

~~CorComp Cursor~~

One Year Birthday for CorComp

CorComp celebrated its first anniversary August 31st !

The CorComp story has been one of riding a roller coaster with sharp curves in the areas of design, production, marketing and management. It is a story common to the computer industry whether the name is Osborne, Kaypro, Atari, or PC jr. Riding the design and marketing roller coaster has been both electrifying and terrifying.

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.

The challenge of meeting the 99er's demand has been our business objective since the first 32K Card came off the assembly line. The difference in the magnitude of our original goal and our position today is attributed to the fact that CorComp became the replacement for TI rather than just a third party manufacturer.

Last October, as we well remember, TI responded to the unpredictable environment of the home computer market with an announcement that surprised a world of 99/4A users! Newspaper headlines confirmed the fact that the two million dedicated 99er's would have to depend on third party manufactures - such as the newly formed CorComp, Inc. Overnight a small garage operation became a authentic manufacturer which was market driven. Dealers, distributors and user groups turned to CorComp as a replacement for TI. The challenge appeared to be a million dollar opportunity and success loomed inevitable.

However, the simple experiences of life have taught everyone what happens when one "assumes"! The results of operating on the assumption that success was assured has been costly. The first lesson was that even a business that is market driven must be substantially capitalized. In February of this year the production lines of CorComp's 32K and RS232 cards slowed to grinding halt. Under capitalization had caused a cash crunch that was near fatal. Management was changed and the engineers necessary to bring the future products to production were brought on board.

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! Sales for the 32K and RS232 cards continued to pump life blood into the ailing company. CorComp's introduction

of the RS232 Stand Alone, a technically sound design in an impressive black metal box increased confidence in CorComp's credibility.

With renewed faith in CorComp the users continued to demand product. Their appetite was not satisfied, for it had been tantalized by the promise of a Disk Controller Card with a new sophisticated Disk Manager. An April release had been announced. Developmental stumbling blocks continued to plague the much awaited "state of the art" 9900 Disk Controller. A promotional release to dealers was used to test the waters and see if patience had worn thin and the market had disappeared.

The 99er enthusiast's loyalty to the 4A held true and the Disk Controller was welcomed and placed in the spot light. User Group's reviews were positive and they became intimately involved in the refinement of the product by their phone calls, letters and newsletters. 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 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.

CorComp's 1st Year Products

FOUR 99/4A PERIPHERALS RELEASED FOR THE 99 ENTHUSIASTS



32K MEMORY EXPANSION CARD: This was CorComp's first challenge. Our 32K Memory Card is 100% compatible with all TI software. It is also compatible

with Text to Speech and the Pascal Card being used with 2 disk drives.



RS232 INTERFACE CARD: The CorComp design reduced the chip count of the TI card by approximately 20% increasing reliability with a reduction in components. This card offers two serial ports and one parallel for interfacing with printers and modems.



9900 DISK CONTROLLER CARD AND CC DISK MANAGER: The 9900 Disk Controller transcends the capabilities of the TI controller. It has given the 99 a new lease on life! The CorComp card will control up to 4 Double-Sided/Double-Density disk drives, and it will load files 2-4 times faster than the TI Controller. It comes with the CC Disk Manager on 5 1/4" floppy disk.



RS232 STAND ALONE: The little black box plugs directly into the side of the 99/4A. It may be purchased with one or two serial ports and one parallel for interfacing with printers and modems.

The incredible fact is that this small black box is expandable! It can be upgraded to include 32K of memory and a double/sided, double/density Disk Controller.

The up-upgraded box can be purchased as a separate unit - The CorComp 9900 Micro Expansion System. Delay in announced availability has been due to the introduction of a new controller chip that will provide state of the art technology to the design. The engineer staff believe that the final product will justify the delay.

9900 Disk Controller - Now 100% Compatible

In July when the much awaited 9900 Disk Controller and CC Disk manager were sent in demo form to dealers and distributors across the country and a few overseas locations.

Each dealer was given five days to "play" with it and put it through its paces. The overall reaction was one of approval. And orders were placed. Then Murphy's Law took over and the phones began to ring. Three problems were identified as needing "fixes" if we were to live up to our advertising.

The first problem was that there was an incompatibility with the 99/4A's produced in 1981 and the first 11 weeks of production of 1982. The cause of this unexpected discrepancy was a change in TI engineering that was not included in our documentation.

The second concern came from users owning thermal printers. Although this was a small portion of the user population, it still demanded a FIX.

The third and possibly the most significant puzzle was our incompatibility with the Foundation 128K Memory Card. The CorComp and Foundation (Tiburon, California) engineers combined forces to find the FIX. * Their findings revealed that the correction was not a hardware change but rather a prom program. The FIX will make serious 99ER'S happy and now bulletin boards can effectively run with 128K of memory and the 9900 Double/Sided Double/Density Disk Controller.

With all FIXES in place, the 9900 Disk Controller Card is 100% compatible with all issues of the 99/4A, thermal printers and the Foundation 128K Card. Additional heat syncing has been added to increase the reliability of the 9900 Disk Controller.

Many thanks to dealers and users for their patience and diligent communication with CorComp. Your help has made the 9900 Disk Controller everything we knew it could be!

USER NOTES

1. To utilize the 9900 Disk Manager you must have a 32K Memory in your Expansion System.
2. If you do not have the additional memory you may use your CorComp 9900 Disk Controller with the TI Disk Manager Two and fully exercise the Double/Sided, double/Density capabilities.
3. When operating the CC Disk Manager it is advisable to keep the Alpha Lock down. It is also advisable to enter all file names in upper case .
4. The FORTH LOADER is now on all 9900 Disk Managers.

FORTH

This article is intended for all TI FORTH users who have (or plan on having) double density and/or double sided disk capabilities. While the techniques described should work with any disk controller capable of double density, the author's CorComp 9900 disk Controller card is the only one that has been tested. The purpose of this article is to illustrate both how to access the additional screen capacity and how to modify the FORTH words and disc to be compatible with the new format and Disk Manager.