

K-TOWN 99'er

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE K-TOWN 99/4A USERS' GROUP



AND

THE ATHENS COMPUTER CLUB

JANUARY, 1991



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COMMENT

The K-Town 99'ER is published monthly for the benefit of the K-Town 99/4A Users Group membership specifically and the TI Community in general. The Articles in this newsletter to the best of our knowledge are factual but nevertheless the views expressed are the views of the author and are not necessarily the views of the K-Town Users Group. Any article, unless stated otherwise, may be copied by other users groups and published in their newsletter providing credit is given to the author and the K-Town 99'ER.

K-TOWN JANUARY MEETING

The K-TOWN 99/4A Users Group will meet at the home of E.M. Smith. We no longer meet in the MLB Building due to change of policy which requires us to pay \$10.00 per hour for use of the building. We will continue to meet on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00PM. JANUARY 10th is our next meeting date. See "PRESIDENT'S FORUM" for UPDATES regarding this change and INFORMATION relative to "whats cooking" for the future of the K-Town 99ers, with suggestions on different options available to us. Bill Sheridan will favor us with a DEMO of some Tigercub software plus a DEMO of TIW+TIA using The Missing Link.

DUES / MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the K-Town 99/4A Users Group is open to any owner or user of the TI-99/4A Home Computer. Dues are twenty dollars per year and subject to our fiscal year which begins April 1 and ends March 31 of each year. Dues are classified as family memberships. New memberships are prorated at the rate of two dollars per month if less than a full year, except for the last three months of our fiscal year. There is a minimum fee of five dollars. Memberships are not prorated for current or former members. We welcome visitors.

PRESIDENT'S FORUM
A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

Uncontrollable, outside forces once again influences the agenda of the K-Town 99'ers. This time the combination of the calendar, holidays, and a change in our printing agenda dictate a much earlier press time for our newsletter. The January newsletter must go to press early Monday morning on the 17 th. of December. That is just four days following our December meeting. All the regular contributors of articles for the newsletter have offered to meet the new and temporary deadline but Bob Buehler will be pressed for time to deliver the December minutes of our monthly meeting. The time constraints will also make it difficult for me to discuss any business decisions that may have been acted upon at our December meeting or matters that may be pending for our January meeting. This is being "composed" Sunday afternoon prior to our December meeting on Thursday.

What this means is that the January Meeting will be like "Pot Luck". You will just have to be present to see what is served up in the way of business and program. The early press time will probably postpone any detailed announcement of plans for our future which might have been acted upon at our December Meeting. While no official action has been taken at the time of this writing, and if the thinking of Bill Sheridan and myself reflects a consensus of the group at large then there will be only two more issues of the K-Town 99'er published. Namely, February and March. That doesn't leave much time for you to express your viewpoints pertaining to the future of the Group. If you care to have your views expressed in the newsletter the deadline for the February newsletter is January 29, 1991.

In the December newsletter I mentioned that we had received V4.31 of Funnelweb from Dr. Charles Good of the Lima Users Group. During the past week end (Dec. 8-9) I transferred these files to my Ram Disk. But, before I could do that I had to transfer the TI-Artist Plus files to a second Ram Disk but before I could do that I had to purge the files on it (they were saved to a floppy) and repartition it into three disks. Before the job was completed I saw fit to repartition both of my Ram Disks. It proved to be a real nightmare because I needed to know how many sectors would be required for the files which I chose to install on each partition of the Ram Disks. Each partition of the Ram Disk is assigned a Disk number of 1 through 9 or a letter of A through Z. I now have files stored on my two Ram Disks which are addressed as DSKn. - 5,6,7,8,or 9. In a nutshell, this explains how RGS v8.14 permits you to utilize Horizon Raddisks 3000 with memory capacities in excess of one and a quarter K megabytes.

BEFORE AND AFTER

What you have read so far in this article was written prior to the December Meeting. That which follows

is the "after" part. Still being rushed to meet an early deadline with our printer.

Why is it, that when one is most pressed for time, unexpected developments forces us to reallocate our time. Priorities have to be juggled.

Just when I was nearly finished with reorganizing my Raddisk files something went askew and at this writing I am still waiting to find the time to fully assess the full damage to my computer system. On Wednesday before our December Meeting I was busy updating the menu on my Raddisk and I experienced a sudden "lockup" of my computer and the screen went blank. Drive 3 contained the January Newsletter Disk and the "before part" of this article is all that I could salvage from a blown disk. As it now stands it appears that I blew two disk drives, one raddisk, a disk controller, a RS232 card, and the PE Box Interface card and cable. The suspected source is the PE Box power supply. Hopefully, I can make a verified report on this in the February Newsletter.

When the problem first developed I pulled out my backup system and started swapping cards out by the time I put together a partial system that was operational I realized that our December Meeting would be quite handicapped with only one disk drive functioning. Fortunately, I had the User Group's system on hand and it has two disk drives in the PE Box. I hastily swapped out the PE Boxes using most of the Group's system cards but because the interface cable in my system is somewhat concealed and I had already replaced the original one with the interface cable and card from my backup system I went that route. You would have to view my installation in order to appreciate why I didn't want to use the Group's System cable. Believe me! Making this swap was just as difficult to do as it is to write about. If I have confused you, that is because I am confused. Ha, ha!

THE K-TOWN JANUARY MEETING

Once again Bill Sheridan has volunteered to Demo some special software at our January meeting. The first item on his agenda will be some Tigercub Software which he believes we will find interesting and as he described it I agree with him. He will also favor us with a Demo of TIM+TIA. By using some features of MISSING LINK Bill will illustrate this 80 column Text and Graphics program. Bill tells me he has encountered some problems with the program so if his Demo comes up short he may call on the collective wisdom of the Group to bail him out. Sometimes, such experiences can be more fun than the demo itself. Be there and we shall see!

MORE RAMBLINGS

Two of our "delinquent" members surprised us with their presence at our December Meeting and contributed greatly to the excitement of the evening. We were having

so much fun that we extended our meeting to near 10:00 pm before retiring to McDonalds for more post meeting festivities. Paul Blevins drove in from Rugby and brought with him a TI console with a ZENO Board installed. The keyboard was removed and an interface for an IBM keyboard replaced the TI keyboard. Joining Paul was Ron Hataaker who has been supplying Paul with the technical assistance needed to modify the console. Ron opened the console and allowed us to view the installation of the ZENO board. The professional appearance of the installation demonstrated Ron's Technical skills with electronics.

When I see or hear of such gadgets as ZENO Boards, Ramdisks, and Hard Disk Controllers, etc. I sometimes wonder how much of such technology would we have access to had TI chosen to stay in the home computer marketplace. We of the TI Community have been extremely fortunate in having so many enterprising, and skilled persons to take up the challenge that they observed in the TI-99/4A. The same should be said in behalf of software pundits who have met the challenge and delivered their wares to us.

The December Meeting proved to be one of our better sessions where there was so much activity going on at the same time that one might compare it with the excitement of attending a three ring circus for the first time. Those of you who missed the meeting are big losers.

K-TOWN FUTURE

Having had so much fun at the December Meeting I am at a loss for understanding why there is not more input into suggested options for keeping the fellowship going in some form or another. This vital decision must be made soon. Our fiscal year ends on March 31. There is a notice on the last page stating that '91 Dues are due. Your response to that request will serve as a bellweather to signal your interest in continuing our fellowship. If the decision is formally made to dissolve the fellowship all dues collected will be refunded. Members of the Athens Club need to take note and signify your interests in our continuing fellowship.

KINDER KORNER 37

By Bob Buehler

STUFF NEEDING SAYING

For good reasons, this Kinder Knorner will win no prizes. Demands of the season combined with filing medical claims and tracing the consequences, getting a Will written, contriving this column a week earlier than usual, and a big bunch of other interruptions are reasons plenty. So in this pinch I'll comment extemporaneously on five subjects. They are (1) The best comedy on TV, (2) the best comedy in home marketing, (3) Modern

improvements, (4) Foolish fancies about RISKS, and (5). Gosh there wont be time for (5).

Best Comedy on TV It is the weather reports! Pretty girls and handsome boys blithly with smiles, gestures, maps, and satellite imagery tell us several times a day how our weather will be. Never, though does a broadcast mention why the immediate prior forecast didn't happen. I take that back. Maybe there was one time a couple of years ago. But then, I've become so disgusted with TV weather forecasts generally that I seldom look and listen anymore. I'll say one thing though; these comedies give steady work to some nice looking young meteorologists. I've just now figured out why forecasts are so frequent and I mean frequent each and every day. It must be to correct mistakes in the previous comedy.

Maybe you think I'm off base. Well, a 12/5/90 news item in the Knoxville News Sentinel quotes Associated Press using a Cleveland, Ohio, date line, To wit: The Weather Service fell short in warning the public of savage weather that claims 400+ lives and causes \$6 billion in damage per year. Two thirds of all tornadoes are missed, three fifths of flash floods, and 40% of severe thunderstorms every year. Severe storms strike without warning 4,000 times per year. Gosh, I'm sorry I credited weather forecast as Best Comedy on TV. Seems like it's more tragic than funny!!!

Best Comedy in Home Marketing This just has to be the Cereal Isle of any food Super Market. Packaging and package art and labeling is aimed at infants and nerds. Product health giving most often is a dangerously false claim. Wheat and oats in a large variety of forms are shoved down innocent throats. Maybe a Flint Stone character helps with the shoving. I'd bet a bundle that the box container in many cases costs more than the contents but the buyer doesn't know. That's plain to see in the case of Puffed Wheat, my 70-yr favorite. A near clear plastic bag is one-half the cost of the same amount of product boxed in cardboard. Further, cereal boxes are usually empty in the top 1/3 of their height. And did you ever look at the sweetenings content of most of the products. No wonder wee folk cry for more after honey was added to Cheerios. Yet sugar is an unhealthy food in most diets. Maybe it serves folks right if they buy half-full boxes! Well it sure improves the market for tooth paste with flouride. This comment could be much better if I had time to run to Krogers and take notes. Of course, then there might not have been room in the Newsletter for an isle full of foolishness!

Modern Improvements Let's begin with just a couple. Automobiles: These are made and bought to carry people and luggage, small and large. I mean small and large luggage, not people. My newest car is a top grade 1990 Oldsmobile. My wife wanted it and she sure as heck deserves it. It's trunk would carry luggage for three only with careful arranging. There was no room for

apples coming back from Wisconsin! I would sue General Motors, but the apple crop was a failure anyway. The glove compartment opens to nothing but a shelf. This new high status car is shorter than my old 1980 Pontiac Diesel, but its turning radius is greater. That's front wheel drive for you. With it I may need two cuts to enter a parking place. But not with my 10-yr-old Pontiac. Moreover there's scant accident protection in front on these front wheelers. The front end can get torn clear off. So why make front wheel drives? It's cheaper, stupid! But prices keep on rising, and the public can be fooled into thinking its better.

My second improvement citation, Hair Shampoo: Awhile back both Head and Shoulders and Prell came out with a handy clip devise that allowed the tube to hang conveniently on a towel rack. In my latest quest most hair shampoos are now coming out only in plastic "bottles" that have to stand on something. Well I settled for a freak brand that still came in a tube which will accept the clip.

There are hosts of other examples. The all New CHEER or SURF or face and toilet tissues suffer too. Usually the improvement will be a bigger more gaudy box containing less product at increased price. Sure it's all new but not so good. If they don't stop improving things, I'll just die! No wonder I'm working so hard on a Will!

Fools about Risks That's us, boys! On a death per passenger mile basis a bus is the safest way to go. Your favorite, the automobile is 26 time more risky. Your car has 13 time the risk of a train and 10 times the risk of the airplane. When all cars are front wheelers, the odds will be even worse. So how do we travel. By car. We take the risk because of its convenience and versatility. But we do this at the potential cost of our lives.

Smoking is another voluntary risk the hazard of which is striking compared to other risks. Just 1.4 cigarettes carries the same life threat as living next door to a modern nuclear plant for 5 years or 5 miles away for 50 years or 20 mile away for 150 years. Yet the stupid public has been so brainwashed by environmentalists that nuclear power, which could and should be our savior in the energy realm is near death from public stupidity.

That forgotten fifth I really did find time for (5) And this really is an improvement with no fooling. Now good looking is our December Newsletter! Now, the reproduction is clear, sharp, black on white. A new printer ribbon sure helps. The Christmas decore on the front page is tops. Prexy EM's Forum tells it like it is, keeps us going through March, and gives hope for some kind of "life after death." Bill Sheridan's POTPOURRI was good again. He presented good stuff without our having to look it up in our library and noted more through that more lengthy route. A little bit like this each time

would do me lots of good. Joe Simmons, too, sounds more cheerful in his STUMBLINGS. Maybe we can keep some TI things going on and on. I sure hope so. It's my only hope to keep my compte rendu pocas palabras under reasonable control And that's import to me!!

Guess what, DAK Industries came out with an improved WORDFINDER. I'd used my 3-YR-old one much and to good advantage. So I bought the improvement and gave the other to my son in Chattanooga. Now the improved one has gone bad. Another case of overimprovement. So there will be misspelled words above. Sorry.

BB 11/6/90

POTPOURRI

by Bill Sheridan

Friday the 13th fell on Thursday this month!!!

The Prez and I were drinking coffee at the local McDonalds (last night) after one of the most interesting group meetings we've had in a long, long time when he reminded me that we needed to put next months newsletter together this Saturday instead of our normal time of the last Thursday of the month. Noe is me! I had forgotten and thought I had two more weeks. I usually spend a couple of days reading other club's newsletters; a couple of days mulling over the various articles and rereading some I liked; then finally writing an article. So, now I have to write something in one day that normally takes me a week. Instead of my usual interesting, intelligent and informative epistle, I am going to ask for help in getting a program to work.

I read the article about combining TI-Writer with TI-Artist by Harry Wilhelm in the October issue of MICROpendium and thought to myself -- Ah, Ha -- An alternative to The Printer's Apprentice and Page Pro 99 (I have both). I ordered The Missing Link from Texaments and typed in the TIW+TIA program from the article mentioned above.

The first problem I ran into was which TI-Artist format? After reading the DOCS that came with TML, I decided it had to be FILENAME_P and _C instead of _I. Following the instructions in the article, I typed in a paragraph of text, then entered a filename of a picture, another paragraph of text, then another picture. Saved and formatted back to disk as told. I entered TML and answered the questions as instructed. Next, I entered TIW+TIA as instructed and answered the questions. Now, here is where the real problems began. As Harry mentioned in his article, different printers work a little differently. In fact, he tells you what lines in the program that might give you trouble.

The first paragraph printed fine, but the picture wouldn't print. BAD VALUE IN LINE 420. After much head

scratching, checking my printers manual and experimenting the only change I made was changing CHR0(T) to CHR0(I+T). Now, the printer will print the first paragraph and the first picture. I am then instructed to PUT DISK WITH TEXT FILE INTO DISK DRIVE THEN PRESS ANY KEY (line 470). After pressing a key it reads the disk, rolls off about 6" of paper then quits. Why won't it print the second paragraph and picture?

STUMBLINGS
by
Joe W. Simmons

Have you ever stumbled on to a new technique either at the computer or in another club's newsletter? If so, this column is for you. The geniuses will be so deep in thought that they will never know that they missed these stumbles! Enough gibberish.

My first stumble is with DM1000. Have any of you tried out the move command in the file utilities? Well, I did recently and found that it will first move the file you designate to where you want it and then will return and delete the file from whence it was located. Real neat! Up to now I have copied and then deleted not knowing the computer program would do that for me.

Since my last month's article, I believe I have all the ingredients to interface with a VCR via my computer and my cassette recorder. Since it is just not convenient to disconnect the cables to our home VCR nor is palatable to me to move my computer setup over to the family's VCR and TV set, I will have to wait until I can borrow the VCR at church.

Hopefully, before the year's end and by the time you read this article, I will have been successful and will have a demonstration for release to my fellow II'ers.

With the help of Art Gibson, I have changed the print commands on his Newsletter program so that they are compatible with the Church's Star Micronics NX15 printer. As many of you may know, Art's original program was designed to work with Star's Gemini 101 printer. Since my Gemini has platen problems and ends up printing dim characters on the right side of the paper, I have been using the Church's printer when printing an Area Teen Newsletter which the Church has been sponsoring.

E.M., after printing three drafts of the newsletter, I can re-appreciate your and Bill's efforts of putting out a newsletter... it has been nearly two years since I was an editor and publisher of a newsletter. Even with Art's pages subprogram, it is still difficult to get one's headings and articles formatted as one would like. Art is it possible to list say the first four lines of the article? This would give the editor the title, the by, and the author.

While talking with Art, he plans to release a new version of his newsletter program which will allow the inserting of graphics from within the (all) file as well as the inputting of print character commands appropriate to one's printer. He says he will have this printer program ready for the next Athens Club Meeting on December 8th.

/..././-./-./

So far, no one, but Art, has answered by plea for help on my Gemini printer! His suggestion was to loosen screws and try to move the print head closer to the platen on the right side. So far this has not done any good. Does any one else have a suggestion or recommendation? I have yet to receive an answer from Star Micronics.

ATHENS DECEMBER MEETING

On December 8th, the Athens Club met at Joe's home at 10:00 a.m. Initially, Joel Braddock and Art Gibson were in attendance. Later, Carl Hinton arrived from Atlanta. Besides the fellowship and Joe's pizza, pepsi's and dip, we covered Art's Assembly Utilities. He has come out with version 2.0. After everyone else left, little joe got Art to give him an on hands tutorial as well as the docs already printed out.

After lunch, we went down to the Etowah Church of Christ where there was more room to set up Joel's hard drive. Poor Joel. After purchasing a Myarc Hard drive and floppy drive disk controller card, a 42Meg Mitisibushi (sp) hard drive, a separate power supply, and the proper cables and after extracting Art Gibson's and Carl Hinton's high I.Q.'s and patience, we finally had to call it quits at about 5:00 p.m. Lloyd, please give Joel a call (404-375-7308) and see if you can drop by Chickamauga to solve his dilemma.

Joe had hoped to set up the VCR connection to his computer; however it was shelved to a later date. Joe say he would persevere and report back to everyone either with VCR tapes or with a cry for HELP!

As has been expressed before, the day was soon gone and we all, except for little joe, were a long ways from home. Joel and Art had 1.5 hours of driving and Carl had over 3.0 hours. For those of us who drive sensibly these times could be extended by about 50%. These three must give the Sookies a run for their pay!

/--./..././?

Has anyone heard from the Forest Lane Users Group; P.O. Box 743005; Dallas, Texas 74374-3005? As some of you may recall, the group was made up of TI employees at the main TI plant in Dallas. I always had the impression from their newsletters that they may have been

the engineers who had originally designed the 99/4a as an in-house computer. In their newsletter they seem to be always developing new endeavors and commenting on past tangents. (Editors Note: The Forest Lane Users Group advised us many months back that they would no longer publish a newsletter. Reason given was the realities of a diminishing membership, lack of contributors of newsletter articles and too much work for too few workers. Sounds familiar to me Joe! How about You? EMS).

The letter which I mailed to their last address returned like Elvis song ...Return to sender, address unknown, forwarding too late too bad the USPS.

MAIL BAG

Irving: Enjoyed you card. You seem to be a man of few words these days.

CHARLES GOOD: Do you read our stumblings?

Bob: Bud Mills' discount on his Horizon Ram disks is very tempting; By about March or April I might be able to save funds to purchase one. Right now, my budget is cramped. I appreciate your efforts and your phone call

Mike Epperson: Sorry, you could not attend our meeting nor read our newsletter.

MEMORIES

Over the years there have been four songs having similarities which are expressed in the above title. Each of them strikes different ones of us in as many different ways. Essentially, they provide us time and room for thought...

Having expressed the above and reading our club's expression of its forth coming demise reminds me of a Boy Scout song we use to sing which goes something like this:

"Here we stand like birds in the wilderness, birds in the wilderness, birds in the wilderness. Here we stand like birds in the wilderness waiting on the Eagle patrol!"

I along with many others am tired of this annual expression by so many of the desperate circumstances in which we find ourselves. We fail to realize that right now we are having the time of our lives! Those of us fortunate enough to own a 99/4A and thereby being able to explore its many caverns of useful applications should thank our GOD in heaven for allowing us this opportunity. Not continually worrying how we will keep the club together. As long as each of us continue to use and share our trials and tribulations with one another, the club will survive.

The Athens Club died in about 1987. At about this time, attendance dropped to two or three members at club meetings; actually the club membership fell from 107 members in 1983 to about 12 members in 1987. Today, there are about nine former members who are still computing on the 99/4A. Of these, only three attend meetings (when we call them) on a regular basis. Yet, the Athens Club continues and will continue as long as we continue to share our trials, tribulations, achievements and joys.

It is GREAT to be alive!

Yes, you want me to list the four songs. I suppose it would be the courteous thing to do; however are the songs that important? One might not agree with me.

Memories. Do you all remember back in about 1986 when the K-town Club had over 40 in attendance with half of them wearing the "Only BASIC spoken" t-shirts and disarrayed in nearly twenty SIG's. Mike and Joe had to ask several times for everyone to hush and settle down for we had to do a little business before we vacated the building. How about the time when little Mike Dodd and his buddy Dr.Fudge so full of I.Q. but little practical experience with humans confronted the club with their Chicago Faire trip expenses! Also, the huff many of us got into when we tried to create a multi-computer club. Yes, memories are many...

Have any of you seen the movie "Field of Dreams"? In its way it carries some of the same sentiments as the four songs.

Having not expressed the four songs, I have been able to keep your attention. To expressed them now might allow you go astray in all kinds of different memory tangents which may not be beneficial to you. Ah yes, as it was in GEN.11:6 you are to be allowed to do whatever you "imagined to do".

THE SONGS:

ROW ROW YOUR BOAT

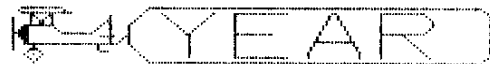
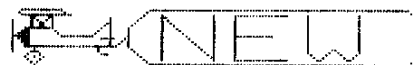
SING TO ME OF HEAVEN

CAMELOT

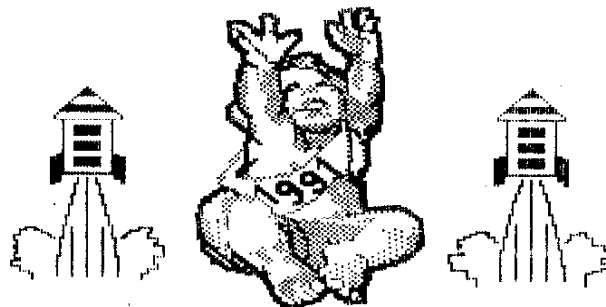
MEMORIES

From Barbara Striesand "The Way We Were".
Enough stumblings? ... 0728 hours 12/09/90

PS: A note from the K-Town president. Joe as a Boy Scout in my youth I was taught to be always prepared. Being prepared includes gathering information necessary to make informed decisions. I can not help it if my concern for adequate support conveys negative connotations.



HAPPY NEW YEAR



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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE *
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* 1991 DUES ARE DUE *
* PLEASE COMPLY! *
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