

# BITS, BYTES & PIXELS

LIMA 89/4A USERS GROUP



March 1992

Volume 8, #3

## THE NEXT LIMA MULTI USER GROUP CONFERENCE MAY 15/16, 1992: REED HALL, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY LIMA CAMPUS, LIMA OHIO

This all TI/Geneve Conference is TOTALLY FREE. There is no admission charge and no charge for user groups, individuals, and dealers who want tables in the exhibit area.

### Tentative schedule:

#### Friday May 15:

4PM-8PM Setup time. We set up tables and chairs and hook up the computer and recording equipment in the seminar rooms. A designated representative of any user group can copy software from the Lima User Group software library during these hours once we get some computer systems set up. Three copies of our library and three computer systems will eventually be available for this purpose. There is no charge for this service, but user group representatives are expected to provide their own blank disks.

If you arrive in Lima Friday evening come on out and enjoy the fellowship. This is a good time to meet old friends and TI personalities on a one-to-one basis, and maybe you can give us a little help with the tables and chairs.

#### Saturday May 16:

7:30AM. Doors open. Set up time till 9AM for those arriving who didn't set up the previous evening. Facilities for user group representatives to copy disks from the Lima User Group software library will be available all day.

9AM Formal presentations begin.

11AM-1PM. Food service, immediately adjacent to the exhibit area, will be open for lunch.

6PM Conference ends. Disassemble everything. Clean up and return everything to its proper place so that you can't tell by looking that anyone has been there!

8PM till?? Informal get together at a nearby restaurant.

### Speaker List:

As of mid February, the following individuals have each indicated an interest in giving a formal presentation. Additions to this list are expected. All formal presentations will be video taped and the tapes made available to the TI community at nominal cost.

Ken Gladystovski	Barry Traver
Jack Sughrue	Bud Mills
Eunice Spooner	Bruce Harrison

### Hotel Information:

These hotels have responded to our request for

information and have quoted us the following room rates, all of which are "plus tax" which is 12%. Call the hotel directly (don't use the hotel chain's national 800 number) and state that you are attending the TI computer conference at the Ohio State University campus in order to get these special rates. These rates are on a space available basis. We have not reserved blocks of rooms.

HOLIDAY INN LIMA, 1816 Harding Highway. 419-222-0004. Drive time to campus- 5 minutes. Flat rate \$62 per room for up to four people. Facilities are comparable to those of the Holiday Inn used for the Chicago TI faire.

KNIGHTS COURT (formerly the Howard Johnson Lodge). 1430 Bellfontaine Ave. 419-227-2221. Drive time to campus- 5 minutes. \$33 for either one or two persons per room, each additional person \$5.

MOTEL 6, 1800 Harding Highway. 419-228-2525. Drive time to campus- 5 minutes. \$26-\$44 depending on number of people in room.

DAYS INN LIMA, 1250 Neubrecht Rd. 419-227-6515. Drive time to campus 10 minutes. \$26.95 for one person. \$30.95 for two-four people in one room.

QUALITY INN, 1201 Neubrecht Rd. 419-222-0596. Drive time to campus-10 minutes. \$34.50 flat rate per room.

ECONO LODGE, 1210 Neubrecht Rd. 419-228-4251. Drive time to campus-10 minutes. \$35 flat rate (up to 4 per room). Reservations must be made 2 weeks in advance to get this rate.

KNIGHTS INN, 2285 N. Eastown Rd. 419-331-9215. Drive time to campus-20 minutes. A good choice for those arriving from the west. \$30.95 for 1 person. \$36.95 for 2 persons in one room. Microwaves and refridgerators \$2 additional per room. Kitchenettes \$9 additional per room.

BEST WESTERN, 175 & Bluelick Rd. (exit 130). 419-221-0114. Driving time to campus- 15 minutes. Full featured with olympic size indoor pool. Rates depend on room size. 1 person \$39-\$55. 2 persons \$42-60. 3 or 4 persons \$48-65.

Some other area hotels that did not quote us specific rates. Our estimated drive time to the OSU campus are indicated.

COLONIAL MOTEL 419-223-2015 (17 minutes to campus)

ECONOMY INN 419-222-1000 (6 minutes to campus)  
DIELMAN'S MOTEL 419-225-2806 (6 minutes to campus)  
EAST GATE MOTEL 419-229-8085 (6 minutes to campus)  
IMPERIAL INN 419-228-4231 (10 minutes to campus)  
MILANO INN 419-228-2525 (12 minutes to campus)  
DAYS INN OF WAPAKONETA 419-738-2184 (25 minutes)  
HOLIDAY INN OF WAPAKONETA 419-738-8181 (25 minutes)

### TOURIST INFORMATION:

Write or phone the LIMA/ALLEN COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU, 147 N. Main Lima OH 45801 (419-222-6045). Indicate you are interested in attending the TI Computer conference in May 15/16 and they will promptly mail you a package of informative brochures.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

To request free tables in the exhibit area, to request time for a formal presentation, and for any other information (except tourist information), write the Lima User Group at P.O. Box 647 Venedocia Ohio, or phone Dave Szippel (419-228-7109) or Charles Good (419-667-3131) evenings.

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

### Scott Foresman Educational Modules

By: Andy Frueh, Lima UG

The modules I would like to discuss here aren't the ones everyone has heard about. There are five that I am aware of that were released in late 1983, and as a result, only a few were actually distributed. They aren't really "lost", but they would fall under the category "limited release". As far as I can tell, some of these WERE sold by Triton. All five are math related and do not have a PHM number. They carry Scott, Foresman's own number. I should note that smaller reviews of these educational modules appeared in a previous newsletter.

FR06 JUMP #31177 - This deals with number orders. A sample problem would be "Give one less...52" The answer would be 51. Like most of these modules, the "player" is timed. Here's where my two-cents comes into play. In my opinion, it doesn't matter how fast a student gets the problems finished. If they get a right answer, that should be enough. Sometimes to get a perfect score, you have to think and type in an answer in two seconds or less. Not many kids can type that fast.

In this particular game, if you answer the question correctly, your frog earns jumps and collects lilly pads. If you get 20 you win. Answer in 1-2 seconds and you get 3 pads, 3-5 sec. gives you 2, and 6 or more seconds yields 1.

The graphics are merely acceptable. Better than no graphics at all, I suppose. There is no teaching or instruction, only drill practice. The real learning has to come from elsewhere. This is not as good as some of the others.

PICTURE PARTS #31180 - This drills basic math skills...adding and subtracting, for example. No polynomial equations here! This one is EXTREMELY cute. I'm sure you remember the Facemaker program that Spinnaker released. Well, this is similar but much more educational (however, this one still is drill-only). If you get a correct answer, you get to pick a part of a face. You get two tries per question (I believe that is the same as all other S, F games). This one, I assume, is for much younger students than some of these other games. Perhaps this is the reason that this game is NOT timed! The graphics are good, but the color choices leave much to be desired. Resolution falters only because the colors are mis-matched. A monochrome monitor might give a much better picture.

PYRAMID PUZZLER #31186 - You are at the bottom of a pyramid trying to get to the top. The computer (or another player) has the same goal. If you get the answer to a problem right, you use the arrow keys to move around the pyramid. Diagonal moves are not allowed. If you get a wrong answer, you don't move and the computer gets to do so twice. If you land on the computer, you bump it back a square. If it lands on you, you must answer a problem correctly. If your answer isn't right, you get bumped. If it is right, you bump the computer. The music and graphics are nice.

STAR MAZE #31183 - This one drills division and is cute. This one is also timed, but there are no real penalties for taking along time to answer questions. The difficulty level selects the time you have to complete the entire game. The object is to answer problems and move an alien through a maze to get home while earning points. If you get a problem right, you are allowed to move until you reach a star. Three types of stars exist. One gives 5 points, another 10, and the last type 20. The 20 point or GOODID star also doubles the value of stars touch after that. BADID stars bounce you somewhere further from the end of the maze which is your home planet. Graphics are OK and the game may be cute enough to keep kids occupied.

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### REVIEWS OF TI EDUCATION MODULES

by Phillis Peyton, grade 5 classroom teacher  
reprinted from IUG NEWSLETTER September 15, 1982

### READING ROUNDUP

The Reading Roundup module provides instruction and practice in three reading skills: figures of speech, work meanings, and idioms. While the stories are written simply enough to be read by a student in third grade, the skills are sophisticated enough to challenge a sixth grade student. The module could be used to provide remedial help for a student in junior High School without making him feel that he must read juvenile material.

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**EDB&P EDITOR'S NOTE:** The next two paragraphs provide a good description of the general structure of most of the **READING** modules, including the 1983 "rare" cartridges. Two activities are provided for each skill. The "Study it" activity provides instruction through examples presented in a colorfully illustrated story. The student's rate of reading will not be a factor contributing to his success or failure at learning the skill. He is allowed to pace himself, pressing "enter" when he has had ample time to finish reading the material on the screen. In the "Study It" activities for each skill, the student is given opportunities to respond, but scores are not tallied. A correct response causes an appropriate signal such as "Right" to flash on the screen. The signal is accompanied by a catchy melody. Incorrect responses result in an opportunity to make a second choice or, by pressing "Aid", to reread the material and then try again. A second incorrect response causes the correct answer to be shown to the student. The student is allowed to learn to improve his reading skills without fear of failure when he makes a mistake or is learning by trial and error.

The "Try It Out" activity for each skill contains paragraph length stories and allows the student to type in a character's name, thus personalizing the stories for him. The name will appear in each of the stories in the activity. At the conclusion of the activity, a score is shown.

The figure of speech taught in Activities 1 and 2 are similes and metaphores. Both are used to show comparisons and are common literary techniques used to cause the reader to form a mental picture. Similies use the word *like* or *as*. Examples of similies are:

1. He is as gentle as a newborn deer.
2. The kite soared like an eagle.

Metaphores form the comparison without the words *like* or *as*. An example of a metaphore is: What a railroad engine of an ox!

The student is expected to learn to tell what two things are being compared and how they are similar. The words "simile" and "metaphor" are not used in the module.

In activities 3 and 4 the student is shown how to use context clues to determine the meanings of words that are unknown or have multiple meanings. It is not always possible or even desirable to stop and use a dictionary every time we encounter an unfamiliar word or a familiar word used in a new and different way. The ability to use context clues is an invaluable aid to reading with comprehension.

Activities 5 and 6 give the student an opportunity to learn the meanings of some common idioms that our English language is so full of. "Sitting on pins and needles" is an example of an idiom used to indicate nervousness. Many adults do not realize the difficulty a child can have in understanding the figurative language that he hears and reads. The young child's language is completely literal -- He means what he says, and he says what he means. Since our language makes use of so many idioms, the knowledge of their meanings can result in higher comprehension scores for the student.

All three skills are combined in activity 7 as a culminating activity.

The four lengthy stories all follow a "Western" theme accompanied by appropriate music in keeping with the title of the module -- Reading Roundup. I highly recommend its use for improving reading skills, particularly by the student in the intermediate grades (4-6).

## DIVISION 1

Division 1 command module created by Scott Foresman and Company for Texas Instruments will be an invaluable aid in the classroom as well as in the home. Because it is a complete text on division facts, its use will cover a wide range of ages and levels of ability. Division is commonly introduced in grade three, and the facts are reviewed through grade six. Grades three through six, then, are the levels at which this module will be used most extensively. It will also be useful to challenge a younger gifted student and as a remedial tool for those students above sixth grade who have not achieved mastery of division facts.

The nine activities available for selection are:

1. Meaning of Division
2. Divisors of 1, 2, and 3
3. Divisors of 4, 5, and 6
4. Divide using :-- (the division sign)
5. Practice and Paint
6. Divisors of 7, 8, and 9
7. How many boxes?
8. Divide With a Remainder
9. Make a Picture

The activities proceed in sequence from the least difficult to most difficult. Each activity may be worked independently of all others. However, the ability to work successfully at each activity depends upon the mastery of skills that have been introduced in the preceding activities.

By working through Activity 1 the student will receive an excellent explanation of what actually happens during the division process. This writer has known students who had memorized division facts and still lacked an understanding of the concept of division. The explanation on the module is made without using the words "divide" or "division", and without using either of the signs normally used to work division problems.

In Activities 2 and 3 the use of the sign / (the "division sign") and the number sentence form are introduced. When the working form is introduced in Activity 4, using the vertical format and the sign :---, the transition is made simple by showing both forms and actually moving each number from the number sentence to its proper position in the new format.

The relationship between multiplication and division is stressed in Activity 6 by showing a "check" in which the divisor and the quotient are multiplied. an incorrect answer causes the complete multiplication table for that divisor to be displayed on the screen.

The concept of remainders is illustrated in Activity 7 by evenly grouping and having "leftovers". The word "remainder"

is used in Activity 8 and the working form is shown. The student learns to give the quotient and the remainder.

At the onset of each activity the student may choose to see one or more excellent teaching examples. Exceptions to this are Activities 5 and 9 because they were designed to be checkup activities.

The illustrations on the computer screen are more effective than even very attractive textbook illustrations. The book's pictures are stationary, while items on the screen may actually be repositioned to show the grouping process. The learner receives a simulation of using manipulatives, a concrete approach required by many children before they can proceed to more abstract learning. Through the use of the voice synthesizer the student hears the equation as he sees what is taking place. The result is that he is receiving information in three modes: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. By involving all of these senses in the learning process, retention chances are much greater. DIVISION 1 is sure to be a popular and enjoyable aid to learning.

READING FUN

Reading Fun is Scott Foresman's reading skills module for the younger child in the primary grades. The module contains four illustrated stories accompanied by musical background. At the onset of each story three words that are possibly new ones for the student are shown on the screen. The child may, by pressing the number next to any of the words, hear it pronounced and see it used in a sentence. When the word appears later in the story, he may receive the same help by pressing "Aid".

The first three stories provide instruction in one skill each. After the child has had several opportunities to respond to questions in a non threatening way, he is invited to try out what he has learned. He is then given a series of ten questions over some short passages of reading. At the conclusion of the activity, the child's score is shown. If he responded correctly on the second try, he is given credit for a correct answer. He has the opportunity to look at the text of the story again before he attempts to correct his answer.

The first story deals with problems and how people solve them. The child learns to identify the problem from a list of three possibilities. He also selects the solution that was used in the story.

The second skill is labeled "Why things happen." Educators usually refer to it as the ability to distinguish cause and effect.

Thirdly, the child learns to watch for clues that tell how characters feel. He must know the meanings of some common words that describe people's feelings, moods, and emotions. Some of the words used are: tired, happy, angry, and upset. The answers to some questions are stated directly in the story. Other questions such as, "How did Ann probably feel?" require that the child draw some conclusions or use some inference skills.

The fourth story allows the child to use what he has

learned about all three skills. Questions asked are:

What is the problem?

What caused the problem?

At this point the child is asked to pick one of the three main characters to solve the problem. He is given a choice of three different actions that character might take in attempting to solve the problem. After his choices have been made, he is told, "Now let's see what happens next." the text of the story continues according to the child's choices and he can then see for himself whether or not he has chosen wisely. He may try as many of the nine possible solutions as he desires. By choosing possible solutions to these problems, a child can begin to learn to predict the outcomes when certain courses of action are taken, and to think about the possible consequences for actions that people take.

These and the other skills dealt with in the module are referred to as reading skills. Having mastered them, a child will almost certainly become a better reader. They might be more appropriately named, however, as thinking and living skills.

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\* Published by Lima OH \*

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\* ADDRESS- P.O. Box 647 \*

\* Venedocia Ohio \*

\* 45894 \*

\* Published monthly except \*

\* July and August \*

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\* GROUP OFFICERS \*

\* President-Susan Cummings \*

\* 419-738-3770 \*

\* Vice Pres-Peter Harklau \*

\* 419-234-8392 \*

\* Treasurer-Leonard Cummings \*

\* 419-738-3770 \*

\* Newsletter editor and \*

\* Librarian-Charles Good \*

\* 419-667-3131 \*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Bits, Bytes &amp; Pixels

\*\*\*\*\* TI-101 \*\*\*\*\*  
OUR 4/A UNIVERSITY

by Jack Sughrue  
Box 459  
E. Douglas MA 01516  
#2 Holism

Happy New Century

Last time, Class, in our TI-101 classroom we introduced the historical perspective of public education in a few strong words. We stated that some of the wrongs with our schools today is the profiteering by the big book industry who would like all our children to be into some kind of large-scale, lock-stepping curriculum as devised by them. [Close to 100% of all the schools in America have curriculums established by publishers and screwed into place by administrative bureaucrats. They are not created by the teachers, the trained professionals who work directly with the children. Once in a while - such as the school in which I presently teach 3rd graders - a school is blessed with an intelligent, child-oriented principal who is not afraid to empower her teachers. But this scenario is truly rare in our country.]

Which brings me back to THE REVOLUTION in education I discussed during our last class. This is the revolution of holism in education. It is an international grass roots approach to learning. Whole Language is the most prominent movement in the revolution. It is a philosophy that asks how children learn and then seeks ways to provide those opportunities for the child. It is, in short, a research-based philosophy and an intellectual attitude and a creative style. But what is it, specifically.

Well, let's look at product results first, although Whole Language Educators will be the first to say that process rather than product is the goal of W.L.:

In the standard achievement tests scores given world-wide the U.S. ranks 47th. On those same tests New Zealand is 1st. New Zealand has close to 100% of its teachers, K-12, using W.L. New Zealand has the highest rate of literacy of any country in the English-speaking world.

Now back to how W.L. works and what it is. In the U.S. we have had a long history of process methodology. Unfortunately, it has never been a part of mainstream education. Like jazz, as musically intricate as any form of music on the planet, has never become the mainstream of American culture. But there were many educators who understood how children think and how children learn. These people have taught and have written books and have done research. But, except for the unusual teacher or an extremely rare school staff, few people had access to these ideas and materials and methodologies. Such things as the Teacher-Writer Collaborative in New York, the Bay Area Project in California, and the Framingham Writing Project in Massachusetts. These were a few of the isolated programs and projects and groups that sought to integrate the curriculum by starting a Square One and helping the students learn from their own strengths in a positive "unending" environment

which tied various aspects of learning into complex, relevant activities. Thinking on a large scale, understanding analogies, making connections, discovering solutions.

To explain another way, Class:

Most of us grew up learning little isolated skills. We learned to Capitalize on the 9th week of school, let's say, in the 8th Grade.

Following that week, during which we'd be forced to learn the 60-odd capitalization rules for Friday's test, we'd leap into a couple days of hyphens and dashes, before going on to colons and semi-colons, and so on.

Isolated. Irrelevant. Boring. And not a good learning environment.

A publisher's dream and an administrator's idea of Heaven. Because the kids can be tested on each of these isolated pieces, numbers can be attached to their names. These numbers can then be sorted into descending order and grades issued based on this garbage.

This has nothing to do with learning, with life-long skills, with internalizing and ownership. This has to do with outside forces trying to jam 19th Century methods down the throats of the people who will be running the 21st Century.

Bad stuff.

Take almost any English book you can get your hands on, and you will not find any writing activities (or few except in the most recent books and then as a way to thwart the movement away from texts). The books tell, tell, tell, tell how YOU are supposed to know this rule and that. The books test, test, test. They introduce the English materials in the most inane ways. For the most part, traditional English text books are sappy, to say the least, and anti-education to be really honest. And, except in a splashy, surface way haven't really changed since McGuffey's Readers of a century ago.

At the time of the Industrial Revolution the sum of human knowledge doubled about every 150 years; at the turn of this century it doubled about every 75 years; after World War II every 25 years; in 1990 every 9 months!

We still need to teach our kids skills, but we need to teach them DIFFERENT skills, better skills, more relevant skills, as "coverage" is impossible. [By the time a science book is researched and written and edited and printed and sold and distributed and finally used in a classroom it is already quite a few years out of date. And this is not just for info about our Solar System, for example, since the Voyager trips; it is about dinosaurs, which we know more about today than we did last year. Information progresses at a quantum rate, and this is true in every area of our real as well as academic lives.] Coverage is impossible, Class. Remember that. It's going to be on your next test.

We need to teach our kids HOW to think. Informational regurgitation is no longer relevant as we swing into the 21st Century. We need to teach our kids HOW to think, so they can be prepared for the future. And no matter how much we may long for the good ol' simple days of yore, they just ain't a'comin' back. We are - for better or worse - in the

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## Bits, Bytes &amp; Pixels

Flartnnir Age. And our kids, if they are going to compete with the rest of the world or if they are just simply going to keep America great, have got to become thinkers. They've got to become thinkers who can use the tools of the future NOW.

Einstein (Albert) was asked for his phone number by a reporter. He looked it up in the phone book, astounding the reporter. Einstein explained that it would be foolish to clutter up his brain with anything that could be looked up.

If Einstein felt he should not be cluttering up his brain with useless information, maybe we could all take heed.

Let's give our kids and everyone else's kids a headstart for the next century by supporting our overworked teachers (instead of bashing them) and joining forces with them to provide a new environment in schools and in our homes. Let's advocate FOR our kids and their teachers. On 60-MINUTES, recently, Andy Rooney said the real problem with education today is not the teachers and not the schools but that "there are too many dumb kids," and, worse, too many dumb parents who don't prize education, who don't value learning (thus, too many dumb kids). I believe, truly, that we can get rid of this dumbness (which Steve Allen calls "DUMBTH" in a wonderful book by that name about the state of American thinking) by turning off the electronic babysitters (TVs and Mintendos) and get the kids into electronic tutors (computers) and maybe even (gasp!) books!

And here we are at the point of these articles: our TIs and what they can do to reverse this terrible dumbing trend in our country.

We'll take this up in our next class by introducing you to some of our brave TI-World educational experts and what they have offered and how we can use their gifts.

Your homework is to dust off all your your educational cartridges (which includes TI-WRITER, of course, as well as TERMINAL EMULATOR and MINI-MEMORY (think about it), as well as DRAGON MIX, READING RALLY, SCHOLASTIC SPELLING, and BEGINNING GRAMMAR). You don't have to pass in any papers next session, but you must be prepared to present a 10-minute talk on at least two of your selected cartridges, being prepared to defend its educational relevance to the child of the future.

Be early for TI-101 next time and get a good seat up front. Adios.

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

TI Greats - Part I ASGARD

By: Andy Frueh, Lima U6

First of all, let me say that this series of articles is NOT meant to be biased. I will be discussing several TI companies (any that send me information). This is meant to be factual and I do not personally endorse any of these products. In my opinion, these are some of the best and largest TI companies. I have contacted a few already, and at

the time of this writing, I have received replies from two. If you are or represent a TI company and I haven't contacted you for information (money is short and postage rates climb!) please feel free to send me any information available, including available products and a history of your company.

Let's get started.

I wrote Asgard requesting information on the history and product information. What follows is the main information from the reply I received.

Asgard was started some 9 years ago. Because of that, Manager Chris Rohhitt was unable to fully remember all of the details. He said that he wrote an article on that, will update it, and forward me the information. When I receive that, I will publish that as well.

I was wondering how he got together with Harry Brashear. Harry has taken up a partnership with Asgard. The team of Harry and Chris has made Asgard a very efficient operation. A lot of people know that, but I wanted to know how the partnership came about. Chris wrote, "I've known Harry now for around 5 years. We first met when he called me up out of the blue, before he had written much for MICROpendium, and asked for copies of programs to review. We hit it off and have been friends since. One of the things I really respect about Harry is that he has always told me exactly what he thinks of things, and never lets a little thing like friendship cloud his opinions (smile).

Over the years he has been an occasional beta-tester, one of my tougher critics (he really slammed me about my manuals), and has made lots of suggestions - some of which were actually turned into products."

Confirming many reports, the Press word processor is more or less permanently shelved. Orders were refunded about 2 years ago. Charles Earle, the author of Telco and Press, is involved with another company writing an auto-parts database for a major auto manufacturer. Chris said that Asgard DOES have plans for the word processor market. Their current catalogs list many such products.

I started asking questions about their module making. Asgard currently has 3 - Typewriter 99, Tris, and Edu-Pack. Chris says that cartridge making requires "desire" and "technical knowledge", but also states that if an individual is determined enough, Asgard can help with the writing of a cartridge program. A new terminal emulator named Link should be available by now. Two newer cartridges are in the works. I'll have to tell you about them. They're VERY special.

First of all, let me state that I have received NO promises that these will be released. No guarantees. The first of these modules is a version of the Music Maker Converter. The converter is similar to the never-released

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version of Music Maker. This program can take a Music Maker file and resave it as many types of files, including Extended BASIC, and E/A source files.

The second module is called Extended BASIC III. Before I hear any groans ("Oh no, ANOTHER version of XB"), let me tell you what I know about this version makes it seem worth looking into. It is a total re-write, written in GPL. According to Asgard, there are many new extensions and a 35-45% speed increase. The software is finished and will run in GRAM devices except for the GRAMCracker, but Asgard needs to wait for special 64K boards to turn XBIII into a cartridge, so there is no release date. Asgard may want to look into something no other XB upgrade has ever offered (to my knowledge). I bet more XB (the original) owners would grace XBIII if they could get credit for turning in their older modules.

I had to ask about Ken Gilliland and his fairly new Notung Software. I asked Chris if he felt other authors would follow suit. He says that "...very few people make enough money from selling software to pay for all the extra time it takes to run your own company...entrepreneurship is kind of like a bug that bites you - an urge to put your stamp on something. This doesn't mean you have to be egotistical to start a software company...If any of my authors want to start their own software companies...I wouldn't try to stop them if they did (unless their work infringes on our non-disclosure contracts)." This is obviously true. In a constantly shrinking market, it must be hard to start a new company. It would sort of be like opening up another fast food hamburger joint. Who needs one? The market size is getting smaller in relation to the number of suppliers.

Those who have more recent catalogs (I should note here, that Asgard has a whole series of catalogs, each one a different theme such as Games, Home and Business, or Utilities, ect.) may have seen that Asgard carries three Commodore games. I found it fascinating that Chris would distribute a product by the competition. That would be similar to Burger King selling a Big Mac, wouldn't it? "I decided to offer a few of their items because I believed they were good programs that some people have never heard of, and we could make a few dollars from selling. No company makes all of the good stuff available, and this is neither the first, nor the last time, that I've sold products from other companies along with our product line." What a FABULOUS attitude!

One of the last things I asked was what we could expect in the future. Chris was hesitant to give any details, possibly learning from Press. At any rate, though I didn't get what I asked for, I understand his position. "...I think you'll see updates of some of our existing products, a number of interesting new games, quite a bit of new graphics software and packages, and a few utilities. We are also

planning more home/business programs. We keep busy - we usually release between 15-25 new products a year."

My sincere thanks goes out to Chris, and any other company willing to take time out to answer such questions. It clearly shows how personal and friendly TI product suppliers can be. While most large corporations would have answered my letters with catalogs or form mail, Chris actually wrote responses to my questions. Of course, some of this is due to the fact that the TI market is small. I don't think it's fair to say Chris runs a small business. Especially when you compare the size of, say, Chrysler, to all the potential car buyers, then look at Asgard (and all the others) and compare the size of his operation to the number of TI buyers. I hope Asgard is around for another 9 years!

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

### THE HEX-BUS CONNECTION:

By Dan H. Eicher

One facet of the whole TI saga that has been largely overlooked is TI's introduction of a new bus standard in the last days of their involvement within the mass consumer market. That new bus was called the Hex-Bus.

The Hex-Bus was planned as a standard bus throughout the TI family of low end computers. The computers that had built in Hex-Bus interfaces were: 99/B, 99/2, and the CC-40 (CC stands for Compact Computer), and the 99/4(a) was to have an interface cable. For one hundred dollars you received a box the plugged into the i/o port of your console and at the other end had a Hex-Bus plug.

What was so grand about this new scheme was the peripherals themselves, some of the peripherals that were actually produced were: disk drives, wafer tape drives, rs-232 interfaces, printer plotters, printers, and video interfaces.

These peripherals were VERY compact, all of them fit on a 4X4" printed circuit board. All Hex-Bus units could be used on ANY computer that had a hex bus port! That means that you could use your rs-232 on your 99/B and when you went on a camping trip you just unplugged it and took it along with your CC-40.

Several years after TI went out of the home computer market, they produced the TI-74 Basic Calc (which was such like a trimmed down CC-40) & the TI-95 Procalc (this is a

NEXT PAGE

much improved model over TI's original 95 programmable line ). Each of these new computers had a new I/O port on the back that looked much different than the old Hex-Bus port. TI slipped and they put out a technical reference manual for the TI-74 (I say slipped because we all know how TI likes to give out technical information....not at all). I believe you can still order one of these TI-74 technical reference manuals from TI Cares.

When people got these technical manuals and started to look them over they were surprised to find out the Hex-Bus was back, only in a different package. In fact all that needs to be done to hook up a Hex-bus peripheral to one of these new computers is change the pin configuration (nothing has to be added, just the wires need to be moved around and put in a new package). The only thing new to this new bus (TI calls it, a Dock-bus port), is a power line has been added so a peripheral unit can provide power to either the 74 or 95. This was done because TI did NOT set up a power adapter jack in either of these two computers, so it was battery powered only. If you bought their printer and plugged it into a power supply, the power supply would provide power to both the printer and the host computer. This will not work with the older Hex-bus peripherals, nor is the CC-40 designed to accept power from one of the new Dock-bus peripherals.

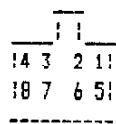
One of the major draw backs to the CC-40 was that there was not a built in cassette tape interface, and Hex-Bus disk drives and Wafer tape units are all but non-existent, this leaves the user without any means to save programs on a permanent media. The 74 & 95 also did not have cassette interfaces built in so TI sold a unit that plugged into the Dock-Bus that allowed you to save programs to cassette.

At first many CC-40 owners were overjoyed, thinking they at last had found a solution to their mass storage dilemma, but it was not to be. TI did not build the code into either the CC-40 or the cassette interface that would allow the CC-40 to save to tape using this device. Although TI did build a version of the CC-40 called the CC-40+ that had a built in cassette interface, these unfortunately were only built for use "in-house".

I would like to note that even today, many CC-40 and TI-74 see service daily. TI wrote several custom programming packages for these two machines. Different government and private agencies send their employees into the field armed with a CC-40 or TI-74 and custom software, tailored to the type of calculations they do. I have even heard of a automated car wash in Germany that runs off of a CC-40.

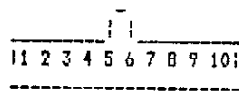
I have included a copy of the shape and pin ins/outs of the Hex-Bus and Dock-bus for any who may be interested.

Hex-Bus:



Pin	Purpose
1	D0 Data-LSB
2	D1 Data
7	D2 Data
8	D3 Data-MSB
5	HSK - Hand Shake
3	BAV - Bus available
4	GND
6	Protective GND

Dock-Bus



Pin	Purpose
1	System Power distribution out
2	System Power distribution in
3	D0 Data-LSB
4	D1 Data
5	D2 Data
6	D3 Data-MSB
7	HSK - Hand Shake
8	BAV - Bus available
9	System Reset
10	GND

For you experimenters here is the color coding of the HexBus Port:

Pin	Color	Pin	Color
1	Grey	5	Brown
2	Yellow	6	Green
3	Red	7	Black
4	Orange	8	Blue

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

Extended BASIC AVG - A Tinygram  
By: Andy Frueh, Lima US

I don't know how many teachers or bowlers we have out there. Face it, sooner or later, everyone has to average out SOMETHING. Prices, scores, grades, whatever. This program is simple. You can do the same thing very easily on a calculator. But it does show beginners how the TI can keep track of how many INPUTs were made, and compute answers based not only on WHAT was input, but how many items were input. It also shows how you can take a string from INPUT and turn it into a numerical value to be computed. Again, this isn't a lesson for the veterans.

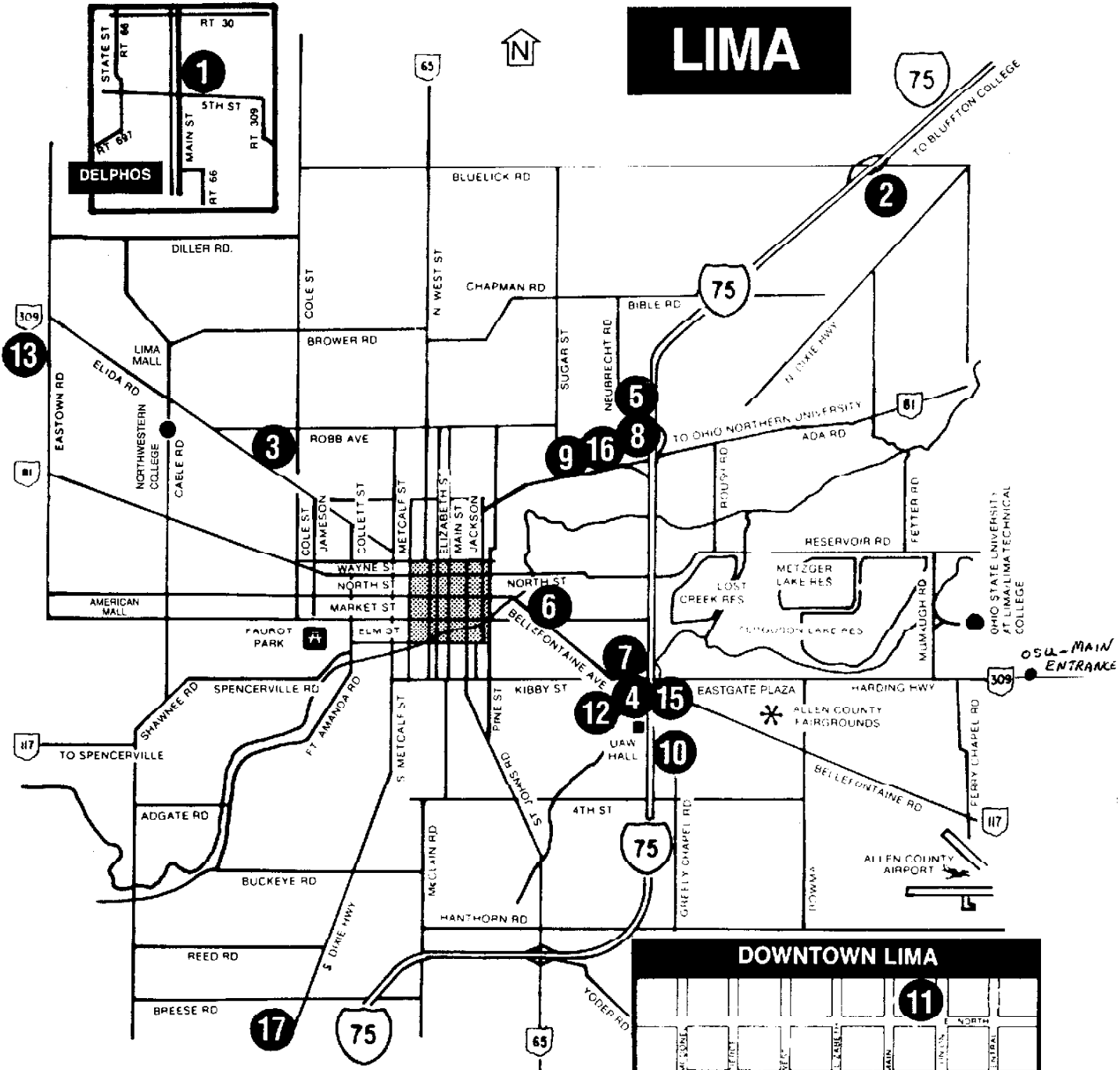
```

100 I=0::DISPLAY AT(13,1)ERASE ALL:"Input values. Type E to end."
200 I=I+1::DISPLAY AT(23,1):I::ACCEPT AT(23,3)VALIDATE(DIGIT,"E"):I#
300 IF I#="E" 400 THEN ELSE V=VAL(I#)::T=T+V::GOTO 200
400 PRINT "Value is: ";T/I
  
```

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

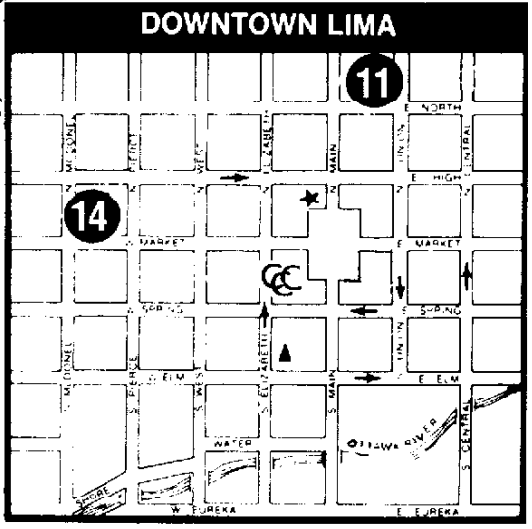


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