



**K-TOWN** <sup>K</sup> <sub>A</sub> **99'ER**  
 NEWSLETTER OF THE K-TOWN 99/4A USERS GROUP  
 AND THE ATHENS COMPUTER CLUB  
**MARCH 1998**



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**COMMENT**

The K-Town 99er 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 99er.

**K-TOWN MARCH MEETING WITH EM**

THE MARCH MEETING OF THE K-TOWN 99/4A USERS GROUP WILL BE AT THE HOME OF E.M. SMITH. PLEASE NOTE THIS CHANGE IN OUR MEETING PLACE AGAIN. I KNOW THIS IS A TOUGH CHOICE AFTER BEING TREATED BY BILL AND KITTY WITH TASTY MORSELS AND DRINKS. If you want to feast at EM's home you will have to bring your own treats. My favorite treat is

still oatmeal cookies with raisins. Foy Edwards, a friend and former coworker of Bill Sheridan before retirement from TVA, will demonstrate his lap\_top computer. The time is 7:00 pm. The day is the second Thursday of March 11th. You might look in the President's Forum for more information and other items on the agenda for the evening.

**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 TEN DOLLARS per year and subject to our fiscal year which begins April 1 and ends March 31 of each year. Dues are clasified as family memberships. New memberships are prorated at

the rate of ONE dollar per month if less than a full year, except for the last five 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

Last month was the first time in several years that yours truly has missed a meeting of the K-Town 99'ers. A pretty fair case of the influenza was responsible but it didn't last long. The word is that I missed out on a good meeting. Sorry! I'll try not to do it again.

April is coming soon and the time is coming for: 1 - dues, and 2 - election of officers. I suggest that we have nominations in March for elections in April.

Also, it is not too early to

start planning a trip to the Lima Fair. It will be on Friday and Saturday, May 14 and 15.

The program this month will be a demo by a friend of Bill Sheridan's who has a new laptop. Is there any simple way to transfer text files to it from our TI through a modem cable?

I will see you all on Thursday, March 11, at 7:00PM at E.M. Smith's place, 3506 Garden Drive in Fountain City. North this time, not South.

John H. Bull



## POTPOURRI

BY BILL SHERIDAN



Commencing with the March 93 issue of VAST NEWS, the editor will be publishing the first of a series of 8 or 10 articles entitled "TI-101 OUR 4A UNIVERSITY", written by JACK SUGHRUE (author of PLUS!). You will be the student and Jack the teacher. The articles will be informative, funny, and directed toward the users of the TI-99/4A. Be sure to make an effort to read them.

Suggestion: Don't get a job at a tea factory. One of the drawbacks is that you never get a

coffee break!

A TIP: If copying or entering a program and you find that you have entered a program line with the wrong line number, then do the following: Enter the incorrect line number; press FCTN X; press ENTER, then FCTN 9. The cursor will be on the line number. Change it to suit, then press ENTER. The original line is unchanged, and you now have a new identical line. Delete the old line. You can also use this method when entering several lines that may be similar such as CALL CHAR(XX,XXXX....), etc.

As promised in the last newsletter, here are the.....

### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 26 = L. of the A.
2. 7 = W. of the A.W.
3. 1001 = A.N.
4. 12 = S. of the Z.
5. 54 = C. in the D. including the J.
6. 9 = P. in our S.S.
7. 88 = F.K.
8. 13 = S. on the A.F.
9. 32 = D. at which W.F.
10. 18 = H. on a G.C.
11. 90 = D. in a R.A.

Letters of the Alphabet  
Wonders of the Ancient World  
Arabian Nights  
Signs of the Zodiac  
Cards in the Deck including the Jokers  
Planets in our Solar System  
Piano Keys  
Stripes on the American Flag  
Degrees at which Water Freeze  
Holes on a Golf Course  
Degrees in a Right Angle

12. 200 = D. for P.G. in M.
13. 8 = S. on a S.S.
14. 3 = B.M. (S.H.T.R.)
15. 4 = Q. in a G.
16. 24 = H. in a D.
17. 1 = W. on a U.
18. 5 = D. in a Z.C.
19. 57 = H.V.
20. 11 = F. on a F.T.
21. 1000 = W. that a P. is W.
22. 29 = D. in F. in a L.Y.
23. 64 = S. on a C.
24. 40 = D. and N. of the G.F.

Dollars for Passing Go in Monopoly  
Sides on a Stop Sign  
Blind Mice (See How They Run)  
Quarts in a Gallon  
Hours in a Day  
Wheel on a Unicycle  
Digits in a Zip Code  
Heinz Variety  
Players on a Football Team  
Words that a Picture is Worth  
Days in February in a Leap Year  
Squares on a Chessboard  
Days and Nights of the Global Flood



## CHATTERBOX - KXV

BY BOB BUEHLER



PLEASE BEAR WITH ME.

The following justifies my fascination for TI-99/4A: The wonders of it's inherent capability; the wonders of it's software authors and it's hardware builders and distributors; the wonders of it's user groups with their generous exchanges nationwide and beyond, with their good buddies who can help me program and fix programs that I can't fix. And to think that I've lived to observe, to study, to apply, and even to contribute fragments to this magnificent technology. It's a blessing almost beyond belief. Yet, it's just as true as night and day, and living, and what ever is left! TI makes tottering old age worth living!

### ANCIENT HISTORY

I've told it before, but quite awhile back. So here it is again. Stop me if you think you can! Besides, it may be some different this time.

**The Beginning** --- I was one of two lucky TVA guys to be sent to programming school in the Corps of Engineers office in Cincinnati about mid '50's. I had visions of a big room with thin copper wires strung hither and yon over pulleys and cams and such. (Likely sparked by vague memory of a picture of the ENIAC of 1944 birth.) In TVA we were doing hydraulic computations by slide rule or mechanical calculator if greater accuracy was needed. Now we would learn about faster high accuracy.

**The Burroughs E-101**--- It turned out to be desk size with an electric typewriter top center to key in data and out-put answers. Right of that was a PEG BOARD, if you can believe. Steel pins inserted in the holes would complete electric circuitry in programmed fashion. Paper templat were used to rubber stamp with a pencil eraser the proper pin arrangement to add, subtract, multiply, and divided, and that's all that sucker would do! Such a template would be positioned over the peg board to guide insertion of pins. Foolish it was but FAST for those days.

**Away We Go!** --- Largely for fun I programmed computation of water surface flood profiles in rivers and reservoirs. It was a lucky accident of timing. Our TVA unit got "stuck" with an impossible work schedule. The E-101 in Cincinnati to the rescue! Three of us would fly to Cincinnati, enter the Corps office at it's quitting time, run E-101 all night, sleep next day, work next night, sleep, work again and then fly back. About two more such jaunts and we got the impossible job done with much satisfaction! AND I'VE BEEN 'HOOKED' EVER SINCE.

**Along Came the LGP-30** --- with a rotating drum RAM of 8000 spaces for data and/or stored instructions which were written in "machine Language." You guessed! Flood profiles were an early programming job, this time with interested help from an associate. That Good Ol' LGP-30 was a work horse in Knoxville for lots of happy years, BUT:

**Bigger Is Better**--- TVA bureaucracy decreed that the LGP-30 would be allowed in our Knoxville office only as a tool to stimulate computing work for TVA's huge IBM 704 CENTRAL COMPUTING SERVICE in Chattanooga. So I programmed in FORTRAN I my favorite job, now much expanded for the

IBM machine. It wasn't work. It was just plain fun, mostly done nights and weekends.

That program was distributed widely to other Federal Agencies and private consulting firms. Fragments remain still in the now industry standard program of the Hydraulic Engineering Center of the Corps of Engineers.

### INTERIM YEARS

A birthday in 1975 caused automatic senility, thus ending my TVA career and severing all connection with stored memory computers. But shirt pocket calculators had been a'birthing and captured my interest, even before 1975 senility. My first was about \$200 and would only add, subtract, multiply, and divide, but with high accuracy; and fast. It served well in "moonlight" consulting, authorized by TVA.

Then came Hewlett Packard, the first hand held that would compute exponentials, needed in water flow computation. Roughly \$400 and using Polish notation with it's "stack" principle. And considered the Cadillac of it's time. But it's expensive batteries were good for only about 2 hours per charge. Still prior to senility I carried it on TVA business trips, learning and using it night times in hotel rooms preparing for next day meetings. Two hours flew by, and electric outlets in hotels were inconvenient for battery recharge.

Probably by virtue of "chip" technology which I'll never ever understand shirt pocket calculators, even programmable ones, filled my post TVA consulting needs beautifully. Clients didn't know of my senility, and I wasn't about to tell! And inexpensive batteries last for years! I had all the consulting work I wanted.

### THE BIG BANG FOR ME?

Of course: the TI-99/4A that son, Kim, gave me for 1983 Christmas. It brought to me, here at home, the computing power that I had enjoyed in TVA, with the several \$million IBM 704! Oh yes, I forgot 'till now to describe that brute. It took the entire first floor of the Old Postoffice building in Chattanooga. It had a false floor under which cables connected peripherals like reel-tape-memory banks, punch card readers, and a massive printer. It needed tons of air conditioning to keep vacuum tubes cool and people too who could enter the Holy space only through an air-lock-chamber to prevent entry of unholy contaminants. Costly continuous maintenance was also needed.

I had been totally out of touch with Personal Computer progress, so I got one whale of a surprise. With my new "toy," only a "diary" cassette tape recorder left over from travel days, and a 'discarded' B&W TV I could make a good showing of the flood profile job of the best

of TVA days. And in my wee office, and no maintenance! Only a P-Box with disk drives and a printer were needed to give me much more power than I'd enjoyed at TVA.

**SO NOW LISTEN GOOD. I'M SO LOYALLY PLEASED WITH MY TI THAT YOU COULDN'T GIVE ME ANY OTHER FOR FREE!!**

### BY THE WAY,

I'm equally facinated with my SEMINI 10X dot matrix printer, even though it's "old fashioned" now. It's print controls are as much fun as X-Basic programming!

### MOTTOS AND OTHER MORON THINGS

If at first you don't succeed, hide your embarrassment.

Anyone who forgot past mistakes, lives alone.

Winning is nice, but losing is the better teacher.

Husband: "I wish you made pies like my mother used to bake."

Wife: "I wish you made dough like your father used to make."

If a guy could have half his wishes he'd double his troubles.

Little strokes fell big oaks.

An alcoholic is one who drinks more than his doctor.

Vampires suffer from iron deficiency and don't have Geritol.

### RECIPES

I need to make known that I'm sort of running-out of good tried and true recipes, and I'm not about to expose you to a recipe that I've not tested, or at least tasted after observing it's preparation by some other skilled cook. That being the case, I may have to look back and remind by repetition some of the really best past ones. But not just yet, because here comes a goody. I watched my Wisconsin sister make this on one of her too infrequent visits awhile back.

### KENTUCKY COLONELS

1 Box confectioners sugar	1 Stick real butter
4 Tbls bourbon	Chopped pecans
Hot chocolate for dip coating	1 tspn paraffin

Cream butter and sugar. Add bourbon and nuts. Shape into small balls, placing them on wax paper. Refrigerate 30 minutes or more.

Melt chocolate and paraffin. Dip cold balls into warm chocolate and put back on wax paper. A crochet hook is good to hold balls while dipping, but a small spoon might be a help too. Return to refrigerator for awhile, if you can wait.

BB 2/1/93

## MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 11, 1993

This job is getting more formidable by the month! The eating part is simple enough to report, even if I can't remember all of the goodies that were offered. From this introduction you know of course that we met again at Bill Sheridan's, where, as reported earlier, his wife, Kitty "loves to cook!" The goodies were especially comforting because it was another of those "dark and stormy nights". All the more remarkable that Paul from way over in Rugby could make it after too many misses. And Joe from Etowah and Art from Rockwood and I 'cause EM hauled me this third consecutive time. And Dennis in his van had been first to arrive. So our User Group was fully packed, all but our President John Bull who had called in sick (but only a little bit sick, I learned next day by phone.)

### BEFORE AND AFTER, BOTH!

I mean those goodies - before the program and after. On arrival there were two kinds of cookies with coffee and some choice looking pink beauties that I didn't try because I had just finished my turkey sandwich from home after EM picked me up, so prudence prompted my temperance.

Even by program end I still had remaining prudence despite a couple of spreads and meatloaf for sandwiches, and swiss cheese and summer sausage and at least three kinds of bread. And more coffee, of course. I noticed Joe Simmons making himself at home by helping himself to something from the refrigerator. Actually, I guess this was at Kitty's invitation. I finally was able to snucker up to a slice of swiss cheese and half a cup of coffee. Eating was still in progress when EM and I left for home. This time, traffic on Alcoa Highway was thick enough so we decided on a right turn out to the Motor Mile for a U-Turn back toward Knoxville.

There now, you have the easy part. Now comes my uncertain, chancy account of:

### CD ROM DEMONSTRATION

Would you believe a Perfect Pink Rose Blossom as big as the video monitor? There it was from the time we arrived until the demo began. It had been planted there by Gary Vinsant, a full time active duty Major in the National Guard who is a son-in-law of Bill and Kitty Sheridan. Gary had set up his CD Read-Only-Memory outfit for K-Towners appreciative

inspection. Of interest, the outfit had been under the 1992 Christmas tree with Gary's name on it, roughly 25 feet from where we were watching the demo. Really the Perfect Pink Rose was not from one of half a dozen CD that Gary had for his ROM device, but had evidently come with the CD ROM outfit. It sure was an attention getter!

To help me remember, this outfit consists of a CD ROM Drive surmounted by the monitor. In front of this was an IBM keyboard. Next right was a mouse to access elements in CD memory from "window's" on the monitor. Further right was an IBM compatible computer. One CD contained all the Zip Codes for any address in USA. Going to the DAK catalog for reinforcement of concept, I judge it to be something like the DAK CD ROM of phone numbers for 80-90% of households in America. Geography was another of Gary's CD's; and NASA space pictures; and a dictionary-thesaurus. Some place I saw advertised an entire Farmer's Almanac on a CD. Evidentially much CD ROM stuff is gobs and ten after ten of information of all kinds for easy QUICK access. I'm a'wondering who puts it all into digital form with keyboard entry. Wow!

I remember my first K-Town 99er meeting. It was in the Lion's Club building in Fountain City Park. EM had an American Flag on his monitor and with music, I think, so it likely was a

July meeting, probably 1984. Well a big TV had been carried in which was controlled by a DISK about 10 inches in diameter. It contained some sort of travelog like flying in a helicopter at fairly low altitude. Not animation. Real good, sharp photography. And it had a game that members were invited to play. And more that I can't remember. The DISK was passed around for inspection as though handling would do no harm. A long time later I asked the owner about it. He said he thought that was the way things

were going to go, so he went that way with it. BUT THINGS DIDN'T GO THAT WAY. Anyone know more than I about this.

Whatever; Gary showed us the way things really did go and in a BIG, BIG way. I understand though, that our TI-99/4A is not adaptable to CD ROM economically. Good thing too, for me. I simply couldn't endure the euphoric pride for TI even though I wouldn't likely ever buy one. I already have too much to learn to use and enjoy!!

BB 2/19/93



## LOTS OF DATA

Our little computer has its limitations. In Extended Basic in Command Mode when you enter SIZE you get this message:

```
11840 BYTES OF STACK FREE
24488 BYTES OF PROGRAM SPACE FREE
```

These numbers are reduced as memory is used by an X/B program. The program space is enough for several hundred lines of a program and that is a big program. My CONTRACT BRIDGE uses it all but it is enough.

The STACK holds data from variables and arrays, string and numeric, and 11840 bytes is not all that much if there is a lot of data. This was the root problem with the saga of the lost file that I recounted in the last two articles.

As you heard, I have undertaken to keep the records of names, birthdays, spouses, children, addresses, and phones for the Bull family. We are a prolific family. When I got to 75 entries the STACK was full and couldn't take any more. At last count there were 181 entries! How to keep them?

The answer is that you keep them on disk, not in X/B arrays. If you OPEN the file this way:

```
OPEN
#1:FN$,RELATIVE,INTERNAL,UPDATE,
FIXED 160
```

Then your program can read each entry with:

```
INPUT #1,REC n: ID$, N$, BY$,
SP$, CH$, A$, CS$, P$
The program can then edit each field in that record and write it back to disk with:
PRINT #1,REC n: ID$, N$, BY$,
SP$, CHS$, A$, CS$, P$
```

Similar commands permit you to add new records, find records, sort the records, and print out the records.

To find a record you GOSUB to:

```
500 RESTORE #1, REC 1
510 FOR I=1 TO N :: INPUT
#1:ID$
520 IF ID$=SCH$ THEN NN=I ::
RETURN
530 NEXT I :: RETURN
```

The speed of access is satisfactory for adding or editing entries. Searching for an entry

is slower and sorting takes some time. The speed of access improves considerably if you put the data file on a RAMdisk.

Using FIXED 160 files, there is room for the X/B program plus about 680 records on a DSSD disk, one record per sector. Shorter records, 128 bytes or less, will allow two or more records per sector and thereby double or triple the capacity.

The program needs to keep track of the total number of

records, N. My program keeps the value of N on REC 0 of the file and updates that number as I add entries.

This system works smoothly and reliably - I haven't lost an entry yet - and it enables me to keep as many records as I need. Sorting is slow, nearly 10 minutes for 180 records, but sorting only needs to be done once in a while as the list grows. The system should work for any really LARGE list.

John H. Bull



# STUMBLINGS

BY

JOE

SEMMOWS



JOE MISSES ANOTHER DEADLINE!!

## M I C R O p e n d i u m

In seeking to neaten up my crowded computer work area the other day I gathered up about four years of MICROpendium, wrapped them for safe keeping, and put them in the attic. The process called to mind how very important and valuable this publication has been to me over the years. New ideas, rich information, and stimulation have continued to come in month after month. John Koloen has done a good job for us and I wonder how well the TI community would have survived without his steady, friendly efforts.

Recently he has raised the question whether he should raise the subscription price in order to increase the number of pages per issue. My response is the thought that almost any price is worth it to keep MICROpendium going. As long as they keep printing, I will keep on subscribing and I will urge my friends to do the same. Thank you, John K., for a good job.

John H. Bull



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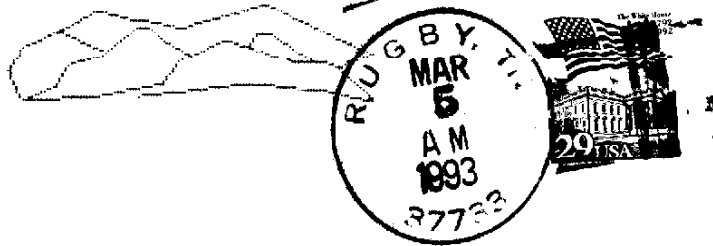
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SMOKY MOUNTAINS



St. Patrick's Day



1st Day of Spring  
March 20

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HAVE A HAPPY ST. PATRICKS DAY

