

THE FOUR "C"ER

OFFICIAL USER GROUP ID#00232

Dedicated to Serving all Commodore Computers

November 1997

Editor Ramblings

By David Witmer



One of the demos for this month's meeting will be Geofax. This

wonderful program allows The C64 (and i28 in 48 column mode) to send and receive faxes, just like the big guys!

There is a big drawback to Geofax, however. You need to have some state of the art hardware to allow this to happen, since the program alone cannot perform it's magic without some tricks up it's sleeve.

The list of hardware requirements for Geofax are: a Hayes compatible Fax/Modem that is capable of handling Group 3 faxes with Class 2 or Class 2.0 fax commands. The modem should have at least 16K of it's own internal ram in order to buffer the data going out, as well as in. The preferred speed is 9600, but can be 14,400. Also needed is a CMD Turbo232 or SwiftLink cartridge, that interfaces to the modem. A telephone connection, if you expect to send and receive faxes. Required, if you plan printing your faxes is a printer that can print with a minimum of 240 dpi (dots per inch)

horizontally and 216 dpi vertically for the maximum resolution, or 80 dpi by 72 dpi can be printed on any type of printer using standard Geos drivers, and the fax must be converted to GeoPaint (which will lose an amount of resolution).

The only software required besides the GeoFax program is Geos64 or Geos128 (V2.0 or higher). Forty column mode is only supported in this program. Make sure you have your required printer drivers in order to access the printer in Geos.

Since there isn't much to look at while Geofax is receiving or sending faxes, this demo will show the basics of the menuing and the various ways of printing documents. The hardware being used at the demo is not intended to be an endorsement of any particular hardware setup, it is just what I personally use.

If you wish to purchase a copy of GeoFax, it can be purchased (this is a commercial program) through Creative Micro Designs, Inc. PO Box 646, East Longmeadow, MA 01028, or by phone to place an order at 1-800-638-3263. See Roger Hoyer for a catalog of other CMD products available.



This article has been edited
and brought to you by The
Commodore 64/128 RoundTable on
Genie

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the Commodore 64/128
RoundTable File#:18335"

<CMD-DOUG> Evening, everyone.
;) I don't really have much
of an agenda tonight... though
I do want to mention that
we're just about done with the
board layout of the SuperCPU
128, and we'll be moving on to
designing a printer interface
when that is done. Right now
there are no printer
interfaces being made. That
DOES make them hard to find.
At this point we plan more
modern printer support.

<Brenda> I have an idea... you
know how the C= interfaces
give non-CBM printers CBM
graphics? Well, would it be
possible to do something like
make newer printers work by
grabbing their weird codes and
translating them?

<C128.LOU> Will it have a BIG
buffer?

<Maurice> Will it have
JiffyDos in it?

<CMD-DOUG> Lou... that's a
maybe on the big buffer... if
we can do it the way we plan,
it might have a 1 MB buffer.
Maurice... yes, built-in
JiffyDOS. Brenda... I've
already written emulations to
let 24-pin printers work
correctly, CBM graphics and
all.

<C128.LOU> Is it a user port
device, or a serial one?

<CMD-DOUG> Serial bus
device... for user port, we
don't need much beyond what we
have, really. Better software
support for User Port types
would be nice, but we can do

that different ways... like in
the SuperCPU at some point.
<Brenda> user port? What about
our modems? er, looking at my
user port it is empty:)

<Patrick> What about dip
switches, more, less, or maybe
none?

<CMD-DOUG> About the same on
dip switches, though we don't
plan to support a lot of the
legacy printers... this will be
pretty much Epson and IBM
compatible printers, 9 and 24
pin for both.

<Brenda> why should users buy
it that already have interfaces
(besides the
aforementioned JD)

<CMD-DOUG> Brenda, the main
advantages will be the JD and
the 24-pin support, and the big
buffer if we can make that
happen.

<Brenda> Does 24 pin mean dot
matrix?

<CMD-DOUG> Yes, Brenda, though
that should work with most
ink-jets as well. The JiffyDOS
will enhance printing speed,
much as it does disk speed.
Especially if we get a large
buffer on-board. Other than
the 24-pin support, JiffyDOS
speed, and possibly a large
buffer, I don't see this
interface as being something
very different... but it will
at least be available NEW,
which nothing else is anymore.

<Robert Bernardo> Could you
tell us about the other
projects, Doug?

<CMD-DOUG> Some of the projects
are just in-house things we
need to get done that take our
time... like a new catalog,
some database upgrades, and
sundry other things. As far as
product related projects...
There are some loose ends on
the SuperCPU development stuff
to finish up, some other

planned upgrades for the SuperCPU, finishing the SuperCPU 128, getting GoDot released, the printer interface, possibly a new mouse/trackball interface... Plus some work on prototyping our computer. GoDot should be ready in about two weeks. GoDot is... well, sort of the 64 equivalent of Photoshop. <Robert Bernardo> GoDot is a graphics manipulation program in which you can apply various effects over the graphic. <Cl28.LOU> How is GUS doing? <CMD-DOUG> GUS is sitting around doing nothing right now, until we finish the SCPU 128. ;) GUS is the CMD computer project.... our own computer. <Brenda> Do we get to know anything about this computer project? <CMD-DOUG> Well, anything I could say about it at this point would only be conjecture. <Brenda> Um, I really don't think we care ;) We'll drool anyway <Brant> DOUG: Would you care to conjecture about the new computer's design goals? <Brenda> What does GUS stand for? <CMD-DOUG> Well, then, none of you heard this... the speculative plan is for 4 MB of RAM, an unknown amount of ROM with on-board apps, some flash memory for upgrades, three 40 MHz 65816 processors, an SUGA controller, a soundblaster compatible sound chip... Built-in ethernet, GUI interface and BASIC command line.... printer and high-speed serial port, on-board hard drive controller, built-in floppy... Probably an option

for built-in modem and net-browser/email.... and it will support CD-ROM as well... and yes, we do hope to have a compatibility slot for a Commodore or Apple or other systems. Whatever some third party wants to put in the compatibility slot. <Brant> GUS: the Universal Computer! <CMD-DOUG> Though I think mainly it applies itself better for 6502 or 65816-based systems. Of course, this is all pretty much pie-in-the-sky unless it gets funding. Timing? Depends on the funding level. If we get what we're looking for there, the project could be done in a year or less. <Brenda> How will you be getting funding? <Maurice> Brenda, in reality, CMD has already achieved much of the technology needed to do this job. <CMD-DOUG> We'll be shopping the prototype early next year with venture capitalists. <Brenda> Maurice, but what about the "compatibility" slot? <CMD-DOUG> Brenda, the slot is the EASY part... it's filling it that takes some work. <Brenda> Are you afraid they will laugh at a 64 compatible machine? I assume it won't be presented as such? <Maurice> That's why the slot. <CMD-DOUG> The base machine won't be 64-compatible... that's what the compatibility slot is for. That's an engineering detail that doesn't enter into shopping the project as a whole. The basic idea is a modern machine that fills the market that the C-64 and others did in their day... such a machine doesn't

exist today, and there IS a market for one. We don't plan on going public with this, at least initially. That's why we're going the venture capital route for R & D funding. The machine will also ship with a built-in wordprocessor and spreadsheet, so between those and the ability to be a 'net-computer' it fills the common household requirements.

<Brenda> Projected cost range?

<Randy Harris> Will GEOS be the operating system?

<CMD-DOUG> Initially, the base configuration would probably run around \$399, though in higher volume (say 1 Million units a year or more) we could get it down to \$299. The OS will be new, as it will be multi-tasking... though I wouldn't rule out similarities to GEOS for the GUI, and possibly some backwards compatibility with it.

<Brenda> So if it is only compatible with the 64 with a chip... can it do anything out of the box?

<C128.LOU> Will the WP and SP software be compatible with the MessyDOS world (IE: saving spreadsheets are .DIF files?)

<CMD-DOUG> If the project gets funded, there'll be applications ready when it comes out (besides the ones that we bundle in ROM). It will take advantage of STANDARDS through-out the OS and hardware design.

<Brenda> Lemme ask this a different way... what will the standard OS be, or is there one?

<Maurice> Does the added processors give you the ability to have pseudo-custom chips (ala Amiga) without the high development costs of

actual custom chips? Doing it in software?

<CMD-DOUG> The standard OS is something new (although the BASIC will be... BASIC). ;) The added processors allow us to do much more than a single one can do at one time... the OS is not just to be multi-tasking, but multi-processor as well... tasks can be spread to processors that aren't busy at the time. It also lets us dedicate things like I/O, Graphics and Sound away from the main processor.

<Brenda> What will the BASIC be like? Will it come with the machine?

<Randy Harris> Expansion slots? How many? Type?

<CMD-DOUG> Yes on the BASIC... built-in along with the GUI... in fact, you should be able to program by typing in BASIC like we do now, or by using a 'visual' interface to programming. I think the BASIC will be a lot like 7.0 in the 128, though with some of the more AmigaBASIC type commands in it... and things like optional line numbers and such.

<Brenda> How would it look to program in ML on this machine in native mode?

<Robert Bernardo> Have you thought about incorporating Basic 8 commands, Doug?

<CMD-DOUG> I don't expect a LOT in the way of expansion slots... this thing is probably going into a case about 8 inches deep, 6 inches wide, and 8 inches tall. Keyboard is external, PC type. Brenda, the ML would be a lot like GEOS programming is now... 65816 ML with a lot of system calls. Robert... we call it a micro tower, since it's much shorter

than a mini tower. The main reason for the keyboard is that they're very inexpensive at this point. We couldn't come close with a custom keyboard to the price. For interfacing external drives and such, we're considering using Firewire.

<C128.LOU> What is Firewire?
<Robert Bernardo>

Interesting...Firewire to connect digital cameras?

<Brenda> Do you think people will write software for the new computer first, or try to get the compatibility stuff first?

<CMD-DOUG> Firewire is a standard Apple came out with some time back for high-speed serial communications to peripherals... it can handle streaming video.

<Randy Harris> What about USB, will that come into play at all?

<CMD-DOUG> I think our own efforts initially will be to get people writing new stuff for it. It can't hit the right market to make it successful without that. We consider USB to be inferior... it requires a hub for multiple devices, and isn't as fast. In other words, no on USB. Firewire can support up to 64 devices (with hot-swapping) without a hub.

<Brenda> Will CMD be doing the C= compatibility for GUS?

<CMD-DOUG> Brenda, I can't imagine anyone else doing that better than us. ;)

<Randy Harris> BTW DOUG, what DOES GUS stand for officially?

<Brenda> What about (c) considerations for the various compatibility options?

<CMD-DOUG> The socket for that will allow us to put a SID and VIC on the board, and feed the video and audio outputs to the on-board chips for mixing with the on-board video and audio outputs. Really it's no big deal... for now it just means General User's Computer platform.

<Robert Bernardo> Doug...back to the SCPU 128 front, are you taking anymore \$50 deposits, or is it full price now (accepted)?

<CMD-DOUG> SCPU 128, so far as I know, we're not accepting anymore orders until the release. Robert, I'll be sure to post when orders are being accepted again.

<Brenda> Doug what about copyright issues on the aspect of the compatibility options?

<CMD-DOUG> Brenda, we'll negotiate whatever is necessary when we get to that point.

<Brenda> Will we be able to use our current hardware with the machine...with or without the 64 compatibility option?

<CMD-DOUG> Robert, with the current pre-orders, somewhere between 150 and 200 last I knew. it will take at least a month to get one with a new order once shipping begins. With the option there would be a serial bus connector, and mouse/joystick ports.

<Randy Harris> One more GUS question, printer driver support will be a big factor. Or will that be covered by whatever OS/software compatibility option is in place?

<CMD-DOUG> Randy, I would expect good printer support with the release. We expect to use Truetype font technology at this point, and

there's plenty of info for us to create a myriad of drivers for this.

<Brenda> Can the GUI be "pushed out of the way"? At least like the Amiga CLI?

<Robert Bernardo> Doug, how do you feel (or how does CMD feel) about your

current position in the Commodore universe? Are you satisfied at where you are?

<CMD-DOUG> Okay, with GUS we haven't planned an option for pushing aside the GUI other than going to BASIC (or starting in BASIC if you want). Robert... our position in the market... Well, we're on top, so I guess there's no where better to be from that respect. But surely the market is shrinking, and that's

really why GUS needs to be something other than just a Commodore-compatible machine.

<Brenda> Doug... can the compatibility slot communicate with the rest of the computer? ie: could you do something in the 64 compatibility mode and dump it into standard GUS?

<CMD-DOUG> Yes, it will need to.

<CMD-DOUG> Not sure on that Brenda... that kind of detail will come later as the compatible card and software are developed.

<Brenda> Cause then you could say, type something in your 64 wp and go to a GUS prg to print it for better output or to a GUS printer driver, if it would work that slick

<CMD-DOUG> If we didn't mind leaving a hole for it, it should be possible. What you'll have to bear in mind is that the software will all run in 'protected' mode... each task has it's own memory beginning at address \$00000,

and accessing memory from another task can only be done through a system global request.

<Brant> Question: Will GoDot convert JPEG to geoPaint?

<CMD-DOUG> GoDot doesn't have a JPEG loader at this point.

<Randy Harris> Any news about Genie having 28.8 connections? Or any other Genie

improvements? They said they were going to, but I haven't seen anything yet. They said they were going to upgrade to the newer version of LYNX, also, but haven't done it yet. <CMD-DOUG> Randy, nothing I've heard. Right now we're just moving it to the Web. A lot of the structure is already there. I'm working on new links for the launchpad.

<Brant> But when will Genie drop their access from GE phone lines?

<CMD-DOUG> They don't plan to. They just won't be running the system on the GEIS machines... the numbers will route you to their own servers on the web.

<Brenda> How do you access Genie on the web?

<CMD-DOUG> Robert... the way the launchpad was done here was really screwy. The web version will be easy for us to update ourselves (RT staff, that is), while the current one requires writing up the links in a funny format and submitting a change request.

<Robert Bernardo> If it's like HTML, then it's a foreign language to me.

<CMD-DOUG> Brenda... I think it's at www.genie.idt.net, but I don't remember offhand (I have it bookmarked, so I only typed it once a few weeks ago). Robert... the current method is more obscure than that. The web one is HTML, but that's easy

for me.

<Brant> Will Genie's new format be accessible with older platforms like 64's, Apple II's, etc. ?

<CMD-DOUG> I think the main thrust right now is to resolve whatever it takes to get the system as it is onto the web... then they can go from there. If the people who access Genie now with Front End program have their way, everything will be as close as possible to the way it is now. Well, folks, I think it's about time for me to check out...

<Robert Bernardo>
Thanks, Doug, for all your time and your enlightening words.



"THE COMMODORE STORY" (PART 5)

Copyright By Harry Blake-Knox
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Canada R0E 0T0

In an effort to garner needed cash Jack Tramiel resorted to some stringent measures that were not actually appreciated by either his customers or his creditors. The demand by dealers for stocks of the PET computer allowed Commodore to dictate terms.

Dealers were forced to demonstrate that their credit standing was A-1, that they had a service engineer and a suitable retail outlet. Commodore went so far as to

demand full purchase price on all orders "up front" even though an order often might take up to six months to fill!

They stretched out payment to their creditors, cut their costs to the bone and they used all inflowing monies to capitalize the creation of production facilities. Tramiel, wondering often whether he had perhaps priced the PET too low decided to offset this state of affairs by doubling the price when introducing the PET into European markets where it was also an instant hit!

The fabulous success of the PET caused others to build systems of their own around the 6502 chip. Tramiel recalls selling chips early on to two young men, both called Steve who were assembling their own 6502-based machine in a garage, a product they later named "Apple"! Radio Shack, and later, Osborne and Atari also used the 6502 chip but Commodore, with the PET 2001, was the leader. In time their innovation would come back to haunt them.

All computers in those days were designed to do upper case letters only.

This was a carry-over from the teleprinter machines from which keyboards were adapted, but the Commodore was unique in that provision was made for accessing lower case letters with a direct command. POKE 59468.14 would cause many shifted graphic characters to become lower case text.

At that time the character set used by Commodore was true ASCII and remained so in graphics mode. It was after the PET 2001 was established that a new use for computers was found and that was "word processing"!

Nobody had anticipated this application when the PET was being designed. In fact, there was no period on the keyboard, a decimal point had to be used. The concept of shifting to get a lower case letter just didn't seem natural.

Henceforth all Commodore computers after the PET 2001 flipped the upper case with the lower case with the lower, of course, in text mode. As a result compatibility with ASCII was lost.

That's the reason why today we must use an interface when sending text to a non-Commodore printer or modem.

It was not, as you sometimes hear, a case of Commodore setting out to create its own non-industry standard but

rather, by being ahead of the rest, getting maneuvered into that position! (PART SIX IS NEXT!).

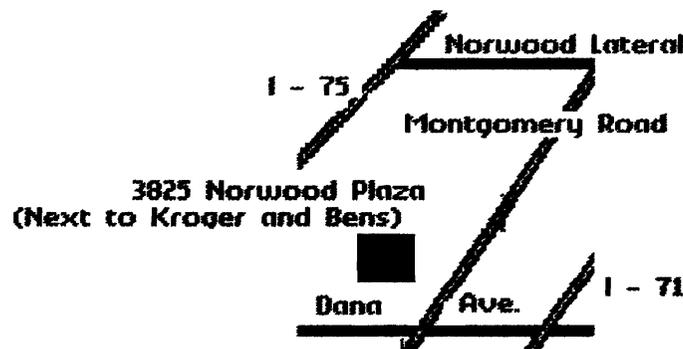
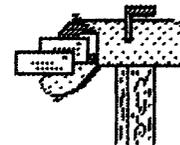


The deadline for next month's newsletter is Sunday December 7, 1997.

Submissions may be e-mailed to the editor at the following addresses:

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The Creativity Stop 513-761-2352
E-mail User #7 or Snogpitch



C C C C

R F W F D F Z W Q Y M M Q F B B C R G D J Z B F M F V B H M W W Y P X Z K J N X
Y B S F K R R T D N G M G M P P V X T C R C G M Z R T P R F C X F Z D K V P P T
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W U G B F G R N R T L N R M B W H T E H G X D D R M N C K Q J D D A D X J J T G
Q G C V M X G F O M R I S N W F F Y M R T V F E C Y G H P R V Q P G P G X K W B
C N B H J T D K Q M A I J H Z F V G T Y J H T D C N N Q B W R P R T Z L D W N B
Z Q C K E M L X G L F Q D Y G Z L M G V X N S W W R N K L P U V X K N J W G Z D
P P C D W N F H Q P Y G J G K K G T D R I N Q E L T V Y G J O R L P D G R N G Q
L P C L R R A J L M M M T Z E S R G Y N Q D G W R N X B Z G F Z E G S T T D W S
C T M B Q B C U C W S Z F G F B Y F H R L M Y Z B O P Q V G Y Y R Y T G J L Q H
A F K Q Q L Q R R B K F X K M N H T X W H Z V P S W D S C N T Q Y G O F T T Q H
B Y M Q K L D K G Q C X Z Y P N M M N M T Y Y S F H P O M N X L T Q V H B T M W
L V F R C P C P S W B L K D C B Q C R B Z S Q Z Y M S Q M B I C S D C X F B Q D
E P Y P R C Q Y W C Y H W N G C F Y K H J K V M F L C H R M S Y T J Y R Y M L P
S H B S J D B Q H Y G Z S M G Y X N R G Q T P M D L G J P Z O Z R T H H L K M Z
Z H W S Y B M L S G G H H Q J V S V P N N Y G G H D N B V Y F C J X H S L G B M
D W D Y T Y G P X W Y L C Q L Y D W F F L N J C T Q X T G B H W Z H P T W P N P

For the puzzle fans among us, see if you can find the Four C'er Officers & Computer Terms. Look for answers next month.

BARR
BUCHENAU
CABLES
CARTRIDGE
CASSETTE

COMMODORE
COMPUTER
DISK
DISKDRIVE
GASE

GEER
HOYER
INTERFACE
MONITOR
MORRIS

NOTCHER
PAPER
PARALLEL
POWERSTRIP
PRINTER

RIBBON
SERIAL
SIXTYFOUR
WINKLE
WITMER

The Four "C" ER

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Meetings are held on the 3rd Sunday of each month, from 2pm until 4pm, at Norwood Plaza Bingo. Located at 3825 Montgomery Road in Norwood, Ohio. If you have any questions, please contact one of the officers, above. Visitors are always welcomed.

Next Meeting November 18, 1997

Please check your label for membership renewal

**Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club
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