

Not Your Usual TPUG Newsletter

Volume 1/Issue 3 & 4 2019-05-09

Welcome!

Allow me to apologize up front for my failure to deliver the April newsletter. A series of events, some expected and some not, conspired to consume my time and the newsletter fell through the proverbial cracks. To make up for that, this issue will include a double dose of Commodore-related news and information. I would encourage you to contact newsletter@tpug.ca if you have any ideas for articles or if you've written an article you'd like to submit for publication. We also welcome submissions for the Links of Interest section and if you have any Commodore-related questions, send them along and we'll do our best to answer them. If you do not want to receive this newsletter, please send a message to newsletter@tpug.ca and we'll unsubscribe you.

Monthly TPUG Meeting:

Our next meeting will be held on: May 16, 2019 @ 7:30pm Alderwood United Church (downstairs) located at 44 Delma Drive, Toronto, ON. See <https://www.tpug.ca/meetings/> for a map to the meeting.

TPUG Resources:

We invite all members to join the Toronto CBM Mailing List by visiting <https://www.freelists.org/list/torontocbm>. The list is devoted to the discussion of anything Commodore related and is a great way to connect with others who share your interests. (Please note that you can only post to the list if you are a registered member and only from your registered email address.)

TPUG also maintains a Discord server you can join by visiting <https://discord.gg/V5DHgR3>. Discord is a free, real-time, multimedia chat system accessible through the Discord website or with free clients which are available for Windows, macOS, Linux, iOS, and Android. Feel free to drop by for some Commodore chit-chat.

TPUG is pleased to offer its vast library of public domain software of over 1000 disks containing over 11,000 programs, many of them originals published by TPUG, and much more on a single CD! If you're interested in obtaining a copy, see <https://www.tpug.ca/2009/12/tpug-library-cd-available/>.

News:

On Monday, June 11, 2018, Syd Bolton, operator of the Personal Computer Museum of Brantford <https://pcmuseum.ca> passed away at the age of 46. His untimely passing was a terrible blow both to his family and his countless friends. He made many of those friends through the Museum which he founded to preserve classic computers and video games for future generations as well as to share his love and enthusiasm of those computers and video games with the community. He is greatly missed.

I mention Syd because early last month the Museum decided the time had come to clear out their storage space. This is where many of the donations to the Museum were stored either because they were doubles of items already on display or required repairs etc. In keeping with Syd's community minded ideals, the Museum invited folks to come by and haul away anything that may be of interest to them – for free. Nothing brings out classic computer enthusiasts faster than the word “free” and I was no exception. I made the two plus hour trip through rush-hour traffic with a friend/fellow member of TPUG to see what we could find.

So, what did we find? A veritable treasure trove of neat stuff. I don't know how Howard Carter felt when he opened King Tut's tomb but I now have a pretty good idea. My goodness. Dozens upon dozens of Commodore 64s, VIC-20s, 1541 disk drives and 1701/1702 monitors, multiple PETs, stacks of Macs and piles of 8-bit Apple computers. There were all sorts of Tandy/Radio Shack computers, TI-99/4As of various vintages, terminals, laptops, keyboards, monitors, magazines, books, software and far too many other bits and pieces to recall. There was even a rare CEMCorp/Burroughs/Unisys ICON which would be familiar to anyone that spent time in an Ontario classroom in the 80's. We were encouraged to take as much as we could because whatever was left over after the two day giveaway would have to be scrapped. Luckily all in attendance were willing to oblige and most of us left with packed cars. Everyone was joking around and helping one another find that coveted part they needed to get some obscure computer running. It was really quite enjoyable and Syd would have loved it.

I don't know what the future holds for the Personal Computer Museum but hopefully it will reopen and when it does I'll be there to celebrate Syd's life and the incredible work he did in creating such a magical place.

Normally that would be it but this is a double issue...

There's nothing better than sitting down in front of a Commodore computer, feeling its keys beneath your fingers, hearing the whirring sounds of the disk drive, and feeling the hairs on your arms stand up from the static electricity coming from the monitor. It's a visceral experience. That experience however comes at a price. With every passing year the value of Commodore computers increases along with the amount of TLC required to keep them running. They

require a fair bit of physical space and transporting them for use in remote locations is an exercise, literally, in one's dedication and determination.

Luckily there's another way to enjoy the experience of using a Commodore computer even if it isn't quite on par with the 'real deal'. Emulation. Emulation is the reproduction of functionality of a computer with the use of a piece of software called an emulator. (Note: There are hardware emulators based on FPGAs and we'll discuss them in a future issue.) There are many such software-based emulators of Commodore computers available today that will allow you to run your favourite Commodore games or applications on your current PC regardless of whether you're running Microsoft Windows, Apple macOS, or a UNIX-like operating system (Linux, FreeBSD etc.)

8-bit Commodore computers:

CCS64 - <http://www.ccs64.com> (Windows only)

Hoxs64 - <http://www.hoxs64.net> (Windows only)

Micro64 - <http://micro64.de> (Windows only)

VICE - <http://vice-emu.sourceforge.net> (multiplatform)

VirtualC64 - <http://www.dirkwhoffmann.de/virtualc64/> (macOS only)

You may have noticed that all but one of those emulators include the number 64 in the name. That's because they all emulate Commodore's most popular computer, the 64. TPUG however supports ALL Commodore computers and that's why I recommend checking out VICE. VICE stands for "Versatile Commodore Emulator" and versatile it is. VICE is actually a package of several emulators capable of running software written for the PET, CBM-series computers, VIC-20, C64, Plus/4, C128 and others. The C64 emulator is the most functionally complete of all of VICE's emulators but work is on-going to improve all the emulators. Moreover, VICE runs on a variety of current platforms and is completely free.

Amiga computers:

FS-UAE - <https://fs-uae.net> (multiplatform)

WinUAE - <http://www.winuae.net> (Windows only)

For Amiga emulation there are fewer choices but don't worry because both FS-UAE and WinUAE (which share a code-base) are powerful and accurate emulators that are capable of emulating all kinds of obscure accelerators, video cards, and other miscellaneous Amiga peripherals. I recommend FS-UAE because it's multiplatform and somewhat easier to use. Both emulators are free.

Note: Some of these emulators require 'dumps' of various Commodore ROMs to operate as well as images of disk/tape-based software. If you need help setting things up, join the TPUG Discord server and ask for advice.

Special Reminder:

AmigaNorth v1.3 will be held at the John Deutsch University Centre in Kingston, Ontario (map: <https://goo.gl/maps/f4vPfbgoDgRW5CAN9>) on Saturday, May 25, 2019 starting at 10am. If you're interested in the Amiga, don't miss this opportunity to hang out with like minded folks and have some Amiga fun. See you there.

Links of Interest:

Super Mario Bros (for 64, really):

Website: https://archive.org/details/Super_Mario_Bros_C64_Zeropaige

Neutron (for 64):

Website: <https://sarahjaneavory.itch.io/neutron>

Get' Em DX (for 64):

Video: <https://youtu.be/rE90vjLADrc>
Website: <https://rgcddev.itch.io/get-em-dx>

Panzer (for 64):

Video: <https://youtu.be/fOyBSl9eBSs>
Website: <https://csdb.dk/release/?id=177090>

Frantic Freddie II (for 64):

Video: https://youtu.be/vlX_ODq_luI
Website: <https://csdb.dk/release/?id=177173>

BIT-C-128 Video DAC for Commodore 128/128D:

Website: <http://www.bit-c128.com/>

The 128 Remastered:

Website: <https://the128rm.com/product/the128rm/>

GoADF! (for Amiga):

Website: <https://bitplan.pl/goadf/>

Skillgrid (for Amiga):

Video: <https://youtu.be/8mujJEWahzU>
Website: <https://retream.itch.io/skillgrid>

Bridge Strike (for Amiga):

Video: <https://youtu.be/SSfeJaEec4I>
Website: <https://amiga.net.pl/index.php?lng=eng&kwt=10010&tms=408>

River Raid Reloaded (for Amiga)

Video: <https://youtu.be/r4csrTcWxPI>
Download: <https://mega.nz/#!bg93CCgI!hsk9nOTQTBMBWTxhogilayx0Ju04jGPcimYjq0JJofE>

Modsurfer (for Amiga):

Video: https://youtu.be/Jl__jp1rkMa8
Website: <https://amigageek.com/modsurfer/>

Commodore Knowledge Base:

Website: <http://www.floodgap.com/retrobits/ckb/>

Secret Weapons of Commodore:

Website: <http://www.floodgap.com/retrobits/ckb/secret/>

DHL's Commodore Archive (Books, Magazines etc.):

Website: <http://commodore.bombjack.org/>

GameBase64:

Website: <http://gamebase64.com/>

Commodore 64 Software Library:

Website: https://archive.org/details/softwarelibrary_c64

Hall of Light (Amiga):

Website: <http://hol.abime.net/>

That's all we have for this month. Until next month, keep enjoying your Commodore computers!