



SAN DIEGO COMPUTER SOCIETY
TI-SIG NEWSLETTER
F E B R U A R Y 1 9 8 8

MONITORS, MONITORS, MONITORS -- The smart programmer looks ahead. And so when we add new components to expand our systems, we think about the question: "Will I be able to use this (put in name of peripheral) on any future computer I get?" Come on, now, even the most died-in-the-wool 99/4A lover knows that day is coming. In that regard, adding drives or modems are fairly easy propositions.

WHEN IT COMES TO video, the task gets harder: First off, as Rod Van Orden, who just upgraded his monitor to a Magnavox 8515, says, there have been many changes taking place in the video field because of improved technology. Additionally, according to your newsletter editor, the proposition is complicated by seemingly wide variety of choices or probable incompatibilities in that field. From past and hard earned experience, we know not just any "whatsit" will fit any old "gizmo" when it comes to computers. For those of you who are thinking of someday upgrading or just want to get a few more rev's out of the TI, a good compromise when it comes to monitors, are the ones described as "analog RGB's" but having composite capability. Also, and this is important, an 80-column rating. Why the 80 cols when the 4A can only handle 40. The answer: not only has the 80-column monitor become the industry standard but it is now possible with the 4A and its direct descendant, the 9640.

THIS IS BECAUSE Myarc's 9640 Geneve and such other popular brands as the Amiga, Atari ST series, and, I suppose, the color Macintoshes all share a common video display chip, the Yamaha V9938. The 4A is treated to 80 column display capability with two aftermarket cards:

THESE ARE: The advanced video display card produced by Tom Spillane of DIJIT SYSTEMS, 4345 Hortensia St., San Diego, CA 92103, and the video card brought out a while back by Mechatronics, a West German firm, and that is marketed in the U.S. by T.A.P.E. Ltd, 1439 Solana Pl Ontario, CA 91764.

HERE ARE SOME BRAND NAMES and model numbers which our sources tell us are suitable monitors for use with these cards and the computers using the Yamaha

chip:

- Magnovox 8515 (AKA the 8CM515)
- Any of Magnavox's Pro Series
- Thomson 4120
- Zenith's KX 1901A (a 20 incher)
- The Amiga RGB 80 column monitor

(EDITORS... please add to this list any others that you know are compatible or any comments you may have.)

BE AWARE, these sell for upwards of \$266 with the Thomson coming in at \$200 with measurably less resolution.

WE ARE TOLD THAT because of the TI's limited CPU memory, that big graphic extravaganzas are not possible. However, it seems to us that RAM cards might provide the extra memory, in a pinch, to get up those extra video revs. (Where oh where is Craig Miller? We need him now!)

* * *

9640 DEMO: Charlie Summerhill of the North County TI group will demo his Myarc "Geneve" computer at that group's February 17th meeting. The meeting is at 7 p.m., Coast Federal Savings and Loan, 1540 E. Valley Parkway, Escondido. Charlie reports the latest Myarc DOS and GPL cured a lot of the new computer's problems. (Hope to have a report on this next month.)

REPORT FOR THE SDCS:At the Sig's January meeting David Allen demo'ed his use of the TI word processor (Funnelweb version) and in particular the printer formatter. President Don Goodno showed how he catalogues and prints out the disk library. The question of whether the group should retain its mail box at the main San Diego post office, or get one at a branch nearer officers' homes was discussed. Woody Wilson was authorized to make the switch -- if possible. (Don had to renew the old box because no boxes were available at the nearest branches.) John Johnson announced that newsletter Editor's position will be open starting in June. He will still contribute to the newsletter but by writing original programs and articles. The publisher, Woody Wilson, will continue in that position.

A PRINT HEAD CLEANING TIP: (From the Long Island TI Newsletter.) CAUTION, We take no responsibility regarding do-it-yourself maintenance. But for the daring here it is:

By Chuck Reinhart of LTI

It takes only three things to get good, dark, crisp print from your printer.

1. A properly adjusted printer
2. A good ribbon
3. A clean print head

The guide for the printing wires gradually gets clogged with a mixture of lint, ink, and oils from the ribbon. As this dirt builds up and dries out, the pin wires drag in the guide. The result is you get light, low contrast print even from a new ribbon. The following is a procedure for cleaning the print head that is quick, simple and does not require the removal of the print head.

Obtain an aerosol can of Color TV Tuner Cleaner (Radio Shack #64-2320 or the equivalent.) Make sure the label states that it contains silicone, that it will not harm plastic and that it has a tube to plug into the spray nozzle.

Power-off the printer. Leave paper in the printer but remove the ribbon. Gently move the the print head to the middle of the carriage.

Cut a two-inch square from a lint free handkerchief. Fold the cut cloth over on top of itself a couple times until it is about the width of your ribbon and about four layers.

Insert the cloth into the print head exactly where the ribbon was, between the pin guide and the ribbon shield. The cloth should not fit too tight.

Insert the tube in the spray nozzle. Put the tube in contact with the cloth next to the pin guide of the print head and give a short quick press to wet the cloth.

Turn on the printer and send a page of print to the printer (self test can be used.) Now move the cloth a little to the side so that you have clean spot. If necessary, give the cloth another shot of fluid and print out another page.

Remove the cloth from the print head and print a page (without ribbon but with paper.) If you see any printing on the paper, put the cloth back into the print head and repeat the whole process until the page prints clean.

Install ribbon and enjoy the improved print.

* * *

SOMETHING FOR BEGINNERS: New 99'ers are still showing up at our group's meetings. They may find procedures long forgotten by old timers, to be of help. Here is one. The procedure for removing copy protection from Extended Basic programs so cassette software can be transferred for use on disk. REMEMBER, XB and a 32K card required to do this:

1. Load the protected cassette program
2. Type in these lines:
CALL INIT <enter>
CALL LOAD(-31931,0) <enter>

3. You may now save the program to disk and also list it to see the code.

4. Caution, some Cassette programs take up more memory than disk based programs and won't fit in CPU Ram when the disk controller is on line. The disk controller takes up additional CPU memory. So not all cassette programs are transportable.

WANNA (WHISPER) QUIETER PE-BOX? The Daytona 99'ers advise using a sprite style fan such as the TORIN TA3008 as a replacement for the TI fan. In any regard, be sure it is rated for 115 VAC. (There's a lot of surplus fans that come in the same size, but are rated 12 VDC. And if you put one of them in, you'll be frying more than eggs!) The writer of the piece in the Daytona newsletter (as reported in the Boston, MASS "MUNCH" newsletter), says he got one fan so quiet he has to look at the lights to see if it is on. (Wish I could get one of those fans!

AND IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT, the same MUNCH newsletter mentions that when you are trouble shooting a blown fuse in the P-Box, be aware that the secondary is (or should we say, "may be") fused also. The writer says to look for the fuse soldered inside the plastic covering.

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TRY THIS...IT IS good for one line only.
100 !W.WILSON,SD TISIG,2/88
110 CALL CLEAR :: DISPLAY AT
(12,1)ERASE ALL:"TYPE YOUR N
AME" :: R-12 :: C-1
120 DISPLAY AT(22,1):"PRESS
FCTN S TO BACKSPACE":"PRESS
FCTN 9 TO RESTART":"PRESS FC
TN 4 TO QUIT"
130 CALL KEY(0,K,S):: IF S<1
THEN 130
140 IF K=8 THEN 160 :: IF K=
15 THEN 110 :: IF K<32 OR K>
126 THEN 130
150 DISPLAY AT(R,C):CHR$(K):
: C=C+1 ::GOTO 130
160 IF C>1 THEN C=C-1 ELSE C
=1 :: K=32
170 DISPLAY AT(R,C):CHR$(K):
: GOTO 130
```

SOME NEW SOFTWARE: "PICTURE IT" by Rodger Merritt, 1949 Evergreen, Ave., Fullerton, CA 92835. This software does most of the tasks common to most graphics-to-printer type programs. But Merritt says his is in assembly and thus better and faster. The software also includes a collection of TI Artist instances with fancy fonts, et cetera.

IT ALSO FEATURES A screen display for viewing instances in seconds and saves them to XB "merge" format programs. This feature also provides for merging sprites -- with motion. It also has an advanced banner printer. For your \$10 fairware donation you get two disks full of programs, instances.

DO YOU OWN A STAR Micronics Printer and do you know that the print head can go bad? Not only is it expensive to replace the print head, they are not always available. So if you are a Gemini owner and handy at DIY, look up an article originally printed in the North Shore UG newsletter and more recently printed in the December, '87 edition of the Cin-Day News (which has the virtue of being in our hard copy library!)

REMEMBER READING ABOUT how you can put your XB inside your console? If you are like a lot of us who are as equally fond of using your EA cart, you probably did not think any more of it. Trouble is you cannot use another cartridge with that installation. Until Denis A. Dann of the Milwaukee 99'ers came up with this fix, as reprinted in the West Penn newsletter. (Yes, my children, the first article is in the hard copy library, somewhere, waiting for you to crack the TI clam and pop in the XB pearl.) Here's Denis Dann's article:

"The Case of the Missing Cartridge"
or "How to Play the Missing Slots"

After reading "Installing Extended Basic Inside Your Console" by John Willforth of the West Penn 99, I proceeded to make the necessary modifications. My efforts were rewarded with a well functioning unit. Then (he didn't think ahead like us, the editor), I discovered that of course I couldn't have a cartridge in the Grom port at the same time X-Basic was loaded unless I wanted a fine array of Assembly Language Code on the screen. Furthermore, if I used a widget, I had to leave one connector open in order to use the XB option. Now I had a Navarone two cart Widget (instead of three). With the aid of a jeweler's file and 15 minutes time, a simple modification of the indexing switch allowed me to restore it to a three cartridge expander with a four position indexing switch.

The procedure:

1. Remove four (4) phillips screws from back side of expander. Gently separate housing, noting positions of components. Note: modification will be made to top side of housing and white index switch slider.

2. File index switch opening an additional 1/8" towards front of housing.

3. When switch normally bottoms out at position 3, there is approximately 1/16" of clearance to the inside front edge of housing. Therefore, you need only to file 1/16" off of front edge of switch slider for a total of 1/8" of clearance.

4. Reassemble components and you now have a four position index switch with one open circuit position to facilitate the use of the internal X-Basic mode.

5. Label the switch opening (1 2 3 X).

REMEMBER: If you see assembly language (code) on the screen, check all switch positions first.

6. Additional tip: Putting a length of double stick tape on the foot of the expander will provide a nice tight installation preventing movement of the expander by accidental bumps.

Many thanks to John Willforth for a neat project and to Navarone for a fine product.

*Cartridge Expander is a Trademark of Navarone Industries, Sunnyvale, California

WE DO NOT HAVE ROOM FOR the drawing. (If you are interested, check out the West Penn 99er NL.)

IN THE JAN, 88 edition of the Johnson Space Center 99er newsletter, John Owen of that group made a two page listing of currently available aftermarket hardware and software "upgrades". The list is truly impressive. Here is an item that caught our eye:

"7. 50 % increase in usable RAM (32K to 48K) described in RYTE Data newsletters (DSR CARD) and also realized from the RAVE 99 expansion. This 50 % expansion lets you manipulate larger blocks of data. For TI Writer this means about 20 pages instead of 12 pages -- a 60% increase in capability. This upgrade will allow Forth applications on the TI 99 to 'explode'." (Well put John. Love his enthusiasm!)

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Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of each month, at 7 P.M., in the Game Room of the North Park Recreation Center, 4044 Idaho St., San Diego

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