The Alternate Source

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TAS Update #11
04/15/85

Yes, Northern Bytes, Volume 6, Number 3 is waiting on YOU! We appreciate all the folks willing to contribute to Northern Bytes. Without your help, the newsletter wouldn't be possible; the TRS-80 would probably fall by the way, like other obsolete computers. A copy of Northern Bytes is FREE with any order from TAS, or $2 per copy if ordered separately.

Apparantly not many of you have charge cards; we have less than 50 people who want Northern Bytes on an "as published" basis. Jack and I have discussed other alternatives, but we are not ready to offer real subscriptions at this time. "With all the thousands of TRS-80 computers out there, surely there are more than 50 people that would be interested in Northern Bytes on a regular basis", we keep saying. Several hundred Northern Bytes were going to persons who subscribed to the old "Opinion-80" and "Between The Issues", but this number has dropped substantially in the last couple months as those subscriptions have been fullfilled. We don't exactly have a mandate to keep publishing Northern Bytes, so if you have an interest in the type of information we have been organizing, it's to your advantage to help promote Northern Bytes. Tell everybody, everywhere, please.

It takes a lot of stamina to read this fine print, so here's a deal to make it worth your while: How many new Model 4P computers, complete with green screen, two-drives, RS-232 and Radio Shack warranty would you like at $650? We're informed that this is a special sale that will end May 30th. This is a cash price not including shipping and insurance.

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The current version of TASMON4 is now 1.12. This version eliminates use of the SYS13 overlay, plus mods have been made to the keyboard and video drivers. This set of mods makes it easier to debug a wider variety of situations, including other overlay modules. If you wish an update at no charge, please send us your master disk with a postage paid mailer and Vicki will get the update back to you expediently.

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Dennis Allen has just finished a new version of The Alternate BASIC. The most important new feature is the optional "conditional translation". How is this used? You simply create the specific lines of code needed for a specific disk operating system and store these in a separate file. Depending on a "flag" that is set when you initiate the translation, the Alternate BASIC "COPY" command will merge these lines with your main program. You can set up JCL to perform all the various translations at one time. This feature is used for translating TINYPAY to all the different versions necessary, plus other programs we will be announcing shortly. Best of all, the new version of The Alternate BASIC is only $59.95. The new package does not contain some of the additional utilities mentioned in earlier advertisements, but it does include the new features mentioned here. A set of utility packages for The Alternate BASIC will be announced later. Anyone currently using The Alternate BASIC and desiring an upgrade, please send us your master disk with a postage paid mailer and the upgrade will be no charge. NOTE: Make sure your postpaid mailer is large enough for the new manual.

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Dennis has also provided an update to his BAS34 package. During the process of converting to the Model 4 mode, in some instances it was necessary to perform calculations to transfer from the 64 by 16 to

an 80 by 24 screen. In most circumstances, this presented no problem, but IF you had a very long line of BASIC code, it was possible that the translated BASIC code became TOO long.

The only requirement to utilize this new feature is that you must renumber the lines before you begin the translation. This is really no problem since all Model III BASICs and the Model 4 BASIC have facilities for renumbering program lines. Several other features have been improved to make the translation even easier and more complete.

Of significant interest to multiple machine owners, BAS34 is now available for operation under five operating systems: TRSDOS 6.x, Model I/III, CP/M, MSDOS (general) and MSDOS (2000). Please specify which version you desire. Two of the modifications are specifically to translate code to a format used with systems other than TRSDOS 6.x:

You can now specify a parameter for the CLS so that all occurances of CLS is converted to PRINT CHR$(12) for Model 2000 and PRINT CHR$(26) for CP/M.

You can also request that all occurances of PRINT@ be changed to LOCATE.

We believe Dennis Allen's BAS34 to be the most powerful translation package on the market at this time. If you would like to receive the new version of BAS34, the price is $10 for both a new disk and the new manual, if you are a registered owner. The new price of the package is $49.95. Be sure to specify which operating system you wish the program to run under. If you wish copies for more than one operating system, ask Marianne for your best deal.

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I hope you will all come to appreciate the value Dennis Allen's programming. The work that Dennis has produced thus far enables Model I, III and 4 owners to utilize their machine more fully, both for developing and just using software. He's still going strong. Dennis has just finished work on his most complicated conversion utility to date: Gee-Whiz Convert.

You DON'T need an IBM, or even a compatible, to run IBM software! There are dozens of programs that will convert TRS-80 software for execution on the IBM PC and compatibles, but what about going the other way? The TRS-80 Model 4 is one of the most versatile machines available. There is a ton of software available for the Model III and the CP/M modes of the Model 4. There are more packages appearing every day for the Model 4 mode. Now, you can run a substantial portion of software written for the IBM on your lowly TRS-80 Model 4!

How? With Gee-Whiz Convert, a new utility from Dennis Allen and The Alternate Source. GW-Convert is a collection of programs and subroutines designed to translate IBM BASIC programs for execution on the TRS-80 Model 4 (sorry, but in the 4 mode only). Plus, if you have either the Radio Shack or Grafix Solution high resolution board, EVEN GRAPHICS ARE TRANSLATED. A high-res board is NOT required to use GW-Convert, but it is required if you want the converted graphics to function properly. Persons using the Radio Shack high-resolution board may require the Grafix Solution software for proper operation. Both the software and hi-res board are available from The Alternate Source. The board is installed using clips if soldering guns give you a fright, although you may want to solder the connections after giving it a try. Eventually you will want to cut one trace for maximum screen clarity.

Some of the many IBM BASIC commands that are converted include BEEP, CIRCLE, COLOR, CSRLIN, DATE$, DRAW, FILES, GET, INPUT, LINE, LOCATE, OPEN, PAINT, POINT, PRESET, PUT, RANDOMIZE, RESET, RND, SCREEN, TIME$ and WIDTH. Programming hints and tips are included for special handling of the ASCII character set, CIRCLE, CKLS, communications, DRAW, graphics, INKEY$, INPUT, joystick commands, KEY function, SCREEN function, softkeys and the VIEW command. GW-Convert includes several functions and subroutines that may be merged with your new Model 4 programs and sold without any royalty. GW-Convert is a must for software houses and programmers that want their software to be compatible with as many machines as possible.

GW-Convert includes a 50-page, indexed manual and all software needed to expand your TRS-80 program library with the thousands of IBM programs in the public domain and otherwise. The entire package is only $99.95 and available immediately from The Alternate Source, 704 North Pennsylvania Avenue, Lansing, Michigan, 48906. Telephone information is available by phoning (517) 482-8270. Although the documentation contains much technical programmer information, it is assumed that the user has some knowledge of BASIC. A knowledge of high-resolution commands may also be needed. Programs that use the IBM communication protocol may also require a BASIC compiler to execute properly on the Model 4.

The Graphix Solution high-resolution board and software is also available from TAS. Call Marianne for details.

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Many of you are familiar with the slick full-screen editing concepts availalbe with ALE and EDM. With these programs, it may be necessary to write small "macro" programs to handle your specialized editing tasks. The EDM macro language is normally "low level", that is, the commands may look loke OVOR or "ZB0010. This is no longer necessary thanks to the EDM Macro COMPiler (MCOMP).

The EDM Macro COMPiler is now available. With this unique tool, you can write programs using a high level language. language. For example, high level commands may look like "CLEAR CRT" and "KILL BUFFER". The EDM Macro language offers many powerful commands that control program flow, editing, arithmetic operations, INPUT/OUTPUT, Screen Control, Storage, String Manipulation and other necessary items.

The EDM Macro COMPiler contains a diskette full of sample macro programs that have a wide variety of uses. All samples are carefully documented in a 100+ page manual. The index details which sample macros use each ommand and the corresponding page number where a listing of that macro can be found. Writing specialized editing programs for your unique tasks will never be easier.

The EDM Macro COMPiler, with documentation, is available immediately from The Alternate Source, 704 North Pennsylvania Avenue, Lansing, MI, 48906 or phone (517) 482-8270. Please note that EDM (EDitor with Macros) is required to utilize this package and is available separately for $99.95. EDM is recommended for anyone who does serious editing. EDM is essential for anyone who deals with a variety of "filetypes". ALE and EDX purchasers can apply the entire cost of either of these packages toward the purchase of EDM. If you order both EDM and MCOMP, you may request ALE absolutely free.

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LTERM started out as a small dumb terminal program intended for personal use with Bulletin Board Systems (BBS). It was soon realized that more advanced features were required to communicate with the outside

world. Several versions of LTERM were developed for the TRS-80 Models I and III and have found their way into public BBS systems all over the country. LTERM IV marks the latest version of this popular terminal program with several new features not found on other more expensive programs.

LTERM takes special advantage of many of the Model 4 advanced features, such as the function keys, reverse video, the extra bank of memory (if you have it installed) and more. Some of the commands include:

[A]-AUTOLOGON: This option sends a string of characters if an "auto logon" code is received. Five auto logon strings can be stored at once.

[B]-BREAK SIGNAL: Several BBS's allow you to use a special break signal to interrupt to interrupt the normal flow of the bulletin board. This break signal is generated as a specific tone in the RS-232 and received by the BBS. LTERM IV supports this special break (called a TRUE BREAK) by sending the proper bytes to the RS-232 for the proper time.

[C]-CONVERSION TABLES: LTERM supports three different conversion tables. An INCOMING table will change any byte received from the RS-232 to any other byte. An OUTGOING table will convert bytes before they are sent out the RS-232 and a PRINTER table which changes a byte to any other byte before sending it to the printer. All are customizable by the user.

[D]-Display Buffer: Once you have captured data in your buffer, you may want to view it in either ASCII or HEXADECIMAL (HEX) modes. HEX mode allows you to see the data in both HEX and ASCII form (exactly like disk zappers display a sector). By using theplus and minus keys you can page forward and backward through any part of memory (even LTERM itself!). You can also modify the buffer on the fly!

[E]-EXIT TO DOS: This option returns you to DOS READY, so be careful you don't hit it accidentally. The exit message also describes the way you can re-enter LTERM if you forgot to save your buffer.

[F]-FILE OPTIONS: SAVE writes the entire contents of the buffer to a disk file. The LOAD sub-command performs exactly the opposite; the buffer is filled from the disk file. In cases where the disk file may be LARGER than the available buffer space, LTERM informs you that the file is too large and that it will AUTOMATICALLY read the rest of the file and send it once the contents of the buffer are sent.

[H]-CR/LF GROUPING: Some systems require a linefeed (10 decimal or 0A hex) while other systems do not. This option toggles CR/LF (Carriage Return/Linefeed) groupings ON and OFF. The current status is displayed everytime you press F3 for the HELP page.

[I]-INSTALL VIDEO FILTER: LTERM has been expanded for use with several major systems, including mainframe computers. LTERM's video display can adapt to various control codes (such as VIDTEX and ADM-3A codes).

[J]-ECHO/FEEDBACK TOGGLE: ECHO is the equivalent of HALF-DUPLEX operation, where all characters you type are displayed on your screen as well as sent out the RS-232. FEEDBACK is used when you are talking to another computer that does not have ECHO (Half-Duplex) and needs to have the characters sent back to them.

[L]-LOGON STRING OUTPUT: This option will send the currently activated logon string out the RS-232. It is used with BBS systems that don't support auto logon.

[M]-MACRO-STRINGS: LTERM IV supports 10 macro-strings which you can program for a variety of functions, such as storing phone numbers if you have an auto-dial modem. This means you can store phone numbers for different BBS's and have the macro-string automatically activate the correct logon sequence with only two keystrokes!

[O]-OUTPUT BUFFER: This option allows you to send the data contained in your buffer out through the RS-232 to a computer on the other end of the line. Output may be either "prompted", where the buffer will be sent out one line at a time, or using standard XON/XOFF protocol, where a block of data is sent until the XOFF code is received. Data transfer is halted until the XON code is received. This form of transfer is faster since there is no need to pause after every line has been sent.

[P]-PRINTER OPTIONS: Once you have received data to your buffer, PRINT sends the current contents of the buffer to the printer using the user-defined configuration settings.

[Q]-VIEW RS-232 STATUS: This option displays the current settings used by the RS-232. These values will remain on the second line of the display until the next clear command [F2] is executed.

[R]-RS-232 MODIFY: LTERM IV is setup to default to 300 baud, 8 bit words, 1 stop bit and NO parity. This setup is fine in most cases, however you may need to change these settings for other bulletin boards.

[S]-SEND DATA TO PRINTER: This option is used to send incoming information to your printer at the same time it is being displayed on your video screen.

[T]-TYPE INTO BUFFER: With LTERM IV, you can type data directly into the buffer for later transmission out the RS-232 or saving to a disk file. The number of bytes currently used will appear at the top right of the screen. This number is useful when preparing a message to be sent in block form to BBS that use specific message lengths (usually 1024 bytes or so).

[V]-CONFIGURATION FILES: Once you have established the various auto-logons, macro-strings, conversion tables, printer configuration settings, RS-232 settings and other settings you wish to use, this option will save these settings into a disk file.

[W]-WRITE BUFFER AUTOMATICALLY: LTERM offers the user up to 65534 bytes of buffer in a 128k machine and over 33,000 bytes in a 64k machine. Even with this much memory there may still be a time when you need to download a great deal of data, more than the buffer will hold. By selecting this option you can setup LTERM to automatically save the data in a full buffer, empty the buffer and continue to download data until you either close the buffer or exit LTERM.

[X]-DIRECT FILE TRANSFER: With the [O]-OUTPUT BUFFER option you can send data out the RS-232 in ASCII format to another computer. This method of transfer is fine but very slow and subject to errors. A better means of data transfer is called Direct File Transfer (DFT) and allows the actual sectors of data to be sent from one computer's disk drive to anothers. There are several protocols out for DFT, however the Christensen style is very popular and is supported by LTERM IV. This method uses 128 byte blocks instead of the 256 byte blocks used in many CP/M systems.

[Y]-DOS COMMANDS: With LTERM IV you can do a variety of DOS commands without leaving the LTERM program.

[Z]-ZERO BUFFER: This optin executes IMMEDIATELY so be sure you really want to erase your entire buffer before selecting it!

FUNCTION KEYS: LTERM uses all three function keys during normal operation.

[F1] - Toggles the buffer OPEN and CLOSED.

[F2] - Clears the entire screen and the command display.

[F3] - Displays the Help page until <BREAK> is pressed.

BUFFER SIZES: LTERM supports either 64k or 128k machines and will configure itself accordingly. The buffer size in a 64k machine will be somewhat over 33,000 bytes while a 128k machine will have 65,534 bytes of buffer available.

LTERM IV, with simple documentation, is $49.95. A version of LTERM is also available for Models I and III and is $10 extra.

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UNIKEY is a machine language program for use on the Radio Shack Model 4 using TRSDOS 6.x. It is used in conjunction with BASIC to permit single key entry of 85 key words and phrases. In addition, UNIKEY offers three "programmable" key combinations, each of which can be assigned by the user. When installing UNIKEY, the user has the option of including a HELP screen that quickly shows the key combinations to produce any of the UNIKEY substitutions. A /JCL file is included on the master disk for easy installation of UNIKEY. UNIKEY, the Keystroke Saver, is only $19.95, complete with a simple 10-page manual. UNIKEY is available only for Model 4 at this time.

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