The Alternate Source

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TAS UPDATE #8

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October 8, 1984

Northern Bytes, Volume 5, Number 7 is ready! This is one issue more than we expected to have this year. If we work real hard, there could be yet another issue. No promises. Our special thanks to authors who have contributed to Northern Bytes. The project couldn't continue without you. All authors are credited with six free issues. If your magazine or newsletter would be interested in Northern Bytes, we'll consider trades.

***

Folks, we have a new lower price on diskettes. The diskette market is becoming very competitive these days, and we explained to Spectrum that we had to pass a saving to our customers, many of whom order diskettes from us regularly. They are certified double density. They have proven very reliable with a variety of machines, including the 80 track, double-sided, double-density drives on the Radio Shack Model 2000. I have one customer who has used several hundred with this machine. A package of ten top quality Spectrum are now only $14.95. If you order 100, the price is only $139.95.

FYI, we have been experimenting with various "cheap" diskette brands and we have found that all diskettes will NOT work on both sides. If you would like a sample of one of these, send us a dollar with your regular order. Add postage if you order one alone.

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Our recent activities with TASMON have produced interesting responses; I believe because of faulty communication on my part. There is confusion about just what is being offered, how much it cost, and why. Here's an attempt to clarify:

First: Jack Decker has provided an upgrade for the Model I and III versions of TASMON. New features include a compare memory command, support for undocumented opcodes, an ASCII display along with a disassembled listing and more. If you would like to upgrade your current I/III version of TASMON to the new I/III version of TASMON, the price is $10.

Second: Over the summer, we contracted with Paul Snively to produce a Model 4 version of TASMON. If you wish to purchase this version the price is $29.95. This revision required several weeks of dedicated attention. Unfortunately, this six week period was just before the 6.x source and Roy Soltoff's book were available.

On November 1st, the list price for each version of TASMON will increase to $39.95.

I am actually hurt that at least three people made me feel as though TAS is "ripping off" users by charging "so much money" for the Model 4 version of TASMON. I am insulted because some folks seem to feel (note I didn't say "think") that Jack's modifications aren't worth a modest $10. I am disappointed that none of the three (or anyone else) volunteered to make the changes from Model I/III to 4, including Bruce, who is busy being an engineer for the best car manufacturer in the world. The changes were not insignificant. I was sort of hoping that enough people would order TASMON4 that I could have the heat turned back on before the first snowfall.

***

Model 4P owners, have we got a deal for you! Martin Stanish, local double-e, has designed two nifty add-on features for the 4P. First is an expansion bus so that you can add two extra drives, if desired. Second, is an video plug so that you may plug in an additional monitor. This is very convenient for when more than one person (even a class) needs to watch the screen. One of these mods is $80. Both are $150. If you wish to add the additional 64K at the same time, we'll do all three for $200. Two extra slim-line double-sided eighties (1 1/2 megabytes of storage) with case and deluxe power supply are $429. Extra two-drive cable is $29.95. Be sure to package your system very securely. UPS is very good about servicing claims, but neither of us need the hassle. USPS is not so good about claims. They have never paid off in about 1/2 dozen cases. In all cases, you should ship insured and authorize us to return the system insured. Local users should call for an appointment.

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People who do a lot of word processing on their computers use a lot of disk space to store their text files. We are now offering TEXTPRESS, a program that will reduce the amount of storage needed to do the job by 30-40% and more! TEXTPRESS also makes it more likely you will archive older files that you might otherwise discard because of the number of diskettes they occupy.

TEXTPRESS compresses ASCII text files for long term storage with a corresponding savings in the purchase of diskettes. When you later need to use the text file, TEXTPRESS will quickly decompress the file to its original form. TEXTPRESS can handle one to twenty-five files in a single program run.

TEXTPRESS compresses text files of any length by taking advantage of the repetitiveness in the English language. Multiple-byte words and letter combinations are replaced by a single byte "token". TEXTPRESS comes "preprogrammed" with 127 of the most frequently occurring letter combinations, plus you can tailor the compression procedure to work more effectively on your own text.

After you have compressed one or more files, you will probably not want to keep the decompressed files stored on disk. TEXTPRESS also provides you an easy way to erase the files on the source filename list.

TEXTPRESS enhances the DOS "LIST" command so that the display stops after one screen of text, and control and graphic characters are displayed in a manner that prevents unpredictable displays, such as those which occur when LISTing machine language and compressed BASIC programs.

TEXTPRESS operates on TRS80 Models I, III and 4(III) with at least 48K memory and one disk drive. TEXTPRESS has been tested with TRSDOS, NEWDOS, LDOS and DOSPLUS operating systems. TEXTPRESS includes a comprehensive, easy to read, well-indexed, 60-page manual that completely details user and technical information you may need to know. TEXTPRESS is available immediately and only $49.95.

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The Alternate Mailer, a special 6" x 8" cardboard mailing package for diskettes or photos is available from TAS. 10/$4.95, 100/$24.95.

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The Survey Analyst processes and analyzes the responses to a survey, questionnaire, or poll. It is designed for use in school districts, businesses, government agencies, church groups, trade organizations, private consultants, etc. -- where-ever information is collected by survey.

The Survey Analyst supports the three most common data formats used for survey questions: single-choice questions (e.g., typical "Agree/Disagree" items), multiple-choice questions (e.g., "Choose ALL that apply"), and questions that require large continous numbers (e.g., total yearly sales). No restrictions are placed on the original format of the survey. In the Data Entry module, data are carefully screened for accuracy when entered, and can be edited, saved to diskette, displayed on the video screen, and printer. File names are managed by the program to ensure that the correct files are used as needed, and to guard against accidental loss of information. Profiled output is presented in table format and can be easily edited into a report and transported for further analysis on a large computer, or other program.

The Survey Analyst is limited to 510 questions per survey, depending on their response format. The number of respondents per study is based on the total available disk space; one 40-track Model III diskette will hold the data from 400 respondents asked 500 single-choice questions. Studies of up to 2,000 respondents have been conducted using The Survey Analyst.

The overall results of a survey are important, but often it is important to know how key subgroups of respondents differ -- men vs. women, registered voters with children, etc. The Survey Analyst can profile selected respondent groups onthe survey questions and show you these differences in detail. The Survey Analyst actually generates the new BASIC code it requires for each profile analysis!

The Survey Analyst requires a TRS-80 Model I, III or 4(III) with 48k memory, at least two disk drives and LDOS, NEWDOS/80, DOSPLUS or TRSDOS. A 100+ page manual contains an overview of survey research and a detailed presentation of the program's features and uses. Also in the manual are a Glossary, Index, annotated Appendices on survey research texts, and sample surveys and codebooks. The program and the manual have been field tested in over 50 studies during the past three years.

Price is $195, plus shipping and handling. Manual is $30 (applicable toward purchase). A supplemental discourse detailing some of the many features of The Survey Analyst is available for a SASE containing thirty-seven cents postage.

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I know that many of you are programmers and consultants. If you are in the market for new projects, it could be very advantageous for you to let us know who you are and what you do.

Programmers: In addition to co-ordinating several major projects of our own, I get frequent requests for programmers. Send as short or as long a resume (or reasonable facsimile) as you desire. Be sure to include your address and phone number, specify machines you have access to and detail which languages you know. The last job applicant I asked about languages replied "English".

Consultants: We are getting more complete packages for vertical markets that could greatly assist you

with a variety of assignments. We would love to help you build a file of "Miscellaneous Vertical Market Software".

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Dennis Allen has just finished work on Version 1.1 of The Alternate BASIC. The manual is now 100 pages. Of particular importance is the added documentation about the ABASIC utilities. ABASIC and utilities are now compiled. ABASIC can translate itself in about five minutes. Translation took almost 1/2 hour with the BASIC version. The improved CASE statement now has range testing. Lower case characters are supported. ABASIC considers null lines as remarks. All input records are processed regardless of errors. The SUF command has been added, especially for folks like Model I users who don't have a backslash (\) on their computer. You can define the ABASIC suffix label to be anything generatable by your keyboard. The compiled version now has an overlay. Therefore, rather than return to ABASIC, it will return to DOS after the translation. If you wish only the new software, you may return your disk and a prepaid mailer and we will provide the update at no charge. If you want disk and manual, and you have returned your ABASIC registration, you may upgrade both without returning your disk for $10.

The following is a problem routine. Until December 15th, if you can eliminate that pesky GOTO in line 376, and keep the routine functionally equilivant, you can purchase The Alternate BASIC for 75% of the list price. We can now provide a variety of PC/MSDOS and CP/M versions. Please make sure the person taking your order is aware of both the machine you have and the BASIC you are using. List price of The Alternate BASIC is $69.95; with an adequate solution, until December 15th, price is $49.95. Watch future UPDATES for announcements of library routines for ABASIC.

Line numbers started off as the actual BASIC line numbers. After eliminating our last remaining GOTO, we can turn line numbers off and write the file to disk without them. Next step would be to translate it to Microsoft BASIC using The Alternate BASIC. The segent of code is from an actual program on C's Bargain Disk (see TAS Update #4) and on ZEN. The editor is EDM, naturally.

```
00354 '
00354 'CODING OUTPUT -- Writes file combining source and
00354 'coding generated by "@MACRO" and "INCLUDE"
00355 '
00355   FOR MA=MP(M) TO MP(M+1)-1
00356    F=1: L=LEN(MA$(MA))
00357    S=FNMS
00358    IF S=L OR S=0 THEN PRINT#2,MA$(MA)'No code change
00360
00360    EC=0
00361    FOR ER=0 TO PN-1
00364      IF MID$(MA$(MA),F,S-1)=PA$(PP(M)+ER) THEN
00364        EC=ER+1: ER=PN-1
00365    NEXT ER
00366    IF EC=0 THEN
00366      PRINT#2,MID$(MA$(MA),F,S-1)" ";
00368    IF EC<>0 THEN
00369      PRINT#2,SP$(EC)" ";
00370    IF F+S=>L THEN
00371      PRINT#2,
00376    ELSE
00376      F=F+S: S=FNMS :GOTO360
00389    END IF
00389 '
00389  NEXT MA
00390 '
```

***

VIVACE, the Compatible Compiler has proven quite popular. Lou Witt informed me that the program was developed in response to user requests for a 100% compiler. One item that I neglected to mention in the last update is that VIVACE is copy-protected. I have had an extensive discussion with Lou about this. A back-up copy is included with each VIVACE sold to prevent inconvenience. The actual disk with VIVACE is used very little, since VIVACE commands are so simple. The BASIC library module is not copy protected and can be copied to your diskettes for distribution without royalty. Currently VIVACE, the Compatible Compiler is only $49.95.

Our initial experiences with the Radio Shack/Microsoft BASCOM have uncovered a bug with the way BASCOM handles the Model 4 BASIC RESUME statement. We have reported the bug to Tandy, along with a small program to help document the problems.

*** Need some help getting your dot matrix printer to do neat high-resolutin plots and drawings? If you own a Prowriter, Epson, Radio Shack Line Printer VIII, or Legend (which is compatible with Epson control codes), we've got the answer: PLOT80. This package was designed by Jim Resh. You've seen examples of his work in past issues of the Programmer's Journal and he has a superior article in Special Edition #19. PLOT80 is a "graphics line processor". To help you understand that buzzword (sorry), consider the following from the introduction in the PLOT80 manual:

Modern printers can do graphics as well as text. So why are most of them only doing text? Because a thousand words has been so much easier than one picture!

Why has text been so much easier than graphics? For the main answer to that one, just contrast what word processors can do with what graphics software has provided. Graphics has had the rudimantary ability to draw lines on paper. Analogously, a word processor can copy words to paper. Who'd pay fifty or a hundred or more dollars for a word processor if that were all it could do? The BASIC ROM's LPRINT function can do that much!

To help you evaluate the features graphics software should provide, consider the many points of similarity between Text Word Processing and what we will call "Graphics Line Processing". The following partial list of analogies should get you started:

Text Word Processing	Graphics Line Processing
Text Files	Pictures
Documents	Drawings
Words	Lines
Characters	Dots
Justifying	Windowing
Centering	Positioning
Formatting	Rotating
	Scaling

PLOT80 is a second generation graphics package that is the first TRS-80 program to merit the designation "Graphics Line Processor" in the sense suggested above. It provides for Editing, Saving, Retrieving, Merging, Windowing, Positioning, Rotating and Scaling. PLOT80 also provides convenient linkage to your application programs.

The PLOT80 package includes a comprehensive manual with lots of examples. Manual alone is $10, applicable toward the purchase. The complete PLOT80

package is $59.95. Need a printer? Call for a low price on the Legend 880.

***

TASMANIA has been available for the Models I and III for some time. We now have it available for Model 4 and CoCo! Mike Freeman, local whiz kid, started with Bruce and Alan's old BASIC version of the driver, added some special machine language patches to take advantage of CoCo features not readily available from BASIC, changed the display to support the CoCo format and emerged with a new product! We have not actively supported the CoCo before, but this is a good place to start. Mike is working on some other Coco projects that we'll announce in future updates. Incidentally, rumor has it that the 64k CoCo with extended BASIC will be $199 (list) for Christmas. I imagine they will be found for closer to $150, a heck of a deal for that super little computer. TASMANIA is $29.95.

***

Macintosh? Sure! We have Softmaker II from Rio Grande Software in stock. This powerful data manager includes almost 150 pages of well indexed documentation with lots of example screens for defining your data and practice sessions with step-by-step discussion of each prompt. Softmaker II actually writes BASIC programs that manipulate your data files. Once these programs are created, instructions are included for USING them. Input can be screened for maximum data entry efficiency. SOFTREP (included with Softmaker) produces reports to your specifications. Softmaker II is $155.

***

Folks, there is one new program that you should definitely consider for your software library. As you are probably aware if you have at least one friend with a different computer than you, compabibility is a problem. HYPERCROSS is a program that resolves much of that incompatibility. HYPERCROSS will actually format diskettes on your lowly TRS-80 that can run on almost seventy (70) machines/environments. Supported formats include all versions of PCDOS and MSDOS and most popular versions of CP/M, including all versions of Radio Shack and Montezuma Micro CP/M and the standard 8" CP/M format. Machines include just about everything you can think of, including Sanyo, Osborne, Morrow, Lobo, Keypro, HP, Epson, Cromemco, Televideo, Xerox, Zenith and many others I've never even heard of. Certain formats do require double sided drives. You will not find a better tool for building your program library.

HYPERCROSS gives special consideration for various file types and whether the "Control-Z", hex 1A, is added to the end of the file. You can get a directory and kill files from both the TRS-80 disk and the foreign disk. Files can be copied both ways. HYPERCROSS eliminates the need for modems, terminal programs and a second computer. HYPERCROSS runs as a standard /CMD file from most popular TRS-80 disk operating systems. Make sure you specify whether you wish the Model I, III, 4 or MAX-80 version. LNW and Genie users should order the Model I version.

HYPERCROSS also features a built-in HELP function that details everything you need to know. Even though a 20-page manual is included, you will probably not need it after the first couple of uses.

HYPERCROSS is available three ways, CP/M only, PC-MSDOS only and both. The separate versions are $49.95; the combined version is $79.95.

Mail all orders and inquiries to: TAS, 704 N. Pennsylvania, Lansing, MI, 48906
Phone Orders (M/C, Visa and COD) may be placed by calling (517) 482-8270

Your Name: _____

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Address: _____

Address: _____

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Product Description: _____ Price: ____.____

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Expiration Date: _____ MI Residents, please add 4% sales tax: ____.____

COD, add $2.00 The Bottom Line: ____.____

What computer models and/or other hardware and software considerations that may affect software performance will you be using with these TAS products?

Please add $3 shipping to your total order for postage and handling expenses.
Thank you for supporting The Alternate Source!