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Asgard Software

Calendar Maker 99

By Chris Hochstetler and Ed Johnson

Introduction:

Calendar Maker 99 is totally unique for the TI-99/4A. Not to say that calendar making programs for the 4A are scarce - there are quite a few programs designed to calculate or print calendars for months or years. There are also many programs designed to allow you to keep appointment calendars (including our own popular **Schedule Manager**). However, this program is different. It is designed to make calendars not so much a utilitarian device as an art-form. This program is designed to make creating and using calendars a creative process. **Calendar Maker 99** (hereafter **CM99**), is useful for the school, business, volunteer organization or home that wants to create picture calendars for your work or cause. Above all else, though, it is designed to be fun for all.

Overview:

CM99 is not just a single program - it is a series of specialized programs that divide the calendar-making process into discrete, contained tasks. The next section (**The Calendar Making Process**) will go into more depth into the actual process used for creating a calendar. Before starting a calendar, it is advisable that you read the section below that (**Loading CM99**) first. The sections after that describe the individual parts of the program. If you want to get started right away, you can easily skip to the section (**A Sample Session**) for a run-down of how you can create a calendar with a minimum of mess and fuss.

The Calendar Making Process:

The calendar making process, as mentioned above, is divided

into many individual parts. The best way to illustrate this is the following chart:

Create Calendar - Specify whether it is a month or year calendar, what month and year.

Design Calendar - Place small pictures and text notes on the calendar.

Layout Calendar - Select the typefaces, line-style, and month/year headline to be used.

Print Picture or Two-Up Calendar - Print a Picture calendar if month or two-up if year.

The calendar making process seems quite "linear". First, you define the year you are making your calendar for, and whether you want a calendar for the whole year or just a month. Then you tell the program whether you want pictures and text on your calendar or not. If you don't, the program sends you to the "Layout" calendar step, otherwise you go to the "Design" calendar section first. At the "Design" phase you place pictures (selecting from a list of those on your work disk) and text (typing it in a box representing the date) on a graphical representation of the month (or each month in the case of a year calendar). In the "Layout" section you designate which typefaces, line styles and headers (the font used to generate the month of the year at the top of each month calendar) are to be used in the calendar. Finally, depending upon whether it's a month or a year calendar, you proceed to the "Print Picture Calendar" or "Print Two-up Calendar" segments of the program. For more information about each part of the process, read the appropriate

section below on the subject of disks.

Loading CM99:

CM99 is distributed on two disks. The first disk is labeled "Program Disk", and contains the actual program. The second disk is called the "Work Disk", and contains much of the data used by the program to print a calendar. Advanced users can create their own work disks - read the section below (**Creating a Work Disk**) for more information how.

This program is more easily used with a two disk-drives. However, it has been designed to be used with only one, if necessary, with a minimum of disk swaps needed to generate a complete calendar. The program cannot utilize more than 3 (and only 3 in certain circumstances) drives. It is provided unprotected so that you can use it with RAM-disk devices (and more importantly, create a copy for your use).

BEFORE LOADING THE PROGRAM, MAKE A COPY OF BOTH DISKS AND STORE THE ORIGINALS IN A SAFE PLACE.

After you have made a back-up copy, turn on the computer and all peripherals (with the TI Extended BASIC module or equivalent in the cartridge port), place the program disk in drive one (and the work disk in drive two if you have one), and select Extended BASIC from the main menu. The program will automatically load and execute itself. The first thing you will see is title screen, and then the main menu of the program. **Before doing anything else, select Option *8 of the Program Menu (Defaults)** and tell CM99 your printer name and the work (or data) disk drive number. The program disk should ALWAYS be in drive one (unless the program tells you to swap disks). You are now ready to proceed to the next

section of the manual, which describes in depth the individual parts of the program. Or, if you want to get started quick jump to the section entitled **A Sample CM99 Session** for "quick and dirty" description of creating a calendar on step-by-step basis.

The Program:

Main Menu:

The first part of the program, obviously enough, is the main menu. This menu contains 10 options, which if you read the section above entitled **Loading CM99**, you are acquainted with the *Set Defaults* option. The options are arranged in their order of use. CM99 is designed so that if you are interrupted in the calendar making process, you can leave it by saving what you have done up to the section you are in, and at a later time return to where you left off. Each part of the program contains an option to leave the program instead of continuing on to the next step.

The other options of this menu deserve some mention. The *Picasso* option (*6 on the menu), is used to load the Picasso drawing program. As explained in the section below (**Picture Calendar**), the pictures used are created with the Picasso drawing program (either version 1.0 or 2.0). The first version is free, while the second is available commercially (and more comprehensive). Another option that deserves mention is *7 (*Convert Pictures*). This option is not part of the normal creation process, but it is important nevertheless - it is used to convert small pictures over from TI-Artist format so that they can be used on a calendar.

The next option that should be mentioned is *9 (*Load Utilities*) which is designed to allow you to load the menu for the plan. **Calendar Maker 99 Utilities** disk. The final option (*0 - *Quit*)

is, of course, use the arrow keys in the program. A note to inexperienced users: to select a menu option press the key representing the option number (i.e. to select option "4" press "4").

Create Calendar:

This is the first stage of the calendar making process, and appropriately enough is the first option of the main menu. In this phase you must decide (a) what year you are making the calendar for, (b) whether it is a month or a year calendar (and if it is a month - which month), and (c) whether you want small pictures and text notes on your calendar or not.

Before doing anything, the program reminds you to put your Work Disk in the data disk drive (or replace the Program Disk with the Work Disk in single drive systems). Next, the program prompts you to enter the year of your calendar - any year between 1600 and 2400 will do (History teachers can use the ability to do calendars of the past to highlight historical events to students). Next, you can select to do a month or a year calendar. A note on each type would be useful.

Month calendars can consist of numerous elements - a half-page Picasso generated picture at the top of the page, followed by the calendar (which can have up to 40 small pictures and 40 text notes on any days), and then a 1-13 line message (depending upon whether you opt to print a picture on the top of the page or not) at the bottom.

Year calendars, on the other hand, are printed two-months to a page (hence the option to print calendars is called **Print Two-Up Calendar**). You cannot print a Picasso picture at the top of the page, or have a message at the bottom. The reason for this is simple - not enough space on the page! As with month calendars, you are limited to 40 pictures and 40 text notes for the whole

year. Obviously, a month calendar can be considerably more detailed than a year calendar - it pays to do a year calendar month at a time.

If you opt for a month calendar you are prompted to enter number of the month (1 is January, 2 is February, and so on). Next, in either case, you have to decide whether you want pictures and text on your calendar or not. If you do, the **Create Calendar** will send you to the **Design Calendar** stage; otherwise, it will send you to the **Layout Calendar** stage. If you just want a blank calendar for personal or office use (one which you can write significant events in pencil or some other way), then you will want to elect to have now pictures or text on your calendar. An added bonus is that calendars with no pictures and text print fastest.

Next, you are prompted to press *ENTER* to continue to the next stage of the process (either **Design** or **Layout Calendar** depending on whether you want pictures and text on your calendar or not), or to press *BACK* (FCTN 9) to return to the main menu. Being able to return to the main menu at this point means you can easily leave **CM99** attend to something else. If you elect to press *BACK* the program will also ask you if you should save your calendar up to this point. If you elect to save the calendar, at some future point you can continue on the calendar making process where you left off simply by choosing the **Design Calendar** or **Layout Calendar** option of the main menu.

A note about using this section is in order - after entering an item requested, the program will give you the option of re-entering your response (by pressing *BACK*), or of continuing on to the next question (by pressing *ENTER*). Additionally, at any prompt if you enter nothing, you can return to the main menu quickly and easily (of course anything you've done up to that point is lost).

Design Calendar:

After creating a calendar with the Create Calendar option, you can place small pictures and text on it with this utility.

The Design Calendar section is a complicated program by itself. It is essentially a graphic display of a single month in which you "drop" pictures or text on individual days. When the program first loads, it will ask you which month you want to "Design" first if your calendar is a year calendar (or if it isn't, it will automatically display the month the calendar is for). However, whether you are "Designing" a month or a year calendar, the program is pretty much the same. The first menu consists of a green box covering the first day of the month, which you can move around by pressing *E*, *S*, *X* and *D*, and the option of pressing *ENTER* to select a single day, or *BACK* to get another action menu for the whole calendar.

Once you have selected a day the cursor changes to red, and the date action menu appears. You have the option of pressing a "P" to place a picture on the date, "T" to place a text note (of up to 89 characters), "D" to delete any picture or text note that is on the date, or "Q" to return to the select date mode. If you press "P" a window will "pop-up" with a listing of all the pictures on your work disk in it. Use the up and down arrow keys ("E" and "X" to move the arrow shaped cursor up or down through the list, *ENTER* to select a picture, or *BACK* to return to the date action menu. If you press "T" a smaller box appears, and you can use the arrow keys, insert, delete, erase etc. to enter a small bit of text for the date (in the manner of TI-Writer). One note of caution on the text editor, any characters entered in the first column of the first two lines (and in the second on dates larger than 9) will be covered over with a number on printing. Essentially, your area open for text is an oblong shape with a square or rectangular "bite" out of the upper left corner.

After you have finished entering the text and selecting pictures for the month, you can press *BACK* to get to calendar action menu.

In all cases you can press "G" at this menu to save and continue on to the next step (the Layout Calendar phase of the calendar creation process), "S" to simply save your work up to that point (if, say, you want to leave the computer on and walk away to do something else for an hour or two), "Q" to quit and return to the main menu (make sure you press "S" prior to pressing "Q" if you want to save your work before leaving!), or "R" to return to the date selection menu. If you are editing a year calendar, you can also press "M" to change the month you are editing. On pressing "M", the program will re-calculate and re-draw the month for you (indicating which days contain pictures or text on them with a "P" or a "T").

Note that this option can be used to edit calendars at any time after they have been created. You could layout, and then print the calendar, and then return to this option and change things and re-layout and print the calendar. This is also true of the Layout Calendar option described next - if you do not like the font or line-style you used for the calendar, you can change it and re-print the calendar without creating it again from scratch.

Layout Calendar:

This component of the calendar making process is used to set the various elements of the printed calendar; the date text, message text typestyles, the typestyle used for the number of the date, the style of the lines used to represent the calendar, and the typeface used for the month and year heading at the top of the calendar.

Note that you must use this option before attempting

print a calendar. This utility functions quite simply - it merely looks at your work disk and gives you a list of your choices for each calendar element. The program comes with samples on the Work Disk provided. You can create your own typefaces, linestyles, etc. with the Calendar Maker 99 Utilities disk sold separately.

If there is only one of each type on the disk, the program will automatically select that as the default, otherwise, it gives you a list of from 2 to 20 choices. Use the up and down arrow keys ("E" and "X") to move the arrow-shaped cursor to the choice you want, and press ENTER to select one. When you are finished, Layout Calendar gives you the option of pressing ENTER to continue on the next step (printing the calendar), or BACK to return to the main menu. If you press BACK, you will be given the option of saving your selections. If you do save your choices, then at some future date to print your calendar all you have to do is select either the Print Picture Calendar or Print Two-up Calendar from the main menu.

Print Picture Calendar:

This option is used to print a month calendar. As the name suggests, this calendar can have a picture on it generated with the Picasso drawing program. You are optionally allowed from 1 to 1-3 lines of a message at the bottom of the page. This message could be a business name and address, a slogan or phrase of your choice, or anything you want it to be.

Do not attempt to print a year calendar with this option

Whether you enter this option by selecting it directly from the main menu, or by following the calendar creation process step-by-step, the first prompt this option gives you is to make sure your printer is turned on and to press ENTER when it is.

Next, the program will ask you if you want to print a Picasso picture on your calendar. If you press "Y" then it will ask you for drive number of the disk drive that will contain your disk that contains the Picasso picture, the filename of the Picasso picture, and how many overstrikes (or how dark you want the picture to be).

After it prints the picture (or centers the page if no picture printed), then the program asks you if you want to print the month and the year. A note: the positions of the month and year have been fixed for simplicity - with the month on the left and the year on the right - you can elect to have either, both, neither printed, but not change their positions.

Finally, the utility asks you if you want to print a message at the bottom of your picture. If you elected to print a picture the message can be 1-3 lines long - otherwise 1-13. If you say yes you can optionally center all the text you enter, and double the width. You are allowed a maximum of 98 characters for each line of the message. Doubling the width of the message halves the amount of characters allowed for each line to 49. Obviously, you can't have 98 or 49 characters on a single screen line, so the program allows you to enter text into a screen window of one screen line at a time.

After you have entered your text for the message line, the program asks you if what you entered was correct. When you are finished entering text (if before the maximum number of lines permitted is reached), all you have to do to continue on is to press ENTER at the first line of the window.

After entering all this information, the program will print your calendar. When finished, it will return you to the main menu. Typically takes from 5-15 minutes to print a month calendar depending upon the complexity of the calendar (how many pictures and text notes are on the individual dates).

Print Two-Up Calendars:

This print option operates almost exactly like the Print Picture Calendar utility - except that you have fewer questions to answer. This utility is used to print out year calendars.

Year calendars are exactly the same as month calendars except that a Picasso picture at the top of the calendar and a message at the bottom are not allowed. Hence, there are no questions of either nature in this part of the program.

Convert Pictures:

The small pictures used on calendars are created (actually converted from another format) with this utility.

Calendars are allowed to have 40 small pictures scattered on any dates. Of course, you are not allowed to have more than one picture on any day. More advanced users of this program will soon want to add their own small pictures. This utility will let you take a small picture (less than 104 by 56 pixels, or 13 by 7 blocks) stored in TI-Artist Instance format, and put it in a format that can be used by CM99. Actually, this utility is more geared to converting a disk full of pictures at a time (unattended) rather than a single picture.

TI-Artist, if you are not familiar with it, is a drawing program for the TI-99/4A. There are quite a few packages of pre-drawn work stored in various file formats available for this program - even some from Asgard Software. This drawing program can be obtained from most dealers and distributors of TI software - and is highly recommended if only for the myriad of programs and utilities that use small pictures and typefaces stored in its format (from Asgard alone - Font Writer II, Artist Enlarger, Artist Borders, Artist Instances Volumes #1-8, and Artist Fonts).

This utility is rather simple to use. Before using it, you have to create a conversion disk though. Using a disk manager, initialize a new disk, and place copies of all the Instance files that you want converted on it. Remember the individual pictures shouldn't be larger than 104 by 56 pixels, or 13 by 7 blocks. Next, load CM99 and select option #7 (*Convert Pictures*).

When this utility has loaded, a short menu will be displayed. The first option is used to tell the Convert Pictures utility what format you are using. The second option, when selected, will convert all of your pictures for you. The third is used to set how you want the pictures processed, and the fourth returns you to the main menu.

Before doing anything, you may want to select option #8 (*Convert Options*). A note of explanation is helpful. This utility will allow you to double the width of those pictures that are less than 42 (or 6 blocks) wide. The reason for this is simple - when printing out the calendar there are many more pixels across the page than down it (a one-inch square on the page would consist of 120 pixels across by 72 down). As a result, the "pixels", or dots on the page are a sort of thin and tall. Hence, if you try to print out a box consisting of, say, 10 by 10 pixels, it's going to look thin and tall - not square but rectangular. This is the reason why it's hard to print a perfect circle on a page with a printer and a drawing program.

CM99 will allow you to get around this by doubling the width of your pictures - this means that they will not appear as if they were stretched vertically. Of course, you can only do this with pictures that are not already wide. This utility will allow you to double the width of any picture that is not too wide. However, if you are processing dozens of pictures, it can be quite a chore to sit at the computer and wait for it to ask you whether you want the width of each applicable picture doubled - hence the *Convert Options* selection. This short menu will allow you to

the utility to automatically change the width of every picture it can, to not, or to allow you to choose on an individual basis.

After you have chosen an option, select option *1 (*Select Disk*) to begin processing the pictures on your disk. This utility option allows you to tell *Convert Pictures* to process the pictures on a particular disk.

After selecting your disk, choose option *2 (*Convert Pictures*) to begin the conversion process. The first thing that will happen is a list of the pictures on your conversion disk will be displayed. Use the arrow keys to move the arrow shaped cursor up and down ("E" and "X"), and press *ENTER* to choose a picture. You are selecting the pictures that you want to process in this step. When you are finished, press *BACK* and the utility will begin working.

When it is done, it will return you to the main menu. One note of caution - when creating your conversion disk make sure that you allow enough room on the disk for the converted pictures. This is a single-disk-drive oriented operation, and won't allow you to read the pictures from one disk and write the converted ones to another. Therefore, you must allot around 5 sectors of disk space for each converted picture (so if you only have 100 sectors left on your conversions disk, don't select more than 20 pictures to process!)

Summary:

Calendar Maker 99 is reasonably easy to use. If you are simply trying to use the program as is, without doing a lot of customizing, then it is a very simple process - and can even be enjoyable. However, if you want more control over your calendar, you'll have to work a bit more. See the section below *Creating a Work Disk* for more information about customizing your calendars.

A Sample Session:

This section assumes all you want to do is use *CM99* right out of the package. Before proceeding through this tutorial, read the section entitled *Loading CM99* carefully! Then return to this section.

Before creating a new calendar, why not print out the sample provided on the work disk? This will give you an idea of how the calendar should appear on your printer. It will also help you adjust the printer to the program. The sample calendar is for one month, so select option *4 from the main menu (*Print Pictures - Calendar*). Follow all the on-screen instructions if you are using a single disk system (and even if you aren't!).

The first question asked will be "do you want a Picasso picture?" Press "Y", then the number of the data disk drive (1 for a single drive system, and 2 for more others), and then type the filename of the picture, *SAMPLE*, and press *ENTER*. Next, the program will ask you "how many overstrikes do you want?" - for the sake of simplicity, type "2" and press *ENTER*.

The program will now print the sample picture on your printer. When it is finished, you will be asked a battery of questions - answer by pressing "Y" to all of them. At the end of the questions, you'll be faced with a box on the screen. Type your name in the first line of the box and press *ENTER*. Then press *ENTER* again - answer the question by pressing "Y", press *ENTER* once more, and then answer the final question by pressing "Y". The program will now print out the sample calendar provided on the work disk.

If you have trouble printing out the calendar like the sample provided at the end of the manual, the trouble may be in one of two things - either your device name specified in the *Default*

is incorrect (if you set it to P10CR you may want to change it to P10CRLF or P10LF), or your printer is not quite Epson-compatible (or not at all).

After you've correctly printed your calendar, you may want to try your hand at creating your own. To start the calendar creation process, select option *1 (appropriately) from the main menu. At this point you are going to be answering dozens of questions. You'll have to decide the type of calendar, whether you want pictures on it or not, and so on. Going in-depth at this point would make this manual 100 pages long, and is pretty unnecessary if you remember a few rules. For one thing - the program will always tell you where you are in the upper right hand line of the screen. If you have trouble, you can quickly figure out where you are, and read the appropriate section of the manual for detailed information about that step. Another thing to remember is that **nothing is permanent** - if you make an error, you can correct it usually on the spot, and definitely by returning to the main menu and re-selecting the step you made the error in. Some errors you might not spot until you've printed the calendar - in which case you can go to the area where you made the error and correct it with no problem (unless you specified the wrong year - in which case you'll have to start over again from scratch). The best way to understand CM99 is to use it.

Advanced Uses of Calendar Maker 99

Creating a Work Disk:

Once you have created a few calendars from scratch, and even perhaps converted some of your favorite small pictures over from TI-Artist so that they can be used on your calendars, you may want to get more ambitious, and create your own work disks. This section will tell you how

Before you can create a Work Disk, it helps to know what's on one. Work Disks consist of several different types of files: Linstyle, or border files (with a filename prefix of :B), text fonts (those typefaces used for the text notes on the individual days represented with :T), Message fonts (fonts for the message at the bottom of a picture, calendar page - :M), Number fonts (the typeface of the numbers used for individual days - :N), and Header Data files (which contain the month and year typeface - :D). Additionally, a work disk has small picture files (:P), Picture files (which have no prefix convention) which are optional, and of course the calendar file TEMP, which contains information about the calendar you are creating. It is this file that is created with the Create Calendar utility and modified in all of the steps after that.

Whenever you create a calendar, the file TEMP is created. This file is modified as you add pictures and text to a calendar, and you select your calendar elements with the Layout Calendar utility. You can only have a single calendar to a work disk - but you can erase or edit that one to your heart's content. At some future point you may want to store a calendar permanently, or create a new work disk with new pictures or calendar elements on it - to do that you will want to create a work disk.

First, initialize a blank disk with a disk manager. You can use a disk of any size for this purpose (SS/SD to DS/QD if you have it) and the more files of each type you put on it, the more choices you have when creating a calendar. Next, using the same disk manager, copy those files from the original work disk that you want. **Make sure that you copy at least one of each type.** If you have the Calendar Maker 99 Utilities disk you can create your own files for each data type. Otherwise, you'll have to work with the ones provided. Next, you can copy over a range of pictures from the work disk. If you are going to use a completely new set of your own or from your collection of TI-Artist instances, you may want to convert a disk of

prior to creating your work disk - and then copy the converted files (:P) on to your new work disk.

Once you've created a work disk with all of the file-types, you can create calendars as you would with the sample Work disk included with the program. If you missed a file-type, the Layout Calendar utility will tell you which one. Do not attempt to use this utility before creating a calendar first, though.

Technical Note:

Data files in CM99 are stored in a format most efficient for printing - IE as printer data. If you are familiar with Epson or compatible printers, you may be aware that Epson's accept printer data for a vertical column of pixels (or pins). Meanwhile, the 99/4A represents pictures internally as a horizontal row of pixels. The major problem for CM99 is to convert horizontally represented data into vertically represented data - indeed this is the problem for all drawing programs, or programs that print graphics on a printer. That is the reason that CM99 requires special file types, and pictures must be converted prior to use. To be as fast as possible programs want information stored in the way they use it - Calendar Maker 99 is no different. The Calendar Maker 99 Utilities disk contains a variety of tools used to convert one type of data to another, or generate it from scratch. It also contains an appendix on how each file type used by CM99 is stored.

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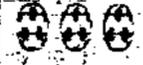
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Example Two-up Calendar:

JANUARY 1989

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2	3	4 	5	6	7 
8 It is the day I get my books in order!	9	10	11	12 	13	14
15 	16 	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY 1989

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4 
5 Suzie's birthday	6	7	8 	9	10	11
12	13	14 	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Bill and Ed's 5 Year Anniversary	25
26	27 					

Disclaimer:

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Calendar Maker 99 Manual Addendum

A number of features have been added to the program at the last moment, and a few cautions weren't properly addressed in the formal manual.

1. Do Not - Under any Circumstances place a sticker over the write/protect notch of either the program or work disk, or any copies.

2. A new feature has been added to both the Print Picture Calendar and Print Two-Up Calendar utilities. You can now opt to have small pictures on the calendar to either merge with the day number, or overlap over it. The advantage to merging is obvious, the advantage to overlapping the picture comes if the picture is very large and fills the box.

3. Some changes should be made in the Sample Session section of the manual. In the description in the third paragraph down it should be added that the print utility will prompt you to place your Picasso picture disk in the drive of your choice, and then replace it with the disk removed when the picture is finished printing. For the instance of the sample session, do not remove the data disk from its disk drive - it contains the Picasso picture SAMPLE.

The second addition should be in paragraph four of the same section - one of the questions it will ask you is whether you should "Merge or Overlay pictures?" - respond by pressing "M" for "Merge".

4. Picasso allows you to save files in several formats. Calendar Maker 99 utilizes the 85-sector Picasso picture format. Do not attempt to use any other type.