CLASSIC COMPUTERS

COMMODORE

geoSynch: Letters, News, And Hard Drives

by D. Roderick Eamon

This month we cover letters. To answer as many as possible, I edited where necessary.

Text Transfer Trauma!

First, a letter from Robert Savage, Jr. of Corpus Christie:

Dear Mr. Eamon:

I used GEOS 128 and geoWrite Workshop 128 on a 1541/1571 drive setup. It works great and I've abandoned the other word processors. However, I have over 200 files from Mirage Concepts' Word Processor Professional that I can't convert using Workshop's Text Grabber. Generic II works, except the lowercase letters become capitals, and uppercase letters vanish! Generic I ignores carriage return and line feeds. The other form files (PaperClip and WordWriter 128) fare no better with Mirage files.

Is there a clean way to convert Mirage Word Processor files to geoWrite?

Berkeley has courteously answered my query, but told me they have no plans to develop a Mirage form file. I would appreciate any help you could provide to solve this problem.

A. Robert, I discovered the same problem converting EasyScript files. If you are any good at programming, you can create a form file yourself with geoWrite 1.3 or earlier. The 128 Text Grabber forms can't port Mirage files, but other utilities can. Converting many C-64 word processor files can be done.

BSw seems to assume all 128 users run word processors written for the C-128, not the C-64. That's fine for most of us, but what if your WP is Mirage, or EasyScript?

Mirage, modelled after the CP/M version of Word Star (it even uses the E/S/D/X "star" cursor layout!) is a good C-64 word processor with powerful print routines and a large spell-check dictionary. Back in '84, Mirage was a good buy. Unfortunately, a tiny text edit area—4 to 5 pages per file—left much to be desired, and its 80-column simulator devours memory. Too bad; it left no room for underline and boldface command routines necessary for even minimal word processors. Another word processor crippled by designers who insisted on a borderline-stupid feature.

On the plus side, Mirage's text is saved to disk as PET-ASCII files, identical to EasyScript's. geoWrite Workshop's (the C-64 version) and geoPublish's Text Grabber supports EasyScript conversions. Unfortunately, GEOS 128's Grabber doesn't. If you add desktop publishing to your arsenal, you can convert those Mirage files.

You can get there without geoPub (though, 'Pub is one of the geoUniverse's best buys!). Here are two other ways to convert Mirage to geoWrite 128: 1.) WrongIsWrite and 2.) TransText. These shareware products are available online in QuantumLink's GEOS Arena, or from the authors at the addresses at this column's end. Send a SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) when writing for information to these creators—independent shareware writers operate on a shoestring and even return postage could break them! Here's how they stack up:

Both geoPub's Text Grabber and TransText convert WP text with form files. "EasyScript" and "Generic III" both work with Text Grabber, and the "PetASCII" form file converts Mirage files with TransText.

WrongIsWrite: Roundtrip Passage!

To translate to geoWrite and back again, WrongIsWrite can't be beat. Of the three transfer utilities, Text Grabber handles the most WP-to-geoWrite conversions; WrongIsWrite, handles two-way conversions; and creating custom form files and font changing are TransText's forte.

Finally, Convert 1.4 (on QLink when last I looked) converts GEOS files to Commodore Sequential files. Here, experimentation is the name of the game.

Questions, Questions

Next, a hand-written letter from (I hope this is right!) Thomas L. Zawodny, of Beavercreek, Ohio. With it came this cover note:

Dear Mr. Eamon:

You appear to be a C-64/GEOS "expert," at least in my book you are. Actually, anyone who writes a column for *Computer Shopper* should be able to make that claim.

I've enclosed a letter I sent to BSw over a month ago. I still have received no response. Perhaps you can shed some light on these questions, particularly, regarding the geoPrint cable.

Thanks for your time and for your column in *Computer Shopper*.

Here's the accompanying letter:

GEOS Is Great!!! But, I have questions...

1.) I have a non-GEOS format disk from a public domain source that contains 11 files. Some are BASIC programs, some are data, etc. I tried using this disk with GEOS without converting to GEOS format, with mixed results.

The second file on the disk is a small BASIC program which runs nicely under C-64 DOS with LOAD"PRINT DOCS," 8 and RUN commands. However, double-clicking this file's icon yields the "This file can't be opened from the deskTop" dialog box.

The "info" box revealed it as a C-64 Program, Sequential in structure, 1K byte in size, and not write-protected. The first file, with similar characteristics, executes with a double-click.

Question: What am I doing wrong? I copied the disk and converted it for use with GEOS (I use V-1.2), with the same result. Is it GEOS 1.2, my disk, or me? (The disk is in the TAXKIT from QS! Alliance.)

2.) When I originally purchased GEOS, I didn't own a printer. I have since purchased a Star NX-10. The User's manual suggests using the geoPrint Cable. The combination works great for all GEOS applications, but doesn't seem to work for non-GEOS programs. This is the only printer interface I have.

Questions: Is it possible to use this combination with non-GEOS programs from GEOS and any other programs outside of the GEOS environment?

Does the Star NX-10 (GC) printer driver address the printer as device #4?

Do devices 4 and 5 apply only to the Serial Port, or do they also apply to the User Port?

Does the geoPrint Cable only work in the GEOS environment?

Do I need to buy a different interface for the non-GEOS environment? (Since a parallel port interface would also work in the GEOS environment,

continued on page 293

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

TI Forum

by Ron Albright and Jonathan Zittrain

Random Ramblings

Since we get so many letters from users asking for some other sources for TI reading, here are some addresses. In my opinion, the best single source for TI reading is (and has been for years), *MicroPendium* (P.O. Box 1343, Round Rock, Texas 78680; $20 for 12 monthly issues). Laura Burns and John Koloen put out 40 pages or so of the latest TI news, reviews, and (equally importantly) advertisements for the TI world. Much more than we can ever print here. The freelancers that write for it are the cream of the 99er world. If you are serious about your TI, its simple: you should read *MicroPendium*.

If you have disk system, the same advice holds for *Genial TRAVelER* (835 Green Valley Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19128; $36/year for a "flippy" disk bimonthly). If there is a TI historian/archiver, Barry Traver is he. His 6-time yearly "diskazine" contains TI Writer text files (reviews, tutorials, etc.) as well as full-blown programs and utilities for the 99/4A. The list of contributors are as long as my arm and run the gamut from writers to the penultimate TI programmers. These two publications—*MicroPendium* and *TRAVelER* are absolute musts for any TI owner.

The newest kid on the publication block is not really a new kid at all. Chris Bobitt, who has been writing about and programming for the 99/4A since he was knee-high to a gerbil, has finally decided to make his expertise available regularly. The *Asgard News* (P.O. Box 10306, Rockville, MD 20850; $6 for 4 quarterly issues) is now available. You may have heard Chris' and Asgard's name before in the column as producers of some of the best TI software around. If the *Asgard News* lives up to the software products from the same source, the TI world is in for a real treat. Jack Sughrue (author of the popular PLUS! utility software; Box 459, East Douglas, MA 01516; $10.00) reported in his much-reproduced "Impact-99" newssheet that "TId Bits" is a newsletter published by Bruce Forbes. Jack liked his issue and that is good enough for me. You may want to write for details to Bruce Forbes, Route 2, Box 412, Sumerduck, VA 22742.

Freebie

This months giveaway goes to Ray Cyr of Royal Oak, Michigan. Ray gets the following: Ron Prewitt's (6429 South Fife, Tacoma, Wa 98409) Fairware Disk of original programs; Bill Harms' Class software (6527 Hayes Ct., Chino, CA 91710; $10.00); TI-Base database (donated by Texaments, 53 Center St., Patchogue, NY 11772; $24.95 + $2.50 S&H); the XCOM Extended BASIC Compiler software (from DKM Enterprises, Box 501046, Indianapolis, IN 46250-1046; $49.95); Graphic Lister TI-Artist utility (Nameloc Software, 3971 S.E. Lincoln, Portland, OR 97214; $10.00 + $1.50 S&H); and the newsletter disk from the Central Westchester 99'ers User Group (from Art Byers, 1261 Williams Drive, Shrub Oak, NY 10588). This will be the last giveaway (see following). Thanks for all the support and interest!

Folding Up My Tent

Well, time has come. After over 7 years with the TI (that's right, I bought my first 99/4A for $329.00 in June,

continued on page 294

TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

TI Forum continued from page 289

1981), the time has come for me to move over and let some new blood carry the banner. Having written about the 99er world for so long, my "word-well" has run dry. First, as a local newsletter editor, then, as a contributor to *MicroPendium* magazine and, finally, as co-contributor to this column for over 2½ years, I have decided to make this column my last. I will not elaborate on all the factors involved in my decision—that would take more than my allotted space.

Suffice it to say that I am not abandoning the TI, I have just passed it on. My kids don't allow me enough time on the console to do it justice. I admit I have a desktop IBM clone, a Radio Shack Model 100, and Toshiba 1000 laptop and use those machines' software more and more. But, let me clear up a common misconception: having and using another computer brand doesn't force one to lose one whit of dedication or gratitude to or appreciation for the TI 99/4A. I was discussing just that point the other day with someone who expressed amazement that the TI world is still so active, so long after its abandonment. I related to him (and probably bored him to death with this flash of insight) what having and using a 99/4A had done for me as a computer user in general. First, it made me appreciate what computers can do. From word processing to telecommunications, I feel quite a part of the mainstream (whatever that ephemeral status is) of computing. It was with the little 99/4A that I first found the wonders of bulletin board systems and commercial networks such as CompuServe, DELPHI, and GEnie. Second, I lost all fear for fiddling with the insides of computers. After gutting and reworking my TI consoles through everything from chip replacement to soldering and resoldering, I know that holding onto the notion of computers as mysterious and intimidating wonders is for those who still practice voodoo. While the other offices where I work waited days for the local information management techies to come install the hard disk drives of our new AT-clones, I had our drives installed and running in a single morning.

Third, I have come to realize the value of user groups, regardless of computer or application supported, to the computing enthusiast. It's a pity manufacturers have not. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I learned what kind of people computer enthusiasts are. I am not talking about those who simply use computers. These run the gamut of people—from good to bad—just as car drivers and cuisinart owners do. I am talking about, well, the hackers. Perhaps no group of people outside a monastery have such qualities of unselfishness, generosity, and closeness with kindred spirits. The friends I have made among TI owners will continue to be so long after the last computer chip has cracked and the power is turned off. For these reasons and many more, I will always be a 99er. The TI Forum column will continue under JZ and my successor. I will read it every month with all the excitement I had when I wrote it. I wish you all well and every happiness.

JZ's Part

It is with great regret that I send along this installment of the TI Forum column—as you have just read, it is Ron's last. His seemingly boundless energy, talent, and competence will be sorely missed. Ron has been an incredible asset not only to the column, but to the TI community. It has been a pleasure to work with him, and I hope there is an opportunity to do so again.

You have probably read about extending Extended BASIC—Barry Traver recently contributed a comprehensive three-part series on the subject to the column. I am delighted to announce that Mr. Traver will continue to grace the TI Forum on a regular basis as my co-columnist.

Traver has been a leader of the TI community for years. He is a system operator on both the CompuServe and GEnie networks, and has contributed articles to *99'er Home Computer Magazine*, *Computer Shopper*, *MICROpendium*, *The Smart Programmer*, and *Super 99 Monthly*.

He started a company, Genial Computer, which publishes software for the 99/4A, including the *Genial TRAVelER* diskazine Ron mentioned.

Traver founded (and served for several years as the first president of) the Philadelphia Area TI Users Group, which is the fourth largest special interest group in the Philadelphia Area Computer Society. He heralded the Archiver revolution with his original Archiver format being adopted on hundreds of local TI electronic bulletin boards and all the major telecommunications networks.

Traver has a special interest in computers in education, home schooling his eleven-year-old son John Calvin. He has a B.A. in mathematics, M.A. in English, M.Div. in theology, and Th.M. in New Testament.

We hope to reflect the diversity of the TI community in future column topics. We have received a lot of mail from readers who have minimal TI-99/4A configurations but who are interested in inexpensive upgrading. In future columns you can expect to find do-it-yourself hardware projects such as various methods of adding 32K to the standard 99/4A console, as well as information of no-assembly-required stand alone module availability.

We hope to keep in touch with software companies and authors, providing reports of software-in-development in addition to reviews of existing products. We will keep you posted as new versions of software classics such as Funnelweb, Disk Manager 1000, and archiving/compression programs are released.

TI faires are happening more than ever, and we will be certain to publish the details of upcoming events as soon as we know them. The Los Angeles 99'ers have already set the date of their annual 99 Fest-West at the Lafayette Hotel in San Diego for February 18-19. And the LA users group is just one of many who have been faithfully sending us their original news and views. Please keep those letters and newsletters coming! They are extremely valuable to us, and we do appreciate them. We will be providing more details about users groups such as LA, Chicago, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia that allow involvement of members-at-a-distance.

Ron long ago offered his Tour de Boards, a look at TI bulletin boards across the country. To complement the larger listing of bulletin boards already found elsewhere in *Computer Shopper*, we plan to include tours of the most popular and interesting 99-oriented BBSs—especially those that are accessible through PC Pursuit, the flat-rate evening telecommunications network offered by Telenet.

Aside from the standard column, we are working to feature extra technical articles, both hardware and software-oriented. Tony Lewis, a past contributor to *MICROpendium*, has promised some fascinating hardware articles for the advanced 99'er, and Warren Agee (author of the FirstBase database program, written in c99) has offered to share some of his extensive c99 knowledge with us.

So this month marks both an ending and a beginning. Ron Albright moves on to other pursuits, leaving behind an incredible legacy for the 99'er (I see Ron did not even mention his Orphan Chronicles and Orphan's Survival Guide as part of his tremendous contributions). Barry Traver arrives with new talent and enthusiasm. And the TI Forum looks forward to another year as one of the foremost sources of news and views on the 99 family. ●

More Texas Instruments on page 554

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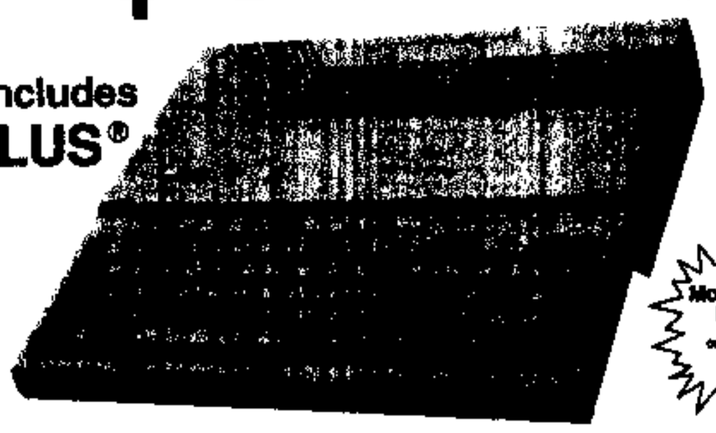

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You Have To Give It Away To Get It

by Jim Horn

Recently as I sat thinking about some of the awful things I needed to do, the postman saved my day. *Computer Shopper* was in the fistful of mail he handed me, which was enough to make me ignore the usual assortment of letters addressed to my neighbors.

The latter part of Dr. Ron Albright's article about the Maine school teacher Eunice Spooner caught my eye. (I always turn to TI Forum.) Ron had a real heart warmer this month. What a story! I picked up the phone and called Vice President Bush's office.

I told them the story of Eunice Spooner in Maine who, rather than sitting back and demanding large PCs costing thousands, opted to scour yard sales and user groups for TI99/4As for her charges. Then, instead of locking the machines up at night in an empty school, Spooner sent the little critters home with a rugged computer under their arm! The young researcher who I drew kept asking questions about the school, the teacher, the exact address. When I told him the teacher had received a teaching award, he needed specifics. Then he told me why. The vice president was going to Maine, ostensibly on vacation during the Democratic Convention. The researcher's home was in Maine! All we got the following days were pictures of the vice president fishing, which fit into a lot of political agendas of non 99ers. But a Washingtonian knows that politicians never are on vacation. If any maniacs out there know of any vice presidential contact in the elementary schools about the TI99/4A, they can blame me and perhaps others who contacted the administration to clue them in on a great story. Thanks Ron!

But the story is not over yet. In spite of huge amounts being budgeted for computers and some highly publicized computer gifts by the major computer manufacturers, there is not a prayer that anything approaching even a single computer for every classroom in America will happen in this century, unless we do something about it.

I believe "Free Computers For Qualified Teachers" is the way. That is what Mid Atlantic 99ers (MANNERS) decided to call their program of getting donated 99/4A computers into schools. Early on, MANNERS members decided that recruiting the teacher or administrator able to deal with an influx of computer equipment was a key. In looking at this, these 99ers decided that not a single member was going to talk about computers teaching anyone anything. "Computers do not teach, teachers do" has become almost a motto as members explain the program to teachers, administrators, and charity officials around the area. The idea, in brief, partly inspired by Ron's TI Forum *Computer Shopper* article, is that the clubs in the Washington metro area will focus the attention of closet computer owners of the 99/4A on the idea of donating their computers and software to teachers who have agreed to take on the care and maintenance of these sturdy, versatile machines. The Mid Atlantic 99ers have set for themselves a goal of placing 10,000 99/4A computers in Washington, D.C. area schools, rehabilitation centers, hospices and other institutions. Members tell me they have now validated their original belief that laying our hands on the console and a video connection was going to be th easy part. One advantage that th 99/4A followers have over any oth computer group is that we have more computers to give away! TI built up to three million 99/4As, and no one can imagine more than 400,000 of the machines are still in active use. Yet, no one burns a book or is willing to admit that he or she threw a computer away. Almost all of them are still out there. And every week, the active 99er community is joined by someone new, the third, even the fourth owner of a particular machine, often the first one to do more than open the box. Most active members have three or more machines.

Why is MANNERS undertaking a public service effort? To try to help alleviate, in their own area, what around the country is a national disgrace; over two million closet 99/4As while America is in an "educational crisis." The program is not trouble free. Nothing is. Some are quickly learning to avoid county computer system managers, at least at first. Most "computer coordinators" cannot stop talking about IBM and Apple compatibility, system wide software standards, local area networks and the like, long enough to even listen. However, do not be discouraged by the response you get from the "professional computer people" in the major school systems, because right down the hall is a teacher whom that professional has been unable to help with any kind of computer. Members assured me that the teachers showed up in satisfying numbers at the Capital Area Heath User Group Convention, where area 99ers were given a booth. In addition, the

continued on page 555

More Timex Sinclair

continued from page 553

Radio Shack keyboards searching for a slice of immortality—and then its just a series of countless memories until the heart and car motor hum again.

Quite simply, the Sinclair/Amstrad groups today would not exist without these periodic seminars (which are increasing in number nationally). They are an inexplicable barrage of renewed acquaintances, bonding, sharing of information and provide the inspiration and direction for us all. My hat is off to this years organizers and participants, for it is you that provides the cohesive fabric for our organization.

With football, ice hockey and modem season here, my infrequent check of the mailbox netted the new Amstrad PCW-8256 catalog from SOS Datamension. While some regard them as overpriced, others simply ignore price and order selectively, as they are virtually the only game in town.

What I did like about their updated catalog, was that it offered some serious business and utility applications. It has crossed all of our minds at one time, that we hoped we weren't being regarded solely as a "games-machine." The PCW-8256 is still growing.

Products I like were the Mini Office/Professional, an integrated package offering word processor, database, spreadsheet, graphics and communications packages. This lists for $79.95.

PlanIt, a personal organizer, offers tracking abilities on personal accounts, daily finances, and a phone/address database. PlanIt lists for $59.95.

The point is power. Products that are currently available here in the states are Desktop Publishing, a solid collection of challenging games, Astrology and Ancestry oriented programs, checkbook, cooking, clip art, relational databases, project managers, datebooks and more. Contact SOS Datamension for their catalog, 615 Academy Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062-2420. Or call 1-800-HELP PCW.

Space simply will not permit an overly detailed analysis of my trip to Europe. I will instead periodically offer that information throughout my upcoming articles. Please drop me your suggestions, tips and techniques, I value them. ●

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Give It Away
continued from page 554

search for teachers willing to take on 5, 10, or more computers actually uncovered both new sources of computers for the club and new members! Teacher stories of needs for simple instruction devices were heartwarming as they watched children playing with educational software at the PUG show. TISDOS shows are noticeably lacking in game software, and this worked to the group's advantage.

Sooner or later, school computer executives will wake up to the availability of these resources and figure out the "*Computer Shopper* way." At that point, there will be a "resource coordinator" who will work to take advantage of natural talent and resources within the school system. Hackers or people with those inclinations in the school system or PTA will get excited about using computers as teaching aids. Administrators need not be afraid to network into that eclectic crowd most computer teachers never get to meet, a user group, who are usually willing to give more help, free, than any maintenance contractor ever discovered.

How Do I Maintain This Beast?

Should you decide to develop a similar program, be prepared to repeat yourself two or three times when you get questions about maintaining the 99/4A. People do not hear you the first time when you tell them that the machine has a maintenance system better than any devised by a computer store, called a user group aided just a tad by secret weapons called *Computer Shopper*, TIFORUM on CompuServe, and Micropendium and other telecommunications networking tools.

MANNERS at this point is concentrating on teachers and other members of institutions who are unafraid of the bureaucracy and are willing to have some fun with a computer. As might be expected, you will be told by dozens of people, many of them non teachers, that there are many reasons your program cannot work. Oddly enough, you will also locate more computers to give away, along with picking up new members along the way for an assortment of reasons. As a result of talking about something positive, MANNERS reports acquiring about ten new members!

99ers have been noticing that teachers are beginning to make up a large percentage of our membership. Teachers, such as Jack Sughrue of MUNCH are very active and successful with our groups. This is really nothing new. Stan Veit and *Computer Shopper* have a famous relationship with people involved with the recycled computer. Stan recently featured a recycled Mac motherboard and fascinated his sophisticated readership. The orphan community is ready for more teachers because enough of them have found us and enriched our fellowship on their own! If your user group wants to share experiences and promotional materials with MANNERS, write them, enclosing a large self-addressed and stamped envelope, c/o Jim Horn, POB 4170, Rockville, Maryland 20850. Include a $16 check made out to MANNERS if you want their regular newsletter.

Pastor's User Group

Some of the schools that MANNERS will end up helping will without a doubt be parochial schools, ones looking for all the support they can get. Something else we need more of are groups that will take on the chore of specializing in some aspect of another of the numerous capabilities of the 99/4A, its enhancements and the Geneve and making their expertise available internationally. The Pastor's User Group (PUG) has taken on the responsibility of communicating with those to whom God is only a toll free call away. Anyone interested in membership is "cordially invited to contact the Pastor's User Group by writing to Drawer D, Hempstead, Texas 77445. There are no dues or fees at this time." Even with that being the case, their newsletter travels via first class mail, so I am sure the pastors would not mind finding a few first class stamps or even a generous check in the plate. They are over 50 percent non ministerial in make-up and all walks of life are welcome. The letter is distributed internationally and accepts ads.

UCSD Pascal Anyone?

One of the oddest little stories of the TI99/4A is the UCSD Pascal tale. When people read in the very first issues of *99er Magazine* (remember it?) that Pascal was just around the corner, many

continued on page 556

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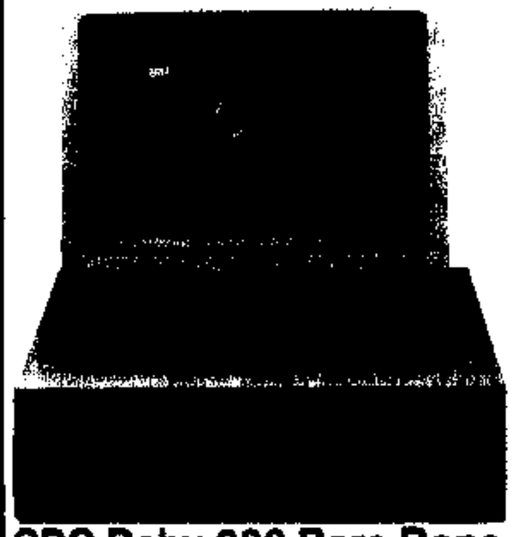

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Give It Away
continued from page 555

bought or expanded their machine on the prospect of having a computer on which to learn a coming new language, one that looked like it would replace COBOL. We could learn this language at home rather than struggle for time slots on mainframes (remember them?). As it turns out, BASIC is more important to micros, and COBOL is as secure as ever in the places where it is used. No one knew that then. I first learned about the UCSD Pascal operating system, called the p-System, from the breathless prose of *99er Magazine*. I was instantly convinced UCSD Pascal and the p-System would soon rule the world. I fired off a check to something called USUS, which stood for the UCSD System Users Society and started getting a newsletter called the USUS News and Report.

I also signed up for CompuServe about that time and joined something called MUSUS, one telecommunications arm of USUS and started bugging them and a lively fellow named Stan Veit over in a congenial area originally called the Popular Electronics SIG. MUSUS folks acted like I was an amusing critter from outer space with all my talk of the toy computer. Stan was more congenial, so I hung around there more. It turned out that TI did not believe in the UCSD System for the 99/4A very much either. The long promised UCSD p-System, first described before the 99/4A was launched, never got into the marketplace in quantity until TI cleared their warehouses in their 1983 fire sale. Even then, many UCSD cards turned out to be defective, probably one of the reasons their introduction was delayed in the first place. If you own a defective UCSD card, here is news you can use. Because of the early problems known to be the fault of TI, they maintained a generous policy of in kind replacement, and probably will do so even today if they have remaining stocks. If you have recent experience with UCSD card replacement, write to me, care of *Computer Shopper*. By late 1983, a lot of people's interest in learning Pascal had either dampened or had become a rationalization to move to a clone and to Borland's Turbo. Yet, like everything else they do, TI left a footprint. Today there is an active international 99/4A p-System community, with the potential not only to reach Pascal, but compiled FORTRAN, Modula II, and a compiled BASIC.

If You Enjoy Tear Jerkers, Ask USUS For The History Of The p-System

The tale of why most micros are using Borland's Turbo rather than p-Code will bring tears to your eyes. Indeed, one could argue that MSDOS and its associated multimillionaire, Mr. Gates are lucky, since the p-System had more than several years jump on MSDOS and looked more promising to many. If you join USUS you can get a detailed history. Ask for those issues of USUS News & Report. A sophisticated system awaits you out there if you care to explore it. The international community is still pushing this world to its limits. Jerry Coffey, author of Jump Boot for the Geneve also owns a "UCSD Micro Engine" and fires it up for guests from time to time. He is currently taking 99/4A Pascal programs sent him by Swedish 99ers and is enhancing the software for use on this side of the Atlantic.

Myarc And Pecan Muttering At Each Other

With any luck, the Geneve will also be running the UCSD system shortly, since Pecan Software of Brooklyn, the current owner of many of the central copyrights for the p-System will be making a driver for that machine. While there has been some muttering back and forth between Myarc and Pecan, hopefully that will be settled soon. All sorts of programs written for Apples, IBMs and even Stride powerhouses are available for execution or straightforward conversion through USUS. USUS programs are not public domain. While available very cheaply or even free at their twice yearly conventions on each coast, the programs are owned by USUS and their authors. With purchase of development software from Pecan dealers, Geneve owners can even start writing new applications that will run on Apples, IBM clones and others right from the start. The 99/4A system contains the development package. You can start learning how to program in Pascal right now with the requisite card and software for your 99/4A.

What to do? First, if you have a card and are no longer interested in it, sell it! Take out a classifed ad in *Computer Shopper*, or pass the word around the user group until you find someone who wants to take up Pascal. If you are a member of a telecommunications service like TIFORUM on CompuServe or TI RoundTable on Delphi, or GEnie or Source (did I leave any out?) by all means get rid of the card up there. Find it a new home. Do not forget to include the software, still under copyright. If you want to explore the UCSD environment, give USUS a whirl. Send $40 to USUS, POB 1148 La Jolla, California 92038. USUS recently discovered they have a large group of 99/4A owners as members. USUS is trying to help us develop and communicate with each other. CompuServe members can pop into MUSUS, even before joining, though non member access is limited. They normally trust you that your check is in the mail. There is an official 99/4A SIG in USUS. There is a nice collection of UCSD Pascal programs on TIFORUM on CompuServe which are public domain. Next, contact Jerry Coffey, who has been doing more than anyone I know inside and outside of USUS to help extend the 99/4A in the UCSD p-System world. Since I do not have his permission to let out his address right now, just write him and send the letter to me c/o *Computer Shopper* and I will make sure he gets it if you are not on the services he frequents. If you like you can put the letter in an envelope with his name on the outside. No stamp on the inside letter is needed. I can be reached on TIFORUM or via email or TELEX at CompuServe ID 76703,603. ●

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