

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

TI Forum

by Ron Albright
and Jonathan Zittrain

Best 99'er Articles Contest Cancelled

Art Byers of the Central Westchester 99'ers Club in New York state has announced the cancellation of the "Best 99'er Articles of 1986" contest. Byers had started the contest to provide a sequel to his "Best Articles of 1985" disk (public domain), which he said has been very popular. "To my great disappointment and surprise, in ten months only four people submitted articles," Byers added.

"In the over 600 newsletters that passed across my desk, I saw so many fabulous things that I cannot even begin to list them."

Unfortunately, the response to the contest was much less than the demand for the 1985 disk. A venture which could have further unified the TI community, and disseminated valuable information to its members, has been lost.

As coordinator of the TICOFF '87, the New Jersey fair, Byers said he was no longer capable of supporting the project, even if there were more submissions at this point.

Is anyone willing to pick up the torch? Here at *Computer Shopper* we have supported a TI programming contest, and although we received several entries, the response was not overwhelming. Should we try another contest with articles?

Without such methods of encouraging the exchange of information among 99'ers, the 99/4A cannot continue to prosper. If you have written something useful for 99'ers, here is your chance to give it a much wider audience. And if you are a member of that audience, here is your chance to give a vote of support! Please drop us a line.

TRAVeLer A Boon To TI Users

Speaking of contributions to the TI community, there is the Genial TRAVeLer, produced by Barry Traver of Philadelphia, PA. Traver composes a monthly "issue" (consisting of a "flippy" disk, containing data for a double-sided disk drive in single-sided format) with an incredible variety of programs and articles for the 99/4A.

Genial Computerware's address was incorrect; the correct address is Genial Computerware, 835 Green Valley Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19128. Traver has been attempting to trace letters sent to the incorrect address, but has had little luck. If you have not received a response to correspondence, this could be why!

TI Forum Celebrates Anniversary

CompuServe's TI Forum has had another anniversary this month, and forum administrator Jim Horn says that he expects "more exciting events for the coming year."

"Among other things, the new Myarc computer (the Geneve 9640) will be the first computer to disseminate its technical data via telecommunications," Horn said. Myarc will be transferring the entire 300-page technical manual for the Geneve to the TI Forum.

"We rounded off the year with a conference featuring Lou Phillips, and I'm sure he'll

be back again. He was thrilled and astonished with the depth and maturity of the questions during the CO," Horn added.

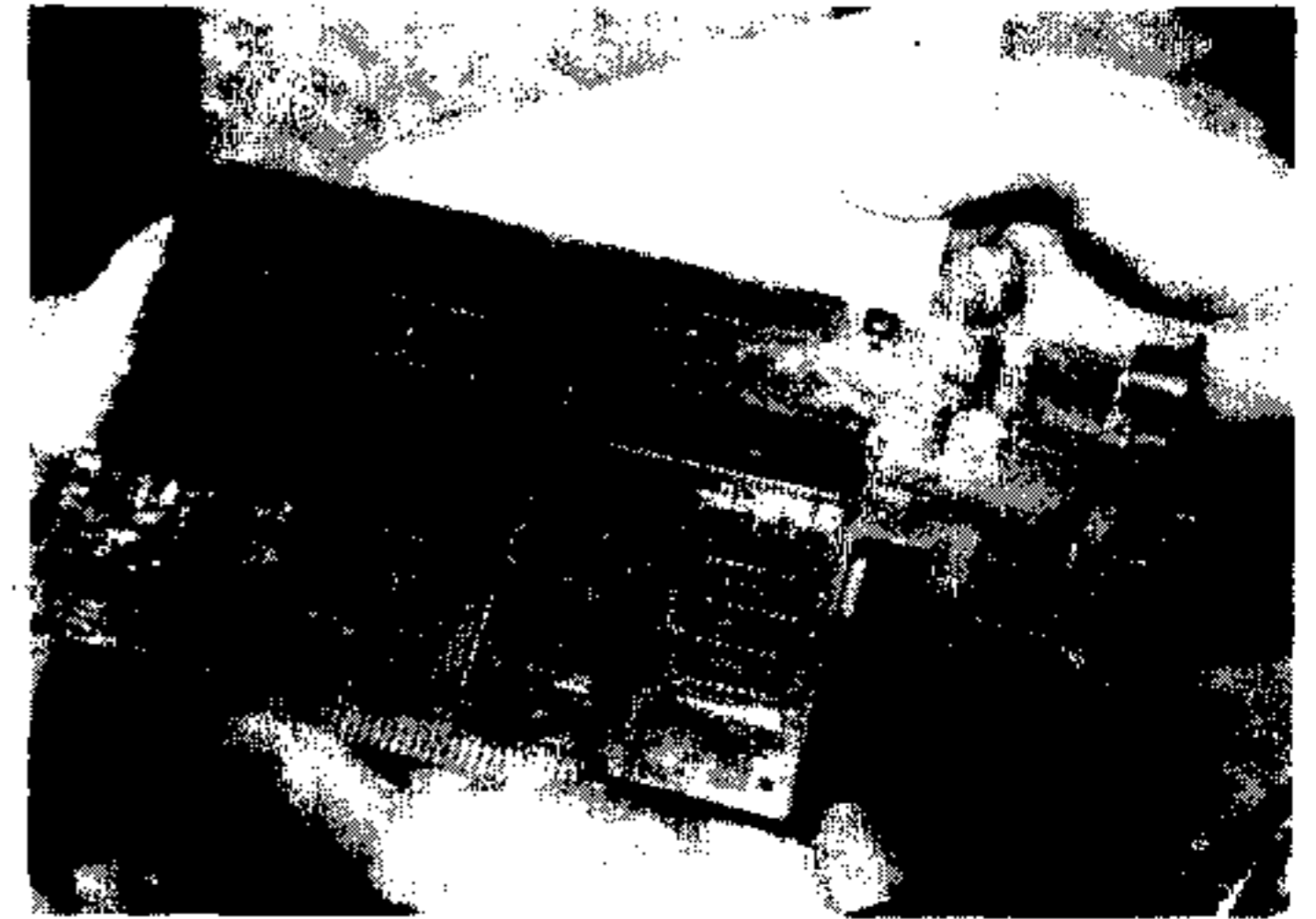
Other notable events during the past year for the forum have included the introduction of RLE (Run Length Encoded) graphics capabilities for the 99/4A, using programs written by Paul Gray and Travis Watford, and conferences with notables such as Monty Schmidt (of TECHIE bulletin board fame) and Scott Adams (author of *Adventure* series).

What next for the forum? "We'd like to extend our reach internationally using CompuServe's network expansion," said Horn. "The public domain and fairware programs offered through users groups and the forum are considered to be commercial gems in other parts of the world."

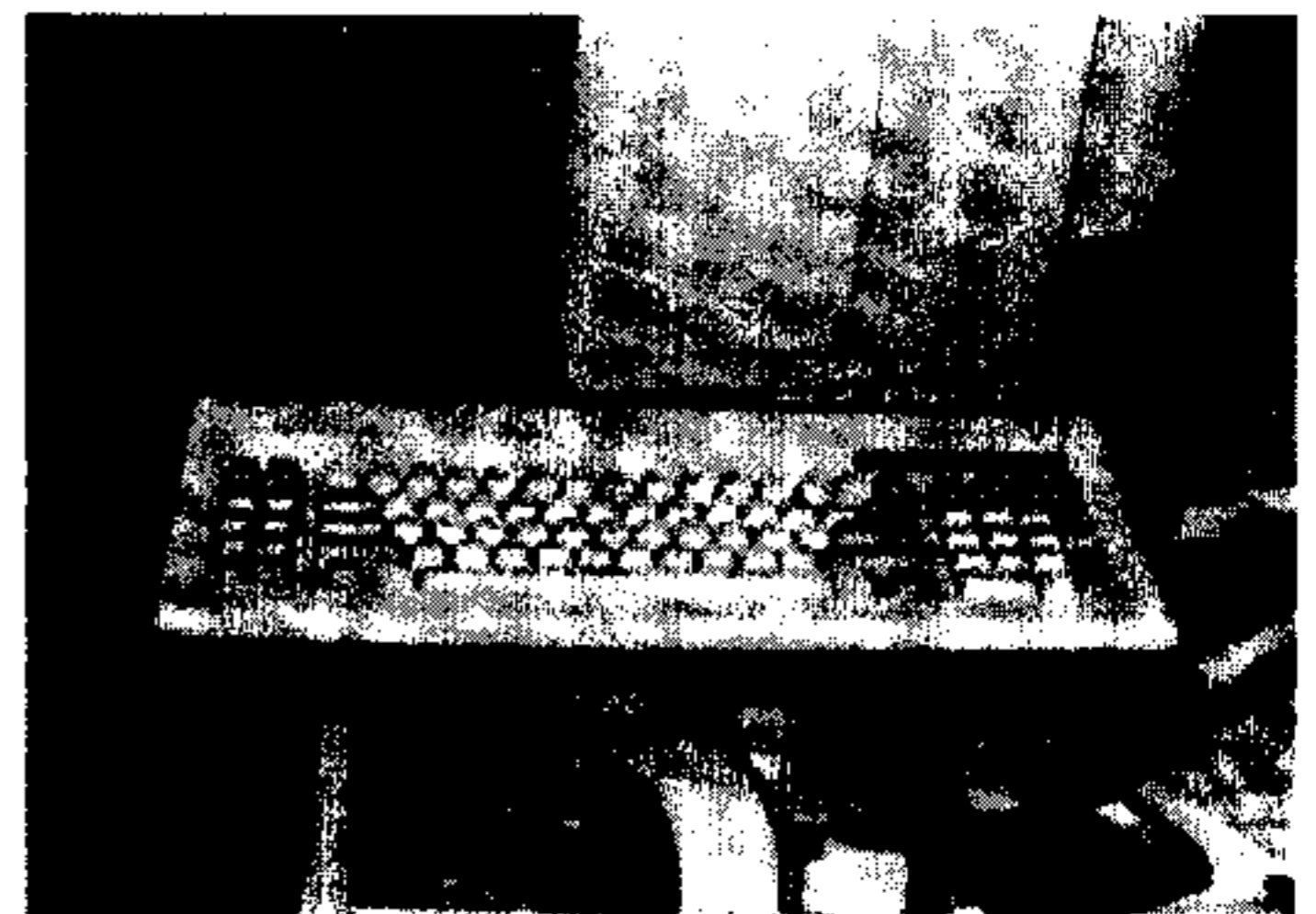
Building A Joystick Adapter

We've had several requests for information on building a

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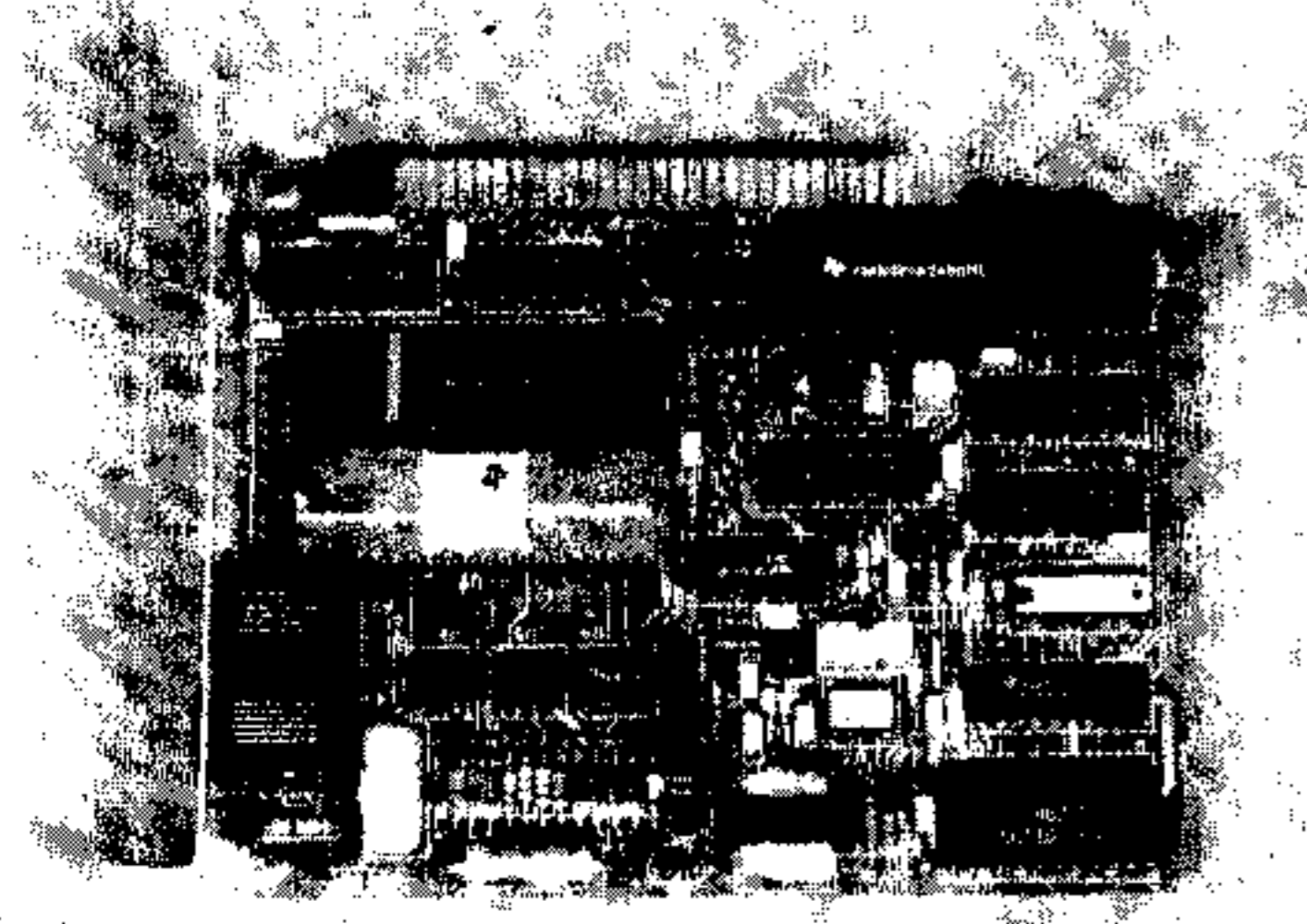


Myarc "Computer on a card"



The Myarc 9640 computer

TI Driving 2400 Baud Modem Prices Down



by Cheryl Peterson

Texas Instruments recently announced plans to market a modem prototype kit that would allow OEM modem

manufacturers to sell 2400 baud modems at current 1200 baud modem prices. The TI engineered product uses industry standard parts whose

value total about \$50 when bought in manufacturing quantities.

Ray Berardinelli, Media Representative for Texas Instruments, says the prototype kits are available now and the chip sets should be available by the end of the first quarter, if they aren't already in TI service centers.

According to the Spring edition of their Semiconductor Group newsletter, Details on Signal Processing, the prototype kit (\$995) provides all the diagrams, schematics and information needed to create IBM PC half-card modems. A working model of the modem is included. With small design changes, the modems could be used with RS-232 interfaces.

"By eliminating development costs for the OEMs, we hope to encourage better sales

of our chips," Berardinelli explained. "It should also help drop the prices of 2400 baud modems."

Mike Hames, the Digital Signal Processing Marketing Manager for TI Semiconductors, added that "2400 BPS modems in the \$100 price range are right around the corner."

Because it is designed to be compatible with industry standard software command sets, the modems created with this chip set should function with already existing software. It supports Bell 212A, Bell 103, and V.22 bis standards for full-duplex operation at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. According to TI the chips can be used to upgrade existing modems from 1200 to 2400 baud operation.

The \$50 parts price for the PC half card modems is based

on manufacturing at the level of about 25,000 units according to TI's specifications. While these numbers might hold back smaller companies, it's only a matter of time before the modems start proliferating. "This could happen within 12-18 months, as modem manufacturers get in high volume production with our DSP modem chips," claims Hames.

For more information about the chip sets and prototype kit, contact your local TI sales office or authorized distributor or TI's Customer Response Center at (800) 232-3200 and ask about part number DSP2400 (chip set) or TMDSP2400PK (prototype kit). Texas Instruments Incorporated, Semiconductor Group, PO Box 809066, Dallas, TX 75380-9066. ●

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joystick adapter for the TI-99/4A, as well as other hardware ventures. To start small, we have included a schematic and parts list for building such a device. Any other specific requests?

Figure 1 is the schematic to build your own joystick adapter to use the Atari/Commodore-compatible joysticks. The numbers go with the pins

of the console port and the joystick connectors. The [] symbol represents a 1N914 diode (or equivalent) which can be found at many electronic parts stores. Be sure to install the diodes with the banded end to the joystick side. In the drawing below, an "*" denotes a connection, otherwise no wires should touch.

Avatex Modems...They Work!

If you want a cheap 1200 baud modem that appears to

be very reliable (from most reports), check out the Avatex modem. Generally priced around \$100 (check the pages of *Computer Shopper* for several sources), the modem is a standalone that has a Hayes-compatible command set. The problem seems to be getting it to dial-out and autoanswer. But the problem is not with the modem but with the cable connection. Here are the connections that, reportedly, have worked for others using this modem.

RS232	Modem
1	1
2	3
3	2
6	20
7	7
20	6

And set all the DIP switches in the "up" position. Try that and yell if that is still a problem. Cynthia Becker of the Boston User Group's TI SIG posted this information on Compuserve. By the way, if you have not "gone 1200 baud" yet, you should. At these prices, you should pay for the modem in connect/long-distance charges in only a few weeks.

Source Supports The TI Community

Thanks to the generosity of Source Telecommunications (1616 Anderson Road, McClean, VA 22102; (1-800-336-3366), I got to check out the exciting new changes they have made there, particularly in the area of computer-specific special interest groups (SIGs). They have really made the SIGs a big part of the Source's

offerings and have even lowered their rates for downloading and message base activity within the SIGs. Under the direction of Blane Crandall, the new TI SIG is no different. An amazing and extremely positive transformation is underway. Real-time chatting and conference facilities, an improved message base, and a way to buy commercial software by downloading it to your computer (and having Source bill it to your account) is also in place. Blaine and his co-sysop Dom Samzone deserve a hearty round of applause for their continued efforts on our behalf. Also, the Source has generously made a free sign-up offer available to purchasers of my *Orphan's Survival Handbook* (\$16.95 from Disk-Only Software, P.O. Box 244, Lorton, Virginia, 22079). That's right! You can sign-up to the Source for free, waiving the usual \$49.94 fee, by buying the Handbook, calling the Source, and giving them the special offer number of the Handbook. So join in and support the national databases as well as your local BBS'. Telecommunications is the future and the TI 99/4A can give you all you need to experience the future.

Another Fairware Beauty

Mark Beck (166 Delaware Circle, Jacksonville, AR 72076) has released version 5.0 (that's right...a fifth version!) of his "Creative Filing System" (CFS) for the TI. It's a dandy program for anyone with lists to manage. This flat-file (that is, non-relational) database can create records of 16 fields and

store 1424 on a DS/DD disk. Not too remarkable there. But, it can do things our other list managers cannot—has a global change function, has a graph option to present numeric data, can sort on one or two fields, can use the Foundation 128K expansion card for speed, and can columnar reports with automatic column spacing. Looks and sounds like a real winner. I continue to bemoan the lack of a relational database for the TI (perhaps, with the added memory of Myarc's 9640, it will come to pass), with CFS and PR-Base (from William Warren), we have two very efficient file handlers. I wish CFS had an import function to be able to take ASC files and import into database format (it has a dandy export function from database to TI Writer Display/Variable 80 format), but life is never a bed of roses in the Orphanage. You can pick up a copy of CFS by sending 3 SS/SD disks, a self-addressed mailer with postage, and \$10 to Beck.

Maybe Your First Look...

I have sent a couple of photos taken at the 4th Annual Chicago TI Fair of the much fabled and equally long-awaited 9640 (a.k.a. "Geneve"). Its a beauty, as you can well see. We all hope it makes it to the marketplace and there is no reason, at this writing, to suspect it will not. In fact, the future of the 9640 may be even brighter than originally projected. Rumors significant enough to be printed in Compuserve's "On-

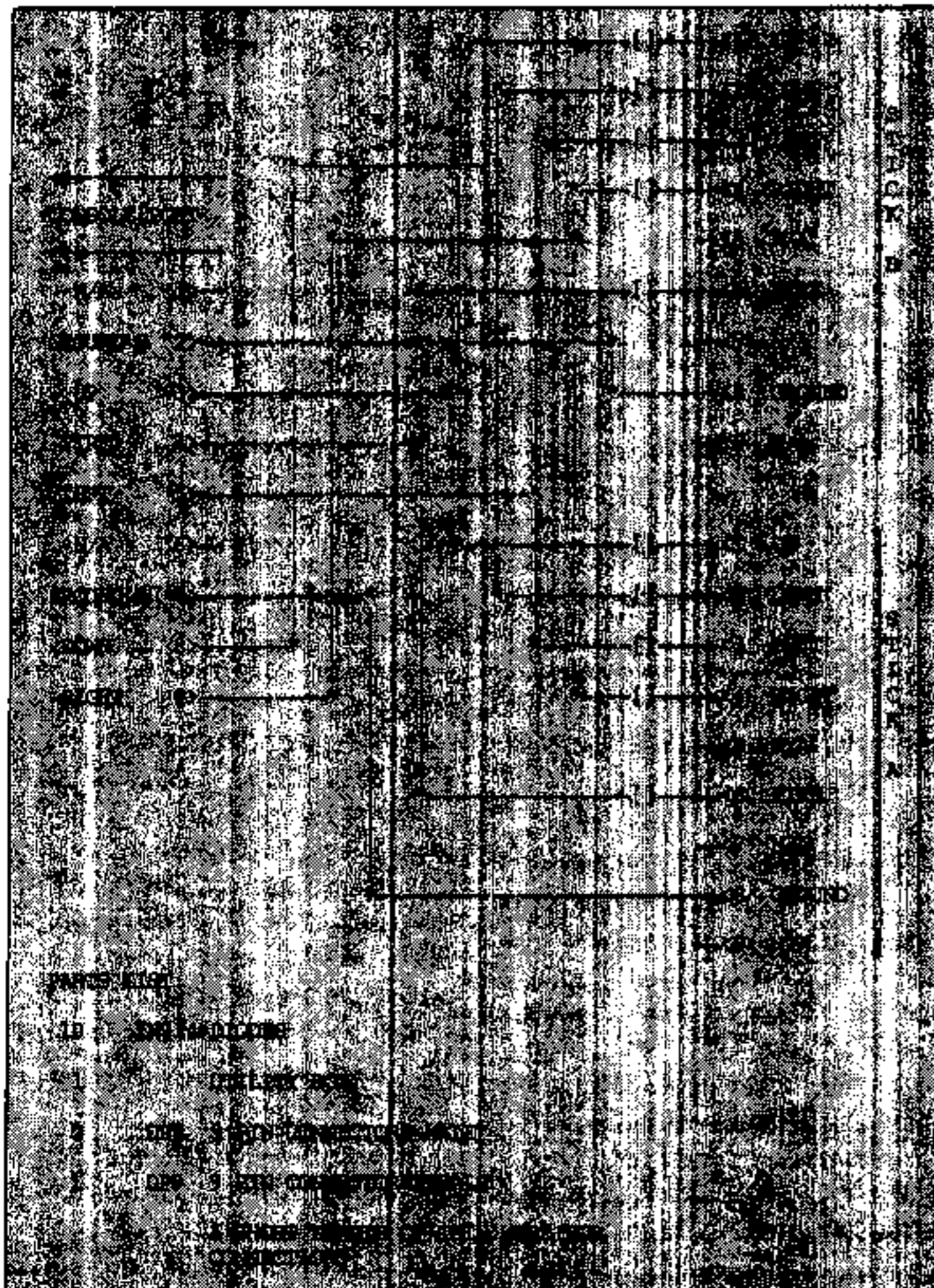


Fig. 1 - Joystick Adapter

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"Live Today" electronic magazine are saying that Yamaha of Japan may have more of an interest in the 9640 than just a place to socket their 9640 chips. Could they be interested in buying out Myarc, pouring some major dollars into the 9640 and making it Yamaha's entry into the home computer marketplace? The Geneve is an impressive showpiece for Yamaha's 9640 chip, has an already-installed software (and potential consumer) base, and is 99.5% completed. What could be easier for the Japanese industrial giant?

Still just a rumor. My opinion? Not in a million years. Now take that opinion and fifty cents and MacDonald's will give you a cup of coffee.

It'll Be Missed...

The December (#42) installment of "Tips From the Tiger-cub" will, sadly to say, be the last. Jim Peterson (Tiger-cub Software, 156 Collingwood Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43213) is giving up his superb gift to the TI community after three and a half years of writing printing, and mailing out the monthly Tips to over 100 users groups. Was it worth it? Economically, definitely not. Jim never approached breaking even with the Tips as an advertising vehicle for his fine software offerings. As a personal gift to TI users with self-satisfaction for a job well-done? I hope so, for Jim. Always unselfish. Always informative. As a personal note: I finally got to meet Jim at the

last Chicago TI Fair. He obviously had the flu but had driven from Columbus, Ohio to Chicago to be there. He was sick, but you should have seen his eyes light up when he ran a SAT-type "spatial-relationships" program for Howie Rosenberg and I saw how it fooled us regularly. Jim is a one-of-a-kind guy. A "giver" and a sharer. I (as well as every user group in the country) will miss the Tips. Thanks, Jim, for giving us them for as long as you did.

PC Pursuit Redialing...

This excellent tip comes from Rory Binkerd of the Siouxland 99'ers User Group in Sioux City, Iowa (by way of Compuserve). "For those of you that don't have Mass Transfer 4.0 or a redialer for PC Pursuit, you may want to try the Racal/Vadic command set. The PCP modems are RVs that emulate a Hayes command set. To get to the RV commands, do the following after getting to your target city."

```

ATZ <-TYPE THIS WHEN IN THE TARGET CITY
OR <-PCP MODEM RESPONSE
<-DO A CONTROL E AND ENTER HERE.
THIS GETS YOU TO THE RV COMMANDS.
HELLO:I'M READY <-PCP MODEM RESPONSE
^D <-TYPE D TO DIAL
NUMBER? <-PCP MODEM RESPONSE
3954618 <-THE NUMBER YOU WANT
DIALING... <-PCP MODEM
BUSY! <-PCP MODEM
^R <-TYPE R FOR REDIAL
NO. OF RETRIES? PCP MODEM RESPONSE
4 <-NUMBER OF RETRIES WANTED, MAY BE
LIMITED TO 9.
3954618
    
```

Help for TI PC continued from page 280

realm with sections for the 99/4A and the TIPC.

Delphi has opened a new SIG just for writers. It is the WRITERS GROUP managed by a professional writer, Ralph Roberts (Username: AUTHOR). Currently he has three books in print along with many articles in various other publications (by the time you read this Ralph's fourth book may be on the shelves of your favorite store). Ralph also edits a couple of specialty newspapers which are growing.

One of the more interesting features of this SIG is the MARKETS Topic of the Database. In it writers can find the information they need to submit their work to various publications. There are also other writers on-line to help novices improve their skills.

As mentioned in the body of this article:

Computer Systems & Supplies, P.O. Box 51388, Raleigh,

NC 27609, 919-847-1967, Sam Johnson.

Delphi, contact Telenet 800-336-0437 or Tymnet 800-336-0149 for local access number then connect to Delphi. Username: JOINTI; Password: WELCOME.

This is a subscription service and there is a \$10.00 fee for this initial sign on, a two-thirds savings of the usual \$29.95 fee. Lifetime membership and a \$7.20 connect time credit are a part of this special offer.

EDP Professionals, 305 Fairview Plaza One, Charlotte, NC 28210, 704-554-1101 (voice), 704-554-1102 (modem). An on-line listing of the jobs they have available. Many levels of experience, not limited to the Southeastern part of the US.

Queen City BBS (99/4A only), 704-541-3776.

XLR8ed BBS, 704-552-7480. TIPC and TI99/4A supported.

JimNet, 512-837-0953, a very good TIPC section.

AustiNet, 512-832-9224, operated by the Austin TIPC Users Group.

```

DIALING.
BUSY!
3954618
DIALING...
BUSY!
3954618
DIALING...
BUSY!
3954618
DIALING...
FAILED CALL / DIDN'T GET AN ANSWER HERE
        <-PCP
ATZ <-TYPE ATZ
COMMAND SET
OK <-MODEM RESPONSE, NOW...
HAYES COMMAND SET. CONTINUE AS
NORMAL.
Winding Down...
Next month, I absolutely
promise to announce the win-
    
```

Keep having fun and, if you don't have a modem, get one. Write us at Computer Shopper for some programming tip sheets or just to ask questions. Remember: enclose a SASE if you wish a personal reply.

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