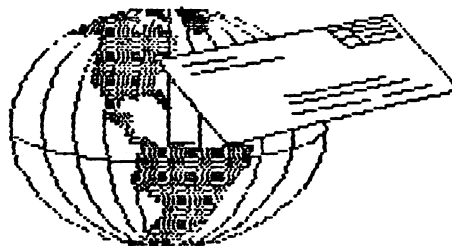


COMMODORE MAILINK

NEWSLETTER OF —
MEETING 64/128 USERS
THROUGH THE MAIL

FRANCIS REDMOND, PRESIDENT

NOVEMBER 1994



MEETING NEWS

Frank Redmond

DON'T FORGET - MEMBERSHIPS MUST BE RENEWED BY 1 JANUARY 1995

\$10.00 U.S. \$11.00 Canada and Mexico and \$20.00 for members in other countries. all funds to be in U.S. currency. Make check to "J. Y. Powell Jr." at 5366 Fieldwood, Houston, Tx. 77056.

We wish to welcome all our new members.

I read Joe Powell's treasurer's report in the September 1994 Mailink. He accepted the position thinking that he would receive honor, recognition and a five figure salary and now discovers that he gets nothing but work. My heart goes out to him. Not only him but the other dedicated persons who cooperate to make this group a success. I have unilaterally decided to take some action to alleviate the situation and give recognition for these persons. Therefore effective 1 January, 1995 their annual salary shall be \$000.000.00. Please note that Joe's hope was to get a five figure salary, this is six, (eight counting the numbers after the decimals). Also the following titles shall be bestowed on these tireless workers:

JEAN NANCE now has the title of Vice President, in charge of everything the president can dump on her and Editor in Chief of the Mailink.

JOE POWELL has the title of Vice President-Finance and Guardian of the M64/128UTTM Treasure Trove.

BRIAN VAUGHAN has the title of Vice President-Member's Records and Membership list

TOM ADAMS has the title of Vice President-Publication and Distribution.

JIM GREEN has the title of Vice President-Electronic Production

We will also reserve private offices with their name in gold letters on the thirteenth floor of our beautiful new 90 story skyscraper in downtown Palestine overlooking the beaver pond. However with their trusty Commodores they will be able to work out of their homes, eliminating the need to travel to Palestine at their own expense.

Thanks should also be given to members of the Advisory Council; EMIL VOLCHECK, DON DROEGE, JOLENE EHRET, SHIRLEY PATTERSON, ALICE SHIPLEY, and GEORGE STEIDUHAR. Fortunately, we have not been contacted for advice on the loss of the ozone layer or global warming so their help has not been required during my brief tenure as president, however I know they are ready to offer their sage advice when needed. Thanks should also be given to our two greeters, Joan Melton and Shirley Patterson who welcome new members to the club. To show the club's gratitude, the salary of all these people will be increased by 10% effective 1 January 1995.

We all appreciate the efforts that Dan Faber, Bob Hunter, Hugh McMenamin, Jean Nance and Dick Righter expended in editing the Mailinks during 1994. Also those folk who volunteer their time and effort to man the Resources available to the members and those volunteers who act as friendly correspondents.

The annual dues for 1995 was based on a preliminary estimate of \$9.96 cost per member. The final estimate including postage increase is now \$10.16. Based on our present membership of 285 members that means we may possibly fall behind by \$45.60 in the coming year. However, our "carry-over" is about \$1,000, so we are still better off than the United States Government and Commodore Business Machines.

Your president, after much cogitation has come up with a solution. When we induct a new member, I have to send the Bio to Brian, the notice to send them the Mailink to Tom and the dues payment to Joe. We are now in the process of stretching strings from our beautiful edifice in downtown Palestine to Brian in California and Tom in Maryland. By attaching tin cans to this string, we can verbally communicate the necessary data to Brian and Tom. The checks will be sent to Joe via our Texas duck (better homing instinct than carrier pigeons). It is anticipated that the savings in postage will amount to about \$55.00, so we will pull ahead by about \$10.

We will award the \$10.00 to some lucky member in a contest. The contest will be an essay in twenty five words or less on "Why I Have More Fun With My Commodore Than I Do Washing Windows". This contest will be predicated on some dedicated member volunteer(s) as judge(s), and of course, contestants. Do you read me? We need volunteers!! The judge(s) will be named in the January issue and submissions should be made so that the winners can be declared in the May 1995 Mailink. Since no one wishes to be crass enough to want actual cash, the \$10.00 will be applied against their 1996 membership dues

A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON AND NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU
AND DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOUR FAITHFUL COMMODORE A CHRISTMAS PRESENT.



taken from *Catching the Thanksgiving Turkey* by Grandma Moses

Joe Powell reports that 1995 dues received as of 10/18/94 - 82 names 29%

Albachten, Andrazyk, Atkinson, Ayers, Baral, Blackburn, Blakslee, Brinson, Bronson, Brown W, Burch, Burns, Carey E, Chance D, Chance J, Coakley, Cochenour, Colwell, Cottrill, Daniels, Detaille, Duncan, Encoyand, Erickson, Estand, Faucett, Fenn, Fernandez, Flaschk, Frainey, Gagnon, Galler, Garrison, Green, Grimm, Haran, Harvey, Herzig, Hinds, Hoover, Houck, Hoyer, Hunter J, Jewell, Jones M, Kennedy, Knerr, Kornicer, Livernois, Lyons, Maglin, Mann, Marsh, McCoy, McMenamin, Mercuriali, Mullady, Nance, Ness, Olson, Penny, Pitman, Powell J, Rankin, Redmond, Reeves, Ritchie, Roblets, Savoy, Sharon, Shove, Sorenson, Stinton, Stone W, Stone D, Tanner, Thomas, Webber, Welper, Walker D F, Ward, Zeman

NEW MEMBERS

TERRY L. ATKINSON, 325 S. Allen, St. Clair, MI 48079 Terry is a truck driver. Hobbies: Astronomy, astrology, science fiction, and reading. System: C-64, C-64C & C-128, 1541 & 1581 disk drives, HD-20 hard drive, Okimate-10, Seikosha SP-1000 & C=1526 printers, and 1084 & 1702 monitors. Interests: Anything to do with the 64 & 128 and keeping them alive.

STEVE BARCENA, 803 Sandy Ln., Mechanicsville, VA 23111 Steve is a retired warehouse manager. Hobbies: Painting, gardening, and travel. System: C-64 & C-128, 1541, Enhancer 2000 & FD-2000 disk drives, Jiffy-DOS, Star NX-1000 Rainbow printer, 1670 modem, and Warpspeed & Explode cartridges. Interests: Computer art with Melody Hall's Artist, word processing using TWS, and making greeting cards with FGM.

ROSE L. BLACKBURN, Rt. 1 Box 46, Monticello, FL 32344 Rose is an executive secretary. Hobbies: Round & square dancing, genealogy, puzzles, grant writing, and listening to music. System: C-128D & an IBM PC/XT, 1541 disk drive, two Seikosha SP-1000VC printers, Princeton & Magnavox color monitors, and a C= 1200 baud modem. Interests: Learning to write & edit grants, creating newsletters, and working with graphics. She is on Freenet and enjoys computer puzzles, card and logic & mystery games, and entering family genealogy and business & home records on the computer.

ROGER DETAILLE, 80 LaLande - #1, Ste. Therese PQ, J7E 1Z8 Canada Roger is a retired computer salesman. Hobbies: Photography, nature, and classical music. System: C-64, two 1541 & 1541-II disk drives, RAMDrive + 2 Megs., Raven PR-9101 printer, 1702 monitor, 1670 modem, and a Handyscanner. Interests: All GEOS applications including GeoPublish, graphics, and fonts.

JOEL LISKER, 35 W. Phillips, Milan, MI 48160 Joel is a 4th grade elementary teacher. Hobbies: Tennis, country-Western dancing, and aerobics. System: Two C-64s & C-128s, 1541 & Rapid Access drives, Star SX-10, NX-10, NX-1000, NX-1001 & Panasonic KX-P1081 printers, modem, and FastLoad & Explode cartridges. Interests: Classroom use of the C-64 also utilizing the modem. He would like to know of any BBS numbers using the 800 number or others within the 313 area code. He is also looking for a switch that can use one printer with two C-64s.

WILLIAM E. ROBBLETS, P. O. Box 273, West Granby, CT 06090-0273 Bill is retired on disability. Hobbies: Scanning, and Health Network (C.A.T.S.). He will furnish details to interested people. System: C-64, C-128 & C-128D, 1581, CMD FD-4000, and two 1541-II & 1571 disk drives, GeoRAM & 1764 REUs, MPS-1200, MPS-802, Epson 5000 & Okidata-20 printers, 1702, 1902, and Magnavox RGB & monochrome monitors. Interests: GEOS 128, FGM, and anything production related.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Richard Glisson, P. O. Box 7322, St. Petersburg, FL 33734-7322
Keith Keller, 1497 H Ave., Ladora, IA 52251-7521
Egon Kornicer, 110 Anglewood Dr., Fairfield Glade, TN 38558
John Morris, 252 Summerset Ln., Summerville, SC 29483
Frank Rush, 428 S. 4th St. (Rear), Steubenville, OH 43952
Stephen Shabanowitz, 204B Cook Hill Rd., Voluntown, CT 06384

OTHER CHANGES

James Cottrill - Correct the spelling of his last name and his Ham radio call to K3LIE.
Jolene Ehret - Delete the black mark to the left of her name.
Patti Stinton - Add the black mark to the left of her name.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



I will be editing the January, 1995 Mailink. Please send submissions to arrive by December 19th. Submissions should be in Pet ASCII sequential files, or in TWS format. Material that arrives near the deadline is more apt to be held over for the next issue if space is tight, so submit early if you want to be sure your material is used in this issue.

We sometimes get complaints that much Mailink material is "too technical", or that certain topics are neglected. Almost everything that is submitted is used. If you want to see material at a particular level, or on a particular topic, you could write it yourself. If you don't feel competent to do that, persuade someone else to submit the kind of article you want to see in the Mailink.

Correction and apology: In "Notices" in the September Mailink, there was an announcement from a "Greg Kurson". Only one member pointed out that there is no such person in our group. My apologies to Bruce Kurson!

JEAN NANCE.

from the Editor's apprentice

First I would like to thank publicly the folks who responded to my inquiry about PHOTO FINISH. Both CHARLES ANDRAZYK and EDWARD ROHAN sent new unused copies of the program. Many folks sent me program sources for which I am also grateful.

I know I swore I would never get into putting out MAILINK again but as usual, I wind up eating my words. Actually, the first time was the worst but then it was downhill all the way from there.

The masters were produced with the ILLUSTRATOR IIa version of TWS on a C=128, 1581 and 1571 disk drives and printed on the C.ITOH Prowriter Jr. The two column format was achieved by the [cm4] command to create the two columns. (p.14 of TWS reference manual) The Elite spacing was done by sending a printer Macro [L]=27,77,27,199 to the printer before printing a page or series of pages. If incorporated into the text, it uses an extra space so the printer is set up before printing.

The graphics were all done with RUNPaint and FGM to create the clip art.

Hugh McMenamin

ADDRESSES FOR MEETING 64/128 USERS THROUGH THE MAIL

Organization business and membership... Francis Redmond, president. Rt 7, Box 7614, Palestine, TX 75801.

Newsletter... Jean Nance, vice president. 1576B County Rd 2350 E, St. Joseph, IL 61873.

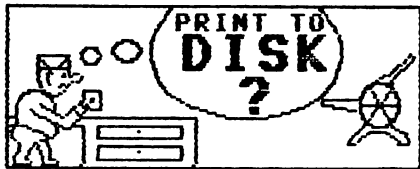
Dues and donations... Joseph Y. Powell, treasurer. 5366 Fieldwood, Houston, TX 77056.

Membership addresses and biographies; corrections and changes... Brian Vaughan, 2101 Shoreline Dr. 352, Alameda, CA 94501

COMMODORE MAILINK

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All manuscripts, or any material for review or publication should be sent to the editor of the next issue (see "Editor's Desk"). Commodore Mailink reserves the right to edit submissions.



MORE ON TEXT FILES
by Maurice Jones

In September I wrote of text files created by and for word processors. I am back to talk about another way in which we use text files to share information, files written for display on our screens.

I doubt that there are many Commodore users who do not know how to read text files from disk. One of the most common utilities is the file reader, which allows us to read text from our screen without a wp. Virtually every side of every issue of Loadstar contains LOADSTAR READER, only two blocks long, and there are dozens of short pd programs as well. Better are readers built into utility cartridges such as Snapshot and WarpSpeed. JiffyDos users have the "@T:filename" command for instant file reading.

What I want to discuss, then, is the creation of such text files. If you have tried to use a file reader to read files created by a wp as screen code, you know that the results are really strange. The reason is that practically every file reader expects PETASCII, so this is the type we must create. It is possible to save the files as, sequential (SEQ), program (PRG), or even user (USR), though user is rare. However some readers will accept only sequential files. In fact, it appears that this was almost standard in earlier times. Now, most new readers will accept either sequential or program files without any action by the user.

There are RUN ME FIRST files on some disks which are actually BASIC programs which print to the screen. While these are very easy to use, they are NOT easy to create. Creating the on screen HELP documents in BASIC was the only part of writing my early solitaire games that I did not enjoy. Now I create long docs to be read from within the program and do not dread it at all. Why? Because Jeff Jones wrote a "File Browser" into TOOLBOX 117 (on LS 117, naturally) which allows me to create the docs using TWS.

Here is how I use TWS to do the job. Since I write for the 64, what follows refers to files for the 40 column screen, but except for screen width, the procedures are the same for the 128 and an 80 column screen. Write the text as you would any text, and then set margins in terms of the screen, rather than in terms of hard copy. If you use an 80 character page width, the left margin may be zero (text is against left side of screen) and right margin may be 41 or more. This means that the last column on the right of the screen is not used. If the margin is set to 40, the C64's built in screen editor will sometimes create unwanted blank lines. If the right margin is less than 40, the screen editor will truncate words at the right of the screen and continue the line below. Try reading a Loadstar 128 text file on the 64 to see what I mean. It is simpler to set the margins to 0 and the page width to 39 or 38. As a general rule, set top and bottom margins to zero. Doing so makes page length unimportant and acts as if your screen is a continuous sheet. It is possible to think of your screen as a 25 line page, setting top and bottom margins as you choose. However, unless the file reader you intend to use is designed to advance a screen at a time the result will not be good.

Once the text is complete, call up the PRINT MENU and hit the "d" key. The prompt "Filename:" will appear at the top of the screen. Type in the name that you want, hit RETURN, and the file will be "printed to disk." The file created on disk will be PETASCII SEQ, readable by most file readers. The advantages of this are obvious, you use all the features of a full fledged wp and get a great looking text on your screen. Why not simply save your text as a PETASCII file? Because if you do, lines are not preserved, although paragraphs are. The result is that some words are truncated at the end of screen lines. Not a pretty sight.

My first wp, SpeedScript, also had the "print to disk" feature and was the tool I used to write my early Zero Page articles for Loadstar. The method was the same as with TWS. I would guess that other wps also have this capability.

Text files for the screen can also be created by Loadstar's Edstar which is a special purpose utility which creates the type file we are discussing. One simply types in the file and saves it. On-screen help files and prompts make the job easy. Edstar, however, is not a full featured wp and is therefore not as convenient as TWS, in some respects.

So why would you want to create such text file? Loadstar, Gazette, and even our own Mailink disk use this type file and you can find other uses as well. Suppose you have a disk containing some of those Gazette programs that had documentation only in the magazine. Load up TWS, type in the needed documents for each program, save these files to the same disk, add a file reader, if you don't have a built in reader, and you can lose those old, yellow magazines. It is a good idea to use some system of naming so that you can readily identify text files. The Loadstar folks use the prefix "t." Have disks which contain programs which you can't remember? Type up a file describing the contents of the disk, print it to disk. Have a disk on which you keep notes to yourself? Create them by print to disk and you can read your reminders without loading a wp. I feel sure you can think of other uses. At least create a file for your own satisfaction.

I do not claim to be extremely knowledgeable in the area of text files and beg anyone who finds errors or misinformation here to set the record straight, either by writing to me or to the editor of MailLink.

GENIE CONFERENCE ON THE COMMODORE ROUND TABLE.

The Commodore Round Table on Genie had a special treat when it had a combined Creative Micro Designs and Commodore World conference on Tuesday, August 24, 1994. Mark Fellows, the President of CMD, who made his first appearance on GENie was there as well as Doug Cotton, the editor of the Commodore World magazine. The group was rounded out with two writers for Commodore World magazine: Steve VanderArk and Sherry Freedline. The conference covered six topics which generated large numbers of questions from the audience.

This conference was hosted by GEOS-TIM [Tim Hewelt]. Tonight we have some special guests:

Mark Fellows, inventor of Jiffy Dos, President of CMD, designer of the CMD harddrive, and author of CMD dos. [CMD-MARK]

Doug Cotton, Director of Technical Services at CMD and editor of Commodore World.

Our first topic is history..... How did CMD get started?

<[CMD-MARK] Well, I started with JiffyDOS on my own about 7 years ago. I marketed it through Computer Shopper and Keyboard Magazine. In 1987, I talked with Charlie Christianson at a family picnic, and we decided to get together. Slowly, since then we have built our product line and reputation.

<[GEOS-TIM] That brings up a question about how you ever got the idea for Jiffy Dos?

<[CMD-MARK] Well, I was writing a MIDI sequencer for the 64, and noticed how horrendously long it took to load files. After that, I kind of got sidetracked into doing JiffyDOS while I tried to find ways to speed up the loading of the sequencer files.

<[GEOS-TIM] Doug, how did you get into the CMD picture?

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> That came a bit later, after the company had been around and selling JiffyDOS for a couple of years. I was working for Abacus back then, and met Mark and Charlie at one of the World of Commodore shows. We got to chatting and when the HD project got underway, and they needed to add some support staff they flew me out to look things over, and the rest is (as they say) history.

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> Doug started on with us in 1989, about the same time we released the HD Series Hard Drives.

<[GEOS-TIM] Okay, I'm opening the floor for questions from the audience. Gaelyne, from C64 alive has a question

<[Gaelyne] G.MORANEC> Mark, whatever became of your MIDI sequencer?

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> JiffyDOS became such a project that there wasn't time for anything else.. By the time JiffyDOS was finished, everybody was using Mac's to do sequencing!

<[Tony] A.PEROTTI> Engage groupie mode: How old are you guys and how many employees does cmd have?

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> Let me get out my calculator...

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> I'm 37 and Doug is 85.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> I guess I'm 85. No, I'm 37!

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> The employee count varies according to the season. There's a number of part timers - the total count is anywhere from 10 to 15.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> Charlie Jr is the youngest I think... How old is he now, Mark?

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> Charlie is about 29 I think.

<[Jake] J.HAMBY5> Seems like JiffyDOS went from v1 to v6 really quick. Were there any big changes made or just bug fixes? Also, how did you learn to write a fastloader?

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> At first (V1 to V2) there were just bug fixes. V3 was just an Alpha release for V4. V4 was when we first incorporated the DOS Wedge into JiffyDOS (it used to have commands like TYPE and DIR). V5 as when I incorporated dual-bit transfer routines to really get the speed up there. V6 came along when I found a way to cram the file copier and some other goodies into the 4 bytes of extra room I had left! I learned to write a fastloader by trial and error and by reverse engineering the fastloaders in other products like Fast Hack'Em, etc.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> I think there was a lot of experimentation involve too... seeing what did and didn't work well.

<[Mitron] M.BENDURE> What bugs did JiffyDOS take care of in the original CBM DOS? If any?

<[CMD-MARK] CBM-PRES.> Well, JiffyDOS was designed primarily as a speedup system, and we didn't pay too much attention to the bugs. In the 1571CR (the drive in the 128-D) we did incorporate a number of fixes that CBM left out. Fixes that they had incorporated in the latest 1571 ROM.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> Fixing bugs that CBM didn't fix can lead to incompatibilities, so we took the safe road.

<[GEOS-TIM]> Rob Knop, one of GENie's well known GEOS enthusiast has a question.

<[Rob] R.KNOPI> I've been a little out of it for a year, but I think this is history: has CMD started supporting platforms other than the 64/128, and which ones?

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> Nope. All we do is 64/128 to this very day, and in fact, we're so busy doing it that we wouldn't have time to do any other platform right now.

<[GEOS-TIM]> Jake Hamby has a question.

<[Jake] J.HAMBY5> Two quickies: First, did you have to pay CBM to use their ROMs in JiffyDOS? Second, did you have a lot of returns on systems with soldered ROMs (like my C64C)? (my friends and I almost destroyed my C64 desoldered the darn Kernal!)

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> We have (had?) an agreement with CBM concerning the ROMs, though the details of that can't really be disclosed.

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> We have negotiated a contract with CBM to use their ROMs, although the terms should not be disclosed here.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> I say 'had' since CBM really is no more...

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> As far as returns go, we see very few. Most people manage to find someone who can help them with the job.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> We used to get back more 'botched' installations than we do now, but it's always been rare, yes.

<[GEOS-TIM]> Nick Rossi, author of Novaterm, has a question. This will be the last one on this topic.

<[Nick] N.ROSSI> How did you end up as a clearinghouse for such a variety of C= software and hardware?

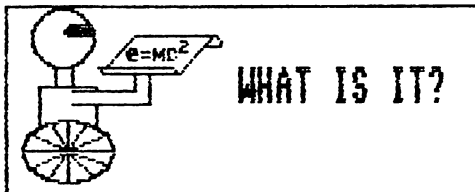
<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> That was really more a matter of default than anything...

<[CMD-MARK] CMD-PRES.> By popular demand, as they say.

<[D.Cotton] CMD-DOUG> As more companies dropped out, it left very few of us offering sales and support We did make a concerted effort about a year ago, though, to diversify. Since this helps us increase our sales base, as well as helps expose new users to our own products.

"Copyright 1994 by GENie From the Commodore 64/128 RoundTable File#####."

[Editor's note: This was only part of a very long conference. We thought members might like to see what a telecommunication conference is like, and the information that was provided. We may publish more of the conference in other MailLinks. Thanks to Tom Adams who downloaded this for us.]



AN UNTIDY COLLECTION OF JUST
WHAT SOME COMMODORE JARGON MEANS.

DONGLE: A plug-in microprocessor for insertion into a joystick port; prevented program copying.

RAMBOARD: An 8k drive ram enhancement useful in copying some programs.

PADDLE: An early alternative to the joystick; few programs use it.

REU: A cartridge which added RAM to the computer which could be accessed by special programming; ram expansion unit.

PRINTER INTERFACE: Hardware allowing control of a printer by the Commodore through the user port rather than the serial port.

DUAL DRIVE: A housing containing two drives offering device 8 but units 0 and 1.

AIRWARE (or VAPORWARE): Software promoted but never reaching the marketplace.

MOUSE: Hardware device controlling cursor by rolling device across a surface.

NLQ: Near letter quality; dot matrix printing nearly reaching business letter quality.

IEEE: A standard for linking computers to peripherals; an early parallel standard introduced about 1976; not Centronics.

CENTRONICS: A parallel standard that became an IBM standard

VIC-II: A Commodore computer chip allowing sprite graphics.

DISK NOTCHER: A hole puncher for notching single sided disks allowing such to be flipped and formatted on the back for use in 1541 drives.

DATASETTE: A tape recorder modified for storing Commodore programs.

WRITE PROTECT TAB: A paper cover masking the notch of a disk; this protects the disk from being written to.

RANDOM FILE: Similar to a relative file used in some databases except that length does not have to be predetermined.

FAST LOAD: Hardware or software routines which speed program loading on Commodore drives.

WEDGE: Program able to operate without interfering with other programs; 64 Wedge is a disk operating system operating by shorthand commands.

COLD START: Turning hardware off and then back on after ten seconds.

SID: sound synthesizer chip.

INTERFACE: A device with a cable or wires at each end that connects a printer to a computer. These were necessary to connect a Commodore with serial output to a printer expecting parallel input.

CPS: Characters per second.

DRAFT MODE: Printing utilizing a minimum of dots in the dot matrix.

TRACK: Rings like tree ring on a disk but containing the format for receiving data.

SECTOR: Sections of each track on a disk.

Z80: a microprocessor sporting CP/M language capabilities; it is an added feature of the C128 and 128D.

CP/M: an early computer language supporting 80 column business programs and drive access.

FAST COPY: A copy routine which captures data but leaves out so-called disk errors. While this may save unprotected software with disk errors, it will not reproduce errors necessary for the running of some commercial software.

SNAPSHOT: Capturing a memory resident program for backup purposes.

PARAMETER: A routine for reproducing software protection for a copy of a commercial disk or a routine for eliminating the need for reproduction of such software protection.

DOS: Disk Operating System

From "Grassroots #1"
Courtesy of Donald Ayers.

WHAT EVERY COMMODORE OWNER
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEIR COMPUTER.

Robert Ritchey

I have been repairing Commodore computers, disk drives and printers for about 4 years now. I buy old non-working machines, repair and resell them. I do not make much money on this. I sell a working 64 for \$50.00 with a power supply and \$40.00 without. Most replacement IC's for the Commodore cost me from \$12.95 for the 6510 (CPU) to \$14.95 for the 82S100 (PLA). Plus, I always install a socket instead of soldering the chip direct to the PC board. As you can see, it's just a hobby.

The #1 problem with most Commodore computers is the PLA chip. I found this to be the problem 90% of the time. The #2 & #3 problems are the 6581 (SID) and the 6567 (VIDEO). Most people will still use their computers after the sound quits working and very often two or more chips have to be replaced in the same computer. When the chips and other components are soldered on the board at the factory it is done all at one time by placing all components on the board and passing the board over a pool of molten solder. The reason some chips are in sockets and other aren't is to hold down the cost of making the board. You will generally find chips in sockets on the newer computers, the earlier ones to come out soldered all of the chips in. Later they put the PLA and VIDEO chips in sockets and then even later they added sockets for all of the larger chips. I have yet to find any memory chips (4164-12) in sockets.

After each board is made it is hooked up and tested. The test reveals any bad components and they are replaced. This is the reason some computers have some chips in sockets that you usually don't find in sockets. Chips are very hard to remove from the board if you don't have a desoldering tool and even then it isn't easy. The hardest chips to replace are the memory chips. This is because the solder runs through the holes in the pc board and solders both sides, because of the number of circuits on the top side of the board. I make it a rule to replace all memory chips if I replace one. I always put sockets under them. However, before you

can even remove a chip you have to remove the metal shield on the bottom of the main board and it is soldered on with about 8 tabs all around the edge of the board.

Testing the chips: You need a logic probe and volt/ohm meter to test the circuits. You also need a good schematic and knowledge of what each chip is supposed to be doing. Since Commodore changed board designs about every year there are several different schematics out there. Your PC board will have a number at the bottom of the board. For example PCB NO. 252311 is for the newer 64C computers, or at least one of them. As with computers the disk drives are different also.

SOMETIMES OLDER IS BETTER: Before they put the 325572-01 chip in the 1541 disk drive there were over 20 chips in the drive. The 325572-01 replaces several of these chips and made the circuit boards much smaller. However, the 325572-01 is no longer in production although the chips it replaced are. So if your drive has one of these and it goes out then you are out a drive. I can repair the older drives more easily because I can still get the smaller chips. The newer 64C has one 64 pin chip that replaced about 15 chips in the old 64, but it cost about \$30.00 and it too is getting hard to find. The older chips it replaced are still around. I am trying to make up a circuit board for the 1541 to replace the 325572-01 chips. I need some good schematics for the PCB#1540007 and PCB# 244597 in order to do this. I also am looking for the schematic for PCB#252311 (Commodore 64C).

One place you can still purchase chips for the Commodore computer and disk drives is: JAMECO ELECTRONICS COMPONENTS, 1355 Shoreway Road, Belmont, CA 94002-4100 (1-415-592-8097) Other possibilities are: EASYTECH, Inc., 2917 Bayview Drive, Fremont, CA 94538 and The GRAPEVINE Group Inc., 3 Chestnut Street, Suffern, New York 10901 (1-914-357-2424).

I will try to answer any technical questions about computers and disk drives. I'm not an expert, just willing to help. I will not repair your computer for you but will take your computer in trade. I may not be able to repair all computers, and I can't promise fast service.

REVIEW OF CMD's SMARTMOUSE
Joey Holman



I, like most Commodore 8-bit users these days, am a GEOS user. The majority of us use the old standby, the Commodore 1351 mouse for an input device. I have had mine for years and it has performed flawlessly. Why should I buy another one now, and for fifty bucks at that? I use "state of the art" business trash computers at work running SmartCAM. I have grown rather attached to the mouse and the smooth, quick and accurate feel that the pointer has. When I get home and get into GEOS, the mere size and feel of the 1351 is not unlike rolling a bowling ball around on the desk. Even with the mouse speed set at it's highest level, it's very sluggish. The mouse buttons are mushy and inconveniently placed. What to do?

Enter Creative Micro Designs, the ultimate good guy in the 8 bit world. (This is the company that Commodore should have been.) They have recently launched SmartMouse, a well balanced, compact three button mouse that is just plain dandy! It is much smaller than the 1351, and better shaped. Looking inside, it seems built well. Comparing the insides of the two is startling. The 1351's board and components clearly show its age. SmartMouse has much higher quality components, particularly the microswitches for the buttons. Even the roller ball is smaller.

What's the Smart part of SmartMouse? A battery-backed real time clock, that's what. This thing can update the GEOS clock, or you can read it for your own uses. A utility disk is included that contains, among other things, an Auto-Exec file for GEOS that will set the clock on the desktop automatically. Just copy the file to your boot disk and have the mouse plugged in. Also on the disk are mouse drivers for GEOS 64 and GEOS 128. Using these, all three buttons are pre-programmed for you. The left button clicks as usual. The middle button is a turbo button. Hold this down while moving the pointer and watch it fly! No more picking up the mouse a couple of times to get the pointer across the screen! The right button double clicks.

Did they stop with just GEOS? Hardly! Also on the disk are ML mouse drivers you can use for your own programs.

One for 64 mode, one for 128 mode 40 column and one for 128 mode 80 column. All three create the pointer for you. (The 80 column pointer is MUCH better and smoother than the one on Basic 8.0!) They include source code files for all three. Yet another program, SmartTools, aids in setting the clock initially. It operates in either 40 or 80 column.

If all this were not enough, also on the disk is RUNpaint. A very nice color painting program that works in 40 column mode in either the 64 or 128 mode. published by RUN magazine a few years back. It allows multi-color or hi-res modes, and has the usual assortment of painting tools. If you don't have that particular issue of RUN, CMD put the documentation on the disk for you to print out.

The manual is clearly written and includes all necessary information. It even shows how to convert the mouse to left-handed operation. This requires some soldering, so the uneasy may seek to have CMD do it for you. Detailed information on programming the real-time clock is also in the manual.

CMD claims 100% compatibility with the 1351. Near as I can tell, it is. Everything I have that needs a mouse works normally. Joystick mode seems to operate in the same manner as well. (I even found a chip inside the mouse that has a Commodore logo on it! - how's that for compatibility?)

Is it worth fifty bucks? When I bought my 1351, I paid \$39 for it. Considering all the improvements, features, and utilities you get with SmartMouse, I think the cost is justified. Another thing to consider, is that CMD has stuck with us when they didn't have to. They have supported us, so we should support them in the way they like best, buying their products.

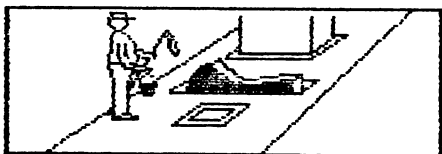
FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE CMD SMARTMOUSE
Brian Vaughan

(Brian also reviewed the SmartMouse, generally favorably but made these additional comments. JN)

Over a 3 week period, the RTC feature in my mouse gained 2 minutes. With GEOS, the mouse has a double speed feature for the pointer, but I find that the pointer moves fast enough without this feature. The mouse has the ability to be put into joystick mode on power-up, but I find that this mode is not as effective as using a standard joystick. I don't plan on using the SmartMouse plugged into the pass-thru connector of the IconTroller joystick as the mouse interferes with the operation of the IconTroller. If you do not need the RTC feature and considering that the SmartMouse sells for \$50, you might be just as satisfied with the C-1351 mouse which sells for much less.

RAMLINK TIP
Brian Vaughan

With a disk drive and a utility program, it is easy to insert dividers into your disk directory between like files or files which load subsequent support files. Using RAMLink with Native Mode partitions, there is no utility that I know of for inserting directory file dividers. I found that it can be easily done using your word processor. Just save a blank file with a filename starting with 16 minus signs (-). Since you cannot duplicate filenames, you can also use the plus sign (+), the equal sign (=), and with spaces and using any combination of these keys, you will never duplicate a filename. If your word processor defaults to Device #8, just press the Swap 8 button on RL and then use your programs feature for sending disk commands to enter any Native Mode partition or sub-partition before saving your divider file. You can then use the DEDIT program on the RL Utility Disk to manually sort your Native Mode directory or sub-directory to place these divider files where you want them.



C-128 POWER SWITCH MODIFICATION
Brian Vaughan

The July issue of DieHard magazine had an article for cleaning & modifying the C-128's power switch. I performed the cleaning & mod on both of my C-128s. One C-128 had a power switch so sensitive that it was causing the computer to reset to BASIC at any time. The cleaning & mod fixed this problem. The other C-128 was fine before & after the work. The author said that his fix would also eliminate the 1 second of garbage that appears on the screen upon power-up before the 128 screen appears, but both my computers still had this minor anomaly after the fix.

DUMB TRICKS DEPARTMENT
WARNING ON SURGE PROTECTORS

In the September Mailink, I described my "Power Comm 3000", and said: "The phone line to my modem runs through for surge protection for that line". Make that past tense! One night an electrical storm was threatened, so rather than trusting my surge protector, I pulled the line to it from the wall. However, I did not remove the phone line. The next morning, my modem and phone were inoperative. However, if I by-passed the surge protector, everything worked well.

I put my problem to Greg Smith, sysop of FBN bulletin board and my local source for technical information. He explained what had probably happened. Surge protectors include a ground line. A surge came through the phone line, and since the surge protector was not grounded, it damaged the phone connection inside the Power Comm. This apparently protected my modem and phone, but my phone protection system is dead.

Moral: Either trust your surge protector and leave it plugged in, or unplug it and the phone line. Another moral: If you don't have a surge protector, or your surge protector doesn't have modem protection, unplug your computer system and your phone line when a storm is threatened. I have heard of several cases where users lost their modem to a storm that caused no damage to the rest of their system.

JEAN NANCE

The BBG Ram
Jeff Fleming

Many kinds of RAM expanders are used with Commodore 8 bit computers. The one I use now is called a BBG Ram. It is a 2 meg, battery backed unit available for \$159 + \$6 S&H from Performance Peripherals Inc., 9 Upper Loudon Road, Loudonville, NY 12211, Phone 800-925-9774. (A 1 meg BBG Ram is \$119.) Lynn McCarthy Industries, publisher of "DieHard" magazine offers the 2 meg version for \$165.97 and the 1 meg version for \$123.97. (Phone 208-383-0300.)

It comes with a separate wall - plug - in power supply and a four "D" cell battery pack. Memory is retained when the computer is turned off, even if there is a 3-week power failure. If the battery pack stays plugged into the BBG Ram, you can take it from computer to computer.

It's perfect for me to use on my second system at my wife's house in Mexico. I don't have to risk my original GEOS disks in airport X ray machines, and once I get there, I don't have to worry about power failures. To be extra secure, I hook the Ram up to a big 6-volt lantern battery. On New Years Eve, the neighbors were whooping it up, shooting revolvers into the air, and guess what! Got a power line. Power didn't actually go down then, but the next day the repair crew shut down all circuits when they came to repair the line. I don't blame them at all for being safe.

It should be pointed out that BBG Ram is a GEORAM type device and presently can only be used with GEOS. I occasionally miss the speed I had using my 1764 with Maverick and Big Blue Reader, but as a heavy GEOS user, I find that the advantages outweigh these inconveniences. I wish I were a programmer; I think it would be a public service to tweak the Maverick, BBR, and TWS RAM expansion routines so they would work with GEORAM type devices. For those who need 1764/1750 compatibility, PPI's BBU unit for \$49 will convert their existing REU's to battery backup.

The GEOS CONFIGURE 2.0 file must be replaced with CONFIGURE 2.0r, which is provided with the BBG Ram. If you are using a GEORAM version of GEOS, or CMD's Gateway, this is not necessary. I couldn't get Gateway to work with or

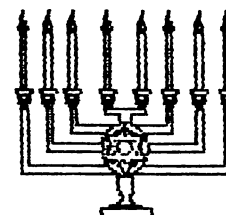
without my BBG Ram, so this article will concentrate on using BBG Ram with regular GEOS 2.0r. The RAM Reboot option under CONFIGURE should always be selected.

BBG RBOOT is a utility which, when put onto your work disks, allows you to boot GEOS directly from the work disk, even 1581 disks on device 9! Saves your precious boot disk. The boot up time with BBG RBOOT is 22 seconds, compared with 50 seconds for my Maverick 1581 GEOS backup, or 55 seconds from the original GEOS boot disk. One small inconvenience using BBG RBOOT is that you must remember to move the RAM disk back to drive C before you shut down the computer. Otherwise, there will only be 2 drives available at the next reboot.

MountMRam1571 allows the user to switch "partitions" within the RAM. I ignored this utility at first, because the title made me think it was a C=128 only routine. I was limited to one 331 K 1571 RAM disk until I figured out that Mountmram1571 allowed me to access all 2 meg. It is helpful to give each of the 5 RAM "Partitions" a descriptive name so you know where you are. "Ram Write B," "Ram Paint C," etcetera. If you for some reason need to reboot without BBG RBOOT, the first "Partition" is reformatted, but the other 4 remain safe. So important stuff should go on pages B thru E.

The partition in use when the computer was last shut down is the active partition when rebooting with BBG RBOOT. This is a real convenience if you do most of your work in the same application. If you reboot with a boot disk, partition A is active, (and blank.)

The BBGRam comes with a disk containing the above utilities. C=128 versions are also provided, and a RAM test program. For me, the quick boot up direct from a work disk, and the large storage capacity of the BBG Ram unit have transformed my C=64 into a convenient, productive machine. The BBGRam is a really neat accessory at a low price.



HAPPY
CHANUKAH

SMARTMOUSE UPDATE

Brian Vaughan

The right button on my new CMD SmartMouse failed after using it only two months. I could get it to work by bending the cable coming from the mouse to the left, but when I released it, the right button again did not work. The mouse's clock also gained 8 minutes in a month which is not acceptable. I called CMD on my nickel and got a return number to ship it back (insured) for repair which cost another \$2.85 plus my phone call. And another CMD problem: I ordered a program from them and the disk arrived mangled because of their flimsy packaging and had to be returned for replacement. The disk was inserted in the middle of the manual which was then tightly shrink-wrapped. Since the program was not boxed as usual, I felt that I had received someone else's reject. If other members have had problems with their SmartMouse or with CMD, please notify the editor of the next newsletter.

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Long term users, go away. These tips are so familiar to you that you've forgotten you know them. They are a real convenience to beginners and are offered in that spirit.

After loading a directory and listing it, you can slow scrolling by keeping the CTRL key depressed or stop scrolling by RUN/STOP. If you are using the wedge from the test demo, you can pause scrolling by tapping the space bar.

With the title of the program revealed in the directory, you can move the cursor up to that line with the cursor keys. With the wedge from the test demo, you can place that loading short hand command right over the block number and the program will load from the disk drive.

If no wedge is being used, you cursor past the second set of quote marks, put a comma right after them, type an 8, type a colon, use the space bar to erase the file type, then keep shift depressed as you hit RUN/STOP. This will load and run a basic program.

With the SX 64, pressing the Commodore key and the RUN/STOP key simultaneously will load and run the first basic program from the disk.

After saving a program, you can verify that save by immediately typing verify"*",8. That saves you from having to type the title.

On most 64's, the restore key must be sharply tapped rather than merely depressed in order to perform. This is not a defective key.

If your public domain disk directory begins with a seq file, you can't run it like a program (prg) file. It is an informational file generally read with a sequential file reader, which is itself a program file.

Unless you are employing a special cartridge or utility, if you load and list a directory by direct mode commands, you lose any program you had in memory.

From "Grassroots #1"
courtesy of Donald Ayers.

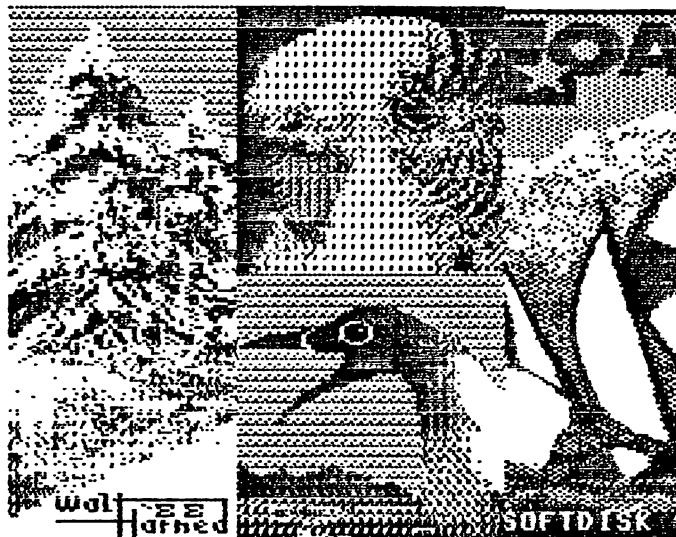


SAD STORY

In May, REGAN FEIST sent a check for \$35.70 to Random magazine, 7161 North Maine, Clovis, CA 93611-8200. This was for a year's subscription, with disks. She had previously ordered and received a set of back issues, and this led her to assume that Random was a going outfit. She received a November 1993 copy, no disk, and has had nothing since. According to information on bulletin boards, Random has folded. Letters to Random remain unanswered.

We don't know what advice to give members about this kind of problem. We certainly wouldn't advise that you never send money to anyone who offers Commodore information. In that case, you would probably never have joined our group. Various Commodore offers, including the two Geos "groups" that later self-destructed, were recommended in our pages by members who truly believed in the people who were providing the material. Maybe a good rule is, "Never send more money than you are prepared to lose cheerfully"

Loadstar has recently published its collection of graphics that have been created by its 'out house' artist, Walt Harned. These represent some of the best computer art that has been collected. Each series is presented as a separate slide show usually related to a topic but many are just collections seemingly gathered just for pure enjoyment. Mr. Harned has included several instructional programs by in computer art for various drawing programs. Although his favorite seems to be the OPC Art Studio, the principles, suggestions and tips dispel the usual reluctance to try to draw anything more than stick figure art.



The above is a sample of segments of some of the screens. The colors are represented by different patterns. Hopefully, this drawing will convey the idea of some of the quality of the art, but it must be said that the only way to really appreciate them is to view them on a color monitor.

The collection includes most of the LOADSTAR 'covers' or original screens. Most of the individual slide shows have provision for saving the graphic as hi-res (Doodle) or med-res (Koala) format so that they can be transferred to other storage devices. The collection is on three 3 1/2 inch disks or on seven 5 1/4 inch disks (both sides). Since there are about 275 separate pictures, the \$20 charge doesn't seem unreasonable. I'm sure that these can be purchased directly without being a subscriber to Loadstar.

As a supplement to Emil Kalar's fine article on color printing, I would also suggest anyone interested in color printing with the C= equipment obtain a copy of Jack Blewitt's article in the July/Aug 94 issue of dieHard entitled 8-BIT 4-PASS COLOR TUTORIAL. This gives an excellent summary in using the three primary pigment colors, yellow, red, and blue along with black to provide excellent color reproduction of Med-Res graphics. As mentioned in Emil's article, the ribbons have to be switched (which is a pain) if a color printer is not available.

The color separation can be done with the Kverter program but the program PHOTO FINISH has a provision that any pattern can be designated for each of the C= 16 colors. Thus the red color would be solid as would the orange, brown and purple. (Orange = red + yellow. Brown = red + yellow + blue. Purple = red + blue.) The lt. red would be made of only partial dots which is accomplished by PHOTO FINISH or the partial filling of the Kverter. Green of course is a mix of yellow and blue and again the intensity would depend on the configuration of the number of dots printed to the page.

Unfortunately, PHOTO FINISH doesn't allow for saving the bit map directly but when it is displayed on the screen, this can be readily captured with Super Snapshot as a Doodle, or better yet, as a Flexidraw file which can be loaded into the FUN GRAPHICS MACHINE to make the clip-art color plates. If SUPER SNAPSHOT is not available, the computer has to be reset and the SCREEN-FINDER of FGM has to be used to capture the screen.

Mr. Blewitt has also developed a technique of multiple passes to intensify the color. This can be done with just the black ribbon with the print head as far away from the paper as possible so that the various shades of grey can be effected. Attempts to demonstrate this are on pages three and twenty.

Although color printing with an 8 bit machine requires patience and a bit of practice, it does add another dimension to the use of the Commodore Computers.



QUESTIONS

KEITH KELLER: The left SHIFT key on my 128D keyboard has started to work only intermittently. Does the whole keyboard need cleaning, a new switch, or what?

WENDELL WELPER: Does anyone know how to put an address directly on an envelope using Geos, and a Star NX-1000 printer?

DICK RIGHTER: I have seen advertisements for CD Roms, and they certainly sound wonderful. Does anybody know if there is any possibility of something like that for the C64/128? I wonder if an interface could convert these to our DOS?

DONALD AYERS: As a Commodore Archeologist, I'm trying to discover what the first CBM drive was, and also whether 8 inch floppy drives were marketed for the Commodore, and if so what they were called. I figure such beasts may have existed between 1976 and 1982. I'm also wondering what was the 3000 series of PET or CBM computers.

DON WALKER has just acquired a new 1581 disk drive. He asks, "Does anyone know of a program or any way to transfer programs from a 1571 to a 1581? I would appreciate any help with this.

WILLIAM MANN: I recently purchased a used Star NL-10 printer with Commodore interface and instruction books. In trying to set up codes in

THE WRITE STUFF for this printer I had three basic problems.

1) "b" (double strike code) gives two column vertical print.

2) "i" (italics code) shows italics on screen, but won't print them.

3) "u" (underlining) does not work at all until a user-defined code is turned on and off at the same time. I set the code "t" to 27,93,49 for turn on and 27,93,48 for turn off. (ASCII operating mode) is turned on and off at the same time. In other words both control codes have to be entered at the beginning and ending of underscoring. This problem may exist only with the NL-10 model. I notice several other members of the group own a Star NL-10. Does anybody have any other way to use TWS codes with this printer?

JIM CALDWELL: When I moved recently I lost the address of the International CP/M users group. Does anyone have it? Also I have heard that there is a C-64 emulator program that is for an IBM computer. If this exists, I would be grateful if someone could tell me where it can be obtained.

DONALD SQUIRE asks: If you have a text file of a BASIC program, is there any way of turning it into a BASIC program, other than typing it in from the text?

[There are programs that convert the keywords into tokens that are required by the C= machines but generally, it is easier to type in the programs. HJM]

THE WRITE STUFF. NEW PRODUCT AND PRICE LISTING

FRED KNERR PO Box 2, New Tripoli PA 18066-0002. Checks to "Fred Knerr"

* * TWS 64 V1 with manual	\$ 9.00
* * TWS 64 V2 with manual & BB Speller (must own V1)	\$ 6.00
* * BB Talker 64 (must own V1) docs in V1 64 Manual	\$ 6.00
* * TWS 128 V1 with manual	\$13.00
* * TWS 128 V2 with manual & BB Speller (must own V1)	\$ 6.00
* * The Illustrator 64/128 for Run Paint/ Print Shop Graphics	\$ 5.00
* * The Illustrator II 64/128 for Fun Graphics Machine	\$ 5.00
* * Keyboard Overlay 64 or 128	\$ 2.00
* * TRY ME Demo disk 64 or 128 (no manual)	\$ 3.00

64 Version shipped unless otherwise specified. Shipped within 24 hours. Shipping included

Buy TWS V1 and V2 before 3/1/95 and get Keyboard overlay FREE



BUY SELL TRADE

FOR SALE: C-128, two 1571 disk drives, Magnavox 80 RGB monitor, Comrex printer (Brother HR-15 clone), joysticks, mouse, modems, fastload cartridge, lots of programs, with all manuals, connectors, etc. Please send an SASE for full details and prices. "JAY" WIBECAN

FOR SALE: Seventeen very fine Commodore books for \$30 plus shipping. Send SASE for list. Also all 25 issues of "GeoWorld", plus 3 issues of "Twin Cities 128", for \$12 plus shipping. HUBERT ALBACHTEN

TRADE: I would like to trade a like-new set of 4 Suncom "The Party Quiz Game" paddles, for: 64 game cartridges or games on 5 1/4 inch disks for my daughters 11, 12, and 13. LINDA DURBIN

FOR SALE or TRADE: Programs with manuals and boxes for the C-64.

SYC Calc by Synapse. \$5

Swift Calc by Timeworks. \$5

Webster's Numbers \$2

Games:

Suspended, Zork II, Deadline each \$2

Complete set of C-64 manuals \$2

Listed price plus postage. JOAN MELTON

WANTED:

Cartridge Port expander.

RamLink

C=128D ED ROHAN

WANTED: I will buy or trade for something you need.

Ultima 1, 2, or 3

Bard's Tale 1 or 2 (or other fantasy role playing games)

Repair book for 1541

Guitar Wizard by Baudville or

Easy Guitar (or any chord encyclopedia that will print out chord charts)

PATTI STINTON

WANTED: JAMES COTTRILL has a program called "V.6 Data Shack Parallel Copier Superfast File Backup and Utilities Version 2". It has served him well, but he has been unable to copy it, and would like to purchase a back-up. The company that sold it, VG Data Shack, of Quebec, Canada, is no longer in business. The author is Charles Le Borgne, but James can't locate him. Can anyone suggest where the program could be obtained? Failing that, are there any Commodore hot-shots out there

who could help with the problem of backing up the program?

JAMES also writes: "I am looking for unusual peripherals for the C-64, C128, 1541, 1571, and 1581. Just started using my Commodore, if I don't have one, I probably need two."

TRADE: Does anyone have any CP/M programs they would like to trade?

JIM CALDWELL

FOR SALE: Mouse, modem, disk drives, interface, REU, pen plotter, monitors, joysticks, and lots of software. Please send SASE for list.

JOEY ASHBY

WANTED. I would like to buy a C-64 program called "Video Title Shop", complete with all documentation. Phone: 604-274-0118 after 6 PM Pacific time.

ANDRE CARDINAL

REPAIRS, PARTS and HARDWARE from CMD: According to a message on the Internet Commodore "List", Creative Micro Designs (phone 1-800-636-3263) is now offering repair services on Commodores. They are also stocking up on chips and other parts, and at times have hardware they have acquired from closeouts. If you need repairs, or are looking for parts or Commodore hardware, you could try them.

NO MORE TENEX MAIL ORDER. A call to the Tenex Computer Express order number brings the following recorded message. "Unfortunately, we have discontinued our mail order operation." Apparently, the parent company made the decision to cut Tenex back to retail sales only. Tenex had been providing less and less for the 64/128, but still had some software, accessories, printers, monitors, etc. It will be missed.

GEOWRITE FILE CONVERSIONS
Brian Vaughan

I suspect that all GeoWrite file converters have the same problem as does my SPEEDSCRIPT FORM file converter. They will not recognize certain non-alpha characters such as the English Pound, the Up-Arrow to the left of the RESTORE key, and the left & right brackets using the shifted colon & semi-colon keys. My converter flags these characters in HEX. If I select to ignore them, they are deleted in the conversion. If I accept them, a question mark is inserted in place of the flagged character. GeoWrite will print these characters if after you have

converted your file, you enter the proper character in place of the question mark. To do this properly, you would need a hard copy of the file from your normal word processor to know what character to enter

THREE PROGRAMS FOR THE 128 "Anonymous by request".

Software Support International is offering a group of three programs for the C-128 and C-128D for \$27.97. They are: Spectrum 128, a paint program, Sketch Pad 128, a drawing program, and News Maker 128, a desk-top publishing program.

The programs are from Free Spirit Software. These programs utilize all the great features which make these computers a pleasure to use. A 1351 mouse moves you quickly about the screen and thru the menus. The 1750 REU performs like another drive, which can save 5 pages or more for printing. Of course, you may use a 1541 drive. Your monitor must be RGB, in 80 column mode, and the printer must be capable of a minimum of 640 dots horizontally. A 64K video Ram upgrade, also available from SSI, is required. Documentation is minimal but adequate.

NewsMaker 128, offers 2, 3, or 4 column layouts. The default is a banner with three columns. However, you can clear the screen and design your own. There are 16 fonts offered and you may add more if you like. The program accepts graphics from Print Shop. Graphics from other sources, such as Print Master can be converted to Print Shop if you have a converter program such as Icon Factory. Art work from Spectrum 128 or Sketch Pad 128 can also be used. There is a graphic editor for detail work. Clip art can be located in any position on the screen, and text can be written around it. When mistakes occur, erasers of many sizes make corrections with ease.

News Maker 128 is similar to Newsroom, Outrageous Pages, Paperclip Desk-Top Publisher, and GeoPublish. However, this is for the C-128 and C-128D. I am always searching for quality programs to add to my library. These are quite sophisticated and illustrate the programmers skill. You too may find these programs welcome.

MAILINK ON DISK

TOM ADAMS has volunteered to distribute back issues of "THE MAILINK ON DISK". All Mailinks from September 1987 through September, 1994, \$10.00. Individual issues, \$1.50 each. Shipping included. Please make checks out to "Tom Adams".

JIM GREEN will continue to handle Mailink on Disk subscriptions. Members may have a "Mailink on Disk" subscription in place of the hard copy, or subscribe to it in addition to the hard copy. Ask Jim for details. Jim also offers a utility disk and a disk of FGM utilities. \$1.00 each or \$1.50 for both. Checks to "Jim Green".

ERROR TRAP

CURT STALDER

When a C-64 Basic program encounters any one of 30 different kinds of error it stops executing, displays the corresponding message and the READY. prompt, and reverts to immediate mode. An error trap modifies that behavior in some pre-planned way. The trap routine presented here displays the appropriate error message, then, assuming only <return> was pressed at the prompt, does GOTO 63999 and execution continues with whatever commands are on line 63999. However, at the prompt there is the option to enter a different line number, in which case execution continues with whatever command exists at that line number. It is the programmer's responsibility to be sure that a line exists with that number, and that it contains an appropriate command.

In this demonstration program, control just goes back to the main menu. Such a trap can sometimes help in debugging a long program, but it is especially useful when you want to make it difficult for the user to inadvertently do something that stops execution of a program. If the user causes an error, it just sends control to wherever you want it and execution continues.

This demo program just shows one way of using the routines. The subroutine starting at Line 63000 turns the trap on. It copies part of Basic's ROM error-handling routine, plus the additional machine code held in variable

RR\$ into locations 686 through 757, saves the original error vector contents in variables VL and VH, disables the stop key, and points the error vector to 686.

The subroutine in Line 63160 turns the trap off. CAUTION: don't call it unless the trap is already ON. It restores the original vector contents and re-enables the stop key. This procedure allows compatibility with at least some of the utility programs that also use the error vector, provided they do not also use locations 686 through 757. However it imposes on the programmer one important responsibility: if the program includes any STOP or END statements, each must be preceded by GOSUB 63160 to turn the trap off. Failure to do this causes strange results, and you might have to turn the

computer off to regain control.

The machine code is fully relocatable, so you could store it at any other protected location by making appropriate changes. The trap destination default line number, 63999 in this example, can easily be changed. The second and sixth 3-digit numbers in string RR\$ (255 and 249 in this example) are the low and high bytes for the number 63999. Change them to any other number if you like, just be sure the number you use actually exists as a line number in your program. You could even have the program itself modify string RR\$ to change the default line number. Try these routines the next time you want to make it hard for a user to "break" your program.

PROGRAM LISTING FOR ERROR TRAP DEMO.

```

100 REM ***** ERROR TRAP DEMO***** BY CURT STALDER, ORLANDO, FL 5/94
110 REM THIS DEMO AND ERROR TRAP ROUTINE ARE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.
120 GOSUB 63000:REM TURN TRAP ON.
130 PRINT:PRINT"MENU - CHOOSE ONE"
140 PRINT:PRINT"E CAUSE AN ERROR"
150 PRINT:PRINT"Q QUIT"
160 GET K$:ON -(K$="")-2*(K$="E")-3*(K$="Q") GOTO 160,170,180
170 A="STRING":REM AN ERROR-CAUSER!!
180 GOSUB 63160:STOP:REM TURN TRAP OFF.
200 GOTO 130:REM JUST IN CASE SOMEONE DOES 'CONT' AFTER A STOP OR END.
62970 :
62980 REM THE FOLLOWING SUBROUTINE TURNS ERROR TRAP ON.
63000 RR$="169 255 133 020 169 249 133 021 032 163 168 076 174 167"
63010 DS=63999:PRINT"FOR DEFAULT TRAP DESTINATION LINE 63999"
63020 PRINT"JUST PRESS <RETURN>"
63030 INPUT"ELSE ENTER DESIRED LINE NUMBER";DS:PRINT"
63040 IF DS=63999 THEN 63080
63050 DH#=STR$((INT(DS/256))/1000):DH#=RIGHT$(DH#,3)
63060 DL#=STR$((DS-256*INT(DS/256))/1000):DL#=RIGHT$(DL#,3)
63070 RR#=LEFT$(RR#,4)+DL#+MID$(RR#,8,13)+DH#+MID$(RR#,24)
63080 POKE 808,225:REM DISABLES NORMAL FUNCTION OF STOP AND RESTORE KEYS
63090 I=686:FOR N=42042 TO 42099:POKE I,PEEK(N):I=I+1:NEXT
63100 I=1:FOR N=744 TO 757:POKE N,VAL(MID$(RR#,I,3)):I=I+4:NEXT
63110 VL=PEEK(768):VH=PEEK(769):REM SAVE ORIGINAL ERROR VECTOR.
63120 POKE 768,174:POKE 769,2:POKE 808,239:RETURN:REM SET NEW ERROR VECTOR.
63130 :
63140 REM THE FOLLOWING SUBROUTINE TURNS THE ERROR TRAP OFF.
63150 :
63160 POKE 768,VL:POKE 769,VH:POKE 808,237:RETURN:REM RESTORE ORIGINAL VECTOR.
63180 :
63999 GOTO 130:REM THIS IS DEFAULT TARGET LINE, TO BE EXECUTED IF ERROR OCCURS.

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Editor's Note: This demo program will be on the Mailink on Disk.



THE ABC'S OF GETTING ON-LINE (Part I)

Bruce Kurson

I would like to start this out by letting you know my position on telecommunication's and why I felt the need for a beginner's guide to the nets. I have been using a C=64 for several years, I am very familiar with its use but I had never invested in a modem. Then someone gave me a brand new 1670 modem and it came with a trial membership to Q-Link. It was very easy to connect and all of a sudden I had left the world of dwindling Commodore support and entered a world full of new software (to me anyway) and found a place to interact with other Commodore users. Being a software hound from way back the thought struck me that there might be places other than Q-Link (which is now closed down) to find current Commodore support and that's when I became hooked. It was hard to figure it all out on my own, and Jean says she is often asked for advice on this by beginners. If more new software then you can store, and interacting with the people still putting out Commodore products and using them sounds good, follow me.

The first step in getting on-line is to somehow find a modem you can use. The 1670 is a good beginner's modem, but with Tenex gone (see the announcement in this issue) I can't tell you where to find a new one. Watch for used ones on sale. This is a modem made by Commodore which plugs right into your user port and is ready to go. Aprotek, 9323 W. Evans Rd, Rogue River, OR 97537 (Phone 503-582-1225), sells a 1200 baud modem and a 2400 baud modem for the 64 and 128, which also plug into the user port. You can get modems with speeds ranging from 300 baud to 14.4K baud. Baud rate is the speed at which your modem talks to other computers. Unfortunately the C=64 was not designed to work at speeds over 1200 baud so if you want to run faster then that you need to

true RS-232 adapter. I use a Boca 2400 hooked thru a Swiftlink. A swiftlink is a product made by CMD that enables the C=64 to use modems with speeds up to 14.4K.

Step two is finding software to use. There are many excellent PD and Shareware comm programs available. If you are only going to call Commodore color graphic BBS's I recommend CCG S. If you are going to call IBM BBS's or get on the Internet or use the major nationwide services like Genie or Compuserve then you will need something with a few more features like Novaterm 9.5. I use Novaterm and highly recommend it. It is Shareware but it has features many IBM comm programs lack! If any members want either program, I would be happy to furnish them for a disk, just drop me a line. I also have Desterm for the 128. That is all you need besides your trusty Commodore and a phone line.

The next hardest part is figuring out who to call! Getting those first few BBS phone #'s is sometimes hard but after that they accumulate with a snowball effect. If you are really lucky you will have a Commodore color graphics BBS local to you. There are still many left. If you have no #'s to call drop me a line and I will see if I can find something in your area. Since some of you may need to dig out that old never used modem or buy one and send for software we will stop here till next issue. Then we will be covering connecting your new modem, installing the software and making that first call and I will list the many nationwide resources available and start to discuss the Internet. It seemed very confusing to me at the start but it really is easy to get free software from all over the world! (By the way..the C=64 is still going strong in Europe and more new C= software is being translated and made available to US users).

Final Note: The biggest reason to go thru all this trouble is the fact that all the time I hear people bemoan the death of Commodore and the lack of support. Well now I use several C= BBS's along with Genie and the Internet...and I have more current up to date support for my C= then I did 5 years ago...!)

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

