explanation of the TI-99/4A I/O port
    (Wichita Area 99ers - Wichita, KS)

Build the Poor Man's DSDD Disk Controller
    (Wichita Area 99ers - Wichita, KS)

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MORE MULTIPLAN
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By BJ Mathis

Protecting programs against overwriting is very important. However, do not protect
the file called OVERLAY on your Multiplan disk. You will be able to load Multiplan
but you will not be able to do anything else if OVERLAY has been protected. The
other files for Multiplan can be write protected, but if you protect a worksheet file
you will not be able to load the file back into Multiplan for corrections, updating,
or printing.

There are many ways to build a formula to add a column or row of figures on a
Multiplan worksheet. Some are easier to understand than others but they are not
always the most efficient in speed and use of memory. Others are very difficult to
set up and can easily be messed up when inserting or deleting rows or columns.

One way to build a formula is to position you cursor on the desired position press
"=", move the cursor to the desired beginning point, press "+", move the cursor to
the next desired position, press "+", etc. until the entire area to be covered is
included cell by cell. Your formula would look something like R[-1]C+R[-2]C+...
This is long and tedious to set up and will often cause a REF! to show up if lines
are deleted or inserted. The recalculation time is slow and the memory is used up
quickly.

One function of Multiplan allows an area to be SUMmed, in other words all the numbers
in a specified area are added together. This function can be used in within
formulas.

A column or row with the desired information can be NAMEd. (See page 60 of Multiplan
Reference Guide.) In order to use the NAMEd column or row, position the cursor at
the point where you want the total to appear. Press "=", then type SUM(NAME), the
total according to the parameters you set up will appear. In this case I have found
the recalculation time to be very slow, the memory is used up very quickly, and the
formula can be affected by inserting or deleting lines within the defined NAME
parameters.

When I build a formula, I find the beginning position of the row or column I want to
total. Let's say I want to add column four and have the total appear at the bottom
of the column. The first of the number is in row six of column four. Now I position
my cursor at the point where I want the total to appear. press "=", type
"SUM(R6C4:". Then I move the cursor up one row. Now press ")". This causes the
cursor to return to the position where the formula is being entered. My formula now
looks like SUM(R6C4:R[-1]C) press Enter. The total now appears in the desired
position. This formula can be copied across the page to add several different
columns. However after copying I would have to Edit each of the formulas to reflect
the correct column number. You can add or delete lines as long as you are not doing
so in the row minus one ([R-1]) position. The speed of the recalculation seems to be
much faster than in any of the above formulas and memory usage is kept at a minumum.

If you get an error message or after building your formula recheck the areas you are
trying to add together. Make sure you are not trying to add in any text and that you
are not trying to add the total to the total to the total.... (The latter will give
you a circular reference error.) If the display shows ##### instead of a number then
your column is too narrow to display the total.

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   BUYER'S GUIDE
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*The following information is provided as a service to our members. The items
listed are for sale by the individuals indicated and are subject to prior sale. The
group assumes no responsibility for items listed and makes no claims as to their
condition or interface capability with the TI-994A computer. Only computer related
items will be accepted for publication in this newsletter.*

Internal Disk Drive & External Disk Drive w/own power supply, Disk Manager II with
documentation. All for $225 Call John Karsh 883-1613

3 TI-99/4A Consoles (Missing 1 RF Modulator), 3 Cassette Cables, 1 Speech
Synthesizer, pair of TI Joysticks, Video Chess, Munchman, Teach Yourself Basic,
manuals and late edition catalogs. All for $175. Call Ike Eigenbrod 294-1993.

15" Sharp Color TV (2yrs. old, like new) $125, 2 TI-99/4A Consoles one $40 the other
$35, Epson MX70 printer $100, Paraprint 18A (plugs into side of console to
communicate with parallel printers) $50, Widget (Navarone Cartridge Expander) $15,
Super Sketch (6 months old) $25. Call Tim Walrath 623-0100(W) or 622-3347(H).

Extended Basic $35, TI-Writer (never opened) $25, Peripheral Expansion Box (empty)
$100. Best offers considered. Call Peter 628-1796 evenings.

Mini-Memory & Line by Line Assembler Cassette $30. Hunt the Wumpus command module
$3. TI Program Cassette Recorder w/cable $25. Call Mike 722-8620 evenings and
weekends.

Volksmodem 300 Baud with 9 volt power supply $50, Flip 'N' File 50 with lock $15.
Parallel RS232 printer cable $15. Call George 742-3091.

Panasonic KXP 1090 Parallel Printer ($269 new) will sell for $120. Comrex CR2 Daisy
Wheel Printer ($500 new) will sell for $220. Call Dick Pascal 790-4779.