

# CURSOR

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

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## MEETINGS — WHERE & WHEN

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MAIN MEETING: Tuesday 5th April 1988, in the Bardon Prof. Development Centre, 390 Simpsons Rd. Bardon. Entrance is through the Centre's Car Park in Carwoola St. The lending Library opens at 7 pm. Main Meeting starts at 8 pm sharp and finishes at 10 pm.

—————> "Live" Demo of Packet Radio by Steve Hudson <—————

C-64/128 WORKSHOP: Sunday 10th April (1 pm - 5 pm) in the Guidance Officers Training Ctr., Bayswater St. Milton. Bring your own computer equipment. Public Domain Disks are available for copying.  
NOTE: FOR MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Colin Shipley - 366 2511 a.h.

AMIGA WORKSHOP: Sunday 10th April 1988 (1pm - 5pm) in the Ithaca R.S.L. Hall, cnr. Nash & Elizabeth Sts., Rosalie. NOTE: FOR MEMBERS ONLY!  
Ph. Bruce Wylie - 359 9779 a.h.

### REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL: 4th Saturday of the month (12noon - 9pm) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Robert Hedi - 395 3606 a.h.

CAPALABA: 3rd Saturday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba State Primary School (Redl. Educ. Centre). Ph. David Adams - 396 8501 a.h.

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

PINE RIVERS: 1st Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine State High School. Ph. Barry Bean - 269 7390 a.h.

SHERWOOD: 2nd Friday of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State School. Ph. Leigh Winsor - 3792405 a.h. / Philip Parkin - 8181172 a.h.

WAVELL HEIGHTS: 2nd Tuesday of the month (7.15pm - 9.45pm) in the Wavell State High School, Childers St. Entrance. 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 Monday of the month (7pm - 10 pm) in the Sunbury St.School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade - 071 / 215059 a.h.

*Copying of Commercial Software is NOT allowed at any of our Meetings!*

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

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

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

Are you interested in forming a Sub-Group or Special Interest Group?  
Contact our Sub-Group Coordinator, Terry Steer, for details.

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## GOODS & SERVICES

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PUB. DOM. DISKS (C-64/128): \$3 ea (+ \$2 Post. to 5 Disks)

PUB. DOM. TAPES (C-64): \$2 ea (+ \$1 Postage Per Order)

BLANK DISKS 5,25" (DS/DD): \$10 per 10 (+ \$2 Postage)

PUB. DOM. DISKS AMIGA : \$6 ea (+ \$2 Post. - to 5 Disks)

BLANK DISKS 3,5" (DS/DD): \$30 per 10 (+ \$2 Postage)

DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (40 disks) - \$15 ea (+ \$5 Postage)

DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (80 disks) - \$20 ea (+ \$5 Postage)

1541 DISK DRIVE COVERS: \$10 ea (+\$1 Postage)

"PUBLIC DOMAIN INSTRUCTION BOOK" (C64): \$5 (+ \$1 Postage)

"STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES" (1541) : \$2 (+\$1 Postage)

"B.B.S. 64 INSTRUCTION BOOK": \$3 (+\$1 Postage)

"C-128 MEMORY MAP": \$2 (+\$1 Postage)

"AMIGA DOS SUMMARY": \$3 (\$1 Postage)

"AMIGA BEGINNERS GUIDE" (CLI etc.): \$2.50 (+ \$1 Postage)

TURBO-ROM for C-64 or C-128: Members Price: \$40 (+ \$2 Postage), or  
Customised Version (Choice of Screen Colours + Your Name on Screen):  
\$45 (+ \$2 Postage)

AMIGA PRINTER CABLE (A500 / A2000): \$25 (+ \$1 Postage)

USER PORT PLUG (EDGE CONNECTOR): \$8 (+ \$1 Postage)

USER PORT PLUG BACKSHELL: \$3 (+ \$1 Postage)

USER PORT to CENTRONICS CABLE: \$35 (+ \$1 Postage)

ADDRESS LABELS (23 x 89 mm): \$14 per 1000 (+ \$2 Postage)

DISK NOTCHERS (for 5,25" disks): \$8 (+ \$1 Postage)

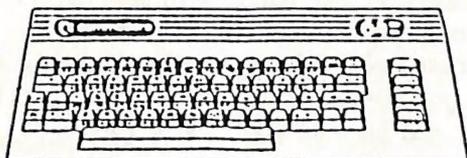


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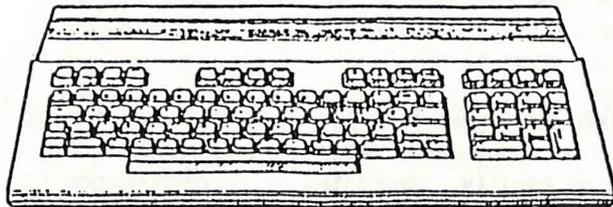
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## EDITOR'S NOTES

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We hope that you approve of our 'new look' newsletter. We are now using a 24 pin dot matrix printer, which results in a better appearance and improved legibility. Elsewhere I have written a bit about the history of dot matrix printers in relation to Commodore.

### THE SURVEY

During the February management committee meeting it was resolved, following a suggestion by Leigh Winsor, that we conduct a survey to find out what our members think of their group and the way it is run. We have decided on this course of action because, with our present large membership, it is very difficult to gauge the needs and wants of our members.

Because past experience has taught us that members don't like to fill in survey forms it was suggested not to include this form in the newsletter, but present it to members at our March main meeting and at our Brisbane workshops and sub-group meetings - this way we can be assured of getting a reasonable response. (If you have been unable to attend any meetings in March and you feel that you would like to fill in a survey form, ring our secretary and he will post you a form.)

During the next month or so we will collate this information and then in turn discuss the contents and conclusions at committee level meetings and during our main meeting. Stay tuned!

### A REQUEST

Most of my regular contributors submit their articles to me on disk. As I prepare two newsletters per month this saves me a tremendous amount of typing. However it would be equally appreciated if correspondence for the Mail Box column could also be submitted on disk. I am capable of transferring EasyScript, SuperScript, SpeedScript, PaperClip and Pocket Writer, as well as straight forward SEQ files to my system (but NOT Tasword or Bank Street Writer). All disks received are immediately transferred and then returned to their owners.

Ralph De Vries

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## RANDOM BITS

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### MAIN MEETING (7th March)

Perhaps it was because the March meeting was not held on the regular day (first Tuesday of the month) that attendance was down somewhat. Our members were first asked to fill in our survey form (see Editor's Notes) after which the president and secretary made their report.

Our senior member Ken Charters conducted the Beginners Corner - it's good to see this particular segment of our meeting restored. Our treasurer John van Staveren gave a talk on SuperBase 64, a program which he uses himself in the stock control of the group's purchases and sales of disks and other items. This was followed by a talk given by Graham Robinson on the spreadsheet Swiftcalc 128. A good session allround.

### MACINKER DEMO

Do you go through a lot of printer ribbons? Than you may be interested in the MACINKER DEMO which will take place in our library during the April meeting. This gadget which is not cheap does a marvelous job re-inking fabric ribbons. We have seen the results and were impressed.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Newer members may not be aware of the fact that CURSOR is produced in TWO editions; the one that you are reading now and the Amiga edition. If you are changing to the Amiga it only requires a phone call to our secretary to advise him of your change in equipment and he will also make sure that you will get the Amiga edition in place of this edition. C64 or C128 owners who want to receive the Amiga edition can do so for an annual fee of \$6.00. Contact Norm Chambers with your request.

### RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

We hear that an old friend of our group, Les Van Tavier (formerly with Chandlers and Sundown Computer Centre), is now working at Software 80 in Milton. If you are in the market for hardware like printers etc. it might pay you to check out prices with Les.

## **NEW SUB-GROUP IN WELLERS HILL**

Grant Toohill would like to form a new sub-group in the Wellers Hill area if sufficient interest is shown. The proposed meetings will take place in the **Wellers Hill State School** (Southside Education Centre) on the last Friday of the month. If you would like to attend this new sub-group give Grant a ring on 848 6187 (a.h.) to confirm your attendance.

## **GOODBYE**

Our longtime member Anthony Thyssen finished his studies recently and has been fortunate enough to land a job at Flinders University in Adelaide. Best of luck in the Festival State Anthony, and keep in touch!

## **HOW LOW CAN YOU SINK?**

Recently Doreen Horne showed us a C-64 library book which had two substantial sections of pages with program listings 'removed', thus rendering the book useless. Regrettably the library staff was unable to find the culprit, but we have our suspicions. Obviously the vandal in question was too mean or too ignorant to make a photo copy of the sections involved. To the culprit we say: "do us a favour and don't renew your membership please, we don't need your sort".

## **WHO TOOK IT?**

During one of the last meetings of the Gap sub-group Julianne Fallen lent a Tape Duplicating Board to one of our members. As this item was never returned to her, will the gent in question return the board to Julianne or ring her on 300 2982?

## **GOODBYE 1571 DRIVE?**

According to our President, Commodore does not intend to import more 1571 disk drives after the next shipment, which is brought in to fill back orders. The reason given is lack of demand. (There seems to be an anomaly in this previous statement!).

The question arises: 'What are 128D owners going to do if they want to buy a second drive? Are Commodore going to release the 1581 3½" drive after all? Or do 128 owners have to settle for a 1541???' Perhaps this is Commodore's subtle way of telling C128 owners to go and buy an Amiga.

It's about time that Commodore comes clean with 128 owners.

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## SOME MORE RANDOM BITS

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by Steven Pugh

I have received an information leaflet from a UK based 128 Users Group. Called the 'Scratch Software Club' they are basically like the CCUGQ, only all topics are on the 128. The club offers: A quarterly 80 page journal (A5 size), up to date newsletters, an international pen-pal list, public domain software library, software discounts, a 128 software database. With the leaflet I received a sheet offering the following discounts for joining members: CANNON 128 (a copier which works with the 1541, 1570, 1571, 1581 drives & copies CP/M and IBM format disks) - ú14.95, 128 HELPER (Electronic Reference Manual) - ú14.95. These programs normally cost about ú25 - ú30. To join this club costs ú22.50 (about \$53). Contact me on 263 5057 for more information.

Regarding Paul Blair's 'Mutterings' (Cursor - Mar'88), the 1571 head problem is for real! Ask my parents - they're forking out \$180 to fix it, so take note!

If you own a 128 or 128D and wish to view 80 columns or use the 640 x 200 graphics screen on your TV cheaply, then I recommend that you get a 40/80 column switch installed at the Milton workshop (see Goods & Services). You don't get colours and it isn't as clear as an 80 column monitor (1901/2), but if you want to see if it's worth buying an 80 col. monitor for use with 80 col. software, it's worth a try.

In the world of copying (I mean 'backup'!) cartridges, the FINAL CARTRIDGE III is out in the UK (don't know if it is in Oz yet) and it looks good. It has a pull-down window environment in hi-res, with a preference window (like GEOS), calculator, notepad, directory windows, clock and the usual Final Cartridge functions.

It seems that on the C64 3-D landscapes for simulators are the latest fad, as both DRILLER and CHUCK YEAGERS FLIGHT TRAINER use solid 3-D.

Seen the new Atari in Feb. APC magazine - Hi-res is 1280 x 960 with 4096 colours, with a total numbers of colours being 16 million. Bit better than an Amiga, only costs 10 times more (\$10 000).

C64 or 128 owners who think of upgrading to the Amiga, but want to keep their existing computer and printer, should note that there's an interface available which takes the output from the Amiga's printer port and channels it into your 64/128 via the User port and from there into the serial printer. The 64/128's memory makes a printer buffer.

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## BRAIN TEASERS

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by Douglas Maclurkin

Test your knowledge of Basic: These Brain Teasers are primarily addressed to all 64/128'ers, particularly the new 64'ers. However even some of the DAMD will enjoy reviewing their palaeontological memories.

Members are invited to submit their own 'Teasers'.

My phone no. is (07) 358 4442.

All submitters will be credited with a by-line.

Questions:-

Examine the statement:- `open4,4,7:cmd4:list-200:print#4:close4`  
and answer the following:-

1. What do the letters 'CMD' stand for and what function do they perform?
2. What part of the 'open' statement does the '4' in 'cmd4' refer to? Is it the file number or the device number?
3. If you did this (`open 254,4:cmd4`) would it work?  
If not how would you make it work?
- 3(a). If you did this (`open256,4:cmd256`) would it work?
4. What does the secondary address (7) mean?
5. What does `list-200` mean?
6. Why is it necessary to enter `print#4` and `close4` at the end of printing?
7. How do you pronounce the symbol '#' and what does it mean?
8. At the start of a program, if you enter '`open4,4:cmd4`' what benefit can you gain?
9. Who are the DAMD?
10. BFN  
ps - what does BFN mean?

The answers can be found on page no. 20

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## REVIEWS

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### THE GEOS REFERENCE MANUAL

publ. by Berkley Softworks - our copy from B.C.F.

by Grant Robinson

The Geos Reference Manual is by no means bedside reading. It is a detailed look at the routines which make Geos the powerful graphics operating system that it is. Before reading the manual the reader should be familiar with 6502 machine language and the internals of the Commodore 64. It is directed at the application programmer who would like to use the Geos environment.

The structure of the manual is in sections like icons, menus, fonts, etc., each of which contains an explanation of the workings as well as a reference page detailing parameters passed for each of the Geos routines discussed under that section. Also, as each section is discussed an example application is built up to illustrate the information given. While at first I found this unusual, by the end of the manual I realised this to be the most logical approach. Every detail necessary for a programmer to write an application is provided. File handling receives extensive coverage including detailed information on VLIR (Variable Length Indexed Records) files, the Geos directory, and Geos header block. Even printer drivers are discussed and the workings of the Epson and 801 drivers are used as examples.

Further miscellaneous details are given such as the fact that Geos uses the raster to generate interrupts. On NTSC (U.S.) 64's these occur 60 times every second but on PAL (European & Australian) 64's these occur only 50 times per second. No this is not the reason the Geos clock runs slow. That is because the timer is initialised to the American mains cycle (60 Hz) instead of our Australian cycle (50 Hz), which is a totally separate issue to raster interrupts. But it does explain why once I had corrected the timer the display went crazy. The Preference Mgr updates the display every 60 interrupts which, by U.S. thinking, is one second, but in the land of Oz becomes 1.2 seconds.

So while my hardware timer was ticking over every second, the screen was being updated with the time only every 1.2 seconds!

Back to the Geos Reference Manual. The manual provides everything there is to know about Geos for a programmer or for someone (like me) with a keen interest in how it all works. It is well written (except for quite a few typographical errors) with clear explanations and examples. Recommended for advanced Geos enthusiasts.

For those who would like to have the time run correctly under Geos, using a Track and Sector utility make the following changes to your Geos boot disk:

1. Change track 3, sector 14, byte \$6E (decimal 110) from \$00 (0) to \$80 (128) to change the timer from 60Hz to 50Hz cycle.
2. Change track 21, sector 10, byte \$09 (9) from \$3C (60) to \$32(50) to change the Preference Mgr screen updating from every 60 interrupts to every 50.
3. Change track 22, sector 7, byte \$0A (10) from \$1E (30) to \$19(25) to change the Clock screen updating from every 30 interrupts to every 25 (i.e. half a second).

## MINI-OFFICE II

**by Paul Blair**

If you are looking for a compact home management package, and don't want to put out big bucks for individual programs, Mini-Office (MO) offers a very economical way to get some good software.

Very briefly, MO is a combined word-processor, spreadsheet and database package for the Commodore 64 (native, or 64 mode on a C128). In addition, the package offers graphical output and a very useful label writer. All the parts can be linked together, so you can use information in a most efficient way. Some writers stress the 'smallness' of the package, and to an extent it is true. But I know of a couple of local businesses, whose turnover would be around the \$1 million mark each year, who keep quite adequate records using MO. If they can do it, the average home user can also do it.

I won't go into all the details of each component part of MO, except to say that with a bit of thought, it is possible to store plenty of

information on disk (or tape, if you prefer), and with an informative menu system, even a new user can get going with a minimum of fuss. The spiral-bound instruction book is easy to read, but even without it, it's not too hard to get going.

My attraction to MO came about because of the graphical output feature. We have a need to print some graphs every so often, and MO offers the user a series of graph outputs that are most useful. Pie charts (either uncut or cut, if you follow me - cut being where some or all pieces of the pie are emphasized relative to the others) and bar charts (data value or cumulative) are very easily produced.

My first effort was on a Star printer, and that went just fine. The graphs were printed at good scale down the page, and were very readable. Then I plugged in my serial MPS1200, only to get no response. Then I tried a Citizen 120DC, with equal nil results. Finally, I switched printer output to parallel and plugged in my Olympia 165. Still nothing. The handbook was quite clear that the program should work with Commodore serial printers or Centronics parallel units, but not for me it seemed. My parallel cable will work with everything I've ever tried, so that had me puzzled too.

Doing things in reverse, I then tried the other parts of MO. All printed perfectly on all printers. By now I was hopelessly confused.

To cut a long story short, I rang Pactronics, the distributor of MO. Max Walters was helpful, and promised to have a look at the matter for me. This he did, and reported that he had tried the graphics option on a Citizen, and it had worked correctly. However, he did indicate that the problem did justify further delving, so I look forward to his report. The disk I have been using may just be one of those duds that sneak through the system every so often, which a friendly distributor has no hesitation in replacing. But the fact that it would drive one Commodore-style printer but not others has me puzzled.

It would be unfortunate if a first-class program got a bad name for something as trivial as a bad disk. The best way to avoid this, if you do want to get a copy for yourself, would be to ask the retailer to demonstrate the graphics part of the program using either your printer, or a similar printer before purchase. When it works buy up and enjoy. But if there are problems, tell the retailer. he can then report back to Pactronics. And I'll keep in touch myself, because I want my copy to work for me.

## CERTIFICATE MAKER (Springboard Software)

by **Lorrie McLay**

Anyone who is involved with an interest group, a sporting club, teaching or those who want to build up the self esteem of family and friends will be interested in this very simple and easy to use program.

This program does just what the title says, it makes certificates. The program includes templates for 220 different certificates or awards to be printed. The templates are grouped under these headings Unique, Office, Sports, Family, Children, Religious and General Awards. There is a very good range especially in the Sports section.

Some of the templates have pre-designed titles for the certificate or awards with its associated graphic. E.g. COMPUTER WHIZ-KID AWARD. Others are completely open so that the operator can supply the name of the certificate or award along with the name and achievement of the person receiving it.

The best part of this program, aside from its ease of use, is that it allows personalised certificates to be made by the operator. There is sufficient room for the recipient's name and their achievement to be printed on the certificate. There is also a signature line and a date line which adds a final personal touch.

The program has 24 borders and five print fonts available in 2 different sizes. This is very similar to Print Shop. It also has a 'Name File' feature which allows a number of certificates to be printed with various people's names on them, without having to redesign each certificate separately. This is very handy when several people are to receive the same certificate. This feature is a real time saver.

The certificates may be printed on paper, cardboard or stencil and the result has a very professional look. The program pays for itself very quickly once the price of printing certificates at the Printers is compared. The only on going costs involved are the price of cardboard, paper and ribbons.

Certificate Maker's manual is clear and well set out and absolutely essential when selecting the template required.

While the program has a great deal going for it, there are several improvements which should be made. These include:

1. There should be a Save to Disk feature (similar to the revised Print Shop) which makes it very easy to retrieve and reuse certificates already designed;

2. There should be a feature to enable the operator to put in or modify graphics on the templates;



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## DOT MATRIX PRINTERS

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### A POTTED HISTORY

by Ralph De Vries

Back in the good olden days of Commodore computing (I am talking about 1981/2) there weren't too many printers around. Commodore's most popular printer in those days was the model 3022 (later 4022), which was a simple straight forward dot matrix printer in a 7 Pin configuration which at the time cost a mere \$1100. That was a good average price for a printer in those days! When the VIC-20 hit the decks in the early eighties Commodore decided to release a cheap printer with this computer, and the result was the 7 Pin model 1515 printer. At about the same time non-Commodore users were able to buy the Epson 9 Pin dot matrix printer (MX-80 etc.) which, compared with Commodore's efforts, gave immensely superior results. PET owners did manage to interface these Epson Centronics-type printers to their computers via some special interface devices, but Vic-20 and C-64 owners were out of luck, because their serial interface couldn't 'talk' to these printers. In due course the 1515 was replaced by the 1525 which in turn was replaced by the model 801. These were all 7 Pin printers which didn't have descenders on p's, q's etc., but they were reasonably cheap. It was even possible to get a graphics dump from programs like Doodle. At about the same time that CBM released the 1525, they also released the model 1526 (later reissued as the 802) which was their top model dot matrix printer (I was using one of these in 1983). This was a 9 Pin printer (I think) which had descenders and in general text looked a lot better than on the 1525 printer. However it was well nigh impossible to use this printer for graphics output - a trap that many of our members fell into.

Commodore users were now (1983/84) asking themselves if it was possible to interface the (better) Centronics type 9 Pin printers to their computers. One way (the 'English' way as expounded by our friend Paul Blair) was to construct a special cable to connect the user port with the printer's Centronics port. To do this from Basic it needed a special driver program to take care of ASCII conversion etc., but certain English programs like EasyScript (later SuperScript) and Super Base

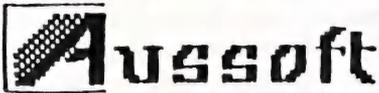
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did support this configuration without the need to run a separate program. The other way was (the more costly) 'American' way. They created the conversion interfaces like CardPrint, Xetec etc. These had the advantage of allowing graphics dumps (difficult to implement with the English system), but had several disadvantages such as the high cost of the interface (currently anywhere up to \$200), plus little wires connected to the cassette port to access the 5 volt line to power the interface. However most of them worked well, and we had now access to all these other printers out there.

The next improvement was Near Letter Quality. This system, which does a double pass print, gave us something that started to look more like a typewriter or a daisy wheel printer, but it wasn't quite there yet. Concurrent with the advent of NLQ there was another startling development. All of a sudden the printer manufacturers discovered that there was a huge C64 market out there, so why not cash in on that market and produce Commodore interfaced printers as well? As a result we suddenly got Commodore compatible printers from companies like Epson, Star, Citizen, Seikosha, C-Itoh etc. In some cases the implementation gave us no more than 801 emulation, but gradually the position improved and now it is usually possible to access most features of these printers. Even Commodore saw the light with printers like the MPS-1000 and then the MPS1200/1250.

About two years ago 24 Pin dot matrix printers appeared on the scene. Even up till a year ago the majority of these cost between \$1000 to \$2000. Having a 24 Pin configuration means that these are no longer NLQ printers, but Letter Quality printers. However the best news is that the prices of these printers are coming down as well. It is now quite possible to pick one of these printers up for \$600 to \$700, and we can expect prices to come down even further.

Another advantage of these printers is that they are potentially capable of producing a vastly superior graphics output. To understand this it has to be realized that, to print graphics with a dot matrix printer, screen pixels (the individual lit 'dots' that make up the pictures on your graphics screens) have to be translated into a sequence of dots on your printer. In the case of 7 Pin and 9 Pin dot matrix printers this effectively means that dots are produced at a density of between 90 to 120 dots per inch. Thus, generally speaking, graphics output from a 9 Pin printer is usually better (less 'chunky') than from a 7 Pin printer because of the greater dot density. However most 9 Pin printer are

theoretically capable of printing out at 240 dots per inch, but to my knowledge no commercial graphics programs support this mode.

In the case of 24 Pin printers a dot density of 360 dots per inch is possible, and coupled with the fact that the individual dots on these printers are smaller as well, a vastly superior output is definitely possible. However even on the Amiga this feature is not supported as yet. Perhaps in time we will all be able to produce better graphics.

This newsletter is produced using an NEC Pinwriter, model P2200. This printer can be picked up for under \$700, offers reasonable speed (in draft mode up to 168 cps and in LQ mode up to 70 cps), and comes complete with a push/pull tractor, single sheet feed, and four built in fonts. Unusually there are NO dip switches in this printer. All settings are controlled by the buttons on the front control panel - a lot easier than those silly little dipswitches which are usually buried in the underbelly of a printer!

Following are a few sample printouts of some of the fonts:

Courier Font LQ in 10 Pitch, the standard font.

The same font in 12 Pitch - *Italics*, **BOLD**, underlined.

Here is the standard DRAFT mode in 10 c.p.i.

12 Pitch Draft, which is CONDENSED, thus giving us 20 cpi!

The Proportionally Spaced font - it looks very NICE!

The SUPER FOCUS 10 Font - the TALL font.

OCR-B Font, in 10 Pitch - a sans-serif type.

This is ITC Souvenir 10 - real SEXY!

And back to where we started, namely Courier in 15 pitch LQ. I hope that you are as impressed as I am. If present trends continue we will see more and more computer users change over to these 24 pin miracles within the next few years or so. Currently they are only available as Centronics printers, but that situation could change as well in the near future.

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## BRAIN TEASERS — ANSWERS

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by Douglas Maclurkin

Answers:

1. CMD = Change Main Device. It redirects computer output from the screen to the device you indicate by the second number in the open statement, e.g. change the 4 to 6 and output will go to the plotter; '3' to the screen; '1' to the tape; '8' to disk.
2. To the file number, which can be any number from 1 to 255. The CMD number must be the same. Also the print# number and the close number.
3. No. open254,4:cmd254 will work.
- 3(a). No. File number must not exceed 255.
4. On Commodore printers and some others the secondary address can change case and other things. '7' prints lower case. (Consult your printer manual for more details).
5. List-200 means output will be up to line 200 of your program.
6. The print# command sends a blank line to the printer. This not only flushes the line buffer but also resets the main device back to the screen. After this you must 'close' the channel or file. If you don't then your printer will hang up and you will get a 'file not open' error.
7. HATCH. Architecturally a hatched moulding means two crossing sets of parallel lines. '#' is also used to indicate a number e.g. Input "What # do you select?"
8. You do not have to keep typing 'print#' on each line you want to go to the printer: just 'print' or '?' will do. NB don't forget to print# and close the file on the last lines of your program!
9. Damned AMiga Deserters.
10. Bye For Now.

Note: Every effort is made to give correct answers. However any corrections will be welcome and will be passed on.

—oOo—

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## GAMES COLUMN

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by Dan & Reub Phillips & Mark Walterfang

### REVIEWS (out of four stars)

#### \*1/2 **TEST DRIVE** (Electronic Arts)

'Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche, Lotus and the Corvette. Test Drive five of the world's most exotic cars. Sound, animation and handling like the real thing.', says the ad. Test Drive is pushed as a realistic driving simulator when in actuality, it is a rather poor arcade game. The player drives the car of their choice around a mountain dodging traffic, police speed traps and other road hazards. Nicely presented, although unfortunately very much short of realism, this game becomes boring faster than you can say 'I prefer public transport'.

#### \*\*\* **RED L.E.D.** (Starlight)

The year is 2379 and Earth's resources are running out. So, it's up to you to link up a grid-thing and save the Earth. The game takes place on a three-dimensional scrolling landscape similar to Marble Madness and Spindizzy. The object being to get from one side of the grid to the other in under an hour, to do this the player controls one of three droids, collecting the four objects on each landscape, avoiding acid pools and enemy robots, and trying not to fall off the landscape. Other objects such as smart-bombs, bonuses and teleport pads can be found around the landscape. The enemy robots are quite irritating as they constantly home in on and deplete the energy of your droid - some robots with different personalities would have been nice. The game is very big, and presents quite a challenge. Graphically it's very impressive, clear and smooth, the sound is only mediocre, but that's more than made up for by the playability this game offers. A worthwhile buy.

### Tips Bit

Dave Apelt of Ashgrove writes: "After seeing the depressing amount of cheats in last months Cursor I dug deep into my piles of disks, magazines, books and rubbish and came up with some interesting little POKES. Some of them have been around for donkeys years but there is always some

mug out there who hasn't heard of them.

For infinite lives in **Wonder Boy**: Reset the computer, POKE 2676,234:POKE 2677,234:POKE 2678,234:SYS 2112.

To disable collision detection in **Bomb Jack**: Reset, POKE 5112,0:SYS 3101

Infinite lives in **War Hawk**: First reset then POKE 27090,234:POKE 27091-234:POKE 27092,234:SYS 24604.

Total invincibility in **Druid**: Reset (with re-enabler), POKE 35731,12:POKE 35744,0:POKE 37940,0:POKE 39421,0:POKE 35779,76:POKE 35780,215:POKE 35781,139:SYS 5120.

For all the time in the world in **Trailblazer**: reset, POKE 29738,234:POKE 29739,234:SYS 25729.

Infinite men in **Space Harrier**: Reset, POKE 6010,173:SYS 2128.

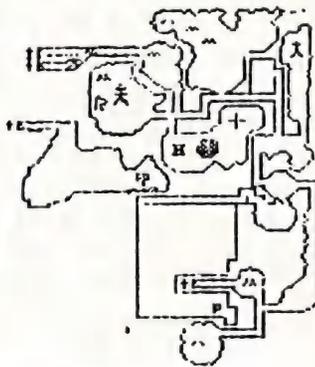
Infinite time for **Split Personality**: Reset, POKE 7033,234:POKE 7034,234:POKE 7035,234:poke 2050,234:SYS 13165.

For infinite amount of **Kung Fu Masters**: reset, POKE 34142,128:SYS 32768.

Dave also sent in a map for level one of Master of Magic. Much obliged Dave:-

## MASTER OF MAGIC

### FLOOR 1



- + START
- ☠ SKELETON
- X ORC
- 🦇 BAT
- 📜 SCROLL
- 💧 WATER
- P POTION
- 👹 HELLHOUND
- ↑ STAIRS UP
- ↓ " DOWN
- == DOOR
- == WARP
- 🎒 BACKPACK

And finally a plea: Frank Martinese of Sunnybank needs help with the Amiga 'Bards Tale'. Ring him outside of school hours on 345 8448.

Tune in next month, same bat-time, same bat-channel.

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

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## BYTES

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### FOR SALE

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**PAPERCLIP II WORD PROCESSOR** for C-64. Complete with **SPELL PACK**, manual and dongle. Good Condition - \$30.00

Contact Ralph De Vries on (07) 300 3477.

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### "INFO" IS HERE

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Just arrived in local newsagents, the January/February issue of the American **INFO** magazine. To all Commodore users we would say: "Go and reserve a copy at your newsagent." At \$9.20 it isn't a bargain, but we consider it much better value than some other American magazines.

Well, what's so special about this magazine? First and foremost it's **NOT** a programming magazine; it is primarily a magazine that reviews software and hardware. More important though, it is an **INDEPENDENT** magazine, not part of a chain. This means that they don't feel obliged to say 'nice' things about their advertisers products (and despite this the magazine carries a fair bit of advertising). The magazine is totally produced on Commodore computers - currently on a C-128, but as from the next issue on the Amiga, now that there are a sufficient amount of good programs (and peripherals) around to do the job. Incorporated in the magazine is the Midnite Software Gazette - for quite a few years the leading Commodore users group magazine in the US; Jim Strasma was heavily involved with this one. Coverage of the magazine is about 50% 8 Bit and 50% Amiga. But not only are there reviews (yes, games as well), but also informative articles on Commodore and other software and hardware suppliers; yes, they even tell you which companies are going broke! In two pages they give an overview of what all the other Commodore & Amiga magazines are publishing as well!

Yes, we will add this magazine to our library, but if you only buy an occasional computer magazine we'd suggest that you put **INFO** near the top of the list. Highly recommended.

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MAIL BOX

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Dear 'Curse',

I note that in the latest issue of *Cursor* you described me as being a 'wicked old man'! I find this delightful and hasten to make a riposte to your dastardly thrust.

re the 'wicked' part. I wear this sobriquet proudly. Sheridan once said 'I am as old as the sum total of my disappointments and I am as young as the naughtiest of my thoughts!'. My 'wickedness' keeps me young. Thanks for the accolade.

re the 'old' part. I am glad that age has imbued me with the sagacity to avoid personalities in order to gain a point. It has always seemed to me that anyone who has recourse to this sort of remark admits defeat. He has shot his last bolt and has no further shafts to deliver. I would be grateful if you would grow up (or perhaps I should say 'get a little older') and avoid puerile remarks in your editorials.

I am disappointed in you and this has added to the 'sum total of my disappointments'. However this is more than counterbalanced by the rejuvenation I feel in hastening your growth of a few more grey hairs.

Beware you engage a giant when you are but an infant.

A retraction would not only be gracious, mirthful and acceptable but also mature.

I trust you will not be so childish as to deny me the columns of *Cursor* in order to publish this letter.

Yours from a wicked old age

Methuselah Maclurkin.

Well, you've really got it in for me Doug, but let's look at the situation in perspective. This is a newsletter, published for the benefit of our members only - not a commercial publication. With some 800 members a group such as ours tends to become de-personalized. But does this mean that I, as editor, am no longer allowed to inject an occasional 'personal' touch in my Editor's Notes? When I refer to Paul Blair as the 'Superbase/Man' it can be considered a pretty weak sort of joke ('puerile' even), but when I refer to you as a 'wicked old doc', I'm sure that everybody will see that sort of remark in its proper context,

namely as a term of disguised admiration, because that's what it was. As for the 'old' part, I'm not that many years behind you, so don't take it to heart. Age, after all, is a state of mind, and I don't think that either of us will succumb to the effects of senility for some time to come yet.

Seen in this light, you will agree, that there's no reason for a retraction on my part. As for denying you access to the columns of this newsletter.... no way! Your contributions add spice to this rather august technical publication.

*This is my first effort into the field of writing to editors! First I must say how I enjoy receiving CURSOR each month. There are a few of us around here and Lismore who really get a lot of benefit from the excellent articles that emerge. May I, and on behalf of the others, say "well done" to you and your staff.*

*Now my problem: with reference to the article by Keith Hadland, I bought a Centronics interface and made up the cable - all tested o.k. (I'm a retired licensed electrician and also a lic. ham operator). I ran Easy Script and put some files in it and went to print it. As soon as I hit the letter P to print, the computer locked up; I tried everything I could with my limited knowledge, yet I just couldn't get it going. Any help would be greatly appreciated. For the record, I bought the PIC cartridge from Chandlers in Ballina for \$29.95, not \$65.00 as Keith said, and the Centronics plug from Dick Smith was \$12.50 and a meter of cable about \$1.50 - I had the plug to go into the user port. Best wishes to all members and the staff also.*

*Harold Moss (Ballina)*

Ralph passed your letter on to me and I hope I can suggest a solution to your problems. First let me say that I am slightly upset at paying \$65 for my interface when Chandlers is now selling them for \$29.95. My only consolation is that I was able to buy the centronics plug for only \$6.50.

Now, to your problem. The first thing that occurs to mind is that you didn't select the correct options at the start of Easy Script. When asked PRINTER TYPE (0-4) ?, select option 1 and press RETURN. It will then ask you (R)S232, (C)ENTRONICS OR (S)ERIAL, select C for centronics and press RETURN.

Assuming that you have done this correctly and it still won't work, I

would be inclined to suspect the wiring and connections. However, as you are a retired electrician, I think we can rule that out. This only leaves two possibilities that I can think of, firstly that there is a fault in the printer cartridge and/or secondly that there is a fault in your C64 parallel port. Both these possibilities can be ruled out by a simple test.

Obtain a copy of the public domain printer driver "PRINTLINK" and use it as described in my very first article to send some data down to the printer. If the printer will work when you try this, then it must be your Easy Script which is at fault. (I have assumed all along that your version of Easy Script does present you with the options mentioned above.)

If you have not isolated the problem by that test, then try linking the printer to someone else's C64. If it works with theirs, then it is your computer which is at fault, if it doesn't, then it must be a fault with the cartridge, so complain to Chandlers (but don't tell them what you are trying to use it for).

Keith Hadland

*In the last two issues of CURSOR there has been an article on the GX-80 Centronics interface. I thank Keith Hadland and CURSOR for providing informative articles such as this. I took the advice and purchased the Printer Interface Cartridge (\$39 from Chandlers) and the User Port to Centronics cable, plugged the lot together and now have access to all those great printer features previously hidden from me. Definitely worth the investment. I must comment on the lack of assistance from Epson when initially trying to track down the elusive PIC - they virtually wanted nothing to do with me. And the warning by Keith on salesmen who won't sell you the PIC if they know you have a Commodore is true; I nearly had a stand-up argument with one person.*

*I do have one suggestion for the main meeting night. I don't have time to go to the workshops or sub-group meetings but I make time to go to the main meeting. It is usually hectic and on the few occasions when I have wanted to ask someone a question I either can't find the right person or they are busy. This is understandable, but what if a Committee member (or volunteer) were to sit just outside the library door? This person would probably be able to answer most of the questions or at least point you in the direction of the right person. This would reduce the amount of 'wandering' around looking for somebody, anybody, to ask. It would also serve as an information desk for newcomers.*

*I am one of the many who unfortunately cannot contribute much to the group or to CURSOR, except my thanks for doing a terrific job.*

*Keith Revell (Kippa Ring)*

As you are probably aware by now, we are in the process of conducting a members survey at present. As your suggestion certainly has merit we will most certainly include it in our final deliberations.

*Re the article in the Feb. issue, page 12 concerning disk alignment - I picked up a tip which some members may not have seen. Insert the cardboard cutout supplied to keep drive stable when carried round. Type load "\*" , 8 and return. Drive runs for a few seconds and 'presto', back in business.*

*By the way, I find "GEO WRITE" a good program for most letter writing. Members comments appreciated.*

*Having almost decided to purchase a reasonably priced modem any suggestions from club members as to brand, suitability, bugs, joining fees etc. would be appreciated.*

*A relative acquired two commercial computers - working and keyboards, ideal for experimenting. They have numerous chips and slots for 8 boards. Included are Ram, video, micro-computer and display boards, but no input or output board. At \$30 each I thought these a bargain and would like to donate one to the group if interested and someone could collect.*

*Finally, I have been toying with the idea of starting a local Commodore club. Ideas from others would be appreciated. Being an oldie would it be too involved?*

*David Beere (Beachmere)*

We have commissioned an article on modems. Thank you for your offer of the computer parts.

Contact Terry Steer, our Sub-Group Coordinator if you want to form one in your area. Note that there's already a Sunshine Coast Sub-Group located in Caloundra, as well as one in Strathpine. It might be more advantageous to join forces with one of these.

*I would like to change to the Amiga 500, like many others, but you always say the final outfit costs between \$2000 and \$2500. What I'd like to know is, could you still survive on the basic Amiga setup (only 1 disk drive and using a TV set)? And how and when do the extra peripherals come into play such as the extra drive, extra 512K memory, the monitor etc?*

*What else needs to be made up or bought to use the MPS 1200 printer with the Amiga 500, as I may sell my 128D?*

*Steven Pugh (Aspley)*

Running an A500 in the basic configuration is a bit like owning a C64 with a Datasette. It can be done, but it's a bit of a pain in the neck. Although the Amiga can be used with a single disk drive you will soon discover that the AmigaDOS (Disk Operating System) commands are NOT built into the system, unlike the Commodore C64 & C128 DOS commands which are built into the 1541/71 drives' ROM chips. This means that EVERY time that you want to format a disk, copy a file etc. you will have to put the systems disk (called the Workbench disk) back in the drive to load the command into memory. Once the command has been loaded into memory you are then asked to put the other disk back. After a while this eternal disk changing drives you potty and you just have to get a second drive. The alternative is to set a portion of the Amiga's memory aside (the so-called RAM disk) and load some or all of the DOS commands into this memory. This is fine as long as you don't use too much memory for other programs, otherwise the result is a systems crash (that's called a 'GURU' visitation!).

Maybe you find that an A500 with a TV set works fine, but I think it is well nigh unbearable - perhaps it's my photographic background that makes me so intolerant towards fuzzy pictures. The word processor which I use (WordPerfect) will barely run on a 512K machine; extra memory is a must for this and many other programs like DeLuxe Paint etc.

Your MPS1200 comes with a Commodore serial interface which has to be replaced by a Centronics interface. Greg Perry tried to obtain one of these from Commodore some five months ago, but they had never imported them at the time. We believe that they may be available now. Greg obtained a Centronics interface for a Citizen 120D printer (Citizen make the MPS1200 printer), and after shaving a bit of plastic of the casing to make it fit, it has worked quite well. Cost of this interface is about \$86.00. You will also need an Amiga printer cable which we sell through our 'shop' to our members for \$25.00.

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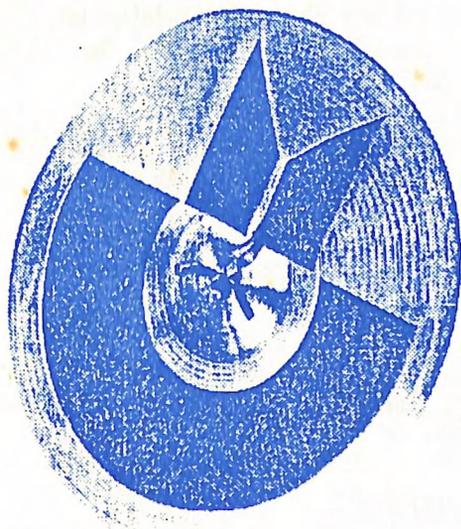
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