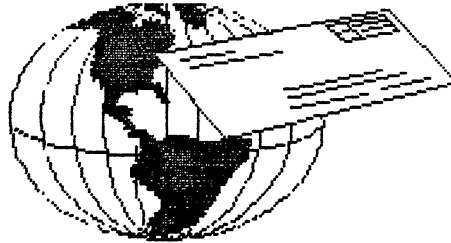


9-12-97

# COMMODORE MAILINK

NEWSLETTER OF —  
MEETING 64/128 USERS  
THROUGH THE MAIL



SEPTEMBER 1997

## MEETING NEWS

Tom Adams

A big welcome to all the new members (*See list below*). Their bios appear in the membership list that accompanies this issue. Remember to keep this membership list as there won't be another until March 1998. An addition to the membership list is that we now print the E-mail addresses of those on the Internet with their bio. There are 55 members that have E-mail addresses. If you get on the net please send Joe Fenn your Internet address. Also for those that have an address send Joe a note if it changes.

While on the subject of E-mail addresses I need you to tell me whether you want the E-mail addresses printed with each issue or printed only with the membership list twice a year or printed with the Information sheet in the back of the membership directory. All new addresses will be published in the next issue as are the changes to postal addresses. Please send me E-mail or a postcard with your preference.

Joe Powell, our treasurer for many years, has resigned because of declining health. We have a new treasurer, Rolf L. Miller and next issue I will be reminding you that dues are due for 1998 and to make your check/money order payable to Rolf L. Miller. Meanwhile we wish Joe our best and the hope that his health improves. It would be a good idea to send Joe a card telling him we hope he will be feeling better in the future.

Speaking of dues, it has been decided that dues for 1998 will remain the same \$12.00 (US) for U.S. members, \$14.00 (US) for our neighbors to the north and \$22.00 (US) for the rest of the world. There is talk of a postal rate increase but the amount is unknown. So we will stick with the current dues and see what happens down the road.

### ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Please welcome the following new members whose bios appear in this issue:  
Terry Brien, George Jakenta, D. L. Johansen, Virgil Leisure, William Nelson, Jon Searle.

The following members have address changes which appear in this issue:  
Robert Burns, Newt Ludlum, Robert Mullady.

*A Piece of STR\$* - I introduced computers to my monastery about 20 years ago and trouble shoot for them on various IBM types, but I would never ever think of having any of them on my little writing desk. Commodore and CMDs FD-2000 and a 1571 with JiffyDOS runs circles around them and does everything I ever want to do-not to mention "Cheaper and Better"! (Fr. Albert Meyer)

MEETING 64/128 USERS THROUGH THE MAIL: ADDRESSES, OFFICERS, AND POLICIES.

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### COMMODORE MAILINK

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*A Piece of STR\$* - Pressing the C= and shift key together while in TWS will give you three screens of help. Shift will toggle the screens. Space will return to the document. I keep learning stuff about TWS. Maybe I should stop and read the manual some day. (Editor)

### EDITOR'S DESK

Hugh McMenamain and Jean Nance will be co-editors of the November issue of *The Commodore Mailink*. Submissions should be sent to Jean, to arrive by October 21st, but sooner is better. All material over about a paragraph should be on a 5 1/4 inch disk, in TWS or Pet ASCII format. Please put your name, the title, and the format used on the label. Material can also be sent by Email to jpan@prairienet.org.



Your editor for this issue is Walter Johnson. *Illustrator I* was used with PS graphics except for the header, which was created by Hugh McMenamain with RUNPaint and sent to the editor. A Star NX-1000C was the printer. This issue was a little easier than the last one just over a year ago. Thanks to all who submitted material. All extra will be forwarded to the editors for next issue.

## *FROM THE NEW TREASURER*

Rolf L. Miller

I thank Joseph Powell for his past service in this capacity. Also appreciated is his guidance and the materials sent which eased the transition. With the direction provided, I shall endeavor to maintain the course established by him.

To that end, therefore, a new trust account has been opened in the name of ROLF L. MILLER. Those who can sign checks are myself and President Tom Adams. In the unlikely event both signers die at the same time, control of the account transfers to Jean Nance. Please make all checks payable to ROLF L. MILLER.

Why must the checks be made to ROLF L. MILLER rather than to the name of the organization? Simply (and banking rules are about as easy to explain as MS-DOS), it has to do with banking requirements. One of the requirements is that, in order to deposit a check, it must be made payable to the named account and likewise endorsed. So, how a check is to be made out is governed by the name of the account.

Other rules dictate the name of an account. An individual cannot open an account in the name of an organization, and an organization cannot open an account in its name unless it meets even more requirements. Meeting 64/128 Users Through The Mail could meet those requirements, but not without effort, inconvenience, and expense that would hardly benefit the function of the group. (It would be like buying an IBM to handle the checkbook.)

Hence, the trust account named: ROLF L. MILLER. Checks made out otherwise cannot be deposited.

Following is a summary of the account as of June 30, 1997.	
Balance 1-1-97	\$2732.93
Credits	1185.47
Debits	2055.37
Balance 6-30-97	1863.03

The Credits include all dues and donations received during the period. Debits include miscellaneous expenses incurred by the officers for correspondence and phone calls, but the primary expenditures are the costs of printing, envelopes, and postage for mailing the Mailink and membership lists.

## *THE WORD PROCESSOR AS A DATABASE EDITOR*

Rolf L. Miller

When asked to take over Joseph Powell's job as Treasurer for the group, the decision came about rather quickly. Handling checking accounts is one of those activities that comes easy at this desk. Thus, the thought of adding another gave no pause. Then the "books" arrived from Joseph.

The records involve a tad more than just a checking account. In fact, the checking account is the bit player in this job. It is the membership list that requires the most attention. As can be imagined, its accurate reflection of new members and renewals is crucial to Brian Vaughan's labor of maintaining the mailing list and bio pages. These, in turn, govern the printing and mailing tasks seen to by Tom Adams.

There are some good checking account and database programs

available that are capable of handling this work. The spreadsheet is also a viable option, which is what Joseph used. However, the membership records are basically text; and when it comes to manipulating text, no program is better suited than a word processor. Furthermore, in the text environment, the word processor can quite handily function as a database editor.

The foundation of any database is a file structure that allows for the systematic storage and retrieval of information. The simplest data file is sequential in nature. The simplicity is due to the fact that sequential records do not require structured information fields. The only rule is that each record contain the same number and order of fields. A sequential file can be viewed thusly, the / representing a carriage return. NAME/PHONE/NAME/PHONE/ etc.

Loading such a file into the word processor sees it displayed this way.

NAME  
PHONE  
NAME  
PHONE

Once in the word processor, editing is freely accomplished. The only care is that the record structure as to number and order of fields be maintained. And it is not a great leap from this use to using the word processor to create text data files.

The membership records received from Joseph resided in spreadsheet data files. Loading them into the word processor allowed editing the information into a single file membership list containing records of three fields each.

Saving the results as a sequential file makes it available to a variety of database or other data manipulation programs for its various purposes. This user, though, rather than wrestle with figuring out how to make a program do what is wanted, finds it easier to write little routines to do exactly what is desired. For example, a routine to access this file consists of just three lines.

```
10 DIM R$(3):OPEN 8,8,8,"FILENAME,S,R"  
20 INPUT#8,R$(1):IF ST THEN CLOSE 8:END  
30 INPUT#8,R$(2),R$(3):GOSUB use data:GOTO 20
```

All that is needed to complete this routine is a couple of lines to use the data as desired.

For those interested in such things, it is noted that INPUT# is the fastest way in BASIC to access the disk. However, like INPUT, it has some peculiarities. It will not read a blank field, a leading space, any ASCII value below 32, nor the comma or colon. It most often treats these as a carriage return, but are known to hang up the routine. Furthermore, INPUT# is limited to 80 characters at one time. So, never leave a field blank or begin it with a space, do not use commas or colons (the semicolon is OK), do not use ASCII value characters below 32, and limit data to 80 characters.

## COMPUTER AND DRIVE REPAIR

Vincent S. W. Dymek

Rolf Miller did an excellent job on the subject of computer and drive repair. I would like to add some of my own experiences in addition to his so that others may profit.



In his discussion, Rolf mentioned the 6581 sound chip controlling the paddles. Some may not realize that this includes mouse control. So if you boot up GEOS or some other mouse controlled program and the

"pointer" freezes in position, suspect the 6581.

If you turn on your computer and see a screen full of garbage, turn it off quickly and check the power supply. The 5 Volt regulator may have failed and the power supply is capable of delivering far more than 5 Volts which can destroy integrated circuit chips in rapid fashion.

If you turn on your computer and see the normal message at the top of your screen and then some alphanumeric character in the middle of the screen, suspect a bad memory chip. This is where Rolf warns you about the agony of desoldering a chip. I have yet to see memory chips socketed. To add insult to injury, the data lines of all eight memory chips are tied together, therefore making it difficult to select the rogue chip. There are diagnostic programs to help and theoretically, the position of the errant character on the screen is supposed to help; I am not that smart!

The PLA chip which Rolf mentioned is the most common offender. You can suspect that first. If you have a second computer available, swap that chip first. I have always found it socketed.

Now a little discussion about lifting out socketed chips, especially the big ones. Find some small pry tools such as small screwdrivers, staple removers, etcetera (I think you get the idea) and pry up one end a little. Then pry up the other end, a little. Repeat this action until the chip releases "nicely". Your tools will have to be selected for the job; chips are not always easily accessible.

Having removed a chip successfully is one thing. Installing a new chip may be something else. Why, because the pins may not have the same spread and the best way to install a new chip is straight down and uniformly (no rocking). If the pin spread is different than what the socket wants, then place one edge of the chip on a firm flat surface (kitchen counter works fine) and gently roll the chip to uniformly bend the pins, all at once. Do this on the other side of the chip and try it out in the socket. Keep doing this until the pins line up exactly with the socket. You will usually find that the pins on new chips are spread too far apart.

As far as chip supply, I have found that our local Salvation Army has C-64s for \$20.00 apiece. It is not unusual to pay more than that for a new chip. You not only get a bonanza of chips (if not a better working C-64 than your own) but also a spare power supply. One of the two units can be regularly cannibalized for spare parts.

Last word, for now, regarding handling your computer. Avoid touching the exposed pins, especially at the joy stick ports, with your fingers and even other materials. Your hands and even some fabrics can accumulate a static electric charge that can zap chips that have leads directly connected to those pins. Notably the 6526 chips are extremely vulnerable.

## *A TV REPAIRMAN'S TIPS*

Zeb Larry

I am an ex TV-repairman and have some information to add to the series of repair tips begun by Rolf Miller.

I have successfully replaced many chips. Of course the easiest are the ones that are in sockets and are merely replaced. A word of caution here. Some of them may be "MOS" and after removing them from their insulating package, they should be handled with no chance of grounding them. Be sure your body is well grounded.

As for the ones that are soldered in, there are several ways to handle this. Solder guns come in a variety of makes, some with

suction bulbs built in. The easiest way, however, is to use a low wattage solder gun (sometimes called a pencil gun). In conjunction with the gun, some "solder wick" should be used. This is a very fine copper braid, which, when placed on the chip terminal and heated very carefully with the solder gun, will lift the solder out of the mounting hole and release it. Continue this process all around the chip until all solder has been removed. Go slow and wait a bit between solderings. Let the chip and board cool down. Be very careful not to heat the copper etching so as to loosen it.

Once the solder has been removed, use an extractor or lift each end of the chip a little at a time until it is released.

Heavy solder guns are a no-no. The above method will extract the solder with a minimum of heat.

To replace, resolder the chip back in, waiting a bit between solderings so as not to overheat the chip. A better method is to solder in a socket, and then replace the chip.

Solder wick should be available at any Radio Shack or supply store. If it cannot be found, and you need a little, I have a supply and for a SASE, I will supply a foot or so--enough to unsolder a few chips.



## *SNAIL-MAIL VS E-MAIL*

Ed Harler

You will not see this on the evening tv news or read about it in your local paper any time soon, but Postmaster General and CEO Marvin Runyon put out the call to postmasters nationwide "...to help preserve the historic legacy of universal mail service." (See the March 1997 issue of "memo to mailers" or check the RIBBS BBS/web site.) The PMG was talking about /all/ forms of competition, not just e-mail. The Private Express Statutes are to be changed and are currently his main worry. There are also rumblings in professional mailers' journals, altho they back-handedly suggest that hardcopy mail /is/ in trouble, especially because of its labor intensive costs. (In 1995 over 80% of the USPS operating costs were due to labor and "That percentage has remained virtually unchanged since 1969, the year before the passage of the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act" according to information in the March 1997 issue of "MAIL: The Journal of Communication Distribution.")

But what are the facts about snail mail and e-mail? Snail mail gets lost; so does e-mail. Snail mail is returned because it is undeliverable; ditto for e-mail. E-mail is much faster, but only if the recipient finds it shortly after it arrives. E-mail is not as cheap as snail mail, unless you are on a Freenet or use a BBS whose fee is less than the amount of postage you would spend. The average on-line cost is about \$17/month, which would require sending 54 letters/month.

If you are sentimental, you will certainly prefer snail mail, because (as Cliff Stoll suggests in "Silicon Snake Oil") "Real mail has attractive stamps..." (unless it is metered), has faded ink, and is something you can feel and smell.

There is no doubt that mail delivery as we know it today is on its way out, but it still has a long, long road to travel before it gets there. In the meantime, the USPS is becoming more aggressive in

protecting its turf. Rates have changed. Have you noticed how the special services (like Priority Mail, etc.) are slightly cheaper for a certain fixed amount and how the P.O. gains a few pennies or more when that fixed minimum is not used? The P.O. set up its RIBBS BBS and offered e-mail for a price. Great if you send over 280 letters a year. Really! Their breakeven point is 366 letters /less/ than the commercial services. They now have a Web site and are trying other technological ideas in order to gain market share.

In all of the rhetoric, however, there is one point I have never heard and this really baffles me!: everyone can use snail mail, but only those with computers, modems, software and an on-ramp can use e-mail. Other points in favor of snail mail are: sending those baby or vacation pics by snail mail is much easier; gifts are easier to send; and, even if you order the latest mystery novel for your favorite aunt from amazon.com, it still goes via snail mail!

So the bottom line is: e-mail has not really arrived and snail mail is not history. We do hope, however, that you will do your part in making e-mail more universal.

## *CREATING "SUPER" MACROS*

Ed Harler

Terry Parsons (in the July CML) suggests taking advantage of "The Write Stuff's" macro feature and creating one for your address. On pages 10 and 11 is my genealogy article in which I describe the six outline files I use. These files are actually super macros, which do not take up any room in the macro area.

I use the same type of super macro for my name and address. Here is how my super macro, which can be used by any wordprocessor, looks:

```
[n@0:-letter header]
[pl57;tm2;bm2;lm6;rm5] <used for single sheets>
[npl66;tm6;bm5;lm6;rm5] <used for fanfold paper>
[c]Ed Harler, 47 Hardy Road, Levittown PA 19056-1311[c]
[c]e.harler@joesgarage.com[c]
<carriage return>
<carriage return, which will be used for the salutation and followed
by the body of the letter>
<carriage return>
```

Heartily,

```
<carriage return>
<carriage return>
<carriage return, which will be used for the day and month/yr macro.
Currently the date macro is Sep 1997>
<carriage return>
```

P.S. Please save the stamp for a collector or return it to me when you write. Please leave 1/8" margin of paper around it.

Thanks.

Note: [] = TWS formatting  
<> = explanatory text

Super macros can be created for just about anything that requires a filling-in-the-blanks need. I use the same idea for special occasion letters (eg: Christmas) in which I include general information and then I fill in special data pertinent to the recipient. Computers are ideal for grunt work, so let them do it and save your fingers for the necessary keystrokes.

## *NOTIME (Naval Observatory Time)*

Tom Adams

If you use Russell Prater's program NOTIME to set the clock on your CMD devices that have a RTC (real time clock) the number for the Naval Observatory in Washington, DC has changed. The new number is 202-762-1594. This is a great program to set the clock on your CMD devices and also set the correct time on your VCR if you can find a five year old kid to do it. It will also give you the correct time to set all your clocks and watches when the time difference changes. To change the phone number you must load the program but do not run it. Now type list 1174, this will list the line number to change. Run your cursor over to the number and type over the existing number. Now cursor to the end of the line and press return. Now cursor to the bottom of the screen and type Save notime.bas. That's all there is to it.

By the way this call to the Naval Observatory will cost you about 15 cents in regular long distance. NOTIME is a Commodore 128 program.

If you don't want to do this you can send Fred Knerr a buck and get the programs in SFX format from him.

## *NET MYTHS*

Gaelyne R. Gasson

Anything popular is bound to have misconceptions, and when it comes to the Internet there are more than I can shake a stick at. I get peeved with people whose only experience with the Internet has been with a graphical interface who take their rather one-sided experience and try to project it onto C64/128 users. Some have come up with silly notions that have absolutely no bearing with reality. I have nothing against anyone who uses other platforms to use the Net, plenty of C= users own more than one type of computer, after all. What I object to is the falsehoods that surface from time to time that are detrimental to those who may have an interest in using the Net with their C64 or C128.

### *Myth # 1*

*The Internet and World Wide Web are the same thing.*

This myth is perpetuated by the media, as they usually show a Web page when covering Internet related topics. They do this because it is visually more appealing than other Net subjects. Those who equate the Web with the Internet have probably used only this portion of it. Since the World Wide Web allows you to do many other Net activities, it is understandable that this myth exists, but it does not make it true. Of course we can use the World Wide Web, but there are other Internet activities that are also used regularly:

#### *Email*

We can send and receive messages and files to others no matter how far they are from us geographically. Email can be for correspondence, saving quite a bit in stamps and/or phone calls, for fun, or even for business purposes.

#### *FTP*

FTP lets us get files from the Internet. Many C= BBS sysops regularly stock their BBS file transfer areas with the files from FTP sites. It is cheaper than phoning long distance to get the files.

#### *Telnet*

Telnet is used to connect to another system, such as a different Internet provider or a Bulletin Board System (BBS for short). It can



be used to access an online service account (like Delphi) as if you had dialed the phone number for it directly. For some people, the only way they can access the World Wide Web is by telneting to use a publicly accessible web browser. There are also several games that can be played by using telnet.

#### *IRC*

Internet Relay Chat lets you chat with others online in real-time (ie they are online at the same time). There are several C= channels, each with different personalities and attitudes.

#### *Newsgroups*

Newsgroups are to the Net what message conferences are for BBS's. There are about 10,000 newsgroups covering as many subjects. For Commodore users, we have the comp.sys.cbm newsgroup.

#### *Myth # 2*

*You need expensive computer gear to use the Internet (or the Web).*

This goes against the actual purpose behind why the Internet was developed in the first place. The beginning of the Net came about because someone at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. got fed up with having a room full of different computers required in order to communicate with the universities they were working with. They needed to find a way to link the universities and government agencies without forcing them to change computer types. Computers cost so much that the idea of forcing everyone to use the same type of equipment was out of the question. Most of the same programs that were developed at this time are still in use today because they work very well and with a variety of computer types.

Other myths that fall into this category include:

You need a high speed modem to access the Net. (Wrong: Any modem will do, but I do not recommend anything lower than 1200 baud).

You need at least 8mb RAM or a Super VGA monitor. (Wrong: C= users do not have to worry about these items and can access the Net just fine without them.)

#### *Myth # 3*

*If you cannot view graphics on the Web, you can only use it as a research tool.*

Sure, and books are only for scholars, right? Imagine life if it were only pictures. I would be out of a job! Take a look at your daily newspaper. Would Ann Landers read any differently if you could not see her photograph? Would your favourite political, humour or sports columnist still be interesting and worth reading without pictures? Sure, when we view the Web without graphics is is like reading the newspaper without the funnies page, but it is certainly not dry and boring. Many times we can download the graphics and view them later. We benefit as we do not waste online time waiting for the graphics to be downloaded and displayed.

The people who perpetuate this rumour are the same ones who confuse the World Wide Web with the Internet as a whole (see Myth # 1). The World Wide Web is the ONLY function of the Internet that makes use of displayed graphics.

#### *Myth # 4*

*Everything on the Internet (or Web) is free of copyright and free of charge.*

Many Web sites state on their pages that the text and/or graphics displayed are copyright. Even when a site does not state copyright ownership, one should NEVER assume that something is free of copyright if they intend on using it in a publication - always ask permission first. Not everything on the Net (or Web) is free, either. Some sites only allow access after you have given your credit card details and

agree to be billed for time spent within the site. This pertains to telnet (such as if you access an online service like Delphi or another Internet Provider) or the World Wide Web. And naturally, there are things you can order on the Net, and you can do so regardless of what type of computer you use. You can even register C= shareware programs on the Web.

*Myth # 5*

*To have your own IRC channel, FTP, or WWW site you must have "X" brand of computer.*

Why would any of these things require a specific computer type? The type of computer used is irrelevant. All it takes is learning about the subject and in some cases (such as FTP), asking those in charge of the Internet provider for it.

*Myth # 6*

*You can get a computer virus from the Internet.*

Due to the nature of the Commodore computer, this is one problem we are spared.

*Myth # 7*

*Using the Internet is expensive.*

Considering that there are hundreds of "Free-Nets" around the world that allow people to access the Internet for free, this myth does not hold water. As well, by shopping around and doing a bit of research, you can find Internet providers that offer reasonable rates for the type of service you require. This can vary from a few dollars a month on up. Shop around.

Myths only last as long as people believe in them. The next time someone tells you it can not be done, think twice and remember that almost anything is possible when you use a Commodore.

Gaelyne Gasson is the author of *The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users*. She can be reached via Email (gaelyne@hal9000.net.au), and you can read other articles she has written on her web page at: <http://videocam.net.au/@gaelyne>

## ***THE DANGERS OF UPGRADING***

Ed Harler

The word "upgrade" means "improve, make better," but in computerland this equates to moving from a slower, memory-starved machine to a faster one with as much memory as it can handle. So...is that bad? And what is so dangerous? And why should we Commodore users be concerned about the Intel-Microsoft (I-M) crowd and its problems?

The main reason is that our machines will not last forever. Something will break or wear out and replacement or repair either will not be available or will not be feasible. All of us knows someone who has moved from C= to the I-M or Mac platforms for that reason. Others will leave C= behind because they are interested in graphics or something that requires more speed and/or memory. For example: the games on CD-ROM, tho we all know that I-M machines are not game machines. ;) Still others are motivated by their work, family or friends. The kids need a "better" computer sounds great even tho their school computer is still an Apple II. Incidentally, this is a good reason "The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users" should be on your bookshelf, if it is not already. Even if you have no intention of going on-line, it will show you the possibilities and give you the information needed to counter the usual derogatory remarks made about Commodores. It is also a plus to point out that NASA's Martian Rover is controlled by an 8-bit 80C85 chip, which is capable of

communicating with more powerful machines just as our Commodores are also capable.

Regardless of the motivation, when the change-over occurs, what will happen to your Commodore-generated data? Are there letters, inventories, financial or other data that you cannot afford to lose? I am sure there are.

One of the best-kept, yet well-known, "secrets" in the mainframe world is the lost of data due to upgrading. It is much greater than the currently ballyhooed year 2000 problem. Both the Census Bureau and the Social Security Administration "lost" millions of records because their newer equipment could not read the old formats, tho some was due to poor storage. The IRS is probably affected, too, but their other computer problems are so great no one has taken notice. And who knows how many businesses have lost vital data?

The mainframe world and the personal computer world are not really that different. How many Commodorians are still using a cassette tape to store data or programs? Not too many. C= users who had tapes probably transferred everything they wanted to keep to 1541 floppies as soon as they got the 1541. Later they may have copied the 1541 stuff to higher density floppies or a hard drive. All of that transferring, however, transpired very naturally because of the disk drive upgrades on the same platform. Going to a different platform changes things.

Here are a couple of suggestions for overcoming the inevitable. Please note that these suggestions are for data only, which should be in ASCII and not any other format. Programs cannot be moved to another platform unless they are written in BASIC, but even these will require some revision and must be transferred in ASCII.

Fortunately, technology is as much on our side as it is against us. Example: A 1541 cable and program are available for the I-M platform. Someone may do the same for the 1571 and/or 1581 floppy drives. Actually, because 5.25" disks are no longer readily available, only 3.5" disks should be used. And, rather than depend on finding a cable/program combination, a better method would be to use The Big Blue Reader or Lil Red Reader to store the data on a 720K 3.5" disk in MS-DOS format. Caution! Do not format high density disks (those which have the additional high-density hole in the upper-left corner and come from AOL and others) as 720K, because the latest I-M software checks for that hole. When it finds it, it assumes it is formatted as a high-density disk. Because of that assumption, it cannot read the disk and it destroys the formatting and the data. It is a bug which might be corrected before you are caught by it, but currently there is no guarantee it will be corrected by then.

If the data is not too sensitive and you are on the superhighway, you could store it on commercial disk space. This way it will be readily accessible to you regardless of the machine you are using. Be aware, tho, that that commercial site could go out of business.

If you do not have The Big Blue Reader or Lil Red Reader, you could wait until you get the new equipment. We assume you are backing up currently, tho this will not help much if the C= suddenly dies. E-mail the data to yourself and then transfer the data to high-density disks. It should also be possible to transfer the data from the Commodore to the new machine via a null modem cable and the telecom programs on each machine. Here is an idea for an article by someone who has had the experience.

If none of the above are feasible for you, then the last resort would be to print out all of your data, which will allow scanning it into the new machine. If everything goes well, you will have all of

your data and only a few minor corrections will be required. At the worst, you will have to rekey all of the data, but at least you will have it.

All of this may be extra work, but it is worthwhile insurance against the loss of valuable data. Do it now, while you are aware of it.

### *HOW'D THEY DO THAT?*

Fred Knerr

How do you get 211 files on one side of a 5 1/4" disk when there is only room for 144 files? ARC is the answer. Not Noah's Ark, not MSDos Arc, but Commodore ARC. An ARC'd file contains one or more files compressed into one file. For sending via modem it is the best way to save time and money. There is only one way better, a SDA or SDX file. When you see a filename.ARC, or .SDA, or .SDX have a fresh formatted disk ready. You must have the ARC program to deARC a file. An SDA/SDX file is self dissolving. Have a fresh formatted disk ready, load the program and follow instructions.

How to make an ARC file with two drives.  
Programs available on Mailink 9/97 from Fred Knerr

Copy all the files you want to ARC to a freshly formatted disk in drive 9. Make a list of those files for later use. You will also need a fresh formatted disk for the ARCed files. Load "boot",8 (return). Run (return). At the prompt ARC230 press return. Type m for multiple drives. On the Main Menu pick c to create a ARC file. Remove the ARC disk and insert the new formatted disk in drive 8. (return). type in filename.ARC (return). At the prompt type in the first name on your list and return. Next filename and return etc. After the last filename has been entered and you see the prompt for pattern just press return and let ARC do its thing.

Make a SDA file from a ARC file.

Load arc/sda v4.0. Pick c to convert Arc to Sda. From directory pick file to convert. Pick filename (return). You have done it.

### *PIECES OF STR\$*

"Action Replay" cartridges make it easy to make a 1 minute loading TWS work disk, if you have "JiffyDOS" installed.

A friend loaned me a Canon BJC-4200 and it works wonders with graphics and TWS escape characters if TWS uses the #4 (Commodore Compatible) printer driver. Works with #1 but will not do graphics there. (Fr.Albert E. Meyer)

You can make your own odd size self-stick labels, bumper stickers, or any other item using this idea which was furnished to me by my friend, Jack Blewitt (CUPID). Print out whatever you want on plain paper. Using double-stick carpet tape, place the label on the sticky side of the tape, printed side up. Be careful, you only get one chance. Trim to size.

Larger size items can be made using extra strips of the tape. To make the item more permanent, stick it face down on clear contact paper or clear packaging tape and trim to size. (Emil Kalar)

## MOVING TO A NEW SYSTEM

Bruce Thomas

Well, I finally did it!

I finally quit using my C-64 and The Write Stuff and am moving on to another system and a better word processor! I decided that I had had enough!



What? A die-hard Commodore 64 user and distributor of The Write Stuff moving on to something else? Inconceivable! Something better? Preposterous!

WRONG!

What prompted this was the Internet. The Info Super-Highway! I signed on to a service in January 1996 - Edmonton Freenet. It costs me \$25/year for full access to the Internet; the World Wide Web (WWW), File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Usenet newsgroups, E-mail, search engines like Yahoo and Alta Vista, everything except graphics (that's \$75 more per year for 20 hours per month). At present there isn't a graphic browser for the 64 so the text system is perfect - and fast!

Of course, there is lots of support on the Internet for the C-64 - the best selling personal computer of all time. There is a Newsgroup for Commodore users; comp.sys.cbm. This is like a message board where everyone can post messages for everyone else to see and respond to. Typically you will see messages about programs, programming, hardware tips and problems, items for sale or wanted and notices about neat sites to visit from people all over the world. It is great!

There are lots of sites to visit around the world with Commodore files to download; ftp.funet.fi is a good one in Finland and ccnga.uwaterloo.ca, another good one previously in Canada, has recently moved to Jim Brain's U.S. site (ftp.jbrain.com). Where these sites are physically located doesn't matter though, as any user in the world can access them.

On the World Wide Web you can visit the site of Creative Micro Designs, Inc. for info on their new 20 MHz Super CPU accelerator or an on-line sample of their magazine - Commodore World. Ordering products from them is simple on-line also. Another good site is Jim Brain's CaBooM! site which contains many links to other Commodore sites, info on Commodore computers, a trivia question section plus the comp.sys.cbm FAQ (frequently asked questions) file. These sites may be located by entering 'Jim Brain' into any of the search engines and then choosing the selection that mentions Commodore Computers. After visiting a site of interest for the first time you will want to 'bookmark' the address so you can find it again easily and not have to worry about searching for it again or entering long strings that begin with http://www.....

If you haven't used it you've likely heard of e-mail. With it I have exchanged regular correspondence with friends on the other side of the country, received help from a user in Australia (after posting a message to comp.sys.cbm) and traded files with users in various other countries. I am able to send, via e-mail, articles such as this one, or others about GEOS, complete with graphics and PD programs, to the editors of various publications. No Disk Mailer, No Postage, No Delay, Much Easier and it is more fun than Licking Stamps! (I will e-mail this file to Walter after saving it as ASCII text).

And I was able to do all of this with my C-64 and 1200 baud modem! So what made me give up you ask? Read on.

For starters, it wasn't all easy. When I first got Internet access I was like a kid in a candy store. I downloaded everything I could find; graphics, SID tunes, compression utilities, GEOS programs

and even some info on Laser Eye surgery my daughter wanted for a school report. At 1200 bps this took a LONG time! Boy, was I unhappy when NONE of the programs worked. I had .sda and .sfx files that wouldn't, .arc files that couldn't, converted files that just said no. The only file I could use was the all text Laser Eye Surgery file, and it wasn't even anything I wanted!

After posting a plea for help to the newsgroup I got a response from Bruce McFarling in Australia. He told me that the LYNX system Freenet was using would have to be configured to recognize Commodore-specific filetypes as binary or they would continue to be treated as text files during transfer and be totally useless. A request to Freenet proved very useful. The next time I checked the FTP sites I saw that certain files were now identified as octet/stream - and they downloaded perfectly. Other program files were still showing as text but, without a suffix, they would not be able to be identified as binary (I used to get these via a mail-server at ccnga.uwaterloo that would send me the files in an e-mail message). One hurdle cleared.

Next was speed. I was able to borrow a friends' 2400 baud modem and used my RS-232 cable (the same one I used to use with a null modem adaptor to connect my 64 to a Postscript Laser printer for GEOS output) to get faster access. Another hurdle cleared, but just barely.

I wanted a 9600 or 14.4 modem and Swiftlink cartridge to really make things fly. After many inquiries and much shopping around I finally found a used 14.4 Kbps fax/modem locally at an acceptable price and, via CMD's on-line web site, then ordered a Swiftlink. After first posting an enquiry I felt secure in placing the order. They verified my address and confirmed they had my credit card £ on file. If I still wanted to use the same card I would only have to supply the new expiry date. No chance of some unscrupulous Internet user getting my card info from the e-mail. Within 10 days I had my Swiftlink and was hooked up at 14.4. I sailed over that hurdle!

Now that I wasn't plodding along anymore it was time to start downloading files again. GEOS Utilities and games (they converted! Hurdle); Demo files (they worked! Hurdle); .sda and .sfx files (they extracted! Hurdle); .arc'd compressed programs (they returned to straight form! Hurdle); everything was working!

Then I found out about the on-line magazine, C= Hacking. Wow! 150-220 K file sizes. If you download this baby you need to give it some special treatment. It does come with programs included but I have yet to extract any and try them. What I have done is converted it with Wrong-is-Write to GEOS format and read a couple with geoWrite. Time Consuming! One of these days I'll have to enquire about the best method to read this magazine (on this one I hit the hurdle with my trailing knee and started limping).

Oh look, over there is the on-line edition of the Catalina Commodore Computer User Group newsletter. Cool! Issues from the past year waiting to be d-loaded and d-voured. Grab 'em all! They're small - 25-30K each. Won't take any time at all at 14.4. Now, do I want to go through that whole GEOS conversion process? (wrong-is-write convert from ASCII. GeoWrite - open file, page too big, inserting page break, CLICK, page too big, inserting page break, CLICK, page too big.....). NO WAY!!

I stop to think and realize I have a fantastic ASCII conversion process built into TWS. It is a fast, convenient, press CTRL-A process that I've often used. Piece of cake! Load TWS. Press CTRL-A, press CTRL-L to load, waiting, waiting, just about done, SLAM!!

What was that? Ouch!! I hit the hurdle straight on with my

leading foot, toppled it over (into the water no-less!) and proceeded to get all tangled up in it. There was no way I could finish this race. Heck, with my head between my gimp knee and the crossbar I couldn't even see the finish line!

Not only was I hurting I was stunned. To think that, after all I had been through, I would get let down by my favorite word processor. Obviously the 22K text area just wasn't big enough for the '90's and the Internet. There could be only one solution - UPGRADE!

I was President of my User Group when I bought TWS in 1988. I thought this program was great. I had previously used SpeedScript (typed in from Compute!'s Gazette in January 1984) and the Writer by Spinnaker. The Write Stuff sure was!

After a demo at a meeting we decided to become distributors of TWS and to date have sold 79 copies (including 64, 128 and talking), the latest just a couple weeks ago. After all of this time I would have thought I would be sad to say good-bye to my trusty C-64 and the (up-til-now) best word processor available. But I'm not. As stated at the start I have found something better on a different computer. It has more features, bigger text area, wider screen display, faster printing and greater drive control. I like it! A LOT!

One thing I always used as an argument against upgrading was my software library. I had a lot with my 64. Another argument was the time needed to learn a new system and other software. After all of the time using a C-64 I found this to be minimal and the software has a nice familiar feel to it.

So what did I upgrade to? A 486 and WordPerfect? A MAC Performa and Clarisworks? A Pentium and Microsoft Word? Wrong on all three counts. I got a 128-D and TWS128!

My desk needed a little modifying but that wasn't too bad. My software library is still intact from the past 14 years but I've now got new and improved features.

Since I liked the 1581 version on my 64 I naturally got the 1581 version for the 128. To make a backup I used FCOPY from CMD after creating partitions with their Subpartition AID Program (both came with my FD-2000). This made short work of backing up the disk.

I also tried to make a disk on my FD with two 1581 partitions but couldn't get it to work. The partitions on the FD must confuse TWS when it tries to save the defaults as it wouldn't successfully do this. I was able to copy the default config files from the 1581 disk to the FD disk and have it work (thinking I'd just change the default partition when one gets full) but gave up on this idea due to the work involved in making any kind of changes. I decided to put the FD with the 64 and leave the 1581 with the 128 as it will utilize the faster transfer times on the drive that the 64 can't (the 1581 is my only drive without JiffyDOS).

One other disk also had to be made up for my TWS 1581 system. I keep files on different disks and had a problem accessing the dictionary files if I had taken my TWS disk out of the drive. A quick e-mail response from Eric Lee suggested I make a 1581 disk with just the dictionary files on it, don't put them in sub-directories like they are on the TWS disk. With this done I have a handy solution for the 'insert dictionary disk' message.

I have also set up TWS 128 to use the parallel printer cable for printouts. This is something that the 64 version doesn't support and is supposed to be much faster (though I haven't done any comparisons). The parallel printing option only works while in the 80 column mode. I tried this from 40 column mode and it printed but then the system crashed. No big deal anyway - if I wanted the 40 column display I

would have kept using my 64.

Oh, we still have it, don't get me wrong. We actually have five with 2 in full operation, one dead one and two extras. I would not be able to just quit cold-turkey after all of this time.

Ron Hackley, the FGM guy, has created a set of printer toggles and macros for using TWS-128 (or TWS-64 with a small change) with a Canon BJ-200 or BJ-200e Bubble-Jet printer. If you have one of these printers I suggest you contact Ruth and ask her to e-mail you this file (an .sda with all the necessary items in it including a nice sample page). It is possible to access most (if not all) of the formatting characteristics of this printer, fonts and styles, plus graphics characters without changing a thing that Ron has done. A definite feather in Ron's cap.

For those of you on-line, TWS is a perfect partner. Write your e-mail messages with TWS, Print them to disk as ASCII files and upload them to your e-mail once you're on-line. Just download the ASCII files and convert them into TWS to read mail you receive.

I am also using TWS as an HTML editor - writing WWW pages for the Internet. Maybe soon I'll get a macro file made with the HTML tags in it to make writing a file easier. These aren't really necessary though as you can d-load an HTML document and insert your own text where necessary. Actually writing an HTML file can be bypassed if you want. Also, once you make a file template you can save it and just insert the text when you update it. This all works very well and, with the right choice of page layouts, looks good even on a powerful machine running Netscape.

Anyhow, that sums up my experiences with the Internet, my C-64, The Write Stuff and my new computer - a C-128D. If anyone has any questions about some of the potential these machines have please feel free to contact me via e-mail or Snail-mail.

### *WHAT IF DR. SEUSS DID TECHNICAL WRITING?*

Unknown author on INTERNET

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port, and the bus is interrupted as a very last resort, and the address of the memory makes your floppy disk abort, then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash, and the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash, and your data is corrupted 'cause the index doesn't hash, then your situation's hopeless, and your system's gonna crash!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house, says the network is connected to the button on your mouse, but your packets want to tunnel on another protocol, that's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall, and your screen is all distorted by the side effects from gauss, so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse, then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang, 'cause as sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang!

When the copy of your floppy's getting sloppy on the disk, and the microcode instructions cause unnecessary risk, then you have to flash your memory and you'll want to RAM your ROM. Quickly turn off the computer and be sure to tell your mom.



## THE WRITE STUFF

Price listing includes shipping.

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 or 128 for Run Paint & PS Graphics	\$ 5.00
The Illustrator II 64 or 128 for Fun Graphics Machine	\$ 5.00
64 VERSION WILL BE SHIPPED IF UNSPECIFIED	

Send check to Fred Knerr PO Box 2 New Tripoli PA 18066-0002  
I have had no interest in TWS since 2/10/97. If you need a good word processor, please order now, before the opportunity to get TWS at these prices disappears.

Vendor Watch from Fred Knerr

The Write Stuff upgrade is available for the 1581, RamLink, and Hard Drive. Cost is \$5.00 each plus \$3.50 S/H. Send order for 64 or 128 (specify) with disk ID copy numbers for V1 and V2, to Busy Bee Software PO Box 206 St. David, AZ 85630

## SWAPPING SOFTWARE

"COMMODORE COUNTRY"

Vincent Dymek

I saw an ad in *Commodore World* from an outfit named *Commodore Country*. They sold and traded software and hardware. I had a bunch of software (about 85 titles) which I no longer had any use for, (some new, some used) so I called them and they said send it down (to Texas) and they would credit me with their value. To make a long story short, after several months I got \$75.00 credit for the lot. After all that time, shipping costs, telephone costs, Fax costs, it came out to much less than \$1.00 per title. Worth it? I will leave it up to you. They certainly do have a lot of titles and some hardware. In this era of increasing difficulty in finding double density disks, it may have been just as effective to keep them for other personal use. Editor's note: Their address is:

Commodore Country  
1420 County Road 914  
Burleson, Tx. 76028  
817-295-7658

## BUY/SELL/TRADE



I have a STAR NX1000 Rainbow printer that gave up the ghost in the color department. If anyone wants it bad enough to pay UPS cost they can have it. \$12.00  
FOR SALE: 40-column monitor for \$35.00, UPS paid. Two copies of Pocket Writer #3. \$35.00 each postpaid.  
Milford Zeman (515)332-5064

## DISK DRIVES

Two C= 1541 \$20.00 ea., One MSD DD drive \$25.00

## PRINTERS

C=1526 \$15.00, Epson LX 800 with RX 80 doc. \$20.00, Seikoska GP 550A \$20.00, Seikoska S2400 \$20.00, Gemini-10X Star \$20.00, Okimate 20 with Color Ribbon \$25.00, Okidata 82A \$25.00, Okidata Microline 193 \$25.00, Okidata M 182 \$25.00, Gemini 10X + Doc.\$25.00, C=1526 \$25.00, Star SL-10C \$25.00, Panasonic KX P1091 \$20.00, Brother HR 15 Daisy Wheel \$20.00

## INTERFACES

Buscard II by Batt.Incl.\$10.00, Brother RS 232 \$10.00, Printmaster RS 232 \$10.00

(Add \$5.00 for UPS shipping)

Does anyone know where I might get ribbons for my Texas Instrument printer? I went the Texas Instrument route and they referred me to their ribbon outlet but they or the ribbon outlet have no memory of that neat little 3"x4"x14" printer. It has no model number but has a serial number=1279950030. Any info or docs would be appreciated. Oh yes, I use a Super Graphix interface to run it and all the various printers listed above "for sale".

Fr.Albert E Meyer OSB (805)544-1810

I have some of the following magazines for sale:

COMPUTE, COMPUTE's Gazette, RUN, Family Computing, Commodore Microcomputers, Commodore Powerplay, Commodore. Some disks available for the COMPUTE magazines.

A few LOADSTAR disks, alpha omega, Re-run prod pak I & II.

Commodore manuals and books.

HARDWARE: C=128, 1541-II drive, Bluechip drive. Printers: MPS 1200, Gemini 10x, Seikosha SP1000vc, Okimate 20, Okidata M/L 321 standard. Miscellaneous: Eprom burner-Promenade md C1, Eprom eraser-Datarase Walling Co., Mk V Action Replay. PROGRAMS: Games 30+, Educational, Word Processors, Productivity, Children, Shareware, lots of others. You pay for shipping. Send \$1.00 for complete list.

WANTED: Wasteland - sides 2 & 4 formatted (oops), Geopublish-manual or complete program, Sentinel World-Version II & III, Graphics program similar to Geopaint that uses the complete screen.

WANTED: Parts for the Citizen GSX 190 printer - tractor unit, paper tray, color kit (motor to adjust color ribbon), users' manual.

D. L. Johansen

Zenith ZVM122A, composite, amber, monochrome monitor \$10.00

Zenith ZVM123, composite, green monochrome monitor, cracked case but works fine \$7.00, C-64 with power supply \$20.00, 1541 disk drive with cable \$20.00, MPS 801 printer with manual and cable \$15.00, 1525 printer with manual and cable \$15.00, 1526 printer with manual and cable \$20.00

Prices do not include shipping.

Vincent S. W. Dymek 973-471-8829

## WHAT DO YOU NEED? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Rolf Miller has collected a variety of used Commodore equipment. Prices are often less than the cost of repair. "If I don't have it, I'll look for it." Also numerous commercial software titles and some manuals, books.

Rolf Miller (805) 643-6666

E-mail ba100@lafn.org or write.

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\*\* E-mail me at: [chris\\_ryan@eastpointe.com](mailto:chris_ryan@eastpointe.com)

FOR SALE: C=128 and C=64 systems

NX1000 and NX1000 II printers each with Xetec Jr. interfaces  
Numerous games, ranging from \$1 to \$7.50 (mint cond. Elvira),

Much productivity software.

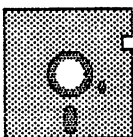
Much of the above belongs to my nephew who is taking his PC off to college in the fall. I offered to try to help him sell it to aid his financial crunch. Contact me by post or e-mail for complete list.

Marianne Plecki e-mail [mplecki@nwscorp.com](mailto:mplecki@nwscorp.com)

FOR SALE: May be forced to relocate residence! Need to reduce excess computer hardware, software, instruction manuals, docs, programs, magazines (i.e. RUN, etc) and other related materials. If interested send SASE for list or for a specific request. Some things FREE for only shipping costs. Also have keyboard for 64C and 128D for repair or parts.

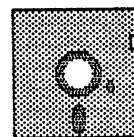
Dorothy R. Brown

At a garage sale I picked up a C=64 cartridge labeled Magic Desk I. I like what I see on the screen and what little I've been able to figure out. Does anyone have any documentation for this little beauty?  
Charles P. Penny - [cpeterpl@juno.com](mailto:cpeterpl@juno.com)



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# LANGTON'S ANT

Larry Schafer

In July 1994 the Scientific American published an article about a simple creature called Langton's Ant. The imaginary creature travels from pixel to pixel on the screen. As it moves from one pixel to the one adjacent, it notes the color of the pixel it landed on. If white, he turns it black, and turns left. If black, he turns it white, and turns right. Then he moves on. That is all there is to it, but if you watch it for a while (ten minutes or so on my screen), it develops a surprising symmetry.

I have written a simple program for it for the 128 in 40 column mode that you might want to try.

READY.

```
100 LISTO,08:LIST4,12:LIST1,1:WAIT1,1:X=50:Y=40 .
110 OPEN
120 CONT X,Y
130 IF INPUT$(2)=0 THEN PRINT1,X,Y:N=N+1:GOTO 160
140 PRINTO,X,Y:N=N-1
150 IFN<1THENN=N+4:GOTO 170
160 IFN>4THENN=N-4
170 ON N GOTO 180,190,200,210
180 Y=Y-1:GOTO220
190 X=X+1:GOTO220
200 Y=Y+1:GOTO220
210 X=X-1
220 CLOSE OR X>312 OR Y>196
230 PRINTCHR$(7)
240 END
```

READY.