Nine T Nine
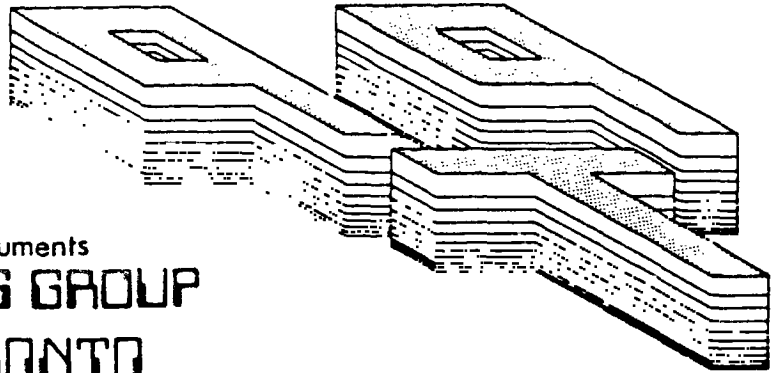
Texas Instruments
USERS GROUP
TORONTO

FOR THE TI-99/4A COMPUTER

FEBRUARY 1986

NINE T NINE USERS GROUP

29 INGLESIDE DR.
DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO
M3K 1V2

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT Emile Verkerk (633-1451)
VICE-PRESIDENT Randy Rossetto (469-3468)
SECRETARY Randy Rossetto (469-3468)
TREASURER Peter Sandford (820-7389)
OFFICER AT LARGE Boyd Brown (793-3761)

PAST-PRESIDENT Lloyd Lindsay (743-3868)

LIBRARY DIRECTOR Gary Bowser
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR Gil Tenant
SOCIAL DIRECTOR Steve Mickelson

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Emile Verkerk
Assistant Editor - Ken Crook

MEMBERSHIP FEES

FULL MEMBERSHIP $25.00 / year
NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION $15.00 / year

All memberships are household memberships. An newsletter subscription is only for those who do not wish to attend meetings, but wish to receive our newsletter and have access to our library. You are welcome to visit one of our general meetings before joining the group. If you wish more information contact our president in writing at the club address on the front cover or call and leave a message with his answering machine.

NEXT MEETING

The meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 25, 1986 at the Downsview Public Library in Downsview, starting at 7:30 pm. The library is at 2793 Keele Street just north of Wilson Ave. The entrance to the library is on Keele Street.

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Any business wishing to reach our membership may advertise in our newsletter. The rates are as follows. (width by height):

FULL PAGE   (6" x 7 1/2") $40.00
HALF PAGE   (6" x 3 1/2") $20.00
QUARTER PAGE   (3" x 3 1/2") $10.00

Please have your ads camera ready and paid for in advance. For more information contact the editor.

Don't forget, that any member wishing to place ads, may do so free of charge as as long as they are not involved in a commercial enterprise.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Members are encouraged to contribute to the newsletter in the form of articles, mini programs, helpful tips, jokes, cartoons and questions. Any article may be submitted in any form by mail or modem. We welcome the reprinting of any article appearing in this newsletter providing credit is given to the author and 9T9. If more information is required, call Emile Verkerk.

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers and are not necessarily those of the 9T9 USERS' GROUP. 9T9 cannot assume liability for errors or omissions in articles, programs or advertisements.

MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

This is a first for me as I usually address my comments to you through my editorial, but as your president for a second term, I felt it only appropriate to express my thanks through a separate column.

During our January meeting a slate of candidates which included the previous executive with the exception of Dave Rust and new members Gil Tennant, Gary Bowser and Steve Mickelson, was presented to you, the members and unanimously ratified.

Our executive meeting, held in Neil Allen's closet, was primarily used to ascertain each members position and duties in respect to 9T9 Users Group (Toronto). The new executive is as follows:

Myself, Emile Verkerk as president, Randy Rossetto as Vice-President and Secretary, Peter Sandford as Treasurer, Boyd Brown as the Officer at Large (Large Officer), Gary Bowser as Library Director, Steve Mickleson as Social Director and Gil Tennant as Membership Director.

There are several things that I as president would like to see happen over the next year.

First, I would like to see our membership grow and see our club have a higher public profile. These two priorities have been laid on the shoulders of Gil Tennant, our Membership Director.

As a club, I also feel that we should not only come together once a month to talk about computers, but should also get together to have fun. Kids Arcade Days, summer picnics, evening dances have become the responsibility of Steve Mickleson, our new Social Director.

Our library is also becoming a bit ragged aroung the edges. There are still many programs with errors and no instructions. As well, many FREEWARE, excuse me TRIWARE, offerings are not even in our library. Gary Bowser has been given the mandate to clean up our library so that it can be used by all our members.

Our club will only prosper to the degree that there is membership involvement. We, the executive, stand ready to serve you, but we still need your help.

```
******************************
```

FOR SALE

Multiplan
Nicos Evedmon
(416) 690-6644

```
******************************
```

WANTED

Plato cartridge
Nicos Evedmon
(416) 690-6644

FROM
THE EDITOR'S CONSOLE

My first thanks this month goes to Randy Rossetto for unselfishly devoting all his spare time to write close to 60% of this newsletter. Since I know how fast Randy types (one thumb), I'm sure we can all appreciate the sacrifice. What's keeping the rest of you.

Secondly, a comment concerning the format. The letters are a little larger and darker. This is because a few of you who like to read the newsletter under the covers with a flashlight were complaining that your eyes were going. Hope it's easier to read.

Next, the month of March, being along the way to spring and spring cleaning, has been designated by the executive as swap meet. So clean off those dusty TI peripherals that don't get used any more and bring them to the March meeting. Sorry, we're only allowing paid up members to sell their surplus hardware and software.

Last, but not least, we could use some columnists around here. Those interested in sharing their Basic, XBasic, Assembler and Forth experiences with the membersip via the newsletter should contact me, the editor. The pay is lousy but you do get to see your name in print.

Running out of time, space and mind, until next month, Happy Computing . . .

EAST END S.I.G.
by Randy Rossetto

The East End Library S.I.G. has been meeting for a few months now and a regular group of about 10 to 15 people have been showing for an interesting Saturday's meeting.

At the last meeting Jason Keltz the Glankonian's newest and youngest remote SYSOP demonstrated parts of the BBS system. (John Palmer had also demonstrated this system the month before with his complete files)

Gil Tennant our clubs new "Membership Director" showed up with some freeware programmmes like "Draw Poker" and "Mass Transfer" as well as some other neat programmes.

I also gave a demo on making up "FLIPPY FLOPPIES" using the single hole punch and a disk notcher and an empty diskette sleeve to mark the index hole location. With this method you can double your disk space and although the original talk was that one should not do this because of spinning the disk backwards releasing the dirt particles onto the disk media, one has to wonder why the PLATO disks are all flippies as are a lot of other commercial disks. The general usage of FLIPPIES by many club members has shown that program losses are nil.
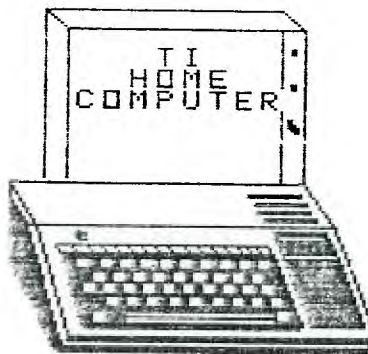
I would like to say that the East End S.I.G. is just another example of extending the 9T9 User Group base of club members in getting together in specialized and varied groups and enjoying our orphaned TI99/4As more than once a month at the regular club meeting.

I received the Annual Report from Community Centre 55 where we have our S.I.G. meetings (97 Main St.) and the "Nine-T-Nine computer club is listed as one of the many Programme Groups that use the facility.

I would like to recommend that the club become a sponsor and make a small donation ie. $20.00 to the Community Centre 55 in gratitude for allowing us to use the facilities.

PLEASE NOTE that the next meeting of the S.I.G. WILL NOT BE HELD ON MARCH 8/86 because of prior family commitments. The next meeting will NOT be held at the Community Centre 55 but at MY HOUSE at 33 LADYKIRK AVE. on SAT. April 12/86. I am getting tired of hauling my system around every month. We will get back to the Community Centre when the weather gets better.

See you April 12th. Randy.

TI-FAIRS
by Randy Rossetto

Plan your 1986 Spring calendar now as a number of TI related events are about to happen.

Locally the Hamilton user group, Channel 99'ers had a TI Faire on Sat. FEB. 22/86 at The Textile Centre, 545 Main St. E., Hamilton. A further report will be forthcoming as a number of people from Toronto will be attending.

For those of you with the travel bug and a bag of gold in your back pocket THE LOS ANGELES 99er COMPUTER GROUP (LA 99'ers) are having a 99'FEST-WEST'86 at the Shrine Exposition Hall, 700 West 32nd St., Los Angeles, CA, MARCH 1st and 2nd from 10 am to 6 pm. They plan to have presentations, seminars, vendors, hardware, software, freeware, new products, mini-workshops and user groups as well as a social event or two.

The Boston Computer Society, TI User Group is sponsoring The New England 9

FAYUH on Sat. April 5th, 10 am to 6 pm at the Diamond Junior High School in Lexington, Massachusetts just outside of Boston near Routes 128/95. For more info call BCSTIUG BBS #1 at (617)-331-4181 (300/1200 baud, 24 hrs).

Closer to home will be the T.I.C.O.F.F. (Texas Instruments Computer Owners Fun Festival) put on by The New Jersey User Group on MARCH 15th/86 at Roselle Park High School, Roselle Park, N.J. The Ottawa TI 99/4A UG is planning to get a large group together and maybe chartering a bus if numbers permit, to go to the New Jersey Fun Festival.

Contact me if you are interested and I'll get on TImeline (TUG) and let Bob Boone or Jane LaFlemme in Ottawa know ASAP.

For more info write: TICOFF, P.O. Box 244, Roselle, NJ 07204.

I think the one to go to will be the TI-FEST sponsored by the OTTAWA TI99/4A User Groups/NUAC (National Usergroup Association of Canada) planned for Sat. April 26/86. More details as to Where and Times will be made available soon.

If any members would like to get together to attend some of these TI-Faires please let one of the Executive know and/or put a message on one of the (count em) 3 TI BBS's in this town and we can get the interested parties together.

WE NEED A NEW NAME FOR FREEWARE?
by Don Veith, Editor

FREEWARE is the registered trademark of Headlands Press of Tiburon, California. A registered trademark held by any firm or individual may not be used without their consent. Please refrain from using the term FREEWARE in any 99/4A related publications.

The IBM PC community created the concept of a program author sharing software with other computer owners on a trial basis, the user is allowed to try the software by simply forwarding a disk, mailer and sufficient postage for its return. If the software is useful to the individual, they are then requested to forward a donation to the software author. The idea was to obtain high quality software from individuals who like to program but are really not interested in selling their wares through a commercial firm. The term FREEWARE was coined by the IBM community to identify the concept of software sharing.

The problem that both the IBM and TI 99/4A communities are experiencing is identical.

Too many people who think the software is FREE, are obtaining copies and NOT FORWARDING a donation to the author . Ceasing to use the registered trademark FREEWARE will alleviate some of the confusion that the programs are not really FREE.

A new term is needed to represent software created by non commercial programmers in the TI 99/4A community. TRIWARE is a suggested new term to denote software previously identified as FREEWARE. The first three (3) letters TRI possess a double meaning. An I was substituted for the Y in try. It was selected to specifically remind people that the software was available for them to try before sending funds to the author. You are simply requested to forward a minimal donation if the software meets your requirements AND will be used on a daily basis.

The second meaning of TRI stands for the three phases of this unique software sharing idea. The three phases are:

(1) A programmer creates the software.

(2) Distribution is allowed to interested members of the computer community.

(3) Receipt of donations from regular users of the software program encourages the creation of additional work.

Our primary dilemma is that too many persons are stopping at step two while continuing to use the software on a daily basis. There have been no visible effects on the supply of software yet!!! Conversations with software authors tend to make me believe the authors will be very reluctant to release programs in the future if this trend is not reversed. Comments to the effect, "I mailed out 600+ copies and received payment for 118 copies."

I do not wish to continue on this distasteful subject any longer. The continued supply of software is in the hands of every TI 99/4A owner. We must all pay something for software of useful value or no more will appear. It really is that simple!

POPULAR COMPUTING ran an editorial on the piracy of commercial software in their October, 1985 issue. One paragraph covered software piracy better than any other I had read. The paragraph is typed below in its entirety.

"Software is clearly a commodity, a product created by an individual or group of people. It takes time and money to write and publish a program, and those who invest their time and money want to be compensated when the programs are used. People deny compensation to the software authors whenever an illegal

copy is made. Most software piracy takes place in the thief's own home. Their opinion (the software pirate(s) or THIEF(S)) is that whatever they do in the privacy of their own home is nobody's business, and ethics and the law be damned."

TRIWARE is not a registered trademark of THE NATIONAL NINETY-NINER or THE 99'ERS ASSOCIATION. The term may be freely used to represent software distributed by authors under the SHAREWARE, FREEWARE, FAIRWARE concepts. You are encouraged to notify other members of the TI 99/4A community and urge them to adopt this term. After all, the word does have TI within it to denote our orphan computer even though the letters are not adjacent.

TIdbits
by Randy Rossetto

Bob Boone of the Ottawa TI99/4A User Group has a book available called the TI-INTERN, a GPL manual published in W. Germany, written in English, which can be a very powerful tool for the advanced GPL programmer.

Corcomp will be releasing the 99 HOME SENTRY, a software package designed for the TI99/4A to use the BSR or Radio Shack Plug n Power controllers for turning on and off lights and appliances and monitoring home security devices. Availability should be about the time you read this (Feb/March 86) price unknown as of this time.

FREEWARE Calendar available from Ken Gilliland, 543 Riverdale Dr. #15, Glendale, CA 91204. This is a 1986 Girlie Calendar with 12 pictures and a cover. Most are new pictures and can be dumped to any printer. Send enough disk sectors (formatted) to cover 838 sectors, 3 SSSD, 2DSSD or 1 DSDD and he'll fill'em up. Please specify format. A contribution ($$$) would be nice.

Mini Memory battery is a #CR2430, 3 volt Lithium battery available at almost any good camera shop or electronics supplier. It has to be unsoldered/soldered into place, which is no big deal. Watch for the SUPER tech tip in the next issue of Home Computer Magazine on how to do this amazing feat.

SECRETARY'S REPORT
MEETING OF JANUARY 28, 1986.

This was the first meeting of the new year that was also being held in our new home for at least the next seasons, namely the Downsview Branch Public Library Building at 2793 Keele Street.

The guts of the meeting was selecting your new executive

for the coming year with Lloyd Lindsay presiding over the nominations, with the current slate of Executive Officers (with the exception of V-P Dave Rust) standing for re-election.

The following members were also nominated to be included in the slate of the executive:
Gary Bowser nominated by Steve Mickelson, seconded by Ken Crook.
Gil Tennant nominated by John Palmer, seconded by Keith Heffer
Steve Mickelson nominated by Hank Bowser, seconded by Neil Allen.
Irwin Keltz moved the nominations be closed, seconded by Juris Laufers.
Keith Hefffer moved the above mentioned slate stand as noted, seconded by Elliot Grasett.
The slate was voted unanimously to act as the 9T9 Users Group Executive Committee for 1986.

The meeting then progressed to demonstrations of the Oscar DataBar reader by Steve Mickelson followed by a demo of the Milton Bradley MBX System by Steve with the help of his 7 year old daughter Athena.

Neil Allen gave a demo of his Disk Label V4.5 (I'm still waiting for Version 27.9 -ed.), and Text Label V3.0 along with a new TI-Writer upgrade called BA-Writer from a fellow named Paolo Bagnaresi from Italy.

The meeting generaly progressed as usual with the members socializing, computerizing on the systems present and hacking about with each other in the true spirit of a users group meeting in exchanging data and information to help each other enjoy our TI99/4A's.

PE BOX FLEXIBLE EXTENSION
RIBBON CABLE
by Randy Rossetto

Coming soon to your neighbourhood, a short 44 wire ribbon style extension cable so that you can displace that big rectangular fire-hose connector on the righthand side of the console to an area behind the console. This small addition will also allow flexability in moving the console around to suit various typing positions without the hazard of disconnecting the PE box accidently and other associated connection problems that we have all experienced.
The maximum unshielded length is about 15-18 inches (I have been using one 15 inches long for about 3 months without any problems). Longer ones will be available but must be shielded (a cable 30 inches long has been tested ok).
These extensions may NOT work on all console/PE box combinations and if so returns will be accepted. Approximate cost will be $30.00 with delivery 4-6 weeks depending on parts availability. See Randy for details.

SLAVE KEYBOARD
by Randy Rossetto

Did you know that you can add a slave keyboard in parallel to your TI99/4A console keyboard. By using a 15 pin (minimum) to 25 pin D-submini connector at the back of your console, almost any practical length of cable (round multi-conductor or ribbon cable) can be used (min. 15 conductor). Lengths tested by 9T9 members have exceeded 250 ft.(76.25m) and can quite probably be much longer! This is possible because the TI99/4A keyboard is made up of only N.O. (normaly open) switches.

The extension cable system can be hardwired to the existing 15 pin connector wires between the keyboard and the motherboard or a connector can be made up to piggyback between the existing keyboard connector and motherboard pins. The only other item required besides another keyboard (available as surplus almost everywhere) will be a suitable enclosure for the slave keyboard. I have used a Hammond #1456 Desktop Console Model #PH3BKBU (or PH3WHBU) which gives enough room to add a numeric keypad and other switches as ideas grow. I made up a cutout template for this console and is available for the asking.

Thanks to Neil Allen for the extensive cable length testing.

RAMDISK IS HERE
by Randy Rossetto

I have just received a letter from David R. Romer of HORIZON COMPUTER, LTD. in Ohio regarding the HORIZON RAMDISK.

It is available in three (3) different versions:
1> Bare Board Ramdisk Kit
  $50.00
2> Single Sided Built Ramdisk
  $180.00
3> Double Sided Built Ramdisk
  $230.00
These prices are all in U.S. dollars with shipping included within the continental U.S. The operating system and source code come on three (3) diskettes and with the manual are included in the price.

Quantity pricing is available only for orders on Bare Boards shipped to a single address. This price is $40.00 per board (U.S.) in a minimum quantity of 5 boards with one manual and one set of diskettes (we can make as many copies of the manual and diskettes as we may need).

Mr. Romer says that they have been operating a test group of cards for about two (2) months and feel that the test group has served its function, so the Horizon Ramdisk is available for immediate distribution.

I suggest that the 9T9 User Group purchase one Double Sided Built Ramdisk for the club PE Box and the members who wish to purchase the Ramdisk pool their orders and a committee set up to locate the parts to stuff the Bare Boards. After all $190.00 U.S. can buy A LOT of semiconductors, chips, resistors, chip sockets, etc.

TIMELINE
by Randy Rossetto

So how come I haven't seen any of you Modem Raiders on T.U.G. That's TIMELINE USERS GROUP out of Laval, PQ. This nation wide BBS is run by one Charles Sinsofsky and can be reached by a local phone call from almost any major Canadian city through Bell Canada's DATAPAC network. For example in Toronto and area: 300 baud is 868-4000, 1200 baud is 868-4100.

I've asked that an application form be included in this newsletter for your convenience. If the 9T9 USERS GROUP gets enough people on this system we will set up a 9T9 User Group private section for listing special bulletins, programmes and newsletter articles. This service will be provided by the SYSOP (Charles) at no extra cost to the club or the subscribers.

At present there are over 350 general messages on TIN (Texas Instruments Netowrk) of TUG from all over the country.

This presents an excellent opportunity for TI'ers to share and propigate the use of the TI99/4A.

There is also a TCON (TeleCONference) on Thursday nights starting at 9:30 pm EST where if, all the avalable phone ports are occupied by TI'ers 40 people can communicate with each other or just hang around and watch the conversations go by.

Uploads and downloads will also soon be available.

So how about signing up with TUG! At 8.3 cents a minute you can't afford to make a long distance phone call to a fellow TI'er in Vancouver even to tell him about this system. The one time cost is a $25.00 membership fee which includes the system manual and all future updates, with a $2.00 per month minimum, if you use over $2.00 in a month you pay for your total usage.

I am enjoying the system when I have time to get on it but I have only one question, AM I THE ONLY TI'ER ON THIS SYSTEM IN THE TORONTO AREA?

T.U.G.: Timeline User's Group
    680-100th Avenue
    Laval, Quebec, Canada
    H7W 3Z6

ENJOY!!

T i m e L i n e

Canada's User-Oriented Computer Service

We Cordially Invite You To Sign Up With Canada's
Fastest-Growing Computer Service

For Less then NINE (9) Cents a minute (300 baud) you can:

#1) Play a SIMULATED Space war against serveral other users (members) in a REAL TIME
     MULTI-USER environment

#2) Computer-Ease Shop from your own home for a wide selection of computer peripherals and
     options at incredibly discounted prices '' Delivered from our door to yours ''

#3) Communicate with any other user in North-America for less than a fraction of the cost
     of a long distance call.

#4) Upload/Download SIG (special interest groups) for FREE Software !!!

#5) Read and Post bulletins on our 36 SIG Topic User-Network Database. Large Commodore,
     Amiga, Atari, Apple, IBM, TRS-80 Mod I-IV/CoCo, TI-99/4a, ectera sections for all users.

#6) Send and Receive ELECTRONIC MAIL!!! You may also store your letters online for future
     reference.

#7) Play a large selection of exciting Single-User games...
     Try your hand at our complex maze-solving ADVENTURE or Play a REAL-TIME StarTrek! and
     many more '''

#8) keep Up to Date with your USER-GROUP NEWS in your group's private section '''
     (note: provided your club (group) has requested a private section)

#9) Participate in an ONLINE REAL-TIME USER'S TELECONFERENCE '''
     Either in private or open discussions.

TimeLine can be reached by a LOCAL PHONE CALL from almost
any Canadian city through the DATAPAC™ Network. All you
need is any PERSONAL Computer/Terminal and Modem.

Membership is only $25.00 (one time fee) for your lifetime
membership, user's manual and passwords.

------------------------please fill out the following section and mail it to:--------------------

T.U.G. : TimeLine User's Group
680 - 100th ave., Laval , Quebec , Canada , H7W 3Z6
OR
PHONE FOR MORE INFO. (514) 681-2280

Name: _____   Address: _____
City: _____   Province: _____
Postal Code: _____   Phone: _____
Type of Comp: _____   Baud Rate: _____
Screen Width: _____   Date: _____
Invoice Method Mail: ___   Mastercard: ___   Expiry Date: ___
Card No. (if applicable):_____
Signature: _____
Where did you hear about T.U.G.: _RANDY.AISSE_____

Enclosed please Find the $25.00 membership fee (cheque/M.O.)
payable to T.U.G.

Note: $2.00/month minimum usage/account holders fee / There are NO additional DATAPAC FEES
      1200 baud is available at TEN (10) cents per minute.
      DATAPAC is a registered trademark of BELL CANADA ENT.