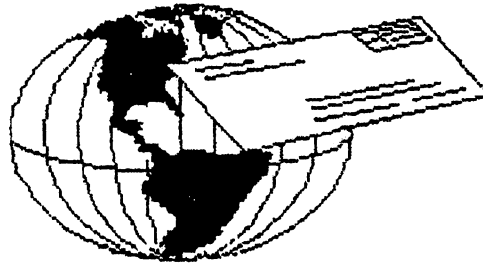


# COMMODORE MAILINK

NEWSLETTER OF —  
MEETING 64/128 USERS  
THROUGH THE MAIL

January 2000



## Meeting News

by Tom Adams

A Happy New Year to all! A warm welcome to new members, Allan Bairstow, Gordon M. Long, Joseph Skidmore and Bob Wells.

"Meeting 64/128 Users Through the Mail" is going into the new millennium, and is in its 14th year. Our membership may be dropping slightly, but we still have plenty of loyal members. We did have some sad losses this past year. The most recent was Ron Fick. His obituary is on page 17 of this issue.

The March issue of "The Commodore Mailink" contains the semi-annual membership list, and the "Information" section. Please read your "bio" in the September membership list, (or the Mailink if you joined recently). If you would like any additions, deletions, or corrections to your bio, write to Brian Vaughan as soon as possible, certainly by February 24th. There will be no further changes in bio information, except for address changes, until September. Also, inform Brian if you would like your name marked as one of our Friendly Correspondents.

I am sorry to say that there was an error in the ZIP code for our treasurer, Rolf Miller, in the "Officers" listing of the November Mailink. The official, always accurate, source of names, addresses, and other information is the membership list, and I can't remember it ever being in error. The safe way is to use that list. Hats off to Brian!

The "Information" section has a list of those who are willing to act as a resource on particular topics. Members sometimes tell me they don't have time to do a major chore for the group but wonder how else they could help. Being a resource person usually doesn't involve a lot of time, so please write to Linda Tanner and ask her to include your name on her list. If you have a problem or a question, remember the resource list. My thanks to Linda for taking on this responsibility and performing it so conscientiously.

**If you can read this, you survived Y2K!**

**Congratulations!**

## **Meeting 64/128 Users Through The Mail - Officers**

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## **MARCH EDITOR**

The March 2000 issue of the Commodore Mailink will be edited by Rolf Miller. The deadline for submissions is February 16th. Submissions may be sent on 5.25 disks as TWS or PETASCI files, or via e-mail, plain text, no attachments, to: rolfmiller@juno.com Rolf

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This newsletter and all the computers it supports are Y2K compliant, as well as being compliant with any year ranging from one to four digits.

## The Editor's Desk

A couple of years ago our local user group, Fresno Commodore User Group/64UM, adopted as our slogan, "Taking Eight Bits to the 21st Century."

Now we all know in our heads that the 21st Century does not really begin until January 1, 2001. But guess what? WE DON'T CARE! We're there in our hearts.

It is Y2K with which computers (including some aspects of the Commodore 64 and 128) must be concerned. It is the change from 19 to 20 that resonates. The starting point is probably historically inaccurate anyway.

So I take pride in editing the first Mailink of the 2000's. Bring on the celebration!

This issue is historic in another way. This will be the last newsletter I will do on a Commodore.

I have the greatest respect and love for my Commodore. But I have become spoiled and lazy after three years of using an IBM compatible. The keyboard shortcuts that I use routinely with Windows get me into trouble on the Commodore. For example, [Control v] is the shortcut for pasting text in Windows. I have The Write Stuff set up so that [Commodore v] switches to drive 10. (The PC control key and the Commodore key are in the same location). In short, my Commodore skills are eroding.

My Commodore was my first PC, and I made use of it exclusively for ten years. I find the PC to be easier and better in many ways, but I don't wish I had switched sooner; I think it was 1997 before the PC developed to a point where it made sense to me to switch. The only regret I have about my Commodore years is that I didn't start off with a 128.

I continue to be active in our local club (and expect to be a member of Meeting 64/128 Users Through the Mail for a few more years). But my Commodore is becoming more a museum piece. I turn it on only to research Commodore-related things to help club members or write articles for the newsletter.

I booted up GEOS to find the Mailink header, and found that my mouse could go sideways, but not up and down. There was a time when being unable to use GEOS would have been a tragedy--but then I had a couple of extra mice. Now I am down to one C128, one monitor, one REU. I still have the CMD hard drive, and two each 1571's and 1581's--a very complete and useful system for anything I may want to do in the future, but not much allowance for breakdowns.

The specs: This issue was produced using The Write Stuff on a Commodore 128 equipped with a 40 meg hard drive, which is used for loading the program, and saving all articles. The front page header was scanned from a laser printed back issue into the PC, but only because of the untimely death of Mr. Mouse.

The text was printed on an Epson Stylus Color 600 ink jet. This printer understood and carried out most commands from TWS with no changes from the codes I have used for years. The exception was double size printing. The only other concession I had to make was to set the line count at 62.

--Dick Estel

## **Active Commodore Clubs Around the World**

by Ed Harler

When I first got the idea of doing an update on active Commodore clubs, I thought there would only be five or six at most. After a few of weeks of inquiries I found out that was not the case. It seems to be a case of "knowing" that most people aren't interested in 8-bit machines so why advertise that there's a group of 8-bitters around. Why not? David Mohr's contribution shows that some people are interested; they just have to be informed.

If you are interested in any of the groups, just contact the person mentioned. (Members of "Meeting 64/128 Users Through the Mail" are listed in the Directory. All others have had their addresses included.)

Many of the exact beginnings are unknown, but most have been in existence since the mid '80s. One thing most clubs have in common is a newsletter and people who are willing to be officers. With the exception of one group they also refuse to include non-8-bit machines. Most of the clubs accept by-mail members.

Paul Berry reports that the Sandhills [NC] Commodore Users Group may be a very small group (about 8 active members), which was formed in the late '80s, but it still meets monthly at one of the local schools.

Back in 1983 the Western Slope Commodore User's Group was founded in Grand Junction CO. They are now know as the Western Colorado Commodore User's Group and their newsletter is called the "Infinite Loop." How apropos! We hope Earl Williams and his fellow members will continue indefinitely. They currently meet the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in Mack CO.

Out in CA the Fresno Commodore User Group and The 64UM began about 1981 (the two groups merged in mid-1985, becoming FCUG/64UM). One of the larger groups, they have about 30 paying members. Dick Estel tells us the club meets once a month. The newsletter, The Interface, is published bi-monthly.

John M. Elko is a member of the Classic Sixty-four Preservation Society in Red Bluff CA, which was started about 1986 or 1988 and has had continuous monthly meetings. There are usually about 10-15 members present. Although the club began as a CBM 8-bit user group, it later included all other platforms, so the discussions are usually divided between CBM and IBM.

David Mohr writes that the Astoria Commodore Users Group was founded some time in 1978 by a group of PET owners. The name was later changed to Amiga & Commodore Users Group. When the C-64 arrived on the scene the club embraced the new model and the 64 still holds the majority position, though some also have 128s and four have Amigas. The club was documented on page 36 of the August 1983 "COMPUTE! Gazette," so there are probably other existing clubs which may also have been listed. David points out that the current members are what he calls "the second generation," composed mainly of those who never had a computer before and were not original members. (It was the only club which reported that it doesn't have any of the original members.) Their business meetings are at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month. At his place of business David has a collection of approximately 3200 disk sides, a magazine collection, books, software and hardware. Members are allowed to use the items (including the computers housed there) during business hours. An unusual plus for members. He also runs a 300-14.4k BBS at 503-325-2905. Their "biggest claim to fame" is that Lawrence Hiler, creator of the Fast Hack 'Em

series, was once a member.

Name changes are rather common. CIVIC 64/128 began in 1982 in Oxnard CA as CIVIC 64. The club currently meets twice monthly on the first and second Saturday. Its members are both local and through the mail. It publishes a newsletter (both hard copy and disk version) monthly, has a disk library (which contains over 20,000 titles) and supports a BBS at 805-382-1125, which runs on a 128 and 1.3 gig. hard drive with thousands of titles available for downloading. A hearty thanks to Rolf L Miller for his coverage on the club.

The Lansing Area Commodore Club (LACC) was listed with Commodore as User Group #225, reports Maurice Randall (arca93@delphi.com), who says the founding date was about 1982. Meeting on the second Wednesday of each month at the Meridian Township Service Center in Okemos MI from 7-9 PM, the club's current membership stands at 40, with about a dozen at each meeting. "Double Click" is their newsletter, which is edited by Maurice, the creator of "Wheels." Thanks also to Tim Lewis (lewist@ARQ.net), the club's president, for additional info. Dues are \$20 a year. Anyone interested in joining the club may contact Tim via e-mail or write to: The Lansing Area Commodore Club, P.O. Box 1065, East Lansing MI 48826. They also have a BBS at 517-322-2386 running on a 128D with 20 MHZ SuperCPU and a 128 Meg HD. Check Tim's Web site at: <http://www.arq.net/>lewist>.

Member Arlene H Brockway is a by-mail member of two other C= groups: Lucky, Inc., which first met over 15 years ago and still meets monthly, and Basic Bits C= Group, which first met in 1985 in a suburb of Cleveland OH and still meets monthly. (K Dale Sidebottom e-mailed that he would supply details about Lucky. Unfortunately, our deadline is at hand, so his information will follow later.)

Randy Harris (rgharris@aol.com or rharris1@genie.idt.net), President of SWRAP (South West Regional Association of Programmers) User Group, Inc., submitted a very detailed report of this non-profit, Commodore 64 and 128 user group that was started in January of 1983 on the southwest side of Chicago IL. It mushroomed to about 200 members in the heyday of the 64, but currently has only one tenth of that. They meet at the Ashburn United Methodist Church (83rd Place and Hamlin Ave) the second Sunday of every month from 2:30 - 4:30 PM. Their monthly newsletter is called "COMM-ADORE." (Love that name!) SWRAP membership costs \$25 annually. The DOM subscription costs \$20 annually (\$30 by mail) and is available in either 1541 or 1581 format (they have a disk library). SWRAP has hosted the Chicago Commodore EXPO in Lansing IL in the Fall of 1998 and 1999. Their Web site is <http://members.aol.com/rgharris/swrap.html>. Their postal address is: SWRAP, PO Box 443, Dolton IL 60419-0443.

Capital Region Commodore Computer Club (CRCCC) near Hartford CT had a modest start in 1985 around the kitchen table of Prudence Schifley, who was the club's first president. As the club grew, they found a meeting place at the Vernon Police Station Community Meeting Room where they converge on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The club reached its membership peak at about fifty, but still have 30 to 35 members. The "Disk of the Month" (started in 1986) is still going strong and trading disks with other clubs helps. A four-page newsletter is published monthly. Thanks to very active member Richard Savoy.

The Tulsa Area Commodore Users Group (TACUG) had its first meeting in April 1984. Like most clubs, its membership soared to 100 within the first year and peaked at about 170 in 1986. From 1988 to 1990 the membership held at approximately 70 members, but then started a steady decline to its current seven members. President

Chris Fite is also editor of the club's newsletter; an essential part of keeping any group in existence. They meet monthly on the second Monday from 7-9 PM at the Martin East Library (2601 S Garnet) and look forward to having visitors.

We were only able to find three overseas clubs. Surprisingly, two of them are in Australia. The Hills 64 Group was formed in June 1982. Ivan Blitz, having a big garage, hosted the club.

The other Australian club is SDCUCI (Southern Districts Computer User Club, Inc.), reported by Gaelyne Gasson. It was started about 10-12 years ago, and they still meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Their web page is at <http://videocam.net.au/sdcuci/>

We hear a lot about European activity, but a message to Guenther Bauer at [go64@go64.org](mailto:go64@go64.org) brought the surprising news that he ([spockie@eris.giga.or.at](mailto:spockie@eris.giga.or.at)) lives in Austria! And, even more surprising, that there are no Commodore Clubs there. Following Guenther's clue, we contacted Nikolaus Metz ([Nikolaus.Metz@t-online.de](mailto:Nikolaus.Metz@t-online.de)), who surprised us even more when he told us he is the only member in the GEOS User Club in Hannover, Germany. The president is Rolf Windgasse ([rolf.windgasse@htp-tel.de](mailto:rolf.windgasse@htp-tel.de)).

We were told there was a C= club in PA, but we were unable to find one. If you have any information about such a club (or any other), please let us know.

**Editor's Note:** The Fresno Commodore User Group receives newsletters from the following clubs (I've only listed the ones that appear to offer 50% or more Commodore support):

Arizona Commodore User Group (Phoenix area); Hawaii Commodore User Group; Huntsville Alabama Commodore Komputer Society (no spell checker I guess); Tri-City Computer Club, Kennewick WA; Commodore Users Group of St. Louis.

Treasure Valley Boise User Group (Idaho) has closed their PO Box and no newsletters have been received for several months, but a member there tells me via email that they are still in operation.

### **JPEG Graphics on the Commodore** by Dick Estel

One of our members asked if the JPG conversion programs discussed in the last Mailink could be placed on the disk version. If you are a disk subscriber, that question should have been answered by the November disk.

He also asked if JPG formats in the newer digital cameras could be viewed with this software; and what is the difference between several different JPG formats he's seen listed. These include (with the probable meaning in parentheses): SHQ-JPEG (Super high quality), HQ-JPEG (High quality), SQ-JPG (standard quality) and DCF/Exif JPEG (?).

Most digital cameras allow the user to select two or more levels of quality. One trade-off is, the higher the quality, the larger the file, and the fewer that can be stored on the cameras storage media. My Kodak DC265, for example, has three quality levels selectable by a simple pushbutton method. The highest quality (supposedly for "experts") requires a script which resides on the memory card, and is selected from a menu in the display screen.

A different sort of animal is this bunch of letters noted by our correspondent: SHQ-TIF, which no doubt stands for super high quality Tagged Image File. TIF files are another format for saving pictures on a computer. They are substantially bigger than JPG files, so apparently there is significantly less compression. As far as I know, there is no program to read TIF files for the Commodore, but if you can get a PC using friend to convert the TIF to JPG, then it can be yours.

Yes, the JPG file from a digital camera can indeed be viewed with this software on the Commodore-- with intervention from an IBM compatible PC. (I don't know if there is any way to do it without going through a PC.) I used Big Blue Reader to get the file from the PC to Commodore format, then used Stephen Judd's JPX/JPZ converter programs to view it. Both the black and white and color versions worked well. I did a little advance preparation by reducing the file size on the PC before converting to Commodore, since even the standard quality files can range from 100 to 300 kb in size. The typical high quality images are in the 300 to 400 range, going up to 600. The Commodore can handle them if you have RAM expansion, but the conversion does not reduce the picture, it just crops out a section so a bit of experimentation is required and smaller files allow you to display more of the original.

### Testing the JPG Converter by Rolf Miller

Technically, I am not the one to write this article. I know little about the technical aspects of high resolution displays, and nothing about JPEG images. So it's hoped another who better understands the subject will come forth with additional insight.

Thanks to Craig LeVay's article in the November '99 MailLink, I downloaded the jpx.zip file from the [www.ffd2.com/fridge/jpeg/index.html](http://www.ffd2.com/fridge/jpeg/index.html) site. Then I went to [www.videocam.net.au](http://www.videocam.net.au) and downloaded the unz6420 file from their FTP site. Upon running, this file self-dissolved into the unzip64v2 program along with an instruction file. Following those directions, I then unzipped the jpx.zip file which resulted in the jpx.txt, jpx1111.pu, jpx1111-8.pu, pup.jpg files. I then used jpx1111-8.pu to display pup.jpg on a stock 64. It appeared as a near-photo-quality black and white image of a pup.

Now, as Craig said, the 64 could not capture the image for printing. That's understandable, actually. When it comes to generating a display, an 8-bit computer like the 64 is limited to 8-pixel resolution. Nothing approaching photo-quality is possible with only 8-pixel resolution. Hence, "a Commodore can't display such pictures."

Indeed, some idea as to the best image of the pup which could normally be accomplished on the 64 is seen as the jpeg image is being created on the display. But, when the last portion of the image appeared, it suddenly became clear, though, as Craig said, it had a slight shimmer.

Since "a Commodore can't display such pictures," how did it?

Curiosity urged resetting the 64 and loading up SCREEN FINDER from the FUN GRAPHICS MACHINE (FGM) disk. It discovered two hardly recognizable images of the pup, each slightly different. Reversing the images clarified them some.

These two slightly different images prompted a thought. The Programmer's Reference Guide speaks of manipulating the display using what's called "interrupts." This allows, among other things, having two different displays appear simultaneously as a split screen. It seems possible, therefore, to alternately display two different images on the screen in rapid succession. It would appear as one image to the eye, though some slight flicker might be present, as was evident with the completed image of the pup.

This being true, a high resolution digital photograph could be reduced to two 8-bit images, one offset slightly from the other. When displayed together as described, twice the resolution would appear. (And while only two images of the pup were discovered, it's supposed there could be others not found.)

To test the theory I first saved the two pup images as FGM screens. Then in the Creator section of FGM, the next step shifted one image one pixel right, followed by superimposing the other image on top of it using the OR function. (This is easily done in FGM v8 with the Merge option.) Of course, the results still existed as an 8-pixel image. But the image of the pup did indeed become clear.

### **A Smooth Transition!**

by Richard Savoy

When I volunteered to become the sixth editor of the Commodore Mailink, my main interest was for a smooth transition. Before me there was Jean Nance, Bill Robinson, Paul McAleer, Jim Green and the late Fred Knerr. As of this writing, just before Thanksgiving, nearly half of the current subscribers, have let me know which disk they take, 5.25" or 3.5" and I believe all so far have renewed or plan to in 2000.

I want to thank so many for the quick response and the notes about Fred, the good wishes for my future performance. I will try to make the disk version something you all will want each issue.

Let's see how are we going to do this? Well, first I will catalog all the public domain programs that have been on past issues, so as not to duplicate and because I'm the Disk Librarian and Disk Editor for CRCCC, I'll catalog in a way not to use the material that I have in that club because there are members that belong to both groups. I did receive some disks from Fred's estate, a few with public domain programs, which I have to check out and otherwise it was Commodore Mailink earlier disks with a few years missing, that others are making copies or sending originals as I write this article.

By the time you read this you should have the November 1999 "Commodore Mailink on Disk" and see that in JPEG Utility by Craig LeVay, Hugh had added informational notes to the end of the article and thanks to Hugh, some programs have been added and a puppy picture to show the clarity on a monitor.

More pictures will be on the January Disk of famous Commodore people attending the Chicago Commodore show last fall! No need to type out Gary Noakes "1581 Auto Partitioner" program because it's done for you on the disk version. That's just a couple of reasons for wanting the disk version--usually the back side will be filled with public domain programs and you just have to press what you want with our new MUSIC MENU program!



If you haven't ordered the disk version yet, order it today and I'll send you Chris Ryan's **COMMODORE GAZETTE** August 1999 issue FREE! A review of that program is done by me elsewhere in this issue.

**NEW PRICES FOR THE COMMODORE MAILINK on DISK EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1,2000 ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

The cost is \$7.50/year in US.	Payable: Richard J. Savoy
\$8.70/year in Canada	250 West Street # 9
\$10.00/year every where else	Ware MA 01082-9783
\$1.50 single back copies	
U.S.A.Funds only.	

**ALL BACK ISSUES ARE AVAILABLE.**

### **The Wave Breaks**

(Compiled from Email messages from Maurice Randall)

The four year long rumor about The Wave is finally turning to reality. It had its first public showing at our local user group meeting last night (December 8). The demonstration went nice and smooth. No crashing. The software did everything it was supposed to do.

The latest news is the browser is now capable of handling most any HTML tag except for those dealing with frames and images. That stuff will come after I finish getting this thing ready for its first login session. I'm trying desperately to get something ready for everyone to play with before Christmas.

Actually, part of the frame work is done. In a sense, the current method of displaying the HTML document in the entire screen is no different than displaying it in a portion of the screen, which would be a frame. The code for displaying on the screen is the same as that which will be used for displaying within individual frames. The scroll bar routines are adjustable to work a scroll bar at any position on the screen and at any height, with any amount of content. So, we can have the ability to scroll any part of the screen. The scroll bar routines I've got now are better than the ones I created for the Dashboard. These new routines will eventually find their way into a new version of the Dashboard.

Scrolling the HTML document up and down is pretty fast. You can grab the scroll bar and move it up and down as fast as you want, and the page moves just as fast as your mouse does. There's absolutely no lag at all.

The Wave is a graphical browser for the Commodore, which runs under Wheels and GEOS. It requires a SuperCPU with SuperRAM. 1 meg will work, but more is better. There are two version, Wave64 and Wave128. They are pretty much identical except for screen resolution. The 128 version runs on the 80 column screen in graphic mode while the 64 version uses the graphic mode of the VICII. They require Wheels 64/Wheels 128 as the OS. The Wave has a graphical browser built in, plus a VT100/ANSI terminal including a telnet mode. It's still in its early stages of development, but the first public release version should be ready within a few weeks. It will be limited to some degree, but development will continue and new versions will be released as they are ready. The Wave is a free application and will be available for downloading from my web site

(<http://people.delphi.com/arca83>) or from my BBS (5173222386) when it's ready.

Once this gets going good, I'll have a built in routine for automatic upgrading to make it easy to keep up with the new releases that might come out every other week or so. You'll just go to my web site and click on a link and you'll be prompted if you want to upgrade The Wave. Click on YES and the process will be handled for you. The Wave installs itself as the default desktop until you exit it. While it's running, you can launch other applications like geoWrite or any other application. There will also be new Wave modules that will run right within the browser. Call them "plug-ins" if you'd like.

### **A Christmas Story**

by Joe Fenn (aka kilroy)

Last week I saw an add in the Honolulu Advertiser newspaper which said "help Commodore 64 user. I need help to salvage data from old disks." The guy long back was a C-64 user and had all his tax data etc. on old floppies and had completely forgotten everything he ever knew about using the C-64. In fact he had no computer stuff left, only the old disks.

I told him if he can figure out or remember what he created his tax spreadsheets and word processor files with we could get to his data easy. He didn't have the foggiest idea of which program he had used. So he brought all his big box of disks over and I started scanning thru the directories and all the disks were "data," with not a hint of which program created the data.

Finally, about the 15th disk I pulled out had a little sticker on it which said "poc planner". I heaved a sigh of relief as Pocket Planner is my most often used software, along with Pocket Writer 2. Turns out all his stuff was created by those two programs so, I donated him a C-64 (like new), a power brick, a CBM printer, a Supergraphix interface and a like new 1541-2 drive. After a few "help me out" calls he had everything solved and was printing out the spread sheets, word processor files, etc. so he could just scan them into his IBM junk set.

So I assume by now he has satisfied the IRS for back data and remains a free man. He is an independent photographer and was overjoyed about how it all turned out. It cost him \$35 for the ad in the paper. I charged him nothing so I feel at least I accomplished the idea of what Christmas is about.

Footnote from Howard Herman: It is also possible to export Pocket Planner data into PC importable format, for the likes of Quattro Pro, etc. This applies to Pocket Filer data as well, which I have imported intact into Paradox.

The only reason I mention this, is that scanned data in the best of cases will have some errors that will need manual cleaning up.

On the other hand, it is likely that the user you describe would not be able to do this sort of direct data exchange, due to lack of computer abilities, and the task of converting data would fall on the you, as the expert.

I was especially happy that this ability exists, since one of my Pocket Filer data bases had about 700 entries.

## Commodore Gazette Monthly

By Richard Savoy

I was asked if I would do a disk review of Christopher Ryan's Commodore Gazette disk. It was no problem for me to accept, Chris and I go back before the Gazette was ever published and also, Chris is a member of our group.

Commodore Gazette is a monthly disk magazine, available on two 5.25" disks or 3.5" disk. He has been publishing the disk for a full 4 years now.

You start with a windows orientation menu with two windows. On this disk, the left window has 10 titles and the right window describes the programs as follows:

### Left Window:

-----  
Commodore Gazette

Kenny's Corner

Utility Tunnel

Education Center

Games Galore

Graphic Gallery

Sounds of Sid

Home & Business

Commodore Bundle

Jim Green PD

### Right Window:

-----  
Subscription info, advertising, utilities, contents and product list.

Futurewriter II+ word processor

Three Label making programs

Educational Programs for children

Chess, Cube, Draw Cave & Letter Puzzle

3 block graphics, with view from disk

47 graphics of birds & animals.

22 songs on Enhanced Sid Player

Life Expectancy, Lottery Program and more.

programs for C-128, VIC-20, Plus/4 and C= 16.

from Jim's Disk # 83.

This disk used a total of 2272 blocks of material, all public domain. Chris charges \$25 per year, payable in USA funds only, for 12 issues on two 5.25" disks or a single 3.5." That's just a hair over \$1 per 1541 disk size. His address is in the BIO's

A FREE copy will be sent to each of the subscribers of the Commodore Mailink on Disk, with their January issue.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

From: Rolf L. Miller, Treasurer

Following is a summary of the Trust Account as of November 30, 1999.

### Balance

9-30-99	\$1251.53	1-1-99	\$2924.42
Credits	981.00		1959.00
Debits	387.50		3038.39
11-30-99	1845.03	11-30-99	1845.03

The Credits include all dues and donations received during the period. The Debits are all the expenditures during the period, the largest part of which is the cost of printing and mailing the Mailink and Bio pages.

## What Commodore Can Do

by Sensei David O.E. Mohr (Lord Ronin from Q-Link)

The following is a true story. I have changed the name for the man's privacy.

When someone asks, "What use is that old Commodore?", tell them this story.

There is on my BBS a user. We will call him Zeus, as once that was his handle. Zeus is a big man, now in his mid 20's. He also has a problem--a very active mind. One that can't settle too long on a project. At least in school that was his problem. He would get bored, simply because he always finished ahead of the majority of the class. Eventually this caused him to drop out of school.

Oh he didn't do bad. In fact he had good grades. Just that things were too boring and going too slow. Once out of school he had to make some money. He also needed something to occupy his mind. Or at least slow it down. He found both. He became a drug pusher and user. Pot and cocaine mostly. Though he would try other things. Along with the booze.

He wanted to quit. But didn't have anything to take the place of the drugs in his life. He and his father came to my shop, as I make no bones about being an ex heroin addict. A little problem I picked up overseas years ago and beat 22 years ago. They thought that I might be able to help.

Yes I was a drug counselor at one time. After a few questions, I figured out that he was using the drugs to slow down his over active mind. He had been in therapy sessions, as part of a legal thing.

I tried him on Role Playing Games, as they require tons of imagination. Plus a very sharp mind. He did good. But couldn't sit still for 8 hour sessions. Though to this day he enjoys the games. Next I put him on a C=64.

Magic happened at that time. He became a fanatic to the Commie. Plays games and does word processing. Logs onto the BBS. Plays games and writes messages on the topics. Next he bought a 128. Then traded for a SX-64. So he could have the Commie when he traveled. Later he bought a used Amiga 500.

Now two years later, he is drug free. Has his contractors license. Paid off all his court costs. Regained his drivers license. Bought a car, has a girl friend and has put his life back together.

Even though he has used the "other" platform, he is now looking at upgrading the 500 to possibly a 1200 or a 2000. Yet his 64 and the SX-64 are at hand and he uses them regularly. He and his family credit me for turning him onto the Commodore, as it saved his life. But it wasn't me. Just that the Commodore works miracles. And not just in its programming. I don't believe that the IBM theme machines would have done the same for him. Because he needs the more direct hands on work, than the point and click impersonal approach.

So now you know just another thing that the Commodore can do. Fix and save a man's life. It all started with LOAD "\*",8.

## Basic Knowledge: Control Codes by Gary Noakes

[Author's note: This is the first in a series of tutorials that will cover intermediate to advanced Basic programming. If you have any suggestions for topics you'd like to see covered, or just general comments to make, feel free to contact me by snailmail or email.]

By now, anyone with even a passing interest in Commodore Basic is at least somewhat familiar with control codes, those reversed characters in PRINT statements that change screen colors, move the cursor around or clear the screen. Although most of the codes are generated in conjunction with the Control key, control in this case refers to screen control.

Most, but certainly not all of the control codes are listed in the appendices of the C-64 and C-128 manuals. The most simple codes, text colors, cursor movements and reverse mode on and off, are well known and will not be covered here. In most magazine program listings, control codes are usually represented by their CHR\$ codes or by using a shorthand code of the keys to press (a mnemonic) to represent the control character. For example, printing a CHR\$(5) or pressing [CTRL 2] within quote mode will do the same thing: tell the computer to turn the cursor color white. For this article, I will use brackets [ ] to represent a letter in reverse mode. While CHR\$ codes are perfectly acceptable in programs, control codes take a single keystroke, as opposed to 7 to 9 keystrokes for a single CHR\$ code.

But there are times when a CHR\$ code must be used. Several cases in point: In a program line, within quotes, a [t], [m] or [M] is not a good idea. A [t] is the same as the Delete key; it will erase the character to the left of it, and, job done, will itself disappear. An [m] is the same as the Return key; everything on the line to the right of it disappears, including the [m] itself. An [M] is, you may have guessed, a Shifted Return. This is a bizarre one; everything to the right is 1) printed one line below where you would expect it to be if it's in a PRINT statement, and 2) LISTed one line below where it should be. Worst of all, the remainder of the line becomes sort of disconnected from the main line (it's still part of the line when LISTed or RUN, it just has a rather tenuous grasp); the disconnected line cannot be rejoined to the first part of the line nor can it be edited. If the first part of the line is edited, the sort of disconnected part becomes totally disconnected, so that the next time you LIST it, it's completely gone. As with the other control characters mentioned, the [M] itself also disappears. Way weird.

If you need to detect the Delete, Return or Shift Return keys, use chr\$(20), chr\$(13) or chr\$(141) instead. Right about now, you're probably wondering how to type a reversed uppercase character with the Control key; the answer is, you can't. While Control is pressed, the Shift key doesn't register in quote mode, so any letter pressed will always be lowercase. The trick is to type the character between quotes, but not within quote mode; just leave a space between quotes where the character will be, exit quote mode, cursor over to the space, press control-9 (to turn on reverse) and press Shift and the letter. This technique will be designated as "between quotes" as opposed to "within quotes" for this article. CHR\$(14) or Control-n within quotes will switch from uppercase to lowercase characters. Since any program that uses text in the display should use lowercase characters for readability, this is an important control code. It's also important to know and use if you plan to use redefined characters in your program. If your font is located at

an address evenly divisible by 4096, then you need to stay in uppercase mode (use CHR\$(142) or [N] between quotes). If the address divided by 4096 has .5 as a remainder, switch to lowercase. Failure to use the correct case switch may make your character set invisible to the VIC chip.

This ability to switch between cases becomes more important in the 80-column mode on the C-128. Whereas Control-n in quotes and [N] between quotes switches the case of every character visible on the 40-column screen, these control codes also allow you to display one or more uppercase characters in an otherwise lowercase screen, even in the middle of a display line. This is due to the VDC chip's ability to display all 512 characters at once, as opposed to the VIC chip's 256 character limit. Once you're in the proper case, you should lock it in. On the C-64, using CHR\$(8) or Control-h within quotes does it; this disables using the Shift-Commodore key combination to change the case. Once locked, it can be unlocked with CHR\$(9) or Control-i within quotes.

Again, this is especially important with redefined characters, since changing case will probably result in garbage characters on screen. On the C-128 in native mode, Commodore changed these particular control codes and swapped the enable/disable order for some reason; CHR\$(12) or Control-l within quotes disables the Shift-Commodore key combination. It's very important to disable these keys in the 80-column mode, since the character set will not change immediately, but anything typed or printed afterwards will be in the wrong case, possibly leading to a search for a PRINT bug that doesn't actually exist. Using CHR\$(11) or Control-k within quotes will re-enable the keys. For C-128 native mode, the control code of CHR\$(9) or Control-i within quotes has been redefined from the C-64 to act as a Tab character; each Tab will move the cursor eight spaces.

One control code that is quite useful is [T] between quotes. This is the Insert control code, and in conjunction with a Cursor-left and a Home, it can be used to print a character in the bottom-right corner of the screen without scrolling the screen up. In effect, it takes the last printable character in a line and inserts it between the second- and third-last characters. It looks like this in a program line (remember, the characters between brackets are in reverse video): "-----  
+[CURSOR LEFT][T]-[s]"

There are several control codes that are specific to the C-128. One of these is the bell (CHR\$(7) or Control-g within quotes), useful for a quick alert to the user that input is required or an operation has been completed. Another is the linefeed (CHR\$(10) or Control-j within quotes), which behaves just like a Cursor Down (CHR\$(17) or Control-q within quotes) or adding a PRINT statement to a line. There is also CHR\$(24) or Control-x within quotes, which is described as "Tab set/clear" in the manual. This makes it sound as though the Control-i (tab) control code may be user-definable to a value other than 8, but after extensive reading I've never found any documentation or examples to support this, and no real explanation of the syntax, how it works or what it does.

Some control codes exist solely in support of the 80-column screen. The flash (or blink) control code uses CHR\$(15) or Control-o within quotes to turn it on, CHR\$(143) or [O] between quotes to turn it off. This can flash a single character or an entire line of characters. A Carriage Return (CHR\$(13)) at the end of a program line will also terminate flash mode, which means you must manually turn on flash for each new line printed, just like reverse mode. The underline control code turns the familiar block cursor to an underline cursor with a CHR\$(2) or Control-b. Turning it back into a block cursor uses CHR\$(130) or [B] between quotes.

While most control codes are for screen or cursor manipulation, one in particular is not. That is CHR\$(3) or Control-c within quotes. This is the Stop key. It's a good idea to disable the Stop key while a program is running to avoid problems like open disk files or a wrong video bank or mode that the user may have a hard time recovering from. Compilers like Austro-Speed for the C-64, Skyles' Blitz! and Blitz! 128 and Abacus' Basic 64 and Basic 128 all disable the Stop key as a matter of course. Having the Stop key disabled but still detectable also allows you to redirect a Stop keypress to your own routine, whether it's to gracefully terminate a disk operation, exit from a submenu or exit the main program itself. By using the Control-c combination while the program is running, you can test your redirects without terminating the program itself or even disabling the Stop key beforehand. As you can see, these control codes can be quite useful. If you are learning to program in Basic, learning to use these codes is a great first step.

### **Colored Graphics: Another Way**

by Rolf L Miller

An advantage to being treasurer for the group is that each year during renewal time sees numerous examples of printing efforts accompanying the dues. Several caught the eye as excellent samples of what can be accomplished using a Commodore 64/128. But one in particular stood out: it contained color graphics!

Color printing is not new technology. Printers made for Commodore use long ago possessed color capabilities. Okidata's Okimate and the Star Rainbow come to mind. What is new technologically is the higher resolution capabilities of today's bubble jet and laser color printers.

However, the per page cost of color printing is a bit high. Moreover, reviews speak frankly about the results possible with Commodore. As one put it: "Do not expect the low resolution of the Commodore to give the results you see in the stores. It just won't happen!"

By relying on the printer's built-in fonts, Commodore 64/128 users can utilize the high resolution capabilities of the newer printers in the production of text. The printer will respond to ASCII code regardless of the computer hooked to it. Hence, the font desired can be selected by sending the printer the proper ASCII codes. Then sending the ASCII code for the letter A will result in the letter A being printed using the selected font.

Graphic printing, on the other hand, requires sending the printer the digital equivalent of the image. This too is accomplished with ASCII values, but the results will only reflect the resolution of the computer in use. And while the Commodore 64/128 can be manipulated to increase the printing resolution by in effect superimposing two or more images, the results hardly approach what is possible with today's bubble jet and laser printers.

Adding color further degrades the imagery possible from a Commodore 64/128. The reason is that the coding needed for the color occupies the same space required by the image. Thus, the color coding takes away from what is available for the resolution of the image.

The sample of color graphics that came out of the renewal envelope, though, did not come from a color bubble jet or laser printer. A look through a magnifying glass confirmed that. It instead came from a standard dot-matrix printer. And it was not

a color printer either. The lack of color dots confirmed that.

The writing on the sample thanked "the Mailink staff for the many hours and outstanding contributions" made. Not a few of the notes and letters accompanying renewal checks contained similar sentiments. Then, in a PS at the bottom of the page, the creator revealed how the color came about. "I cheated some, the coloring is by hand."

This brought to mind another Commodore user who regularly produces colorful printing efforts where the printer isn't the source of the pigments that tint the work. Instead, the PRINT SHOP program is used to create the front and back of what will become a card. Copies are then made from this master and set aside till grandchildren visit. Then the crayons come out. The resulting handiwork is later used to pen short letters, Thank You notes, and other writing as needed.

#### **New Members**

**ALLAN BAIRSTOW**, 14 Glainis Close, Garforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS25 2NQ, United Kingdom Allan is a fireman. Hobbies: Model making, and home improvements. System: C-64, C-64C, C-128D, Apple IIe, Amiga 1200 & a PC, 1541 + clone, 1541II, 1571, 1581 & FD-2000 disk drives, Citizen 24e & 1200, Canon BJC-4100 & various Panasonic printers, and Philips 8833-II & 1701 monitors. Interests: Magazine production (Commodore Scene), wanting to use a CD-ROM read/write unit with his C-64, and the Internet, E-mail, (allanbairstow@compuserve.com).

**GORDON M. LONG**, 1024 S. Atlantic Blvd. Apt. #8, Alhambra, CA 91803-2220 Gordon is a security guard. Hobbies: Military history, the bible, and chess. System: C-64C, FD-2000, FD-4000 & 1541-II disk drives, JiffyDOS, SuperCPU, 1750XL REU with 2 Megs., Panasonic KX-P5400 laser printer, 1802 monitor, and a HandyScanner. Interests: None given.

**JOSEPH SKIDMORE**, 420A W. Division St., Dover, DE 19904-3236 Joseph is disabled. Hobbies: Collecting sports cards & coins, and entering contests. System: C-128 & 386 compatible, two 1541 disk drives, Seikosha SP-1000VC printer, Panasonic RGB color monitor, and a 1200 baud modem. Interests: Getting on the Internet to surf for information.

**BOB WELLS**, Rt. 1 Box 339A, Star City, AR 71667-9710 Bob is a library subscription agent. Hobbies: Woodworking, and carpentry. System: C-64, C-128 & C-128D, 1541, 1571, 1581, and FD-2000 & FD-4000 disk drives, HD 100 hard drive, Panasonic KX-P1624, KX-P2023, KX-P2130 & Okipage 10EX printers, and a Magnavox RGB 80 column monitor. Interests: Programming, and working with RELative files.

#### **ADDRESS CHANGES**

**Keith Keller**, 304 4th Ave. W. #2, Grinnell, IA 50112

**Charles Penney**, 9087 Lambskin Ln., Columbia, MD 21045



## **Ron Fick Passes**

Ron Fick, a M64/128UTTM member and enthusiastic Commodore supporter, passed away on December 21 following a battle with cancer.

Ron took over the remaining stock of Xetec, and built hard drives as well as providing extensive support to customers and others. He also offered repair service and help to Xetec interface users to the extent his limited stock of parts permitted.

Ron moved to Santa Maria CA from Colorado about a year ago and immediately became active in the local Commodore scene. He will be missed by all of us who came into contact with him.

## **The Omni BBS**

by David O.E. Mohr

In the magazine called BBS in 1996, Gaelyne Gasson wrote a review on a BBS system called OMNI-128. I never saw it till summer of 1999, two years after I opened my own BBS. Now that I have a copy of that issue, I wonder why more C=128 users didn't pick up the system.

Back in 1995 I became the president for our users group. The past president wanted to convince me to open the group up to a multi platform users group. Personally I thought that supporting the Pet, Vic-20, C=64, C-16, C=128, Plus/4 and all the Amiga models seemed to my naive mind to be multi platform. But he wanted to bring in the "other" platforms. I said no and he showed me a newsletter from MC-3 near Portland Oregon. I saw that they had C=64/128 files on their BBS called Twisted Sky. Since Portland is just 103 miles from me. I thought why not call the BBS.

So putting DesTerm 2.0 into ANSI mode, I called the TSBBS. Logged on with the handle "Lord Ronin from Q-Link" and became ID #62. After some time and a lot of help from Sky Knight <Ed Paulsen> I not only learned my way around, but was shocked to see that the BBS for this multi platform users group was run on a stock 128.

So I asked if I could log on in C/G. Well it turns out that you can. In fact you can log on in 40 or 80 columns C/G, 40 or 80 col ASCII or 80 col ANSI. Wow I thought...why do the BBS's for the other platform only allow ANSI?

More messages passed. In the end I ordered the distribution packet from Brian Bell, the creator of Omni-128. Three 1581 disks arrived. But first he refused to sell it to me till I had at least a FD-2000. Well I saved and borrowed and bought a 500 MB HD, thinking it might be enough for a start. Little did I know at the time. Point of fact is that the TSBBS was on a 200 MB CMD HD, having 5028 files. Which is what the partitions 2-? are used for in the setup. I know this, as I was allowed to copy all of the TSBBS files to my Hard Drive. Now I also own the 2 GB drive that was the 64 SYSOP's for TSBBS.

Now I know that this is going to sound like a sales pitch for the Omni system. To be frank it is in a way. The way is that we have something called the Omni Echonet. This is a collection of message bases. These are echoed then put into a packet. This packet is sent to Omni World in Tacoma Washington. There it is dissolved and put on the board. But the caller also will receive a packet. This packet is all the

messages that have come in from other Omni and Color Boards, as Omni is compatible with Color BBS.

Yeah I know the idea of a Long Distance call to Tacoma is a little out of the budget even on a weekly basis. Well for those that have an Internet account, you can send and receive the packet as an attached file, saving on the long distance call.

O.K. so why am I going on about the echonet? IMNSHO C= users need to be connected in as many ways as possible. The Omni BBS by virtue of the Echonet gives users this connection. How connected you ask? Well Gaelyne is ID #44 on the Omni World. She is in Australia. Nick Rossi of NovaTerm is listed in the users list. So is Michael Nausch, who is better known as Big Chief, SYSOP of Omni World Germany, just outside of Munich. It is through him and Michael Scholich [Omni World Germany ID #10] that I learned about the CD Commander and that Dale Sidebottom had the U.S. rights.

Omni has more features than I expected. Here is a sampling. Message bases can be set up for a max of 20. 19 of these can have around 99,999 sub areas. EX: 6.32781. Each of these sub areas can have up to 50 topics. Each of the topics can have, space allowing, unlimited number of replies. I have an echonet area with over 458 replies.

File area is set for a max of 20 areas. These can have sub areas like above. Each sub area can hold 100 files. This also includes the matching 100 uploaders comments. Protocols include punter, X & Y modem, Y-modem g and even z modem uploading. My own area 2.1 & 2.11 are full of 64 Arcade games. Area 2.12 is half full.

Games that are played online are a draw for users of all platforms. Sorry to say that not all games can be played by all users. There are some games that are in C/G only. There are 4 versions of the Empire game. Two Stock Market games. One that on my BBS is the most popular, called Nuclear War. Another game that isn't in the Distribution pack. Shadowrunner, based on the game by Fasa. These and a few others are all playable in both C/G and ANSI.

If you are good at Basic V7 programming you can write your own games or additions to the system. My group is just starting to write some more games for Omni. BTW: the games are distributed free to Omni SYSOPs. No registration fees to pay for the extra games. There are about 22 of them that I know about.

So there in brief is the Omni BBS. Comes small but grows large and I haven't touched but 10% of what is in it. The best part of this is not that all upgrades are free. Nor the very helpful other SYSOPs. But the fact that this system is still in production. Has been since 1986. My feeling is that if we have more C= users setting up BBS's we might expand our C= users. Even if they aren't Omni, as long as they allow both C/G and ANSI users to call. Gain a few returnees and maybe, as I have done, gain some new converts. At least it will provide a local atmosphere to the wired community in which you live.

System requirements are at least a FD-2000. A C=128, 80 column monitor is good. But a 40 col in CGA will also work for the SYSOP. Speed of the modem is up to you. Starts at 300. I run at 14.4 moving soon to 28.8. As I have a Swiftlink. Omni will work with the Ramlink, RamDisk and SCPU.

So if this interests you the man to contact is Brian Bell. Email address is

bbell19@idt.net If you aren't wired to the net or would like more information, feel free to write to me. I'll pass it along or try to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

### Ten Top PC's

The December PC WORLD magazine has an article entitled "The Digital Century: 100 of the Best, Worst and Weirdest Events in Computing History". In a sidebar entitled "10 Greatest PCs of All Time" is the following list and comments:

- 1) Altair 8800: The machine that inspired a generation.
- 2) Apple II: The definitive PC--at least until IBM joined the party.
- 3) IBM PC AT: Set standards still in use today.
- 4) Compaq Deskpro 386: Pioneered a new Intel processor before IBM did, inspiring a horde of other clone vendors.
- 5) Radio Shack TRS-80 Model 100: The first successful notebook.
- 6) Apple Macintosh 512K: The first truly useful Mac.
- 7) Amiga: Did multimedia tricks in 1985 that today's PCs still can't do.
- 8) Commodore 64: Possibly the most beloved computer of all time.
- 9) IBM ThinkPad 560: Thin, light and durable; our pick for the perfect traveling companion.
- 10) Palm Pilot: Small is beautiful.

Submitted by Gary Noakes

### For Sale and Wanted

Wanted: To find Krenath Sunfire and/or any of his programs from Q-Link. Wanted a copy of Vopal Aid V4. Said to have been on Q-Link. Used in GEOS. Wanted Craig Chamberlains book "Everything you want to know about the Commodore."

Sensei David O.E. Mohr [go-dan] BBS 503-325-2905

Free books (you pay postage):

Easy Script Manual  
Jiffy-DOS Manual

Dick Estel

For sale: Lots of used commercial software, computers, drives, other hardware, books, accessories. Separate lists are provided on a 5.25" disk. Send a floppy disk mailer with return postage and your address to: Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club, c/o Roger Hoyer, 31 Potowatamie Trail, Milford OH 45150.

For sale: Commodore hardware, software, accessories and books on individual lists. Send SASE for copies of the lists to Roger Hoyer at 31 Potowatamie Trail, Milford OH



# FUN GRAPHICS MACHINE

Greetings fellow club members. Jean asked me to write something about the new version of FGM that was recently released on **LOADSTAR #182**.

For those of you unfamiliar with FGM, it is a graphics manipulation program. I created FGM because I wanted to do more than what Print Shop (and others of the time) allowed. FGM will let you place nearly unlimited graphics and text anywhere on hi-res screens, then manipulate the screens to your hearts content (ie: flip, invert, reverse, stretch, expand, reduce, rotate, merge, combine, mix, smooth, etc.). Graphics from most any graphics program can be used in FGM (Print Shop, Print Master, Newsroom, and GeoPaint, to name just a few). Once the screens are created you can print them out in a variety of ways using some pretty versatile printer drivers. I consider FGM to be a supreme labelmaker:-).

**TEXT IMPORTER** is probably my favorite new feature. You can write your text using your favorite word processor, place some graphics on a page of hi-res screens, then "pour" the text onto the hi-res screens. The text will flow around the graphics (or within, if you wish). You can switch between fonts at ANYTIME, set proportional spacing, adjust leading (space between rows of characters), **bold**, **underline**, all on-the-fly using codes that you enter into the text with your word processing program. As each screen or set of screens is filled with poured text, FGM will automatically save them "linked" with the appropriate filename prefixes, then load the next set of hi-res screens, pour, and save them.

**SOFTHYP**: This program properly places soft hyphens into text files for pouring into Textimp, or printing with a word processor. You can increase the word base.

REU (expanded memory such as 1750/1784) support has been added. The REU can be used as a data drive and/or FGM can be installed into the REU for going rapidly between sections.

The **PRINTER** sections have been speeded up considerably, and a new one added that uses interpolation techniques to place additional dots on the paper in a way to smooth out the jaggies. Centronics parallel (ie: geoCable) output is now supported and the different printer sections can be individually assigned to either serial or parallel output, running a printer on each. Parallel output is a lot faster! On the downside, Commodore 7-pin and emulating are no longer supported.

**DEMO-ER**: This section lets you record your keystrokes while using the hi-res editor, for later playback. Useful for video titling, instructional demos, animation, fun. In this version you can include clipart files, which allows for all manner of animation and special effects.

**TUTOR**: Plays tutorial files that have been recorded in DEMO-ER. Tutorials can be made that show how to do something, then turn the hi-res editor over to the user to actually try it for themselves, then the tutorial continues.

Other improvements include improved drive support, **SUPER CPU** compatible (fast!), import **GEOPAINT** files, rotate full screens 90 degrees, some specialized printer drivers. **READER** still imports **Handyscanner** files. FGM and Andrew Martin's **Hi-Res Sketch & Hi-Res Workstation** are compatible.

And there's much more. If you don't subscribe to **LOADSTAR** you can order issue #182 which includes **LOADSTAR**, the new FGM, and full documentation (on disk). That's three disks for \$10 post-paid. A great deal! Give Fender or Judy a call at: 1-318-868-8727.

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BEST WISHES  
FOR A Y2K  
COMPLIMENT YEAR  
O O O O O O  
RON HACKLEY

CREATED  
with the  
FUN GRAPHICS MACH

