

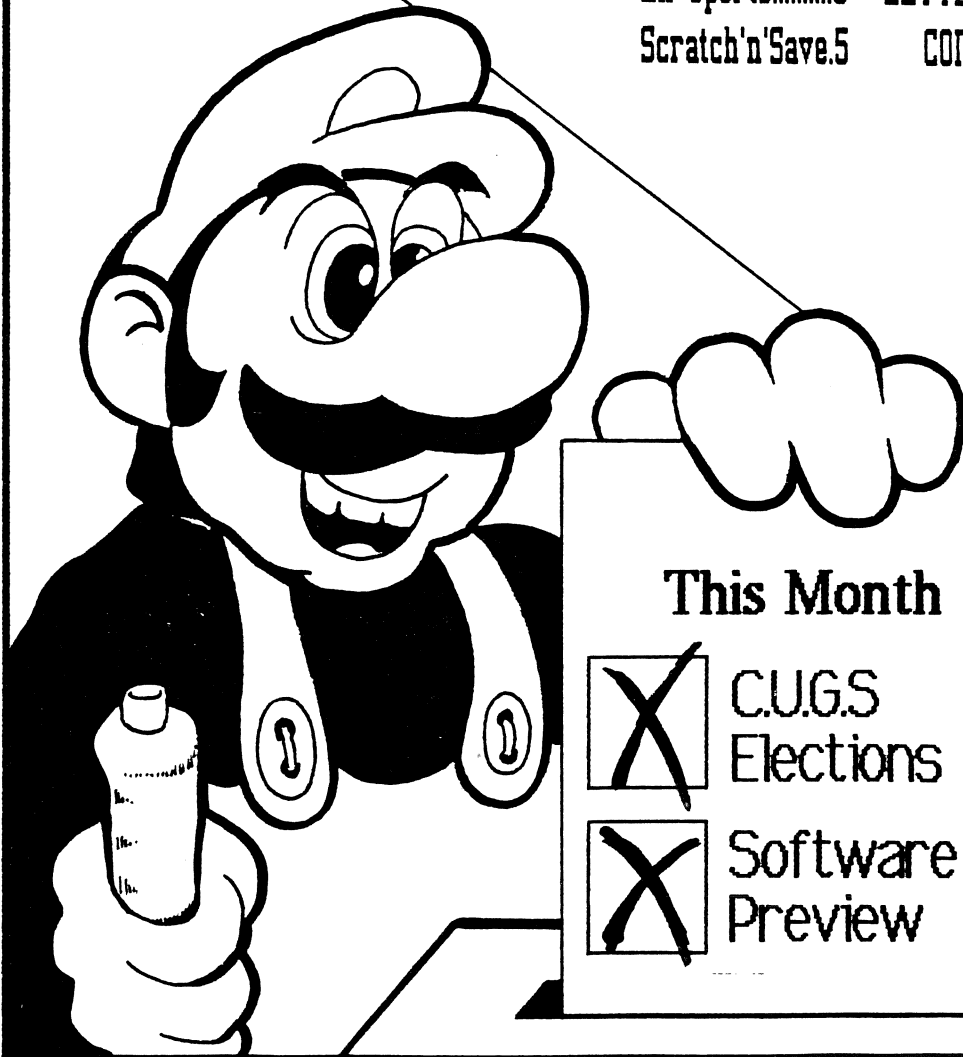
*Commodore  
Users Group  
of  
Saskatchewan*

November, 1989

Vol 4. No.9

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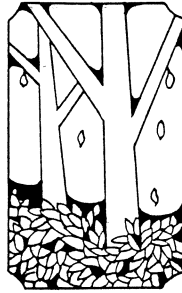


**This Month**

- C.U.G.S Elections
- Software Preview



NEW IMPROVED  
OBLIGATORY STUFF



# EDITORIAL

BUGS MAILING ADDRESS:

BUGS  
143 Birchwood Cres.  
Regina, Sask.  
S4S 5S3

BUGS BBS - (306) 586-1189

C U G S EXECUTIVE 1989

President	Richard Maze	586 3291
Vice President	Barry Bircher	359 1925
Treasurer	Harry Chong	789 2142
Editor	Ken Danylczuk	545 0644
Asst Editor	Jarrett Currie	757 2391
Librarian	Earl Brown	543 2068
Asst Librarian	Steve Bagues	949 1370
Members at Large	Real Charron	545 7601
	Gord Williams	543 0373

If you have any questions about CUGS please feel free to contact any of the above executive members.

THE MONITOR is published monthly by the COMMODORE USERS' GROUP OF SASKATCHEWAN (CUGS), Regina, Sask., Canada. CUGS meetings are held at 7 pm the FIRST WEDNESDAY of every month (unless otherwise noted) in The North-West Leisure Centre, corner of Rochdale Boulevard and Arnason Street.

Anyone interested in computing, especially on the C64, 128 or 64C, is welcome to attend any meeting. Out of town members are also welcome, but may be charged a small (\$5.00) mailing fee for newsletters. Members are encouraged to submit public domain software for inclusion in the CUGS DISK LIBRARY. These programs are made available to members. Any member is entitled to purchase DISKS from our public domain library for a nominal fee. Programs are 'freeware', from computer magazines, or the public domain. Individual members are responsible for deleting any program that he/she is not entitled to by law (you must be the owner of the magazine in which a particular program was printed). To the best of our knowledge, all such programs are identified in their listings. Please let us know if you find otherwise. Contact Earl Brown, 727 Rink Ave.

CUGS is a non-profit organization comprised of C64, 64C, C128, and 128D users interested in sharing ideas, programs, knowledge, problems and solutions with each other. The more members participate, the better the variety of benefits. Membership dues are pro-rated, based on a January to December year.

## Meeting Place

CUGS MEETING WEDNESDAY  
NOVEMBER 1, 1989  
NorthWest Leisure Centre  
7:00 pm

AGENDA:

1. Club Business
2. ELECTION
3. Software Preview

On passing on...

No one likes to leave, to pass on, to see someone or something that you care about taken from you. And this has been a week of word of many things "passing on" for me. A kind, gentle soul of an uncle passed away just last week, and it is sad to think of him gone. This will be my last EDITORIAL (hold the applause, please!). This month will mark the last meeting for the "old" executive - hopefully, SOME new faces will appear to replace those of us who need to pass on the "torch". And I read the article by Loren Lovhaug about the demise of the 128 (read C64 as soon as possible).

However, there's always some bright side to every passing.

My uncle, who might have stayed in this world and suffered horribly from a crippling disease, is gone to a better tomorrow, leaving fond, pleasant memories with all who knew him.

Jarrett Currie has agreed to stand for the position of EDITOR of our illustrious rag. From what I've seen, he'll have little trouble maintaining the MONITOR's high standard of excellence (as set by yours truly - ahem) and probably improve on it a mite! I know he'll add his touch and his ideas, and these new ideas will keep us and the MONITOR lively and growing! Maybe some one of you would offer to "understudy" the job as his assistant).

I don't know, yet, if I'll be one of the faces on the new executive. I've said I'd help Jarrett out if no one new appears (tragic thought). I've also said I'd sooner serve the club by devoting my computer time to contributing to the club - articles (NOT editorials), programs and/or presentation ideas. Ideally, I'd like to become a "member at large". I know several of the club executive would like to "back off" from their full executive commitment, and help some new faces with new ideas bring those ideas to light. But, the bottom line is, we feel the club is important, and we'll do what we must for it to survive! If YOU feel the club is important, maybe it's time YOU did something to keep it alive! (Sorry, I wasn't going to preach.) Remember, any executive member who leaves is doing so for the good of the club, and so that new ideas from new, fresh minds can keep the club vibrant and fully alive.

Last, I've dealt with Commodore (the company) for over 9 years, ever since my order for one of the first VIC 20's was delayed 10 months (their ads were well in advance of their shipping ability). I've been on the sending end of countless comments and advice to Commodore on one of two issues the company seems adamant to ignore (don't ask me why) - marketing and customer support.

I've watched Commodore react to (and in some cases badly pre-guess) the consumer market. I've watched them botch an EXCELLENT chance to literally sew up the Canadian educational market by monotonously building a reputation for customer disrespect and bad marketing. I've watched them act deaf, dumb and blind (no insult to persons with these handicaps intended!) to the owners of now-defunct Plus 4's and C16's. Their marketing strategy sold these "mid-point" machines to hapless folk, whom they then ignored. After all, if you don't answer the knock of a starving man, eventually you know he'll stop - if your conscience will let you wait that long!

Commodore became very adept at ignoring or rationalizing the complaints and concerns of their faithful customers. I suggest to you that the C64/128 are around today IN SPITE OF Commodore's efforts, because they're just damn good computers!

And now Commodore's decided to kill the ONE truly upgraded, fully compatible machine they've ever created!! Make sense of that one - 7-point-something MILLION C64 owners who could be moved into a bigger, compatible machine by a little clever marketing IGNORED, primarily to back the AMIGA and attempt to convince the world it's (the AMIGA) something that it's not - namely, a great home computer!

This issue we've devoted almost two pages (plus this editorial) to try to convince you, as a Commodore computer user, that we should express our concerns in unison to Commodore. How? Read the last couple of pages - write a letter, sign the petition, maybe - just maybe, this time, Commodore will listen.

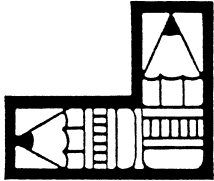
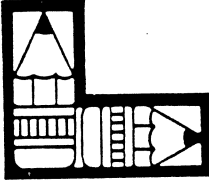
Anyway, should the 128 or even the C64 pass on as has the good ol' VIC or C16 or Plus 4 or PET, there'll be something to take its place that's faster, bigger, better, neater and eventually (maybe) just about as much fun. And IF they pass, I guarantee the memories of the machines will all be pleasant. Commodore (Inc.) used it as an early catch-phrase, but the C64 made it real - it truly became the "VOLKSCOMPUTER" - the people's machine, and the friendliest one on the block.

So, don't mourn my passing; rather, celebrate my successor! Hail, Jarrett, Editor-in-Chief, and may all your editorials write themselves!!!

It's been a slice - keep komputing, Kommodorads!

## ELECTION CALL

This month is election month. Tonight, we will have the election of officers for 1990. The executive positions consist of:

	President Vice-President Secretary/Treasurer Editor Assistant Editor Librarian Assistant Librarian 2 members at large	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The executive usually meets once a month outside of regular club meetings. The duties of the executive members primarily consist of:

- planning meeting agendas.
- looking after the disk library
- publishing the 'MONITOR'

You don't have to be an 'expert' to be an executive member. All you need is a willingness to bring your ideas about what the club should be doing to executive meetings. NEW, FRESH IDEAS ARE NOT JUST WELCOME, THEY ARE A NECESSITY TO THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF OUR CLUB. So please, get involved. EARL BROWN has agreed to act as a nominating committee (of one). GET INVOLVED..... Give your name to Earl and become a CUGS executive member.

## PREZ MAZE



The meeting this month contains two important parts. These are: the election of the executive for 1990 and the software preview night.

The software preview part of the meeting will give you a chance to have a look at some of the programs that you have heard about or seen advertised. It is a lot easier to consider whether or not to buy a particular piece of software once you've had a look at it in action. I personally know about a number of programs (games in particular) that have been purchased as a direct result of club members seeing them in action at the software preview night and being impressed with them. I also know of some programs that were looked at and not purchased because they didn't impress. The important thing is - NOW YOU KNOW!!!!

Another important aspect of the software preview night is the chance that members have to sit around the coffee machine and munch cookies and share ideas and experiences with each other. This gives each of us a chance to get to know each other a little better.

I don't want to sound like a broken record or continue to harp on the same thing but I think it is important that each and every member considers letting his/her name be included as an executive member. There are two important things to realize about being involved with the executive. First you don't have to be an expert at anything to become an executive member. There are lots of members with particular expertise that can be called upon if that is what is required. What is needed by executive members is a willingness to discuss their ideas and help plan the meetings and activities for other members. The second thing to realize is that it generally doesn't require a great deal of time. For most executive members, the time involvement is one executive meeting per month. If you can be involved more than this you may want to consider helping with the club library or the newsletter which do involve a bit more extensive output of time. The important thing to realize is that your ideas and outlook on the direction the club should take and the activities it should be involved with are more important than your expertise as a computer user.

## SMART MAZE



On page 4 of the MONITOR SUMMER ISSUE the editor issued a challenge to "find the errors" in the BASIC program. The program was intended to allow the entering a string of characters and then permitting changing any group of characters you wanted within that string. Please accept the following as my answer to the problem posed.

Depending on which machine you use to enter it, this program can determine the number of errors present. For example - the use of the variable ST in START\$ is a reserved word in BASIC 4 and would be an error on the PET but not on the C64. I am using a C64 and assume that BASIC 2 is used thus eliminating the error I mentioned above.

I don't think you want any mention of the style of the programming but I do think that the program would be much better with a couple of REM statements explaining what is happening. Since there are no memory restrictions, there is no reason not to include some REM statements in crucial areas. I would include the lack of REM statements as "errors of laziness".

In two places, lines 30 and 50, the programmer included the question mark with the statement in the input statement. Since input causes a question mark to appear this creates a double question mark. I would call these errors of carelessness since they do not affect the operation of the program but still should have been eliminated.

There is one major logic error in the program. As it currently is written the program WILL NOT FIND ANY STRING THAT IS AT THE END OF THE MAJOR STRING. The error occurs in line 120. As written line 120 reads: 120 FOR FOUND = (LEN(START\$)-LEN(CHANGES\$)) TO 1 STEP-1

Because the program looks for the found string from the end to the start, if a string to be found is at the start or in the middle of the major string the cushion of characters after the found string makes the arithmetic come out OK. At the end of the major string the arithmetic causes the string to start looking 1 character before the actual string occurs and as a result it is not found. The fix is to simply add 1 to the arithmetic so line 120 should read: 120 FOR FOUND = (LEN(START\$)-LEN(CHANGES\$)+1) TO 1 STEP-1

[EDITOR'S RESPONSE: WAY TO GO, RICHARD! Please remember the source for the challenge - a long past back issue of our beloved MONITOR (then called a "newsletter"). They apparently suffered from the same malaise we, too, seem to have - they got no takers. A couple of older (not "elderly" club members DO remember discussing it at a meeting, but no one responded then, and (up 'til now) none of our members responded today. I guess that make you a winner, Richard, and eligible for a FREE CLUB DISK!]

# Bogues the Builder:

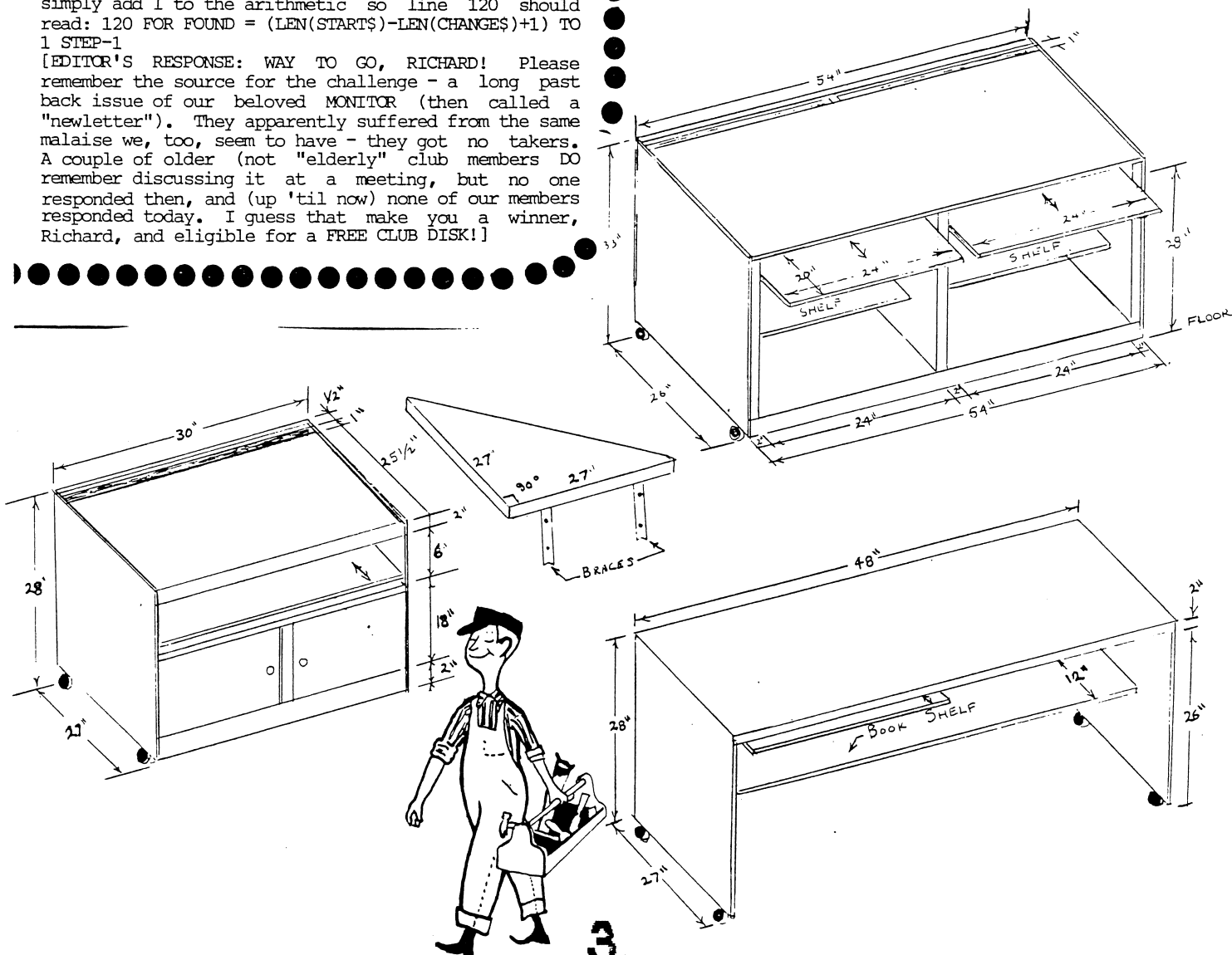
This is the final draft in Steve's extensive series on computer desks and accessories for the beginning handyman. Steve's moving on to other horizons, but leaves us with this very extensive "piece de resistance", his largest plan to date. Thank you, Steve, for an excellent series. I hope you have time to do another series for us again soon!

Steve's final plan features:

- basic desk with optional parts
- pull-out paper shelf
- pull-out keyboard shelf with lift-up book holder
- monitor shelf
- casters
- large work surface
- hutch
- self-standing castered printer stand, capable of handling 15" carriage printer- optional side shelf (paper shelf)

HUTCH features:

- bookshelf
- closing cupboard with (optional) locking doors
- built-in power bar





# WHERE2SHOP

Last month I started a series on sources of computers supplies and accessories for the 64 and 128. The idea is to let you know where to look as well as what you can expect to find if you go there. I won't include prices - it's up to you to compare and find the best buy. The reason for this should be self-evident. I may visit a store during a sale and thus report a price which will have changed by the time you read this article.

Another condition I have put on this series is that I am not going to report on computer stores that do not carry Commodore computers. I realize that these stores will have a number of the usual supplies present and there may be some super buys available at some of these stores but overall I am going to mention those stores, individuals, etc. who support the 64 and 128. One last thing before I begin looking at some of the suppliers, HELP!!!! If you know of suppliers that I have missed please let me know and I will include them in a future article. It is very difficult for one person to gather all the information about suppliers - especially the smaller stores that are off the beaten path.

In the Victoria Square Mall, Bi-Rite Drugs carries Commodore supported magazines as well as a very limited supply of software (mostly games), joysticks, diskettes and disk boxes. They do not carry anywhere near what they do in their Gordon & Albert Street store. Zellers carries a good supply of hardware including C64's, 1541 disk drives, monitors (1702 & 1802) and 1250 printers. They also have some software (both games and productivity), diskettes, disk boxes and joysticks. Their software is not as extensive as in their Golden Mile store but they do have a much better hardware selection.

The Bi-Rite store in the Gardiner Park mall does not carry any computer supplies. Superstore carries diskettes, disk boxes and joysticks. The no-name diskettes they carry are of excellent quality. On sale they are a super buy.

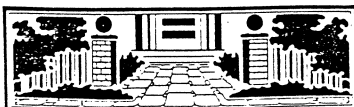
Canadian Tire (north store) carries the C64, 1541 disk drive, monitors, mouse, modem and a limited supply of other peripherals like joysticks and disk boxes. Their selection is much better than the south store.

There are two sources of re-inking fabric ribbons in the city. The first I will mention is our own club member - Barry Bircher (phone 359-1925). The second is Associated Computer Services (phone 949-3117).

## 1990 Meetings

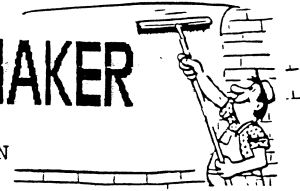
BUGS MEET:

The meeting dates for 1990 have not been set as of yet. We have applied for the FIRST WEDNESDAY of each month as a meeting time with the SECOND WEDNESDAY as an alternate date. We will not hear about this until the end of November. As soon as we know the official dates for 1990 meetings we will include them in THE MONITOR and on the bulletin board.



# LABEL MAKER

BY DAVE PROCYSHEN



A quick and easy way of making labels for disks or for making mailing labels is illustrated by the following program. The program was written for the 801 printer but also worked very well on a Gemini 10X with a Cardco +G interface. Because it doesn't contain any special printer commands, it should work on any printer.

Enter the program, and save it on disk. Put labels into your printer and give it a try. You may want to enter some dummy data (series of x's) for one label just to make sure everything is lined up properly. One final note - if you want to enter nothing for a line enter a pair of quote marks as the data for that line and the line will be left blank.

```
100 rem label maker
110 rem by dave procyshen
120 :
130 open 1,4
140 print "enter first line":input a$
150 print "enter second line":input b$
160 print "enter third line":input c$
170 print "enter fourth line":input d$
180 input "how many copies";n
190 for i = 1 to n
200 : print#1,a$
210 : print#1,b$
220 : print#1,c$
230 : print#1,d$
240 : print#1
250 : print#1
260 next i
270 input "do you want another label";an$
280 if an$ = "y" goto 140
290 close 1:end
```

## Next Meeting:

BUGS MEETING WEDNESDAY - DECEMBER 6, 1989

NorthWest Leisure Centre  
7:00 pm

AGENDA:

7:00 - 7:30 FOR THE NEW USER  
(DISK DRIVE)  
7:30 - 7:35 CLUB BUSINESS  
7:35 - 8:15 PD DATA BASES  
8:15 - 8:30 QUESTION & ANSWER  
CLUB DRAWS

The session "FOR THE NEW USER" is intended for people who have not had much experience with using the C64 or C128. It will contain hints and tips to try and help you get the most out of your equipment. Although it is intended for new users, there should be something there for everyone, so "old-timers" are welcome, too.

The session on "PD DATABASES" will examine a number of public domain data base programs. It seems that everyone is searching for a good data base program. Here is a chance to have a look at the good and bad of some of the newest public domain data base programs.

The club draws this month will include the regular club draw, as well as the SPECIAL DRAW FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE MONITOR. If you haven't made yourself eligible for this draw you can still do so by contributing an article for the December issue.

# Exports of Sorts

Recently we began a regular service to our membership. The people below have agreed to let their names be listed as "experts" in some aspect of C64/128 computing. If you've a question, these brave volunteers can likely answer it, or help you find an answer that works. If YOU have a skill at some computing process, consider listing yourself with our other volunteers. We're all in this together!

## Wordprocessing:

- Paperclip III - Shaun Hase ----- 584-3371  
 - Paperclip (to version E) -Richard Maze- 586-3291  
 - Paperclip (to version E) -Jarrett Currie 757-2391  
 - Paperclip (any version) -Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

## Spreadsheet:

- Multiplan - Richard Maze ----- 586-3291  
 - Pocket Planner - Barry Bircher ----- 359-1925  
 - Better Working SS - Ken Danylczuk ----- 545-0644

## Databases:

- Pocket Filer - Barry Bircher ----- 359 1925  
 - Oracle (Consultant) - Ken Danylczuk --- 545-0644

## Communications:

- Pro-128-term - Barry Bircher ----- 359-1925  
 - Pro-128-term - Jarrett Currie ----- 757-2391  
 - Library files - Barry Bircher ----- 359-1925  
 - Desterm 128 - Gilles Archer ----- 545 4638

## Music/Sound:

- (most) ----- Ken Danylczuk ----- 545-0644

## Languages:

- Forth - Ken Danylczuk ----- 545-0644  
 - Pascal - Ken Danylczuk ----- 545-0644  
 - ML (machine language) - Ken Danylczuk - 545-0644  
 - ML (machine Language) - Barry Bircher - 359-1925  
 - BASIC (general) - Richard Maze ----- 586-3291  
 - BASIC 7.0 (graphics) - Shaun Hase ----- 584-3371  
 - BASIC (2.0-7.0) (files) - Ken Danylczuk 545-0644

## Graphics:

- Print Shop/Master - Ken Danylczuk ----- 545-0644  
 - Koala Painter/Printer - Ken Danylczuk - 545-0644

## Hardware:

- All hardware - Tyler Rosewood ----- 525 0214  
 - Disk Drive Maint. - Ken Danylczuk ----- 545-0644

## GEOS:

- GEOS 64 and 128 - Tyler Rosewood ----- 525 0214  
 - GEOS 64 - Jarrett Currie ----- 757 2391

# Scratch 'n' Save

Just a word in passing. In the November issue of RUN (in the MAIL RUN column) they describe a "fix" to stop the pointer from jumping when using a Japanese version of the 1351 mouse for the paint-and-draw program called RUN PAINT. I tried this fix today but failed to get the 1351 mouse to work at all (you must use Port One, instead of Port Two, after the fix). Now I'm not quite sure if I did something wrong but will try to re-examine what I did, in the hope that I made an error somewhere. I will give you an update (perhaps at our November meeting).

There is only one addition to our disk library this month; UTILITIES PRINTER 3 (#PC). However along with this disk is another disk full of programs obtained from the November issue of Gazette for those of you who purchase this magazine. Both these listing occur elsewhere in the MONITOR. Off the November Gazette is an educational program called 'Flash Card'. The program "generates simple math problems and displays them in large, easy-to-read format". The method used to generate the answer appears awkward compared to similar programs. To a young child this may not (or may) be a bother. If you prefer a similar program, we have them in our library. For those of you that write BASIC programs on the 64 there's a utility program called 'DP BASIC'. The utility enlarges BASIC commands by 33 more commands, including most of those used as disk commands on the 128. 'SPEEDSCRIPT EC' stops the dancing routine of the cursor movement as you command it down or up your copy. The save and replace bug has also been fixed for those of you with early disk drives. 'COPY 81' is a file copy program for the 1581 disk drive. It allows you to copy programs from partition to partition of the same disk or to another disk. You're limited to 255 files and 20 partitions.

On UTILITIES PRINTER 3, there are Hi Res screen dumps, a couple of programs that generate cheapsheets for the 64 (overlays), several directory programs, several label printers, a sequential file printer (does not appear to work in 80 columns), and many more. One program in particular, I could not make work; is called 'MENU V2.1'. I left it on, in case I was doing something wrong. Please let me know about this program. There are a few of the programs I could not make work properly with my printer (Epson with Xetec interface). If any of you discover what printer they are written for, could you notify me.

I would like to welcome all new executive members. Those of us that have been elected or acclaimed before, will assist you every way we can. Don't hesitate to ask any one of us for assistance.

# New Club Disks:

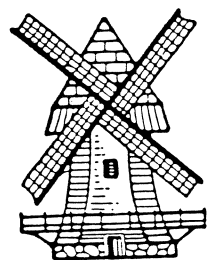
## PRINT UTIL.# 3 PC

UGS LOADER  
 UGS DATA  
 -----  
 HIRES DUMPER  
 LORES DUMPER  
 CHEAPSHEET  
 MAIL.C  
 TYPE SETTER.C  
 COMMANDS 1525.C  
 TITLE PAGE.C  
 DISK PRINTER.C  
 LIST ALL  
 FORM MAKER  
 FORM MAKER.DOC  
 LABEL MAKER  
 LABEL MAKE.DOC  
 ADDRESS LABELS  
 ADDR.LBLS.DOC  
 RETURN LABELS  
 RET.LBLS.DOC  
 SORTNPRINT  
 SORT.DOC  
 SCREEN DUMP 64  
 SD64 SOURCE CODE  
 STAR PICTURE  
 PICDUMP  
 BLOWUP  
 KAREN  
 DISK LABEL PRINT  
 HOW TO USE  
 SMART COL PRINT  
 TWO COL DIR

PRINTER CODES  
 ULTRA SEQ-PRINT  
 +ULTRA.DOC.C  
 GRAPHICS BUFFER  
 FONTPRINTER  
 FONT PRINTER.BAS  
 ITALIC.FONT  
 STRANGE.FONT  
 CAPITAL.FONT  
 COMPUTER.FONT  
 STANDARD.FONT  
 PRINTER CHANGER  
 PRINTSCREEN  
 PRINTSCREEN.CMP  
 CONDENSED FONT  
 CF COSTOMIZER  
 KEYBD.OVLY.C-64  
 OKI.120.3COL.NLQ  
 D.OKI.120.3COL  
 FANCY DIRECTORY  
 D.FANCY DIR  
 MENU V2.1  
 D.MENU V2.1  
 CALENDAR.PTR  
 ENVELOPE ADDRESS  
 R.ADDRESS LABELS  
 DISK LABELER.2  
 CATALOG PRINTER  
 F.TINY.DIRECTORY"

## GAZETTE NOV #89

ENU  
 7.<----->  
 COPY 81  
 COPY81.OBJ  
 WHITE WATER  
 WHITEWATER.OBJ  
 FLASH CARD  
 VERT SCROLLER  
 SPEEDSCRIPT  
 SPEEDSCRIPT EC  
 INPUTDEMO1  
 INPUTDEMO2  
 INPUT.ML  
 DP BASIC  
 DP BASIC.49152  
 CONTENTS



# DO YOU REALLY LOVE YOUR 128/C64???



Commodore Petition Drive

In Compute!'s Gazette October issue, in the Letters to the Editor section, the Heartland user group in Montana U.S.A. had written a letter to all Commodore computer users. In it, they asked for Commodore user groups to band together in a petition drive. I wrote to them and asked for the information they wanted us to receive. Two weeks later I got a thick letter size envelope with a copy of the petition, a personalized letter and the Heartland user group newsletter called 'The Town Cryer'. The letter generally thanked C.U.G.S. for efforts to call to Commodores attention, the concerns of the C64 and 128 users. It mentioned that we (CUGS) were the second user group in Canada to write for it. I rewrote the petition with the C.U.G.S. name on it as requested.

To those who may not have heard, Commodore is discontinuing the production of the 128. The C64 is safe SO FAR. Who knows when (maybe next year) there will be calls for the C64 to cease production. The basic purpose of the petition is to bring C64 and 128 owners together in an effort to give us a voice which Commodore might notice - to take notice of the existing C64/128 users and their needs.

If the company cannot or will not continue production of the computers, then they should give the existing users a channel to buy third party parts and peripherals. Commodore should, at the very least, allow a company to purchase the rights to manufacture and distribute ROMS, ram expander units (REU) and disk drives like the 1571/81. To allow the machine to be used as it is capable of being used. Loren Lovhaug, editor of Twin Cities 128 has stated that he is willing to set up such a company and wants very much to have Commodore's blessings. Your signature on this petition will give us a stronger voice, a voice to tell Commodore, not to JUST drop the machines and walk away, but allow a third party to continue to support them.

\*\* Where can you find this petition? \*\*

On your next trip to Software Supermarket, take a look on the front desk, read the petition and sign it. Or, if you attend the November 1, 1989 meeting you will find it at the front table where the library disks are.

\*\* Is there anything else I can do? \*\*

Yes, at the end of the newsletter, you will find a sample letter you all can rewrite to the C.E.O. of Commodore. Please rewrite (so that we all don't look the same and repetitious) on your own favorite word processor and send it to the address at the top of the letter. If you are short of time or cannot be bothered to rewrite it then please, at the very least, sign your name at the bottom and mail it to Mr. Copperman. If we all participate, we will be able to get at least the third party support for our machines and give it a chance to become a legion in the computer hall of fame.

Thank you,

Barry Bircher.

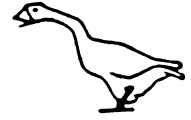
(Ed. Note: Because I believe this letter makes clear what is intended and what could be for the 128 or C64 in the years ahead, it is reprinted here for you to read and seriously consider adding YOUR name in support of the cause - and two GREAT computers.)



RUMOR/OPINION/MAYHEM

by Loren Lovhaug

I HAVE A DREAM



(reprinted with permission from Twin Cities 128: The Commodore 128 Journal)

Three years ago, in January of 1986, I started Twin Cities 128. My dream was to provide the best 128 support I could. With the help of a number of gracious people I have been fairly successful. While there is still vast room for improvement, Twin Cities 128 has earned the reputation as the best outlet for 128 specific information in North America. But now I want to tell you about a new dream, one that involves you and the 128.

My dream, although certainly not as important as the one held by Dr. Martin Luther King, involves an emancipation of sorts. Just as racial minorities have in the past been prevented from reaching their maximum potential by institutional and structural, we the owners of Commodore 128 personal computers have to a certain extent been prevented from reaching our maximum potential by barriers inherent in the marketplace. Yes, the emancipation of which I speak involves the "freeing" of the Commodore 128 from Commodore.

Sound silly? Let me explain. As we all know, since the 128's inception, Commodore has hesitated to get behind the machine in a big way. This is understandable when you realize that the 128 has always been thought of in Commodore marketing circles as a "transitional" machine[ a product that would tide the company over profit-wise as Commodore followed the rest of the industry into the realm of 16 and 32 bit products. The 128 was designed and perfected in a mere seven months for a fraction of what was then called the "Mazerati" of personal computers. From the beginning the 128 has been a machine that was designed to generate a healthy profit with a minimum amount of investment. And given those parameters, the 128 has been a smashing success. The machine has sold an estimated two million units world wide with virtually no advertising support, fueled only by the appetites of first time home computerists and C64 upgraders. In addition, the healthy sales of the 128 have been accompanied by the very profitable business of marketing add-on peripherals such as the 1571 and the 1581 disk drives, the 1700 and the 1750 RAMexpanders, the 1350 and the 1351 mice, the 1902 and the 1902a RGBI monitors and the 1670 modem, none of which required huge outlays to design, manufacture or promote.

However, as the 128 approaches its fourth birthday, Commodore has nearly completed its transformation from a company in dire financial shape that depended on volume sales of C64s and 128s to ward off the creditors into a thriving operation with a rosy outlook based on the higher margins being reaped from the AMIGA and PC clone lines. And within this new framework the 128 and its supporting cast of peripherals are increasingly being viewed as excess baggage. Indeed shortages of items and a paring down of eight bit development and technical support activity have, over the past year, been telltale signs that our machine was/is losing vafor in West Chester. As much as we may not like this there are some strong reasons why such actions are in



Commodore's best interests. And like any corporation, Commodore must do what is best for its bottom line.

But before the tears begin forming in your eyes, recall that this essay is about my new dream. A dream which I believe is both positive and pragmatic. I want to engineer a method by which Commodore can "bow out" of the 128 gracefully. Notice, I did not say "a method by which Commodore can abandon 128 owners". Instead, I carefully used the words "bow out" and "gracefully" to suggest otherwise. Here is what I have in mind:

COMMODORE SHOULD HELP ME FORM A COMPANY TO PROVIDE AFTER MARKET SUPPORT FOR THE 128.

It has been no secret that Commodore has always relied on third parties such as magazines, user groups and telecommunications networks to provide usage and technical support for its products. In the case of the 128, this has been doubly true. So it is quite natural that Commodore "farm out" the long term after market support for the 128. My involvement in this company is also natural since over the past three years, with your help and the help of the many fine contributors to these pages, I have steadily built what is now the "de facto" vehicle for unadulterated 128 development and support. Over the past three years as North America's only 128 exclusive publication, we demonstrated unequalled success when it comes to re-defining how the 128 is used and perceived. Our triumphs have included literally the most important ideas and events that have taken place in the Commodore 8 bit industry since the beginning of 1986. These triumphs include the popularization of desktop publishing with GEOS, the initial and continued dissemination of information concerning the 128 and 1571 upgrade ROMs, the popularization of expanded 128 video RAM, pre-release information on the 1581 drive and continued coverage including post-release usage and bug fixes, initial and consistent coverage of BASIC 8, and most recently, the announcement and presentation of detailed information concerning the display and manipulation of "meg-hires" interlaced graphics (including on-screen resolutions of 640 x 400 and 640 x 600) on the 128. And that is not all! Twin Cities 128 has provided online 128 support on the GENIE telecommunications Network, and in October 1987, we were contracted to manage the 128 hardware group on Quantum Link. And most importantly we have accomplished this on a ridiculously low budget.

COMMODORE THEN MUST USE THIS COMPANY TO LIQUIDATE ITS INVENTORY OF 128S AND TO MARKET 128 PERIPHERALS.

CONSIDER THIS NIGHTMARE: It is the summer of 1990 and Commodore is liquidating the 128 and 128D via traditional liquidation outlets. These include click cable television operations, second-hand discount and overstock chains, and mail order warehouses. The sales people hawking the machines continuously reread the meaningless information printed on their 4x6 inch blurb cards. Their banter includes choice enticements such as: "it can use a disk drive", "it has a 128K memory expandable to 640K", "it can run the C...P...slash...M operating system and is compatible with the model Cee...six...four." While Commodore benefits from the quick cash these outfits provide to clear out their inventory, the public relations effect of this move is disastrous. Long-time 128 owners became militant. They vow never to buy another Commodore product. They see their purchase falling prey to the pattern established by the Plus 4, SX-64, refurbished brown 64s, now the 128. They wonder how long it will be before the AMIGA 500 and the AMIGA 2000 end up being the object of "toot-toots" on the late night cable. New owners of the bargain basement 128s are bewildered. Most of

them are first time computerists who decided to buy this machine to learn about computers because of the low price. They read on their boxes and in their manuals about non-existent peripherals and software products of a company that does not provide long term product support and that cannot be trusted. The next computer they buy will be and IBM or and Apple.

CONSIDER THE ALTERNATIVE: It is the summer of 1990. Eight months earlier Commodore announced that it was committed to supporting its 128 customers into the 1990s and to help them do just that they have served as a catalyst in forming a company for that purpose. Now Commodore has decided to begin clearing out its inventory of Commodore 128 and 128D computers. The support corporation is the only authorized liquidator of these machines. The support company sells these machines alone or in various attractively priced system packages. Bundled with each computer are four first class applications, a two month subscription to a 128 bi-weekly (yes, bi-weekly) newsletter, a Q-link disk, and an extensive catalog of Commodore, in-house and third party software and hardware products marketed by the support company. In addition the company has signed many local Commodore dealerships to handle its products. The company also has a helpful people as well as product support sections on Q-link, GENIE, and Compuserve. Commodore showcases the 128 support company as evidence that it is committed to long term support of its products. As time marches, new and long-time 128 owners have few regrets about their 128 purchase, and as their needs and technology evolve they naturally consider a Commodore product.

Does this sound too naive and too far-fetched to become a reality? Well, Apple did not think so! you see, the paradigm for the 128 support company is a successful company by the name of Sun Remarketing in Utah. Established with Apple's assistance, Sun Remarketing is the authorized liquidator of the Lisa and Apple III microcomputers. Sun markets a variety of system bundles and produces software for these "forgotten" Apple products. Interestingly enough, statistics show that many of Sun's customers either own or will someday own a MacIntosh. Beyond the obvious public relations and advertising benefits Sun Remarketing provides for Apple, Apple actually gets a better price for their Lisas and Apple IIIs than they would get from more conventional liquidation channels. Lisa and Apple III owners benefit from the continued hardware and software development while Apple and Sun make money. Everyone wins!

i hope I have tantalized you with these prospects. I want to make it clear that at this point this whole concept is nothing more than an idea. I am, however, exploring it sincerely. However, please DO NOT send us contributions to finance such an endeavor. I don't want to start a charity or a religion. However, you can help by popularizing this notion. Permission is hereby granted to reprint this proposal (and only this proposal). I urge you to place it in user group newsletters, on local bulletin board systems, and on national telecommunications networks. Show it to your friends and to local Commodore retailers. And above all, please ask Commodore to adopt this idea, or at least to consider it seriously. The key players you should contact are: Irving Gould, Max Toy, David Klein, Richard McIntyre, Julie Bauer, Brian MacDonald, and Jim Gracely. You can write them at: Commodore Business machines, 12001 Wilson Drive, West Chester, PA 19380. As the old song says: "You can't always get what you want, but if you try, sometimes you get what you need!"

Mr. Harold D. Copperman, President & C.E.O.  
Commodore Business Machines,  
12001 Wilson Drive  
West Chester, PA 19300  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Copperman

During the past year or so there has been increasing speculation and some hard evidence that Commodore intends to discontinue production/support of it's 8-bit computers, the C= 64 and C= 128. These rumors have been fueled by scarcity of equipment (eg. ram expansion units and 1571 disk drives) as well as by the absence of any emphasis on these machines in Commodore displays at major industry expositions.

I realize that some users want and need the additional power of the Amiga and IBM clones. For many of us, however, the C= 64 and/or C= 128 (with the vast amount and very fine software already developed for it) do everything that we require of a computer. They fill a nich' for many home users. We would be most unhappy to see these dependable and useful machines become extinct and their support/replacement items dry up.

I therefore urge in the strongest terms that, as you undertake the direction of Commodore's U.S. operations, you firmly commit the company to continue production and adeqate support of the C= 64 and C= 128.

If such support by the parent company is impractical, I urge your careful consideration of the proposal for an aftermarket support company along the lines suggested by Loren Lovhaug in issue #23 of the Twin Cities 128: The commodore 128 Journal. I would like to see some outside third party company acquire the manufacturing and distribution rights on at least the parts and peripherals of the 64/128. In this way, the existing users that own these computers, may purchase replacement ROMS, parts, RAM expanders and disk drives for at least the next 3-4 years. I ask that you do not forget the consumer market that made the 64/128 computers sell for your company in the first place.

Respectfully yours