

# BITS, BYTES & PIXELS

LIMA 99/4A USERS GROUP



APRIL 1991

Volume 7, #4

## A MESSAGE FROM JACK SUGHRUE

In a recent letter Jack has asked us to pass along the following message to the entire TI community: "Jack Sughrue, author of the NEW-AGE/99 articles in many newsletters, is temporarily unable to continue with the series, which he expects will be resumed in a few months. He wishes to apologize to his readers for this unexpected delay."

1991 LIMA TI MULTI USER GROUP CONFERENCE UPDATE  
Saturday May 18, Reed Hall  
The Ohio State University Lima Campus

## FORMAL PRESENTATIONS

As of March 9 we have the following list of individuals who plan to give formal presentations and their topics. These presentations will be video taped and made available to user groups and to individuals who are members of the Lima User Group for the cost of media and postage. We will publish a tentative hour by hour schedule prior to the conference in the May issue of BB&P.

--Eunice Spooner, "THE OAKLAND COMPUTER CLUB." This elementary school user group is probably the most active user group in the country. Eunice may have a 12 year old club member assist with her presentation.

--Mike Wright, "THE TI99/8." Mike, a member of the Boston Computer Society, is a collector of all things relating to the history of the 99/4A. He will put the 99/8 through its paces for us.

--Paul Scheidewantle, Topic to be announced (Paul says, "Maybe something about programming.")

--Irwin Hott, "STATUS OF THE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE CLEARING HOUSE." This project, initially discussed at the 1990 NEWS Conference, has received enough funding to proceed as planned. It may be in operation by the time Irwin gives his report.

--A user group officers' meeting will be held immediately following Irwin Hott's report.

--Jim Horn, "THE SEX LIFE OF THE 99/4A." Honest folks, that was the tentative title Jim gave us. We didn't realize there was enough material on this topic to give a whole one hour presentation. Jim's attendance at our conference is only tentative, since he is on active duty with the army and thus may not be able to attend.

--Gary Bowser, "HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE PRODUCTS FROM O.P.A." In the last few years Gary has been on the cutting edge of new products for the 99/4A.

--Barry Traver, "THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE TI COMMUNITY."

--Bruce Harrison, "GOLF SCORE ANALYZER, AND OTHER 'HARRISON SOFTWARE'"

--Bud Mills, "THE LATEST FROM BUD MILLS SERVICES"

--Chris Bobbitt, "SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE FROM ASGARD."

## GROUPS WHO HAVE REQUESTED EXHIBIT ROOM TABLES

To date the following dealers and user groups have requested free tables in the exhibit area. We know that representatives of other user groups who are planning to attend but have not requested table space.

--CIN DAY USER GROUP; Cincinnati and Dayton Ohio.

--GREAT LAKES USER GROUP; Detroit Michigan.

--BUD MILLS SERVICES; Horizon ramdisks, PGRAM cards, and NEWEX expansion memory for the Geneve.

--ST LOURS USER GROUP; St. Louis Missouri.

--CONNI; the Columbus Ohio user group.

--TIGERCUB SOFTWARE; Jim Peterson will be selling (almost giving away) disks from his vast public domain library.

--GENIAL TRAVELER; Barry Traver will be accepting subscriptions to his disk magazine.

--CLEVELAND AREA USER GROUPS; Cleveland Ohio.

--OH MI TI USER GROUP; Toledo Ohio

--L.L. CONNER ENTERPRISE; Larry Conner is a general dealer with lots of stuff for the 99/4A, Geneve, and CC40.

--BASIS PENSIVE ABACUTORS; Gary Bowser will have the OPA 80 column peripheral, RAMBO, and other neat hardware and software.

--RANCHARGED COMPUTER; Ron Markus is a general dealer with lots of stuff for the 99/4A. Ron may have some 80 column cards available for sale.

--THE FORT'S USER GROUP; Fort Wayne Indiana.

--NEW HORIZONS USER GROUP; Toledo Ohio.

--979 USER GROUP; Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

--HARRISON SOFTWARE; Bruce Harrison will feature his Golf Score Analyzer, the Harrison Word Processor, and classical music.

--COMPETITION COMPUTER; a generic TI dealer from Milwaukee. They told us, "We have lots and lots of stuff we can bring to sell."

--HOOSIER USER GROUP; Indianapolis Indiana.

--MS EXPRESS; Mickey Schmitt and Mike Sealy will have adventure games and hints available.

--CHICAGO USER GROUP; Chicago Illinois. They will have their own special software and hardware manuals for sale.

--ASGARD; the largest publisher of TI and Geneve software. Chris Bobbitt may have some of his much talked about hardware available as well.

--THE LIMA OHIO USER GROUP; from guess where?

## HOPE TO ATTEND, BUT NOT YET CONFIRMED

--Jack Sughrue; His column is reprinted in many newsletters. If his health and finances permit he wants to attend.

--Beery Miller; Mr. Miller edits the disk based 9640 NEWS and hopes soon to have a disk magazine for the 99/4A.

--Chris Pratt; representing ESD CORPORATION and their hard and floppy disk controller for the 99/4A.

NEXT PAGE

## DISK COPYING FROM THE LINA US'S SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Accompanying this April 1991 issue of BB&P is a disk containing commented listings of all software added to the Lina User Group's software since the May 1990 NUG Conference. This new material is on 188 floppy disks and represents 376 5.25 disk sides. As a service to the TI community and to help support other user groups, a designated representative of any user group may make copies of these disks at no charge. We plan to have three copy stations with good quality half height drives, and three sets of our disks available for copying between approximately 4PM and 9PM Friday May 17, and again during the conference between 8AM and 6PM Saturday May 18. Disk copying is subject to the following conditions:

--Only user group representatives can copy. Individuals who want access to our library can become paid members of the Lina US.

--Copying is on a self service basis. We will be available to show you how our equipment works but you operate the equipment. Whole disk copy programs in use will be REDISKIT and maybe THRRD COPY.

--You provide your own blank disks. They need not be pre-initialized. EVERYTHING IN OUR LIBRARY IS IN 5250 FORMAT, so be sure to bring enough disks.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Netel and tourist information was published last month in BB&P and is posted on GENIE. We will reprint this information and include a zap with our May newsletter. To request free tables in the exhibit area, to schedule a free formal presentation, or for further information write the Lina User Group at P.O. Box 647, Venedocia Ohio 43894, or phone Dave Szipp evenings at 419-228-7109.

**\*\*DONE\*\***

### THOSE DAMNED NICAL BATTERIES!

P.O. Box 1421  
Largo Florida

February 19, 1991

Dear Charles:

Your article on the HX-1000 printer plotter in your January 1991 issue (of Bits Bytes & Pixels) mentions problems with NiCad batteries. I have enclosed a copy of an old issue of TI PCC NOTES which discusses one aspect of the problem. The whole idea of "zapping" comes from an old (GE I think) handbook on the use of NiCads's. I had a lot of experience with that when we were using NiCads in an inertial system. For publication I agree with Maurice's idea of building a "zapper". In the absence of a "zapper" circuit one can clear shorts in NiCad's with some rather bizarre techniques, but they are certainly not for publication.

The other classic NiCad problem not mentioned in the TI PCC NOTES article and not cleared by "zapping" is the so-called memory problem which results from repeated small discharges. The accepted cure is to perform several cycles of charging and deep discharging. Typically three cycles are needed for good recovery.

Palmer O. Hansen Jr.

(BB&P EDITOR'S NOTE: Palmer Hansen is the current editor of TI PCC NOTES, the newsletter of the TI Personal Calculator Club. This club supports the CC40 among other devices. The article referenced in Palmer's letter is reprinted below. It was originally published in 1982 and is from volume 7, number 6, page 10. The authors are Palmer Hansen Jr. and Maurice E. T. Swinnen.)

### THE ZAPPER

"...An internal short. .... Such a malfunction is typical of Nickel cadmium cells. No amount of charging will eliminate the short. The output of a "fully" charged battery pack becomes low.

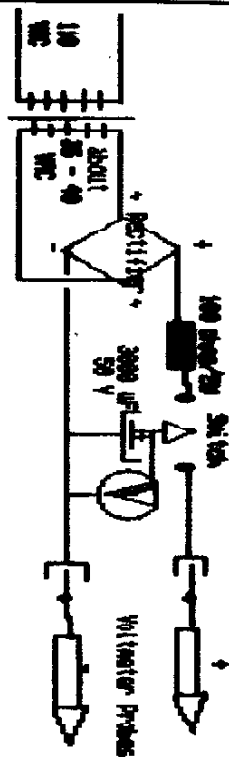
"I (Swinnen) have been annoyed several times, enough to start a "course of inquiry" as to the source of this annoyance. Dissecting a defective battery I found a well defined dendrite in its insides. While the dendrite proved to be conductive, it definitely was identified as the villain who shorted my battery. A simple application of about 30 volts evaporated said dendrite. Thusly the Zapper was born.

"The schematic diagram shows what is needed. A power supply, either one you put together from a discarded transformer and a bridge rectifier or an existing one, capable of supplying about 50 volts at a few milliamps will do. An electrolytic capacitor of at least 3000 uF at 50 volts has enough energy stored to zap even the most recalcitrant battery. A voltmeter (your VOM will do nicely if it has in the vicinity of 100000 ohms per volt internal impedance so as not to load too heavily the charged capacitor) is handy to find out when your capacitor is charged up and ready for the next zap. A switch allows you to charge the capacitor slowly when switched to the left and to discharge the capacitor quickly across the NiCad cell when turned to the right. To this end, drill three small holes, about 2 mm, on either side of the battery pack, THROUGH THE PLASTIC ONLY, so as to expose the heads (metal) of each cell. Your voltmeter probes come in handy to apply "zapping power" through these small holes to each cell. Sometimes, a couple of applications are needed. It is good practice to zap a known shorted cell a couple of times, then to charge it for an hour or so. If it still doesn't take a charge, zap again.

"I have had success in about 90% of all the cases, taken over more than forty batteries zapped."

NEXT PAGE

Circuit for  
"THE ZAPPER"



\*\*\*DONE\*\*

COMMENTS ABOUT LEANDRO BETTINELLI'S CHARR1 FILE  
by Charles Good

Leandro's 9 sector char file redefines the keyboard characters @ ( ) \* ( ) \* ( ) as special characters used in the Spanish language. This file is available on disk 566A of the Lima U6 software library, and is included with the disk or DOS versions of this newsletter. Using Funnelweb v4.31, this char file allows you to correctly DISPLAY ON SCREEN and PRINT TO THE PRINTER special Spanish language characters. You can load this character file from the Funnelweb v4.31 text editor by giving it a two character name such as SP putting it on the same disk or subdirectory as the rest of the Funnelweb TI Writer central menu files. Boot Funnelweb, go to a central menu, and press FCTN 9. Answer N to the QUIT prompt, and then specify SP (or whatever name you are using) as the new Text Editor char file. The new character file is immediately active when you go to the text editor and will correctly display all Spanish characters on screen.

To print the special characters to the printer, you have to use a software code to turn on the printer's Spanish language character set. This is the software code mentioned in the letter for the Epson LX800/B10. You can embed such a software code in your text and PF from the text editor, without having to bother with the Formatter. Another software code returns you to the normal keyboard characters. Switching on and off the printer's Spanish character set with these codes lets you print both the redefined Spanish characters and the undefined normal keyboard characters in the same body of text, as is done in Leandro's letter. UNFORTUNATELY, the Spanish character set of some printers does not include the "tilded a e i o and u". Such printer's known to me include the TI impact printer, Star Gemini 10X and 5610 printers, and the EPSON FX80. When using such printers with Leandro's Spanish character file, the tilded vowels will look ok on screen but will usually be printed as the ordinary keyboard characters @ ( ) \* by the printer.

You can access your printer's built in Spanish character set by typing the following software codes directly in the body of your text and then PF from the editor to the printer. The software codes for the TI impact printer (PHP2500) and for most EPSON printers (the EPSON MX80 has no Spanish character set) are typed exactly as follows, without leaving any spaces and without typing "-" or "/". A hyphen (-) means you type the indicated keys simultaneously.

CTRL-U/FCTN-R/CTRL-U/Shift-R/CTRL-U/Shift-6/CTRL-U turns on Spanish characters. The SHIFT 6 may be SHIFT some other letter in some printers.

CTRL-U/FCTN-R/CTRL-U/Shift-R/CTRL-U/Shift-2/CTRL-U returns to normal keyboard characters.

For Gemini 10X and 5610 printers, the codes are:

CTRL U/FCTN R/CTRL U/7/CTRL U/SHIFT 6/CTRL U to turn on Spanish characters, and

CTRL U/FCTN R/CTRL U/7/CTRL U/SHIFT 2/CTRL U turns off.

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Buenos Aires, February 21st, 1991.

Lina Users Group  
 P.O. Box 674  
 Venedocia, OH 45895  
 United States of Amrica

Dear Sirs:

Inside the disk I am enclosing a CHARA1 I have modified to be used in Spanish(it works with the Latin America character set found in the EPSON LX-800, 810 and others). It has symbols that are actually needed when you write in Spanish and were not included in the Spanish CHARA1 I have seen. These are: ¡ (open exclamation mark), ¿ (open interrogation mark), the vocals with accent mark (or tilde):á,é,í,ó,ú; the Ñ in capital (Ñ) and lower-case (ñ) and the u with diaeresis (ü) which is a symbol to reflect the sound of the "U" joined with the "E" and the "I" after an "G" (normally the "U" loses its sound under these circumstances).

The new characters are accessed through the use of the following keys:

CHARACTER	KEY
á - tilded "a"	"@": SHIFT 2
é - tilded "e"	"^": SHIFT 6
í - tilded "i"	"{": FCTN F
ó - tilded "o"	"}": FCTN G
ú - tilded "u"	"~": FCTN W
¡ - open exclamation mark	"[": FCTN R
¿ - open interrogation mark	"]": FCTN T
ü - "u" with diaeresis	"`": FCTN C
ñ - "ñ" in lower-case	" ": FCTN A
Ñ - "Ñ" in capital letters	"\": FCTN Z

And lastly, I access these characters via the editor of TI-WRITER using the CONTROL U characters: ESC + [ + R + chr 12.I put them at the beggining of every Spanish text (this runs for an EPSON LX-800 and 810 but I do not know about others).

The most important thing to note about this characters is that they are all necessary to write in correct Spanish. The TI-WRITER Spanish version lacked some of the very important characters now I introduce. I thought that this was a very small stuff to distribute over the world but when I saw that you are offering FUNNELWEB with the option of selecting some international character sets I decided to send my CHARA1 to you.

*Leandro R. Bettinelli*  
 Leandro R. Bettinelli  
 Casilla de Correo 39  
 1429 BUENOS AIRES  
 República Argentina

\*\*\*DONE\*\*

## MUSIC PRO VS. MUSIC MAKER

By: Andy Fresh, Lisa US

This is the "music titan faceoff." I've been asked to compare both TI's MUSIC MAKER and ASGARD's MUSIC-PRO. Why bother with the \$18 Music-Pro when you can have the relatively cheap Music Maker, which I've seen from \$3 to about \$12?

Well, Music-Pro offers many of the advanced features that TI seemed to have "forgot" to tell us about. Music-Pro uses a very unique "compiler" program that really has me sold on it. More on this feature follows.

The one true advantage that Music Maker has over Music-Pro is that, being a cartridge, it loads lightning quick. Music-Pro does take a while to load, but it is well worth a couple of minutes. However, when looking at a program that should let the user demand a lot from it, the speed factor can be ignored.

Even though you seem to have more control over the actual piece with Music Maker, setting up all of the options is both too time consuming and way too complicated for me. I consider myself a guy of average intelligence, and the Music Maker manual seems more complicated than the Editor/Assembler manual. Most of you know what I mean! It seems to me that this manual was written by one programmer of the cartridge talking to another one! This book was not designed for "users", as ANY manual should be.

Both programs are identical in that you can see the score you are currently working on, you can select a play mode, and adjust the speed of the song. Music Maker has more settings for the speed of the song, but Music-Pro displays much more of the screen (which looks better, and helps a LOT in finding a wrong note), and has a special "piano" mode, which lets you try different notes BEFORE you place them on the screen. Very handy when you want to experiment!

Music Maker uses icons to select the various note lengths. This may have seemed like a wonderful idea, and it does make sense visually, but it is too hard to write music that uses several different note lengths one after the other. You must keep moving the cursor back and forth from the icons to your actual score. With Music-Pro, you simply hold down the note key and it cycles through all the various lengths.

If there is one thing with Music Maker that is very simple to do, it is enter the actual note on the screen. With this program, all you need to do is move the note up and down the scale with the joystick. With Music-Pro, you need to press a key on the keyboard. This means you must print out the diagram showing which keys are which notes.

A very good and strong point of Music-Pro is the inclusion of examples. I feel that all utilities of this

sort should include several examples, both as aids in using the program, and as demonstrations of its power. The sample songs in Music-Pro demonstrate the program very well (by the way, if anyone knows who did the examples, please tell me! I'd like to credit this person!)

Both programs feature a hardcopy print out option. This lets you print out the score. Music Maker requires that you have a Thermal printer (I suspect that if you can get a disk copy of this program, you could use a sector editor to change the default printer name. Does anyone have such a copy of this program?) which is now very obsolete. The printout can't even display the whole screen (the manual admits this). With Music-Pro, you can use a "regular" (dot matrix/EPSON compatible) printer and obtain copies of your whole song. The only drawback is, you can only print out one voice of the three at a time.

Now, if any of you still thinks price outweighs all of this, here is the one feature of Music-Pro that blows Music Maker out of the competition. The compiler. TI failed to use the full capabilities of its wonderful machine! With Music-Pro, you enter in one voice at a time, and can save each (total of 3) as a file with a number prefix. For example, if I was writing "Yankee Doodle" in three parts, I would name the first voice YANKEE1, the second YANKEE2, and the third YANKEE3. Then, the compiler will ask which filename to use. You simply enter YANKEE and it scans the disk for that string. It then loads each file into memory and compiles them on top of each other.

Why is all this compiling an advantage? Although Music Maker allows you to enter three voices onto one score, instead of splitting them up, it's a lot easier to debug a score split as Music-Pro has done it. With Music-Pro, you get a lot less screen clutter, and you can find wrong notes easily. They don't get lost among all the other right notes! Also, Music Maker color codes the various voices (voice 1-blue, 2-red, 3-green). But tell me, what does this colorization mean to people with a monochrome monitor or black and white TV?

Some of you may be saying, "Music Maker has the neat 'Soundgraphs' feature." So what? Really, I haven't found any useful purpose for it. It seems to be more of a cheap gimmick than a programming aid.

To contradict myself for a second, those just beginning to music programming may want to obtain a copy of the Music Maker manual. Why? Because it contains a wonderful appendix. I applaud this feature of Music Maker because it helps you start out. You may also want to get a copy of the music tutorial from Tiger Cub Software or the one from the Tidewater Users Group. Both of these are good, but the Tidewater version is more expansive (it over fills one 95/90 floppy!)

All in all, there are quite a few bad or useless features

that make Music Maker a bad choice. Maybe if someone took up the task of writing a new and easy to understand manual, I could learn to like Music Maker. However, there are very few Music Maker users that I know of, and I strongly recommend Music-Pro. Music-Pro has the terrific manual typical of most ASGARD products. I have yet to be confused by an ASGARD manual. I say just spend the \$18 on Music-Pro and get someone with a Music Maker manual to photocopy the appendix section. You can see for yourself if you like, but Music-Pro makes me glad I put off buying Music Maker.

I hope that this article has helped clear up questions that people may have had over the differences between both music composing programs. Keep in mind that I am not trying to take sales away from dealers selling Music Maker, nor am I trying to boost the sales to ASGARD. I'm sure that TI has produced programs that are better than similar ones from ASGARD (but I sure haven't seen any yet!!)

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#### BREW'S VIEW: TI EDUCATION SOFTWARE

By: Andy Frueh

With all the hype recently concerning the lost TI modules and Fairware packages, I feel that a lot of 99'ers are forgetting that the stuff TI made in from 1982-83 is fantastic. Plus, everyone can use them. This stuff is still available, and it's great.

The below reviews use 1, 2, 3, or 4 stars (\$) to rate the software. 1 star is worthless, and 4 stars are great!

**Beginning Grammar (TI) \$\$\$** - Despite the name "Beginning," this isn't just for the wee ones! I recommend it for grades 2-9, it teaches nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, and the whole lot. And it DOES teach. You select which type of word (noun, verb, ect.) from a menu of six options. Each choice has a unique game/learning session. First, you are given a textbook-type instruction. Then you get to practice (i.e. game). For nouns, you have to move around into a box as to whether it is a person, place, thing, or not a noun. Verbs use an "elevator" game, and adjectives use a restaurant menu, ect.. Great use of graphics and music. It's worth buying.

**Milliken Math Sequences (Milliken) \$\$\$** - Milliken tried, and for the record, they didn't do too bad. There is a whole series, ranging from simple maths to percents and equations. Unlike most of the TI education cartridges, this one expects you to know the material before you use the module. The modules appears to be meant for review, not actually learning. You are asked first for your name, than the difficulty level. This level will decide how advanced the problems are. For example, on the Equations cartridge, level 1 would give a problem such as  $12 + x = 15$  while level 24 (one of the highest levels) would give a two-step equation.

When you get a problem right, an animated graphic appears. If you make one mistake, you are told it is wrong, and allowed to try again. If you are still wrong, the computer gives the answer for you. The screen displays the problem, the current level, the number of problems given on the current level, the number of problems done right on the level, and the percentage (take by dividing the # right by the total #). If you make too many mistakes, the program puts you down one level. If you do a good job, you can go up one level. There is no time limit to input your answers, unlike several math "games". Good, yet boring. These might not capture kids attention, and thus not be used. The ARE good practice, but only for those kids who need casual practice.

**DLM Math Series (DLM) \$\$\$** - These are arcade-style "educational" games. You'll probably find that they hold attention quite nicely, as they ARE games. You can enter an option screen that really lets the user perform on a suitable level that isn't too hard or too easy. You can select the difficulty (i.e. the speed of the game) from 1 (slow) to 9 (fast). Also, you can select how hard the problems get, the time to play from 1 to 5 minutes, and whether or not you'll use the joystick or keyboard. The theme used in this series of Addition, Subtraction, Mixed Adding/Subtracting, Division, Multiplication, or a Mix of those two, is about the same. You shoot at the bad guys who are out to get you. You have an answer located somewhere on your person, whether it be a robot or a dragon. Enemies are moving towards you, their speed depending on the difficulty level. Each enemy has a math problem printed on it. You have to shoot the enemy whose problem matches your answer. If you are wrong, the enemy advances, until they either destroy you or something you're protecting. The only real difference is in Alligator Mix (Adding/Subtracting) where apples float down a river to your alligator. If the apples have the right answer, the alligator's mouth needs to be opened. At the end, a tally board showing the current hits/misses and the best hits/misses is displayed. Good use of graphics, but lacking such creativity.

\*\*\*DONE\*\*\*

#### The Return of the Cartridge

By: Andy Frueh

A while ago in B, B P, I had an article ran comparing cassettes, disks, and modules (i.e. cartridges). I stated that modules are far better since they don't need to load, and anyone can use them. Lately, I've been noticing that a lot of software produced by the larger TI publishers (ASGARD for example), are producing more stuff on cartridges. Excellent! When I buy a cartridge, I don't worry about backup disks. Sure, they cost about \$10 more, but they last practically forever. I have cartridges from way back in 1985 that still work 5 YEARS LATER! Can that be said about disks?

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**CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL:  
THE BEST OF THE MBX SYSTEM GAMES**

reviewed by Charles Good  
Lima Ohio User Group

By their very nature, reviews of game software tend to be very subjective. With a review of "functional" or "productivity" software, the reviewer should be able to describe what the software does, and the review reader should then be able to judge if the reviewed software will fit the reader's needs. A game review isn't so easy. Game reviews are based mainly on how much the reviewer "enjoys" the game or how much "fun" it is for the reviewer to play the game. One person's "fun" may be "boring" to someone else. I have, for example, seen in exchange newsletters both rave and very nasty reviews of the SUPER MARIO BROTHERS 99/4a game advertised in recent issues of Micropendium. Thus, readers of this review may have reservations about my claim that, for me, CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL is the most fun of any of TI's officially released game modules. The only TI action game that comes close, in my opinion, is Thorn EMI's TENNIS. But this is not an official TI product.

Unfortunately, very few readers will ever get a chance to really dispute my claim. You can only play CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL if you have an MBX system, and very few 99/4a enthusiasts have ready access to this piece of hardware. Thus, although CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL can still be purchased brand new in TI factory sealed containers (L.L. Conner has new modules for \$15), most readers will just have to accept my word that this is a really neat game. For those of you who would like to SEE what you are missing, the Lima User Group has a VHS video tape demo of all the "MBX system required" software. Any user group of individual member of the Lima Ohio UG can obtain this video by sending a VHS tape and \$1 return postage, or by sending \$5 to me at P.O.Box 647, Venedocia Ohio 45894.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL uses all the special features of the MBX system, including voice recognition and all the special knobs and buttons on the MBX joystick. It is a two player game that requires two human players. There is no option for a single player to "play against the computer". The at bat player uses the MBX joystick to swing the bat and to control base running. The fielding player uses voice recognition and/or the MBX keypad to control pitching and the fielding of batted balls. The game is accompanied by very realistic sounds (from the monitor speaker) and voices (from the MBX control box speaker. The umpire's voice is particularly realistic. He says "foul" and "ball" at the appropriate times. He raises his right hand and says "steerike" when the pitcher throws a good one. When a strike out occurs, the umpire says "Strike three, yerrr out." When a fly ball is caught or a runner is tagged out, the umpire says "ouuut". You have to hear this ump to really appreciate his neat vocalization.

When a game starts you hear the song "Take me out to the ball game," and the fielding team walks out of the dugout to their fielding positions. The first batter then walks out of his dugout, assumes his position in the batter's box, and the umpire says "play ball". All of this initial player movement is shown on screen. The defensive player uses the MBX keypad to throw pitches, first selecting a speed (slow, medium, or fast) and then selecting the type of pitch. Pitch types can be either curve or fastball. If the pitch is a fastball, the defensive player can aim for the inside, middle, or outside of the plate by pressing the appropriate spot on the MBX keypad. To throw each pitch requires two presses of the MBX keypad (speed, then pitch type). If the batter takes the pitch, the defensive player says "pitcher" into the MBX microphone to have the catcher return the ball to the pitcher. If the ball is hit, the defensive player speaks into the MBX microphone the name of the player who should field the ball. If necessary, the defensive player then speaks into the MBX microphone the fielding position to which the fielding player should throw the ball. "Shortstop" followed by "first" might be used to throw out a batter. The following fielding positions are accessed with voice recognition: pitcher, first, second, third, home, shortstop, left, right, and centerfield. To tag a runner it is necessary to do more than just throw the ball to the fielder nearest the runner. The defensive player also has to press the TAG button on the MBX keypad. Although voice recognition is fun, it is not always accurate. Sometimes the computer misunderstands a spoken command and throws the ball to the wrong fielder. The MBX keypad provides an accurate alternative to verbal control of who has the ball. The keypad has a diagram of the playing field with all nine fielding positions indicated on the diagram. The defensive player can press the keypad to indicate who should field a batted ball or receive a thrown ball. The keypad can be used in addition to voice recognition to control fielding, or the voice recognition option can be declined at the beginning of the game and all fielding can be controlled from the keypad without worrying about the inaccuracies of using the MBX microphone.

All offensive play is controlled with the MBX joystick. To swing at a pitch use the trigger (comparable to the fire button on most joysticks). The force of the swing is infinitely variable using the knob on the top of the joystick arm. Clockwise adds power but makes it less likely you will actually hit the ball with your swing. Turning the knob fully counterclockwise produces a bunt. This knob turning can be done between pitches in a way that is hard to observe by the defensive player. Once you hit the ball can try for extra bases by pushing the joystick arm forward. As long as you push the joystick arm forward the batter (or lead runner) will advance around the basepath. Be careful or you will be tagged out! You can make the lead runner slide by pushing button #1 on the joystick. You can also make the lead runner "lead off" by pushing the joystick arm forward and then

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releasing it. This leads to all kinds of interesting possibilities. The pitcher can try to pick off the "leading off" lead runner, who must hustle back to his base by pulling the joystick arm back (toward you). The "leading off" runner can try to steal a base (ending with a slide by pushing button #1). The defense responds with a quick throw from the catcher or pitcher to the appropriate base that may result in the "stealing" baserunner being tagged out or caught in a rundown. This sort of creative base running (leading off, attempting to steal) adds a great of excitement to the game.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL is the only MBX software module that takes advantage of virtually all of the special features available with the MBX system. In graphics, excitement, and special features it is comparable to many of the better sports games available for the Nintendo game system.

**\*\*DONE\*\***

## TI-WRITER v 4.2

Review by: Andy Frueh, Lisa UG

This review is similar to the one that appeared in MICROpendium. Those that have read it may feel that this is a rehash of that review, and will probably wish to skip this article. Those that may not get MICROpendium, here is my review!

TI-Writer 4.2 is a program from RAG Software. It is advanced over previous TI-Writer "updates" in that it actually is a GREAT improvement over the original TI-Writer. There is much more speed, and extra Formatter commands. All the other features are basically unchanged, just speeded. There are three things that Funnelweb's TI-Writer clone can do that this version doesn't have. I hope that later version may include these. The first one is the beep that sounds when you are almost at the end of the line. This helps a lot when word wrap is off, so that you don't accidentally lose text. The bottom of the screen ruler is also missed. However, the one feature that I'd really like to see added is Funnelweb's improvement in the ShowDirectory. TI-Writer v 4.2 has a catalog much like Disk Manager, instead of the extra features found in Funnelweb's catalog.

For those who don't want to purchase an 80-column card, or a GENEVE, this version is for you. It loads either out of Extended BASIC, or out of the Editor/Assembler. You can load a neat configuration program in E/A. It lets you select tabs, margins, colors, and whether line numbers are on or off. It also looks for a CHARAI file on the disk, and actually merges it with the TI-Writer program! This eliminates the need to have a separate file. Even the actual program files have been shortened to a degree. There is also a configuration file for the Formatter. This does such things as setting up the default printer name, ect.

Now, I'll give a brief description of the added Formatter commands. These aid greatly in using TI-Writer, and are all things that Texas Instruments should have included in their original version.

PC n1 n2... (Printer Control) This sends printer control codes without having to transliterate them.

BU n, DB n, DM n, DR n (Define Underscore, Define Boldface, Define Mail list, Define Required space) This command allows you to reprogram the characters used to get these commands. For example you can replace the for underscore with \*.

AI (As is text) Actually, this is the same as the NF command with the exception that it leaves the left margin alone. The FI command will set up regular formatting.

CP n (Conditional Page eject) If you have only a few more lines on a page, this command will hold the page break.

CF filename (Chain File) This command will allow you to link several files, and waits for you to insert a new disk. This means that you can print out text of any length you want, and is limited only to the number of disks you own!

QQ (Quit) If you enter this in the command mode, you can quit directly instead of using Q to quit and then press E to exit.

CTRL , and . These two will allow you to jump to opposite ends of your text. CTRL, will jump to line one and CTRL. will jump to the end.

In the Formatter, at the "Pause at end of page?" prompt, you can enter "L" and the Formatter won't put any line feeds in at the top of the page. This is useful for letter heads and when you are writing text that should take less than one page.

According to Harry Barshear, who reviewed this program in MICROpendium (April 89), he couldn't get the AI command to work with his MX-1000. This program is available from R. A. Green of RAG Software for a mere \$10. Of course, you don't get the complete TI-Writer manual. You do get the configuration programs, loaders, and explanations of the expanded formatting commands. Compare that to the cost of the original TI-Writer (\$10 to \$20) and you see that you have nothing to lose (but definately something to gain)!

Send your money to:  
RAG Software/Mr. R. A. Green  
1032 Chantenay Dr.  
Gloucester, Ontario  
Canada K1C 2K9

**\*\*DONE\*\***