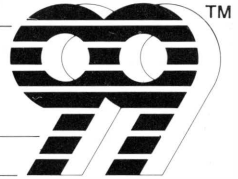


Volume 1, No. 1

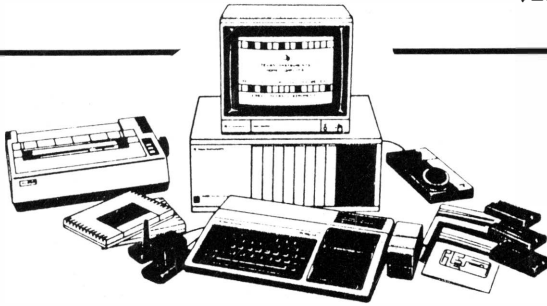
March, 1985

Mini-Mag



THE EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE FOR TI-99/4A USERS

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Monthly
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for
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Dear Readers:

Welcome to the first issue of MINI-MAG 99!

MINI-MAG 99 is a major national publication exclusively written for TI-99/4A users. We will cover all levels of information, including application, education, how-tos, product news, practical hints, etc.

We have received support from key dealers and users groups, as well as third party manufacturers, who have assured us of continued product and software availability for the 99/4A.

Since the so-called “death of the 99,” there has been more activity than ever before. More companies have provided product support, since they are not up against Texas Instruments.

At the recent CES, new products were announced that will bring the capability level of the 99/4A to that of the IBM PC—products like MAC Paint and module screen dumps.

MINI-MAG 99 is dedicated to the TI user—YOU! We look forward to providing you with information and news that will help you to use your TI-99/4A to its fullest!

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Leslyn Pepper
Editor
MINI-MAG 99

LETTERS OF WELCOME

We have received an incredible response to our announcement of MINI-MAG 99's birth.

We don't have room to put all of the terrific letters that we've received from everyone, but the following are a few to share with you the great support and well wishes we've had.

Thanks to all of you 99 loyalists!



Please send me information regarding your soon to be released magazine. I understand that the first issue is FREE. If this is so, please send me a copy. I now subscribe to "Compute," "Home Computer Magazine" and "MICROpendium." I find that I need all sources to get a well rounded view of all 99/4A computer related information. I hope it is of a high quality and shows originality. I have a deep interest in Assembly Language and Extended Basic.

Respectfully,
R.W., Arcadia, CA

I am pleased that someone new is starting up another new TI-99/4A computer magazine. We need it!! I hope it goes over good. Thanks very much for your support to TI!! Hope this magazine is a success!

Sincerely yours,
L.W.K., Bensenville, IL

I read about your "Mini-Mag 99" on the Source. Please send me a free copy of your first issue.

Good luck on your new venture. It's efforts like yours that will keep the 99/4A alive and well.

Thank you,
J.S., Port Allegany, PA

Please send me the free issue of your TI Magazine. I am always looking for new publications on the TI-99 computer. I will be looking forward to receiving it.

Thank you,
I.G., Vancouver, WA

I would be grateful for a free sample copy of your upcoming Mini-Mag 99. Hope the project turns out successfully for you and all us orphaned 99'ers.

Thanks.
R.S., Scranton, PA

I would like to take you up on your offer for a free copy of Mini-Mag 99. We TI'ers need all the support we can get! Good luck and thanks.

A.S., Waterbury, CT

We (TI Users) need a new and fresh approach to what is new and product reviews. I have subscribed to another magazine for quite some time now and have recently become very dissatisfied with the new format (published whenever they want to). Thanking you in advance, I am looking forward to receiving your first issue.

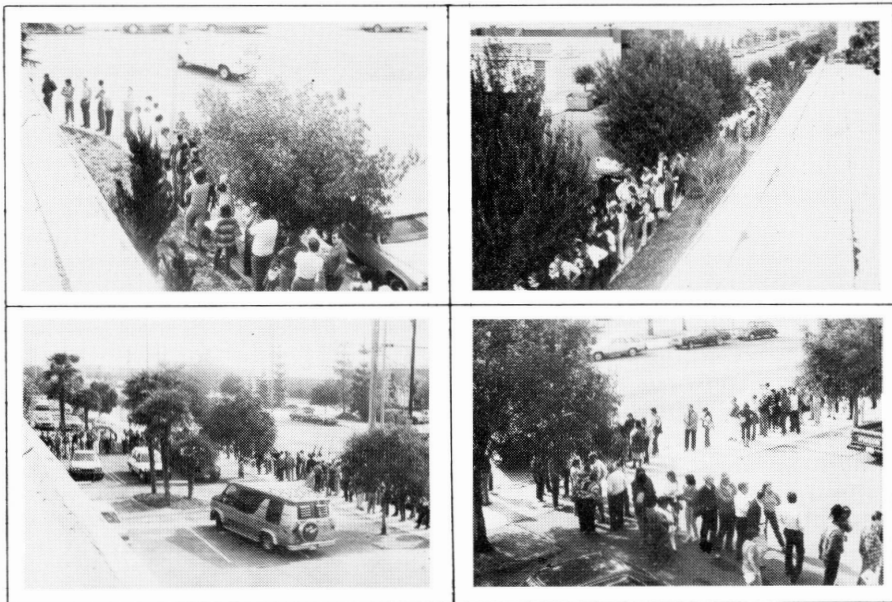
Sincerely,
D.P., Vallejo, Ca

We are pleased to learn of your new publication serving the continuing needs of the TI-99/4A owner.

Best of luck with this venture.

Keith Lewis
Texas Instruments
Consumer Products Division
Irvine, California





The line forms to the rear—ALL DAY LONG

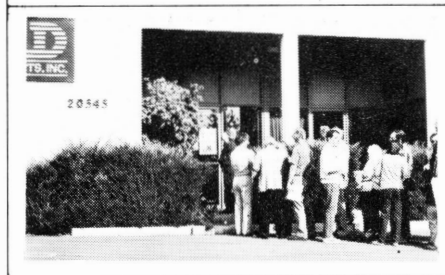
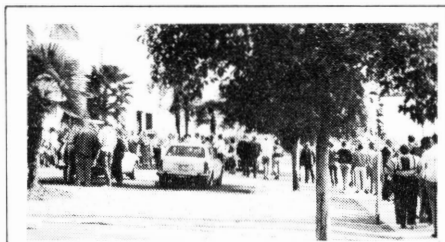
The Great ONE-DAY SALE

By Leslyn Tepper

Hundreds of people stood in a line that wrapped around an industrial park building waiting for a chance to take advantage of a one-day sale of the TI-99/4A computer at only \$99.95.

Included in the package was the console, 4 books, a cassette of 32 games, the Oscar w/programs, and the opportunity to buy the "Home Financial Decisions" command module for an additional \$1.99.

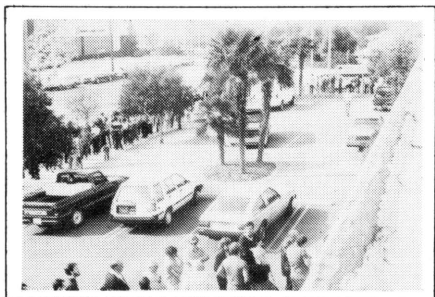
Tex-Comp, the company that held the sale, had to limit the purchase of the TI-99/4A to two per person, since there was such a phenomenal response to the full-page Los Angeles Times ad.



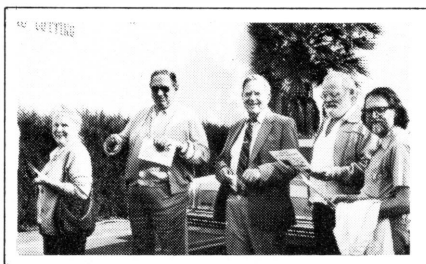
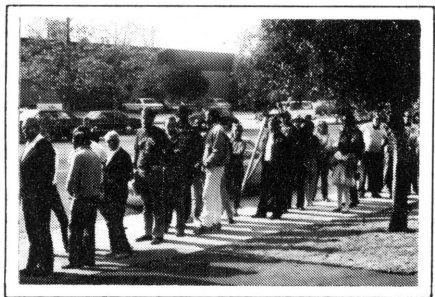
I arrived on the scene at 10 a.m. to find that the line already stretched from the front door of HEAD Computer Products, Inc. (where the sale took place), down the front walk, a block to the corner, around the corner, and a block past the rear of the building.

It took four (4) hours for that portion of the line to get in and buy their equipment; all the while, the line kept getting longer.

Only five people were allowed to enter the facility at any one time. They were then given their invoice and sent to the pickup window to receive their new computer.

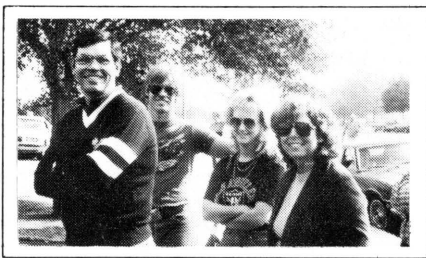


The delay began when the credit card authorization system broke down (maybe they should have used a TI-99/4A!). After several hours, the "cash only" people were allowed to go ahead of the rest of the line. Even with this quicker method, the line remained until well after dark.



TI-99er's make new friends and get a great buy

I spoke with several people who waited patiently (some sent friends and relatives to the nearest fast food restaurant for provisions). Why were they waiting so long? "Where else would I be able to get a computer so inexpensively?" most answered.



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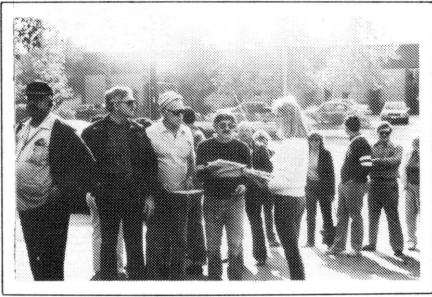
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As for Tex-Comp, they sold over 1,000 units, creating for themselves a tremendous January for their local warehouse store. "We had a run on cassette recorders," said Jerry Price. "Fortunately, we were able to provide a GE recorder that had the same settings as the original TI recorder, and for only \$39.95."

Although there were people there who already owned a TI-99/4A and were getting a second or third console, the majority of the crowd, I found, were getting their first computer.



Jerry Price, Tex-Comp

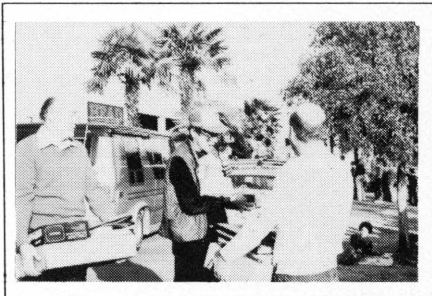


"Since the sale, business has continued at a consistent pace." Price said. "With so many new consoles in use, we're getting a lot of users in the store who are now beginning to expand their systems."

There were a few who had another kind of computer and wanted to buy this one for someone else (i.e., their children, etc.).



Happy faces say, "it was worth the wait!"



In addition to the business the sale brought Tex-Comp for software and peripherals, they have also had many of the people who were only allowed to buy two consoles, return to the warehouse store to buy one or two more "while they last."

How long would you wait to buy a computer? Well, I was there all day, and believe me, I got my two!

CORCOMP CONTINUES



In an effort to make TI-99/4A users aware of what is really happening at CorComp, we are reprinting the following excerpts from CorComp's newsletter, "CorComp Cursor:"

"Our anniversary celebration was one of positive attitudes mixed with the challenge of reorganization. The decision to reorganize was based upon faith in the products, persistent demands by the 99/4A user worldwide and the incredible support of the distribution network.

"CorComp's second lease on life was made possible through the support of the distributor network. Requests for 99/4A peripherals were

constant and determined. The spirit of the user groups may have been daunted, but it was definitely not broken!

"The acceptance of the Disk Controller gave CorComp its third lease on life.

"Few companies earn even a second chance, much less a third, but CorComp's driving force has been the spirit of the users who are convinced that the 99/4A is a phenomenal computer!

"The rumors of reorganization are true. It is a positive action. We have the support of our component vendors. The employees have an optimistic and dedicated attitude

Continued on Page 24

MINI-MAG 99 NOW ACCEPTING ARTICLES AND PROGRAMS

MINI-MAG 99 is looking for articles and/or programs that would be of interest to TI-99/4A Computer Owners and Users.

If you have any new ideas or fresh approaches to the use and/or programming of the TI-99/4A, we would be happy to consider publishing your information.

Suggested subjects are: Applications, hardware, software, education, and games, just to name a few.

Manuscripts must be typed double-spaced and, if your article includes a program, submitted with disks or cassettes (you may use both sides). Manuscripts will be returned **only** if accompanied by sufficient first class postage and a self-addressed envelope.

SEND TO:
S.O.S. PUBLISHERS
MINI-MAG 99
21777 Ventura Blvd., Suite 203
Woodland Hills, CA 91364



TI-WRITER

The Value File & Form Letter

By Leslyn Tepper

In this month's column on TI-Writer, we will discuss setting up a "value file" for use with a form letter which contains variables.

The use of form letters with variables will save a tremendous amount of time and effort and will "personalize" the letters you send out.

There are many instances that call for variables: account balances, names and addresses, part numbers, prices, etc. In order to change these variables with the least amount of effort, you simply set up a "value file" with the different information (data) that you need for each of the variables you need in your form letter.

The most common type of variables are the name and address. In order to set up your file properly, you must first determine exactly how you are going to use the information contained in it.

For instance, if you are going to place the name and address of each person only at the beginning of the letter, followed by, "Dear Sir:," you can set up the value file with the full name in one variable:

```
1 Mr. John Jones
```

If, however, you wish to follow the inside address with, "Dear Mr. Jones," you will have to approach the set up of the value file differently:

```
1 Mr.  
2 John  
3 Jones
```

In this way, you can call out specific variables within the letter. For example, the variable numbers 1 and 3 placed in consecutive order will produce "Mr. Jones," while the variable 2 will produce "John," or the first name of the person to whom you are writing.

When you are ready to print your form letter, and have given the proper information for the insertion of the value file, the Formatter will look at each variable number and replace it with the information that you entered after its corresponding number in the value file.

SETTING UP THE VALUE FILE

To start a new file, select the Text Editor option of the TI-Writer main menu. You will already be in the "command level." At this point, you can use Command 3 to change the screen color. Then type an "E" and enter to place the cursor on the first line.

This is the point at which you will begin your value file, entering each line of each set as follows:

Enter the variable number (the first one will be 1) and a space, then enter the information that will be represented by that variable (up to 78 columns). When you have typed your information for the variable, push enter(CR), and a carriage return symbol will appear on the screen. **NOTE:** This carriage return symbol is extremely important, and must follow each and every line you enter in your value file. In this article, I will use (CR) to represent the carriage return.

You will now see your cursor on the second line. Enter the variable number 2, a space, the information represented by this variable, and (CR).

Continue to enter each line until all of the information you need for the form letter is entered for this one person.

When you have completed the information for one person, you will have entered a "data set." On the very next line, following the last line of the data set, type an asterisk (*) and a (CR). This asterisk will tell the Formatter that this is the end of a data set.

Now, begin a new data set by entering the first variable number, a space, and the new information for that variable.

Continue this process (separating each data set by an asterisk and (CR)) until all of your data sets are entered.

Now, save the file by entering command level (Function 9), typing SF (enter), and naming the file (i.e., DSK2.LIST), then press enter.

VARIATIONS IN VALUE FILES

We have discussed the simplest of value files here; however, since you can use up to 99 separate variables within a form, you can see that a value file can become quite extensive. If you do have an extensive file like this, be sure to keep a list of what each variable represents (i.e., phone number, account number, part number, codes, names, balances, etc.).

In this way, whenever you wish to use the value file for any purpose, you will know which variable numbers to insert in any given form or letter.

SETTING UP YOUR FORM LETTER

When you have completed your value file (and saved it), the cursor will flash, and your file will still be on the screen. To begin your form letter, enter command level, again (Function 9), "Q" for Quit, then "P" for Purge, and "Y" for Yes. This process will clear the screen and place the cursor on Line 1, ready for new entry.

IMPORTANT: Be sure that you have saved your value file before you Purge, or you will lose all of the data you have entered.

You are now ready to begin the entry of your form letter. The first thing you need to do is format the letter. By this, I mean place certain "format" commands within the text of the letter to tell the Formatter how you want the letter to appear after it is printed.

All of your format commands must be 1) preceded by a period (.), 2) typed in capital letters, and 3) followed by a carriage return symbol (CR). The line that the commands are written on do not take up actual space in the printed text; however, they will appear on the screen to take up space.

THE "FILL" COMMAND

The first format command should be .FI(CR). This command tells the Formatter to "fill" the lines. Since your variables are just that, each one will vary in line length and will need to change spacing. If you don't use this command, only the actual amount of space in each line on the screen will be allotted, and, therefore, the variables will not necessarily fit.

SETTING THE MARGINS

The format command for setting the left and right margins can be put on the same line, separated by a semicolon. Type .LM followed by a space and the number of the left margin column, a semicolon, .RM followed by a space and the number of the right margin column, and a (CR).

Example:

.LM 8;RM 72(CR)

The above setting, by the way, is a real nice one for most letters and forms.

SPACING

Depending on the type of paper you are using for your letters, you may or may not wish to enter some space as your next command.

The Formatter is preset to start printing on Line 6 of any page. If you have letterhead stationery, printing on Line 6 may interfere with the letterhead. To alleviate that problem, add some space by using the .SP command. Type .SP followed by a space, the number of lines you wish to skip before your first printed line and (CR).

For example, if you wish to print on Line 10 instead of Line 6, enter .SP 4(CR).

THE LETTER

It is at this point that you enter the date of the letter and return to the next line. On the next line you use the space command to leave space between the date and the inside address. The best (and accepted) amount of space is 5 lines. Since the return after the date causes one line already, simply enter

.SP 4(CR)

On the next line, we will begin to enter the variables for the inside address. Again, this procedure will vary depending on what kind of value file you set up. We will assume that you have chosen to use the first name somewhere in the letter and have already set up your value file with 5 variables like this:

```
1 Mr.  
2 John  
3 Jones  
4 555 Main Street  
5 Anywhere, CA 90069  
*  
1 Mrs.  
2 Mary  
3 Smith  
4 222 Central  
5 Someplace, MI 48135  
*  
etc.
```

Since you will want the first three variables to appear on the same line, you type in the following:

1 *2* *3*

The second line of your inside address is the street address (variable 4), so enter *4* and (CR) on that line. The third and last line of the inside address will then be *5* and (CR).

When the Formatter picks up each variable number, it will print out the name and address of each person you have entered in your value file.

Example:

Mr. John Jones
555 Main Street
Anywhere, CA 90069

The next command is the space command, again:

.SP 2(CR).

Then, on the next line:

Dear *2*(CR)

This will place the first name of each of your people after the "Dear."

Since you will only need one line of space following the "Dear" line, simply press the enter key once on this line. On the following line you begin your letter. Place a (CR) at the end of each paragraph, and one on the line between each paragraph.

At the point in the letter where you wish to insert each persons first name, just type *2* instead of a name—the Formatter will take care of the rest.

After your last paragraph, enter

.SP 2(CR)
Sincerely,(CR)
.SP 4(CR)
your name(CR)

This leaves the proper amount of space for signing your name.

As with any other file, you must save this one by entering command level (Function 9), SF(enter), the name of this file and enter.

Once the file is saved, you may exit to the Formatter by entering

"Q" at command level (Function 9) and "E" for Exit.

You will then be ready to enter the Text Formatter (Number 2 on the TI-Writer main menu).

Follow the instructions for printing from the Formatter and when asked the question, "MAILIST?" say yes (Y). The Formatter will then ask you the name of your Mailist. This is where you type in the same filename you gave to the value file when you saved it. Include the location of the file (i.e., DSK1, DSK2, etc.).

SETTING UP AN ENVELOPE

It is possible for you to set up a text file with a format that will use the same value file to produce envelopes.

Take the Text Editor option on the menu and then enter an "E" to place the cursor on the first line of the text editor. Enter the following format commands:

.LM 8;RM 72(CR)
.IN +32(CR)

Then, depending on the type of value file you set up, enter the variable numbers where they are to appear on the envelope.

Example:

1 *2* *3*
4
5

OR

1
2
3

NOTE: Be sure to follow each line with a carriage return.

At this point, save your file as you would any other.

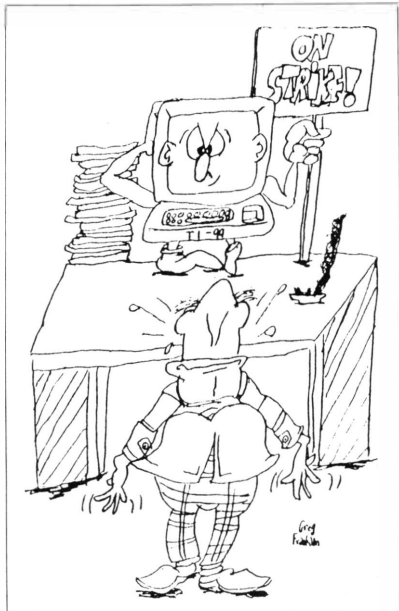
PRINTING THE ENVELOPE

If your printer only works on tractor feed, there are envelopes available at computer supply stores with the continuous forms.

If you are using individual envelopes, you will have to hand feed them, so be sure to answer "Y" to the "Pause at end of page?" question.

After entering the Text Formatter option of the TI-Writer menu, enter the name of the file, the print device, etc. When you are asked if you have a mailist, answer "Y." Use the filename of your value file when it asks for filename.

In next month's column I will show you how to make three kinds of value files from one for use with variables, mailists and labels. □



"What do you mean, 'NO SUCH FILE'?"

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THE CARE & FEEDING OF A DISKETTE

By Stuart O. Adler

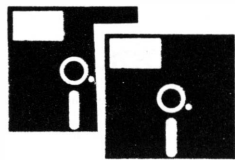
When you first receive any new software package, it is important that you **copy** the disk(s) and put the original(s) away in a safe place (if the software hasn't been protected against you making a copy). It is preferable that you keep your originals somewhere away from your other computer equipment. In case of fire or theft, you are then assured of keeping a copy of your software so that you can resume operations as soon as possible.

It is also advisable to make copies of your working disks once a week so that your data is protected.

This is called **backing up your disks**. The back-up copy is put into service and the original is put away with your master copy. Generally, three cycles of back-ups are kept and then the oldest disks are re-used for the next copy. If possible, **NEVER USE YOUR ORIGINAL DISK, EXCEPT IN MAKING A MASTER COPY.**

The following are guidelines of how to keep your disks in the best possible condition:

1. To load a disk, remove it from its protective jacket. Insert the disk with the side you are using facing the right. Slide gently into place until you hear a click. Gently close the door lever.
2. **ALWAYS** place the disk back into its protective envelope after use. **NEVER** place your fingers or thumb on the disk through the window slot exposing the magnetic surface.
3. **DO NOT** leave the disk lying around. Dirt, dust, or stains on the disk could cause the loss of data. Never leave the disk lying on the video unit or near an electronic motor, since the presence of a magnetic field may also cause loss or scrambling of data. If you have a magnetic paper clip dispenser, **KEEP IT AWAY** from the disks for the same reason.
4. **DO** use a **FELT-TIP** pen to make any notes on the label of the disk. Using a ballpoint pen or pencil could damage the diskette inside the envelope.
5. **NEVER** load the diskette with the disk drive power off.
6. **NEVER** remove the diskette from the disk drive compartment with the red "busy" light on.
7. **ALWAYS** remove the disk **before** turning off the power. Never leave the disk in the disk drive with the power off.
8. Preserve the disks by storing them at 10 to 52 degrees Centigrade or from 40 to 125 degrees Fahrenheit. □



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By special arrangement with Texas Instruments and Adventure International, TEX-COMP is now able to offer the entire 12 volume series of Scott Adams' Adventure for the TI-99/4A Home Computer. At a special package price of only **\$49.95**, you are saving hundreds of dollars off of the original suggested retail price for these adventures when purchased separately. The Scott Adams Adventure Series has been

produced for every major brand of home and personal computer and is recognized as the leading name in adventure gaming.

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- #2 PIRATE ADVENTURE** — Only by exploring this strange island will you be able to uncover the clues necessary to lead you to your elusive goal — recovering the lost treasures of Long John Silver. Difficulty Level: Beginner
- #3 ADVENTURE #3** — In this exciting Adventure, time is of the essence as you race the clock to complete your mission in time — or else the world's first automated nuclear reactor is doomed! If you survive this challenging mission, consider yourself a true Adventurer! Difficulty Level: Advanced
- #4 VOODOO CASTLE** — The Count has fallen victim to a fiendish curse placed on him by his enemies. There he lies, with you his only possible hope. Will you pull off a rescue, or is he really down for the Count? Difficulty Level: Moderate
- #5 THE COUNT** — It begins when you awake in a large brass bed in a castle somewhere in Transylvania. Who are you, what are you doing here and WHY did the postman deliver a bottle of blood? Difficulty Level: Moderate
- #6 STRANGE ODYSSEY** — At the galaxy's rim, there are rewards aplenty to be harvested from a long-dead alien civilization, including fabulous treasures and advanced technologies far beyond human ken! Prepare yourself for the incredible! Difficulty Level: Moderate
- #7 THE MYSTERY FUN HOUSE** — As Adventure #7 begins, you find

- yourself hopelessly lost in the middle of a carnival fun house. While escape may elude you, one thing is very clear — you're NOT here to have a good time! Difficulty Level: Moderate
- #8 PYRAMID OF DOOM** — This is an Adventure that will transport you to a dangerous land of crumbling ruins and trackless desert wastes into the PYRAMID OF DOOM! Jewels, gold — it's all here for the plundering — IF you can find the way. Difficulty Level: Advanced
- #9 GHOST TOWN** — You must explore a once-thriving mining town in search of the 13 hidden treasures. With everything from rattlesnakes to runaway horses, it sure ain't going to be easy! Includes a special bonus scoring system too! Difficulty Level: Advanced
- #10 SAVAGE ISLAND PART I** — A small island holds an awesome secret — will you be able to discover it? This is the beginning of a two-part Adventure. (The story continues in SAVAGE ISLAND PART 2, ADVENTURE #11.) NOTE: This one's a toughie — for experienced Adventurers only! Difficulty Level: Advanced
- #11 SAVAGE ISLAND PART II** — The suspense begun in Adventure #10 now comes to an incredible conclusion with SAVAGE ISLAND PART III! This Adventure requires you to have successfully finished #10, wherein you were given the secret password to begin this final half. NOTE: For experienced Adventurers only! Difficulty Level: Advanced
- #12 GOLDEN VOYAGE** — The king lies near death in the royal palace. You have only three days to bring back the elixir needed to rejuvenate him. Journey through the lands of magic fountains, sacred temples, stormy seas and gold, gold, GOLD! This one is for experienced Adventurers only! Difficulty Level: Advanced

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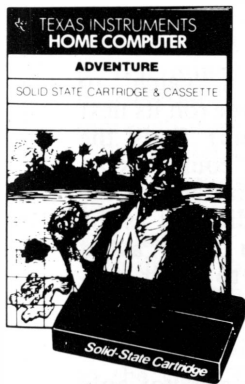
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console and load the particular game you want to play from cassette or disk. You will immediately be transported to another time and place where two word commands allow you to manipulate objects and perform acts just as if you were actually there. The object of each game is as varied as the games themselves and to win the game you must complete it. This may take hours, days or even months. Like a good novel you can lay it down and then continue where

you had left off. The program provides for saving the game on cassette or disk and then recalling it.

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TYPING TUTOR—A Review

By Kimberley Anne Guest

I know that there are a lot of you TI users out there who love your computers and love to work with them, but isn't it a little frustrating, not to mention embarrassing, to sit at your keyboard and punch everything in with your two index fingers?

It seems like there must be some way to improve your typing skills without going back to High School, right?

I have found that Touch Typing Tutor, a command module program by Texas Instruments is a terrific aid for both adults and children.

It is set up in three main sections: Lessons, Diagnostic, and Game.

LESSONS

You are given a choice of 8 different levels in this section, ranging from the learning of the basic keys to learning all the numbers and symbols on the TI-99/4A.

DIAGNOSTIC

The three subsections within this part of Typing Tutor are: WPM (word per minute) Timing, Analysis, and Practice.

WPM Timing

The screen displays a sentence or a combination of sentences for you to type in. When you have completed this section, you are given the number of errors that you made, as well as your wpm timing.

Analysis

After you are given a combination of letters, numbers, and/or symbols, you type them in. When

you are finished with this portion, Typing Tutor informs you as to which keys you will need to practice more.

Practice

For a practice session, several keys are displayed on the screen, one at a time. Your task is simple: type in the keys as they are shown.

GAME

This is my favorite part!

Again, you are given the choice as to which level you wish to try. Then, as an airplane (which is flying across the screen from left to right) passes over a little cloud, it leaves a word from the Lessons inside the cloud. As soon as you see a word, you must type it in correctly to make it disappear.

There is, however, a "catch" to this task: If the airplane (on its next flight over that cloud) finds the word is still there, it counts as an error. The plane flies faster, and the words become more difficult as the play continues. You must avoid allowing three errors to occur consecutively, because, at that point, the game ends.

Typing Tutor's game is not only challenging (and nerve-racking, at times), but it will help you to build up your speed.

My overall view of Typing Tutor? It's an excellent tool for learning. And it may be just what you need to stop the two-fingered farse!

BITS & OTHER PIECES

By Jim Labriola

Over the past 30 years, computers have helped man to achieve goals in many aspects of life—from the home, to running businesses, to developing new devices and medicines.

Most often, the developments made in human achievements are done first on computers, whether preconceived and refined on the computer or developed from parameters given to the computer.

In this article, and articles to follow, we will try to build an understanding of computer logic and digital technology.

From the beginning, a method of turning pertinent information into electronic information was needed.

With the inception of Univac, a gigantic vacuum tube computer, it was conceived that either a signal of predetermined voltage, or no signal, in a certain amount of time would represent information.

These signals were called “bits” of information, and all information was to be broken down and used in this manner.

In digital logic, a “one” (1) or a “zero” (0) is used to represent an on or off signal in the bit’s format. This numerical format is referred to as the **Base Two Number System**. There are no two’s (2’s) in Base Two, because in our everyday system, **Base Ten**, a two is equal to “ten” (10).

Strings of ones and zeros are read by computers as numerical words. Different types of computers may

use different numerical word lengths—from four-bit words to 32-bit words. The TI-99/4A uses 16-bit words.

Eight (8) bits is equal to a **byte**. A 32-bit computer uses words that are 4 bytes wide. The TI-99/4A is a 16-bit computer and uses words that are 2 bytes wide. A four-bit word is called a **nibble**.

If a computer is said to have a capacity of 16K (as is the TI-99/4A), it means that there is a memory capacity of 16,000 bytes.

Small computers are called microprocessors and were designed to personalize the mainframes. The Microprocessors use basically the same logic process as the larger mainframes, except that they have limitations as to work and storage capacity.

For example, a microprocessor may range from 8K to 64K (with some going as high as 512K), and a mainframe may start its storage capacity at 512K and go up from there.

With recent developments, the once “not so capable” microprocessor is fast approaching the mainframe’s capabilities.

Next month, we will discuss the terminology used to refer to the different parts of the microprocessor.

You are given a choice of eight different levels in this section, ranging from the learning of the basic keys to learning all the numbers and symbols on the TI-99/4A. □



A LOOK AT MINI-WRITER

By Leslyn Tepper

Mini-Writer is a cassette-based, easy-to-use word processor that works with the Mini-Memory Module and an optional printer.

Mini-Writer was authored by W.R. Moseid, who says that 9500+ characters can be stored in the console.

Much like TI-Writer, Mini-Writer uses a "window" display of three (3) overlapping windows. Its files are compatible with those of TI-Writer and the Editor/Assembler (Dis/Var 80) and are, therefore, capable of being edited by either of them.

There are, however, several differences between Mini-Writer and TI-Writer. One is that the tabs are preset at 8-column intervals.

Another preset function is the bell which rings when you reach column 75 (of the 80-column line) to let you know that you are about to approach the end of the line. This function is set up to provide the user with a chance to hyphenate or change to the next line, since there is no "word-wrap" function in this program.

Both of these preset functions can be changed, and the publisher will give you the information as to how to change them if you get in touch with them.

There are up to 119 lines usable in Mini-Writer (that's about two pages long). The last line (120) must be left blank to allow for room for the "move" and "copy" functions.

The "move" function is really unique in Mini-Writer. It was made to be used with complete ease, while

the screen tells the user to move the cursor to the beginning of the copy that is to be moved, then to the end of the copy to be moved, then to the position at which the copy should be placed.

Instead of giving specific file commands as in TI-Writer, Mini-Writer uses Control keys for these commands (i.e., Control 1 for Save; Control 2 for Load, etc.).

The "search" command will search for up to an 80-character string, placing the cursor at the beginning of the string when it is found.

To print hard copy, the user simply uses the "save" command and indicates the device to which the copy should be saved. For instance, RS232, PIO, DSK, CS, etc.

Mini-Writer comes with full screen text editing.

You can take a blank overlay that you received when you got your TI-99/4A console, and mark the respective boxes with the commands that they perform with either the Control key (row with red dot to the right) or the Function key (row with the grey dot to the right). The author of Mini-Writer suggests that instead of writing on the blank overlay, you should use rub-on letters (available at most art stores or stationers), and then, cover the overlay with magic transparent tape. Finally, trim the excess tape with an X-Acto knife.

Moseid states, "Mini-Writer is like putting 10 pounds in a one-pound bag!" The retail price is \$19.95. □



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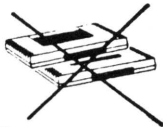
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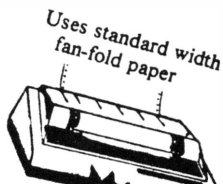
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Q J N Y R E T I R W I T Q D P K T K G F
P E R I P H E R A L S F V I Q H C M P Y
Y D D V V Y R Y P J K Q H G N I O Z P B
H M L T H H Q X L Z J K H D T D I L L J
V W O C R P K C C C L H X S E B A K Y N
U U G J T X A X F O T Y Y M D T J N A L
M N A L P I T L U M M O N D O I V P L P
C K W D O C N S X G J P W E L E S E I A
U O K R I U T D M D G I U O L Q R K Q A
J Q N S V G V D Y I I E O T I U L M K V
M L A S K G G E R F N U R Q E E D S E V
C B D S O A J S M J P I H A R R B O C C
M L T M M L Z F H E O B M A W U W Y M I
I U A I H F E F B V F H W E H D I O D S
K L N C O H P O I C T T X M M R R O J A
M I K T S T X F P R F V A Y T O O A A E
M L M K C A T H O O S C I S H G R T H W
V K U L K P P F S O D W N B M R C Y H A
T D K F M L C P R I N T E R M G M W W D

DIRECTIONS

There are 20 words hidden in the above puzzle. You may find them horizontally, vertically or diagonally, and they may be either frontward or backward.

The word list is at the right. Check each one off as you locate it in the puzzle. Good luck!

CASSETTE
BASIC
PASCAL
FORTH
PLATO
MULTIPLAN
TIWRITER
MODULE
PRINTER
CONSOLE
DISK
PEBOX
HARDWARE
SOFTWARE
PERIPHERALS
MINIMEMORY
MINIMAG
COMPUTER
MODEM
JOYSTICK

TID-BYTES TO WET YOUR APPETITE



DataBioTics Plans for '85

RENOIR

A company spokesman from DataBioTics, Inc., a Southern California based corporation, told us about the companies' plans to release several new products for the TI-99/4A sometime in the first quarter of 1985.

The first of these new products is a cartridge called, "Renoir," which includes a 64K memory and a menu-driven choice of either FORTH or RENOIR. This version of FORTH is supposed to work with "blinding speed," according to the spokesman. The RENOIR portion of the cartridge will work with Mouse and Joystick to create graphics.

RENOIR will have the ability to save graphics to any desired device (RS232, PIO, DSK, TP, etc.). It is hoped that the unit, which plugs into the front of the computer like any other command module, will cost \$99.95

MINI-WRITER I

Mini-Writer I is a cassette-based word processor that is to be used with Mini-Memory. There will be no joyprint interface in this program; however, DataBioTics spokesman said, "Mini-Writer I will use the same formatting that TI-Writer does, with all codes on the screen."

"The added attraction to this word processor, though, is the use of the 32 ASCII codes to direct the printer to do whatever the user wants—underscore, bold print, compressed print, expanded, etc."

The planned price for this product is \$19.95.

MINI-WRITER II

Another planned module is Mini-Writer II, a combination of Mini-Memory and Mini-Writer. It is a word processor in a single cartridge. This will be closer to TI-Writer in performance and will sell for \$39.95

MINI-WRITER III

Mini-Writer III, like Mini-Writer II, will contain all of the same advantages, plus, on the front of the cartridge is a 16-pin connector for direct printer hook-up. The DataBioTics spokesman calls this module, "a word processor in a can." The planned price is \$99.95.

SUPER DISK

Now, let's move from the module portion of the TI-99/4A into the PEB (Peripheral Expansion Box). Here, DataBioTics is planning to release a new product called, "Super Disk." According to the

spokesman, Super Disk is a card to be inserted like any other card in the PEB. To the system, this card will appear to be a disk controller; however, in reality, the card will contain 64K of memory expansion, with the option of adding more memory to it in 64K increments, up to 512K total.

The "workshed" portion of Super Disk will include several functions—Catalog, BLoad, BSave, PEEK, POKE, etc. Within the utilities section, the user will have a Disk Manager, Sorter, Screen Dump, ability to move memory and write to VDP and more.

Super Disk uses advanced technology to afford the ability of obtaining 512K on a 5" x 7" card. The price? At the time of this writing, the price has not been set. However, the company hopes to offer Super Disk with 128K for under \$300.

4A/TALK

4A/Talk is a diskette-based terminal emulator that will use Baud rate 110/2400.

DataBioTics is planning to include three (3) separate and distinct protocols:

1. X-Modem
Allowing the user to up and down load from any CP/M data base.
2. TE II
Allowing the user to connect to DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation) Computer.
3. KERMIT
At no additional charge.

The cost of 4A/TALK will be under \$35.00.

4A/PAINT

According to DataBioTics spokesman, "Look out PC Jr. Paint!" This disk-based program will do everything PC Jr. Paint does & more, with less memory consumption (under 50K, currently).

"You can save your graphics to disk and call them back in from the keyboard anytime." 4A/Paint will interface with Mouse and track ball. The plan is to sell 4A/Paint for \$69.95.

PILOT

DataBioTics' educational release will be, "Pilot," a disk containing the high-level language referred to as PILOT. It is a language which enables teachers who are not really that familiar with computer programming to prepare computer-aided instruction by use of only 7 or 8 commands. Not only a language, this disk also works as a compiler, compiling the PILOT into machine language. The result: high-speed processing. Pilot will be priced reasonably at under \$50.



EDITOR'S NOTE

It is our hope that these products not only go through the planning stage, but come to fruition. The 99/4A could use a real boost like this!

If you know of any plans for new products, send details to:

S.O.S. Publishers
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CORCOMP

Continued from Page 7

toward their job and the future of CorComp. New engineer expertise is being brought on board. Revitalizing imagination and strategy are being introduced by new engineers and management. Our distributors are standing behind us and have continued to work with us and make sure the 99er's can fulfill their computing expectations.

"We at CorComp are grateful for our third chance and promise quality products, professional support services and innovative ideas for the

future of the 99/4A loyalist. We are looking optimistically towards our second year anniversary and wish to offer a premature Thank You to all 99er's."

According to Jackirae Sagouspe, president of CorComp, the 9900 Micro Expansion System is well into production, with many units already sent to distributors. Even though there have been delays from time to time in obtaining parts from their suppliers, CorComp is completing production. □



EDUCATION FROM NAVARONE

HOMEWORK HELPER, by Navarone Industries of Sunnyvale, California, was designed to make homework fun, while developing basic computer skills.

An educational program for children 8 years and older, Homework Helper features a built-in 20,500 word spelling checker dictionary to identify spelling errors.

According to Navarone, it is a simple-to-use tool for improving study habits, written work quality, and planning class assignments.

Homework Helper contains a word processor which includes standard format book reports and class projects. This software uses the Peripheral expansion features of the TI-99/4A.

Navarone's *SPEED READING* was designed to improve reading speed and comprehension. Versions are available for both children and adults.

This program comes complete in a cartridge, no additional peripherals or memory are required; however, special features can be used if a disk drive is available.

The program provides extensive practice in taking in more print, faster. Included with the cartridge is a complete workbook.

Both Homework Helper and Speed Reading sell for \$49.95 and can be found at most distributors.

NOTES

P-CODE PROBLEMS

We have heard that several users of the P-Code card have had problems with the card "burning out," and sometimes affecting other cards in the box. W.R. Moseid says, "The P-Code card does generate the most heat of any card."

There is, however, a solution to the problem. Moseid says, "To obtain the needed adequate ventilation, remove the fan from the expansion box and replace it with a fan from the TI Professional computer. This fan not only moves more air, but also runs much quieter."

Mr. Moseid also suggests another method of quieting the existing fan in the PEB. He says, "simply cut a circle out in the PEB and place a wire shield in the hole."

RUMORS ABOUND

Myarc, Inc., in Basking Ridge, New Jersey has a limited number of hard disks for the 99/4A. These disks contain 10 mega bytes and a clock option. They cable to a personality card which connects to the PEB. To take advantage of full capabilities, the user should have Extended Basic. Price is set at \$895.00/each.

It is also rumored that Myarc may be manufacturing a new cost-reduced hard disk. If anyone is interested, you should call or write to Myarc.

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FREE BBS

According to Terry Atkinson and Paul Degner of Canada, there is a database on a Canadian Network called **DATAPAC**. The database is called **UMBBS** and is maintained by Mark Evans of the University of Manitoba's Computer Science Department.

UMBBS is featured as a multiple board BBS which rivals the Source as being multi-user capable.

Currently, this is a free system, but due to the cost factor, there may eventually be a yearly membership charge and/or a fee charge per call. The charges, however, should be minimal compared to the Source or Compuserve.

You can access this database by either Telenet or Tymnet. I have received two separate access

Continued on Page 27


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NOTES

Continued from Page 25

numbers and, at the time of this writing, have still been unable to "hook-up."

Terry's instructions are as follows:

If you have access to TELENET, get into the service by normal means, when you get the "@" prompt, type in:

C 0302093200233(enter)

If you get connected, type in:

TLOGON UMBBS

and follow the prompts from there.

Paul Degner's instructions are as follows:

Once you have access to either TELENET or TYMNET, specify

3101

then

93200233

then, finally:

TLOGON UMBBS

I was unable to connect with the instructions given by Paul; however,

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I did connect with Terry's instructions. The furthest I got was connect, though, still being unable to actually log on to UMBBS.

Upon my last attempt, I got the following message:

UMBBS has been moved to 470 . . .
Use BLOGON UMBBS.

When I used these instructions, I got the message, "ID in use," and was automatically disconnected.

According to Terry, "This is a free service, and is very busy, with callers from all over Canada and the USA. If you get prompts such as 'insufficient units' or 'user ID not responding' and the like, this just means it is BUSY, so keep trying."

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