B. B. C. G. Presents

THE COMMODORE COMPENDIUM

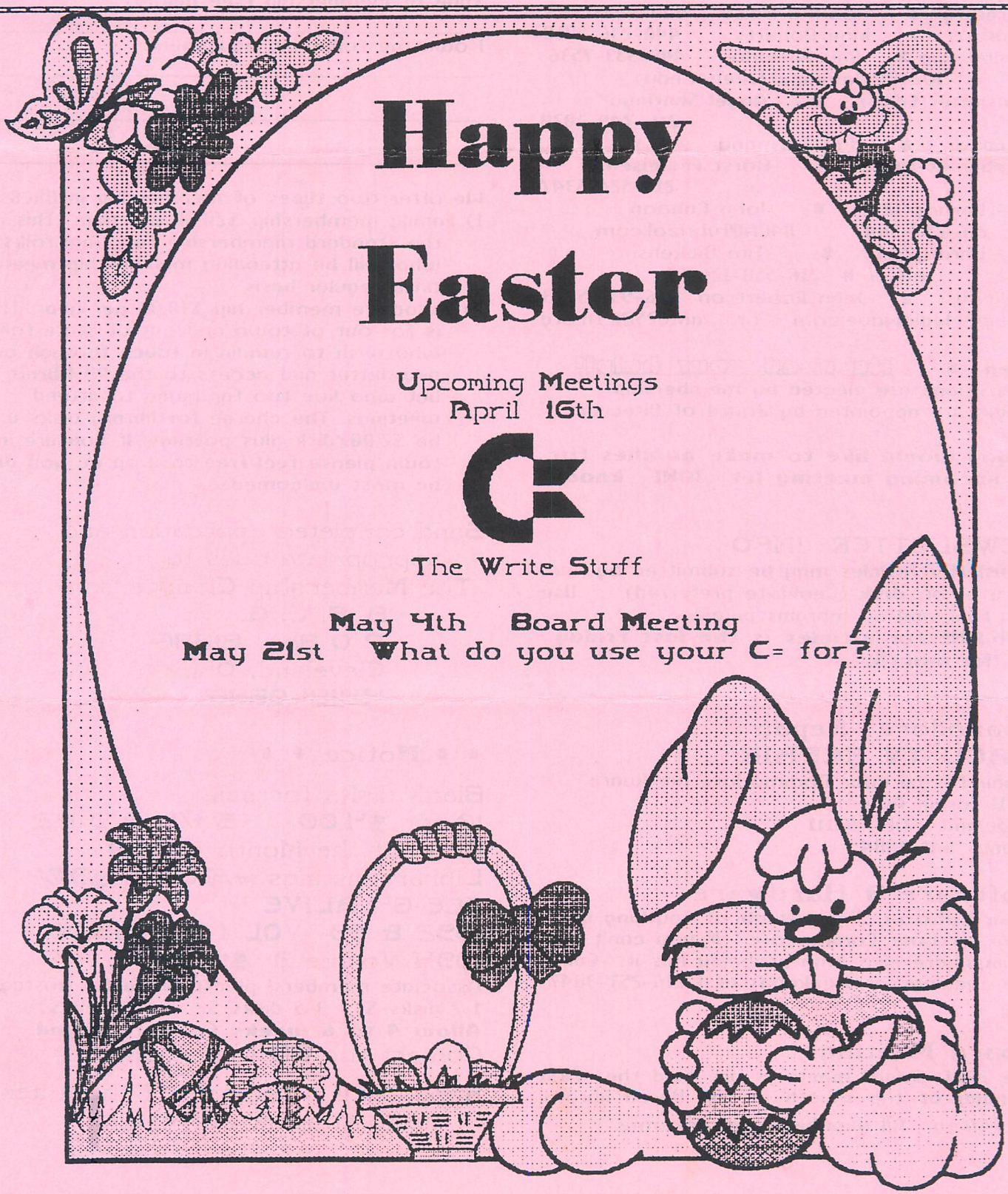
April 1998 Vol. 12 No. 4

Happy Easter

Upcoming Meetings
April 16th

The Write Stuff

May 4th Board Meeting
May 21st What do you use your C= for?



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Basic Bits Commodore Group
P.O. Box 81886
Cleveland Oh
44181-0886
Supporting the C64 and C128

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Open ✱ **We need your help!!**
✱-Positions are elected by membership.
Others are appointed by Board of Directors.

If you would like to make goodies for an upcoming meeting let JANE know!

NEWSLETTER INFO

Newsletter articles may be submitted by hard copy or on **disk** (GeoWrite preferred). Use BSW font and no margins please.
DEADLINE for articles is the last Friday of the month.

Commodore Repair:
ACU TV REPAIR

Repair for all your Commodore hardware
10911 Lorain Ave
Cleveland OH 44111
Phone 941-8884

Software & Hardware

John Cahoon has just about anything you need for your Commodore. If you can't find it anywhere else John probably has it. Call him evenings or weekends at 1-216-257-3847

Board Meetings

The BBCG board meetings are held the first Monday of the month at the Berea library, at 7:00pm. All members are welcome.

APPLICATION FORM

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____

State/Zip:_____

Phone:_____
How did you hear about BBCG?
_____
Type of Membership (see below)
_____
I own the following equipment:
_____

_____

_____

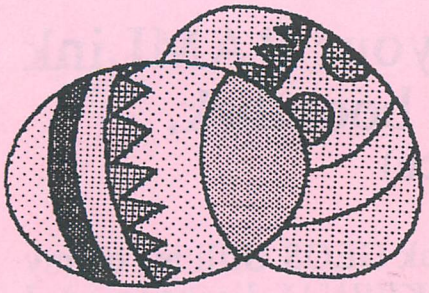
We offer two types of membership in BBCG:
1) Family membership $20.00 per year. This is the standard membership for local folks who will be attending membership meeting on a regular basis.
2) Associate membership $10.00 per year. This is for out of town and out of state folks who wish to remain in touch through our newsletter and access to the PD Library, but who live too far away to attend meetings. The charge for library disks will be $2.00/disk plus postage. If you are in town please feel free to drop in, you will be most welcomed.

Send completed application and appropriate dues to:
The Membership Chairperson
B. B. C. G.
P O Box 81886
Cleveland, Ohio
44181-0886

✱ ✱ Notice ✱ ✱

Blank disks for sale:
10 for $4.00 5 1/4 & 3 1/2
Disk of the Month $2.00
Library listings w/DCMR $3.00
CEE-64 ALIVE ! !
1992 & 93- VOL 1 & 2-$15.00
1994 Volume 3 $15.00
Associate members! please allow for postage 1-2 disks $1, 3-5 disks $2, and 6-20 $3.
Allow 4 to 6 weeks for turnaround.
Contact the PD Librarian.

Remember!! The sale of these items go to support our club!!



Happy Easter

From the staff of B.B.C.G.

Meeting Notes

Last months meeting was a demo of the copy program "Maverick", the best copy program for backing up your hard to get Commodore software. I checked around to see if I could find a place to purchase Maverick, but it seems the only place to get this program is through a resale shop like Vintage Computer, 619-445-8432 or Commodore Country, 817-295-7658. Check with John too.

This month were going to feature "The Write Stuff" word processor. Several of the newsletters we get each month are produced using this full featured word processor. It comes in both a 64 and a 128 - 80 column version. One of the best features is the ability to read and translate files from other formats and codes. It recognizes 14 other word processors plus straight PET ASCII SEQ files. The formatting codes are translated into the Write Stuff codes as the file loads. Then you can edit the file and save it as either PET ASCI or the Write Stuff. If you name your unfinished document "-rough draft" it will auto boot the next time you boot up the program. It has an AutoCapes mode that makes the first letter of each sentence auto-capitalized, just use two spaces between each sentence. It also has two column printing, word wrap, left and right justification, append files, calculator mode with auto insert to put the answer into your text for you, and mail merge. Many other features are included in this program. We'll have an information page where you can purchase this great program.

The 64 version comes with 60 page manual, speller and Illustrator, sells for $25.00 + $2. shipping. The 128 version sells for $32.00 + $2. shipping.

Desterm

The new "Beta" version of Desterm 3.00 was released on March 15. It still has a few bugs but has CMD device support and Z-modem download capabilities. I downloaded this new program from a BBS up in Canada about a week ago and I haven't had any problems with it. The program has a whole new look and downloads automatically. I'll have both 5.25 and 3.5 inch disks at the meeting. If you have a 128 and want to get online, this is the program to have. Matthew's website: www.ionline.net/~mdesmond

Reminder

The Lansing Area Commodore Club's Expo is set for Saturday May 2nd, from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Meridian Township Service Center, 2100 Gaylord Smith CT., Okemos, Michigan.. This is the only Commodore Expo that I know of and is exceptional. Several of our members have traveled up and have come back with great reports. Expect some interesting hardware and software demonstrations, including things never done on C= computers. Maurice Randall will be showing off his new WHEELS update for Geos along with GeoFax, GeoShell and *whatever* else he's working on. Dale Sidebottom is expected to be there with his Laser printing for Geos and even a member from the Fresno C= Club. There is also a flea market area where you can pick up some bargains. If you can't attend, the EXPO will be online, in the Delphi chat area of the Internet. Go to:
http://www.delphi.com/commodore/

Other C= News

CMD is trying to develop a new printer interface called JiffyPrint. It will have a one megabyte print buffer, so you can keep working on another project while your printer prints out your previous work.

Dialogue 128 has now been released as freeware. Dialogue 128 is another excellent terminal program. Dialogue 128 was distributed on a 5.25 disk with A SwiftLink version on one side and a non-SL version of the other. It also had a printed booklet. If someone has this program and would like to donate a copy to our PD library, we would appreciate having Dialogue. Maybe we can find *someone to type* out the manual so we can add it to the disk as a DOCs file.

Super Snapshot utility cartridges are now in production again. Jeff Jones did a review in LoadStar newsletter #54. Cost is $55. US funds + Shipping. Available from J.P. PBM Products by Mail, BOX 60515, N.Sheridan Mall Postal Outlet, Downsview, Ontario M3L 1B0.
Phone # 416-240-8993

Angel talked to Maurice Randall about his new upgrade for GEOS called **WHEELS**. (last page of this newsletter) To reserve your set of **WHEELS**, send check or money order for $36 + $4 for shipping to Maurice Randall, P.O. BOX 606, Charlotte, MI 48813. You can visit his website at: http://people.delphi.com/arca93/ or e-mail arca93@delphi.com

C-Net 128 BBS Software was released as shareware this past year. If anyone is interested in starting a BBS using a Commodore 128, we can put you in touch with the guy that has all the information you need.
Call me at 440-234-6092

Installing your SuperCPU patch and your RAMLink GEOS Utilities on your GEOS 2.0 boot disk.

(from someone who's done it, twice)

When I was installing my SuperCPU patch and my RAMLink GEOS Utilities on my Commodore 64, and my *GEOS, GEOS BOOT, and GEOS KERNAL* disappeared, I thought that I had done something wrong. I tried it again with my *System Back-up*, and the same thing happened again. I read and re-read the manuals and could not find where I had made a mistake. This was especially difficult for me since I seemed to be the only one with this problem.

After some deep thought and even deeper reading, I ordered another GEOS 2.0 and attempted to do what seemed to be an impossibility for me, installing the afore mentioned utilities to my GEOS boot disk. Everything seemed to be all right at first, but when I shut the system down and tried to boot the *System disk*, I was surprised to see that there was a "FILE NOT FOUND" message. I booted the back-up disk and then closed it. When I opened the *system disk* from the desktop, I was shocked to see that I was missing the first three icons, well, it just means that I can't boot the *system disk*. In other words, it's ruined.

I promptly called Creative Micro Designs and was given the solution to my problem. It seems that the RAMLink GEOS Utilities must be installed first. After following the instructions and after the new configure icon is installed as per the instructions, I was told that I should make a back-up copy of this configured *system disk* using geoMAKEboot. After I have a working copy, then I should proceed to install the SuperCPU patch. At the time of this writing, I did not have my system ready, so the results will have to wait until next time.

Speaking of the SuperCPU. The 64 version only works on a 64 or a 128 in 64 mode. The newly released 128 CPU will run in both 64 and 128 modes. This seems to be the better deal.----------

PLUGS-For anyone interested in buying quality used Commodore items, such as disk drives, software, computers, etc., there are two companies worth mentioning:

CREATIVE MICRO DESIGNS is one of the best known Commodore platform servers. These people have just about everything that you could want for your machine. For more information call: 1-(413)-525-0023. There is not enough space in this article to give them their due.

VINTAGE COMPUTER has a fine collection of Commodore stuff. Some of this stuff is almost impossible to find anywhere. They claim to have had their best month ever in December, 1997. They are worth checking out. Call; 1-(619)-445-8432. California.

AT EVERY ONE OF OUR MEETINGS, Pat Carmany brings tons of information about these two companies and many more. Don't forget that our very own, John Cahoon, has just about everything that you could want for your Commodore, too, at our member's meetings every month. BYE.

COMPUTER TID-BITS FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE

In last month's issue I mentioned that there isn't a disk drive that comes close to doing what the three-in-one 1571 disk drive can do. After all, it's three drives in one, but it reads two versions of BASIC, the 64's 2.0 and the 128's 7.0. It also reads and writes CP/M programs as well! Creative Micro Designs' FD-2000 and FD-4000 series 3.5" disk drives are capable of reading the standard double-sided, double density disks that are common on our 1581's, but will read and write on high-density and extended-density diskettes

While the 1581 will only store 800K worth of memory, the FD-2000 will store about 1600K on high-density disks and the FD-4000 will store an amazing 3200K on extended-density diskettes. **WHAT A MACHINE!!**----------

Believe it or not, I've gotten a few calls about the SPEEDSCRIPT article that ran in last month's issue. It seems that people really liked the way that the article looked. This phenomenom reminds me of the film industry's fascination lately, with making black and white commercials and movies. Black and white is back in style. Go figure.----------

In the early 1980's, the Commodore computer, regardless of the model, was looked upon as an entry-level, low priced machine. Maybe this was the reason for their success. CBM produced the best selling personal computers in the world at that time. These machines were popular all over the world and even today in some South American countries and in Europe, they have a very devoted following.

In Canada, for instance, over 60% of the schools used a Commodore. Where did the Commodore big-wigs go wrong?----------

Loadstar Letter #54 has an interesting article titled, "An interview with Maurice Randall." Randall is the creator of the GEOS 2.0 upgrade, WHEELS. You gotta read the article if you're interested in the latest rage in the Commodore world.----------

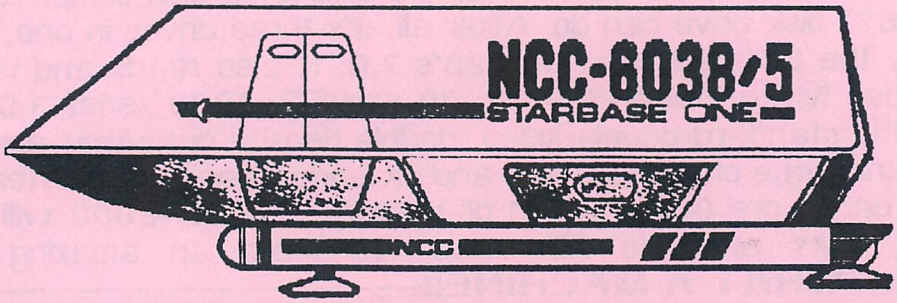
I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people at Creative Micro Designs for their prompt and courteous service. I've had occasion to call them and ask for technical help, and they indeed , helped. Whenever I've ordered something from them I've been satisfied with their service. They're a pleasure to do business with.----------

I don't know how many times I can say this, or even how many I'll write and talk about it in the future, but it never ceases to amaze me how many great programmers for the Commodore computer are out there right now. Why with Ron C. Hackley's FUN GRAPHICS MACHINE, and Maurice Randall's WHEELS, the GEOS 2.0 system upgade, being produced for a so-called "**dead**" computer, I wonder what would've happened if the company hadn't gone under.

Many people don't realize that the Amiga computer was produced by another company before Commodore bought it. Unfortunately for Commodore, the Amiga didn't really take off like they wanted, which is probably why they tried to kill the great selling 64. There are devoted Amiga enthusiasts out there, but it's nothing like the 64 and 128.----------

In the article about getting RAMLink and the SuperCPU to work with your GEOS, I did receive my GEO replacement system disk from CMD. I haven't had a chance to do anything with it or the geoMAKEboot that came on the same day, but I'll let you know what's up next month.----------

It is regretable to hear about some of the other Commodore user's groups that are falling by the way-side. I can only hope that our little group will be around for many, many years to come. ----------



I was thinking the other day about all of the technological advances that seem to just come out of nowhere in today's computer world. I'm going to keep typing until I fill up this page of the *Compendium* with computer tid-bits.

The first Atari home computers were the Atari 400 and the 800. The Atari 400 came with 16K and featured a membrane keyboard (a plastic surface with the keys drawn on it). Needless to say, it wasen't very popular. It sold for about $200. The 800 came with 48K and sold for about $600. Both were excellent game machines and were designed for color television hook-up. Both the 400 and the 800, as well as the parent company are gone now. You don't even hear about them, to say the least.

When IBM introduced it's PC (Personal Computer) it carried the company's name on it's back. It was a crossroad for IBM who was leasing computer time for their big business computers. The home computer wasen't something that they could let happen without entering the fray. This machine sold for about $1500 and came with 64K. I doubt that you can find anything for this machine today. Unless you're really dedicated, I mean.

Radio Shack or Tandy introduced their TRS-80 color computer in 1979 and was a popular machine. Users of this machine affectionally called it the, *CoCo*, short for Color Computer. The 16K was the lowest memory model available. This particular model sold for around $300. I've seen a few at trift stores here and there from time to time.

I could go on and on, but my point is this, no matter how different or technologically advanced you are, tomorrow is another thing, unless you own a Commodore 64 or 128. Now that's another story. Although the Commodore 64 was introduced in 1982, you can still buy new disk drives (3.5), hard drives (2 Gigabytes of storage space), ram expansion units (18 Megabytes are possible), accelarators (20 Mhz), and even refurbished computers and monitors and...the list goes on and on. Not bad for a machine that once boasted 64K and sold for around $600. This machine has outlived all the other models that I've mentioned in this article. I've got tons of this type of information, but enough is enough, right?

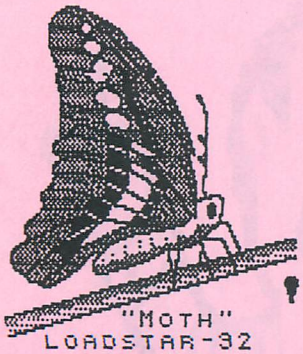
DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...Texas Instruments hired Bill Cosby as a spokesperson for their TI99/4A?

...I don't remember seeing a Commodore computer commercial on television?

...the Commodore 128B isn't compatible with the C-128? How many of those machines are still around, I wonder.

...even if you're using GEOS with a RAM unit and the SuperCPU, the new *Wheels* upgrade will make it faster still? This came straight from Maurice Randall himself.



MOTHBALL THE FLEET WITH OUR BELOVED "COMMODORE" ON-BOARD?

by: Jack Blewitt

A long-time Commodore Pen-Pal asked me a serious question recently. "Should I mothball my faithful Commodore or should I fix it up for the grandkids?". A difficult question when transitioning to a new "PC" platform.

First, the grandkids will probably reject the thought of an antique computer. After all, it can not take that fantastic voyage on the "Magic School Bus"; It can not research an encyclopedia to do their homework for them; nor does it have the graphic capability to tour the art galleries of the world. What good is it?

Ask them to write a simple program to print their mailing address from scratch without using software developed by someone else. They will soon see that the PC owns them, and not the other way around. There is no better way to learn how a computer works than to dig in and program it. The Commodore is perfect for this as there is very little that can harm the computer that can not be recovered by flipping the "ON/OFF" switch. The same is NOT true of the PC.

On the other hand, if you have ever corrupted "Windows-95" I dare you to recover without the aid of a PC Guru! Then try to find that Guru who will help you correct you hardware without costing you a bundle. You will dream of those glory days when help was as close as your mail box, telephone or MODEM.

For example, I was given a hard drive with twice the capacity of the one that came with my PC. (I had filled the existing HD in three months with junk programs that were almost impossible to delete.) Ten minutes later the hardware was in place. However, the BIOS would not recognize the new drive. In fact it would not even recognize the old drive when it was re-installed. I now have a thirty pound paperweight that only blinks at me with a superior glow on the screen. If it were not for the trustworthy 128 upstairs, I would be unable to check e-mail, write article and letters, or maintain my sanity.

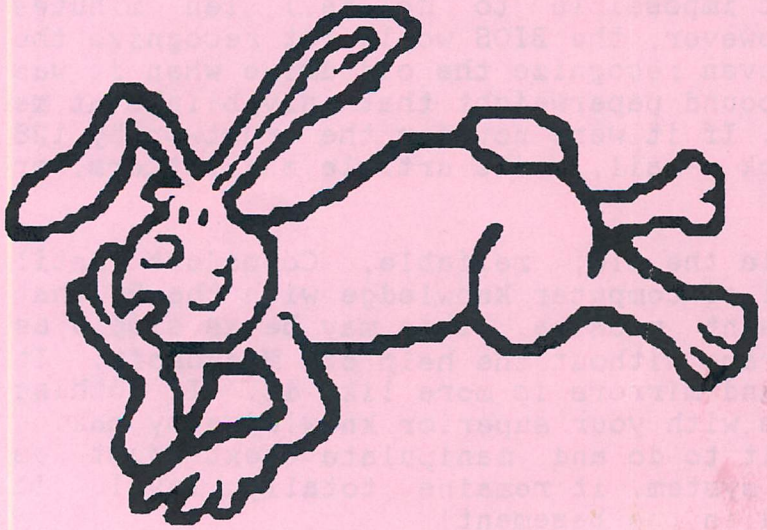
Thus, I urge you not to scuttle the old, reliable, Commodore until you have at least reached the level of computer knowledge with the PC that you have obtained with your present machine. This may be as simple as knowing how to load different programs without the help of Microsoft. It is NOT all sugar and roses. Smoke and mirrors is more like it. If nothing else, you can impress the grandkids with your superior knowledge by making your "Commodore" do what you want it to do and manipulate text just as fast as you can type. As a back-up system, it remains totally loyal. It deserves better than to be scuttled in the basement!

My Commodore Computer & Me

A few of the people that I work with are always ribbing me about the fact that I insist on using an old machine like my Commodores. They continually ask me why I still listen to 8-track tapes and why don't I get a new machine? My reaction is the same as someone who restores antique cars, or someone who collects stamps or coins. Not that the 64/128 are antiques or anything like that, but the reasons are the same.

A stamp collector could collect stamps for various reasons: as an investment, for an appreciation of art, etc. The same applies to collecting coins. What madness drives an individual to invest thousands of dollars in an old antique car? Many times in the restoration of an antique car the individual must make or have someone make parts for them because the parts are no longer available. Where can you drive a car like that? I'm sure that a even a 50 mile road trip would require some thorough planning. I mean, in case of a breakdown, where do you go for parts or get repairs made?

While the 64 and 128 computer may seem archaic to the average person, it is far from being an antique. You can still buy "new" hardware and software for this 16-year old 8-bit machine. Why do I continue to upgrade and learn from my Commodores? I do it for the love of the machine itself. For the personal joy of being different than the majority. I do it **FOR THE SHEER PLEASURE, MAN!!**



WHEELS 64

I had a conversation with Maurice Randall, the architect behind the new GEOS upgrade the other day, and he said that he should be shipping WHEELS 64 out anytime now. I asked him what I could expect from the upgrade and he said that the most noticeable thing about it is the fact that it will make GEOS run faster than it already runs using the RAMLink and SuperCPU. I can't wait for mine to arrive.