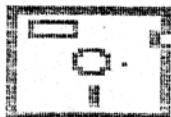


THE DISPATCH DISK



SOUTHERN DISTRICTS COMMODORE USERS CLUB INC.



May 1989

COMMITTEE - 1988/89

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	: Graham Hawes phone 381 3813	16 Nannigai Drive	Hallett Cove
Librarian	: John Hancock - see above. Library open 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm each general meeting.		
Newsletter	: John Hancock - see above.		

Next meeting : MONDAY 26th June at 7:30 pm.

Location : Salvation Army Hall, Elizabeth Rd. Morphett vale.
Subject : Paul Gorton's machine code demo

Disclaimer The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writer/writers, and are not necessarily of the club's committee members. The use of the word "Commodore" in no way implies any connection with any organisation bearing that name. No part of "The Dispatch Disk" may be copied or reproduced by any means, without the written permission of the Committee and the author.

THE FUTURE OF THE 64

Five years after the introduction of the 64, Commodore's eight-bit superstar is still going strong. The continued strength of the 64-and the 128-have caught more than a few industry observers off guard, prompting repeated postponements of the machines' obituary notices. Many other computer manufacturers would be delighted to have sales figures for new machines that could match those of Commodore's long-lived duo.

Recently, Compute!'s Gazette Features Editor, Keith Farrell talked with Rick McIntyre, Commodore's Senior Vice President in charge of Sales & Marketing in the U.S. We thought that local Commodore users might be interested in extracts of that conversation as to what Commodore saw as the future of it's two best known machines.

Farrell : Despite all the rumors and predictions, the 64 is still going strong. Has that surprised people?

McIntyre : The accounts of its death are greatly exaggerated, that's for sure. We'll sell over a million eight-bit 64 and 128 units in 1988.

Farrell : How many 64s and 128s have been sold by now?

McIntyre : Over seven million.

Farrell : Is that the largest installed base for a single family of machines?

McIntyre : I don't think anybody's passed in yet-in units. In dollars, of course, it's been passed. But in units, I think we rank way up there.

Farrell : One of the keys to Commodore's success is the terrific brand identification consumers have with the company name as well as its products.

McIntyre : This is a tremendous resource that Commodore has. Especially members of Commodore users groups-they're just devout.

Farrell : Many of those users love the machine's game capability. Last U.S. winter you experimented with renewed TV advertising for the 64. Four commercials positioned the 64 as a great game machine-and much more. Did that pay off?

McIntyre : Yes, it did. We targeted the machine towards the potential customer. The customer for that product, we felt, was around 12 years old. We positioned the machine as, while a computer, also a very dynamic and rich entertainment system.

Farrell : For the parents of youngsters in that market, you touted the advantages of giving the children something more than just a game machine.

McIntyre : Recreation is certainly one of the major reasons to buy a system. Entertainment will always be a key element in 64 and 128 strategy. But, we asked the parents to consider the value of the investment and the fact that the computer can provide many, many more functions than just recreation. It's an educational tool, a productivity tool, as well as a learning device.

Farrell : *Is your primary outlet still the general retailer?*

McIntyre : It is still the mass merchant. The largest percentage of our business goes through the Supermarket/Departmental Store channel, because of the price point.

Farrell : *How does Commodore maintain a successful mass-retailer presence when many larger computer companies cannot?*

McIntyre : Product recognition is high, obviously. It's been on the market for five years now, That channel is very important to us. The support that we're still receiving from third parties allows that to be. There are still new titles being written for the Commodore 64.

Farrell : *Those developers are continuing to stretch the limits of the machine.*

McIntyre : Programmers are still learning about the 64, still finding things they can take advantage of when they're writing software. As far as high quality, low-cost graphics machines, the Commodore 64 was the first, and is still an excellent device to be used in that area. It does have limitations, in terms of memory and speed. *But* for the price performance, it's still the best deal.

Farrell : *In terms of marketing, what other advantages has the 64 acquired over its history?*

McIntyre : The functionality of the machine has also grown. Viatel is a good example. Here's an online service available to the 64 user. For about \$600-computer, disk drive, modem-you've got online shopping, banking, airline reservations, information service, and so on.

Farrell : *Despite this, the machine sometimes get rapped as being old-fashioned, obsolete.*

McIntyre : Today, if we positioned the 64 in the marketplace-forget RAM, bytes, bits-if we went out and functionally described the Commodore 64, it would be heralded as a fantastic advancement in personal microcomputing.

The problem is that if you start to talk to people who have been in this business since its inception, they start to get jaded: "It's only eight-bit."

Who cares? You are buying this machine for a specific reason. If it satisfies that need, it is never obsolete. Only your requirements become obsolete. If you no longer require it, then you obviously would no longer need hardware to satisfy the need. The need ceases to exist-not the hardware. If the need continues to exist until the year 2000, then that machine is still satisfactory.

There is no such thing as hardware obsolescence. That is a phrase that was coined by the naysayers in this industry. That's baloney.

Extract from Compute!'s Gazette, May 1988

GLOSSARY OF COMPUTING TERMS
(SEC-WOR)

- Sector** This is the smallest grouping of data on a disk. Typical sector sizes are 256 bytes, 512 bytes and 1k bytes. A storage unit for a disk file is called a block and usually consists of a number of sectors.
- Serial** When information (data) is sent from one device to another it is either sent along one line, serially or along several lines which is called parallel. Serial data transfer usually uses one line and is slower than parallel. A common example of a serial data standard is RS232-C which is used on MODEMS. HPIL is another serial standard developed by Hewlett Packard for use on their own equipment. It is interesting to note that Commodore use IEEE-488 on their parallel drives but on the Commodore 64 they have used their own serial version of the IEEE-488 Bus, thus getting the worst of both worlds.
- Shift** This is a code modifier key. A code modifier will alter the the code generated by the keys on the keyboard. When held down the keys produce a second set of characters usually placed above the unshifted characters on the keyboard, but shifted letters are capitals.
- Source code** This is the series of instructions or programme that the programmer writes. The term source code is often used where the code needs to be modified before it can be used by the computer. This modification is called compilation. There are usually several stages to produce a file that the computer can use. The files produced are ;
1. Source code - Programme that is typed in
 2. Object code - An intermediate code sometimes linked with other sections of code or libraries of programme sections.
 3. Executable code - The final programme which can be used by the computer.
- Spreadsheet** A programme used to store a number of arithmetically related figures in the form of a large sheet, similar to a large sheet of paper with rows and columns. This is used for such things as budgets, expense accounts and price lists.
- Static** Many materials, particularly synthetics, that are good insulators may develop an electric charge when rubbed. This electric charge is called static electricity and although there is very little energy in this electric charge it may be up to tens of thousands of volts. Many modern electronic devices are built with very thin layers of material and a discharge of this static electricity into these devices will destroy them. It

is therefore very important when handling electronic equipment to be aware of the dangers of static discharge. This is especially necessary with computers since the user, joy-stick, printer and cartridge ports can be devastated by static discharge.

Stepper Motor

These motors are used not so much for continuous rotation as for accurate positioning. For example a stepper motor is used to position the head in a disk drive over the track that is to be read. The motor has four wires and these wires must be pulsed in a certain order to step the motor back and forth. Older drives used a worm drive to attach the motor drive to the head mechanism but this has been replaced by steel bands because of the wear problem with the worm drive.

Symbolic code

This is a type of programming language where each instruction is converted into a number of symbols. This conversion makes the programme faster. This conversion may occur either when the programme is first typed in as in a BASIC interpreter or it may be produced by processing the programme that is written by an editor. This processing is done by a symbolic compiler.

Syntax This is typically used when talking about a programming language. Syntax is the way a command is written, including commas, colons etc.

Track This is the circular path a read/write head on a disk drive traces when it is not moving. Most 5 1/4" floppy drives have 48 or 96 tracks per inch.

Voice Coil

A voice coil drive is used in many hard disk drives to position the heads on the disk surfaces. The mechanism used is similar to that used in loud speaker voice coils. This type of drive is much faster than stepper motors but voice coil hard disk drives usually cost half as much again as their stepper motor counterparts.

Warm Boot This is the process whereby the computer can be taken from running some programme to a situation where it is just as if the computer has been turned on without reloading the operating system. In most cases this involves running a short programme that resets various parts of the operating system. Note that the Control Alt Del sequence on MS-DOS is sometimes incorrectly called a warm boot. It is in fact a cold boot since it reloads the complete operating system.

Word Processor

A programme that allows the user to enter and modify text. It also formats the printed output. There are a number of types of word processors, and are usually classed by the way they appear on the screen while the user is entering and formatting text. It is possibly

true to say that there are many more types of wordprocesspr than I am describing. First is the type where the text is totally unformatted on the screen and margins, indents, text enhancements etc. are all done with commands. This is the hardest to use because a special view mode has to be used to see the final formatted layout. Next is on screen formatting. In this mode the text appears on screen as it would on paper but text enhancements may appear in a different colour or with embedded commands. Finally there is "What you see is what you get" or wysiwyg where the edit screen is exactly how the printed page will appear.

Some examples of each type are;

Unformatted -	Easy Script, Font Master.
On screen formatting -	Pocket Writer, Wordstar.
Wysiwyg -	Geo Write.

J. H.

P.S.

This is the final in the series of articles of the Glossary Of Computing Terms. If any one would like the complete article please contact me and I will make it available free to club members.

CHANGE OF NIGHT

The committee is attempting to arrange another night for the meeting to prevent the conflicts that have occurred over the last few months. The new night will possibly be a tuesday or wednesday night. A vote will be taken at the next meeting to change the night.

FOR SALE

Computer C128, disk drive 1571, monitor 1901, Citizen printer NLQ 120D c/w Super Graphics Interface, joy-stick and assorted software. Will not split \$1300 the lot. Contact Paul Gorton on 38 6381 during business hours or 085 56 3643 at home.

MARCH CROSSWORD - ANSWERS



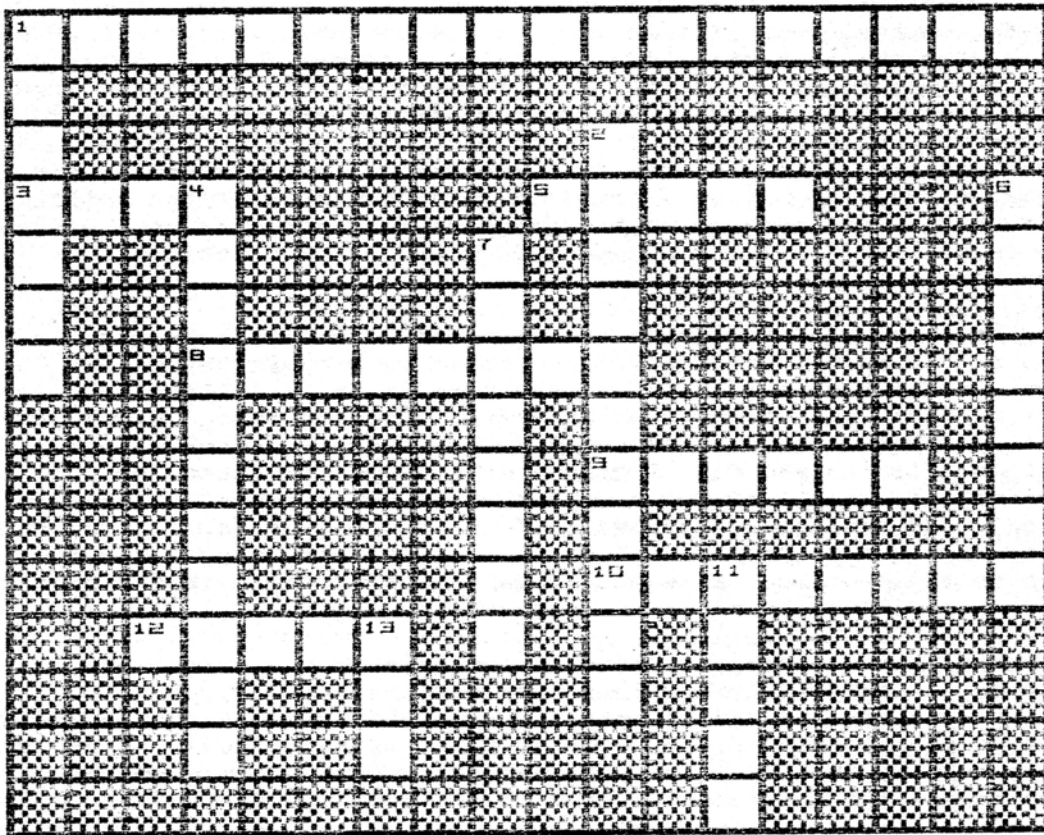
ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

There seems to be a need for a question and answer column in the club magazine from the number and type of questions that the committee members are being asked. Below is a typical question to start off. In future it is hoped that the questions can be supplied by the members.

Q. When I try to load a disk with LOAD "*",8 it does it not always work?

A. The * symbol is called a wildcard and in this case it means the first programme on the disk. The ,8 means that you are trying to load a BASIC programme. There are therefore two reasons why this may not work. The programme that has to be loaded may not be the first programme on the disk, in which case the full name of the programme must be placed in stead of the *. The programme may not be a BASIC programme in which case ,8,1 must be used in place of ,8.

MAY CROSSWORD



ACROSS CLUES

1. Computer manufacturer (6,7,4(abr))
3. Type of memory
5. Computer language
8. Mass storage device
9. Interface standard
10. Type of monitor
12. BASIC comand

DOWN CLUES

1. To connect many computers
2. Game
4. Needs no interpretation for computer
6. Tangible
7. Pretty pictures
11. Computer type
13. Unit of computer storage

12 Riverway,
14 Croker Road,
MORPHETTVILLE,
SA 5043
15 February, 1989

Mr. Ken Pilkington,
President, Southern Districts Commodore Users Club Inc.,
16 Anselm Street,
CHRISTIE DOWNS SA

Dear Ken,

Further to our telephone conversation before last month's meeting, I am enclosing a printout of Public Domain software for C-64 (and C-128 in some cases) which I believe are available from the Brisbane Commodore Computers Users Group (Qld.). (A listing is available in disk files which can be read with Speedscript.) Ross Edwards and I have already purchased several from this listing and would be prepared to pass them onto the Club for what we paid for them i.e. \$2 per disk. From what we have seen of them they are better than what the Club has in it's PD catalog in that they have more interest for the average SDCU Club member and are generally not for the technically inclined. Perhaps, we could issue them on a 'Disk of the Month' basis for \$2 and then members would go away each month with something to explore until the next meeting. Then at the next meeting, we could spend 10 mins. exchanging views on the interest level and useability of the material. I believe that the address of the Brisbane Commodore Computer Users Group (Qld.) is 'Box 274 P O, Springwood QLD 4127 Attention Norm Chambers'.

Given the price of retail software at present, Public Domain seems the way to go. A survey of US magazines shows that there is so much PD software available, one would not get through it in a lifetime. A couple of firms are advertising on Viatel that they have PD software available. While the prices that they are charging (from \$11 per individual disk to \$50 for 12 disks) is still a bit steep for an individual, if the Club were to buy them it could copy them off sell them of at \$2 and use any excess to fund more purchases. I enclose a listing of a Public Domain disk which I bought this way. It's a little on the technical side but it is a 'Utilities' disk and some of the material I have found to be very useful.

'The Australian Commodore & Amiga Review - Commodore Annual 1989' published at Christmas time listed off all the User Groups in Australia and New Zealand. I note that the SDCUC is not listed. I am enclosing photocopies of the relevant parts of the Annual. I would like to suggest that the Club write to the Review and advise them of our existence and ask for inclusion in the next issue/update.

John Wright has shown us several times the delights of music produced by an organ and a Midi Interface. I don't know how many members own or can borrow an electronic organ but it will certainly be more than those who own the range of Midi interfaces that John has displayed.

The February issue of 'Electronics Today International' contained a 'Midi Interface for the Commodore 64' project for electronic enthusiasts to construct. John has looked at the project and described it as excellent as the interface project incorporates a switch which will enable it to operate as the 4 types of Midi Interface which he has. While I have tinkered with electronic project, it seems a bit above capability level. I would therefore be interested to know if we have any electronic enthusiasts who would be prepared to make up the project if I purchased the parts. Perhaps this could be raised at the next meeting and I will also do an extract from this letter for inclusion in the Club newsletter in case someone is not at the meeting.

At the recent 'Kids Night' (which was attended by more adults than kids) it was obvious that a number of our members have bought some original software. By now, they may have grown bored with it (!!!!) or have found their way through the adventure or given up (me). I would like to suggest that one night per year be a 'Swap and Sell' night for original software only. I would be interested in discussing with you how this might be organised.

One final thing. I am working towards a 'Design a Sprite' Project which could be used as the basis of a 'Design a Sprite Competition'. I am using all Public Domain software so that it will be readily distributable amongst users/competitors. I am advised that using the C-64 's 504 pixels available to design a sprite that there are:

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possible sprites available to be designed. I am certain that we should be able to create something new!

When I am finished, would the Club be interested in running a competition.

Yours in Computing,



JEFF CAREY

Response to Jeff Carey for his constructive letter.

Jeff Carey has gone to the trouble to write the letter which appears in total in this newsletter. First thing is - thanks very much Jeff, it is great to have some feedback from members on where our club is going.

We discussed your letter at the last Committee meeting, and I will deal with the questions you raised.

Your Public Domain disks.

By all means bring your PD disks along to one of our meetings, they sound quite interesting... I wonder how many people would buy a copy of these disks to discuss at the following meeting? Perhaps some more feedback from other members on this issue?

Listing of public domain software.

There are 34 double sided sheets available for perusal of members, including games, graphics, utilities, music, databases, word processors etc. etc. in fact everything under the sun, twice over! If anyone wants to purchase any PD software this list would be worth looking at. See John our librarian to check out this listing. We may buy some ourselves to include in our PD library.

Listing of user groups - Australia and New Zealand.

Mike Griffin has taken note of the address and we will be in the next issue.

MIDI interface.

Some of the kits from ETI are not that easy unless you are skilled in electronic kit building. I don't personally know if anyone could help you, but we will find out. maybe if it does not take too long to build, we could knock up this project at one of our club meetings.

Swap night.

This is a great idea and I will talk to you about this ASAP. Meanwhile, everyone else should dig up the computer bits and pieces they no longer want to keep and bring them along to the first inaugural Swap Night. More information will follow later.

Design a sprite.

Another good idea, I myself don't know anything about sprites, so it seems like a good way of learning.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Jeff for his comments, and would like to hear from any other members who have suggestions for our club.

Ken P.

CHEAP CARTRIDGES

\$2:00 each !

The club has recently been offered some very cheap cartridges. OK, I know they are not as good as games on disk, but if you don't have a disk drive, they are heaps faster than loading from cassettes.

1. *International Soccer.*

Obviously a game for all expatriate POMS!

2. *Wizard of war.*

Another monster munching game!

3. *Magic desk.*

A software filing cabinet and typewriter system. See John Wright to find out about this product.

4. *Visible solar system.*

Learn about our solar system.

5. *Financial advisor.*

Some neat little routines in here for would be wizards of finance, for example calculate the repayments on a personal loan to see the effects of paying back more.

The club has a copy of these programmes in our library, and they are available for loan. If you want to buy the cartridge, then get in quick, we may not be able to get many more, so stocks are definitely limited!

At \$2:00 they are great value, see John Hancock if you are interested.