

CURSOR

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

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MEETINGS - WHERE & WHEN

MAIN MEETING: Tuesday 2nd Feb. 1988 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.

*** An Introduction to our New Bulletin Board ***
*** C-64 / C-128: Examining our Needs ***
*** Amiga: WordPerfect Demonstration ***

C-64 & C-128 WORKSHOP: Sunday 14th Feb. 1988 (1pm - 5pm) in the
Guidance Officers 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 14th Feb. 1988 (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.

CAFALABA 3rd Sat. of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba State
Prim. School (Redl. Educ. Centre) Ph. David Adams - 3968501 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 Gracev. State School
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 Hobbs - 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 - 207 3065 a.h.

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

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

WE NEED YOU!

1988 Will be a year of considerable change in the Commodore community and within our group.

On the one hand we will see a steady increase in new C-64 owners who will have joined our ranks to learn more about their computers, and on the other hand we will see an increasing number of C-64 and C-128 owners who are exchanging their computers for Amigas.

What this means is that quite a few regular contributors to this C-64/C-128 edition will no longer be writing articles for us; they will have their hands full getting to know their new computers.

This then is a plea to those C-64 and C-128 owners of some experience to come forward and start writing articles for this edition. They don't necessarily have to be very erudite or technical articles - remember that a lot of newly joined members are in need of very basic information.

What we are looking for are articles on every aspect of 8-bit computing. Some of the subjects that come to mind include:-

- Use and Maintenance of the Datasette.
- Disk Drives - Operation, Maintenance, Fast loading etc.
- Printers - Commodore-ready or separately interfaced.
- Basic Programming
- Word Processing - Spread Sheets - Data Base Programs
- GEOS
- Tele-Communications
- Upgrading your computer
- TV's and Monitors
- Etc. etc.

We know that there's enough talent out there, it's only a matter of overcoming your inferiority complex or shyness and put pen to paper or load up your favourite word processor and start writing; yes, it's as simple as that!

It would be a great pity if the supply of articles for the C-64 and C-128 edition dries up. Currently I am receiving more material for the Amiga edition, and if this trend continues we will revert back to a single edition in the middle of 1988, which will be mainly Amiga orientated with SOME C-64/C-128 articles. This would make my job as editor a lot easier, but you, the readers of this edition, would be the losers. The solution is in your hands!

In this issue I've used up quite a bit of space describing Commodore's new 1581 3,5" disk drive, which must surely be one of the best C64/C128 add-ons released for some years. Yet, it seems that CBM is very reluctant to release this drive in Australia. Perhaps some pressure from our members may help?

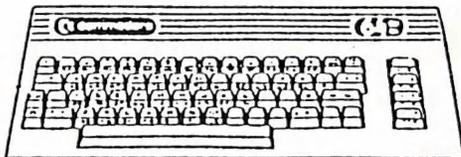
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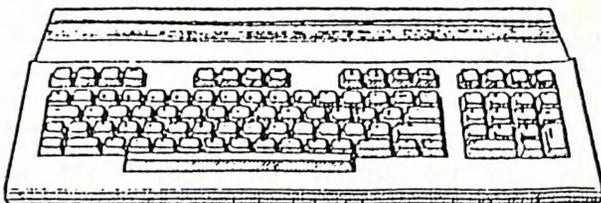
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BLANK DISKS FOR AMIGA 3,5": \$30 per 10 (+ \$2 Postage.)
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (hold 40 disks) - \$15 ea (+ \$5 Post.)
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (hold 80 disks) - \$20 ea (+ \$5 Post.)

"PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK" (for C64): \$5 (+ \$1 Postage.)
"STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES" (1541 owners): \$2 (+\$1 Postage.)
"C-128 MEMORY MAP": \$2 (+\$1 Postage.)
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"AMIGA BEGINNERS GUIDE" \$2.50 (+ \$1 Postage.)
TURBO-ROM for C-64 or C-128: Members Price: \$40 (+ \$2 Postage.)
Customised Version (Choice of Screen Colours + Your Name on Screen): \$45 (+ \$2 Postage.)
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For details contact John Van Staveren on 372 3651 (a.h)

COMPUTER ADDITIONS

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

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C-64 without Socket or C-128D \$10.00.
WRITE PROTECT SWITCHES: 6.00 WRITE ENABLE SWITCHES: \$6.00

The Following Items made up to Special Order Only:

SERIAL SWITCHING BOX: \$14.00 SERIAL PORT DOUBLER: \$14.00
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RAM CARTRIDGE 8 KByte: \$40.00, 16 KByte: \$55.00.

OUR NEW BULLETIN BOARD

by Jim Vick

This is by way of an introduction to our new bulletin board program or BBS as it is commonly known. Well we have been on line since about mid December and I am pleased to be able to report that, apart from two crashes that I caused myself in learning to use the BBS by remote control while Greg Shea, our new Sysop, was on holidays, the board has not been off line at all and has had no software failures of any kind (fingers crossed etc.!).

This BBS is somewhat more complicated to use than the old system that we had, but it does a lot more and I find it a much more satisfying system to interact with, as it gives the user a lot more control rather than just being a button pusher that was led by the hand in a series of very simple steps such as the KBBS program did.

OK, what are the main advantages that this program (Punter protocol) has over the old KBBS program? Well, apart from the fact that it does not keep falling over all the time and causing the Sysop to have sleepless nights I guess the biggest single thing is the ability to send and receive messages from the other Punter Nodes (Node being the term used to describe the other bulletin boards that are members of a network). At present we have eight Nodes spread from Albury to Townsville. This means that the ordinary user can log on to the local board and leave a message which will in most cases be sent that night to the node to which it is addressed. In theory a message posted before midnight should be available for reading by your friend the next morning. All this at a cost of about fifteen cents. That's cheaper and quicker than a letter!

The system is such that if mail is in the system ready to be sent, the BBS automatically rings up the required Node at any time from about midnight onwards and sends the message which is then posted up on the appropriate mail board for the receiver to read.

To have access to this facility you should contact the Sysop and make arrangements for getting money to him so that he can give you credit on the system. Unfortunately it must be cash in advance and with a message cost at 15 to 20 cents I guess \$5 in kitty would be a fair amount, although the actual figure could be as much as you like.

The system we are using is what is known as a semi closed system - this means that to gain access one has to log on and leave one's name and address. Next time the Sysop logs on he checks a special file for new user. If the new user is a member of the User group he or she is admitted to the system and given full user status, if he or she is not a member of the user group they are deleted from the file and denied access. In this way we can ensure that only members of our User group have access to club facilities.

Apart from this the system is fairly standard in the facilities it provides, e.g.:

- Send and receive messages.
- Upload and download programs.
- Get a log of other users.
- Read bulletins.
- Re-post messages sent to you.
- Etc. Etc.

I will not go into the command structure at this stage as that is not the intention of this missive, but for those who find difficulty in navigating the system we have prepared a booklet that gives a full list of instructions. This will be on sale at the next club meeting and I would recommend its purchase if you intend to use the board on a regular basis.

For further information contact either Greg Shea or myself but the easiest way is to log on, leave your name and address as requested and become a member. Note you MUST leave your correct name for two reasons, namely:

- 1/. We have to be able to find you in the club member list.
- 2/. The board will not be allowing aliases, nick names etc.

The board can operate at the following Baud rates: 300/300, 1200/75 and 1200/1200, which should cater for most users, so in closing I guess all I can say is: *log on and become a member!*

Our New BBS Phone number is (07) 344 1833

RANDOM BITS

MAIN MEETING (DEC 1)

Despite the rather inclement weather the last meeting for 1987 was probably attended by more members than ever, and we are sure that they weren't sorry that they came.

In 1986 the Amiga S.I.G. ran a Deluxe Paint demo by Peter Wharton, and we asked Peter to repeat his lecture for all our members. This time however a few things had changed. First we were able to use the projection video system with the Amiga, and Peter Wharton was now using DPaint II instead of the original DPaint program.

Most members who attended would agree that this lecture was by far the best and most interesting lecture for 1987. Peter Wharton's skill in showing off the many features of this program held the huge audience spellbound. We should imagine that quite a few 8-bit owners decided there and then to make the change to the Amiga.

And if this wasn't enough "Hardware Harvey" Riddle gave us another Amiga demo in which he digitized several excerpts from compact discs and played them back through Ami. The quality certainly left nothing to be desired.

So, in one evening both video and sound on the Amiga were shown off to their best advantage.

MILTON WORKSHOP - IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Please note that as from the February '88 meeting the Milton Workshop will always be held on the SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH!

POCKETWRITER 128

Because of a particular lethal form of copy protection which was the cause of frequent crashes, coupled with problems in obtaining replacement copies, the library staff has reluctantly decided to withdraw Pocketwriter 128 from circulation.

Despite the fact that this program has been very well received we urge caution to intending purchasers of this program, as it is very difficult to obtain replacement copies in case of a crash.

SUPERBASE NEWS

Precision Software has released V.3 of SuperBase 128. This version will allow EXPORTing to another drive. At the time of writing Precision Software does not appear to have representation in Australia. Updates would have to be ordered from the UK.

Our "very special Canberra correspondent" Paul Blair contributed a 10 page article to the Sep/Oct '87 issue of the ICPUG newsletter on direct data reading in Superbase 64 & 128. A copy of the ICPUG newsletter is in our Library.

A RIDDLE

Did Beethoven own an Amiga? Too right he did! After all he wrote his 1st symphony in 'C'!

1988 DIARY

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a listing of our main meeting dates for 1988. NOTE that the March and May meetings are NOT held on the customary 1st Tuesday of the month! Make a note now, so that you won't turn up on the wrong night, as several members did last year to their chagrin.

BASIC PROGRAMMING COURSES AT THE ITHACA T.A.F.E.

Although this notice probably won't reach you in time for the start of these programming courses, we give you details here:

The courses are conducted at the Ithaca T.A.F.E. and consist of 17 weekly evening sessions running from 6 pm. - 9 pm. Total course fees are a measly \$5.00, and the courses are run by Greg Perry and Jim Vick, using C-64 computers.

There is a BASIC 1 COURSE for beginners - this one is conducted on either Monday or Wednesday nights, starting on Monday 18th Jan. and Wednesday 20th Jan.

A BASIC 2 COURSE for those people who have completed the BASIC 1 course successfully is run on Thursday nights, starting on Thursday 21st Jan.

Ring Greg Perry on 366 3295 (10 am - 4 pm) for further details.

TeleColumn

PunterNet

By Geoffrey Welch, Toronto, Ontario

Most Transactor readers will be familiar with the name Steve Punter. Since he wrote his first BBS (Bulletin Board System) program years ago, 'the Punter BBS program' has gained recognition as the most polished BBS program available for the Commodore 64. However, the one thing that Commodore-based BBSes lacked that was available for larger computers was the ability to 'network', to have messages transferred from one BBS to another. Although networking had been discussed several times before and methods of doing it had been thought of, no one had actually produced a working network. Steve Punter, seeing that the interest in networking had left the stages of theoretical discussion and was nearing the experimentation stage, worked out his own solution and put it into testing with six boards in the Toronto area starting in the fall of 1985. The system proved reliable and, in March of 1986, was made available to the general public. I was the first to sign up and have been operating 'Node 7' ever since.

From the beginning, the system has been 'a hit'. As I type this, 89 boards have registered to join the network - about a third the number of BBS programs Punter has sold - and about 60 are active. PunterNet users can send mail from Halifax in the east to Hawaii in the west, south to Miami, and off-shore to Bermuda, in some cases for less than the cost of a stamp! Many of the active boards are in the Toronto area, and Toronto users take advantage of this to participate actively on several boards while only having to sign on to one.

The BBS program itself didn't look different. The first thing an unsuspecting user saw were messages from people whose first names started with a number and a slash. "1/Steve Punter" and "7/Geoffrey Welch" didn't exactly look like names a loving parent would give their children. . . those inspired enough to read bulletins knew, though, that this was simply how the BBS indicated that the message had come from another board. The number before the slash told you which 'node' the message came from so that, when you replied to the message, the BBS could make sure the message was routed through the correct board and arrive in the recipient's mailbox.

For instance, if Steve Punter wanted to send me a message on my board, he would tell his board to send the message to "7/Geoffrey Welch" and, after midnight that night, his board would call node 7 (my board). When it got through, it transferred the message and the message would appear on my board as having come from "1/Steve Punter". Since our boards are within local (free) calling distance, the board will deliver the message the same night. Obviously this could prove expensive if the destination was long-distance, so the program offers the message sender two options for long-distance messages: regular and fast delivery. Regular delivery keeps messages going to a given destination in a file until there are four messages going to the same place (so the cost of the call is distributed over the four messages) or until the message is four days old (to make sure that the message doesn't sit and wait forever

before it's sent). If the message is important and must go through immediately, the sender can designate the message for fast delivery, which means that the board will not wait for the four messages or four days, but send it immediately. For this luxury, the sender pays double the normal cost of sending the message.

That, of course, brings up the cost of sending the message to begin with. If your node is within local dialing distance of another, it doesn't cost anything to send a message to a user there, so SYSOPs (SYStem OPerators) usually let users send messages to local nodes free. But contacting most boards requires a long-distance call, and that costs money. Fortunately, the network calls are all made while the telephone company offers the highest discounts. Still, the call costs money and the SYSOP must pass on that cost to his/her users, and the BBS program has a built-in accounting system to handle this. Only users with money in their account may send messages to long distance destinations, and the program automatically calculates the cost of a message (based on the length of the message and a minimum charge) and deducts that from the user's account. The exact charges are completely up to the SYSOP, so they vary from board to board.

Further savings are possible using 'pathways'. For instance, there are over a dozen network nodes in the Toronto area. Why should a California (or, for that matter, Hawaii) node call each of these separately, when they are all a free call away from each other? The pathway concept allows SYSOPs to route messages to nodes other than their actual destinations, so that all messages to the Toronto area can be sent in a phone call to one node, and the Toronto node would then distribute the messages to their destinations. Although this is most effective in Toronto, where a single call can distribute messages to nearly twenty boards, there are other areas where two or three nodes can call each other free of charge. Naturally, only boards with storage space to spare can handle the heavier loads that result from using them as pathways, but the concept works well.

But how does any node (and its users) know what other nodes are on the network? This is accomplished by two files - "NetUpdate" and "NODES". The first is a file containing the latest list of nodes and the information about them: their telephone number, their speed (300 or 1200 baud), if they are temporarily down, etc. The NetUpdate file is kept up to date by Steve Punter at PunterNet 'headquarters' here in Toronto and is automatically fetched by any board that sends a message to node 1 (or, if the caller is using a pathway to get to node 1, whenever it passes a message to the board it designated as the pathway to node 1). The second file, NODES, is just a bulletin that the board fetches along with the NetUpdate file. If the SYSOP has told it to do so. Users can see the NODES file by entering the bulletin section and typing NODES.

Thanks to PunterNet, I keep in touch with a friend in Kitchener, Ontario, and people in Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Montreal, Allentown, Vancouver. . . people I would never had heard of if it weren't for PunterNet. And it only costs me a couple of dollars a month!

UNDERSTANDING COMPUTER TERMS

From the November 1987 edition of "CONNECTION" - newsletter of the CHRISTCHURCH COMMODORE USERS' GROUP Inc. New Zealand.

Byte - short for "buy it". Refers to how many peripherals you'll have to purchase to support a computer (e.g. there are 8 "buy it", 16 "buy it", or 64 "buy it" computers).

Carriage return - what you do if you decide not to keep the kid.

Cold boot - what a programmer puts on feet in winter.

Computer science - the fastest growing voodoo art course in universities today.

Down - said of a computer made of feathers: "that computer is down."

Dump - the best place for computers.

Electronic mail - Post Office jargon for anything delivered in less than a week.

Expansion slots - the extra holes in your belt.

Floppy disk - serious curvature of the spine.

Friendly - said of anything associated with computers that is difficult to understand or does not work the way it says it will.

Intelligent - a hypothetical term used in computing.

Interpreter - the person you take with you to the computer store to help you understand what the salesman is talking about; usually a twelve-year-old.

Keypad - an apartment with a lock.

Keyword - "your place or mine?"

Light pen - a minimum sentence prison.

Line feed - "I've never met anyone as interesting as you before," etc. etc.

Menu - an itemised list of ways to make a mistake on a computer.

Multi-processing - to cook statistics more than once.

Network - what fisherman do when not fishing.

Output device - a word processor who can't say "no!"

Peripheral - anything that costs a lot of money that can remotely be associated with computers.

Program - a random accumulation of bugs.

Program counter - a parent who limits how much TV you watch.

RAM - where most of the bugs are kept.

ROM - where you put all the bugs that won't fit in the RAM

Routine - a program that never works the same way twice.

Silicon - a foolish prisoner.

Skew - interface between consenting computers.

Skew failure - premature calculation.

Software - what hackers wear under their hardware.

Terminal intelligence - to be so smart it kills you.

Time sharing - what you do when only one of you has a watch.

Variable - anything with a fixed value you thought would change.

Word processing - to change the meaning of words, e.g. to make the simplest communication completely unintelligible.

Work station - a desk with a dumb terminal sitting at a computer.

Zap - the ultimate bug killer.

Hooray! You've mastered the lingo! Now, just remember:

Those who can, compute.

Those who cannot, program.

Those who can't program, write manuals.

Those who can't write manuals, sell computers!

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POOR FELLOW NON-MEMBER

by Cor Geels

I sometimes wonder what I would be doing in my spare time if I had not bought a C64 some two and a half years ago. And then... what would I be doing with my computer now, if I had not joined the COMMODORE COMPUTER USER'S GROUP some three months later.

Meeting and talking to so many helpful people with such different levels of computing experience has helped a lot in my enjoying this unique equipment.

And there is more to it than talking and learning only... take what happened to me just last week when I had that nasty experience with my disk drive.

One evening I was in the process of loading a program from the disk directory when I heard a terrifying clatter coming from the 1541, with the red light flashing, and then that fatal message 'FILE NOT FOUND'. Of course I tried a few more times (I even turned the drive upside down, listening for something loose to rattle), but when I thought it was going to be a repair job I wrote the happenings on an adhesive label to assist with the diagnosis, stuck it on the drive and went to bed.

The next morning I looked at my, up until now, faithful 1541, but the label was still stuck to it.

Now I started to remember some of my WAVELL HEIGHTS SUB-GROUP friends having mentioned in the past that they had 'attempted' to re-align the 'heads' with varying degrees of success. I also remembered that one club member recently mentioned that he thought his disk drive only needed some re-alignment but had to pay \$ 75.00 to pick it up after repairs. Being in the privileged position of belonging to the C.C.U.G. (Q) and thus being aware of those things I phoned a few friends to ask who had actually ever 'fiddled' with their 1541 or if they had any suggestions.

"Try first formatting a disk, then 'Initialize' the system and then run the 'INPUT A\$,B\$' test", was the advice.

And here I had thought all along that surgical instruments like screwdrivers and hammers would be required! Well, the suggestion worked like a charm and once again I thought: "the poor fellow who is not a member of our group does not know what he is missing."

P.S. My next task will be the creation of a "TIPS & HINTS" register, compiled from past issues of "CURSOR".

WATCH THIS SPACE!

-oo0oo-

MORE ON THE GX-80 INTERFACE

by Keith Hadland

In reply to Ralph's question as to whether certain software will support the GX-80 Centronics linkup, (refer CURSOR Vol.4, No.5 - December 1987), I can only confirm his suspicions that Doodle, Printmaster, Printshop and Newsroom do NOT support the parallel interface. GEOS I am not sure about but from what I have seen of it, GEOS does seem to have quite a large array of printer drivers.

The solution to the above mentioned problem is quite simple however. All one has to do is unplug the new Centronics cartridge from the back of the printer and plug in the old one again. This solution applies to any compatibility problems which may arise. A convenient analogy is that of switching back to your old Kernal ROM when a program fails to load with Turbo-ROM. Just one thing to be careful of. If you are swapping between the two cartridges, do not forget to unplug the cord from your old Commodore cartridge from the back of the disk drive, as leaving it attached to the serial bus without being plugged in to the printer as well will affect the operation of the disk drive rather adversely.

FROM THE LIBRARY

Items borrowed at one meeting MUST be returned at the next meeting. If you cannot attend a meeting to return these items, please post the items BEFORE the meeting to our Group's address:-
The Librarian, C. C. U. G. (Q.) Inc.
P.O. Box 274, Springwood, Q'ld, 4127.

Should you prefer to deliver the items BEFORE the meeting please telephone a member of the Management Committee or Librarian (telephone numbers are listed on the inside back page of "CURSOR") for information regarding an address in this respect.

In order that waiting for particular items of software, to be returned to the Library, should be less time consuming for would-be borrowers, a system of limited reservations will be tried out as from our February meeting.

From 7 pm to 7.30 pm, the first member requesting the reservation of a particular item of software will have that item, when it is returned, reserved for her/him until 7.45 pm, by which time it must be collected. All reservations not collected by 7.45 pm will be put into general circulation.

Reservations will not be carried forward from one meeting to the next and, for the time being, unless there are special circumstances, reservations will be limited to ONE item only per evening for each member.

The opportunity is also taken to remind members borrowing software that the packages concerned should be checked by borrowers before leaving the Library to ensure that the items listed on the outside are, in fact, enclosed - and please advise the Library of any software that appears to be faulty.

SCREEN SCROLLER

by Dennis Wright

Here's a short and tidy screen scroller that can easily be incorporated into other programs or used by itself simply as a message display vehicle. The program is structured so that you can vary the speed of individual lines if you want to.

```
1 REM ** SCREEN SCROLLER **
2 REM ** BY DENIS WRIGHT **
5 POKE53280,0:POKE53281,0:GOTO500
10 A$="MESSAGE 1":RETURN
20 A$="MESSAGE 2":RETURN
30 A$="MESSAGE 3":RETURN
40 A$="MESSAGE 4":RETURN
50 A$="MESSAGE 5":RETURN
500 PRINT"(CLR)":PRINT"(CRSR DOWN) (CTRL9) (CTRL3) (8 SPACES)
(24 COMM @) (7 SPACES) (CTRL0)"
510 PRINT"(CTRL9) (8 SPACES) (CTRL0) (24 SPACES) (CTRL9)
(7 SPACES) (CTRL0)"
520 PRINT"(CTRL9) (39 SPACES) (CTRL0)"
530 GOSUB10:DEL=50:WD=24: D$="(HOME) (3 CRSR DOWN)
(8 CRSR RIGHT)":PRINT"(CTRL 6) (HOME)":GOSUB620:GOTO720
620 L$="(4 CRSR RIGHT)":A$=L$+L$+L$+L$+L$+A$+"(SPACE)"
630 FORI=1TOLEN(A$)
640 PRINTD$;MID$(A$,I,WD);CHR$(145)
650 FORJ=1TODEL:NEXTJ,I:RETURN
720 GOSUB20:GOSUB620
730 GOSUB30:GOSUB620
740 GOSUB40:GOSUB620
750 GOSUB50:GOSUB620
1000 RUN530
```

EXPLANATION OF LINES

Line 5

Sets screen colours to black. If you want LOWER CASE printing, then put PRINT CHR\$(14): before the first POKE.

Lines 10-50

These are where you place your messages.

The best way to do this is to position the cursor on the M in MESSAGE in each line and hold down the SHIFT and DEL keys to insert as much space as you want. It will work best with one complete sentence to a message line.

You can add any number of lines (60, 70, 80, etc.) in the same way, providing that you always end them with a :RETURN (or, if you need a couple more spaces, create an extra line with the RETURN on it).

Lines 500-530

Sets up the scroll graphics framework. These lines are not essential to the scroll effect but look quite good.

Just in case it's unclear, 24 COMM @ means 24 presses of the @ key with the Commodore key held down.

Lines 530-650

These create the scroll. If you want to vary the speed of the entire scroll, or the text width, alter the DEL and WD values in LINE 530. The smaller the value for DEL, the faster the scroll. If you want variable speed scrolling, then the easiest way is to add :DEL=xx (where xx is the numerical value you want) to the GOSUB at the end immediately before its equivalent in the message line. If, for example, you want Message 4 in LINE 40 to go faster, then add :DEL=25 to LINE 730. (You'd have to add :DEL=50 to LINE 740 to restore the original speed.)

LINES 720-750

You need an extra one of these for every extra line of text you add at the top. (720 corresponds to 20, 750 corresponds to 50, etc.) So if you add another line - line 60 at the start, then add LINE 760 thus:

```
760 GOSUB60:GOSUB620
```

I've deliberately numbered the lines in this way for quick line copying and alteration.

Incidentally, if you combine it with screens prepared with Compute!'s Gazette ANIMATOR 64 program (Issue 52, Vol 5, No. 10, October 1987, p.86), or SNAPSHOT (Issue 32, Vol 4, No. 2, February 1986, p. 78) you can make a very interesting and lively animation for display purposes.

That's it! I hope '88 scrolls along well for you.

-ooOoo-

THE 1581 DISK DRIVE

by Ralph De Vries

This article contains information which I obtained mainly from the Canadian "TRANSACTION" magazine (Nov.'87, author M. Garamszeghy) - in fact the two tables which I have reproduced herewith have been taken over from this particular article.

At the time of writing (late Dec.'87) a spokesman at CBM told me that he had no information about a forthcoming Australian release.

However we feel that the specifications of this drive are of sufficient interest to warrant this article.

About Disk Formats

Most of our members will be aware that the so-called 'floppy' disks come in several sizes. By far the most popular size is the 5,25" size used in the majority of micro computers. An earlier format was/is the 8" disk which is still used quite extensively on larger and/or older systems.

Some years ago several disk drive manufacturers started to look at reducing the size of disks even further but without sacrificing the quantity of information the disk would hold. For some time it was a toss-up if the standard format was going to be 3" or 3,5", but the 3,5" disk won out (the Sony design). It can now be found on the Macintosh, the Atari ST, the AMIGA and also on the latest models of the IBM's. With the exception of the cheapest model of the ST they all use the double sided format and have a capacity varying between 700 and 800 K - this latter figure is for the Amiga drives. When these disks were first released the Aust. retail price was close to \$100 for 10 disks, but when our group started selling these disks in 1986 we were selling them for \$50 and currently they are down to \$30 - quite a dramatic decrease in price and we can expect further decreases with increased demand. In round figures we can say that they cost three times as much as 5,25" disks.

Specifications

So what do you get for this extra expenditure? Well, the 3,5" disk has more than twice the capacity of a 1571 disk and roughly five times the capacity of a 1541 disk! Being made out of a rigid plastic case they are easier to transport and less likely to bend!

Male users can put them in their shirt pockets and no doubt female users can find an equally convenient place to carry them around!

The vastly increased storage space should make them ideal for those situations where large quantities of data have to be stored. Non-protected programs can also be transferred to these disks. As an example PaperClip users can now put their program and dictionary disks on one disk with space to spare. You will find full details of the disk capacity in Table 1.

The important difference is that the new 1581 drive is both smaller and FASTER than either the 1571 or the 1541 drive. Table 2 gives full details of read- and write times of both the new drive and the older Commodore drives.

Note that 64 users have a new Zap Load command which loads a program approx. three times faster than the normal load command. On average a 1541 user will find the 1581 is 1,5 times the speed of the 1541 drive. 1571 users will also find that the new drive gives them a similar speed increase.

Physically the 1581 drive looks similar to the Amiga's 1010 drives. (No, they are NOT compatible!) The power supply is external which means that the drives remain cool.

Table 1: 1581 Technical Specifications

Total formatted capacity 808,960 bytes	
Number of directory entries 296 (each directory partition)	
Maximum SEQ file size 802,640 bytes	
Maximum REL file size 800,000 bytes (approx)	
Max. records per REL file 65,535	
Number of DOS RAM buffers 9 (7 I/O + 2 reserved for BAM)	
Track cache buffer 5 K bytes	
Recording format MFM (IBM system 34)	
Physical Disk Organization: (as seen on the disk)	
Number of sides	2 (numbered 0 and 1)
Number of tracks per side	80 (numbered 0 to 79)
Number of sectors per track	10 (numbered 1 to 10)
Number of bytes per sector	512
Logical Disk Organization: (as seen by DOS)	
Number of sides	1
Number of tracks	80 (numbered 1 to 80)
Number of sectors per track	40 (numbered 0 to 39)
Number of bytes per sector	256
Number of blocks free	3160
Notes:	
All logical to physical conversions are done automatically by DOS	
Each physical sector is subdivided into 2 logical sectors	
Each logical sector begins with the track and sector pointer to the next logical sector, as per normal CBM DOS.)	
Chips:	
Microprocessor	6502 A
I/O Interface	8520 A
32 K bytes ROM	23256
8 K bytes RAM	4364
Disk controller	WD 1772
Physical Dimensions:	
Height	63 mm
Width	140 mm
Depth	230 mm
Weight	1.4 kg
External Power Supply:	
North America	100-120 VAC, 60 Hz, 10 W
Europe	220-240 VAC, 50 Hz, 10 W

Table 2: Summary of Disk Drive Test Speeds

Operation	Disk Drive / Computer			
	1541/64	1571/128	1581/128	1581/64
FORMAT disk	80	40	100	100
LOAD short	4.5	1.5	0.4	3.5
LOAD long	93	11.5	6.4	75
ZAP LOAD long				30
Burst LOAD short		0.4	0.4	
Burst LOAD long		10.4	5.3	
SAVE short	6.5	5.7	2.1	4.5
SAVE long	100	71	31.5	52
WRITE SEQ file	9.3	7.8	5.7	6.8
READ SEQ file	8.1	4.6	3.8	7.3
WRITE REL file	155	109	57.3	89.5
READ REL file	80	77	32.3	37.5

Notes:

- 1) All times are in seconds and were obtained using the CIA #2 TOD clock as a timer. The times you get may vary depending on disk usage (i.e. if the files are stored contiguously or not, and how far the head has to move to access the files).
- 2) The short program is 5 blocks in size and the long is 146 blocks.
- 3) ZAPLOAD 64 is a fast loader for the C-64 and 1581 which is supplied on the 1581 demo disk. It takes 6 seconds to load.
- 4) The SEQ file consists of 100 strings of 24 characters each. File reads and writes are via BASIC's INPUT* and PRINT* statements in a FOR-NEXT loop.
- 5) The REL file consists of 100 records of 64 bytes long each. Records are read and written in BASIC in pseudo-random order (100, 1, 98, 3, . . . , 99, 2) designed to maximize record searching. Record positioning commands given twice for each record. The write speeds include initial creation of a 64 byte x 100 record file.

1581 DOS

The 1581 disk operating system supports all of the standard DOS commands of other CBM drives. Supposedly the notorious Save & Replace Bug, as well as the Relative File Bugs have finally been laid to rest - amen! Burst mode is supported for the C-128. There are some new memory read and write commands as well, a full description of which can be found in the previously mentioned issue of TRANSACTOR magazine.

The 1581 supports subdirectories, or more accurately, disk partitioning, with each partition having its own BAM and directory. Each partition can have up to 296 file entries. However each partition used as a subdirectory requires 40 blocks of overhead for this additional BAM/directory track.

Another major departure is that this drive uses the IBM System 34 MFM recording format instead of Commodore's 4 for 5 GCR encoding system. (Perhaps one fine day our Canberra correspondent Paul Blair might write an article explaining in simple terms - if that's possible - the different disk recording formats. Are you listening Paul?). In theory this means that you can read and write to other disk types like 3.5" MS-DOS or Atari ST disks. In practice somebody would have to write a conversion program to allow you to do this, but it is certainly a decided possibility.

In Table 1 you will see some mention of the Physical Disk Organisation as well as the so-called Logical Disk Organisation. This was apparently done to retain some degree of compatibility with earlier DOSes. This is all rather confusing as there isn't a great deal of similarity between the new and old system. Basically there are two logical disk sectors to one physical sector.

The root or main directory is on logical track 40 (physical track 39). The directory header is logical sector 0, BAM for logical tracks 1 to 40 is in logical sector 1 and BAM for logical tracks 41 to 80 is in logical sector 2. The directory proper starts in logical sector 3 and uses the rest of the track. The format for partition directories is identical, except that the BAM is only local for the specific partition.

AVAILABILITY & PRICE

As I mentioned in the beginning of this article CBM's spokesman was unable to tell me if they intend to release this drive here, which probably means NO. In the USA this drive sells for slightly less than a 1571 drive, so cost cannot be a major factor. Although the advantages of owning one of these drives may not be quite so substantial for a C-128 owner, I feel that C-64 owners who want to store a lot of information will find that this drive is a tremendous improvement over the slow, low-capacity 1541 drive, plus the fact of NO save- and replace buy and better relative file access.

To some extent I can understand CBM's reluctance in releasing items like C-64 memory expansion cartridges (too expensive in relation to the price of the computer), but I feel that if they don't release the 1581 drive in Australia they are making a wrong marketing decision.

If, after reading this, you are of the same opinion, drop a line to Tony Serra, the managing director of CBM in Australia, and ask Commodore to release this drive in Australia. If enough requests land on their door step they may well change their mind.

-oo0oo-

MAIN MEETINGS 1988

Tuesday 2nd February 1988	-
Monday 7th March 1988*	-
Tuesday 5th April 1988	-
Tuesday 10th May 1988*	-
Tuesday 7th June 1988	-
Tuesday 5th July 1988	-
Tuesday 2nd August 1988	- <i>Annual General Meeting</i>
Tuesday 6th September 1988	-
Tuesday 4th October 1988	-
Tuesday 1st November 1988	-
Tuesday 6th December 1988	-

* NOTE: March and May Meetings are NOT held on the 1st Tuesday of the month! We are NOT responsible if you turn up on the wrong night!!

Spelling It Out

by Jim Butterfield

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If all good programmers are lazy at heart, why do I hate to take short cuts? I seem to turn my back on all the quick tricks that others use.

For example: Many users never type in full keywords. They type L Shift-O for LOAD, for example, or N Shift-E for NEXT. I always type the words out (and follow them with a space for good measure) Is it that I love typing so much? Not exactly: I have a mixture of motives.

Similarly, I type spaces between words. Where others rejoice in typing a line such as FORK=ATOMSTEPH I plod along with FOR K=A TO M STEP H. Why would I do the extra work?

The L Shift-O technique might save the user a little time, but does not save any memory. The characters you type do not go into the computer's memory. Instead, a single byte called a "token" replaces the entire keyword. When you subsequently command LIST (or L Shift-I if you prefer), you'll see the whole keyword spelled out, regardless of how you typed it in. You might save personal time and effort with this technique, but the computer program registers no difference. The program will run at the same speed no matter how you entered the words.

Spaces are a little different. If you leave out spaces, the program will save a little memory (one byte for each space omitted) and a little running time (perhaps a hundred microseconds per executed space). So you can show a technical advantage. Why do I insist on doing things the hard way?

My most urgent motive is that I write for an audience. Whether in articles for publication, or in presentations to groups, people look at my code. Many of them can't read N Shift-E and understand it as meaning NEXT. . . and why should they? It's hard enough trying to read those programmed-cursor symbols. Similarly, leaving out spaces and typing IFF=CANDY=ETHENK=0 tends to confuse and alienate a user. The alternative, IF F=C AND Y=E THEN K=0, is much more readable. . . and the run time isn't that much greater.

Perhaps you don't care if others can read your code or not. That's OK; a computer is a personal thing and you're entitled to do as you like. But think about this: I'll bet that in a month or so there will be someone very anxious to read that program of yours, and that

someone will be quite vexed if it's tangled and all crunched up. That "someone", by the way, is YOU. Isn't it annoying when you can't read your own stuff? How many times have you resolved not to write in that crunched style any more?

In terms of shortened keywords: If you're an old-timer, you might recall several early machines in which you NEVER typed a keyword. You had a specific key for PRINT, another for IF, and so on. There are not too many of those left today. It's more natural to type in the whole words. Can you really remember whether R Shift-E stands for REM (remarks), or READ, or RESTORE? Is it worth keeping track? Not for me; I have more important things to confuse me.

And if you're thinking of migrating to another machine, even just for the workplace or whatever, you'll be glad you went the conservative way. Many popular machines - including the IBM PC and the Amiga - want those keywords spelled out, and need spaces separating following words. Get in the habit now, and save yourself work.

I've pointed out that if you had the line IF J=T AND Y=0 THEN PRINT 'XX' and decided to collapse it into the almost unreadable IF-J=TANDY=0THENPRINT'XX', you'd discover an amazing thing. Although the two lines are identical, except for the omitted spaces, the second one doesn't work. It seems that Commodore machines will always reject a line of code containing the sequence TANDY. (That's for an understandable reason, of course . . . it contains the keyword TAN for "tangent", thus confusing the system).

So spell 'em out, space 'em out, and live comfortably.

There is one exception, concerning the use of GOTO. It's best to always spell GOTO as a single word. GO TO, two words, sometimes works and sometimes does not.

You probably know that a line reading GO TO 500 operates identically to one which reads GOTO 500 (or GOTO500, for that matter). But there are times when GO TO, with the space between the words, is poisoned. Examine the following lines of code:

```
100 GOTO 110 (OK)
110 GO TO 110 (OK)
120 J=2
130 IF J=2 GOTO 140 (OK)
140 IF J=2 GO TO 150 (Syntax Error)
150 IF J=2 THEN GO TO 160 (OK)
160 ON J GOTO 170,170 (OK)
```

```
170 ON J GO TO 180,180 (Syntax Error)
180 REM
```

Note that GOTO always works, but GO TO (two words) is not always dependable.

Here's another problem related to use of GOTO. You may code either:

```
800 IF R = 4 THEN 900
...or...
800 IF R = 4 GOTO 900
```

Which of the above is better? There's no clear-cut answer.

On Commodore machines, I like to use GOTO for readability. A quick scan through a program can reveal changes in program flow; just scan for the GOTO keyword. You have an easy visual (and mental) contrast with lines such as:

```
810 IF R=3 THEN C=C+1
```

. . .where no severe change in the flow is involved.

On the other hand, some early computers do not recognize IF . . . GOTO, which makes it mandatory to use IF . . . THEN. If you have such a computer, or think you'll have occasion to work on one, you might as well get into the IF/THEN habit. It's too much trouble remembering which machine uses which.

It's for this reason that some magazines which publish programs 'good on a wide variety of computers' stay with the IF/THEN construction. Hampering their program structure even more is the problem that such early computers also require THEN to be followed by a line number, never by code. Thus, the line shown above as 810 would not be legal for such a system. Sigh. . . it does seem to give away much of the terseness of our Commodore Basic structures.

Here's a short program that does NOT work. You might like to try it and see if you can spot the problem. Hint: never use long variable names. . .

```
100 FOR NEATNESS = 1 to 100
110 PRINT NEATNESS
120 NEXT NEATNESS
```

I rather wish the above program did work. Then I could tell you how the program points out a moral . . . the moral of this article:

'NEATNESS COUNTS'.

GAMES COLUMN

by Daniel & Reuben Phillips & Mark Walterfang

In our never ending quest for gripping reading, we have brought to you (at great expense), in collaboration with the Australian and Pommie Postal services, a world (perhaps universe) exclusive. An interview with Andrew (Gribbly's Day Out, Paradroïd, Uridium, Alleykat, Morpheus) Braybrook! Wow! and here it is:

How and when did you become interested in programming?

I left school at 18 with very little idea of what I wanted to do, went to a careers exhibition, got an interview with a company running mainframes and started working on accounting programs in COBOL. I spent the evenings writing games in COBOL and even did a realtime Space Invaders on it. I left after four and a half years to write games full time.

What were your first products?

I started converting some Spectrum programs onto the Dragon 32, namely 3D Space-Wars, Seiddab Attack and Lunattack. I then moved to the C64 and wrote Lunattack again, and then came my first original 64 game, Gribbly's Day Out. The rest I'm sure you know.

What do you feel constitutes a good game?

A good game shouldn't make it obvious it's a computer program, e.g. no glitches or unnecessary waits. Everything must run smoothly so that the player can get immersed in the game itself. The game should match the ability of the player.

What utilities do you use?

For sprites, I use 'Sprite-Magic' on the C64, and 'Ultrafont+' for character sets. Sound is done on a makeshift test-bed and music is done similarly by my boss - Steve Turner. He composes it on guitar and synthesiser. I write the code on an IBM PC-compatible and parallel download to C128 with a MON64 cartridge.

Do you see yourself writing for 16-bit machines e.g. Amiga/ST?

After my next game, provisionally titled Intensity on the C64 I will be experimenting with the Amiga. We have yet to sort out the development kit but I am looking forward to it. I don't know what I'll be doing on it yet, but I have a fair library of titles to convert and upgrade to proper Amiga standard.

How are the American conversions of Uridium going etc. going?

The ST conversion looks identical to the C64's but much slower. It was only an early demo we saw, I would expect them to upgrade the graphics. The IBM and Apple II conversions are apparently coming along well, but I haven't seen them. The Amiga one is not yet underway.

Did you make any changes to the U.S. versions?

U.S. Uridium saves the high scores to disk and runs 20% faster, although it glitches more often at this rate. Both games run properly on a U.S. C128 as they use the 2 MHz mode. They were designed to load into any machine (NTSC or PAL) and then behave accordingly.

What lifespan do you see the 64 having from here?

In the U.S. they've had the Amiga and ST for longer and the 64 still survives. The 16-bit market is the key, when will they take over? I takes longer to write 16-bit software and very little of any note has arrived yet. I give the C64 another two years before it starts to really crumble as the 16-bits take over. The C64 will still sell as it is discounted heavily.

Is the 64 becoming limiting to you now?

I'm starting to notice graphical limitations as I use an Amiga A1000 and DPaint II as a drawing pad who wouldn't? It can still do things the ST struggles with. As an artist I need to use better hardware though.

Do you have any favourite games, musicians, foods, pastimes?

I play a lot of Dropzone on my Atari 800XL. I'm also impressed with the quality of Jeff Minter's work on the 64 (and ST). In the arcades I play a lot of Space Harrier, Star Force, and Slapfight. My favourite band by a long way is Rush. I also like Marillion and Pat Benatar. I spend too much time listening to music on CD. I'm not really an exotic food person although I'm a sucker for fresh cream cakes! I'm also a great fan of Mr E. Rubik (of cube fame).

Where to from Morpheus? More on the 64, or a progression to the Amiga Perhaps? What products are in the pipeline?

At present, Morpheus has been delayed by legal proceedings after our move to Telecomsoft [Firebird] from Hewson. It is unlikely to be released before Christmas now so I am hurriedly working on a new title as I let it slip earlier. It's provisionally called 'Intensity' and I'm trying to use many of the things that I've learned over the past couple of years. Expect to see new features mixed with old ones from all over the place. Then the Amiga!

What are your views on piracy? (e.g. John Twiddy programming 'the Expert' cartridge?)

I'm totally against piracy, but then, I would be. It's got to ridiculous proportions now with organised chains producing thousands of copies before the original is even on sale. Leaks from review copies cause this and we will, in future, be ensuring that review copies are deliberately incomplete, and traceable. John Twiddy is something of a mercenary and I disapprove entirely of so-called backup cartridges.

Any tips for up and coming games programmers?

I think the main thing is to try and be a little innovative. It only takes a little bit of thought. It's more important to design a program well than to program it. Of course, the programming shouldn't be neglected as a professional finish is essential, but it's only a means to an end. The player should be happy with the game, not that he can see 27 and a half sprites on screen at once!

Where do you see the market going from here?

The market has already slimmed down considerably, and it'll get slightly smaller, leaving only the big companies, which is very sad as they don't apply as much care and attention to each game. I think things will improve when the 16-bit machines really start to motor.

Finally, what do you feel about interviews?

I believe it's important to establish contact with the people that buy and play your games and to know what they're thinking, writing games involves feedback from the users too. Thanks for taking an interest in what I'm doing, and I hope you all enjoy my work.

Cheers,

Andrew Braybrook

REVIEW (out of 4 stars)

***1/2 REVENGE II - RETURN OF THE MUTANT CAMELS (Llamasoft)

The mutant camel is back! This is the third in the Jeff Minter camel saga and is actually another Revenge of the Mutant Camels. As in Revenge I, you control a gigantic mutant camel across a horizontally scrolling landscape while destroying assorted aliens. Unlike Revenge I, (and in keeping with the latest fad in games) you can buy extra weapons, shields and extra camels. The camel can now fly, and, while flying, it can drop bombs. Also, the gameplay has been improved. Unlike movies, computer game sequels are nearly always better than the originals - Revenge II is no exception.

TIPS BIT

This months tips section is a little under nourished, with 700 members, surely some must actually play games (NO!) and have some cheats, tips, or even something to say that they could send in.

Shadow Skimmer

Life is cheap in this games column... In fact, we're giving them away free! Reset the computer, then POKE 18565, no. of lives (from 0-255) then SYS 18432 to restart. '

Snap dragon

Feel like completing this terminally boring game once and for all? All you need to do is hold the joystick up and the baddies don't get a chance. Also, try pressing the Commodore key and Shift for a change of scenery...

We really do need your playing tips/POKES/suggestions/adventure hints/requests. Even a few indecipherable crayon marks would be nice. Until next time, may your griblets romp happily in green fields, safe from Mutant Blabgorians.

Write to:

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

-oo0oo-

BYTES

FOR SALE

CBM 1526 PRINTER with 802 chip installed & 4 spare ribbons. In very good condition, complete with original packing. - \$190.00

Contact Bernard Speight on (07) 349 6677 a.h.

GEOS for C-64 - Original program with Documentation - \$20.00

Contact Ralph De Vries on (07) 300 3477

CBM MPS-803 PRINTER, recently fitted with new printhead, complete with tractor feed modified for disabled use (can be removed). In good condition. - Offers over \$170.00

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Contact Peter Baker on (065) 62 4234 (after 5 pm)

COMPLETE MIDI INTERFACE for C64 - Price \$80.00 if a sufficient number of units ordered. Midi Software available at no extra charge.

Contact Darren Tracey on (07) 223 9297 (9 am - 5 pm)

WANTED

MORE ARTICLES & REVIEWS for this edition of CURSOR!

We don't pay well - in fact we don't pay you at all, but won't it be nice to see your name in this newsletter, knowing that you have contributed your bit for your fellow members?

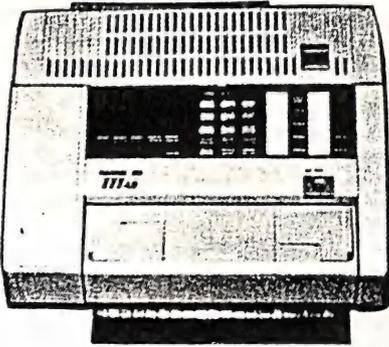
For further details contact Ralph De Vries on 300 3477

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

Deadline for adverts in the following issue of CURSOR is the FIRST TUESDAY of the month.

-oo0oo-

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MAIL BOX

Firstly, let me thank you all for the quality of the newsletter; Cursor. For people like me, who can only get to attend one or two meetings a year, Cursor is a great resource, for ideas, help with ideas and news.

Secondly, I seem to recall that the equipment I have is on record with the group. I still have a colour TV, a 1541, and an Epson GX-80, but I now own a 128 instead of a 64.

My experience causes me to wonder if the "upgrading" has really been worth all the trouble. I allowed myself to be convinced into "upgrading" only because of my desire to use a Genealogical program which needs more than 64K memory and the extra memory can be tapped through the CP/M mode on the 128.

I now have a Wordwriter 128 word processor which has not, as yet, proved any better than Easy Script. I can only access three out of the, at least, eight printer features and cannot access many of the word processor features in 40 column mode. Further this Wordwriter only uses 64K for text, anything over that, and that happens rarely, has to be chained, to be printed out. All this cannot be discovered until the eighty odd dollars have been forked out.

I remember reading in the Dec. Cursor, the article by Keith Hadland, on accessing the features of the printer through making a special cable for the printer. I also remember reading an article on, either how to make a cable or where it can be purchased. This cable will help me gain the benefits of the wordprocessor which can only be accessed through 80 column mode.

Would you kindly advise me where I can purchase, or who I can contact for the information on this cable?

Thank you for the good work everyone does in the committee. I hope the festive season has been restful and kind to all of you and your families.

Reginald A. Campbell

Thanks for your kind words. However the quality (i.e. the contents) of our newsletter is in the hands of our contributors - they deserve our thanks.

I have notified our secretary about your current equipment. This information will be entered in the group's membership data base.

It's a pity to read that you are disappointed with your C-128 purchase. However, having owned a C-128, I feel that your real disappointment is more with the software in question and the lack of the necessary additional hardware which is required to get the best out of the 128.

Strange as it may seem, we have never reviewed Wordwriter, although I did ask a few owners to write a review, but without success. By all accounts it's not in the class of Superscript or PaperClip, but this is open to debate!

Reading between the lines, it appears that you are using your 128 in 40 column mode, and to me that really means that you are under-utilising your computer. The 80 column mode is one of the real strengths of the C-128, particularly with word processors or using it with CP/M. Even a monitor such as Commodore's amber 1201 monitor will mean a real improvement.

Virtually equally important is the use of the double-sided 1571 disk drive with the C-128. (Notice that I have no trouble in spending your money!!!) This is just about a 'must' to be able to use CP/M without too many hassles.

[All this is part of the computer "con" job. You tell the poor sucker that it only costs 'X' amount of dollars to upgrade, only for him or her to find out later on that you need such-and-such and so-and-so to turn it into a usable system. A typical instance is the current "con" on the Amiga 500. Only \$900.00 odd dollars and you are in business. However to obtain a useful and usable Amiga system you will have to spend between \$2000.00 to \$2500.00, without even talking about printers! We would advise all our members who want to upgrade and have doubts in their mind to talk to their more experienced fellow members and not to some junior shop assistant in a computer shop.]

Referring back to Keith Hadland's article, to access the user port with your GX-80 printer you not only need the Centronics to User Port Cable (available through our 'shop' - see the Goods & Services page), but also the PIC Centronics Interface Cartridge. It is this cartridge which allows you to access the extra features on your printer - the cable is just for connecting the Centronics PIC to your computer's parallel (user) port. You then tell your word processor that you are using an Epson printer and NOT a Commodore printer (see K. Hadland's article). If the word processor is any good it will now allow you to access some of the extra features which are not normally available on a Commodore 801 or Commodore look-alike printer.

However, before proceeding with the purchase, I very much doubt if Wordwriter supports the user port output (i.e. it probably only recognises output through the 'normal' serial port). Most American programs don't. In this case you would have to go back to Easy Script or Super Script - these programs do support output through the user port.

If all this appears confusing to you, take heart. A lot of fellow Commodore owners are just as confused as you are! Over the years the whole Commodore printer / interfacing thing has been subject to more and more changes, so it's not surprising that only those people who are really 'into' printers can find their way out of this Commodore printer maze. Here's hoping that all your printer problems will be solved in the near future.

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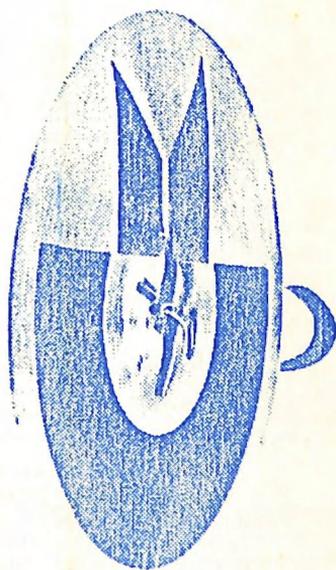
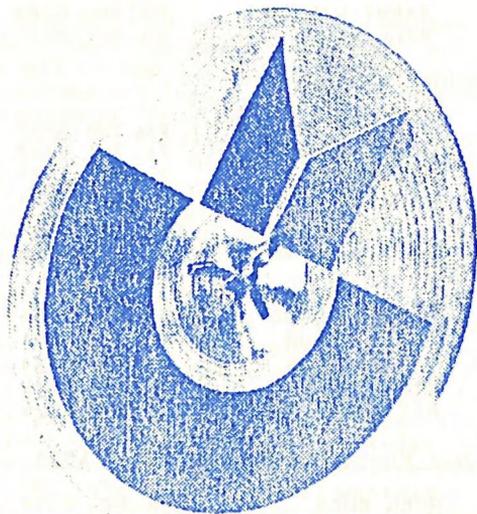
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