Commodore Users Group of Saskatchewan

October, 1989 Vol 4. No. 8

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Happy Haunting
Meeting Place

CUGS MEETING  WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 4, 1989

NorthWest Leisure Centre
7:00 pm

AGENDA:
1. Club Business
2. Write Stuff
3. Break
4. Computereyes
5. Questions/Problems
6. Prize Draw

Editorial

SEX!

Now that I have your attention...

I'd like to make several observations in this issue's missive to the Commodore masses.

Next month is election time. No, you don't - DON'T SKIP THIS PART! GET YOUR EYES BACK HERE AND KEEP 'EM HERE! That's more like it. If you're anything like me (I realize many of you might be praying that there's no similarity), you really don't want to consider involvement on the level of club leadership. It's nice to come to meetings where it's all done for you, and play the role of detached, absorbent sponge. But continued passivity presents the club with 3 scenarios, none very positive or encouraging. We have an executive, mostly people as insecure as you. They do their best to plan activities that will benefit you and the club. They didn't join with any more skill, background or confidence than you now have. They believed in the computer as a useful and exciting tool for all manner of reasons. They are 9 people strong, which makes each load light, but they are ONLY 9 people. They've served for anywhere from 3 to 8 years! Over the years, membership changes, the NEEDS of members change, and the planners on the executive SHOULD change. If they don't get "new blood", they can't have a good understanding of the members' needs, and will continue to do "what they've always done" - which can be stagnating.

Or (and this is worse) the executive begin to feel they KNOW the way things ought to be!! THEY direct the club, kicking and screaming, into paths that are merely self-serving - I've seen the potential results of such an approach - the club BECOMES the executive - other members merely provided them a few dollars (membership fees) with which to pursue their narrow interests, and the membership shrinks to those few.

The final scenario is devastating. The long-standing executive members, anxious for the club to continue, work and serve again and again, stretching their patience and computing interest to the limit until that inevitable moment - they don't even enjoy working with their home computer any more, let alone working and planning for the club. They withdraw from the executive whenever the frustration level peaks, often leaving the club entirely. They are disillusioned and jaded about what was once a passionate hobby.

There is only one solution, one way to a continuing, vibrant club - courageous new members willing to step forward and help us old-timers keep the club current and relevant.

Which brings up another point - our club is in metamorphosis (that's "change" in plain English). Having just completed an intensive nostalgic tour of our club's history via its written word (newsletters, etc.), I have seen us pass through three stages, and believe we are on the fringe of a fourth. In the beginning, Commodore users were alone - literally - outcast rebels to the might of APPLE. We were necessarily self-reliant, because Commodore executives never have figured out the meaning of the phrase "customer support". Our origins were survival-based. If we needed a program, by and large, we had to create it and share it. Our early members were virtually all "hackers" in the true sense of the word. As the machines gained in popularity, we became a "society", complete with average users, "gurus", hackers, masters, teachers and neophytes. We were a community fostering understanding of these new machines.
Our third (and current) stage is really a transition. Some early members believe the machine limited their ability to grow, so they left the C64 for the lure of 16-bit speed and sparkle. Those who remain with the C64/128 are a mixture of members secure in their commitment to using the machine, anxious to learn more about how to use the machine more effectively to serve their needs. This reflects normal societal growth, but another element has moved us to the edge of a FOURTH stage: the computer revolution (I prefer "revolution" to "meltdown") turned away from the 16-bit "elite" or trained user, to the "common man" as primary user. At the same time, the companies who produced the very machines that revolutionized the public understanding of the use of computers are trying to drop support of these machines in a move to direct the buying public into new, bigger, faster (read "more complex and expensive") machines. The industry appears ready to make the same mistake they've always made, moving ahead without purpose— at least, without purpose evident to the "home" user. Much like the auto industry, they're trying to TELL us what we want, rather than LISTEN to what we want.

Thus we stand before a fourth stage. The "average user" of a computer today is NOT interested in MORE colour, FASTER computing, clever user interfaces or massive memory. I've watched the mushrooming of computers in my own neighbourhood the past two years, and I've seen the computer of choice as an inexpensive second-hand available software, which in 6 of 9 cases I'm personally aware of, means "garage sale" C64's. These people are curious and apprehensive, yet anxious to not be left behind in this new computer age. They all toured computer shows and thought they'd have to sink $2000-3000 into a system. But they heard that the C64 was a good machine to begin on, so they took a $500 gamble. They don't know anything about the 8-bit vs. 16-bit debates, DOS compatibility or customer support. In fact, they realized when they took their gamble that the sea of Commodores out there was giving them any help was nil — that's a healthy attitude! They virtually all knew someone who was "good at computing", who recommended they try starting with this machine, and someone who'll get them started. They are ripe possibilities for new club members.

Our club can move into that fourth stage if it can reach these people, and offer them the support they need to gently enter the computer age. I can show them the computer as a doorway to a world of wonder and possibility, and offer them whatever help they need to reach whatever their goal may be. The executive service guide to the club, planning for the needs of the members we've lost to the scene, is the C64. That happens when current members GET INVOLVED! DO get involved; try an executive position.

Finally, and Richard has more to say about this in his October message inside, in an attempt to address this new group of Commodore users, we're going to try some new techniques and presentations through this year. The first of these will be at our December meeting, when we'll alter our format of the past several years to feature a "beginners" half-hour session from 7 to 7:30 pm. This short session will deal with the more rudimentary aspects of using the C64/128, offered for the "newcomers" in our group. If you've seen someone new who got recently "bitten" by the Commodore bug, suggest they give this meeting a try. It's another attempt to better serve the needs of our club, offering what we hope will be easy entry into the wonder-world of computers for recent buyers. Encourage anyone you know who might benefit to attend. The specific topics for the first meeting will follow in the next issue!

Just a couple of quick comments: Richard's new series of articles on where to buy what for your

C64/128 is going to be very interesting. He'll be happy for any help anyone can provide to make his investigation more complete, but do read it! You might be surprised at where you CAN find things for your good ol' 8-bit machine.

Another "must-do" — our November meeting agenda seems thin but it packs quite a wallop! First, help us find a new executive (one that INCLUDES you would be nice!), then browse the new (and not-so-new) software available for the C64 at Christmas buying! Try it before you buy it IS possible at the November meeting. Ever wonder if you NEED a spreadsheet? Find out why and/or which ones do what. Wondering what's in some of the new games out for Christmas look like? Here's a chance to find out.

Well, I feel a little guilty about my attention grabber, so I'll leave you with a little humour related to the previous and one that makes no less — a young lad of 7 caught his mom a bit off guard when he bounced into the kitchen and asked "Mom, where'd I come from?" Being a progressive mother of the eighties, she was ready for just such an occasion, to the living room, brought out all sorts of medical and passage books, and spent into a two hour detailed but sensitive lecture on the wonders of human reproduction and sexuality, and the wonder of birth. Closing the book on the last picture, she leaned back and looked deeply into her little son's eyes and said, "So, now that you've seen all this, have you any questions?" The boy had a very puzzled look on his face and was fidgeting a bit as he said, "Ya, mom. This was all real interesting and everything, but I just wanna know... my friend James comes from Toronto, and his friend Ella comes from Winnipeg, and I just wanna know, where'd I come from?"

As my skateboarding son would say, "Catch ya later, computer-heads!"

Last month marked the first anniversary of our CUGS bulletin board. Yes, we have been in operation for a year. Except for a few problems this past month with members having difficulty accessing boards, and a few new boards (I blame Sask Tel and the changes they are doing to the lines) it has been a very successful year.

A number of members have commented both on the board and to me personally that since this is a private board there is no need for handles. The arguments brought to me include the idea that handles don't allow members to know who each other are and as a result, it makes it very difficult to involve different people in using the board. I have decided to make the board a name only (no handles) bulletin board. I must agree that a private board does not have any need for people to not be recognized. The nature of the bulletins that have been left are mostly "hot-dog" that have plagued a number of stocks on other boards. As a result, any new callers - please enter your name when it asks for your handle. Members who have already registered on the board can change their handle to their name very easily as the following process indicates.

To change your handle you must first of all call in ASCII mode. Use a non-graphics terminal mode and enter N (for no) if you are asked if you want graphics. From the main menu press Y (for your status). Your handle will be displayed on the screen and you will be asked if this is OK. Enter n (for no) and you will now be asked to enter your new handle — enter your name as your new handle and answer the remaining questions. The handle will now be changed and when a list of users is obtained, your name will appear instead of your handle. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. I hope that the changes result in increased use of the board and that more people will feel that they can get more involved once they know to whom they are responding.
The presentations this month should have something of interest for every one. First of all, Gord is going to present "The Write Stuff" - a word processing program for the 128. Besides giving you a chance to see a new and different word processor, it may also contain some hints and tips to make the most out of your own word processor. The second presentation will be a program that has been available for a couple of years although not too much has been said or written about it. This program is 'Computereyes' and Barry will give a demonstration of the features and uses of this program. The November meeting will once again give you a chance to preview some of the newer programs that are available. We will set up a number of computers and give you a chance for a hands-on look at what is out there. I know a number of programs were bought (and others not) as a result of members having the chance of seeing them and trying them out at our club preview night. Looking ahead to December, we will have a slight change in the meeting format. The executive have been examining including a "BACK TO BASICS" section into the meeting agenda. Our plan is to start at 7:00 for beginners (or anyone else who would like a review) with some aspect of using the computer, disk drive, printer, etc. We have tentatively planned the first presentation around the disk drive and file handling techniques (i.e. saving, erasing, copying etc.). Our regular club meeting would then start at 7:30 with a presentation format similar to what we have now. There will be more information about this in the November issue of 'The Monitor' as well as a the club meetings between now and December.

I will end this message with a plea to all members, GET INVOLVED. Elections are coming up next month. It is pretty hard for the same group to continue to plan meeting agendas without having a sameness appear which soon can become boring. Fresh approaches and ideas are needed. The source of these ideas is you - the membership. Let your name stand for an executive position. The work is not much and the rewards are great. Furthermore, your ideas can help shape the direction our club will head.

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday
Nov. 1, 1989 - 7 pm
N-W Leisure Centre
Election '89
Software Preview
One of the first things I have noted from our club members is the way it was ARCoded. Several people failed or had great difficulty unARCing it. I had to try several times using different approaches. I used ARC250, which I now hear is not the program to use. However, I did get it unARCed and running O.K. It would have made life easier if there was a way that it could have been ARCed differently or even if the DOC files were included as a separate arc'd file, as the size seemed to play a determining factor. Single drive users had the most problems.

When everything is set up the way the user wants it and has all the phone numbers, function keys and emulation modes entered and saved, using the term is almost second nature. All the user has to do is hit 'RUN/CONTROL' to get the main menu, cursor down eleven selections to get the 'Dial Directory', hit return and select the number he wants. Desterm does all the rest. I think that after the user has done his homework in setting up the term as he wants that the program could put the 'Dial Directory' as the first or second main menu selection to eliminate the cursor downs and shorten the process down to the shortest time and keystrokes. It is usually the first thing the user wants to do (for me anyway).

Also, during single number dials, using the menus (not the HOT KEYS), if there is no carrier (no answer or busy) the timer runs out as it should but the program forces you into terminal mode. Is it not possible to return back to the 'Dial directory' menu? This would eliminate running through the whole procedure again to dial/redial a number for people who like to use the menus. It is a minor thing I know, but then a programmer's job is never done because he keeps making improvements until he either runs out of memory or the memory of the computer runs out.

One of the most problematic and easily changed things that bothers me is the delay from the time of the 'carrier detect' to the actual viewing of the terminal screen. On several BBS's around here, the BBS asks you if you want C/G or ANSI Graphics as the first thing printed at logon. In the meantime, some files load in and delay the user from seeing the message. I realize that the program is probably loading the character set and function files. Is there a possibility that those files could be loaded in at the same time the phone number is loaded? Then when they were, then the program could go IMMEDIATELY to terminal mode (without the user hitting 'ESC') and then play the music to signal a 'connect'.

In this way the user can see the first logon question and answer it. A person has to know the BBS he is calling pretty well to know that he missed the C/G question and answer blindly... 'yes'. Otherwise the BBS results to 'NO' and then has to look at messed-up ASCII (being that he is in C/G mode) and fumble around the BBS to find the ASCII-C/G toggle selection.

When I am in Commodore C/G mode, I cannot seem to get the term to send C/G commands like COLOR, RUN ON, RVS OFF etc., although receiving is all O.K., and graphics look great. Is there a reason for this or is that a bug?

One feature sorely missing is the lack of an editor for the buffer. I can see uses for all of the features you have included but feel even a primitive text editor would be a great improvement. I use my buffer to capture my mail and messages. In doing so I gather up a lot of garbage prompts and menus that I don't really need in it. One can save the buffer and then exit and load in a word processor to edit, but usually all I want to do is add and delete text from it. If this could be added to your term in later releases it would be a great feature.

I may have come across a problem that is possibly a bug. When I am uploading in Punter protocol, everything works well until the file transfer ends, at which time one hits a key to exit the m-4-e and the drive light remains lit. This leads me to think that the file had failed to close in some way. Reading the directory or just attempting to read the directory clears the error channel.

As a programmer myself, I don't like to see my hard work handed out like an old magazine. None of my projects involved the amount of time I believe you have put into this term program. Having said that, I feel you have put a lot of faith in the Commodore 128 community. I hope that they do not fail you or your current registered users.

For this reason I just would like to suggest that you cut and hack your code so that all but the transfer and/or buffer coding is included in a 'DRO' version of your term. Have this widely distributed and people can see and feel your term (less the file transfer/buffer capabilities) and then decide if they want a full feature term. And if they do, they send away for it, you get the $25.00 and send the newest, full-featured version back to them. Ultragram 3 was distributed this way and was an effective way of insuring the programmer(s) is rightfully compensated, yet not losing too much of the 'Shareware concept'.

I use a 1581 to boot up Desterm and use a 1571 to up/down load and collect messages. I do not use a mouse as of yet. I ran into an interesting problem with it when first trying to set up Desterm. When I tried to type anything on the keyboard, 3-6 other characters came up at random at the same time and others simply would not print, including cursor characters. It took me a while to figure out the problem. I use GEOS quite a bit and thus use the 1351 mouse for input. However, I use the mouse plugged into port 1 and found that unplugging it cleared up the problem. With the use of the 'HOT KEYS' and 'RUN/CONTROL', use of the mouse seems to just get in the way.

Please keep up the great work you are doing for us 128 users. I have passed along these suggestions to help you make this term even better. Whether you use my suggestions or not, you have made DESTERM the terminal for me.

Sincerely,

Barry Birchler
(Vice President of C.U.G.S.)
(Commodore Users Group of Saskatchewan)
This article is the first in a series which will outline where you can go looking to find accessories, etc., for your computer system. There are often items that members might be interested in but these remain on the shelves simply because we don't know that they exist. I have set a few limits for this article simply because of time and space constraints. The first is that I won't include the prices of items. This would be nice but unfortunately could unfairly represent some businesses because of sales or discounts that were recorded in one and not in the other. Second, I am not going to report on computer stores that handle non-Commodore equipment. I realize that all of these stores have the usual accessories like diskettes, disk boxes, printer and monitor stands, paper, etc., and that I may miss some exceptional items that some of these may have. However, most of these do not have items that would be considered by most of the C64, 128 owners. If I miss a source of items I apologize and will include it in a future article if you point it out to me. If a store updates its supplies I also will mention this in a future article if I am made aware of it. I do especially need your assistance. If you know of a source of materials that might be of interest to a C64 or 128 owner let me know and I will include it in one of the articles in this series. The more we know the better our decisions can be.

The first two stores I will consider are those that give a DISCOUNT TO CUGS MEMBERS. Software Supermarket is the most complete supplier of Commodore materials in the city. Their inventory includes all hardware including printers, modems and RAM expanders. They also have a complete repair service. They have a full line of software including both games and productivity software. They also carry a full collection of computer magazines. They have a full collection of printer and monitor stands, diskettes, disk boxes, joysticks, printer paper and other peripherals. TTL Computer Concepts carry a full line of software including both games and productivity software. They also have a full collection of printer and monitor stands, diskettes, disk boxes, joysticks, printer paper and other peripherals.

The following stores are the suppliers in south Regina. (Future articles will include other areas of the city.) Canadian Tire (south store) carries the C64, 1541 disk drive, monitors, mouse, modem and a limited supply of other peripherals like joysticks and disk boxes. They also have a computer desk for sale. Bi Rite Drugs (Albert & Gordon Road) carries Commodore supported magazines as well as software (mostly games), joysticks, diskettes and disk boxes. Zellers (Golden Mile) carries software (both games and productivity), diskettes, disk boxes and joysticks. They also have a couple of monitors on display including a 1902. Woolco, in the Southland Mall, has a limited supply of software, joysticks and disk boxes.

Prices vary greatly (for example one program, that was available in 4 different stores, varied in price from $24.95 to $36.75). It is your responsibility to check out and find out what is best for you. Future articles will include stores in other parts of the city as well as some services that are available as well. I hope that you find this information to be useful and at the very least it saves you some gas. If you find item in stores I didn't mention, please bring these to my attention as the more comprehensive our list the more meaningful it will be.

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**1989 Meetings**

**CU8S MEETINGS**

The meeting dates for the remainder of 1989 are as follows. Note: these meetings are on the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month.

- October 4
- November 1
- December 6

All meetings are at the NORTHWEST LEISURE CENTRE and are from 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

Write these dates down now and plan to attend.

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**ELECTION FEVER!**

At the CUGS meeting in November, we will have the election of officers for 1990. The executive positions consist of:
- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Editor
- Assistant Editor
- Librarian
- Assistant Librarian

2 members at large

The executive usually meet once a month outside of regular club meetings. The duties of the executive members primarily consist of:

- Planning meeting agendas.
- Looking after the disk library.
- Publishing the 'Monitor'.

If you would like to help the club by providing your expertise as an executive member, we would be more than happy to accommodate you. New, fresh ideas are not just welcome, they are a necessity to the continued success of our club. So please, get involved. To date, there are TWO executive members who have indicated that they will not be returning to the executive next year. EARL BROWN has agreed to act as a nominating committee (if one). GET INVOLVED.... Give your name to Earl and become a CUGS executive member.
This is the second-last desk design submitted by our resident mad draughtsman, Steve Bogues. If you're a new club member, the last year's back-issues are worth it just for Steve's designs. The desks and accessories are all simple and reasonably inexpensive to build, and well-thought-out for functionality.

Now, for those of you who like "his and hers" everything, including computers, Steve's latest design features:

- TWO (2) pull-out keyboard shelves
- TWO (2) book/paper storage shelves
- 1" slot for paper feeding
- casters
- large working surface, easily able to hold two systems conveniently
- extensive under-desk storage
- built-in power bar

| X-PERT LIST |

Recently we began a regular service to our membership. The people below have agreed to let their names be listed as "experats" in some aspect of C64/128 computing. If you've a question, these brave volunteers can likely answer it, or help you find an answer that works. If you have a skill at some computing process, consider listing yourself with our other volunteers. We're all in this together!

**Wordprocessing:**
- Paperclip III - Shaun Hase 584-3371
- Paperclip (to version E) - Richard Maze 586-3291
- Paperclip (to version E) - Jarrett Currie 757-2391
- Paperclip (any version) - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**Spreadsheet:**
- Multiplan - Richard Maze 586-3291
- Pocket Planner - Barry Bircher 359-1925
- Better Working SS - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**Databases:**
- Pocket Filer - Barry Bircher 359-1925
- Oracle (Consultant) - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**Communications:**
- Pro-128-term - Barry Bircher 359-1925
- Pro-128-term - Jarrett Currie 757-2391
- Library files - Barry Bircher 359-1925
- Destem 128 - Gilles Archer 545-4638

**Music/Sound:**
- (most) - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**Languages:**
- Forth - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644
- Pascal - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644
- ML (machine language) - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644
- ML (machine Language) - Barry Birch 359-1925
- BASIC (general) - Richard Maze 586-3291
- BASIC 7.0 (graphics) - Shaun Hase 584-3371
- BASIC (2.0-7.0) (files) - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**Graphics:**
- Print Shop/Master - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644
- Koala Painter/Printer - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**Hardware:**
- All Hardware - Tyler Rosewood 525-0214
- Disk Drive Maint. - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

**GEOs:**
- GEOs 64 and 128 - Tyler Rosewood 525-0214
- GEOs 64 - Jarrett Currie 757-2391
The CUGS GAZETTE #30 was actually released last month but because of the early date on publication of THE MONITOR the listing of it was kept to this month. This disk contains the last two programs from April as well as all the programs from May, June and July of Gazette 1989 Magazine editions. Some of the neat programs that caught my eye on this disk are the RAMDISK, the RAMDISK 64, the SLIDESHOW PLAYER, SPEEDCOUNT (a word count for Speedscript), DIR SORTER-1581 (a directory sorter for the 1581) and many others.

The CUGS GAZETTE #31, which is new this month, contains all the programs from August, September, and October of Gazette 1989 Magazine editions except those that are written for GEOS. These programs need a GEOS-formatted disk, so when there are enough of them available, we will save them to that format on one disk (if there are enough of you out there that want them).

Some other programs that caught my fancy were: DISKDOUBLER/128 (a program that will change the disk pointers for you to make a single sided disk a double sided disk without losing any of your programs saved), TEXT SCREEN ED which will allow you to edit your own screens using cursor commands as well as special designated Function Keys, save the screens to disk, and retrieve them into your own programs (an ideal program for those of you who wish to give Graphic Pixx to Richard for his Bulletin Board), RGB KIT/128/64 (which will allow owners to use the 2 MHz instead of 1 MHz speed of their 128 computers in the 64 mode). As a final reminder, you must own the magazines that contain the programs you want. Scratch from the disk any programs you're not entitled to.

From the GENERAL 16 81/2 disk the SPIN THE WHEEL program on disk is almost a direct copy of a popular TV program including a Grand Prize puzzle. Although the graphics are not as good as similar programs, this is the first program that I have come across that follows the original to a T.

Two more programs that will tickle the electronic hobbyist are COLOR CODE QUIZ and RESISTOR CHART. The first program displays a colored resistor (in 3 bars) and you must decide its value (you can sneak back to a color chart whenever you need it). On my monitor it is sometimes very hard to determine the actual color displayed even when I try to re-adjust the color control. The second program entitled RESISTOR CHART, works in the opposite way. It displays the color chart and asks you to supply the value of a resistor you would like to have and then displays the colored bars for that resistor (including the 5% or 10% tolerance bar).

For the ladies (or the budding chefs in the crowd) there is a database program called RECIPESAV. It allows you to save your recipes to disk and print them to paper in a menu-driven format similar to most database programs. The program entitled BINGO! is ideal for any size bingo game. It is very easy to use. When running the program, using the space bar selects another number to be called. After a bingo, hit the 'q' key to stop calling numbers (to call a new game) or the 'stop' key to quit playing entirely. By using a Commodore compatible printer you may print out as many bingo cards as you see fit, simply type in the quantity when you select the printer option. I select 4 at a time, as four cards print out per 8 1/2 by 11 page.

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Coming Soon...
Software Preview
Election Fever
Beginner's Time
November 1
December 6