

# CURSOR

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

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## MEETINGS - WHERE & WHEN

MAIN MEETING: Tuesday 1st Dec. 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.

\*\*\* For our last meeting of the year we have a real treat \*\*\*  
\*\*\* in store for ALL our Members: A demonstration of \*\*\*  
\*\*\* DeLuxe Paint II on the Amiga by Peter Wharton \*\*\*

8-BIT WORKSHOP: Sunday 13th Dec. 1987 (1pm - 5pm) in the Guid. Off.  
Training Ctr., Bayswater St. Milton. Bring your own computer  
equipment! Public Domain Disks available for copying.  
NOTE: FOR MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Colin Shipley - 366 2511 a.h.

AMIGA WORKSHOP: Sunday 13th Dec. 1987 (1pm - 5pm) in the Ithaca  
R.S.L. Hall, cnr. Nash & Elizabeth Sts., Rosalie.  
Bring your own computer! Public Domain Disks available for  
copying.... MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Steve McNamee - 262 1127 a.h.

### REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL 4th Sat. of the month (12noon - 12pm) in the Cannon  
Hill State School. Ph. Barry Wilson - 399 6204 a.h.

CAPALABA 3rd Sat. of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba St.  
Primary School (Redl. Educ. Ctr.) Ph. David Adams - 396 8501 a.h.

KINGSTON 2nd Fri. of the month (7pm - 10pm) in the Kingston State  
School. Ph. Peter Martin - 290 1537 a.h.

PINE RIVERS 1st Sun. of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine  
High School. Ph. Bruce Wylie - 359 9779 a.h.

SHERWOOD 2nd Fri. of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State S.  
Ph. Leigh Winsor - 379 2405 a.h. / Philip Parkin - 818 1172 a.h.

WAVELL HEIGHTS 2nd Tue. of the month (7.15pm - 9.45pm) in the  
Wavell St. Hi. Sch., Childers St. Entr. Ph. Cor Geels - 263 2839

SUNSHINE COAST meets regularly. For meeting times, dates, places:  
Ph. Harvey Riddle - 071 / 421036 or Ph. Vic Mobbs - 071 / 941330

MARYBOROUGH/HERVEY BAY 4th Mon. of the month (7pm - 10 pm) in the  
Sunbury St. School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade - 071 / 215059 a.h.

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

PRIMARY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP: 3rd Tue. of the month (7.30pm) in the  
Aspley State School. Ph. Bill Weeks - 3412823 a.h.

PROGRAMMING SUB-GROUP meets during the Main Meeting in our Club  
Rooms. Ph. Jim Vick - 3451878 a.h.

CP/M SUB-GROUP meets during the Main Meeting in our Club Rooms.  
Ph. Steinar Johansen - 2073065 a.h.

PLUS/4 SUPPORT GROUP: - Clarence Stock is acting as support  
coordinator for Plus/4 owners. Ph. 397 8894 a.h.

NOTE: COPYING OF COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE  
IS NOT ALLOWED AT OUR MEETINGS!!!

Do you want to form a Sub-Group in your District?  
Contact Terry Steer (Ph. 808 2424 a.h.) for details.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

This is the last newsletter for 1987. After a break of one month the Feb.'88 issue should reach you sometime during January.

Please Note: There will be NO Main Meeting or Milton Workshop in January!!! Check with your local sub-group coordinator about holiday arrangements in your sub-group.

### Dirty Tricks Department

Have you seen Commodore's latest "Family Pack"? I consider this the most misleading gimmick that Commodore has perpetrated for many years. For your \$350 to \$400 you get a 64C computer, a couple of joysticks, a handful of antiquated cartridge software and, wait for it.... a book about Australia! Presumably this book is the place where you store your Basic programs, as there's no longer a Datasette supplied in the pack!

I absolutely abhor this type of tactics - you get them 'hooked' first and then the 'victim' will go out and buy all the other goodies to turn the pack into a useable system. The lucky owners of these Family Packs who don't get hooked will sell them off in a hurry. Commodore has also a "Pro Pack" (a bit of a misnomer!), consisting of a 64C, a 1541 drive and assorted other bits and pieces; this sells for about \$600. If any of your friends are contemplating buying a computer outfit steer them towards this pack. It represents reasonably good value, and more importantly, it gives them a working system - more than can be said for the "Family Pack".

To some extent the same thing applies if you are contemplating an Amiga system. \$1000 buys you an Amiga 500, but to turn in into a useable and useful system you require the 1081 monitor (\$600), a second disk drive (\$400) and the 512K memory expansion (\$300), and we haven't even talked about printers or software yet!

So, this Christmas:- "LET THE BUYER BEWARE!"

### And what about 1988?

We are still waiting with bated breath what Commodore's moves will be in 1988. (I could make a few suggestions myself, but I would probably end up with a libel suit!) Presumably they will carry on much as before, selling C-64's mainly through chain stores and PC clones and Amigas through computer stores and chain stores. Despite price drops Commodore's PC clones are by no means the cheapest around, a fact borne out by those members who bought PC clones during this year - practically nobody bought Commodore PC's. But the real casualty at present is the C-128D. As its current retail price is higher than the A500, Commodore will have to reduce the price to well below the level of the A500 to maintain this model in its range. Time will tell.

\* Have a Happy and Safe X-mas, and a Prosperous and Healthy 1988 \*

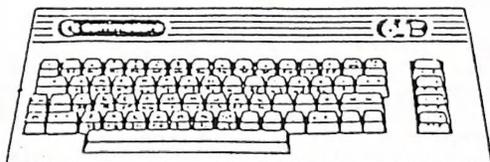
Ralph De Vries

# commodore COMPUTER

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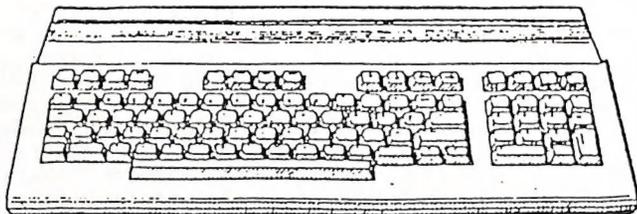
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ALL WORK CARRIES OUR 90-DAY WARRANTY!  
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SPECIAL RATES FOR USER GROUP MEMBERS!

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## R A N D O M   B I T S

### MAIN MEETING (3rd November)

This was our first combined C64/C128 and Amiga meeting. Attendance was down a bit compared with some previous meetings - but perhaps it only seemed so, because our cheerful secretary Norm Chambers was unable to attend! Greg Perry did the usual 'housekeeping' chores, by informing our members of the why's and wherefore's of the last month. He thanked Maurice Hawkyard, who recently resigned as Chief Librarian, for his sterling services rendered to the group.

The Amiga owners moved to room S1 where Steve McNamee showed members how to strip a Workbench disk, and in the main auditorium it was the turn of the "Expert Panel" consisting of Bernard Speight, Greg Shea and Jim Vick to answer the questions of the C64 and C128 users.

### 64 EMULATOR

A combined software & hardware package called "GO 64!" has been released for the Amiga. Yes that's right, it will turn your Amiga into a C-64! It consists of the necessary software and an adaptor to mimic the serial port of the C-64, thus allowing the use of 1541 disk drives, MPS printers etc. It is supposed to run 99% of C-64 software at speeds varying between 90 - 120% of C-64 speeds. We believe though that this early version doesn't support sound.

We have seen it advertised for \$225.00, but as one can pick up a C-64 for about \$300.00 there doesn't seem too much point in the exercise.....

### A TRANSFORMATION

For some years now our meetings have been graced by the presence of a dignified and well-bearded gentleman called Bernard Speight. Imagine our surprise at the October meeting when we were addressed by a gentleman who looked like the twin brother of Norm Chambers. Yes, you guessed it..... it was Bernard minus the beard.

The management committee is still getting over the shock of this sudden transformation and is seriously considering implementing a new ruling where members advise us in writing prior to changing their appearance so drastically - we just cannot cope with this type of culture shock!

### LANGUAGES

We read the following in the Sep.'87 issue of Compute!: A recent survey by the Boston Computer Society shows that for 80% of computer users BASIC is the preferred language. This is followed by FORTRAN (60% - mainly used by the scientific community), and then come Machine Language, 'C' and Pascal at 30%, Lisp at 10%, and 5% each for Forth, Prolog and Cobol. The remaining languages attracted 2% or less of the votes. The reason why the percentages don't add up to 100% is that quite a few of the people surveyed used more than one language. On the face of it Basic is certainly not waning in popularity.

## NEW VENUE

For some months now we have held our Amiga workshop at the Playground & Recreation building in Spring Hill. Because of problems with furniture we have been forced to look for alternative accomodation which we have now found in the shape of the RSL Hall in Rosalie. Amiga workshop meetings take place on the second Sunday of the month from 1 pm till 5pm.

## FROM NORTH QUEENSLAND

We recently heard from our group's first sysop, Ray King. Ray, who is a chemist by trade, purchased his own chemist shop in Cardwell. Apart from making heaps of money he seems to fill his spare time with boating, fishing, and running into crocodiles. Well Ray, computing mightn't be as healthy or exciting, but it's definitely safer!

## MAGAZINE SALE

Over the last year or so our library has aquired a considerable amount of magazines and other goodies which are surplus to our requirements. To overcome this problem we will have a special

### END - OF - YEAR - CLEARANCE - SALE

in the library area (Room S1) during the Main Meeting in December.

Bring an ample supply of 50 cent coins, because that will be the going rate for most items.

## COMPUTER EXPO 1987

This year's expo was held at the RNA exhibition centre. In previous years our group had a free stand, but this facility was not extended to us this year - in fact our committee had already decided not to participate because of staffing problems.

Commodore was conspicuous by their absence, but than so was Apple and several other well known wholesalers. The difference was that Apple was represented by at least ten dealers, and poor old Commodore by one group of dealers only, namely the United Computers group. It must be admitted though that their stand was one of the most popular stands on the show.

There wasn't all that much in the way of exciting developments. IBM clones were everywhere, but that seems to be a world wide trend. A few items that stood out included a Sony CD-ROM player and a 30cm interactive video disk. You have to be well-heeled to afford these items though.

## COMMODORE'S 1084 MONITOR

Already released is Commodore's replacement for the Amiga 1081 monitor, the model 1084. Again it offers RGB analogue & digital, as well as composite video. The big difference is that the monitor has now got standard plugs and sockets, which means that it can be used with every Commodore computer on the market. The recommended retail price is \$699, but you should be able to buy it for \$599.

## GOODS & SERVICES

PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS (C-64/128): \$3 ea (+ \$2 P & P - up to 5 Disks)  
PUBLIC DOMAIN TAPES (C-64): \$2 ea (+ \$1 Postage Per Order)  
BLANK DISKS 5,25" (DS/DD): \$10 per 10 (+ \$2 P & P) [No Libr. Case]  
RAINBOW DISKS 5,25" (SS/DD): \$18 per box of 10 (+ \$2 P & P)  
DISK BOXES (hold 90 5,25" disks) - \$18 ea (+ \$5 P & P)  
PUBL. DOM. DISKS FOR AMIGA 3,5": \$6 ea (+ \$2 P & P - up to 5 Disks)  
BLANK DISKS FOR AMIGA 3,5": \$35 per 10 (+ \$2 P & P)  
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (hold 40 disks) - \$15 ea (+ \$5 P & P)

"PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK" (for C-64): \$5 ea (+ \$1 P & P)  
"STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES" (for 1541 owners): \$2 ea (+ \$1 P & P)  
"C-128 MEMORY MAP": \$2 ea (+ \$1 P & P)  
"AMIGA DOS SUMMARY": \$3 ea (+ \$1.00 P & P)  
"AMIGA BEGINNERS GUIDE" \$2.50 ea (+ \$1 P & P)  
TURBO-ROM for C-64 or C-128: Members Price - \$40 (+ \$2 P & P) -  
Customised Version (Choice of Screen Colours + Your Name on  
Screen): \$45 (+ \$2 P & P)  
AMIGA SPECIAL PRINTER CABLE: \$25  
USER PORT PLUG (with Key Way): \$8 (+ \$1 P & P)  
USER PORT PLUG BACKSHELL: \$3 (+ \$1 P & P)  
USER PORT to CENTRONICS CABLE: \$35 (+ \$1 P & P)  
ADDRESS LABELS (23 x 89 mm): \$14 per 1000  
3,5" DISK LABELS (70 x 70 mm - rolls of 100): \$2.50 (+ \$1 P & P)  
RIBBONS for MPS-1000, GX-80, LX-80 PRINTERS: \$9 ea (+ \$1 P & P)  
RIBBONS for MPS-1200/1250, 120-D PRINTERS: \$12 ea (+ \$1 P & P)

ADDRESS all orders to P.O. Box 274 - Springwood - QLD - 4127  
Cheques to be made out to: C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.

Available for Hire to Members only: 1526 Commodore Printer  
For details contact John Van Staveren on 372 3651 (after hours)

### COMPUTER ADDITIONS

by Gary MacMinn (Ph. 848 2271 a.h.) and Philip Van Der Vliet (Ph. 848 5753 a.h.), at the Milton Workshop Meeting (see page 2).

### SERVICES OFFERED:

RESET BUTTONS: \$6.00	RESET RE-ENABLE: \$6.00
	[Tap reset switch while pushing this
DEVICE NUMBER CHANGE: \$6.00	button to reset a protected program]
C-64/128 COMPUTER SELECTION SWITCH: \$6.00	
40/80 COLUMN SELECTION SWITCH for C-128 \$10.00, for C-128D \$15.00	
TURBO ROM INSTALLATION: C-64 with Socket or C-128 \$6.00	
	C-64 without Socket or C-128D \$10.00
WRITE PROTECT SWITCHES: 6.00	WRITE ENABLE SWITCHES: \$6.00

### *The Following Items To Order Only:*

SERIAL SWITCHING BOX: \$14.00	SERIAL PORT DOUBLER: \$14.00
EXPANSION PORT PLUG: \$10.00	CAPACITANCE METER BOARDS: \$14.00
RAM CARTRIDGE - 8 KByte: \$40.00, 16 KByte: \$55.00	

## D I S K   D R I V E   P R O B L E M S

by W. Peter Gadsby

Maybe other members of the Group will be interested in some recent difficulties I have experienced with my 1541 disk drive.

In addition to the 1541, we also possess one of the "Qualitron" drives available through the Group (from Ken Charters). I might note in passing that, after a few initial problems which were fixed under warranty, we have been very impressed with the Qualitron unit.

After experiencing some read/write problems with the 1541, I tried aligning it using the CSM program, but to no avail. All else having failed (!), a brief visit to Brisbane enabled me to drop it into Parcom P/L, where Don's efficient staff performed an alignment, and checked out the unit. Got back home to Armidale and... guess what? Same old problems - specifically, the drive would not read all the tracks on the Commodore Bonus Disk (0 blocks free) during a VALIDATE.

So, back to Don's it went, where they put it through a major series of tests, the computer equivalent of the Iron Man competition. Even my Bonus Disk gave no trouble during an all-night VALIDATE test. Nothing wrong, said they, and returned the machine to me (and would not accept any payment for the further trouble - thanks Don!).

Must be something else, said I (finally). So I began by disconnecting other peripherals: the printer - no difference; the Qualitron drive - no difference; the monitor - BINGO!!! When I switched off my green screen monitor, my problems with the drive disappeared. They didn't reappear when I plugged everything else back in, until I turned on the monitor.

Evidently, radiation from the monitor had been interfering with the highly sensitive operations of the 1541's read/write head. It hadn't affected the Qualitron because that excellent unit, unlike the plastic 1541, has a sturdy metal case which shields the head from interference.

The solution to my problems? Simple - I just covered the 1541 with aluminium foil (except the cooling vents!), and to make extra sure, placed another double sheet alongside the monitor. The foil is thick enough to screen out the interference, and everything works just fine!

So the poor old 1541 wasn't really to blame at all, but it took a deal of time and trouble to find it out. Maybe there's a moral in there somewhere, but I can't think of it. At least my experience may help someone else who has problems - what could be simpler than a sheet of foil?

--ooOoo--

## GX-80 CENTRONICS INTERFACE ON THE C-64

by Keith Hadland

A year or so ago, I purchased an Epson GX-80 printer for my C64. It has been a great printer and I was very happy with it up until the time when the Riteman C+, MPS 1000 breed of printers arrived. Previously I had been quite happy to stick with the serial interface supplied with the printer, but after these new feature-packed printers were released, I found that my GX-80 paled somewhat in light of their amazing array of gimmicks.

The problem lies with the plug in Printer Interface Cartridge (PIC), which plugs into the back of the printer and has a cable leading from it for connection to the computer. The PIC for the C64/128 makes the printer fully compatible with the C64, including graphics characters etc. but it makes the printer emulate the very boring Commodore MPS 801. By using the printer keyboard, NLQ, Double Strike, Emphasised and Condensed modes can be attained, but these are not software changeable. The only other features available are Enlarged and Reverse printing by control codes, line feeds, graphics (bit image) mode and limited horizontal tabs. In short, a total of 12 software commands. Boring.

There is a solution to the problem which will give you every feature that you ever wanted such as Elite printing, Italics, Underlining and 16 vertical and 32 horizontal tabs. Your array of software commands expands to 66 and every conceivable gimmick will fall within your programming grasp. Your previously non-existent buffer will suddenly increase to 1K or so, and the world will be a much nicer place to live in.

How much will this all cost? Around \$82 for those who can wield a soldering iron, or \$101 for the not so technically adept.

How can this amazing printer transformation be achieved? Very easily, in 4 easy steps.

Step 1. Proceed to your nearest Epson dealer and fork out \$65 for a GX-80 Centronics PIC (#8620E). Do NOT tell your dealer you have a C64 or some dealers almost refuse to sell you one. Just say that you have an Apple or an IBM and your dealer will be all smiles.

Step 2. Obtain a User Port to Centronics cable.

Step 3. Plug your new PIC into your printer, the appropriate end of your new cable into your C64 User Port, the other end into the cable leading from the PIC.

Step 4. Enjoy your new printer.

The cable mentioned in Step 2 can be ordered from the User Group at a cost of \$36 (incl. P.&H.) or made up yourself for approximately \$17. Instructions for doing so are included at the end of the article.

Having parted with yet more cash for the worthy cause of computing, you now have a parallel printer and an instruction manual the same size as the one for your computer. The printer now basically does everything except make coffee but will give you a nice picture of a cup in any one of 6 eight-pin or 2 nine-pin graphics modes.

The printer no longer interferes with the disk drive in any way and the parallel interface means that data transfer from the computer to the printer is much faster. The buffer will hold about a page of text, so while the printer is finishing one document, you can be loading a new file, a new program or even turning off your computer. Actual printing speed increases as the printer already has the next line in its own memory (buffer) and does not have to pause at the end of each line and wait while the next one is sent by the computer.

Compatibility? Any program with a Centronics printer driver option will support it, which means most good word processors, including Easy Script. With Easy Script, simply choose "1" for MX-80 then "C" for Centronics. For BASIC programming, a public domain printer driver called "Printlink" is available which allows the printer to be programmed exactly the same way as a fully dedicated Commodore printer ie. OPEN 4,4 etc., (refer to your C64 Instruction Manual). Printlink is loaded and run before the BASIC program and resides out of the way in high memory.

As Centronics is an industry standard, your printer will now connect with almost any better-than-a-'64 computer, including Amigas.

#### User Port to Centronics Cable.

- You will need:
- 1 User Port plug - \$8 from User Group.
  - 1 User Port plug backshell - \$3 from User Group.
  - 1 36-way Centronics plug - about \$6 from electronic store.
  - 2 or 3 metres of 12-way ribbon cable - about \$3 from electronic store.

Using the ribbon cable, connect the bottom row of the User Port plug to the appropriate pins on the Centronics Plug. You will find tiny numbers identifying each pin on the backs of the plugs. In the C64 Instruction Manual, the bottom row of pins is labelled with letters. These letters are included in brackets after the number.

User Port Plug (bottom row) - 36 way Centronics Plug.

1(A) - 27	7(H) - 6
2(B) - 10	8(J) - 7
3(C) - 2	9(K) - 8
4(D) - 3	10(L) - 9
5(E) - 4	11(M) - 1
6(F) - 5	12(N) - 19

While this is not a difficult job, the connections at the Centronics end are a little tricky. Owing to the cheapness of the ribbon cable though, I would encourage everyone who has, or can borrow a soldering iron to have a go. If you get into a complete mess, you can always cut the wire off. Be careful not to touch the plastic of the plugs with the soldering iron, as it melts rather alarmingly on contact with the iron.

This simple process will transform your GX-80 from being a 9-pin MPS-801 into a truly top-class printer. Happy hardcopying.

[Ed. We are pleased to see once more that one of our members has found the ideal way to interface his printer with the computer, namely through the parallel port. However a warning has to be sounded at this point - to our knowledge most graphics programs which do some form of screen dump do NOT support the parallel port. Perhaps Keith could tell us in a future article how he gets on with programs like GEOS, Doodle, Printmaster, Printshop, Newsroom etc., using the parallel port.]

-ooDoo-

## A R C 6 4

by Jim Vick

This is a review of what I feel is one of the most useful 64 utilities yet released, and best of all it is Freeware and as such you can "try before you buy" and make sure it does what you want before you pay out any money.

The program is called ARC and an explanation of it is as follows:

The ARC program does a number of things. First off it inserts a wedge that gives the 64 access to IBM type commands, the most noticeable being that the drives are now referred to by letters rather than numbers. This seems a bit strange for a start but it certainly is logical and you soon get used to it. The sequence is:-

A	Device 8	Drive 0
B	Device 8	Drive 1
C	Device 9	Drive 0
D	Device 9	Drive 1

And so on up to device 11 drive 1

ARC works by using an interpreter to look at all text on the command line (The command line being the line that the cursor is on when you hit the return key). If there is nothing on the command line that ARC recognises then nothing happens and the computer continues to operate as a normal CG4. If however a sequence is on the command line that ARC recognises then that command is executed. A command consists of a series of strings separated by spaces with each string performing a specific function.

The following are a number of the more commonly used commands and a brief explanation of how they work.

DIR lists the directory on the default drive.

DIR C: Lists the directory on drive C.

To load a file or program the format:-

C:FILENAME will load the file or program called FILENAME on drive C.

To delete a File or program the format:-

DEL A:FILENAME will delete the file or program called FILENAME on drive A.

To copy a file or program from one drive to another:-

MOVE A:FILENAME C:FILENAME Copies a file or program called FILENAME from drive A to drive C.

REN A:OLD NEW will rename the program "old" to "new" on drive A.

As well as these commands the program uses all the standard wedge commands these being accessed in the usual manner with the > sign.

The second function of the program is to act as a text editor by allowing the loading of text files into memory and editing and manipulating them in a similar way to a word processor, some of the commands which are available include:-

GET A:TEST loads the text file TEST from drive A into the computers memory.

CHANGE/FROM/TO changes all occurrences of the string FROM to the string TO

FIND/STRING/ prints all lines that contain the word STRING

The third and most important function of the program is to ARC programs and text files for the most efficient storage on a disk. First off what is ARC? ARC is a system that reduces a file or program to its smallest possible size by a number of means so that it may be most efficiently stored on a disk.

An ARC file may be easily recognized by the suffix ARC, this is automatically added to the file during its creation so all ARC files will be as follows "prog-name.arc".

To give you an idea of how efficient ARC is here are a few examples of ARCING that I did myself in the course of doing this review:

85 blocks to 53 blocks: 1 ML prog, 1 Basic prog and 2 Seq files into 1 ARC file.

130 blocks to 38 blocks, a Paperclip text file.

76 blocks to 65 blocks, a full machine language program.

75 blocks to 34 blocks, a Paperclip Seq text file.

58 blocks to 46 blocks, a Basic program,

This gave a total reduction from 424 to 236 blocks or in real terms the ability to store the equivalent of close to 1200 disk blocks on a single disk with a 1541.

I guess you may ask is it worth the effort. I think for day to day use probably not, but the true worth is for storage of data that you may not need for some time, or, as we will be using it, to reduce the size of programs for posting to the bulletin board. This will have the advantage of reducing the time required to download a particular program, with the added advantage that if a program has a number of parts these can all be ARC'D into one file. This means that you are not going to have the worry that you may download a program and after going off line and trying to run the program find that one part is missing.

ARC files can be manipulated in various ways. You can ARC a whole disk, a single file or program, or a selective number of files and or programs into one ARC file. Once the ARC file has been created it can be copied in the normal manner. If you wish to see what is in an ARC file a directory of the file can be listed just like a disk directory, this directory giving file name, size before ARCING, size after ARCING and the method used in the ARC process.

To sum up a utility that can be very useful if you have a lot of programs that you may want to keep backup copies of, and if you are going to use the downloads section of the bulletin board you will certainly need to be familiar with the ARC program

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## 1 2 8   A R C   b y   A M P E R E   M E T A L

by Jim Vick

This time I will try to give an overview of ARC for the 128. The 128 version is a whole new ball game and a much more sophisticated program with a host of features not available to the 64 version.

To start off, the whole system is controlled by a program called CS DOS which is as the name suggests a complete operating system that gives a host of extra commands. The structure of this system is quite different to what we are normally used to, so a fairly detailed explanation is called for.

To use the program the first thing you do is load a DOS SHELL, this being the interpreter that examines the command line in a similar way to the 64 version and decides if the instruction is for CS DOS or not. At this point the 128 version varies from the 64 version to the greatest degree. Where 64 ARC had all the commands built in which made for a fairly large program, the 128 CS DOS has no built-in commands at all. What you have instead is small program which is called DOS SHELL and a ram disk which is created when the SHELL is first booted - all the commands that DOS

SHELL uses are kept on the ram disk. This at first seems rather cumbersome but the logic behind it is that you only need to put in the ram disk those commands which you require. In this way the ram disk can be tailored to your individual needs, also as they (Ampre Metal) add new commands it is not necessary to get a whole new program but just the new commands which are actually very small stand alone programs.

When you invoke a command the operating system goes to the ram disk gets the small program, which can be from a few bytes in length to several hundred bytes, installs it in the computer in the correct place and then runs this small program which performs the task you asked for. This happens so quickly there is no noticable delay and you do not even realize what the computer is up to. These small programs can be easily installed or removed from the ram disk at will as required, or they can be all automatically installed as the program is booted.

The present list of commands that are available via the dos shell at present number thirty eight and according to the documentation that came with the program this list will be upgraded from time to time for a very small fee to registered users.

This ram disk can be located in memory wherever required but the program will take care of that at boot up if required. To see what is in the ram disk the simple command RDIR will list the contents similar to a normal disk directory.

As with the 64 program the shell has a built in wedge to simplify disk commands and generally make life easier, the wedge using the universal greater than sign to invoke the wedge commands.

Some of the more useful of the shell commands and a brief description of what they do follows:-

ARC	Invokes all ARC functions.
CHANGE	Changes a nominated piece of text to something else.
COMP	Compares two disk files.
COPY	Copies a file or program from one drive to another.
DATE	Sets the date so that all ARC files will show when arced.
DIR	Lists a disk directory.
FIND	Locates all occurrences of a particular string.
GET	Loads a sequential file into memory for editing.
REN	Renames a file on any drive.
SCROLL	Allows you to scroll backwards and forwards through a program.

Now to the ARC program itself. 128 ARC is 100% compatible with ARC 64 so there will be no problems with programs that are arced on a different machine.

An arc file can be created in a number of different ways with each way being designed to give the maximum compression under certain conditions, but as with thoroughness typical of the program writers they have given an option that automatically analyses each file and chooses the option which will give the

maximum compression. Using this method the following are a few examples of programs that I arced myself and the results I obtained.

A Paperclip program text file from 130 blocks to 38 blocks.  
A Machine Language program from 76 blocks to 65 blocks.  
A Sequential text file from 75 blocks to 34 blocks.  
A Basic program from 58 blocks to 30 blocks.

From this it should be obvious the saving in disk space that can be made by arcing programs or files that may only be for backup purposes or as we intend to do, arc programs to be put up on the bulletin board.

I guess the next question is, how difficult is it to create an arc file and what can you do with it once you have created it. To create an arc file the syntax is:

`arc/c a:test b:*`

This will create (the c after the / stands for create) an arc file called test on drive A containing all the files on drive B.

`arc/c b:space b:space invaders`

This will create an arc file called space on drive B containing the program called space invaders also on drive B.

How do we recognise an arc file? By the suffix .arc that is automatically attached to the end of each arc file created, so the previous examples would end up as "test.arc" and "space.arc".

OK we now have our arc file what can we do with it. I will not at this stage go through all the commands in detail because of Cursor constraints on this already overlong review and as the syntax is somewhat similar to the commands to create an arc file I will just describe the options.

- 1/. We can look at the directory of an arc file the same as a disk directory except that we will get a lot more information such as the file name and type, the number of blocks before and after arcing, the method of storage and the date on which it was arced.
- 2/. We can add an individual file or program to a previously arced file.
- 3/. We can extract an individual file from an arc file.
- 4/. We can dissolve an arc file completely and end up with all the programs that we started with.
- 5/. We can transmit the file over a modem the same as any ordinary file or program except that it all happens much quicker because of the smaller size.
- 6/. And last but not least we can create SDA arc files. Or to use their full title Self Dissolving Archives. These are Arc files which have been modified by a further process after arcing to create SDA files. The advantage being that, when you download the latest and greatest program from the local BBS, you don't have to load up the arc program and dissolve the file. You just load and run it and it dissolves itself (make sure you have space on the disk to put it in its full size).

I guess I could go on and on but I think I have given enough detail to give anyone who may be interested an idea of how the program works and what it could do for them.

## GAMES COLUMN

by Daniel & Reuben Phillips & Mark Walterfang

### AN INTERVIEW

Iridis-Alpha, Attack of the Mutant Camels, Sheep in Space, Revenge of the Mutant Camels I & II, Ancipital, Mama LLama, Batalyx - just a few of the games written by Jeff 'Yak' Minter. And, this month we have for you, dear CCUG Games Column reader, an exclusive interview with the hirsute one himself!

*How and when did you get into the computer game business?*

1981 - scroungin' free ZX81 RAM packs off Dk'tronics, developed several ZX81 games and a device called the 'Graphics Rom'. Soon progressed to VIC 20 and went solo, first game 'Defenda'. First ever machine code game written in 1979, on 8k CBM PET, 5k of hand-assembled code, called 'Star Fire'.

*What utilities do you use to write your games?*

On C-64, I have used: Merlin (on an Apple II, download to '64), JCL 128 Assembler, Machine Lightning (Ace!), Ultrafont and Supersprite. On Atari ST: Devpac-st, neochrome for grafhix.

*What do you think constitutes a good game?*

Good blasting, sensible playability/design (not too diffy/not too easy, plenty of depth), plenty of animals, neat grafix, product of one programmer rather than a team, original, not an arcade conversion.

*How many different types of furry animals do you own?*

At least 150 model furry sheep/llamas/goats etc. including a 3 foot high yak. Real beasties - 2 Siamese-felines only at the moment, but goats & sheep to follow next spring & maybe llamas if I get to buy that field next door.

*I once saw a 'Frogger' game called 'Frog Run' or something. On the title screen was 'by Jeff'. To put it politely, it was pretty bad. Where you responsible for this game?*

No. The story is this: when I started Llamasoft, I worked with this guy who wanted to handle the business side of things. Trouble was, he wanted to buy in all manner of crap to sell, so we split, acrimoniously. He started a new company, and 'Frog Run'

was one of his I think. Anyway whoever released it wanted people t'think I wrote it, 'coz I already had a hit with 'Defenda'.

*What are you working on now and what have you planned for the future?*

Lightmage - the ultimate light synthesier - on the ST and Die, Filth - fast blaster on the ST, loads o'sprites & Robotron xplosions!

*Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Flat Earth Society?*

No. I have been up in Concorde, and you can see the curvature, from that height.

*What are your views on software piracy?*

Could do plenty of damage in a market where everyone has a disk drive, and a game takes a year to write - i.e. the 16 bit market.

*What are your favorite computer games (if any)?*

8-bit Star Raiders on Atari, Ancipital, Revenge (I and II), Sentinel (The), Starglider, Starwars/Empire, Stargate (arcade), Time Bandit (ST), Iridis-Alpha.

*What advice would you give to budding game writers?*

Make sure th'bastards pay you.  
Be original - don't do conversions. Try new ideas - scrolling ain't everything. Pay attention mainly to playability; make the game slick (no glitches)

*Where do you think the computer game industry is heading?*

Into a vast black hole of ennui, unless programmers start being original & give up making easy bread doing boring conversions. Companies should promote individual programmers as artists rather than corporate identities, as they currently do.

*Why the fascination with llamas? I've heard that they're always spitting on people. Is this true? Personally, I think chickens make much nicer pets.*

Llamas only spit if you are nasty to them or if they are frightened - I have travelled all over Peru & not been spat at! Llamas are physically attractive; smell nice; don't eat other animals; and are good natured & peaceful animals.

*And finally, what do you think about interviews?*

Ok. Takes time though!..... YAK!

Well, there it is - straight from the Yak's mouth.

---

### REVIEWS

#### \*\*1/2 TIGER MISSION (Kele Line)

Tiger Mission, based on the arcade game Tiger Heli, is really just another vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. Fly the chopper up the screen, blast tanks and ground installations and pick up extra weapons - nothing really sets this game aside from any other. The graphics are quite droll and the movement of the 'copter is reminiscent of those nightmares where you feel like you're moving through some nasty viscous fluid. Having to start the level from the beginning after dying is annoying. Despite all this, it is a fairly playable game.

#### \*\* AIRWOLF II (Hit Pak)

This is the sequel to Airwolf (really?!). Unfortunately it fails to improve on the original. In fact it is much worse: clumsy graphics, depressing sound and music, very little gameplay and even less to do with the TV series than it's predecessor. Fly your Superdoop-All-American-Commie-Bash-Helicopter and vapourize as much alien life as possible, all the while fighting off boredom. Too frustrating to be worthwhile.

### TIPS BIT

Here are some tips for The Pawn and The Last Ninja, both were sent in by Kingston Arthur from Loganlea, and were written on very pretty paper too.

#### The Pawn

To get past the guards and deliver the letter, show it to the guards.

To lever the boulder out of the way. Remove Jeans then fix the rake to the hoe with jeans. Then lever boulder.

To stop the Guru laughing, remove your shirt and fix it to your wristband (that should shut the ol' Egghead up for awhile).

#### The Last Ninja

Level One: First of all, go to the screen below you, kick the baddie to death and then get the sword on the next screen. Then go up and get the smoke bombs, nunchuckas, shiruken, pouch, key, and any apples. Find the dragon, stand at the far left of the path - near the first clump of boulders - select the smoke bombs,

and press fire and right, the dragon should snuff it from smoke inhalation and you will be able to enter the next level!

Level Two: Get the Claw from in front of the lions paw, and while holding nothing else except this, push Ninja-Babes towards the cliff face. To go down again, walk backwards holding only the Claw. Get the Glove, Staff, and the Ninja Magic, you can now pass the statue to Level 3.

Level Three: Get the Necklace from around the statue's neck, use the Glove to get the Rose, then stand in front of the big statue with the Talisman and pray. That's it for the first three levels, next month we'll show you how to complete it.

Thanks Kingston.

### Camelot Warriors

Reset the game then POKE 32322,169:POKE 32323,0:POKE 32324,234 to disable sprite collisions.  
POKE 23730,234:POKE 23731,234:POKE 23732,234 for infinite lives.  
To restart SYS 16384

### Dink!

Reset it then POKE 47927,169:POKE 47928,0:POKE 47929,234:SYS 16384 to make the Tom Thug sub game considerably easier.

### Dukes of Hazzard

Why is it that any game based on a movie or TV show is rarely any good?

'The Dukes of Hazzard' is a good example. For instance, it uses sprite collision detection (which is completely TWO dimensional) to detect collisions between three Dimensional objects!

Anyway, to remove these collisions, reset it, POKE 23614,169:POKE 23615,0:POKE 23616,234

POKE 23620,169:POKE 23621,0:POKE 23622,234 to render helicopter missiles harmless.

To restart the game, SYS 5298. And to hear that fantastic music, SYS 8415

This game is very faithful to the TV series (it's just as bad).

### Airwolf II

Some tips to make this game less annoying:

Reset it, POKE 29469,169:POKE 29450,0:POKE 29451,234 (if aliens can fly through mountains, so can you ...) and/or POKE 28710,234:POKE 28711,234:POKE 28712,234:POKE 29661,234:POKE 29662,234:POKE 29663,234 for permanent weapons. To restart, SYS 49469

Remember, if you have any tips or hints, send them to:

GAMES COLUMN - 11 Coultis Street, Sunnybank, Qld, 4109

B Y T E S

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FOR SALE

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C64 Original Tape Games (Some without instructions) - \$5 to \$10 ea

Contact Kingston Arthur for details or listing on 23 Kraatz Ave.,  
Loganlea, 4131, or Ph (07) 200 5613 (3pm - 7pm).

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COMPUTE! Magazines (Jan.'86 - Apr.'87) - \$15.00 the lot.

Contact Ralph De Vries on (07) 300 3477

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VIC-20 Keyboard, Powerpack, Instruction Book and Co-axial cable  
for TV, with adaptor.

Contact Cor Geels on (07) 263 2839 for further details.

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WANTED

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Lots more articles for "CURSOR" !

We don't pay well (actually no pay at all!), but you will have the  
pleasure to see your name up in lights!

Contact Ralph De Vries on (07) 300 3477 for details.

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sends

Best Wishes for Christmas  
and every day of  
the New Year

to all our Members, Advertisers and Supporters.

M A I L B O X

As you know, I own a Citizen 120D Printer. I use this for most of my print-outs, the exception being when I want to print a list with money columns, such as an inventory (using TOTL Business prg) or a list with money values (using PFS Report); then I use my MPS 803, why? --- because I can change to printing 8 lines per inch just by flipping the dip-switch at the back. I prefer these lines closer on these print-outs in spite of the funny lower case characters of the 803 and with a long inventory I save a stack of paper (read money). So the problem was, how to use the Citizen 120D to print out an inventory using the above programs and get 8 lines per inch.

Then recently I was re-reading a back issue of CURSOR (a habit of mine) and on page 23 of Vol.3 No.4 (October '86) I saw a solution to a linefeed problem with a Riteman C+ printer. I juggled the solution around and came up with an answer to my problem. Now probably most owners of a Citizen 120D already know how to do this; but in case it helps someone else, here is the solution I came up with :-

Turn on the system including the printer but before loading any program, type :-

`OPEN4,4:PRINT#4,CHR$(27);CHR$(48):CLOSE4` then press <RETURN>

Now load your program and the printer will space at 8 lines per inch. Don't forget to specify 88 lines per page instead of the usual default of 66. When the printer is turned OFF the above command is lost. I think this command would work with most programs such as SUPERBASE. The same method could be used to cancel the slash on zero's or space the lines at other intervals per inch etc.

In passing, I'd just like to mention that my friend and tutor, Norm Chambers, has helped me very much to progress from being a computer illiterate with a datasette to someone who enjoys disk drive computing just for the fun of it. Thanks Norm. I read and re-read the CURSOR and look forward to receiving it each month, it's the best magazine I get. Congratulations to all responsible.

Len Heffernan (Macgregor)

Many thanks for your useful tip Len. It does give you a good feeling when you figure those little tricks out, doesn't it?

This tip can be equally helpful to owners of other printers which use the Epson control codes, such as the Riteman, MPS 1200, and several others as well.

Thanks for your kind words about our newsletter. Let's hope that we can keep up the standard.

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The efforts of the committee, sub-committees and many helpers are often overlooked and rarely rewarded. They work long and hard to provide the facilities and services so many of us 'ordinary' members TAKE FOR GRANTED.

On page 6 of the October *CURSOR* an item appeared regarding sub-groups. It is not the first I have heard of this problem and it seems to be a continuous trend. In just a few short years the club has attracted a large membership and set a standard for other clubs to follow. However to preserve this standard the club must continue to build upon its foundation.

It is in this area that I feel the sub-groups have a vitally important part to play. From observation I know that there are far more Commodore users in the community than in the club. I feel that it is these people that should be wooed to the sub-groups.

As an 'ordinary' member I offer the following suggestions for consideration when the subject is next discussed.

1. Encourage new membership at sub-group meetings, By making the sub-groups the 'front door' of the club, many of the new recruits would stay at this level.

2. Perhaps some limited form of advertising aimed at students, parents and others to attend their local sub-group for a FREE look. (Maybe an open day. I'm sure a few members would love to show what they can do.)

By using these ideas it would also provide additional revenue for the club without much extra burden to the main meeting activities (e.g. the library)

It is at the grass roots level that the club must work because if the sub-groups 'dry up' so do a lot of membership renewals also.

Les Taylor (Alexandra Hills)

Thanks for your valuable suggestions, Les. No doubt you have read our comments on sub-groups in the Nov. newsletter, so I won't go over the same ground again. At our recent meeting of sub-group coordinators a suggestion was made that coordinators make more use of the weekly 'freeby' suburban newspapers to advertise the services of their groups - a very valuable suggestion indeed, and it does not cost us anything!

Mind you, the idea of attracting ALL Commodore owners to our group is rather frightening! Imagine a group with 7500 members instead of 750! I think that the present management committee would resign en masse, unless they were appointed as full-time salaried office bearers! However I don't think this is very likely to happen - as another example no more than 1% of all camera owners belong to a camera club. Still, it's a rather intriguing prospect is not it!

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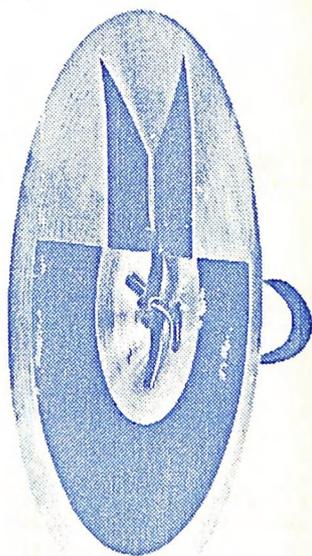
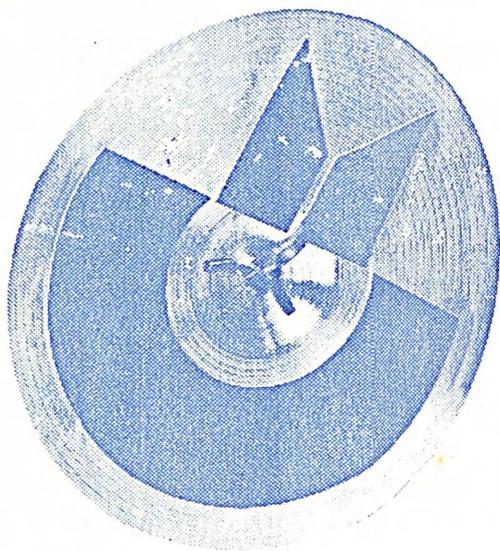
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