



# SHIFT838 Newsletter

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This newsletter is dedicated to the ongoing support for the Texas Instruments TI-99/4A and Myarc Geneve 9640 user community and is published by SHIFT838.

First I wanted to inform everyone that the '**Floppy Days Podcast**' by Randy Kindig was recorded on September 23, 2015. It actually took two sessions as there was a lot to discuss. It has not been released yet to listen to, but Randy is going through it to edit out noise, etc. before he releases it. Watch for it on AtariAge and my newsletter. Once it is ready I will post a link on my site. Lots of good information in it.

These are just a few of the links available for '**Floppy Days Podcast**':

<http://floppydays.libsyn.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/floppydayspodcast>

<https://twitter.com/floppydays>

In this edition I chose not to look for anyone to do an interview, but instead I wanted to touch on some of the things ***The Great Gazoo (Tony Knerr)*** has accomplished for our community. This is in no way a complete list but a few memorable accomplishments.

Thanks to all that have subscribed!

## The Great Gazoo (Tony Knerr)



As most of us know we were informed that a fellow TI'er was taken before his time!

**The Great Gazoo (Tony Knerr)** passed away on September 22, 2015, which was also his birthday, he turned 57 years of age on the day of his death. Tony passed away at his home in Pennsylvania.

Tony held a Bachelor's Degree in Music from West Chester State University and played many musical instruments. I myself, did not know this about Tony and if I did I am sure we would have lots to talk about since we shared this interest.

Tony was beloved in the TI Community and dedicated much of his personal time working on issues around the TI/Geneve and helping others like myself to understand areas of the TI/Geneve that he understood very well.

The obituary can be found:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailylocal/obituary.aspx?pid=175931204>

Tony was a huge part of the TI community and will be missed greatly.

The TI-99/4A community came to know Tony as a pioneer for technical visions for our little beast of a computer.

Tony started developing his own Extended Basic back in the 1980's when he wanted more out of XB than the current version at the time. His version would run on the Geneve 9640 in GPL mode. This was my first experience with his version of XB. Years later I pulled my Geneve out and obtained a copy of version 2.5, if I remember correctly and after working with this version I was hooked. I loved it and thought it would be great if it could be placed on a cartridge for use on a real TI system.

Tony had a vision to develop a single cartridge that had the storage capacity to hold many common used programs on it for all of us TI'ers to use on a regular basis. This vision he had was years in the making and finally came to fruition in 2014 when he released the Extended Basic Suite 2.7 cartridge. This cartridge has taken the TI community by storm and very rarely comes out of my cartridge port!

This cartridge is his latest accomplishment and Tony even tailored an update to allow it to seek for the BOOT program that all of us fellow TI'ers have come to love.

Tony also released a collection of programs for use with cartridges like the 512k and 1024k cartridge boards, such as compiled games, utilities and educational programs that could be burned to a single EPROM.

Some of Tony's other wide accomplishments was the programming of MDOS 6.50 for the Myarc Geneve 9640 computer, which was later released at the TI Faire in 2004. This is the operating system that the Geneve 9640 utilizes which is very similar to MSDOS.

Tony even released some 'Music' disks of an assortment of music for the TI-99/4A and I know these are available on the WHITECH FTP site somewhere.

Tony Knerr received the Jim Peterson award in 2006 for his work related to the Geneve 9640.

Some other areas Tony did for all of us were:

- Figured out how to FINALLY get Parsec loaded from a different GROM page so it would work on an HSGPL card! He always was looking on how to do this.  
<http://atariage.com/forums/topic/242554-parsec/?hl=%2Bparsec#entry3318207>
- Geneve Boot EPROM v 1.0
- HSGPL Loader
- Provided support for HSGPL, PGRAM and GROMO cards for TI'ers
- Recorder various videos to demonstrate hardware and produce awareness for TI hardware availability and capabilities. Some of these can be found on the TI-99 Italian Users Group YouTube Site:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCee86vaawVGgCmRr0QLzqg>

I am sure there are many, many more!

The entire TI community feels the loss of a great TI'er and friend. Our condolences goes out to his family and friends as they mourn, but we will always remember the achievements he did both personally and professionally.

I personally, did not know Tony as well as I would have liked to. I wish I had more interaction with Tony. The times I did via email or conversing over the AtariAge forums, he was always helpful and would steer me in the right direction for the help I needed on the TI or Geneve. I am sure that as helpful as he was for me that he was this way for others as well. I am sure his family is proud.

I can only say:

**"Thank You Tony!"** as I have said many times in the past for things he has done for our community. I would like to share a comment from someone he helped a while back. I received an email from the SysOp of **HeatWave BBS** (Kyle) and he recalled a specific time that Tony was extremely helpful.

Quote:

*"Tim told me about this last night. When I first got the Geneve and HFDC about 5 years ago, Tony sent me one of his old MFM drives for free, as I did not have one. Funny enough it is that drive which I used to run Heatwave for the first year. I tried to get him to call a couple times, but he never did. I think his interest in BBSes had long since passed."*

This is just an example of Tony's giving nature and how helpful he enjoyed being to others.

With all the accomplishments that Tony has made to our community I for one think he should be nominated for the **TI Hall of Fame**! I know I am not the only one that believes this as it has been brought up on AtariAge already.

Owen Brand (**Opry99er**) has put together a small program to be a tribute to **The Great Gazoo**.

I have also taken screenshot of the final end result for the newsletter.



The program listing is below and can be copied and pasted into an emulator or pounded out on real hardware!

Owen (**Opry99er**) you did a fantastic job!



a playable demo for all of us to enjoy and I have to tell you this game is very addictive. Even my 8 year old son enjoys playing it!

If you have not read up on his Alex Kidd port please do. It can be found on Atariage.com at: <http://atariage.com/forums/topic/226068-alex-kidd-port/>

The playable demo can be found in the below post on AtariAge:

<http://atariage.com/forums/topic/243742-alex-kidd-on-miracle-island-playable-demo/>

## Software

### Ooey GUI MESS Launcher

A lot of TI-99ers and Geneve'rs have gone to emulation and the emulator of choice varies from user to user.

One of the most versatile emulators used to be known as MESS (Multiple Emulator Super System). Well now all MESS functions has been combined into MAME(Multiple Aracde Machine Emulator). This emulator offers a variety of peripheral cards that other emulators do not such as HFDC, HSGPL, Horizon Ramdisk and more. Next month we will go more in depth with Michael Zapf next month!

Now to the topic.

I decided to create a Visual Basic .NET front end to launch the new MAME with ROMS for emulating TI-99/4x, Geneve 9640 and TI-99/8. This application is just a front end to issue the correct commands to the latest version of MAME (Version 0166b as of 10/20/15). Be aware that this program does not work with the previous versions of MESS before the MAME/MESS integration. New switches and configuration options have been added to the latest version of MAME which Ooey GUI MESS Launcher takes advantage of. This gives everyone the reason to upgrade!

This program allows you to save your own configuration files to load up as well as mapping of F1 to F10 keys for favorite load configurations. I have even included launching of Michael Zapf's TIIMAGETOOL, which allows you to map your PC communication port and mount to MAME so you can communicate to old style serial devices like modems and get a true vintage BBS experience.

Error checking is including which dumps to a log file when the selected configuration is launched each time in order to possible troubleshoot any issues that may arise.

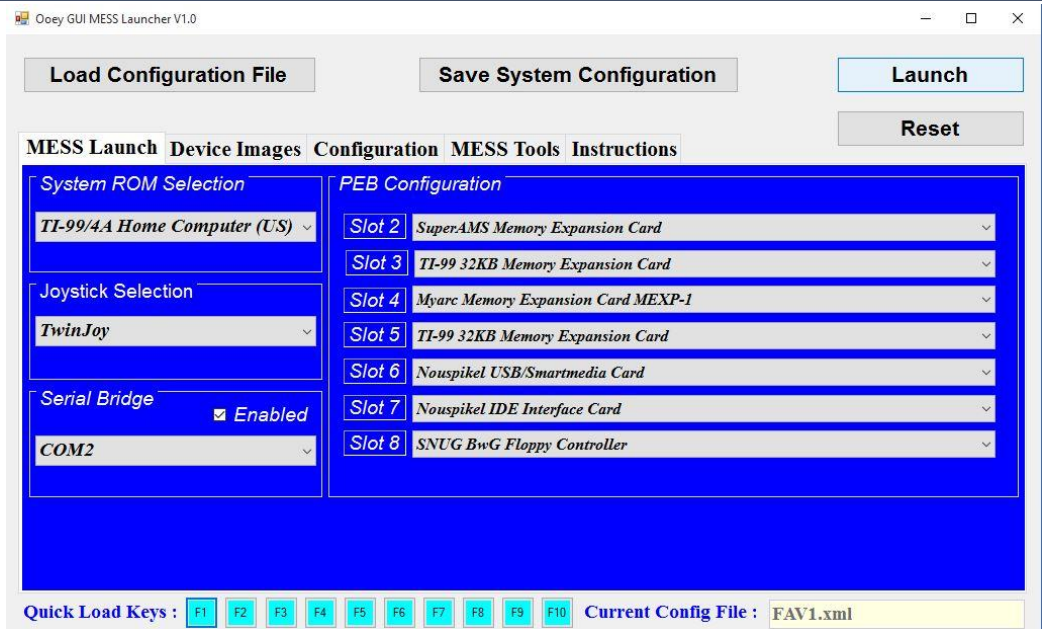
The original posting can be found below and I have even posted a video with a video of it working. I still have to add some logic to it to meet my expectations and hopefully cover all aspects of error handling.

I am planning on releasing this for users to play with within the next month if time allows. I am looking for BETA testers! Email me if you want to be one.

Topic:  
<http://atariage.com/forums/topic/243360-new-mess-gui-launcher/>

Video:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9poph5k2txgwjye/OoeyGUI.mp4?dl=0>

The end result may be a little different than the below photo, but it will be close.



## Calling All GAMERS!

Owen Brand (**Opry99er**) has started a TI Gaming competition on AtariAge where a TI-99/4A game is chosen every month and TI'ers can compete to see who can get the highest score. At the months end the person with the highest scores receives some type of prize.

If you want to read the message thread in its entirety and possibly participate in the friendly completion then click below:

<http://atariage.com/forums/topic/241547-official-ti-994a-hi-score-competition/page-1>

Last month's game was : **Miner 2049er**


Winner was: **SHIFT838 (cschneider)** with a score of **12,780** points

This game was much harder than I remember as a kid. I am surprised I won with all the other dedicated TI Gamers out there. I only got to level 4 once and that's what put me to the top.

This month's game is : **Micro Pinball**

**GOOD LUCK!**

This month since I was the winner I chose Micro Pinball because I figured that most everyone was looking forward to a space shooter game like Parsec or something down those lines. I wanted to throw a curve ball with a video game version of Pinball! I remember racking up a lot of hours playing this game when I was a teenager. There has been a lot of playing it looks like with score postings on AtariAge.

And  figured out the PS2 keyboard does not work really well with this game! Great video!

## Coding

### Assembly Tutorial #2 – Screen Display by Lee Stewart

In our second tutorial, we will be showing how to change 'Screen Color' and 'Displaying Text' on the screen via TMS9900 assembly programming.

```
*=== SCREENDISPLAY
=====
* This program changes the screen to TEXT mode, clears the screen
* and displays a one-line message in black on medium green in the
* center of the screen.
*=====
=====
      REF VWTR,VSBW,VMBW   reference E/A utilities
      DEF START           declare Start label of our program so E/A loader
*                          can find program entry point

*: EQU is an Assembler directive that defines an assembly time constant
*: and can be thought of as "EQUate to". EQU is used to set a label to a
*: value. It may include any symbol or calculation that can be resolved
*: at assembly time, just as with LI discussed in the previous tutorial.
*: The EQUated label can then be used anywhere in the source code to make
*: it easier to read.

SCSTRT EQU 0             Screen Image Table (SIT) starts in VRAM=0
*                          we're not using this label, but it doesn't
*                          cost us anything to include it here for clarity
SCWID EQU 40             Screen width in TEXT mode is 40 characters
SCEND EQU 960           SIT in TEXT mode is 960 characters. This number is
*                          also the VRAM address 1 past the end of SIT.

* Program entry point
START LI R0,>01B0        load R0 with TEXT mode setting for VDP register #1,
*                          but with screen display off while we change stuff
*                          (bit >40 needs to be 0 for screen blanking)
*                          VWTR needs R0 with MSB=VR#=(>01) and
LSB=setting=(>B0)
      BLWP @VWTR          change to TEXT mode with screen blanked

      LI R0,>0712         load R0 with screen color setting for VDP register #7
*                          VWTR needs R0 with MSB=VR#7 and LSB=colors,
*                          left nybble=FG=1 (black); right nybble=BG=2(medium green)
      BLWP @VWTR          change text colors to black on medium green
*                          FG (black) only affects TEXT mode

*: VSBW points to the WP and address of the E/A utility for writing a single
*: byte to VDP RAM (VRAM). The VRAM address must be placed in R0 and the
*: byte to be written placed in the MSB of R1 before calling VSBW.
* Clear the screen by writing spaces to SIT
      LI R0,SCEND-1      we're gonna start at the end of the SIT and work down
      LI R1,>2000         writing blank (ASCII code=[>20] must be in MSB for VSBW)
* Loop writing 1 blank at a time to the SIT
BLANKS BLWP @VSBW        write one blank to next lower SIT location
      DEC R0              decrement by 1 the value in R0
      JNE BLANKS         if R0<>0, write another blank
```



```

* Screen colors have been changed and the screen has been cleared. It should
* be OK to turn the display back on.
  LI R0,>01F0    load R0 with TEXT mode setting for VDP register #1
*              (bit >40 needs to be 1 to enable screen display)
*              VWTR needs R0 with MSB=VR#=(>01) and
LSB=setting=(>F0)
  BLWP @VWTR    change to TEXT mode

*: VMBW points to the WP and address of the E/A utility for writing multiple
*: bytes from RAM to VRAM. You must have the starting VRAM address in R0,
*: the starting RAM address in R1 and the number of bytes to copy in R2
*: before calling VMBW.

* Display message in the center of the screen
  LI R0,SCWID*11 display message at beginning of line 11 (0-based)
*: We could have used the result of the calculation, SCWID*11=440, instead of the
*: calculation, but the calculation is clearer. An important notion to repeat
*: here is that this type of calculation MUST be resolvable at assembly time.

  LI R1,MSG+2    RAM location of message to display
  MOV @MSG,R2    copy text character count to R2
  BLWP @VMBW    write the message to line 11 of the SIT

* Infinite do-nothing loop requiring computer reset to exit!
LOOP NOP        do nothing
  JMP LOOP      ...forever

*: Assembler directives used below are
*: DATA = Initialize 1 or more 16-bit constants. The operand field (after
*: the 1 or more spaces following DATA) may contain expressions sepa-
*: rated by commas (no intervening spaces) evaluating to constants at
*: assembly time (labels, numbers, 16-bit text, i.e., 1 or 2 characters
*: in single quotes, etc.)
*: TEXT = Initialize a block of text delimited by single quotes. Asm994a allows
*: double quotes. To get the delimiter as a character within the quotes,
*: double it.
*: EVEN = Align memory to next even address. It is a good idea to use this
*: directive after every BYTE and TEXT directive if the next statement
*: or directive should start on an even address boundary. All directives
*: except BYTE and TEXT and all TMS9900 instructions force an even
*: boundary anyway. You should always check the listing before and after
*: BYTE and TEXT blocks to avoid surprises.

MSG DATA 35    length of text that follows
  TEXT ' Rest In Peace The Great Gazoo!'
  EVEN          align memory to next even address
  END START    END of program; start automatically at START when
program loaded

*== NOTES
=====
*== WP = Workspace Pointer
*==

```



## Resources

### Contact information

To contact me please feel free to visit my website and click on the 'Contact' tab.

<http://shift838.wix.com/shift838>

### Newsletter Topics

If you would like to participate in the writing of this newsletter or provide any topics for this newsletter please contact me via my web site.

### Sites

There are a few of sites that I think should get their own list below. These are for the TI Hall of Fame and TI-99ers Unsung website. Please visit these below sites as both have great information.

<http://www.ti99hof.org/index.html>

<http://www.ti99ers.org/unsung/>

Also the below site has a list of all the TI-99ers that have passed. Please be sure to check them out.

<http://ti99ers.org/modules/Inspire/remember.htm>

Below resources are just a handful of sites that support the TI-99/4A and/or Geneve 9640 computers. It is in no way a full list. This section will be included in all future newsletters. If there is a site that you think should be mentioned then please contact me.

[Web sites / FTP Sites](#)

<http://www.99er.net>

<http://www.ninerpedia.org/>

<ftp://ftp.whitech.com>

<http://shift838.wix.com/shift838>

<http://www.ti99-geek.nl/>

<http://www.mainbyte.com>

<http://www.atariage.com>

<http://www.harmlesslion.com>

<http://www.ti99iuc.it>

<http://www.turboforth.net>

<http://www.ninerpedia.org/>

Yahoo List Groups:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TI99-4A/info>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TI994A/info>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Geneve9640/info>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/turboforth/info>

## **Active BBS'**

### **HeatWave BBS**

Access: Dial-Up and Telnet

System: Geneve 9640

Software: S&T BBS Software

Location: Arizona

Content: TI and Geneve file libraries, message bases, door games and e-mail.

Telnet to: [www.heatwavebbs.com](http://www.heatwavebbs.com) port 9640 Dialup : **602-955-4491 @ 8-N-1**

### **The Hidden Reef**

Access: Dial-Up

System: TI-99/4a Modified

Software: S&T BBS Software

Location: New York

Content: TI and Geneve file libraries, message bases, door games and e-mail.

Dialup : **718-448-9402 @ 8-N-1**

### **The Keep**

Access: HTTP and Telnet

System: Pentium 4 running Windows 2000

Software: Worldgroup BBS Software (up to 256 user connections)

Location: Tigard, Oregon

Content: TI and Geneve file libraries, message bases, door games, multi-user and multiplayer games and e-mail.

Telnet : [www.thekeep.net](http://www.thekeep.net) port **23** Web browser to <http://www.thekeep.net>

The Keep has TI File libraries, Message bases, e-mail, door games, multi-user and multiplayer games. The keep also has a modem line connected for anyone that would like to contact The Hidden Reef BBS from the internet through The Keep.

Simply telnet to [www.thekeep.net](http://www.thekeep.net) on port 23, login to The KEEP and then type **/GO DIALOUT** at the main menu, then D1 to dial out to The Hidden Reef. It's that simple.

## **Vendors**

SHIFT838 – Provides used TI equipment as acquired. Check with me often. A lot of the items need rehoming from other TI Users.

Arcade Shopper – Provides old and new TI equipment, upgrades and new runs of PCBs at [www.arcadeshopper.com](http://www.arcadeshopper.com)

## **Repair Centers**

### **Richard Bell**

Repairs available on limited basis, please contact Richard at [swim4home@verizon.net](mailto:swim4home@verizon.net) for wait-time before sending any repairs

### **Tim**

Myarc-related hardware repairs on a limited, as-available basis. Contact Tim at [insane\\_m@hotmail.com](mailto:insane_m@hotmail.com) for wait times or to request service.