The Reflection

The Chief Sez

Lately I've been bothered by a feeling that there are a lot of people "out there" that are not really interested in support and the furtherance of IMAGE so much as they are interested in clamoring merely to get noticed.

What brings this up? Recently on Q-link there was some heated discussion and some very vocal complaints because we have not released the programmer's reference guide yet. That was followed by a couple of phone calls from some long time sysops, people that are users on my system, wanting to know about the light bar.

Ok, we haven't released the reference guide. We HAVE, however, published this newsletter for almost two years and. we HAVE included a wealth of information in here, much of which will be in the guide when it is finished. The point is, had some of those who complained the loudest about the lack of a guide bothered to subscribe to this newsletter they could have had most of the information that will be in the guide. And probably had it as cheaply as the manual.

The questions about the light bar are doubly irritating. Not only has the information been available in this newsletter, but the file was also made into a text file and that has been available for download in a FREE download area, as have many of the programming articles.

Many of these same types of questions have appeared in the net-subs as well. Questions that have been covered in the newsletter.

I suppose I should not let things like that get me down, but I do wonder why go to the bother of providing a service when people don't want to take advantage of it.

I dunno. Maybe it's just been one of those days. I do know that it is a pleasure putting this newsletter together when we get some of the favorable comments that we get, so it must balance out.

-*R*-

N I S S A N e w s

By: Al DeRosa (BUCKO)

Greetings once again from the land of NISSA,, this month's article will be pretty much short and sweet. To get folks caught up on what's happening, we are still receiving back surveys, we are still waiting for quite a few, if you haven't returned yours yet please take a minute out after reading this and fill it out and send it in, your NISSA membership depends on it.

We are in the process of setting up localized NISSA groups within the 4 regions, details are still sketchy but from within these groups we hope to have better communications. Larry at Commodore Image has already had a get together with many members in the South West, hopefully we'll be able to get something like that to spread across the states.

There are some new members I would like to welcome, I know I missed many welcomes over the past couple of months and for that I apologize to everyone I missed. New members include:

Angel's StarShip 619-460-6003
Cmmdr DiskOvery 619-437-1189

Both boards are in the San Diego area.

There is a new boards list out, as there will be at least every week or two now. Bruce (Dr Moffett) came up with a new routine in the Online NISSA DataBase to create the Boards list automatically, (That's why when you log on to Wrong Number II or Commodore Image it'll ask you if you are an

IMAGE SYSOP and if you are and are a member of NISSA it'll ask you to verify your info) this is what we are using to keep up with you folks. The new boards list is also colorized for C/G Users. Also I put out a couple of C/G opening screens for members to use, they are nothing special they just say that the user is connected to a NISSA ASSC or SSB board, in a nice 3-D box.

As of right now the NISSA Plus File writers contest is going about as well as I had expected, NO ONE has submitted anything. Originally I had planned to have a cutoff date of August 31st, well I will move that now 'till October 1st. Let's have at least one entry so there will be a winner.

Welp things sound like the same old stuff is taking place, it pretty much is, I will be getting together with Bruce in a few weeks and we are going to work out the SSB status bit, many of you are annoyed about it and we are working on a decision and I hope to have it in the October issue of The Reflection if not before.

Next month I will take a vacation from writing and have our Editor put up the latest Boards list if he doesn't mind. This way all of you will have a hard copy of the current NISSA Boards list. Welp that about wraps things up for now, Enjoy the rest of the Summer and hope to chat with some of you soon.

Bucko

-dR-

Regional News

Southwest

By: Larry Hedman (X-TEC)

Thanks everyone who sent netmail saying that they enjoyed the article I wrote last month. It's always nice to hear encouraging words.

There have been quite a few developments since last month most significantly and to my surprise were phone calls from Al and Bruce asking me to become part of the NISSA Administration. As it is my pleasure and honor to accept the position I hope to be able to serve NISSA well and provide a high level of support to all NISSA members. I believe the experience I gained as President of the Adak Computer Users Group will be useful within NISSA.

As Al mentioned in last month's NISSA News there have been other moves in the NISSA organization. With the addition of CODEX and ALTERNATE REALITIES joining ENCHANTED FORREST and CROSSROADS as Regional BBS' all four corners of the United States are covered. Additionally with Al, Bruce, Ron and I taking regional responsibility for NISSA Admin matters it should be easier now to get information disseminated as well as have available to those who need it.

As a new member of NISSA Administration one of my first orders of business was to call all the NISSA boards located in the Southwest to introduce myself. (Southwest includes AZ, AR, CA, CO, HI,

KS, LA, MO, NV, NM, OK, TX, and UT). In doing so I found that I could not reach some of the boards listed in the NISSA database. These were C0700 Emporium, G0004 Aria, G0017 International California Connection, G0121 Surf Shack, G0485 Commodore Express, E0657 Underground Press, and G0615 Spider One. Unless otherwise notified we will assume that these boards are no longer active and they will be deleted from the NISSA database. If anyone knows differently please contact me via Commodore Image BBS. There was one board that I connected to but was not taking new callers. Elysian G0430. If anyone can contact the sysop there please ask him to contact me. On the active side of the house still up and providing great NISSA support are Crossroads, Regimental HQ, Commodore Image, Treasure Chest, Dred's Caverns, and Club Med. Also we have two new NISSA ASSC boards in the Southwest, Angel's Starship (619) 460-6003 and Commodore Diskovery (619) 437-1189.

My intent is to contact each of the Southwest NISSA boards at least once a month to just say "hi" and to send updated NISSA information, anything new that has happened during the previous month or things that we may be looking ahead to

NISSA is always happy to welcome new members and now is the time to apply. We at NISSA Admin have been discussing several new and exciting ideas. I think all NISSA members will like the new concepts. (More on that next mon

th) It's easier than ever now to apply for NISSA membership. All that's required is that you be a registered IMAGE owner and have an operational IMAGE BBS. To apply for ASSC status just call Port Commodore, Wrong Number][or Commodore Image. If you're already a validated user type NAP at the main prompt and you can fill out a NISSA application online. New users will have to wait for validation before using the NAP command.

Larry Hedman (X-TEC)
NISSA Administration
Commodore Image BBS
(619-429-8192)
IMAGE Net Node 67 @ CIB
-≤R-

Northwest

By: Ray Burke (MR. CTA)

Greetings from Washington! I aplogize for the "lag" in my articles over the past few months but family and work problems prevented me from providing new information about the boards in Washington and the great Pacific Northwest.

I guess the first order of business is to say that the National Association Of Image SysOps (NAIS) Net is doing well and has thrived as most other networks have done.

The boards in the northwest region have gone through some serious changes, boards like Veilkend and Ice House (formerly The Parthenon) have gone down due to hardware problems. Other boards have either withdrawn from their network affiliates such as many of the Canadian connections or have completely shut down their systems.

Certain boards in the Northwest such as Land of Oz, Timetaker's, Digital Dimensions and Chicago (aka Alternate Realities as of September 1st 1991) have experienced fluxes of activity and have continued to offer great service to the users of the respective systems. Timetaker's dropped from NAIS for personal reasons but has expressed no hard feelings.

On a more technical/support orientation I have released yet another package that should be available on Wrong Number II and Port Commodore by now. The package, as some of you may know, is a new utilities setup that has an automatic scanner to detect and list files available for use via the main program. This package is supposed to be a demo featuring about seven or eight commonly used files. An additional fifteen maintenance and utility files will be available in the near future, however, I am not sure of the medium of their release (is PF disk NISSA release etc.)

On a note as a NISSA SSB I would recommend that anyone who still hasn't returned their questionaire to please do so.

In conclusion I hope that everyone is enjoying the summer and the increase in activity that usually accompanies it. I'd like to thank New Image for the release of PF disk six and would hope that 2.0 or at least another 1.2a type of PF disk be released in the near future with their excellent modifications that really make IMAGE BBS the best.

By the way I'm back!
-≤R-

Programming
"The ampersand commands"

By: Bob Leary (DR.BOB)

The IMAGE "ml" can be most confusing to those trying to write modules for IMAGE. To most it is a great mystery but those of us that know the IMAGE jump table (& commands), think that it is Ray's greatest work of art.

The jump table controls most input, output and, modem routines that allow IMAGE to function the way that it does and provides a simple, efficient, interface that even the novice BASIC programmer can understand. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, I won't be able to cover all of the jump table routines but, I will try to cover all of the important ones.

COMMAND FUNCTION

0   outstr

Desc - output routine, handles all MCI conversion.

Use - & or &,0

Examples:

&   (output a$)

&,0   (output a$)

&"hi" (output "hi")

1   inline

Desc - input routine, handles word wrap, MCI, line length and graphics. use poke53252,line length to set line length. w$ is text that is wrapped, input is into an$.

Use - &,1,x

    x=Bit/Val

    0/1 - graphics allowed.

    1/2 - "." on column 1 exits.

    2/4 - disable p$ prompt.

    3/8 - MCI allowed.

4/16 - text wrap ON.

5/32 - edit mode ON.

6/64 - ignore time expired.

7/128 - delete on column 1 exits.

* x should equal the sum of the values you wish active.

Example:

10 poke53252,20:p$="Name":

w$=na$:&,1,32

will print the prompt (p$) (Name), the users handle, then the prompt again and allow input of up 20 characters in an$.

2   dskin

Desc - file input routine, will input up to a maximum of 80 characters into a$. Also will allow bytes to be read directly from a file into a variable.

Use - &,2,lfn# or &,2,#bytes

Examples:

    &,2,2 - input contents of lfn#2 up to chr$(13)

    &,2,2,2 - input the first 2 bytes from lfn#2

(lfn = logical file number)

3   read0

Desc - file read routine, also allow variable speed for movie files. A speed of 0 is normal speed and each ascending value decreases speed appropriately.

Use - &,3,lfn# or &,3,lfn#,speed

Examples:

    &,3,2 - read file open as lfn#2

    &,3,2,15 - read file open as lfn#2 at lower speed

6   password

Desc - password input, sets text length to 14 characters. mask character is printed rather that the input. (use poke 17138,asc("xx") to change mask). input is returned in an$.

7   prg

Desc - loads modules into memory. Put the drive # and filename in a$. The device number is passed directly in the command.

Use - &,7,device#,x

         x = 0 - normal +.file module

         1 - LMP module load

         2 - ++ (ml) module load

Example:

dr=5:gosub1010:a$=dr$+"+.lmp":

&,7,dv%,1

(loads an LMP module from plus files disk)

11   clrarr

Desc - used to clear the contents of an array. 0 clears tt$(and ascends in the order defined in "setup".

Use - &,11,array#

Examples:

         &,11 or &,11,0 - clear tt$(x)

         &,11,5 - clear the fifth array defined after tt$(x)

12   newuser

Desc - same as &,3 only is non-abortable.

Use - &,3,1fn#

Example: see &,3

15   convan

Desc: converts 11 digit date in an$ to text returned in an$.

16   sys49152

Desc - same as sys49152 but allows passing of paramaters to proto files.

Use - &,16,x,y

22   tenwait

Desc - time delay. will delay for any interval between .1 second to 25.5 seconds in 1/10 second steps.

Use - &,22,tenths

27   arraysav

Desc - Save variable pointers. Saves the starting and ending address of BASIC variable so that unneeded ones may be easily erased.

Use - &,27

28   arrayres

Desc - restore array pointers set via &,27

Use - &,28

37   trapon

Desc - turn error trap ON

Use - &,37

38   trapoff

Desc - disables error trap

Use - &,38

40   forcegc

Desc - forces fast garbage collect

Use - &,40

41   setbaud

Desc - set the baud rate that IMAGE will use. NEVER call while someone is connected!

Use - &,41,x

         x = 0 - 300

         1 - n/a

         2 - 1200

         3 - 2400

52   **chkflags**

Desc - Interface to the IMAGE lite-bar.

Use - &,52,x,y

refer to Dec 1989 edition of *The Reflection* for more info (Also the article reprint "tf.litebar" available on most support boards.

54   **editor**

Desc - basic interface to the image editor

Use - &,54

This covers the most important ampersnd commands used in version 1.2. The next version will see some additional commands used.

-*R*-

Mod

By: Larry Hedman (X-TEC)

Here's a tiny mod that Lt. Kernal owners who do backups from the multiplexed computer can use to prevent logins during backups. It should work in IMAGE versions 1.1 through 1.2a including the lo/off mod.

In +.lo at the beginning of line 120 just before pw$ add:
&,52,30,3:ona%goto50

Then add a line 50 to +.lo as follows
50 &"[F6]][F6]Sorry, No Login: Back-Up In Progress[F6][F6]"
:tr%=.:goto1811

Then whenever you're doing backups simply toggle the checkmark on the left side of Fn1. When a new user logs in he will see your "s.login" screen and then will be shown the message from line 50. The BBS will then dump his time remaining to zero and place him at the main prompt. Any key press after that will log him off. The beauty is no IMAGE files are rewritten during the process so you don't have to worry about the Lt. Kernal reading and writing to the same file simultaneously and your backups will go much quicker as well.

Oh one more thing don't forget to remove the checkmark from Fn1 after backups are finished.

-*R*-

Spice up your BBS

By: Mike Laponis (ROADMASTER)

As we all know, the IMAGE BBS is perhaps the best BBS program available for the C64 and 128 computers. The past few months, some boards have experienced somewhat of a "slow-down" in activity. There are some things you can do to put some SPICE back in your IMAGE! Some of these options you may already be familiar with , and may already be doing. Some of the suggestions may be options that you can order through IMAGE, some are plus files or "mods" available for downloading, and some are just some ideas that may be worth trying.

Many IMAGE SysOps are already using the TURBO-RELS option offered by IMAGE, but if you are not, you should. There are several ways this improves your board. First, scanning and reading new messages is greatly improved. The posts are stored in relative files instead of sequential files and oper

ates with improved speed and efficiency. Second, you can then set up your board with SIGS (Special Interest Groups) that allow you to define which Subs show up in that SIG. This allows for a much more appealing and better organized message base.

A hardware improvement that many have made is the upgrade to

Some commonly asked questions.
Q. When will the next version be released?
A. This question continues to crop up even though everyone is familiar with our policy of not releasing information concerning release of our products. The next version will be released when we are satisfied that we have done what we set out to do.
Q. What about an (Amiga, C128, IBM, Macintosh, etc.) version?
A. At present the plans are to finish the C64 version, then probably an IBM version. Other vrsions may follow.
Q. What is the story on the programmer's manual?
A. We have statred and stopped work on the manual several times. At present we are on hold but would like to get one finished.
Q. What new features will be included in 2.0?
A. There are many. Some of the most noticible are the "More?" prompt, text formatted to screen width, time displayed in users time zone, cursor menus in GF

2400 baud. It works great! IMAGE has gone through a lot of hard work to enable the 8-bit C64 to be able to operate at 2400 baud. Some said it couldn't be done, but it can and is done on many IMAGE systems. There are several good quality 2400 baud modems available out there. You will need an RS232 interface with some of the modems. The increased speed will be a welcome addition to some potential users and will entice them to log on.

Another "product" that is available to improve your IMAGE is the current Plus File Disk offered by New IMAGE, PF#6! A worthwhile addition! It includes the Extended Command Set (ECS), which allows you to edit your system commands any way you like. You can change what the command is called, and you can add commands, each configured to access. And the best part, is it can all be done ON-LINE! You don't have to take the board down to change or to make the new commands active!

Also on the PF#6 is the Multi-Archival Commands (MAC's). These allow each user to define and save up to four command string macros! Users find these very helpful in saving time and getting around the board. Other great features include the User Biography option, the option to scan for new posts, responses, and uploads at logon, and several new on-line games...including Battle Mex, Greed, and Combat!

Okay, okay...you don't really have to spend all that money to improve your IMAGE! These are just some of the things available. How

about some features that are available merely by the expense of a phone call? Well, some of the best around are available on most of the IMAGE company boards as well as the NISSA SSB Boards. One of the best on-line games to come around in a long time is the Fishing Tournament from WHEELMAN at Magic Kingdom. Look for "+.fish lakes". There are 4 large self-dissolving files you need, but it is worth the download! What better way to have your users spend the summer but by fishing Lake Starr, Shady Creek, Willow Lake, Henry River or one of the other lakes or ponds included with this great game. It is truly one of the best plus files to come along in quite some time!

Also just a phone call away is The Grunt's Automaintenance! This package allows most of your BBS maintenance to be set up to run automatically! It is quite a time saver for all the busy SysOps, allowing them to use the power of their computer and IMAGE BBS to do the upkeep on the board.

Then there is the Personal Signature file that Cregan and Redbird have brought back to life. Users really like this one! It allows users to create, save, and use a personal signature. It can be appended to their posts, responses, e-mail, and feedback, simply by entering ".U" while in the editor! Sort of a personal macro all ready for your users! Ed Note: The MULTI-Personal Signature, as modified by Captain Kurth is undergoing testing now and may be included in V2.0. This version is available for down-load on PCM.

There are a couple of cg menu screens available on several of these support boards as well. No better way to SPICE UP YOUR BOARD then by using the capabilities of your computer, and IMAGE to produce the best color graphics for your users to enjoy. These menus really add some color and life when that "lost user" uses the ol' "?" command.

The last recommendation for you to put some SPICE in your board is to fully utilize the entry screen capabilities. Many boards don't take the time to make attractive and easy to read entry files. Don't forget, you can make BOTH CG and ASCII screens allowing ALL of your users to see these files. The keys to GOOD ASCII and CG screens are use COLOR; make them EASY TO READ, and make them ATTRACTIVE. Here again is a way users that log on to your system can be motivated to spread the word about your board as they travel through the other boards they call.

There are many ways to keep your boards looking fresh and alive...these are just a few. Don't forget to take the time and effort to make your board look the best it can, keep it reliable (always up and running), and advertise it on other boards you call (just remember to keep BBS ads out of any networked areas you are in ‹‹Grin››). Remember, you are running one of the best BBS systems, and on a machine that is still amazing...all you need to do is KEEP UP THE IMAGE.

-ℛ-

The Time Warp
708-426-6292

By: John Donahue (THE DOCTOR)

The Time Warp BBS was born out of a dream of FREE SOFTWARE. I had been active on many local BBS's that offered "warez" and PD stuff and even though the WAREZ looked nice it was always the PD (graphics, music, and text files) that got my attention. The only boards I liked to call were the C-Net 10 boards and a home-made Apple BBS. I eventually met some of the people that ran the C-Net boards and somehow managed to get a copy of it from them. My intention was to be a friendly competitor with my new friends. My 300 baud Video-7 modem worked perfectly with C-Net but I wanted to get the NEW 1200 that was available but couldn't afford the Commodore 1670 so I bought a Volksmodem and also got a copy of C-Net 11.1 from my friends.

Cnet 11 didn't like my modem so I did nothing for a few more months (except continue to be Sub-Op on the other boards). FINALLY Cnet 12 came out and it worked on my Volksmodem! (to a point). I had 1 lonely SFD and a 1541 and I was all set to conquer the modem world! In January of 1987 I had the phone line installed and "THE TIME WARP" was born! The original name was "The Gutter-because that is where your mind is most of the time" but that was too long a name!

My pirated copy of Cnet 12.0 really sucked, it locked or dumped every few days, so I BOUGHT the software and a serial original was not much better. In the short time from January to July I had acquired 4 SFD's a D9090 a REAL 1670 modem and together with my original 1541 I had one hell of a BBS going.

THEN I got a communication in the mail about 12.1 upgrade! I ordered it immediately! I also had to move to a new address at the same time the 12.1 upgrade was due to be released. I ordered both DS II and IMAGE at the same time. I ran the first software that arrived and didn't crash. Guess which it was? My DS][is still gathering dust, it never would boot.

In the last 3 years I have gone 2400 baud, acquired a 20 meg Lt. Kernal, upgraded that Kernal to 82+ meg, and have plans to go 120-160 meg as soon as I can afford it. New Image BBS is what I run and what I will stay with as long as I have my board up.

[BBS Ad time here!]

Any registered IMAGE owner gets free IMAGE downloads and better than normal access (i.e non-weed!). I usually make available any files I download from PCM or any IMAGE board as well as home-made mods.

I am NOT an IMAGE programmer but I have managed to figure out a few minor "mods" for my boards protection and I have a lot of good friends that know what they're doing in BASIC. We all share and will share with you! [remember when all else has failed CALL FRED! He has to be tired of me calling him by now!]

-dR-

ORDERS

Name

Address

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Zip _____ Serial # _____

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IMAGE 1.2 From 1.0	$25.00_____	
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(Indicate Selection)		
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Tec-Net Pfile Disk	$16.00_____	
Tec-Net GFX Disk	10.00_____	
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The Reflection	*$15.00*_____
(12 issues)	

Note: Some "package" prices are availabvle on IMAGE products, call for details. (801-423-2209)

Send all orders, with check or money order to:

New Image Software
P.O. Box 525
Salem, UT 84653