

**Southwest
Ninety-Niners
Newsletter
contributed by
- Tom Wills -
SW99ers User Group President of Record
compliments of**



**TI99ers
On-Line
User Group**

www.ti99ers.org

JULY 1986

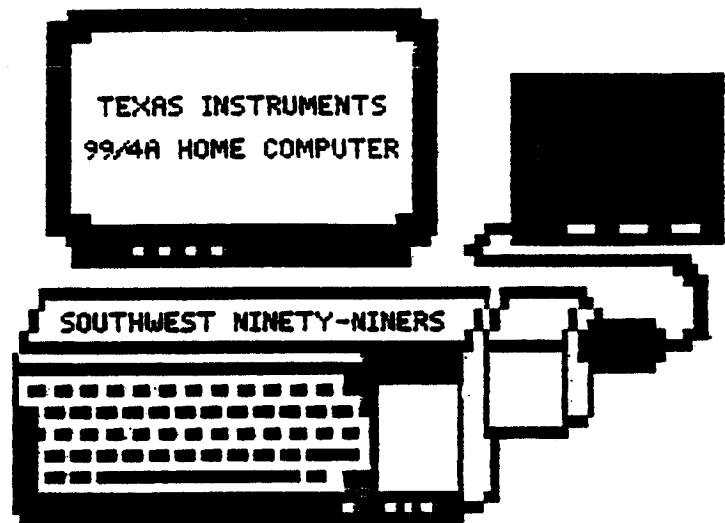
P.O. Box 17831 Tucson, AZ 85730

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: July 1, 1986 at 7:30pm. Location-Tucson Fire Department Training Center on Ajo Way just west of Park. The program will be geared to Kids and the TI-99/4A. We will have demonstrations of several different programs and modules that kids like to play and that teach. We are hoping to have an MBX Expansion unit to demonstrate also.

WORKSHOPS: Basic - 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 pm (July 10th). Ex-Basic - 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm (July 15th). Both at the Mathis Home - 5941 E. 26th - 747-5046

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS: Writer & Multiplan - 3rd Thursday of each month at 7 pm (July 17th). Mathis Home - 5941 E. 26th - 747-5046
Assembly Language & FORTH - 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm (July 22nd). Joe Lenox Home - 8252 E. Zensky - 722-2464

IMPORTANT VOTE: At the July 1st meeting the membership will be asked to vote on amendments to the constitution and bylaws to create group memberships.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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One of the items appearing in this month's newsletter is a listing of Freeware. But I'd like to remind you all that "Freeware" isn't free. The idea is to use it not abuse it. So if you've been using Freeware but haven't yet paid the piper now is the time to send your money to the author of that program you've come to depend on. Check Bytes & Jots if you'd prefer to pay through the club, BJ has a marvelous idea. I'd like to join LA 99ers president Teresa Masters in setting aside July 4th as Freeware Amnesty Day. Her idea is that if you've been procrastinating writing that check do it on the 4th and really help support free enterprise. After all if we fail to honor our commitment to the Freeware developers we will all be losers when there are no new programs for the TI.

John Hale, one of our most active members, has had a very rough month. John had a heart attack while installing some new DS/DD disk drives in his PE box. He spent some time in the CCU at El Dorado hospital and had heart by-pass surgery. John is home now and feeling better. We hope he'll be able to be back with us soon.

John McCleary * 296-8198

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Bytes & Jots

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The workshops and special interest groups that meet throughout the month are open to all members. So far the only one with a planned curriculum is the Assembly Language group, thank you very much David Ormand. The workshops and Writer & Multiplan groups have evolved into a time to work on specific problems encountered by anyone who shows up at the meetings. If no one is having any problems we try to introduce some new ideas to each person attending. Joe, Jack and I have really been enjoying the meetings at our homes. We will be taking the month of August off, however, and resume classes in September. Classes will be held in July.

John Karsh donated the TI Disk Controller w/internal disk drive and external stand alone disk drive, that he has been advertising for a long time, to the group. He gave us permission to sell or keep it according to the needs of the group. We have added the second disk drive to the groups' computer and will try to sell the TI Disk Controller w/internal drive. Thank you John Karsh!!

Jack and I received our copy of the "new Home Computer Journal". The cost of this new rag is \$25 for a single issue or \$75 for a year (one volume per quarter). This rag is a whole 32 pages long and contains programs for Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC & PCjr, and TI. Each volume includes a 5.25 disk of programs for your computer. There is no advertising which is just as well. They can barely cover anything about any computer in the space they allow. Gary Kaplan is now an Editorial Consultant, yes, that's the guy from Home Computer Magazine. Home Computer Journal won't be available at newstands, and if this 1st issue is their idea of the best, I don't imagine many people will pop for this very expensive magazine.

Control Data has contacted us and many other TI Users Groups about purchases of the PLATO line of educational software. Control Data will discount volume purchases on User Group purchase orders. If you are interested let me know.

It seems that many people still are not sending in contributions for Freeware. If you would rather have the group handle these contributions then let's start this month with BA-Writer users. The requested amount for BA-Writer is \$18 and has to be put into an International Money Order for Paolo. Contact me with your contribution, checks should be made out to the group.

Looking for Lithium Batteries for your mini-memory cartridge? We've found two sources. Microdevices, 1224 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose, CA 95128, (408) 995-5430. Batteries (\$3.95) and Battery Holders (\$1.49) [shipping is \$2.50 and the minimum order is \$10]. Windsor Distributors Co. (800) 645-9060. Batteries with connectors fifty cents each. No information on shipping costs of minimum order.

BJ * 747-5046

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EASY SPRITE REVIEW

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by Steve Weinkamer President of the Cleveland Area UG

EASY SPRITE is a really nifty little X BASIC utility, written by Tom Freeman, that lets you design and save sprite characters for use in your program. The program has easy to understand documentation files in D/V 80 format to help you get rolling. One drawback to a lot of sprite editing programs, is the long pauses due to calculations and manipulation of strings and other data. EASY SPRITE has overcome these hangups with assembly routines in just the right areas. EASY SPRITE lets you manipulate

sprite orientation, (i.e. flip, flop, rotate and reverse image) and print out an actual image of the sprite in graphics mode of an Epson/Gemini printer. With EASY SPRITE, you have the full ability to create, save, edit, and print sprite graphics without having to tediously copy lots of hex code by hand. Well worth the Fairware cost. I rate it a 9. EASY SPRITE is Freeware available from SW-99ers library, EdJ

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DIAGRAMS

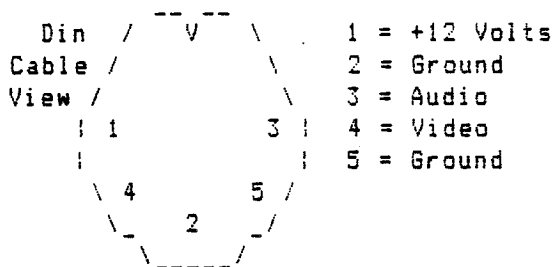
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by Jack Mathis

Parallel Printer Cable Pin-out

Monitor Cable

RS232		Printer
1	Handshake out.....	Strobe 1
2	Data (Least Significant Bit)	2
3	Data.....	Data 3
4	Data.....	Data 4
5	Data.....	Data 5
6	Data.....	Data 6
7	Data.....	Data 7
8	Data.....	Data 8
9	Data (Most Significant Bit)	9
10	Handshake in.....	Busy 11
11	Logic Ground....	Logic Ground 16
12-16	Not Used	



These configurations are built into standard Din cable to RCA jacks for stereos. Wrap RCA jack that connects to pin 1 with tape. The outside of all four RCA jacks are ground.

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GRAMKRACKER, A REVIEW FOR THE USERS/NON-PROGRAMMERS

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by Teresa Masters President of LA 99ers Computer Group

Over the last few years I have enhanced my system piece by piece, savoring each new addition and marveling at the differences. I was not disappointed by any of them, I appreciate each and every one. Now along comes GramKracker, well, it is a Revolution. I am so enamored by it, I feel I have emerged from the Dark Ages. I have seen so many demonstrations, and listened to many praises sung, all technical. I have asked several persons to review this marvel for the unsophisticated, non-programmer user. Let them know how basically utilitarian it is. My most recent plea for a review of this type was answered with "why don't you do it yourself?" So here goes.

I am Not using GramKracker to dump Modules, never thought that was its prime value. I don't use most of them anyway, so what does it matter diskette or module.

My GramKracker contains EA, TI-Writer, and Ex-Basic plus a few small programs for convenience such as skip over perforations and print tiny catalog. I do not use my Widget, switch modules, change operating diskettes, I easily switch from one to the other with the greatest of ease. I do not tie up a disk drive with an operating diskette, I do not subject my disk drives to many seek functions, my console is not subjected to extra wear by swapping modules, and the time saving feature is great. I

have not had the GramKracker out of my module space since the day I got it.

If by chance I want to utilize the function of another module, I simply plug it into the GramKracker and go ahead, simple and oh so easy. All this can be done with GramKracker, its accompanying diskette and manual. To quote John Koloen's excellent GramKracker review in MICROpendium "the more I reread the manual, the more I am able to do".

Yes, there has been "expert" assistance for technical changes, some of them I would not have been able to do, and others, yes, I could do. For my particular system set-up, Tom Freeman modified modules that formerly ran only out of disk drive 1 to now run from Ram disk. The ability for others to make the same changes has been widely distributed via various media, this newsletter, Compuserve Forum, and direct communication with Tom. There have been several GramKracker utilities written for GramKracker owners for the use of other GramKracker users. George Steffen of our club and Danny Michael are two of the more prolific.

Do not be mystified by this great hardware peripheral, it is not for specialized use. Doug Warren and Craig Miller have given us a Diamond, fine quality, fine durability and a joy to own.

Several of our club members have asked me "what do you use it for?" It is not a secret, I use my computer thanks to software written by others, I don't write software. I don't feel left out, I get great use of our GEM, I don't let myself be overwhelmed by any phase of it. In other words, if I can use and enjoy GramKracker, so can you!

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NOTES ON THE CorComp MEMORY CARD

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by Norm Hoffman of The Front Ranger, Colorado Springs, CO.

A few mentions on the new CorComp memory card available in the Tenex catalog. First off, it comes in four configurations: Stand-alone 256K and 512K or a P-box version of the same capacities, but with external power supply to save data of files when the P-box and console are turned off. [Neat!]

The stand alone versions are \$219 (256k) and \$279 (512k) and the P-box versions are \$189 (256k) and \$239 (512k).. The stand alone versions allow the use of the 32k card in the P-box (if you have that configuration) so you have a full 256k or 512k for storage. If you the P-box version, the card replaces the 32k card and the system uses 32k in the card BEFORE allocating space for your ramdisk, etc. A SS/SD drive is 180k of storage, so if you use the 256k version in the P-box you would have enough room to put, put, FunnelWriter with Fast-Term and have very little space for files left. The 512k version is a better bet (I was thinking of putting my FunnelWriter on it.) Lets see... at 718 sectors that's 360k + 32k after memory expansion-390k, leaving 122k for files; or about 2/3 of a SS/SD disk. It might be worth it to have instant TI-Writer or such. The power back-up is nice but it's not battery, so if you kick the plug, or have an outage, your files go to the big trash can in the sky.

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HACKERS

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a book review
by Steven Levy of INTERFACE, Western New York UG

The last time I sat down and read an extensive piece of literature was at least five years ago. Normally, it's all tech manuals and science magazines, but this book caught my eye in Waldens and I decided to "try" to read it. I never put it down until it was finished.

The book starts in the late fifties at MIT with a campus hobby group known as "The Tech Model Railroad Club". To hook up some wild wiring or machinery to accomplish something for the railroad layout was called a "hack", hence, the kids that took care of the layout wiring under the table were known as "hackers".

Some of these kids discovered the Electronic Accounting Machinery area, better known as the EAM room, the main artery to a giant IBM704. Those were the days when everything had to be punched into cards and fed from hoppers into the computer. The people that interpreted the programs and results were considered priests of a sort and there were no guarantees on anything.

Anyway, the kids discovered the computer, wormed their way into the good graces of the people in charge, and began playing with the programming. One kid would program something, throw it in a drawer, and someone else would come along and try to make the program more efficient by "bumming" out a line or two. Then someone else would do the same. There were no secrets, only a constant flow of input and output between people and machine to explore and understand. This was the "hacker ethic", to make it better, to explore the workings of the code and computer, to "hack away" but to never, ever harm or do damage.

At the same time, the west coast had Stanford University. Things were a little different there (aren't they always). The kids didn't take things quite as seriously. There were partys and the like well-mixed with the hacking, while the MIT kids were mostly misfits that didn't get involved in the "social order of things". The goings on that occurred in the computer room at Stanford would NEVER have happened at MIT. I took delight at the fact that a few diehards at Stanford LIVED between the ceiling and roof over the computer so that they could access the terminals anytime someone else couldn't make a time slot.

The book takes you from the first Altairs, (the first little bell and whistle computers sporting a mighty 256 bytes of memory) supported by The Homebrew Computer Club, to the present Seara Online software company. Along the way we meet Steve Jobs, "the Woz", Captain Crunch and all the rest of the folk-heros you've heard about. What made them tick and how they got started. Most of all, though, it's about me... and you, and the guy over there with the messy hair and his shirt hanging out. You know him, don't you? He's the one with all the answers and the pocket full of nuts, bolts and chips.

I think the book is fantastic as a series of stories about people, but if you're into computers, it'll tell you why, and what YOU are all about.

It gets a little dry here and there and I found myself skipping a page or two but if you stick to it, it will leave you thinking and perhaps inspired. Isn't that what a good book is for?

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FREWARE

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Here are some more of the programs offered through FREWARE, but NOT currently available through the Group Library. This listing was compiled by the LA 99ers. If you send for any, please bring a copy to the group librarians (Jack or BJ). Your disk will be replaced. If you would like the group to send for one of the programs let the group secretary (Wesley) know.

Requirements:

- disks sent for freeware must be initialized
- unless otherwise stated, you must include a stamped, self addressed return mailer to receive the Freeware
- be patient, those offering Freeware are not doing it for a profit

[1] HOMEPLAN Bob Delpit, 14634-B S. Budlong Ave., Gardena, CA 90247. A spreadsheet program. Can enter up to 20 rows and 13 columns of numerical data. Mathematically operate in 6 ways: add, subtract, multiply, divide, power and roots.

[2] SUPERBUG II Edgar L. Dohman, Route 5, Box -84, Alvin, TX 77511. An excellent enhancement of TI's Superbug, and it includes change-of-output device from your screen; color toggles, added commands, and much more. \$10

[3] DISPLAY AT Barry Traver, Genial Computer Ware Philadelphia, PA 19128. Build a "BLANK" TI-Writer file to create screen of "Display At" statements.

[4] DISK CATALOG Larry Duke & Scott Beeker, 4704 Palo Duro NE, Albuquerque, NM 81701. Another Disk Catalog X/B add, delete, print, display, purge, disk information.

[5] TE-2 ENCODER Ken Gilliland 543 Riverdale #15, Glendale, CA 01204. Made for Bulletin Board Operators who want to provide Graphic, Speech and Color to their TE-2 Cartridge. \$5

[6] DISK MANAGER 99 Mike Dodd, 116 Richards Drive, Oliver Springs, TN 37840. Another disk manager. Extended Basic, Console Basic with Editor/Assembler or the Mini-Memory. Protect or unprotect, rename files or disk, test and catalog a disk to screen or printer.

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RECOMMENDED READING

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by Liz Seib of INTERFACE, Western New York UG

I find that when I'm confronted with a whole rack of computer books to choose from, the calm, self-assured person that I am vanishes, and leaves in her place an uncertain idiot, totally unable to make up her mind. I really hate to spend \$10 - \$20 on a book that isn't going to tell me what I want to know. The following listing was gotten from the experts and should make it easy to find exactly what's needed. All the books mentioned are available at Walden's.

PROGRAMMER'S REFERENCE GUIDE TO THE 99/4A
by C. Regina- 358 Pgs, \$14.95.
PUB. COMPUTE Magazine

This is an excellent manual for both TI Basic and Extended Basic. It covers every phase of programming in detail and the type-in programs are worth the time. A must.

COMPUTE'S TI COLLECTION VOL.1
307 Pgs, \$12.95.
PUB. COMPUTE Magazine

This book contains many higher level type-in programs, including games, utilities, and music. The expanded version of "Superfont" makes this book worthwhile in itself.

DATAFILE PROGRAMMING IN BASIC
by LeRoy Finkel Jerald R. Brown- 342 Pgs, \$12.95
PUB. John Wiley Sons, Inc.

This book was designed to be used with Radio Shack computers but, because of the similarities in the two computer languages, I found this book to be extremely beneficial for file handling instructions.

DATA AND FILE MANAGEMENT FOR THE TI 99/4A
by Grillo/Robertson/Zbyszynski -152 Pgs, \$15.95
PUB. William C. Brown Publishers

When you think you've learned everything there is to know about file manipulation and procedures buy this book. It'll show you how the pros do it and you will have learned the "calculus" of file handling.

SMART PROGRAMMING GUIDE FOR SPRITES
by Craig G. Miller- 74 Pgs, \$5.95
PUB. Millers Graphics

This little book will introduce you to a new form of programming efficiency. It goes into great detail on game programming in extended basic and is very definitely the best \$6 you will ever spend on your computer.

INTRODUCTION TO TI BASIC
by Inman, Zamora Albrecht- 305 Pgs, \$12.95
PUB. Hayden Book Company, Inc.

This book is set up as a study manual for learning basic from the ground up. The layout and examples are excellent and details given for each programming line make the book very easy to understand.

TERRIFIC GAMES FOR THE TI 99/4A
by Hal Renko/Sam Edwards- 152 Pgs, \$5.95
PUB. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company

This is a great little book of games, many of which are quite inventive. While it is most recommended for the beginner, I think it is an excellent book for the "game-hacker".

WRITING BASIC ADVENTURE GAMES FOR THE TRS-80
by Frank Dacosta- 222 Pgs, \$9.95
PUB. Tab Books, Inc.

Okay, so it's for the TRS-80 but I have yet to see a better book to explain adventure game programming. The book includes two games that you can type in yourself and explains the structure line-for-line.

BASIC FUN:COMPUTER GAMES, PUZZLES, AND PROBLEMS CHILDREN CAN WRITE
by Susan Drake Lipscomb Margaret Ann Zuanich- 176 Pgs, \$2.25
PUB. Avon Camelot Books

While not specifically for the TI 99, the programs are done in a very basic basic. There's almost no translation required so the child programmer should have a lot of fun with it.

101 PROGRAMMING TIPS TRICKS FOR THE TI-99/4A HOME COMPUTER
by Len Turner- 126 Pgs, \$8.95
PUB. ARCsoft Publishers

While not all that "tricky" for the experienced programmer, this book is a good step up for the novice basic programmer.

FUNDAMENTALS OF TI-99/4A ASSEMBLY LANGUAGE
by M.S.Morley- 304 Pgs, \$16.95
PUB. TAB Books Inc.

This is THE one understandable book on TI 99 assembly. It takes you from turning on the computer to a fairly complete understanding of the language. It also includes some object code programs that you can type in yourself.

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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.

Zenith RGB color monitor with switchable green screen \$400; 1 complete expanded system including tan Console, PE Box, 32k, TI disk controller and drive, and RS232 all new TI equipment in original shipping boxes \$500; 2 TI-99/4A Consoles \$50 each; PE Box (empty) \$150; Extended Basic \$50; TI LOGO \$25; (plus the following cartridges) Tax/Investment Record Keeping; Attack; Number Magic; Car Wars; Tombstone City; and TI Invaders. Documentation and cables included. Call John 296-8198.

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.

Green Screen Monitor w/video cable, PE Box, RS232 w/PIO cable, 32K, Disk Drive and Controller, Disk Manager 2, TI-Writer, Editor/Assembler, Video Chess, Tax/Investment Record Keeping Module, Zork I, Microsurgeon, Sengo Kujidai, all with documentation. All for only \$350. Call Larry Showalter 790-7801 after 5:00 PM.

From the SOUTHWEST NINETY-NINERS - TI Disk Controller w/internal (for PE Box) disk drive \$85, Personal Real Estate \$3, Household Budget Management \$2, Home Financial Decisions \$3. Call BJ 747-5046.