

**Southwest
Ninety-Niners
Newsletter**
contributed by
- Tom Wills -
compliments of



**TI99ers
On-Line
User Group**

www.ti99ers.org

MAY 1986

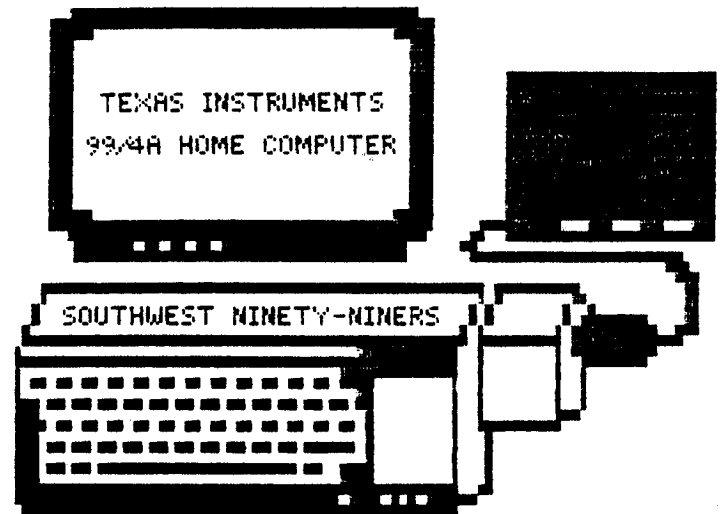
P.O. Box 17831 Tucson, AZ 85730

Officers

John McCleary - President
Ed Hallett - Vice President
Wesley Eng - Secretary
BJ Mathis - Treasurer

Newsletter

John McCleary - Editor
BJ Mathis - Assoc. Editor



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ATTENTION MEMBERS

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NEXT MEETING: May 6, 1986 at 7:30pm. Location-Tucson Fire Department Training Center on Ajo Way just west of Park. Ed Hallett will demonstrate his GRAMKRACKER provided the firemen can find the key this month.

WORKSHOPS

Basic - 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 pm. (May 8th)
Mathis Home - 5941 E. 26th - 747-5046

Extended Basic - 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. (May 19th)
Mathis Home - 5941 E. 26th - 747-5046

Other Workshops are scheduled by individuals within the group according to their proximity to each other in distance and knowledge.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Writer & Multiplan - 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 pm. (May 15th)
Mathis Home - 5941 E. 26th - 747-5046

Assembly Language & FORTH - 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm. (May 20th)
Joe Lenox Home - 8252 E. Zensky - 722-2464

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Bytes & Jots

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Our meeting last month lived up to the expectations of April Fool's Day. The poor firemen couldn't find the key to their Training Center, seems someone took it home by accident. Some group members followed Jack and I home and the group still brought enough to make a deposit this month.

John McCleary, ever a helpful neighbor, is recovering nicely from a Close Encounter of the Neighbor's Canine Kind. He hopes to be at the upcoming meeting. The canine encountered was bigger than John, but luckily it was not rabid.

Special interest groups are continuing to meet in members homes. We are very pleased with the results of these meetings. However, sometimes Jack and I are not sure we have provided the information a particular individual wants to learn. If you are

dissatisfied with a particular group please let us know. We are always delighted with positive comments from members. It is gratifying to know that we are able to provide something many of you have been waiting for, some members have been patient for as long as 3-4 years.

BJ Mathis * 747-5046

MORE FREEWARE IN OUR GROUP LIBRARY

1) 9900 BREAKTHRU by Clint Pulley is a BREAKOUT type video game. Written in Assembly Language, requires Joystick, Disk Drive, and either Mini-Memory or Editor/Assembler with 32K or Extended Basic with 32K. Included with SUPERCOPY on the same disk.

2) SUPERCOPY by Clint Pulley is a full disk copy program with error recovery and formatting. Included with 9900 BREAKTHRU on the same disk.

3) c99 by Clint Pulley another language for the TI 99/4A. Requires two disks.

4) FUNLWRITER by Tony and Will McGovern of Australia. For a comparison between this and BA-WRITER see related article in this newsletter. On one disk.

5) CHECKBOOK MANAGER, BUDGET V, MAILLIST, FINANCIAL DECISION ANALYSIS, and DISK CATALOG by Fred Guyton. These utilities require two SSSD disks.

BA-WRITER and FUNLWRITER, A COMPARISON

by Tom Freeman

From LA Topics, April 1986, Vol.5 No.3, Los Angeles, CA

Those of you who do a lot of writing, either pure text, or assembly language, and therefore use either the EDITOR/ASSEMBLER or TI-WRITER modules a great deal, might be interested in one or both of these fine FAIRWARE programs.

The versions I used are FUNLWRITER Version 3.1 and BA-WRITER Version 1.1 (FX2B). Both were modified in February, 1986 and therefore represent the latest versions, but as is usual with fairware, more modifications will probably come in the future. For notes on RAM disk use, see end of article.

FUNLWRITER

FUNLWRITER, written by Tony and Will McGovern of Australia, requires memory expansion and runs best with more than one disk drive. The program must be loaded from Drive #1 (also true of TI-WRITER and E/A). It runs ONLY OUT OF EXTENDED BASIC. A seven page file called FUNNELDOC provides documentation, and is meant to be printed by the Formatter.

The initial program runs automatically ("DSK1.LOAD") and contains a hidden assembly language program which does most of the work. The "list"able lines allow you to change the printer defaults for the Editor and the Formatter (separately), as well as adding up to five options that will be displayed on a menu screen for "LOAD AND RUN"

or "RUN PROGRAM FILE" (= UTILITY OPTION OF TI-WRITER). More about these below. Two of the options are predefined: FORTH and DPK (this is DISKO or DPATCH, a sector editor of limited usefulness considering what else is now available). They can however, be changed. There is a CALL COLOR statement which can be edited to change the colors achieved by CTRL 3 in the Editor. These five options plus another three which are fixed, are available at most menu screens by pressing one number higher than the last appearing on the screen. The altered program may be saved in place of the original (on a backup disk of course!).

When you run this program you will see a title screen followed at the press of a key by the first menu: EDITOR, FORMATTER, UTILITY. The editor, formatter, and assembler files were present on my disk, as well as DM1000 (MGR1), CHARA1, E/A utilities (EAU) and the aforementioned DPK. There is a disclaimer about the non-presence of copyrighted files on the disk, so I am not sure about the status of all these files. The formatter is the FIX 1 version that was given to the user groups, but it and the editor have been modified to run only with this disk, and have been renamed EDITA3 and FORMA3.

Picking the EDITOR or FORMATTER options accomplish just what you would expect. One difference in the formatter is that at the end of a document you are not automatically returned to the main menu screen, but can print another document without reloading the formatter. Another very nice feature in both of these files, is that the last filename used in either one will appear as a default to start the other, so you don't have to remember the name. If none was used, DSK2 appears as the default.

The EDITOR has an incredible disk cataloger that runs with the SD command, rather than TI's GPL version. This program is not only VERY (VERY) fast, it is PAGED! This means that with a single key press (CTRL or SHIFT) you can page backwards or forwards, in case you forgot what already flashed by. In addition, fractured files are marked, and by pressing "=" all program files that are meant to run in Basic or with Option #5 of the E/A (or #3 of TI-WRITER) are marked as such. At the end, you do go back to your text for editing and have to re-enter SD to get the catalog again, but this is a small matter, considering the paging feature. I cannot praise this part of the program enough!

Choosing option #3 (UTILITY) from the first menu screen will give you a new 9 item menu. 1 is the Editor (E/A version), 2 the Assembler, item #3 is DM1000 (if MGR1 is in drive 1) and 4-8 are the ones you set up in the LOAD program.

The Editor is actually the same as the TI-WRITER Editor, but the default edit mode has been set to FIXED instead of automatic WORD WRAP, the Tabs are set to those used by E/A, and SaveFile will not save the tabs in the last record. These are very nice features, as the rest of the features from TI-WRITER are retained. Mainly, you can't by mistake, reformat an entire file of source code to one grand paragraph!

Item #9 enables you to load almost any run program file, or load and run type programs as would be loaded by the E/A module. First you must choose the environment, however (i.e. TI-WRITER with text mode enabled, or GPL, or one similar to that used by #5 of E/A, or Load and Run). These are also not well documented. There is an additional problem in that non-autoload Load and Run type programs cannot overwrite the FUNLWRITER loader at the high end of high memory around >FF00, and a program file also can't overwrite this area unless it is the last of the series. In this case the program also can't return to FUNLWRITER. Sometimes the XB utilities (or some of them) are left in place or an attempt to load the E/A utilities may be made. I have not used these features. An additional problem with this part of the program is that there appears to be no way to get back to the main menu.

Finally, if and when you exit the editor (either one), formatter, or assembler, you will get a 6 item menu. Item #3 on this menu will give you DM1000, and Item #4 the same menu as #9 in the last paragraph. As far as I can tell there is no way to get back to the original utility menu that contained the 5 default programs you put in the LOAD program. Item #6 will allow you to "quit" the entire program back to TI's title screen. An interesting feature of this menu is #5 SWITCH. When you press 5, item #2 toggles back and forth between FORMATTER and ASSEMBLER and, although you don't see it, the editor (Item #1) also toggles between the TI-WRITER version, and the E/A version.

BA-WRITER =====

BA-WRITER was written by Paolo Bagnèresi of Milan, Italy, who was at 99'FEST-WEST'86 in March, and it was quite enjoyable to meet him. This program is an upgrade to TI-WRITER (henceforth called TIW).

It can be loaded from TIW, EXTENDED BASIC (XB), EDITOR/ASSEMBLER (E/A), or MINI-MEMORY (M/M). The editor and formatter files have been extensively modified, but are still named EDITA1 and FORMA1 etc, so they will still load from options 1 & 2 of TIW. Programs named LOAD, BA-WRITER, and MINI-BA-WR will load the set-up program from XB, E/A (#5) and M/M respectively. Load is mostly a hidden assembly language program. As MINI-BA-WR is normal display/fixed 80 object code, it will also load from basic with the CORCOMP or MYARC disk controllers. The editor and formatter files appear to be self contained as far as all of the utilities peculiar to this program are concerned, and as they are normal program files as well, will also load from TIW #3 or E/A #5. Therefore, if you are using one of these two modules, you don't need any of the loader programs.

A nice feature of BA-WRITER is the ability to RETAIN in memory the number of the disk drive that the first program was in. This will be used for all future loads. This information is read from VDP ram for the TI and CORCOMP disk controllers, and from the DSR ram in the disk controller itself on the case of the MYARC (that was the main addition in the Feb 1986 version). Note that since the information is read from the disk controller this will NOT work with a RAMdisk without modification (see end of article). There is however a fail-safe in the program. If the proper programs cannot be found in the drive number that has been inserted in the code, ALL drives will be searched until the program is found.

Additional files included on the disk are:

1) FORMATDOC, PRACTICE, PRACTICE1 from the original TIW disk. Basically useless, as mentioned by the author (Paolo)!

2) W-READMY-0 a file for the formatter that reads 4 additional files from DSK2 that provide simple but complete documentation.*

3) MY-INSTALL provides an additional menu choice, namely CONFIGURATION. This option allows you to change the default colors, the printer names for formatter and editor, and the utility filename for option #3. You can then use the program right away, or permanently modify the disk (backup of course!) to include the changes. A direct sector access is used so a true sector copy of the disk must be present. This is checked so that another disk will not be damaged. With the TI or CORCOMP disk controllers either a regular file by file backup can be made (only the files through MY-INSTALL need be copied) or a sector copy can be used. The MYARC controller is again non-standard here, it begins copying files in sector 32 instead of 34. Therefore, a sector copier MUST be used or else the original disk should have ANY 3 sector file added to it and the name changed to "A" or something that will precede

"BA-WRITER" in the alphabetical list.

4) W*DEUTSCH (ESPANOL, FRANCAIS, ITALIANO, SWEDISH) and CHARA2 - Any one of these six files, if renamed CHARA1 will load the appropriate international character set (or the usual CHARA1 with true descenders) into memory. Paolo will prepare additional character sets for you if you send him the character definitions in a format he specifies. The files could be modified with a sector editor if you are a "Do-It-Yourselfer". yourself with a sector editor.

5) W-FOUND-A, W-FOUND-B these were files meant to enable the use of a RAMdisk for the editor and formatter files. I was unable to get these to work however, and have not yet contacted Paolo to find out why.**

6) W:INITZ a disk initializing program to obviate the need for another disk manager. Note however that you will lose whatever you have in memory, and 18 tracks cannot be obtained with a MYARC controller.

The EDITOR functions similarly to TIW Editor, with the following enhancements: First, if you exit the editor to the main menu, you can go directly back to the editor with all of your text intact. Thus if you have forgotten to save your file, all will not be lost (RecoverEdit feature of TIW is not reliable). In addition, SD will give you a disk catalog that is much superior to that in the TIW module. It is FAR faster, and allows a "REDO" at the end instead of having to return to command mode and entering SD again. It does not scroll as such, but after the bottom of the screen is reached, the top is overwritten, so the effect is the same.

The FORMATTER also has enhancements: First, if you have previously saved a file in the editor, this appears as the default for loading with the formatter (the reverse is also true - the last file loaded in the formatter will appear as the default for LF in the editor). Second, the CATALOG function is also available from any input line in the formatter - great if you've forgotten a file name. And third, at the end of a printing job, you get the message "END OF JOB" and return to the top of the formatter without having to reload it.

COMPARISON

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The basic question is whether you use mainly or solely TIW, or whether you also do a lot of assembly language programming (or modifying) and assembling. For the latter there is no choice, as BA-WRITER does not support E/A functions. FUNLWRITER has the additional advantage of a superior catalog disk function (the paging has to be seen to be believed!) and the ability to load various types of display/fixed 80 or program files in TIW, E/A, or XB environments. However, FUNLWRITER runs only out of drive #1 and XB module, and if you exit the editor it must be reloaded and your text will be lost.

BA-WRITER on the other hand would be more useful for the text author. It can be loaded from practically any module and drive, and goes back and forth from editor to formatter more gracefully. The catalog feature from the formatter is very nice, as is the re-entry to the editor without loss of text. Its catalogger is midway in quality between TIW and FUNLWRITER.

Both of these programs are nicely, albeit briefly, documented, the exceptions I have detailed above notwithstanding. Neither of the programs appears to suffer much loss of buffer space for text. BA-WRITER claims to lose only 64 bytes (done by trading CPU ram for VDP ram when cataloging is done). FUNLWRITER claims no loss at all, although how, I cannot imagine as the EDITA programs take up 17 additional sectors! BA-WRITER has the additional advantage of pre-defined international

character sets; however these are not really useful unless your printer is also capable of printing them.

It is difficult to choose between these two fine programs. Unless you feel you have absolutely no use for one of them, why not get both!

NOTES ON RAMDISK USAGE

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As noted above FUNLWRITER only loads from drive 1, and BA-WRITER only from floppy disks. Some of you may wish for the increased speed of loading from a RAMdisk. My GRAMKRACKER had enabled me to do this, and I have gotten used to lightning! Using the DISKASSEMBLER (tm), I have determined the various routines in all the files of BA-WRITER that accomplish the assigning of a drive number, and have modified the code to load everything from drive #4 (my RAMdisk) only. The changes are made with a sector editor. They are easier with FUNLWRITER, as one need only search for occurrences of DSK1. If there is sufficient interest in this, I can send the instructions in an SASE, or perhaps publish them in a future issue of the newsletter.

A WISH

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Having seen the catalog feature of FUNLWRITER, I would like to see it in BA-WRITER as well. If you get DISKASSEMBLER perhaps you can find the complete routine, and if there is enough room, replace it! Now there's a project!

** We do not have this file nor the files from DSK2 in our group library. He didn't know of their existence until now, but we'll get right on it now! Right Wesley?!*

*** According to documentation our group received from Paolo these are experimental, he was also unable to get them to work. I think he included them in hopes that someone would help him figure out how to use a RAMdisk with this program.*

Both of BA-WRITER and FUNLWRITER are now available through our group library.

BJ

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NEWS BYTES

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From: South Bay TI Users Group, May 1986, San Jose, CA

In reference to Millers' Graphics' new card to allow the use of an IBM keyboard... Craig, also hinted that there would be something down the road which will allow you to get rid of the 4A console entirely. This sounds as though MG may be planning a way to take the main board (or its components) out of the 99/4A and put it on a card in the PE box. This sounds like both a great idea and a reminder that there are excellent system enhancements featuring a GramCracker, IBM-style keyboard, XB II, 512k RAM, quad density drives, and no console. Perhaps this IS the new computer!

Note: Craig also mentioned that many people are running out of room in their PE Box, and hinted that something may have to be done about that, too.

BJ

From: Northern Nevada Ninety-Niners, March 1986, Vol. 2 - No. 3

TI-WRITER TUTORIAL

The National Ninety-Niner has a Reference Guide and Tutorial for TI-Writer available on disk for TI-Writer. The new manual includes a step by step tutorial on using the Text Editor, Text Formatter and instructions for using Define Prompt and Mail Merge. The manual is written in easy to understand terms and is a reference for the beginner and experienced user. To order the new REFERENCE GUIDE AND TUTORIAL FOR TI-WRITER, send \$15 to Larry Robinson 503 Third Ave., Bonaire GA 31005.

From: SUPER 99 MONTHLY, Feb 1986 VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6

MERGER!

On March 19, 1986, Bytemaster Computer Services purchased all rights to THE SMART PROGRAMMER from Millers Graphics. Beginning in April, a new and timely quality publication under the name THE SMART PROGRAMMER will be released to subscribers of both SUPER 99 MONTHLY and THE SMART PROGRAMMER, as well as through magazine stands.

Staff writers from both publications will continue as contributors, with Richard Mitchell serving as Editor. THE SMART PROGRAMMER has been a prominent fixture in the 99/4A community under the competent pen of Craig Miller. Craig's role with THE SMART PROGRAMMER will be as a Corresponding Staff Writer. Many of the features of THE SMART PROGRAMMER initiated by Millers Graphics will continue, including more memory maps and a 16-page format. The only major departure from the format and plans of Millers Graphics is that four 16-page issues will replace the proposed "final" 64-page issue and THE SMART PROGRAMMER will be an on-going project. Improved, regular services will be featured in the new publication.

We are also pleased to announce that talented programmer D.C. Warren will be a Corresponding Staff Writer for THE SMART PROGRAMMER. D.C. wrote Millers Graphics' EXPLORER program and has played an important role in several MG hardware and software projects, including GRAMKRACKER.

The merger of SUPER 99 MONTHLY and THE SMART PROGRAMMER is an expanded version of the major announcement last month for 99' Fest West '86 (in Los Angeles), where we announced the affiliation of Craig Miller and D.C. Warren as Corresponding Staff Writers.

From MICROpendium April 1986, Volume 3 Number 3

Ryte Data, a Canadian based company, advertised a 128k RAM/GRAM card upgradable to 512k, a Mouse with software, Extended Basic II plus, and MAXIMEM. (Ed Hallett has gotten several of their newsletters and is very impressed.) They are working on an 80 column card, DOS 80 Disk Manager for 80 track drives, and a new expansion unit with built-in DSDD drives.

TexComp introduced a 256k and 512k Memory Plus Expansion Card either for your PE Box or as a Stand Alone Unit. If you've been waiting for a 512k that you can use with your CorComp Disk Controller it is here.

Unisource Electronics of Lubbock, TX, has announced plans to go "out of the TI merchandising business." The company will be pursuing other direct mail interests. "The TI market has been profitable and we want to thank our loyal customers. We have appreciated the loyalty of all our customers in the TI market and want to wish both them and our competitors the best of success in continuing to support the TI." The company is currently limiting its TI orders to in-stock merchandise, which Unisource is offering at "enormous savings" until it is gone.

Lou Phillips had his new computer "up and running" for a little while at the New England 99 Faire in Boston April 5, though it fizzled by afternoon. Lou Phillips of Myarc says that "one of those little wires must have shorted out." Printed circuit boards expected by the companies should prevent future occurrences. Lou also said they are still developing the new computer. Lou anticipates making the formal announcement including the name of the new computer, shipping date, and price around April 18.

Thomas P. Weithofer, author of the Pilot 99 programming language, died April 5 at Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was 22. Weithofer was a computer science student and a member of the Cin-Day Users Group. He suffered from cystic fibrosis. The program will continue to be available with the proceeds going to Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

BJ

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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.

TI 99/4A Console, PE Box, RS232, 32K, Disk Drive and Controller, Disk Manager 2, Extended Basic, TI-Writer, Multiplan, Personal Record Keeping, Data Base Manager Module, Personal Report Generator, Mini-Memory, Personal Real Estate, Securities Analysis Module, Beginning Grammar, Video Chess, Typing Tutor, Household Budget Management, Tax/Investment Record Keeping Module, TI Logo Users Manual, Name & Address program and several other programs on disk, many instructional manuals too numerous to mention. All for only \$450. Call Dave Blevins 747-8620 after 6:00 PM.

From the SOUTHWEST NINETY-NINERS - Household Budget Management \$2, Home Financial Decisions \$3, Personal Record Keeping \$3, Personal Real Estate \$3, Munchman \$2, TI-Writer \$15, Editor Assembler \$10, TI-99/4A Console \$40, Signalman Mark III Modem \$38, TEC Pro-Writer Printer \$125. Call BJ 747-5046.

TI Disk Controller, Internal Disk Drive & External Disk Drive w/own power supply, Disk Manager II with documentation. All for \$180 Call John Karsh 883-1613

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. Call George 742-3091.