

CURSOR

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NEWSLETTER of the COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.

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MEETINGS - WHERE & WHEN

MAIN MEETING: Tuesday 4th August 1987 in the *Bardon Prof. Dev. Ctr. 390 Simpsons Rd. Bardon*. Entrance through Car Park in Carwoola St. Doors open 7pm (library), Meeting starts at 8pm sharp. Library closes at 9.30pm.

***** ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING *****
*** GREG SHEA: "WHAT MAKES MODEMS TICK?" ***

WORKSHOP: Sunday 16th August 1987 (1pm - 5pm) in the *Guidance Officers Training Ctr., Bayswater St. Milton*. Bring your programming- or hardware problems, as well as your own computer equipment! Opportunity to copy our Public Domain Disks.
PLEASE NOTE: Workshop Meetings are for MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Colin Shipley - 38 2511 a.h.

AMIGA MEETING: Sunday 2nd August 1987 (1pm - 5pm) in the *Playground & Becc. Assn. H.Q. Bldg., Love St., Spring Hill*. ** Demo of AMIGA MUSIC, MIDI and SYNTHESIZERS **
Amiga Library open from 1.30pm - 2.30pm. Bring your own computer equipment to copy our Public Domain Disks! - Ph. Steve McNamee - 262 1127 a.h.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL meets on the 4th Saturday of the month (12noon - 12pm) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Barry Wilson - 399 6204 a.h. or Ron Jarvis - 399 6981 a.h.

CAPALABA meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba State Primary School. (Redland Education Centre.) Ph. David Adams - 396 8501 a.h.

KENMORE meets on the 1st Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Kenmore State School Library. Ph. Peter Reeve - 378 2665 a.h. or Keith Hadland - 378 6698 a.h.

KINGSTON meets on the 2nd Friday of the month (7pm - 10pm) in the Kingston State School. Ph. Peter Harker - 800 4929 a.h.

PINE RIVERS meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine High School. (rear entrance). Ph. Bruce Wylie - 359 9779 a.h.

SHERWOOD meets on the 2nd Friday of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State School. Ph. Leigh Winsor - 379 2405 a.h. or Philip Parkin - 818 1172 a.h.

THE GAP meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (7.30pm) in the Gap State School. Ph. Julianne Fallen - 300 2982 a.h.

WAVELL HEIGHTS meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the Wavell Heights High School (library), Brae St. Ph. Rob Adamson - 266 8353 a.h.

SUNSHINE COAST meets regularly. For meeting times, dates and places: Ph. Harvey Riddle - 071 / 42 1036 or Ph. Vic Mobbs - 071 / 94 1330

MARYBOROUGH/HERVEY BAY meets on the 4th Monday of the month (7pm - 10 pm) in the Sunbury State School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade - 071 / 21 2271 (w) or 071/21 5059 a.h.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

PRIMARY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (7.30pm) in the Aspley State School. Ph. Bill Weeks - 208 8620 (work) or 341 2823 a.h.

PROGRAMMING SUB-GROUP meets during the Main Meeting in our Club Rooms.
Ph. Jim Vick - 345 1878 a.h.

CP/M SUB-GROUP meets during the Main Meeting in our Club Rooms.
Ph. Steinar Johansen - 207 3065 a.h.

PLEASE NOTE: COPYING OF COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE IS NOT ALLOWED AT ANY OF OUR MEETINGS!!!
Do you want to form a Sub-Group in your District?

Contact our Sub-Group Coordinator, Terry Steer (Ph. 808 2424 a.h.) for details.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a letter and the reply by Jon Kalkman on the subject of software for the use by physically and mentally handicapped children.

It is easy for those of us who have healthy children to conveniently forget about those parents with children whose physical or mental health is impaired, but perhaps we, as one of Australia's largest User Groups, might be able to do something really useful for the community at large for a change.

Because the C-64 is the cheapest quality computer in the market place, a range of software specifically written to cater for the needs of the handicapped (as well as a range of alternative input devices for the physically handicapped), would be of great benefit to those parents who find themselves in the situation of having to develop the living skills of the handicapped.

It is for this reason that we invite suggestions from members for the development of both suitable hardware and software for handicapped people. If you feel that you have ideas or projects that could assist in this programme, we would like you to contact in the first instance Jon Kalkman (Ph. 07 - 345 8290) to discuss the feasibility of the project(s). If on the other hand you feel that you have no skills in the areas of programming or hardware design but still would like to contribute in some way, we are sure that Jon would like to hear from you as well.

In both this and the previous issue of CURSOR you will find some contributions from Paul Gunther, which are welcomed with open arms by yours truly. He has some pertinent things to say and makes some very useful observations, even if we don't necessarily agree with all of them. In fact I always look forward to contributors with very outspoken views or make outrageous claims - that way you can be certain of some counter responses! Welcome to the gang, Paul!

The first issue of the Amiga-specific edition of CURSOR has now gone out to all Amiga owners. It has been generally well received, but we can certainly do with more local content. However we are sure this will follow in due course. Because quite a few of our "8-bit" members have mentioned to me that they would like to know what's happening in the Amiga camp, we will endeavour to keep you up to date with the latest developments. Did you know for example that we have amassed close on to 100 Public Domain Disks for the Amiga in less than 12 months? As these disks hold 880K of data per disk, compared with 170K on a 1541 disk, it means that we actually have gathered more Amiga PD stuff than 64/128 material! In fact most members just cannot keep up with the flood. It's all rather overwhelming!

In this issue there are some more contributions of the hon'uble Paul Blair, our Canberra correspondent, Superbase expert, Disk Drive detective, contributor to a certain Australian Commodore magazine and friend of our President. (That's the reason we won't pay him for his contributions!). It is always good to read Paul's wise words. (Even Jim Strasma, in the May'87 issue of RUN, quotes Paul's words of wisdom.)

That other Disk Drive detective, our President Greg Perry, published an article in the March'87 issue of Cursor on "Problems with the 1571 Disk Drive". This article has now been published in the May/June '87 edition of the English "ICPUG" newsletter. Not only did they publish the article - they also felt that he should get the Sherlock Holmes of the Year Award (computer version) for his detective work on the 1571 'bug'.

It's good to see our local boys getting the recognition which they deserve.

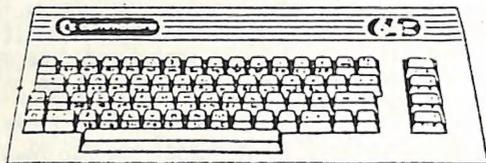
Ralph De Vries

commodore COMPUTER

PARCOM PTY. LTD.

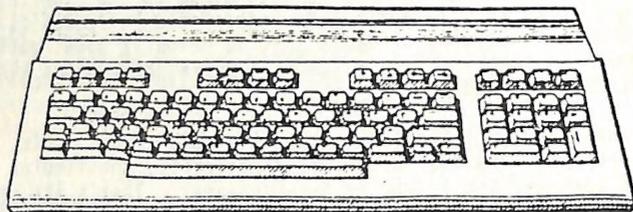
WHITES HILL SHOPPING VILLAGE
SAMUEL STREET - CAMP HILL - 4152
Ph. (07) - 395 2211

363 BAYSWATER ROAD
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R A N D O M B I T S

MAIN MEETING (7th July)

This is normally the "Pay your Subs" meeting, and so it was this year again. Four of us took membership fees but, as Norm Chambers said, more members are mailing subs to him, which meant that there was less of a queue than in previous years. If you have not paid your subs this will be the last issue of this informative, witty (well sometimes) and useful publication that you will be receiving. Absent from this meeting were our Treasurer who had to work, the assistant to the Treasurer, John Van Staveren who had to go overseas for family reasons, and our Chief Librarian who is straightening out the troubles in Fiji. We hope to see them all during next month's AGM. The meeting itself was taken up by those three talkers who never shut up, the President, the Secretary and Newsletter editor. We have added quite a few new books to the library and the Pres offered them to members for a first read-through, on the understanding that they do a review for the newsletter - good thinking on his part! We had a running graphics demo in our main meeting which had been prepared by one of our senior members, Angus Norrie. Angus used the bare essentials to produce his demo, namely A C-64, a Datasette and a "Simon's Basic" cartridge. Angus gave a short explanation how he had prepared his tape and then threw out the challenge to other members to improve on his efforts. We wonder if somebody will take up the challenge. The evening concluded with Greg Perry showing the intricacies of "SuperScript", but as usual time ran out without being able to cover all the fascinating aspects of this program. See you all next month at the AGM.

AMIGA MEETING (5th July)

We're back in Love Street for our Amiga meetings! More room, still not enough trestle tables for equipment (we're working on that one), and quite a few new faces. Our secretary has just informed us that another five 8-bit users have gone over to the Amiga camp. (We believe that quite a few of them still hang on to their 64's and 128's, and that's not a bad idea at all.) A this meeting Bruce Wylie explored the intricacies of Amiga Basic and Harvey Riddle brought a heap of Hi-Fi gear to play a demo tape of Amiga sound and speech. We practically raised the roof. We will probably play this tape at our next (A.G.M.) meeting - bring your ear muffs!

GOSSIP COLUMN

You may have read recently that once more Commodore International have been firing their top executives. Tom Rattigan, the Chief Executive Officer and Nigel Shepherd (he was the former chief of CBH in Australia) have both been booted out. (Rumour has it that the 'real' top boys weren't happy with their performance yet.)

But here comes the clincher: According to Andrew Farrell, Nigel Shepherd has returned to Australia to head the new ATARI company, which is taking over from Mobex, the current Atari distributors who haven't performed too well for Atari.

Sure sounds like a game of musical chairs, doesn't it?

PARCOM PTY LTD

Not too many members are aware that Don Goergen now offers SERVICE CONTRACTS on computer equipment. These contracts can be taken out on computers, disk drives, monitors etc. (We don't believe that this include joysticks!). Contracts start as low as \$50.00 annually. Ring Don on 395 2211 for full details.

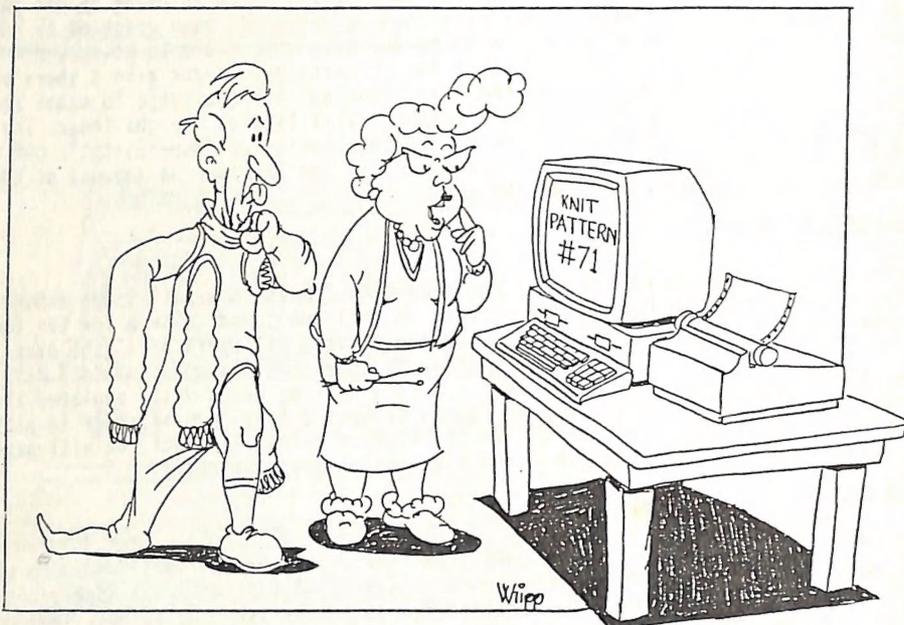
One of the weakest links in the C-64 chain is the power supply. Don is now able to 'beef up' the power supply, so if you feel that your power supply can do with a face lift we again would suggest that you give Don a ring for more info.

A BUSY MAN

Our Pine Rivers Sub-Group Coordinator, Bruce Wylie is a very busy man indeed. Bruce is also the Assistant Coordinator of the Amiga group, and lately has been deputizing for Rob Adamson, the Coordinator of the Wavell Heights group, who has been away on study leave. In his spare time he tries to get to grips with Amiga Basic. It is advisable not to offer Bruce any more jobs these days!

GAMES CORNER

We are sorry to hear that Jamie Ogden is giving up writing the Games Corner. Jamie has decided not to rejoin our Maryborough/Hervey Bay Sub-Group because of other commitments. We thank him for the work that he has put into this column and hope that we may be able to find a successor to step into Jamie's footsteps in the near future.



"YOU DON'T SUPPOSE THIS THING HAS DEVELOPED A SENSE OF HUMOUR?"

GOODBYE & WELCOME

We just heard before going to press that Rob Adamson, Sub-Group Coordinator for the Wavell Heights group, has deserted the C-64 for a PC clone for professional reasons. Rob, in his quiet way has been a tower of strength in several aspects of our Group, and we want to thank him sincerely for all the work he has done for us. Fortunately Rob has decided to retain his membership, so no doubt we will see him from time to time either at our main meetings or our Wavell Heights meetings.

AMIGA 2000 & AMIGA 500

This A2000 has now been released (R.R.P. \$2995.00). As previously mentioned this new Amiga has built-in options for IBM (PC) compatibility. However it should be pointed out that if you feel that this is your next computer you are going to spend a lot more money before you can run IBM software. You will need a monitor, a 'Bridge Board' (that's the actual IBM type micro processor and ancilliary 'bits'), as well as at least one 5,25" disk drive, as the A2000 comes with only one 3,5" drive. So, by the time you add all that up, you won't get much change out of \$5000.00. An expensive way to buy an IBM clone!

The A500 has just been released as we are going to press (R.R.P. \$999.00 + \$59.00 for the A520 TV modulator if required). More details to follow.

SOME SPECIAL NEWSY RANDOM BITS

by our very special Canberra Correspondent *PAUL BLAIR*

WITHER THE C-64: The rumour mongers have lots of stories circulating. The one I like is that the C-64 is to be revamped to permit extra memory (plug-in) and a revised Kernal without cassette routines to handle 1571-type fast disks handling. As the new 1571 ROM is reportedly an upgrade option for the 1541, who can tell?

LONDON SHOW: The recent (mid-June) industry exhibition in London brought a look at the new CR (cost-reduced) Commodore models, including a C-128 variant. Now, there have been stories that C-128 production will cease late in 1987. But if that is so, why bother producing/showing another model? For my money, the C-128 will continue as a medium - profile model, even when the Amiga 500 is released. It offers too much to abandon now, and with more than a million sold world-wide, it gains friends daily.

"INFO": The top magazine (after TRANSACTOR) for Commodore buffs will be on sale in Australia later this year. INFO is to/has absorbed the long running MIDNITE GAZETTE, much loved and read by PET and early C-64 brigade. Sadly, the top editor of MIDNITE, Jim Strasma, has gone on to a PC world. But INFO editors Mark Brown and Benn Dunnington produce an interesting magazine. Dr. Dick ("INSIDE DOS") Immers is to write a guest column.....

DISK HACKERS: Has anyone seen PIRATE DISK? This disk has 5 questions hidden deep inside layers of protection, and the object is... well, you figure it out.

BATTERIES INCLUDED: It has been reported that BI has been sold to a US company. This may be the whole shebang, or just the products. Stay tuned!

C-64 HARD DISKS: Got everything else? OK, the market place is obviously wanting mass storage, so manufacturers are obliging. You can start with the old CBM D9090 (7,5 MB) for about \$450 from Graham Lee in Sydney. Then comes the ST10C (10MB), a range of JCT (3,7, 5 and 10MB), Data Chief (10 & 20MB), Lt Kernal (20MB) and Device 9 (10MB). US prices for these range from \$700 to \$1000. Translate that, and you have maybe \$1400+. 10MB is 10 SFD1001 disks (say \$20) or 60 1541 disks (say \$120). The hard drives seem attractive, but think what it will cost you per byte!

SWIMMING SCREENS: Some Commodore colour monitor screens develop a sinuous vertical scan motion after a while. The problem is in the power supply, I'm told, and there is a mod to prevent this. See your serviceman if pain persists.

Rumour is rumour, fact is fact. Neither appears deliberately in the above.

CURSORY NOTES

by Phil Guerney

Two months ago I wrote about being cajoled to run a "Computer Games Room" at the Fig Tree Pocket State School fete - well, that was two weeks ago and I'm still alive to tell the story. Imagine a room about the size of a reasonable bedroom with six 64's going flat out - and one of them was wired to a projection screen, provided by Channel 9, giving a 2m x 2m blow-up of PITSTOP on the wall. That was 19 powerplugs feeding into two wall sockets! Popular? There was someone waiting for their 5 - 10 minute turn behind each machine for almost all the five hours we were going. It wasn't exactly quiet in any sense. Little commandos perforating scores of enemy soldiers on this side, lethal karate blows wielded on the other and intergalactic wars in the front. The big screen race action was popular, but no more so than the other games and on reflection was probably not worth the effort. I counted 190 pairs of tickets (2 were required at 20c or 25c each depending on whether they got the bulk discount) so that worked out at an average changeover every 10 minutes on each machine for the day. The \$85 or so takings were a useful bit extra for the school but I wouldn't want to make a living out of it! We kept a blackboard tally of high scores going with giveaways from Channel 9 like trendy wraparound 'sunglasses' being a popular prize. The best time on Pitstop won an admission to Seaworld (just for him - I didn't want to be around when his family found out and realized what that was going to cost THEM!). You can imagine that we were able to extract quite a few dollars from a small but hard-core set of gamers who couldn't leave a high score unchallenged or an empty machine idle. Besides having to keep a good lookout against drinks and sweets coming near the place, we didn't have any trouble. Special thanks have to go to the four brave people who loaned their C64's (three of them were CCUGQ members) and helped on the day.

It's nice to go on holidays. Tent up besides some Northern beach enjoying the warm winter sunshine, kids happy on the sand. But when the dark evenings come, there's the weak gas lighting, sandflies up to the neck and the C64 is back in Brisbane just when I have the time to spend developing all the programming ideas I've stored up. We are off again this year in a couple of days and I can only think how in a few years time there may be affordable small battery-powered computers that will enable me to avoid the annual computer withdrawal symptoms (like finger tapping on the camping table, excessive computer magazine buying at the nearest newsagents). However I strongly suspect that the higher authority in this household would ban it from the luggage!

They were in K-Mart a few months ago and now Bookworld are also selling the 'Usborne' series of computer books at a dollar or two. Among them are some reasonable how-to-program pages for youngsters but also some of the only clear instructions I've seen anywhere on wiring up things to go into the ports on the C64. I put together the light sensitive resistor circuit that plugs into the joystick port and pretends to be a paddle with the reading dependant on the light falling on the resistor. With the help of a Super Expander or Simon's Basic cartridge to make reading the paddle port and graphing easy, there was good fun for little cost. Even a burglar alarm was made with a torch on one side of the door with the computer waiting to make various noises when the beam was broken!

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COMPUTERS AND THE HANDICAPPED

Some time ago a Mr. Paul Tennent wrote to Cockroach Software re the availability of C64 software specifically written for use by the physically and mentally handicapped.

As Cockroach Software were unable to assist Paul Tennent they in turn advised him to get in touch with our member Terry Steer, who, in the past, has made some valiant attempts to have both software and hardware developed for the handicapped. However in those days (1982/3) there was neither sufficient talent nor sufficient interest in this particular aspect of the C-64.

Terry Steer in turn has passed the letter on to Jon Kalkman, whose reply to Paul Tennent follows below.

The gist of Paul Tennent's letter was that a friend of his who had a handicapped child had purchased a Tandy Colour computer, after having been told that there was an abundance of suitable software for this machine - not so. The friend has since then tried to develop his own program based on some existing Apple programs. As Paul Tennent said, this type of software could be programmed so much better on a C-64, with its better sound and graphics capabilities. However there's virtually nothing around. His friend is now contemplating an Apple computer at considerably more expense. Here now is Jon Kalkman's reply to Paul Tennent's letter:

--o--

Dear Paul,

At a recent meeting of the C.C.U.G.Q. Mr. Terry Steer gave me a copy of your letter to him regarding the availability of suitable software for children with physically disability. He approached me because I also have a physically handicapped daughter and as a Commodore computer owner I also have an interest in the area of appropriate software.

In addition, I am the President of the P & C of the State School for Spastic Children (SSSC) and this school has invested heavily in computer technology for these children in recent years. In this context it is instructive to consider the criteria they used for their selection of hardware and software. Historically the computer with the biggest range of educational software (as opposed to games) has been the Apple and this machine has been actively supported by the Qld Education Department and its Division of Special Education in particular for several years. For children with almost normal mental ability with the capability to access the computer with standard controllers, eg. keyboard, joystick or mouse this machine probably represents a very worthwhile investment despite the fact that by now it is ancient technology.

For children with more limited mental capacity and/or physical disability which severely limits their access to standard controllers the SSSC has decided to purchase the BBC MICRO computer because it has been well developed for Special Education in the UK. In particular it has a range of accessories such as pressure sensitive pads and voice controlled interfaces which dramatically increase these children's use of computers.

By contrast the Commodore 64 has only recently been placed on the list of approved machines for use in Qld state schools. Again historically, the C64 developed out of the VIC 20 which was sold and developed as a games machine. Consequently, the range of educational software is similarly restricted. I bought the Commodore 64 because a) it was much cheaper than the Apple and b) it had the hardware and therefore the potential to support attractive and stimulating interactions with children ie. colour and sound. Sadly that potential has never been realised in the educational field. It is that old Catch 22 situation where the market was not there to encourage the software developers to create the software which would develop the market.

It is interesting to note that Commodore became quite involved in education in Canada especially with the PET. Much of this was developed by user groups and is in the public domain. However it is written for the PET and therefore it does not exploit the full potential for colour and sound offered by the C64. It also suffers from the same malady that most educational programs written by non-educationists have in that much of it is repetitive drill exercises rather than allowing for the child to express their creativity or take control of the computer and its software in the way that Doodle does.

For these reasons I would recommend that if the buyer is interested primarily in educational software and can justify spending quite a few dollars (like a school can) they should buy an Apple or a BBC. For me the computer is a home computer where its recreational characteristics are probably more important than its educational ones and where it also has to satisfy the needs of all the other members of the family from word processing to space invaders. I believe the C64 or the C128 meet these criteria and represent good value for money.

Because the market for disabled children is too small for commercial exploitation the only realistic option is that software will be developed by user groups like CCUGQ or committed individuals. I live in the hope that CCUGQ will respond to this need because it has the numbers and the vitality to produce the public spirited and talented people needed to do the job. In the meantime I would suggest that you contact Montrose Home for Crippled Children, Consort Street, Corinda because they have been using the C64 in their school for several years.

I hope this information is of some use to you.

Jon Kalkman

--o--

It is really rather sad to think that a computer with sales of over six million has not been able to get support in this particular area of software support.

As the average parent with handicapped children has usually considerable financial burdens, they are then in turn to spend a great deal more money on a suitable computer and software, because the C-64 is only considered to be a 'games machine'.

Perhaps if, instead of writing the 795th version of Space Wars, commercial software developers were to expand their energies in the area of developing software for the handicapped, they might well find that they could in the long run have some steady sellers on their hands.

In the meantime parents who are in the unfortunate situation of having to bring up handicapped children better follow Jon's advice given above.

The Trials and Tribulations of Purchasing Software

by Jim Vick

After my review in Cursor of Paperclip II for the 128 I thought to myself, "One of these days I will get this program", but all things take time and about six months had gone by and I was still saying "I must do something about that program". So I finally made up my mind that the time had come and determined to set the wheels in motion.

This was about the time my problems started, but little did I realize just how difficult it would be to do something as simple as buy a computer program.

To start things off I thought that I would have a ring around and get a few prices - big joke, no one had even heard of Paperclip II let alone have a copy in stock.

Nothing daunted I rang our all-knowing club President as I had remembered him talking about it at one stage. Paydirt - Greg was able to tell me that Entertainment Computer Products on the Gold Coast were the distributors.

A look in the phone book revealed no such firm, so a call to Telecom turned up their Phone Number. Next step was a call to the Gold Coast which went like this:

Me "Do you have Paperclip II for the 128?"

ECP "Yes we do."

Me "Do you have copies out in the shops?"

ECP "No, only sent out on order."

Me "Can I buy a copy from you?"

ECP "Sorry, try our Brisbane agent Computronics at Slacks Creek."

Me "OK I will give them a try, can you tell me how much it should be?"

ECP "About \$99."

End of call.

Another look in the Phone Book then on the Phone to Computronics.

Me "I have just been talking to ECP at the Coast and they tell me you are the agent for Paperclip II for the 128."

Computronics (after checking) "Yes we are, can I help you?"

Me "I will be out this afternoon to pick up a copy."

Computronics "Sorry we do not sell to the public, try Myers at Carindale."

Back to the Phone Book.

Me "Computer Dept please."

Me "Do you sell Paperclip II for the Commodore 128?"

Myers "Don't know - will have a look sorry not on our list."

Me "Would you be able to order it in for me please?"

Myers "Don't know where to get it."

Me "Computronics at Slacks Creek have stocks."

Myers "Sorry can't order it in cos it's not on our list."

Me "What's that mean?" (Me being a bit stupid.)

Myers "We have a list of programs that we carry and can only order if its on the list".

Back to Computronics

Me "I have just been on to Myers and they will not order it in for me, where do we go from here?"

Computronics "Try Chandlers."

Me "What happens if Chandlers will not order it in?"

Computronics "Give us a ring back."

Back to the Phone Book.

Me "Computer Dept please."
 Me "I am looking for a copy of Paperclip II for the Commodore 128."
 Chandlers "Never heard of it."
 Me "Would you order it in for me please?"
 Chandlers "If I knew where to get it I would."
 Me "Computronics at Slacks Creek tell me they have stocks."
 Chandlers "No problem, we deal with them, but you will have to pay in advance."
 Me "How much?"
 Chandlers "Dunno about \$140 I suppose."
 Me "ECP at the Coast said it should retail for \$99."
 Chandlers "That sounds OK, can you come in and pay then I will order it for you."
 Me (getting desperate by this time) "Can I come in and pay for it then go out to Slacks Creek and pick up a copy?"
 Chandlers "They wont have any at Slacks Creek, all stocks are kept at the Coast."
 Me "They said they had it in stock."
 Chandlers "True, but all that means is that according to their sheet they have stocks somewhere but not actually at Slacks Creek."
 Me "Do you except Bankcard mate?"
 Chandlers "No worries, give me your number and I will order this afternoon."

So the deed is done and a week has gone by (still to receive my copy of Paperclip but the Bankcard bill turned up without any problems). But what all this preamble shows up is the stupidity of a situation where an excellent program such as Paperclip II for the 128 is rotting in some warehouse instead of being on the shelves of a shop where it could be bought at will.

Now I have heard that some software suppliers feel that the Users Group could do more to support them but this support has to be a two way deal, let's see this software up front (who knows what other gems they may have hidden away that we would love to get our grubby little hands on). I think that, if one is going to pay out \$100 or so for a program you should be able to run it in the shop and have, at the very least, a ten minute play to see what the program does, and try and get some idea if it is what you really want.

I feel a deal of responsibility in that a review of a program that I have done may convince someone that this or that program is what they want, but if they are then put in the position of having to then buy the program sight unseen and put the money up front before the shop will place an order I think that the whole situation stinks.

I am sure I would not have placed the order if it had not been for the fact that I had been fortunate enough to have had the program at home for a couple of weeks and was in the position of knowing exactly what I was buying.

I must confess I am not sure what the answer is, but maybe it is time that the Users group addressed the problem. Who knows, perhaps we could start retailing ourselves?

To finish of, a bit of a plug for the computer dept of Chandlers at McGreggor who were at least interested enough to go to the trouble of ordering it in for me and who have said that if enough interest was shown in the program they would be prepared to carry stocks.

POSTSCRIPT: I rang Chandlers today and was told the program probably would not be here till next week now (that would make it about 10-12 days from order to delivery). It appears as though Chandlers have to order on Computronics at Slacks Creek who will then place an order with Entertainment Computer Products at the Gold Coast. The reverse will then apply to get the program back to me. Entertainment Computer Products will send it to Computronics, who will despatch it to Chandlers who will get it to me. Efficiency plus!!!

1541/1571 CBM DISK DRIVE UPGRADE ROM V5

by Paul Blair

Commodore has prepared a revised disk operating system (DOS) for their 1541 and 1571 disk drives. The DOS, contained in one chip, is a plug-in replacement for the existing chip, and will eventually be delivered as "standard" in new disk drives. There are also 3 new chips for the C128/128D, and it seems that all chips will be offered gratis to owners. Congratulations to CBM for this, a nice touch.

The disk drive DOS upgrade will overcome most of the hassles that disk users have experienced, especially with the 1571 drive. (* See note below*) The endless waiting to read the directory from a single-sided disk, the funereal writing speed to the second side of a 1571 disk all things of the past. There are even speed improvements for some disk actions. This is all good news.

There's always a catch, and here it is. Some of the disk timing constants in DOS have been changed. These constants affect the speed at which information is sent from the disk drive back to the computer. For most normal operations, you won't feel a thing. Enjoy!

But what's "normal" these days? The dreadful speed of the 1541 spawned a whole new industry - we have all grown to love / depend on their output of fast loaders / copiers / file transfer utilities. These products have made life bearable for 1541 owners, and indeed anyone with one disk drive. Without them, some software would still be sitting on retailers' shelves, scorned because loading them would be just too dreary. Hardware devices have also been "normalized" as you would expect in the circumstances.

The new timing constants will turn much of this software and most of these devices into mush. They won't work. Your favourite software won't load, dealers will be left with non-saleable items, or have to carry "old ROM" and "new ROM" stocks. There will be confusion with two "streams" of disk drives, software and hardware devices. That's a large catch.

So we will have a shambles on our hands. With more than 8 million C64/C128s around the world, there will be a lot of disk drives with them. Owners face a bleak future. Stay with the old, and accept what the present DOS offers - C64 slow, C128 bad news. Get the new, and both are none too friendly. Your software library has just been decimated.

Maybe its time to let Commodore know what we think. We buy their products, so surely that right is ours. There's not much point in pestering Commodore Australia - they are merely at the end of a long supply line. The best thing would be to write to the person responsible - Fred Bowen. Be polite (Fred's really a nice guy, I'm told) but firm. Point out to him that, while welcoming any advance past lurking bugs is very welcome, there's no point in going to any system that's not upwardly compatible (all your old stuff works). But you don't want to live any longer with the old system either. Ask him not to manufacture / retrofit ROMs that will hurt us and Commodore.

Write to

MR F A BOWEN
SENIOR SYSTEMS ENGINEER
COMMODORE BUSINESS MACHINES INC
1200 WILSON DRIVE
WEST CHESTER PA 19380
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

either individually, or through your User Group. Perhaps a positive indication from sufficient Commodore users will bring about a change of heart.

--o--

Notes by Greg Perry.

I thought I would add a few comments. First, I thoroughly agree with Paul's comments and I for one will be registering my protests with Fred Bowen. A few of us attempted to burn a new EPROM last weekend so that we could check out the new drive code ourselves. Unfortunately we had problems with the EPROM burner and therefore have not had the opportunity to thoroughly test it before going to press. However, several sources seem to indicate that there may be more problems than Paul suggests. The problems with Superbase and other programs still seem to remain. We will bring you the full details as soon as we can. I do feel it is a pity that Commodore Australia have not made the new ROMs more available for testing by local user groups. Surely this is the least we can expect?

---oo0oo---

THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY

Reproduced by courtesy of North Gloucestershire Group

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	A man-made method for making a computer even more irrational than a man.
BACKING-UP	Mythical ceremony, often discussed but rarely encountered.
EXPERT SYSTEM	Program that duplicates your mistakes, only faster.
HARD DISK	Device enabling naive computer users to lose vast amounts of data quickly and easily.
HOUSEKEEPING	Just like the real thing, doesn't get done.
LOCAL AREA NETWORK	Electronic means of allowing multiple users to destroy data files simultaneously.
NATURAL LANGUAGE	Like no other language anyone's ever heard of.
SECURITY COPY	Imaginary duplicate that everyone assumed was made by somebody else.
SHADES OF GREY	Shades of green.

--oOo--

It Just Happened. . .

by Jim Butterfield

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I'm often asked about two features of Commodore machines. The first is the non-standard code, Commodore ASCII. . . why did Commodore choose it? The second is the STOP key. . . why doesn't it work during user INPUT? Oddly enough, the answer to these two is related, and it's intertwined with the way personal computers grew in the early days.

Back in the renaissance days of 1975 and 1976, personal computers were mostly home brew. You'd buy a mess of chips and would spend long hours attaching them to a circuit board. Sometimes you'd design your own system, and sometimes you'd buy a kit. Even with a kit you'd customize your machine, often based on what was available and cheap in your neighborhood. Some hackers soldered their connections, others used an almost-forgotten construction technique called "wire wrap". Back in those early days, each computer was unique, reflecting the style, pocketbook, and constructional skills of its owner.

One of the biggest problems - technical, financial, and practical - was how to attach input/output to the computer. Keyboards could be found, although they were generally a collection of "uncoded" switches, so that the hobbyist had to figure out hardware and software methods to connect them. Output was more of a problem. . . video displays were not common, and the logic and circuitry needed to allow character display on a CRT was not standardized. Many of the early "klooge" displays had barely enough logic to display a range of 64 characters. This would allow upper case alphabets, numbers, punctuation. . . but no lower case.

"Rich" users would find a way to obtain a teletypewriter. Suitable scrounging might turn up a Teletype (tm) model 32 or 35, which used ASCII code. . . upper case only. These terminals were also used by business for "time-sharing", where a number of users submitted work to a central computer from their terminals. Again, these devices had no lower case, only capitals. . . and shaped our concept of the nature of a computer terminal.

Now comes the first Commodore machine. . . the PET 2001, with its tiny keyboard and built-in cassette deck. The only alphabetic characters

that seemed to be on these machines were upper case (capital letters). . . a carry over from teletypewriter machines and early Basic concepts. The competing machines of that generation - the Apple II and the TRS-80 model 1 - had only upper case letters.

In fact, Commodore was ahead of its competition, in that it did have lower case in the first machine. These lower case characters were not visible, unless you knew to command POKE 59468,14, at which time many of the shifted graphics characters would change to lower case alphabets. Thus, the heart graphic would change to lower case (NOT upper case) S.

Now: at that time, the character set used by Commodore was mostly true ASCII. An upper case A, for example, is code 65 - correct ASCII. This is still true of Commodore machine in graphics mode.

But users started to get into word processing, and it didn't seem natural to use the shift key to get lower case. You expect to press SHIFT

Commodore were not engaged in some sneaky plot. . .

for upper case. And in their next model, Commodore conceded the point by flipping upper case with lower - in text mode only, of course. As a consequence, compatibility with ASCII was greatly reduced.

That's how we lost it, and that's why we need to translate characters when sending to a modem or to a non-Commodore printer. Commodore were more or less pushed into it during the evolution of their computers. Did they have any alternatives? Yes, but none of them seem good. They could have completely switched around the character set, graphics and all. . . and would have lost compatibility with early machines. They could have converted the graphics set so that in graphics mode, you would have only lower case alphabets. . . that would look terrible on graphics screens. They could have ended up with the clumsy system on other computers whereby you cannot write a program unless you put the Shift Lock down.

The important point is this: Commodore were not engaged in some sneaky plot to invent

their own character set. They just ended up being maneuvered into that position.

About the STOP key. Why doesn't it work during a user input? Again, it goes back to the teletypewriter machines of early computers.

The pioneer microcomputers were often hooked up to a teletypewriter or other serial device. ("Serial", here, means something like the RS-232 interface - NOT the Commodore serial bus). They were so constructed and programmed that they could do only one thing at a time. They could choose one of: (a) watch the keyboard line for incoming characters; (b) do other computing. They could not do both. When Microsoft(tm) Basic was written for these early computers, it was known that Basic must "freeze" and give up control the system in order to get input. In other words, once you typed RUN on your teletypewriter and pressed RETURN, your keyboard was dead until the computer decided to come back and look at it again. Basic would not look at the keyboard unless the program stopped or an input was required.

The STOP key was often on the computer itself, not on the keyboard. The program to check this key was implemented as part of Basic. As your Basic program was running, the interpreter would check the STOP key at frequent intervals and stop the program if the key were found pressed.

But when Basic executed an INPUT statement, it would suspend operation. The computer needed all the time available to watch the keyboard, and Basic execution would be "frozen" until the desired input had been received. Naturally, Basic wouldn't be checking the STOP key during this time.

In early days, only the Commodore computer left the keyboard "alive" while Basic was running. It did that with a clever system (still used) called "interrupt" which allows Basic and keyboard to run virtually at the same time. So - on Commodore machines only - it would have been possible to watch the STOP key, even during input.

But Commodore purchased their Basic, which had been written for the "standard" machines of that day. So Basic didn't know of this advanced feature. . . and the STOP key did not work during input.

Funny, isn't it? It's as if the early Commodore machines - with built-in lower case and interrupt keyboard servicing - were so far ahead of their time that they were hampered by these advanced features.

GEM - PART 2

by Paul Blair

In the June issue I showed you how to compact two or more COMPUTE! Gazette disks onto one side of a disk. After cleaning up some of my own disks I realized that there was one more step that would improve matters further.

CG disks store menu information in SEQ files. "64 (or 128) CONTENTS". After merging the two together with GEM, I suggested that some files could be scratched to create more disk space.

If you do this, the CONTENTS file will still contain reference to them. It doesn't really matter, because if you select a non-existent program the CG menu system just cycles back to the start, with no damage done. But if you like to be tidy, and have a copy of SUPERSCRIP (the Precision Software word processor), you can tidy up even further.

SUPERSCRIP will load the CONTENTS file for you. Now you will see how CONTENTS is arranged. The first line is the month, the second is the number of programs on the disk. After that, information is in pairs - the first is the title shown on the screen menu, the second is the name of the file the menu will load for that choice. All you need to do is remove (F1/E/B) the appropriate pairs of information relating to the files you have scratched. Don't forget to decrease the number in the second line by ONE for every PAIR removed.

Now simply replace the file on disk (F1/D/R). Next time you load a CG disk, the menu will contain only those items you have selected to retain.

There are doubtless other word processors that will do the job for you. Provided your model will load SEQ files this trick should work. I suggest you try first on a copy of your original disk, just to be on the safe side.

Reprinted from the June 87 issue of Commodore User Group (A.C.T.) Inc. Newsletter.

MORE ON COMMODORE MONITORS

by Paul Gunther

As correctly stated in the June issue of Cursor, the AMIGA 1081 colour monitor can be connected to any computer in the COMMODORE range with composite video output. However, if you did a side by side comparison with a 1081 and a 1702 (or 1701, 1801) colour monitor you would notice a difference in quality. The 1081 displays a peculiar 'graininess' especially with multicoloured high resolution screens. This symptom also occurs with the 1201 monochrome monitor. The problem lies in the cable from the composite output connected to the monitor. Such a cable has a separate audio output and a single video output (2 RCA plugs).

The 1201 and the 1081 don't have separate luminance and chrominance inputs so the cable mentioned combines them into a single video plug.

SOME USEFUL TIPS

by Paul Gunther

Some people think that speech synthesizers on the C64 have no practical use at all. Here's at least one use I can think of: When typing in programs from magazines that have lots of data statements. After hours of typing you save your work then type the magic word 'RUN'. Uh-oh '?OUT OF DATA ERROR', or the program crashes (sound familiar?). You are now faced with the task of attempting to manually check all those annoying data statements. If you are not a touch typist, this involves looking at three things at once (screen, keyboard and magazine). Use of a speech program can help ease your load. Simply start up your speech program then insert these few simple lines in at the start of your program:

```
1 READ X
2 S$=STR$(X)           :REM convert number to a string
3 SAY S$               :REM or whatever the syntax is
4 GET A$:IF A$="" THEN 4 :REM pause - wait for any key
5 GOTO 1
```

This will speak the data items back to you, allowing you to concentrate on the listing. Of course the program will eventually stop with an '?out of data error in 1', but at least you should be able to pinpoint your mistyped or missing data.

--o--

Buy a 'Turbo Rom' or some sort of fast loading device for your disk drive. Although this advice may sound too simple, the number of people I see who haven't yet taken the plunge seems alarming. Using a fast loader with your C64 can mean the difference between night and day. The 1541 disk drive was not designed to allow for the theoretical maximum data transfer rates. Unless you employ a fast loader. These will set you back roughly \$50 depending on your choice. To give you an idea of speed and storage devices check out this table in ascending order of program LOAD speed.

TOO SLOW:	1530 Datasette (slowest known storage device in universe)
	1541 Disk Drive at normal speed
	1530 Datasette with Turbo tape utility
JUST ACCEPTABLE:	1541 Disk drive with an EPYX Fast Load cartridge
	1541 Disk drive with a Cockroach Turbo Rom
	1571 Disk drive in C128 mode (FAST 2MHz mode)
THE FASTEST:	1541 Disk drive with Dolphin Dos (ultra fast but at \$170!)

Does anyone know where the strange WAFER drive fits in? In the future, 3.5 inch disk drives, RAM drives and Hard drives may also have their place.

---ooOoo---

Have you got some useful Hints or Tips? Why don't you send a note to the Editor with your discoveries. It doesn't even have to be a page full. All little bits help!

CONFESSIONS OF A SYSOP

by Murray Smith

It was an ordinary night. I sat slouched on my coffee-stained bean bag perusing the latest edition of the CURSOR newsletter, when my concentration was broken by the mechanical whirr of my 1541 disk drive. The activation of the drive meant one thing - the SUNCOAST Bulletin Board was being visited again....

My system consists of a Commodore computer, two 1541 disk drives, a Taihaho auto answer modem and a green screen display monitor. Now as some systems go these component parts may appear inadequate, but in my opinion it is possible to run quite a reasonable board if you plan things right. Anyway by now I have managed to switch on the monitor, the small ball of light grows to reveal the opening titles of the board blazing a trail for some unknown user. K.B.B.S. is the latest version of the previous named COMboard system, the brainchild of a Canadian bearing the name of Kris Hatelid. His latest opus incorporates many of the features of previous versions. The main difference is that KBBS allows the operator to customize the format to suit his needs if he so wishes. Who knows, next time you log-on you may be greeted with "HACKER IDENTIFIED - EXTERMINATE, EXTERMINATE!".

Being a Sysop can be a lot of fun, but the board should not be allowed to stagnate, so constant updating is necessary. If you have happy users, then you are on the way to having a successful bulletin board.

Since the bulletin board is still pretty new I am fairly curious to see the identity of the latest user - I am always hoping for newcomers, but I'm out of luck this time. On this occasion it's number 11 to appear next to the Identity request. If I am not mistaken the user is Matthew. His programming skills are definitely a bonus to the board.

On a good day the system would probably get 2 - 3 users. Most of these occur somewhere between the hours of 10pm and 2am. At the moment the board runs part-time (9pm - 8am), so for a fairly new board it's not so bad. The beauty of a bulletin board like this is that it doesn't require constant monitoring if it is left to its own devices. Computers require minimum quantities of power, so they don't cost a fortune to operate. My only worries are what will happen to boards like mine if Telecom burden us with their new charges, and from what I have heard that is almost definite.

Considering my short time as a member of the elite (SYSOPS), in my opinion we are really great human beings and a little worship from time to time would surely not go astray, so if you happen to be near a phone, and you have the right accessories, drop me a line and be dazzled by our latest creation; SUNCOAST BBS! Oh yes, you may find this number useful too: 071 - 435184. Go on, give me a call, I deserve it and I'll be waiting.....

---oo0oo---

Perhaps with all this BBS stuff Murray is neglecting the rest of his computer gear, as I think his letter was obviously printed on a printer without a ribbon! I shall present his letter at our next meeting as evidence to show what happens to ribbons if you don't replace or re-ink them! If you have spent all your spare cash on that BBS of yours you may as well upload your next article to the group's official BBS in Brisbane - we'll all be able to read it then!

In the meantime we hope that some more of our Sunshine Coast members will accept Murray's offer and flood him with calls to his BBS!
[Editor]

ABOUT THE C. E. S. AND COMDEX

An Interview with Royce Jones of Computer View in Bundamba

Ed: Royce, what was the main purpose of your trip to the USA?

RJ: To get a first-hand look at the computer scene in America.

Ed: Tell us a bit about the C.E.S and Comdex first.

RJ: Well, C.E.S stands for the Consumer Electronics Show, and this is held twice yearly - the Winter C.E.S., held in January and the Summer C.E.S., which this year was held from the 30th May till the 2nd June in Chicago. The C.E.S covers every form of Electronic consumables like Video, Radio, TV, Household appliances and yes, Home Computers! Comdex however is a computer and computer-related show only.

Ed: I believe that it was your intention to visit the C.E.S. only, and after the show spend a few days exploring the USA?

RJ: Yes, but I came a cropper! You see, Commodore wasn't exhibiting at the C.E.S.! It was their intention to do so, but they pulled out at the last moment and decided to exhibit at Comdex, which this time was held at practically the same time as the C.E.S., namely from the 1st June till the 4th June.

Ed: So, what did you do?

RJ: Well, as I was in Chicago I decided to visit the C.E.S., and despite Commodore's absence it was very worth while. After spending a few days at the C.E.S I moved on to Comdex.

Ed: Was that held in Chicago as well?

RJ: No, and that was the real problem. You see, Comdex was held in Atlanta, in Georgia in the other end of the USA. That killed off my sight-seeing plans!

Ed: Oh well, business before pleasure. But back to Chicago - what was it really like?

RJ: I won't try to describe the size of the place - it's immense. At the opening day they had 100.000 visitors. To really have a good look at all the computer related gear would take several days.

Ed: What was the 'big' computer news at C.E.S than?

RJ: PC (IBM) Clones without a shadow of a doubt. They were everywhere, and so was the software for them. Perhaps the most popular clone would be the 'Blue Chip' one made by Hyundai, the Korean company. Epson also had a new low priced clone on show to try to regain a larger slice of the clone market.

Ed: So no Commodore computers in sight there?

RJ: Oh yes, quite a few in fact on the stands of software companies. From 64's to the full range of Amiga's.

Ed: What about Atari?

RJ: Yes, they had a stand in Chicago, as well as in Atlanta, but I didn't get the impression that they were more popular than Commodore's Amigas. Another Atari line that didn't impress me was their new PC clone. It looked rather miserable.

Ed: Probably in keeping with their low pricing. But do you really think that the Amiga's are now as popular as the ST's?

RJ: Yes, and with the A2000 (now released) and the A500, Commodore will give them a real run for their money. However, as I said before, they don't sell anywhere near as well as the PC clones. It is claimed that percentage-wise Amiga is doing better in Canada, Europe, UK and Australia - in fact Australia has the largest user base of Amigas in the world on a per capita basis!

Ed: And what about the C-64's and the C-128's?

RJ: The C-64 is still by far Commodore's best seller. The C-128 is selling steadily, but I still didn't see the 128D's in the States.

Ed: And how about GEOS?

RJ: Selling very, very well indeed - several new packages to be released soon.

RJ: I was also very impressed with Commodore's new 1351 proportional mouse for GEOS (and other applications too, of course.)

Ed: Perhaps if GEOS was more realistically priced in Australia it would sell equally well. Did you see the C-64 memory expansion?

RJ: No, I didn't see it but I believe it is available. I did see an interesting accessory for the 64 and 128 though. It's called an 'lcontroller', released by Suncom. It's a type of fixed joystick which clamps on the bottom right corner of the computer and has been more or less specifically designed for use with GEOS.

Ed: (looking at an illustration of the lcontroller) - Yes, it looks like a very interesting accessory. What about other 64 or 128 accessories?

RJ: Hard Disk Drives - I saw the Lt. Kernal 20MB drive in operation on a C64. It seemed to work very well. They also have a File-Server for this one which will allow you to hook up to 8 64's or 128's to this drive. Another company, Phoenix Electrics had 10, 20 and 40MB hard disk drives for the 64's and 128's. Cost here in Australia could be a problem though.

Ed: So, after your stint at C.E.S. you rushed off to Atlanta to catch Comdex?

RJ: Yes, because for the first time ever these two shows overlapped, so it was a case of 'out of one and into the other'.

Ed: Is Comdex purely a business computer show?

RJ: No, not altogether - there's still plenty to see for the home user, although Commodore chose to show only their PC range and the Amiga family.

Ed: Any comments on their stand?

RJ: It was quite a large stand with huge Amiga banners coming from the ceiling. Although all the big names were there like IBM, Apple, Atari etc. I'd say, without being too prejudiced that Commodore's was one of the busiest stands at the show.

Ed: I take it that all the software- and hardware developers were there as well?

RJ: Oh, yes - in full force. In fact I had the opportunity to talk to quite a few company representatives, which is better than going through distributors etc.

Ed: Anything that stood out?

RJ: Some very nice Colour printers/plotters, but priced way beyond most peoples budget. In general most high quality printers are still too expensive. (On showing me a US Commodore brochure): Note that the MPS 1200 printer is now renamed a MPS 1250 printer? Well, Commodore are going to market this version which has both a Commodore Serial port as well as a Centronics port, thus making it suitable for use with all Commodore's computers. I'd also like to point out the quality of Commodore's US leaflets, or rather more a booklet really with information about third part's products.

Ed: Yes, very nice - I notice they mention the new Amiga WordPerfect in there.

RJ: Indeed, it is now very close to being released. (\$US395.00 RRP) What with file interchange between the Amiga and IBM versions it should be a winner.

Ed: From information supplied it seems indeed to be an extremely powerful program. What about the other Amiga word processor/desktop publishing program, Vizawrite?

RJ: A gentleman from the UK (its country of origin) was demonstrating it. It is ready for distribution, but for one thing, the manual hasn't been printed yet! I've also got some news from the manufacturer of PROWRITE, the desktop publishing program. If anybody has a copy of this program they should make a backup for present use and send their original back to the manufacturers in the USA and they will receive free of charge a revised program disk which now includes a low-res version of the program, thus eliminating screen-jitter. I also was supplied by the manufacturer with a copy of "Publisher 1000", a new desktop publishing program, which I feel is somewhat easier to use than PageSetter.

Ed: So that promises well for the near future.

RJ: Yes, indeed. I'm glad that I went, because it's certainly an experience not to be missed, but all the same I'm glad to be back in Australia again.

Ed: You certainly seem to have learnt a bit. How about Hanover in Germany next year?

RJ: Well, you never can tell.....

GAMES CORNER

by Jamie Ogden

Hi, how are you going? I've been writing this column for nearly a year, and I must admit I loved to write it, but as I am not renewing my membership because of other commitments I'm unable to continue with this column. I'll miss your letters and all that, but maybe someone else might like to pick up where I left off. Anyway, let's start the ball rolling.

CHEATS CORNER

MUGSY'S REVENGE

Jason Eiby of Brisbane asked for some helpers for this one, so here they are:

- * Never donate more than \$1000 to the Policeman's Charity.
- * Hire 'Spud' Murphy for \$15000 and put out a contract on Capo Rockefeller or he'll sap your money by a third, time after time.
- * Only send a \$1000 to set up a smuggling net.
- * Try to build up your stock to 100 barrels and then sell them off by the truck load.

ELITE

Jason Eiby also requested a cheat for this one, but all I could find was this. Pause the game then type X, C and M on the keyboard. Who needs a docking computer now? Thanks for sending it Buddy!

THE PAWN

Can anyone help Kurt Stanley from Alberton? He is sortof stuck at the moment because he can't:

- Get a light for when he wants to go under the climbable tree.
 - Get past the guards at King Eric's Palace.
 - Lever the big boulder out of the way, even though he has a rake, trowel and hoe.
 - get Honest Joe to pay up, even though he's got a chit.
- If you can help send the info to the Editor - sorry but I'm now unable to offer further assistance.

Well, all good things come to an end, and my column is one of them. Don't lose your hair over a stupid game, just because I won't be there to help you. I hope all you members out there stay safe, and remember don't drink and play games as it is hazardous to your computer's health, especially if you've got a temper!

Adios, Amigos!

---oo0oo---

STOP PRESS

At the July 7 meeting I notified our members of the untimely demise of Jamie Ogden (probably by some creature from Outer Space!). Fortunately for us Daniel Phillips and his brothers and friends have offered their services to fill this void in Cursor.

Leigh Crowther also offered his services, so between the two of them we should see a continuation of the GAMES COLUMN.

BYTES

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FOR SALE

=====

C-BOX Printer Interface (same as CARDCO, XETEC) for non-Commodore printers. Will print all your DOODLE, PRINTSHOP, GEOS, Word Processing etc. Perfect Condition. \$55. COMPUTE!'s GAZETTE: 40 issues up to February 1987. \$50 the lot.

Contact Rob Adamson on (07) 266 8353 (a.h.)

"GRAPHICS & SOUND on the COMMODORE 64" by Dr. Greg Perry.

This book, written by our President is now available at the Special Price of \$10.00! The sample programs in this book are available on a Club Public Domain Disk.

Order your copy through Bill Bohlen (Ph. 208 3729) or from the Author (Ph. 38 3295). (If collected from the Author he is prepared to sign your copy Free of Charge!!!)

C-64 Computer, c/w Datasette, Joysticks and Manuals. Perfect Condition \$250.00
DISK SOFTWARE - \$10.00 per box of 10 disks (for C-64)

Contact Craig Upton on 396 9429 (a.h.)

=====

"BYTES" are computer-related adverts which are FREE to all financial members.

---oo0oo---



Our Chief Librarian in a very characteristic pose!

M A I L B O X

Our members have asked me to write to your club to let your members know how much we appreciate receiving your club magazine.

Through our exchange arrangement we feel much more informed of the thoughts and direction other Commodore user groups are going.

Please convey our best wishes to your members and keep up the great work.

Chris Dunbar

(President, Tuggerah Lakes Commodore Users Group, Wyong, NSW)

Thanks for your kind words, Chris. We are equally pleased to have contacts with other users groups throughout Australia and New Zealand. They are a rich source of ideas, inspiration, and yes, they even show you how to avoid some pitfalls!

Hopefully we will one day have a National Commodore Conference in Australia where we can all meet in person and exchange ideas and experiences.

We wish you and the members of your group well for the future.

--0--

In fearful response to your threats and pleadings for someone to write to you and help fill Cursor I have the following questions.

I have a 1526 printer, with which I am very pleased as far as operation goes. What I am lacking in is information. I found the User's Manual almost useless, and there doesn't seem to be any programs to cater for it. If anyone has any information I would love to hear, as I find the 1526 more than adequate for my needs. Also would someone please tell me that the 1526 does not do a screen-dump in less than 15 minutes so I can go on and do something useful.

Thank you for an excellent magazine - I really look forward to it every month.

Kevin Cotterell (Moura)

Dear, oh dear me - those threats must be really working! I've never seen so many letters turn up as in the last few months. I love it!

As the 1526 printer was my very first Commodore printer I've got fond memories of the beast. The print quality is still quite good if we ignore NLQ mode on the more modern printers. The manual is bad news. It was a quick re-write of the printer manuals for the PET, and left indeed a lot to be desired. It is only since the MPS 1000 and even more with the MPS 1200 that Commodore's manuals have substantially improved.

Yes, the 1526 and 802 are just not designed for printing out graphics. Very few commercial programs support them, and although some programs in magazines have written graphic routines for these models they are S L O W. Regrettably this is tied up with the way that bit-mapped graphics are generated in these printers, and to my knowledge there's not much one can do to speed this up. However it should be pointed out that graphics printed out on printers which do support graphic dumps aren't necessarily all that fast either. I seem to recall that some years ago the combination of my Star Gemini, Cardprint G+ interface and Printshop took about 11 minutes for a full page screen dump. On the other hand certain later combinations of printers and programs have shortened these times by about 50%

In the July issue of Cursor you will find an advert in the BYTES section of one of our members, Barry Wilson, who is selling a graphics replacement chip for the 1526/802 printers. As he has not submitted one of these for review we are not in a position to ascertain how effective this is. We believe it emulates a Commodore HPS801 printer which does allow the printing of graphics.

If you feel that you want to have access to graphics features without going to the expense of buying a new printer this may well be the best way to go. You can contact Barry on 07 - 399 6204 or write to him at 45 Blackwood Ave. Morningside Q 4170.

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Public domain programs that provide repayment schedules for loans and mortgages abound. However they have two failings.

Firstly, who in their right minds would borrow money from financial institutions without being aware of weekly repayment figures. Seemingly we have a solution in search of a problem with this type of program.

Secondly, the answers provided frequently don't tally with repayment schedules provided by banks or credit unions. This is most probably a function of different computational procedures rather than faulty programming or maths.

A more useful program (for me) would demonstrate how increases in the amount of repayments could decrease the duration of the loan. Recent press reports indicate that increasing mortgage repayments by a few dollars a week can save tens of thousands of dollars and decrease by years the time to discharge the loan.

Does any reader have a program that will do these calculations or a formula suitable for calculating this on a spreadsheet.

John Murray (Ferny Grove - Ph. 351 2761)

Occasionally even your editor is stumped for a reply! I have seen quite a few programs of this nature over the last five odd years, have tried some of them, but never had the need to use them regularly. It is quite possible that amongst our many PD disks there is one that meets your requirements.

Perhaps some of our members have just the right type of information. If anybody out there can help John they can contact him on the phone number given above.

--o--

I am a new member of the CCUGQ. I have really enjoyed reading my first three "Cursors", and have learned quite a bit from them. I have especially appreciated the very helpful and friendly attitude of your members.

After reading the reviews of Paperclip, Easyscript and Superscript, I was wondering if any of your members have tried Paperback Writer by Digital Solutions. I imagine you are familiar with it, but if there's anyone out there that hasn't given it a chance, you should really try it out.

[Follows a description and comparison of Paperback Writer 64 versus Easy Script, Word Writer, Write Now etc.]

Jeff Rairigh (Papua New Guinea)

We have indeed reviewed Paperback Writer (or Pocket Writer as it is now previously called) in the Feb.'87 issue of Cursor. As you pointed out, a very good WP indeed, except that in the C-64 version only 7K of memory is available for files. In this respect the C-128 version scores because it does not require a separate Hi-res screen which is necessary to obtain 80 column screen output on the C-64. In all other respects the C-128 version appears to be similar to the C-64 version.

As our Group has copies of this and its companion programs Pocket Filer and Pocket Planner in our library we managed to exchange our earlier versions with the latest updated versions directly from the distributors in Canada. They offered good and prompt service.

In the last resort choice of a WP is personal, and also heavily dependant on one's requirements. However for the benefit of some of our newer members I would like to list some of the most well known and widely used word processors.

A) The cheapest would have to be SPEEDSCRIPT, from Compute's Gazette. Lots of newcomers to word processing have started with this one. It's one of the favourites of our librarian, but documentation is pretty sparse, and it requires a fair bit of knowledge of printer escape codes if you use a non-standard printer. Both Greg Perry and myself have never taken to this one.

B) EASYSCRIPT is or has been by far the most popular WP for the C-64. Originally retailing at \$100, it has ended up at \$10 - \$20 in super markets. It's good, quite well documented, but gettin' on a bit in years. It has been superseded by:

C) SUPERScript in both C-64 and C-128 versions. These are first rate and far more flexible than their predecessor.

D) PAPERCLIP (C-64) and PAPERCLIP II (C-128). I've always had a slight preference for these two over EASYSCRIPT and SUPERScript. That's where the personal likes and dislikes come into play.

E) POCKET WRITER 64 and 128. The manufacturers of this program have taken PAPERCLIP as their starting point (their files are interchangeable), and have made it more 'user-friendly'. This has been at the expense of memory though, which means that there's less room for large files. I like them.

F) VIZAWRITE 128. (There's a 64 version, but I haven't seen it). The only WP for C-128 which allows you to set up the page and format your text in columns. (This is not the same as the column handling as found in Paperclip, Paperback etc.). However I didn't find the program easy to use, partially because of the inadequate instruction-book. The program itself rates very high though.

G) WORD WRITER (64 and 128 versions). Sorry, but I don't like either of these. I feel that several of the above are better. (Again this is a personal view point - if a user of this program disagrees with my assessment I am willing to publish their views, provided it is a full scale review!)

Well, those are some of the WP's I am acquainted with. I don't profess to know them all really well, but the above are the ones most often mentioned in reviews and publications. Any of the above work well within their limitations. In fact, as an Amiga user, I can state unequivocally that several of the above are a good deal better than the ones currently available for that machine!

--o--

PENFRIENDS WANTED

We received a letter from a Polish C-64/C-128 user who would like to correspond either in Polish or English with Australian enthusiasts.

His (her) name is **MARIAN NAZIMEK,**
Address is **LESNA 1,**
46-250 WOLCZYN,
POLAND.

He (she?) is 31 years old, and also interested in building radio-controlled models of planes, helicopters and electric cars, music, stamps, some fashion, photography.

---oo0oo---

DISK LIBRARY

by Bill Bohlen

Disk 039	C. C. U. G. (Q) INC	, UV
MENU	Menu with program descriptions	
SPEEDSCRIPT	Latest SpeedScript version (3.2)	
SPEEDSCRIPT INST	Detailed instructions of how to use it.	
DATE/TIME LOADER	Keeps track of date and time in	
SpeedScript		
SPEEDSCRIPT DATE	Loaded by above	
SCRIPTREAD	Reads SpeedScript files at fast speed	
SPEEDSEARCH. BOOT	Finds desired text in SS files.	
SPEEDSEARCH	Loaded by above	
SS CONVERTER	Converts SEQ files to SpeedScript format	
SEQ CONVERTER	Converts SpeedScript files to SEQ files	
TRIGON	A 64 variation of the Arcade game 'TRON'	
VERMINATOR	Shoot'em game in a Labyrinth. 2 players	
BLOCK'N' BUBBLE	Fight yourself through a maze.	
PLAYBALL	Another version of 'Break-out'. Fast	
CONNECT 4	Try to beat the computer in this game.	
C4.\$64	Loaded by above	
C4.\$70	" " "	
C4.CO	" " "	
C4.EO	" " "	
CHES SYS4132	Chess simulator. Excellent graphics	
CHES INST	SpeedScript file of instructions of above	
POWERBALL. BOOT	From Compute's Gazette. May 1987	
POWERBALL	Loaded by above	

* * * * *

Good news for C128 CP/M users. There are now 34 CP/M disks available in our Public Domain Library. Most are SIG/M disks (SIG/M-Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey) and some FOG (First Osborne Group) disks. They contain utilities, libraries games and much more. They are now all catalogued on our 'Q4' catalog disk.

SPEEDING UP "BASIC"

by Daniel Phillips

BASIC is a fairly slow language. Usually this is not a problem, but in some cases where speed is vital (like games), the result can be disappointing.

One solution to this problem is to use a compiler to convert your programs into faster code. The library has one called PETSPEED which never seems to be there!

If you can't get hold of a compiler then the techniques below should be useful.

First of all, FOR - NEXT loops are faster than GOTO's.

For example:

```
10 FOR I = 0 TO 1 STEP 0 :           10 REM LOOP
20 REM LOOP                          : is faster than:  20 GOTO 10
30 NEXT                               :
```

Also note that a variable after the NEXT (e.g. NEXT I) is not necessary and omitting it speeds up the program.

With nested loops, NEXT:NEXT is faster than NEXT I,J

COMMODORE BASIC only recognises the first two characters of a variable, so BA is faster than BANANA.

A program can be sped up considerably by using variables instead of number constants. This is because it is faster for the BASIC interpreter to find the value of a variable than to work out a number.

For example:

```
A=1:FOR I=0 TO 1000:Z=Z+A:NEXT
      is faster than
FOR I=0 TO 1000:Z=Z+1:NEXT
```

For maximum speed variables should be defined in order of use.

A full stop can be used instead of a '0' and is faster. A full stop is also faster than a variable. For example: A= A+. instead of A=A+0

Blanking the screen speeds up the operation of a program since the video chip does not have to delay the CPU while it is fetching screen data. In the same way, having sprites enabled slows things down a bit.

```
The screen can be blanked with POKE 53265,PEEK(53265) AND 239
and can be turned back on with POKE 53265,PEEK(53265) OR 16
Sprites can be turned off with POKE 53269,0
```

Spaces and REM's can be left out and multiple statements on a line instead of separate lines should be used. However these reduce the readability of the program. REM's should never be used in loops.

USE THEN IFs instead of AND

For example use:

IF A=1 THEN IF B=2 THEN etc. *instead of:* IF A=1 AND B=2 THEN etc.

This technique can only be used when condition checking, not in the other use of the statement (Boolean functions), ie the AND in POKE 53270, PEEK(53270) AND 247 can't be replaced with a THEN IF statement.

Using these techniques should noticeably speed up the operation of your BASIC programs. The best technique to use however, is to learn a faster language like FORTH or C. The fastest language is Machine Language which is not really as hard as many people think - you just need perseverance.

' - It is interesting to note that in AmigaBASIC (also written by Microsoft) multiple statements on one line actually slow the program down! (Ed)

---oo0oo---

C - 1 2 8 H I N T S & T I P S

by Andrew Symons

ENTER 64 MODE :- SYS 57931 RESET COMPUTER :- SYS 65341
BOOT DISK :- SYS 65366 RESTORE FUNCTION KEYS TO NORMAL :- BANK 15:SYS 49425

DISABLE SHIFT/RUNSTOP AND HELP

10 POKE 4104,0 : FOR I=4159 to 4169: POKE I,PEEK(I+9): NEXT

BASIC PROGRAM UN-NEW

BANK15: POKE(PEEK(45)+PEEK(46)*256),1: SYS 24293

ERROR TRAP ROUTINE FOR BASIC PROGRAMS

0 TRAP 9999
9999 GRAPHICO:SCNCLR:FORX=1 TO 8: SPRITE X,0: NEXT X: PRINT ERR\$(ER)" IN " EL: STOP

ESCAPE FROM COMPUTER LOCKUP

When computer locks up hold down RUN/STOP and press the RESET button.
Then type X (RET)
Then type LIST (RET) and your program should still be there.

BASIC PROGRAM APPEND

Load in the first program.
Then type: Z=65278-FRE(0): POKE 45,Z AND 255: POKE 46,Z/256 (RET)
Then load in the second program which must have line numbers greater than the first program.
Then type: POKE 45,1: POKE 46,28 (RET)

---oo0oo---

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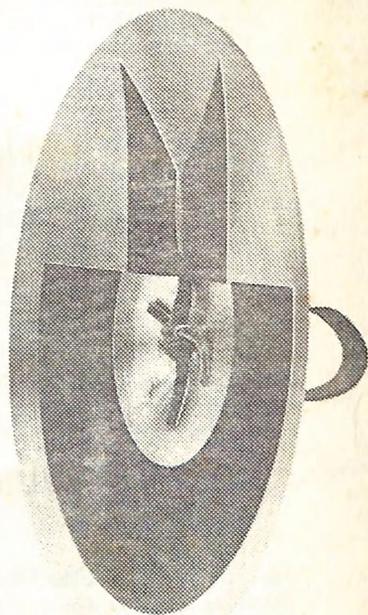
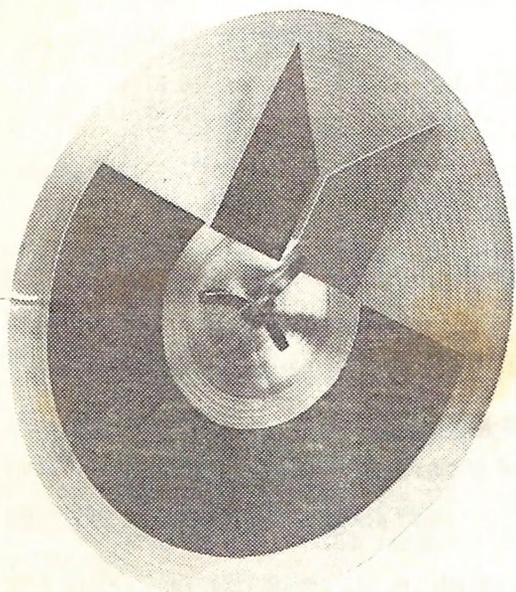
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