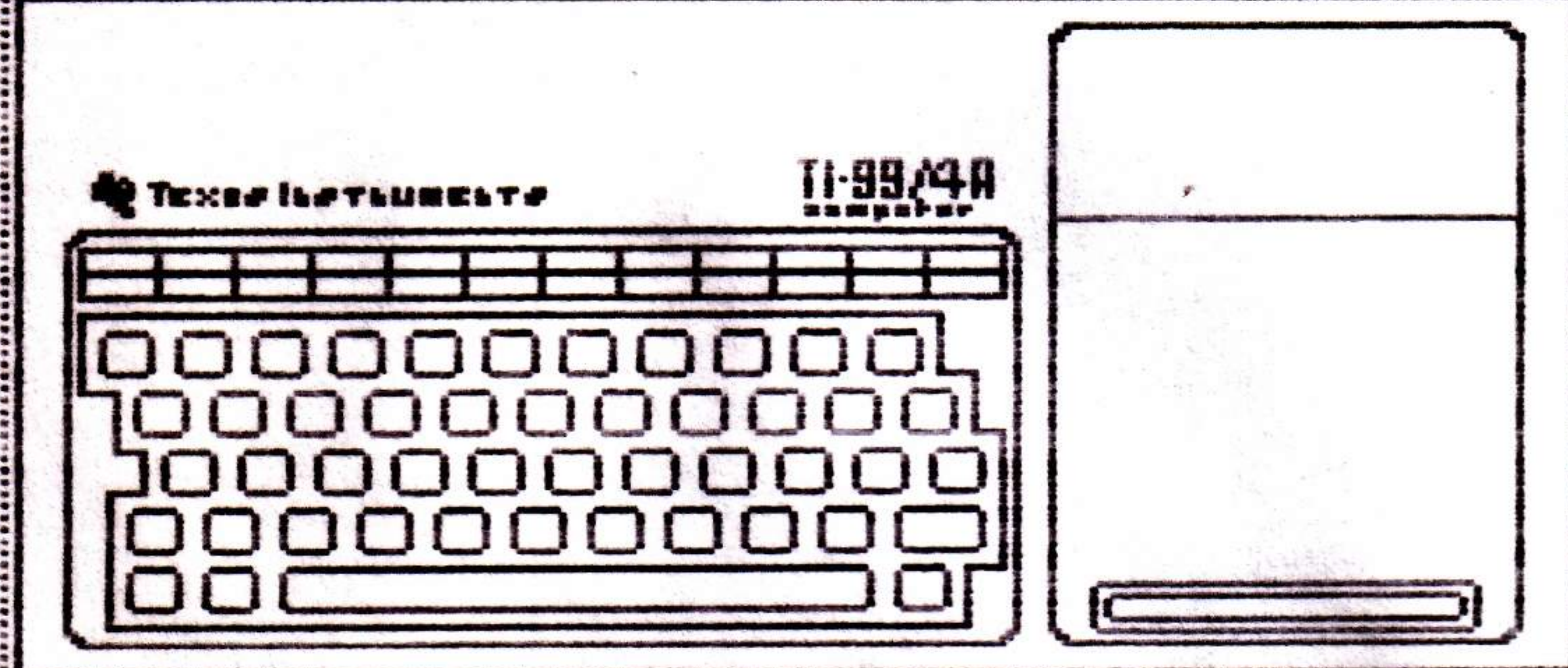


SHIFT838 NEWSLETTER



NEWSLET

VOLUME ONE NUMBER ONE

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JUST FOR FUN

by Ralph Rees - sparkdrummer

Ever since Chris Schneider came out with his wonderful SHIFT838 Newsletter I started having a strong desire to produce my own newsletter once again.

Back in the old days I was a member of the VALley of the Sun Ti99ers (UAST) Users Group and really enjoyed the meetings, group bbs and the newsletter every month.

As time went on, I eventually became president of the group and newsletter editor. I really enjoyed being the editor and producing a newsletter every month - although it was quite a bit of work, it was a labor of love.

I started out using PagePro 99 and really got to know the program well. Using Page Pro, Page Pro Composer and other TI graphics and text programs I was able to push the TI to the limit with producing a newsletter. At least that was my opinion (and a few other people at the time). I wanted to rival newsletters that were being produced on PC Clones and Macs at the time and I think I accomplished that.

This publication is by no means meant to compete with the SHIFT838 newsletter. Chris is doing a fantastic job reporting all the new things that are happening with our beloved TI-99/4A. What I am going to do is reprint information from our rich past that hopefully you will find interesting. At the very least, maybe somebody new to TI will read something they didn't know.

Anyway, I don't know how many issues of this little rag I will be publishing but at least I am satisfying the urge to compose another newsletter and put it to bed.

Ralph...



NATIONAL FUN & GAMES



GAME TITLE	SCORE	JOYSTICK JOCKEY	TI CLUB	DATE
BACKSTEINE	155900	STEVEN JAKABFY	OSHTI UG	09/95
BIGFOOT	290500	DAVID HANDLE	OZARK 99	01/95
BLASTO	44880	MIKE CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	11/94
BREAKTHROUGH	1850	RAY FRANTZ	VAST	11/93
BURGER BUILDR	1000000	ELEANOR ZIC	W/PENN 99	03/94
BURGERTIME	82600	MICKEY CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	09/85
CAR WARS	6050	JIM WAYNE	VAST	11/93
CENTIPEDE	301930	MICKEY CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	01/87
COLORS	1000000	HARRY HOFFMAN	CLEVELAND	03/95
DIG DUG	262460	FRANK ZIC	W/PENN 99	03/94
ENTRAPMENT	3668	FRANK ZIC	W/PENN 99	11/93
HOPPER	4031826	TOM BEERSMAN	OZARK 99	06/94
HUSTLE	WON 52	ELEANOR ZIC	W/PENN 99	03/94
JAWBREAKER	15025	JIM WAYNE	VAST	11/93
JUMPY	131900	ELEANOR ZIC	W/PENN 99	03/94
MICRO PINBALL	1776500	NORM ROKKE	W/PENN 99	05/87
MIDNITE MASON	27100	FRANK ZIC	W/PENN 99	11/93
MOON PATROL	73150	MIKE SEALY	W/PENN 99	03/94
MUNCHMAN	202170	PAUL BROCK SR.	W/PENN 99	09/87
PACMAN	153000	GARY TAYLOR	W/PENN 99	09/87
PARSEC	47300	MICKEY CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	09/87
PKR SOLITAIRE	3790	JACKIE REMENSKI	VAST	11/93
POLE POSITION	57700	MICKEY CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	12/94
SUPER VAHTZEE	615	JACKIE REES	VAST	11/93
THE ATTACK	31800	JIM WAYNE	VAST	11/93
TI INVADERS	15930	PAUL BROCK SR.	W/PENN 99	09/87
TI TRIS	2200	FRANK ZIC	W/PENN 99	11/93
TOMBSTNE CITY	154400	DANNY MCGUIRE	OZARK 99	11/94
TRN SOLITAIRE	351	CAROL HOFFMAN	CLEVELAND	03/95
TREASURE ISLE	37800	MIKE CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	10/94
TRIS (ASGARD)	8393	MICKEY CENDROWSKI	W/PENN 99	12/94

This was a feature that ran in the VAST News for many issues. If my feeble memory serves me, it was initially published by Ray Frantz who was also a past president & newsletter editor of our group.

You'll notice that members of the West Penn 99ers were very active in this friendly competition. The person who really pushed for me to republish this when I became newsletter editor was Mickey Cendrowski of the WestPenn 99ers. I'm sure many of you remember her as she was a real mover and shaker in the TI world.

The scores were posted on the honor system. Looking at the list you'll see that we had cartridge, assembly and even a couple of extended basic games that were posted. Can you beat some of the scores that were listed here?

OLD TRICKS FOR NEW (AND NOT SO NEW) USERS BY JOSEPH COHEN

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN
LIMA NEWSLETTER, DEC 1991

Though many of us tend to ignore most of the cartridge software for our computer, with the exception of TI Extended Basic and, possibly, Multiplan, Logo II, Editor/Assembler, and TE-2 (for speech), many of the cartridges are very enjoyable. In order to give you an excuse for searching your closets and basements looking for those hidden modules, I'd like to point out that many of them have undocumented features ranging from useful to interesting to amusing. Here are a few examples.

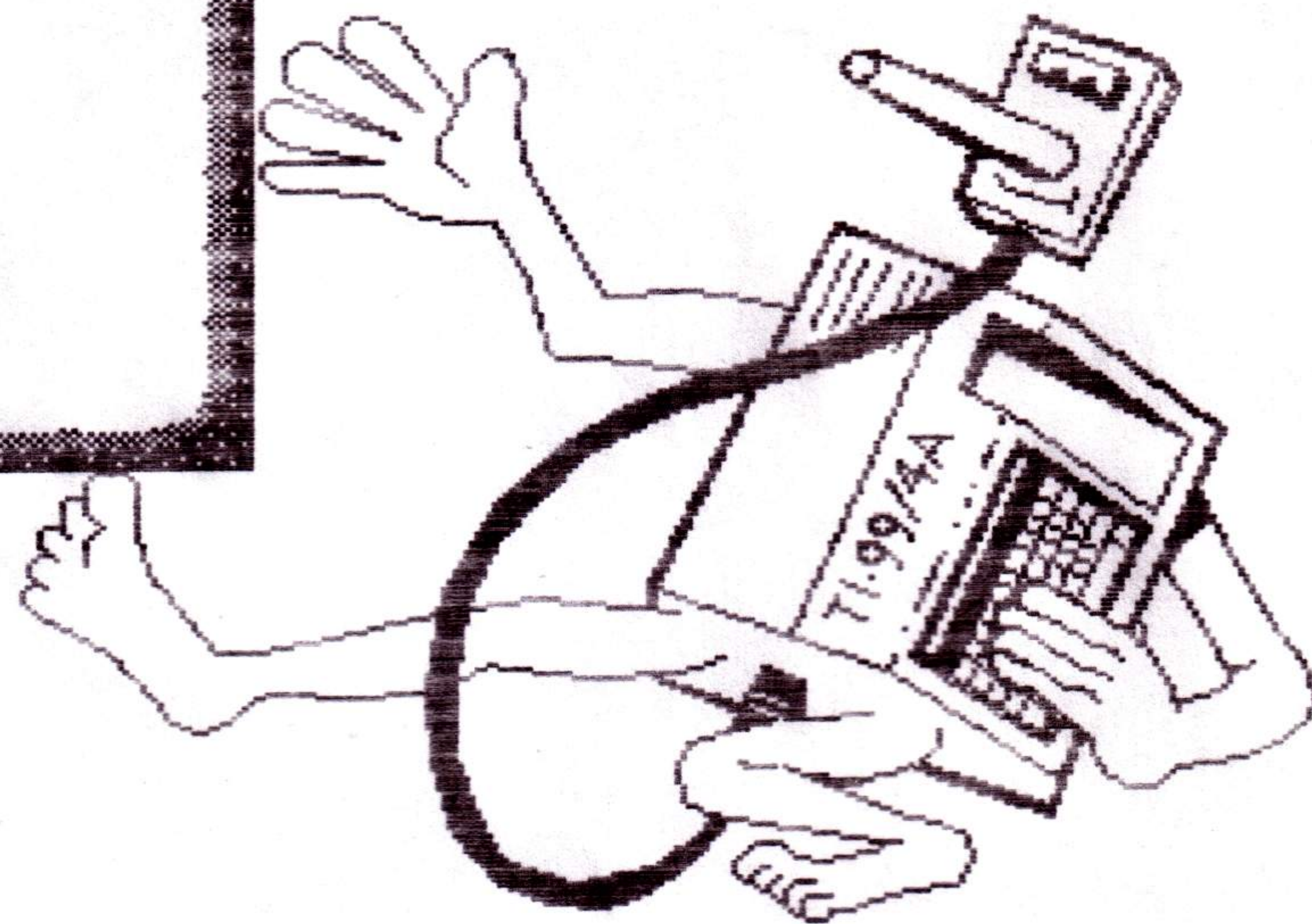
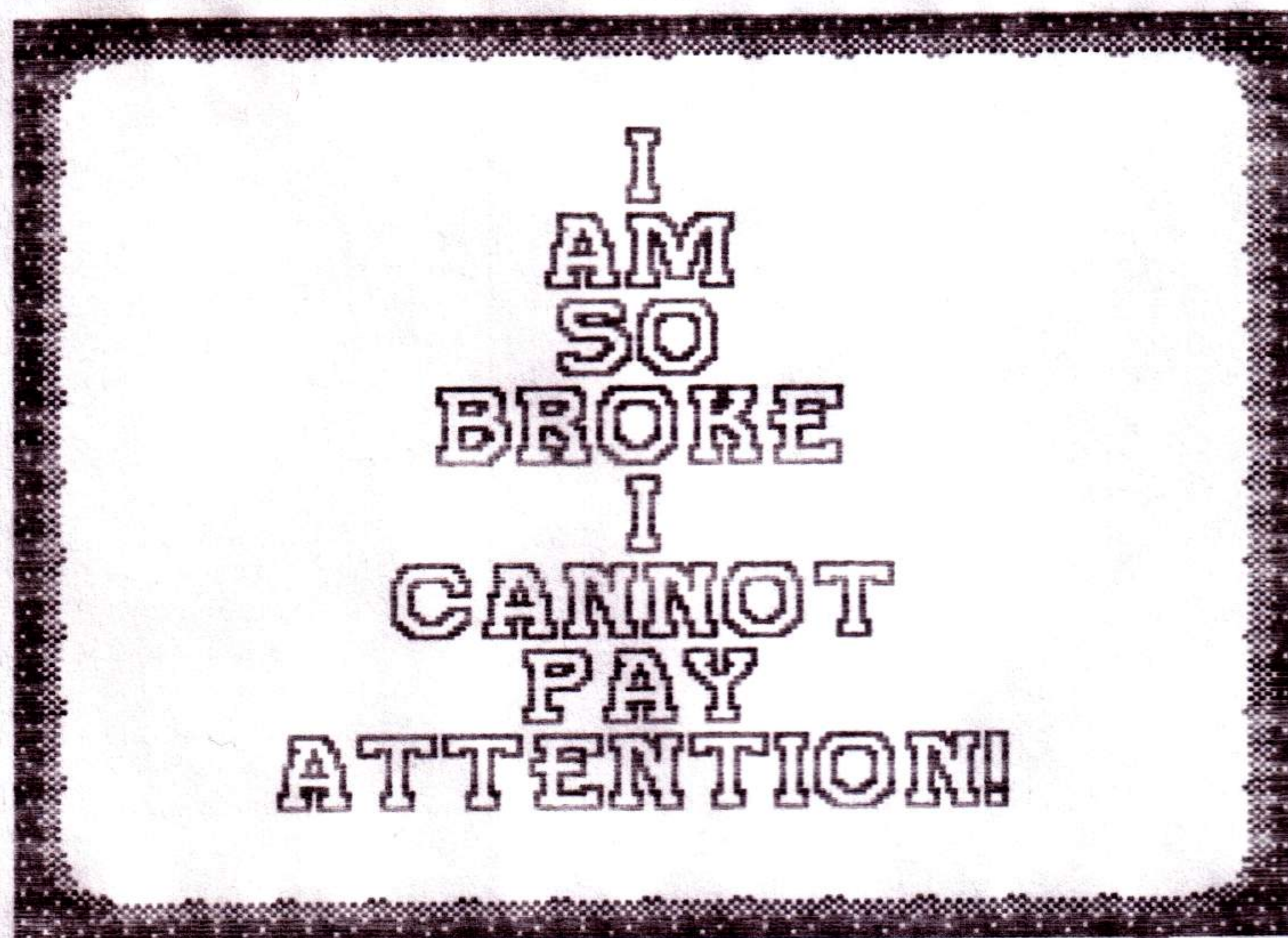
Many are probably familiar with "The Secret of Personal Record Keeping: Implementing DISPLAY AT and ACCEPT AT without Extended BASIC", published way back in 99'er magazine and reprinted in The Best of 99er, p. 76. Briefly, TI BASIC with the PRK module contains the commands CALL DC() and CALL AC() (similar to DISPLAY AT and ACCEPT AT). Presumably this also works with the Statistics module, but I do not have this one and could not verify it. I have been told that this is a result of the hybrid nature of certain modules, containing both GPL and BASIC coding. Perhaps someone knows or could discover additional undocumented features of this cartridge and possible other cartridges which call console BASIC routines (E.G. Tax/Investment Record Keeping).

Next, the TI Disk Manager cartridge offers a proprietary protection feature that does not allow the Disk Manager to copy a protected diskette. To use it, press the FCTN-X Key ten times while on any menu screen. You will hear a beep (if your monitor has sound!) and >< will appear at the center top of the screen. Any diskettes initialized at this point will be proprietary protected. Each time you address them using the Disk Manager cartridge (e.g., to catalog such a diskette), a low-tone beep will sound (not present for unprotected diskettes), informing you that the diskette is protected. The protection information is stored in sector 0 on the diskette. This type of protection is ineffective against the sector disk copiers and has been discussed in the past. I wonder if anybody knows more about it. The DM-1000 offers protection and un-protection of diskettes; is it the same kind as the TI Disk Manager cartridge?

Now to a few game cartridges. Moonmine, Alpiner, Munchman, Munchmobile, and Hopper have a test mode, where you can select the starting level. So if you wanted to see what it is like to play at those levels you could never reach, here is a good reason to plug those cartridges into your 99/4A! The test mode is obtained by pressing SHIFT 8 3 8 at the game title screen (SHIFT 8 only, for Hopper). and on Burgertime, pressing SHIFT 8 gives a message: "code modifications by John M. Phillips".

Have you always played Parsec as a one player game? Here is something different, for a two player team. If the fire buttons on both joysticks are pressed simultaneously, Spaceship Parsec will not overheat. Horizontal lines will appear on the screen, but they do not disturb the game and would allow, in fact, one to see the Bynites when they turn invisible.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list. If anybody knows about other "tricks", would they please let me know? I am sure the Adventure and Tunnels of Doom modules contain undocumented features. Please take a few moments to let others know, and enjoy your cartridges!



T1-99/4A

THE 99/4 HOME COMPUTER
DESCRIPTION OF AN ANTIQUE
BY CHARLES GOOD

originally published in the Feb 1991 Lima OH
Bites, Bytes & Pixels User Group Newsletter

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TI HOME COMPUTER

TI began shipping the 99/4 (copyright 1979 on the color bar title screen) in October 1979. It cost \$1150 bundled with a 13 inch color monitor (FORTUNE, December 3, 1979, p.54). Initially you had to take the monitor and could not purchase the 99/4 separately, and most purchasers had to pay close to full price.

Bundling was necessary because the 99/4 console passed but TI's TV modulator initially failed to pass FCC lab tests for noninterference with radio and TV broadcast reception. The modulator emitted too much RF radiation (BUSINESS WEEK, March 19, 1979, p.37). However, at that time the FCC did not regulate RF radiation from computing devices not hooked directly to TVs. So TI got around the FCC regulations by offering to the public a "complete package". It wasn't until January 1, 1981 that the FCC began testing ALL computers likely to be used in a home environment for TV/radio broadcast interference (POPULAR COMPUTING, November 1981, p.6). TI eventually came up with a TV modulator that would pass FCC tests and on November 28, 1980 began selling the console and monitor separately.

The console's list price was \$650 (BUSINESS WEEK, December 8, 1980, p.28). This was in one respect was actually a price increase, because the separate prices of the console and monitor were \$250 more than their previous bundled price.

TI never published any sales data for the 99/4, but an independent market research firm estimated that TI would sell 25000 between its introduction and the end of 1980 (FORTUNE, June 16, 1980, p.139). During the summer of 1981 TI quietly introduced the 99/4A with a list price of \$525. By the time production of the 99/4A ceased in late 1983 or early 1984 the store price for a brand new 99/4A was \$50, and over 1 million, perhaps several million 99/4As had been sold.

SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 99/4 AND 99/4A.

The most obvious differences are the keyboard, the lack of lower case letters on the "4", and the "4"'s EQUATION CALCULATOR. Most "4"'s have an earphone jack on the front for private listening, but mine doesn't. I will discuss most of these obvious differences in detail.

To be continued next month