OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
TIDEWATER 99/4A USERS GROUP INC.
4168 S. MILITARY HWY. LOT 021
CHESAPEAKE, VA. 23321

JUNE 1988

A Non-Profit Virginia Corporation
dedicated to educating and
enlightening TI-99/4 users
to the full potential
of home computing.

Dues FREE
DALLAS TI HOME COMPUTER GROUP
P. O. Box 29863
Dallas TX 75229

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT ------------------------------ Billy Denny   420-9631
VICE PRESIDENT Adminstration ---------- Allen Leibrand 485-5809
VICE PRESIDENT Operations ------------- Mike Couture   480-3943
SECRETARY TREASURE --------------------- Dick Hanson   587-1949
LIBRARIAN --------------- Mac and Cathy MacAllister   877-4699

****

MEETING NOTICE

The club meets every first and third tuesday of each month at E.C.P.I.
(Electrinic Computer Programing Institute) located at 5555 Greenwich road in
Virginia Beach. Educational classes start at 6:30 pm. followed by the regular
meeting and discussion groups at 7:30 pm. Please note these times and dates on
your calendar.

There is another group meeting on the peninsula on the second tuesday of
each month in room 101 at Warwick High School located at 51 Copeland Lane in
Newport News. Formal meeting s begin at 7:30 pm with informal discussions before
and after the meeting. Please note these times and dates on your calendar.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Hi everybody! Late again! It's starting to be a tradition. We got some
really good info this issue. Don't miss the contest of the month. You too could
win.

Notes from the really BIG pinic. A smashing success!

All kinds of really neat articles inside.

Allen Leibrand
Editor.

Club Notes

The pinic was the big event this month. Everybody was there. Billy, Mike, Ken, Glenn, and myself and more were there.

Good Chow and conversation was in abundance.

It was a good thing for the wives to meet the people in the club. They now know what we are doing when we run off to "computer club" twice a month.

Overall we had a great time.

Let him cast the first stone.

Reprinted with permission from
 The Boston Computer Society
    May 1988 Newsletter

The following letter appeared in the March 1988 issue of the Central Iowa 99/4A Users Group newsletter(p10):

"As president and editor of our newsletter, I apologize for the lack of original material in our newsletter. I very seldom get contributions from other members and it is difficult enough to get all the tasks done to insure the club runs smoothly, and get any kind of a newsletter out,without coming out with new interesting and worthwile articles every time. I am a programmer, and can hardly remember the last chance I had to do some serious TI programming. We have about 25 members and most of the assistance I do get is from past officers who are already "burned out". (I realize this is somewhat a universal problem.) WE have only a couple of programmers and a couple of members who dabble in hardware modification(minor), but I don't think they believe they can compete with the software and hardware "gurus" who write articles for other newsletters. They also have non-TI systems they are sharing their attention with.

"We plan to attempt the (sic) keep the TI club going as long as we have a handful of people interested, and we are even, at the moment, in a period

with an upswing of interest. The main thing that keeps us going is the quality of newsletters we recieve in this exchange. We have been dropped by some clubs for having too little original material, but we still exchange with about 50 excellent clubs. This is just a meager effort to say THANKS MUCH fellow TI enthusiasts! we'll keep trying to get more members to contribute, so please bear with us.

"OVERWORKED AND UNDERPAID, BUT HAVING FUN! editor

This short letter is a high-precision device. It is a front surface mirror that reflects the attitude of certian people in the TI community so accurately that it makes the spine tingle.

What snobs some of us are. What cheap shots some of us are capable of. What bullies some of us in the larger user groups have turned out to be. What holier-than-thou attitudes some of us perpetrate. What a guilt trip we have wreaked on this poor wretch of an editor.

An editor who feels he is forced to make a public apology for doing his best. An editor who apologizes for bringing out a 10-page newsletter. An editor who has the added burden of being the club president. An editor who somehow, in spite of it all, still manages to get some fun out of what is, after all, merely a hobby.

Now I don't want to sound like a lily-white goody two-shoes. But the TI user group of the BCS has had the following policy with regard to exchange newsletters for more than a year now:

+If a user group sends us a newsletter they are placed on the exchange mailing list.

+There is no judgement call made on the quality of the newsletter. Some groups us what amounts to a meeting flyer. Others sent us 20 pages of first class material.

+If a user group fails to send us an exchange for 12 months, they are

removed from the exchange list.

+No exchange is penalized for skipping one or more issues.

We are fortunate here in Boston in that we rarely seem to suffer from a lack of funds. As a result we are prepared to stick to the above rules as long as this continues. We understand if your user group cannot always manage to do the same.

We know there are some clubs that take advantage of this. For example, a club may only be able to afford 20 exchanges a month. By only sending us an issue every second or third month the club can cut its mailing cost. If this is the best the club can do we accept it. Our only regret is the club's newsletter file is incomplete.

We hope that the articles in our newsletter can assist you in maintaining interest and even stimulate some members to rise above themselves. If they are able to, we believe that the TI community will benefit from their labors and our small investment will have paid off.

As long as you are able to make the effort to turn out the best newsletter you are capable of, we will attempt to support you. We know from personal experience that in many cases newsletter editors shoulder the entire burden of producing something that everyone in the club wants to read. However, when it comes to writing, those who like to read become afflicted with a mysterious paralysis. Unfortunatly, that seems to be a fact of club life that is not restricted to computer users.

In spite of this, gentle editor, and in spite of those who insist on throwing stones, please continue with your efforts. Please continue to keep your TI club going. Please continue to keep your TI members interested in our classic computer. Hopefully your cry from the heart will be heeded be others.

****

Remarks from Allen on the above article

This article reaches into the soul of everyone who reads it. Durring the short time I have been the newsletter editor, I found out how hard it is to produce the newsletter.

The policy of newsletter exchange expressed by the Boston Computer Society is now ours with the following admendment:

+We will make an earnest effort to contact the editor of any newsletter before removing them from our exchange list.
This is to find out why they have stopped sending us a newsletter.

This policy will remain in effect as long as I am the editor of this newsletter.
                    Allen Leibrand
                    Newsletter Editor
●●

Notes from Joe Towell
Member Tidewater Users' Group

This may be my only contribution to our newsletter or may be the start of many, however, I welcome the chance to try out my writing talent.

First, I enjoy the Users Group meetings because here in one place I can find out from knowledgeable and helpful members solutions to problems related to my TI 99/4A that I haven't been able to solve by reading the manuals or giving my computer the right kind of tap.

Also, I enjoy the members company and I hope they enjoy mine.

The presentations and demostrations makes it possible to understand and enjoy my computer as well as how to use the many programs.

The group library provides up to date programs in all areas of my interest.

One source of information the Users Group provides is the file of

newsletters from other Users Groups
which are made available to the
members. I select a quanity of the
newsletters usually at every meeting
and review them for articles of my
interest which includes Multiplan,
TI-writer, Basic, Graphics, Music and
miscelleneous items. Iknow that at some
future time the information in one of
the newsletters will come in handy so I
make a list of each newsletter, date,
page numbers, and the particular
articles that I am interested in. I
have been able to solve a lot of
problems through the use of the
newsletters and I would like to thank
all contributers to the newsletters.

Another help to me outside the Users
Group and the few personal books I own
are the local libraries in Norfolk and
Virginia Beach. They have a large
collection of covering all aspects of
computers and not just restricted to
the TI 99/4A. As an alumnus of Old
Dominion University I sometimes pay a
visit to the university library which
has quite a selection of computer
books. Other sources for information
useful to me are Micropendium and
Computer Shopper. My use of Computer
bulletin boards has been on hold
pending my sick equiptment getting
well.

Well, I hope I haven't been too
boring. Most of you probably do the
same as I do or something simular.

Joe Towell

Problems with the Novation
    1200 Parrot Modem

I have had my Parrot for a while now
and I have a small problem with it. It
seems that the modem has a problem
connecting with other Parrot modems.

When the modem is in the answer mode,
it doesn't generate a loud enough tone
to signal the orginating modem to begin
the connect.

The problem doesn't affect every
Parrot modem. Ken Woodcock's Parrot
doesn't seem to be afflicted with this
problem. It seems the problem may be
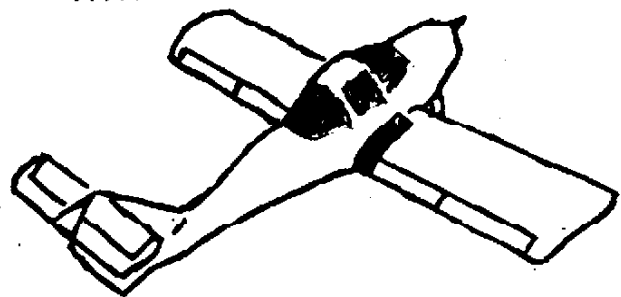
caused by the phone line.

After careful study it seems the
problem is a combination of the phone
line and inherent design problems with
the Parrot. The Parrot is operating
within marginal limits and a poor phone
line connection pushes the problem to
the point where the modem won't
function.

The solution may be to enhance the
phone line. While conversing with C&P
representatives I learned about
something called a data jack. It is a
device that has various electronics
inside that tends to enhance the modem
tones. I have sent for the AT&T parts
catalog to locate the jack.

I want to point out the problem only
occures durring attempts to make
Parrot modems connect together. When I
call any other modem, the Parrot works
perfectly.

I will write again to keep you
informed when I have more info.

Allen

****

TI99/4A Pilots

Are you into flying as well as
computing?
Are you tired of talking to the
Flight Service personal and not really
getting anything out of it?
Are you tired of using Compuserve at
$12 per hr plus 25 cent per airport for
computer assistance for flying?

If you answered yes to any of these
questions, read on!

Danville Weathermation (804) 799-5028
Richmond Weathermation (804) 786-9046

(From the peanut gallery)
"Hey Allen! What's Weathermation?"

Airplane pilots need NWS weather briefings to properly plan their trip. this briefing is usually done with a phone call to a flight service station. You ask for the weather conditions and they give it to you.
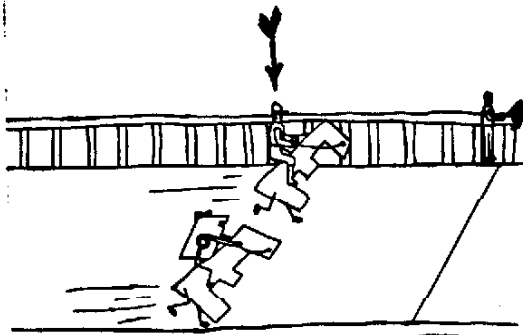
Weathermation will give you the same info and you get a neat printout from your printer. This helps out a lot when you call the flight service station. You just go down the list as the attendant reads it out and check it off.

In addition Weathermation will perform tasks that Flight Service won't do. Like plotting true course and more.

To take advantage of this free service, you must have a 1200 baud modem. Set the parameters to 8N1 and go with Half Duplex.

I am trying to get a Weathermation set up at Norfolk International Airport. This will allow us to use it with no long distance charges.

For more info, give me a call.
                    Allen

Contest of the Month

Can you correctly identify what the above person is doing? If you can send in your answer to the newsletter. The first person to do this will win a valuable prize.

The address: Contest of the Month
            c/o Allen Leibrand
            4168 S. Military Hwy.
            Lot #21
            Chesapeake, VA. 23321

May Winner was Bob Magill. The answer was An Chinese using lodstone as a Compass.

Good Luck!

What the editor assembler manual didn't tell you about Program Image files.
                    NL STAFF

Included in your Editor assembler disk is a file called "SAVE". This is a utility which allows you to convert your display fixed 80 files to program image.

Why go with program image? It is a very compact form of data storage on the disk. It will almost cut in half the size of your program on disk. Also it will allow your program to be loaded by the menu loader of the Horizon Ram Disk.

Problem: If you use utilities like VSBW, VMBW, KSCAN, ect. your program won't run in program image. These utilities are loaded by the E/A cartridge and they won't be there when a program image file is loaded.

Solution: Read the E/A manual carefully in the section dealing with the save utility. Include the following subroutines in your program. They are used like the utilities they are named for. The only difference is you use BL @xxx instead of BLWP @xxx.

This info is a spinoff of the WEFAX project.(Yes,we are still messing with it.). If you are having problems converting your programs, Call Allen.

```
        DEF   SFIRST,SLAST,SLOAD
SFIRST  B     @START          *JUMP TO START OF PROGRAM
SLOAD   EQU   SFIRST          *SET POINTER FOR SAVE UTILITY
WS      BSS   32              *YOUR WORKSPACE


*SUBROUTINES

KSCAN   LWPI  >83E0           * ACCESS THIS JUST LIKE KSCAN EXCEPT WITH A "BL"
        BL    @>000E          * POINTER TO SCAN ROUTINE
        LWPI  WS              * RESULTS LIKE KSCAN
        RT


VDPWA   EQU   >8C02           *
VDPWD   EQU   >8C00           *This routine works like VSBW, only faster.
VSBW1   BSS   2               *
VSBW    MOV   R0,@VSBW1       *SAVE ORIGINAL R0
        ORI   R0,>4000        *Set first two bits to 01 for data address.
        SWPB  R0              *Swpb address so LSB is loaded first.
        MOVB  R0,@VDPWA       *Load address lsb first into vdp write address.
        SWPB  R0              *Swpb it back
        MOVB  R0,@VDPWA       *Load in msb address
        MOV   @VSBW1,R0       *RESTORE R0
        MOVB  R1,@VDPWD       *Load data to be written to vdp.
        RT                    *return


VMBW1   BSS   2
VMBW    MOV   R0,@VMBW1       *STORE ORIGINAL ADDRESS
        ORI   R0,>4000        *SET FIRST TWO BITS TO 01
        SWPB  R0              *LSB FIRST
        MOVB  R0,@VDPWA       *MOVE IT TO VDP WRITE ADDRESS
        SWPB  R0              *NOW MSB
        MOVB  R0,@VDPWA       *MOVE IT
        MOV   @VMBW1,R0       *REPLACE R0
VMBW2   MOVB  *R1,@VDPWD      *MOVE MEMORY AT R1 TO VDP DATA REGISTER
        INC   R0              *INC ADDRESS
        INC   R1              *INC DATA POINTER
        DEC   R2              *DEC REPEAT REGISTER
        MOV   R2,R2           *IS IT ZERO?
        JNE   VMBW2           *IF NOT DO IT AGAIN
        RT                    *RETURN


VWTR1   BSS   2               *WORKS LIKE VWTR
VWTR    MOV   R0,@VWTR1       *SAVE ORIGINAL DATA
        ORI   R0,>8000        *SET BIT 7 TO 1
        SWPB  R0              *LOAD LSB FIRST
        MOVB  R0,@VDPWA       *MOVE IT
        SWPB  R0              *MSB NEXT
        MOVB  R0,@VDPWA       *MOVE IT
        MOV   @VWTR1,R0       *RESTORE ORIGINAL DATA
        RT                    *RETURN


* MAIN PROGRAM

START   *YOUR PROGRAM HERE

SLAST   END
```