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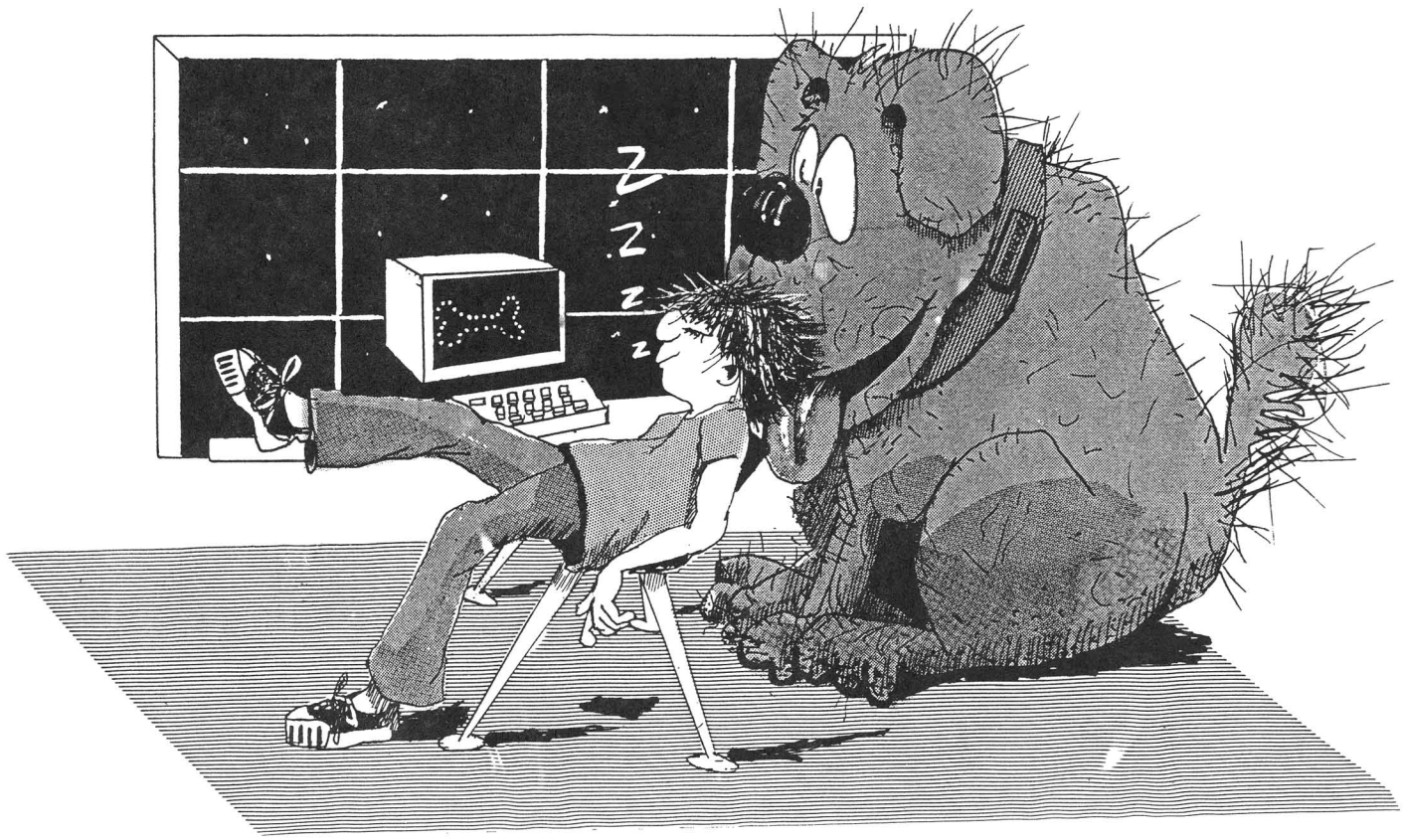
Midnite Software Gazette

The First Independent U.S. Magazine for users of Commodore brand computers.

Includes The PAPER



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Hello readers. Times have changed, priorities have changed; so, too, the ***Midnite*** will change. Due to economic and other reasons, the ***Midnite Software Gazette*** will no longer be published by Micro-PACE. Rather than fold the ***Midnite***, MPC has reached an agreement with Ben Dunnington, owner/publisher of ***INFO*** magazine, to continue to print ***Midnite Software Gazette*** within the guidelines they set forth. ***INFO***, my OTHER favorite magazine, will be publishing the ***Midnite Software Gazette*** within their pages. All subscriptions to ***Midnite*** will be fulfilled by the capable staff at ***INFO***. Although MPC and I will no longer have responsibility for printing the ***Midnite***, I and other writers you have met within these pages will be appearing in ***INFO*** contributing our opinions, comments, articles, and our famous (if not infamous) reviews. I feel this is the only way ***Midnite*** can continue.

Literally hundreds of people have contributed to the material printed in the ***Midnite***. To list them would take dozens of pages, and the list of reviews that have been printed could nearly fill a book.

But now, on to the important material. With ***INFO***'s 100,000+ reader base, the ***Midnite*** will be read by more people than ever before. That excites me. Now, ***Midnite*** will be enjoyed by a whole new group of people who haven't even heard of the ***Midnite Software Gazette***.

Ben and Mark will allow me to contribute as much as I can to their magazine with the hope of adding to the high quality of ***INFO*** magazine. Info, in my opinion, is the ONLY magazine that is a truly hones, unbiased publication serving the Commodore community. What they have achieved so far tells the true story that they are doing things right. Now, with ***Midnite Software Gazette***, they have the horses to accomplish what we at ***Midnite*** couldn't do: become the biggest, most read independent Commodore magazine on the newsstands and in the homes.

Jim Oldfield, Jr.

Editor's Aerie

Tim Sickbert

The ***Midnite Software Gazette/The PAPER*** is passing on. As I write this, the details have not been resolved. I do not know the immediate, much less the ultimate, fate of the ***Midnite***. It is a sad time.

The ***Midnite Software Gazette*** has served the Commodore community since 1980; ***The PAPER*** started way back in 1978. No other publication has served so well, or so long, as an advocate of Commodore users. The ***Midnite Software Gazette*** has never been over-concerned with selling, we have never worked hard to become a commercial success. So it is that the ***Midnite Software Gazette*** does not sell well, and it is a commercial failure. That is not to say that we have failed; we have served well in the mission we have set for ourselves. To the best of our ability, we have informed you, our readers, of the products and services that have been available, of the quirks of the machines that you use, and of the vagaries of the Commodore computer market.

We are proud to have maintained the tradition and the spirit of the ***Midnite Software Gazette*** for so long. And we are proud to accept and live with the reality of the commercial marketplace that requires that we discontinue our efforts here. We could not compete against major commercial magazines, nor would we wish to. Magazines such as *RUN*, *Compute!'s Gazette*, and *Ahoy* are major players in the Commodore market. These magazines help promote and maintain the excitement of the Commodore market, they help the new user become familiar with the machines, and they indirectly help the more experienced users by helping to bring in the new users on which the strength of the computer market relies.

The computer market, and other markets, are driven by the philosophy reflected in an editorial by Jan Lewis in the 30 March edition of *Computer Reseller News*:

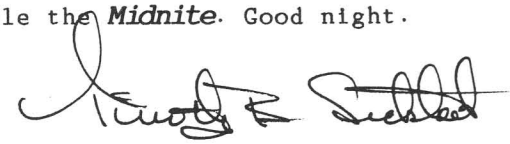
> Of course, after the crowd wheels the DTP [DeskTop Publishing] Trojan horse inside the PC corporate walls, it may realize both a blessing and a burden. For what was once acceptable copy will now look old-fashioned. And as customers demand more from their printed communications, they will demand more from hardware, software, support, and training. Which is just what the market needs--applications that create demand.

The whole computer marke is driven by applications that create demand. And many publications encourage this by enthusiastically reporting and encouraging everything that comes along. It makes for good business. But that has not been what the ***Midnite Software Gazette*** has tried to do.

The ***Midnite*** has worked on the idea that computers are good functional tools, an enjoyable hobby, and better than the Sunday morning funny pages for entertainment. You might say that we have tried NOT to treat it as a business. Sure, we wanted to promote, encourage, and aid the use of Commodore computers and, by doing so, to promulgate the market. But we have never had any desire to **create** a market, or to drive the market by **creating** demand. We believe that the need, the demand, for good tools is present. We believe that people do enjoy computers as a hobby. And we believe that computer games are an excellent source of entertainment. We have tried to help users by reviewing hardware and *Software* that improves the effectiveness of the computer as a tool. We have tried to make computers more interesting and pleasurable for hobbyists. And we have tried to review games so that using computers for entertainment will be more entertaining. We have done this well.

But we have done so with a continuing financial loss. The cost of running the Midnite Press/Midnite Software Gazette has been underwritten by Micro-PACE, Inc., which, as a business, cannot afford to continue losing money. I appreciate that Micro-PACE has underwritten us for so long. And I am sorry that the Midnite Press/Midnite Software Gazette has not been financially successful.

Considering the seven years of the ***Midnite***, my twenty months as Editor seem brief. I have had the pleasure of dealing with several score of the several hundred people that have made the ***Midnite*** possible. I wish to thank you all, particularly Art Lewis Kimball, who has not only written innumerable reviews, but has also lent his experience and resources to making the ***Midnite*** more attractive; Robert Baker, who has been our most consistent source of the best articles; Dr. Richard Immers; Dr. Elizabeth Kaspar; Sue Albert; Jeff Lowenthal; Neil Phillips; Mike Stout; Gary Fields; W.H. Lambdin; and all the reviewers and writers that have contributed to our efforts. And, finally, I want to thank Jim Oldfield for letting me handle the ***Midnite***. Good night.



Debbie and I have sweat, toiled, loved, and argued the ***Midnite*** for a very long time. We dealt with the glory as well as the defeats, and we wouldn't have missed it for the world. No words can adequately describe our heart-felt gratitude and appreciation all of you, the subscribers, have bestowed upon us. If not for your encouragements, advice, monies, and generous help, we could not have done it alone. We were never large or pretty, but we didn't want to be. All we tried to accomplish was to print an honest magazine. We are very proud of our baby and we know Ben and Mark will take care of their newly adopted child.

Jim Oldfield, Jr.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

I started this article many times There is so much that I want to say. i don't want to bore your or sound like so many other articles that I accused of sounding silly and ridiculous. I think of the past...from the cut out computer ads I found stuck in Jim's auto magazines...the first computer Jim bought with a whole year's vacation pay (no, we DIDN'T get a vacation trip that year)...the first ***Midnite***/CIPUG newsletters I stuffed in the SASEs and mailed...

We have a few readers that have been with us since day one. I want to especially thank them for being so loyal to us. We, Jim and I, have met so many wonderful people through ***Midnite***. We have gained so many friends. All the hours, hard work, and everything else that goes into a magazine have been well worth it.

The ***Midnite*** means so much to Jim and I. Only a few could know. It's almost like a child to us. From day one, we always tried to get honest reviews to you. We thought getting needed INFOrmation to you was more important than being glamorous, being big, or making lots of money. Making a good profit was not that important, however, someone else doesn't see it that way.

I hope to see those familiar faces at future computer shows that we have been so accustomed to. I hope that in some way we have been of value to each one of our subscribers and/or friends. We have enjoyed the past years immensely.

Debbie Oldfield

Sorry, Len. I never made the centerfold.

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Keep the Spirit
Ralph Bressler

[reprinted from ***Midnite*** #9,
Volume IV, Issue 5 of ***The Paper***]

Those of you who have been regular subscribers to ***The PAPER*** or who have picked up an occasional issue will recognize me as the publisher of that late newsletter. Late describes ***The PAPER*** in at least two ways. Over the past two years Doug Haluza, the editor, and I have tried to issue ***The PAPER*** on some kind of regular basis. We often fell short of our goal. Now ***The PAPER*** has combined with the ***Midnite Software Gazette*** to bring the readers of both publications the best in reviews, commentary, articles, rumors and answers to their questions. With all of us now working on each issue, I feel sure the readers will get the best information available on time.

I, like many of you, am a veteran Commodore user who had one of the original PETs when they first burst on the scene. I remember some of the first programs I typed in from magazines or created myself. After they were debugged, I traded them with friends to increase my library and show others what I could do. I also remember meeting with other users and discussing the newest bits of information we had gleaned from our machines. These activities became somewhat formalized in program exchanges and newsletters. The program exchanges have flourished, but most of the newsletters have died out. I

am really at a loss to explain this phenomenon. Perhaps it is because programmers feel confident writing programs, but get cold feet when they start to write about their programs. Recently, several authors asked if I could pay them for articles, and I am sure those that run program exchanges get similar requests. These are not unreasonable or outrageous questions. When you stand on the outside and look in, it must seem like $20 per subscription or $10 per disk is enough to make a healthy profit. Let me assure anyone that feels this way that the money barely covers costs and does not begin to pay for the time of those that labor in these causes.

Why then do people spend so much of their time writing articles and programs, only to give them away? Why do others work far into the night to comp le newsletters and program exchanges? It is because these people continue to have the spirit that started the free exchange of ideas when the first PET users knew little about their new machine. These people remember the thrill of learning a new technique and passing it on to a friend or a group of fellow users. Don't get me wrong, I am not starting a campaign to canonize these people. I just feel we would be in much worse shape if everyone felt they must be paid for everything they contributed. I also feel that authors should be rewarded in some way. Perhaps a small fee for submitting an article would be possible, but I prefer some kind of contest. Each issue the readers could vote on the best article, and the winning author would garner a small prize. In this way, each author has a chance to win, generating some suspense for both the author and the readers. However, I hope this remains subordinate to the willingness of most people to contribute ideas just to help out other users.

As we start a new publication, I hope everyone will realize they can contribute in some way. Articles and reviews are always needed, as are questions and comments. Many people just need to get over that initial "fear" of writing some of their ideas down. Other readers want to know if you have had good or bad luck with a particular product or company. Maybe you have learned something about a Commodore machine that you think is common knowledge but that others are unaware of. Remember that many users are just starting. Your niche may be to explain some very simple concept in a new way they can understand. Come join with us in the thrill of helping other Commodore users. Help make this magazine one which will continue to grow in quality and readership.

Books

Twin Cities 128: $22 (twelve issue subscription) magazine. PO Box 4625 Saint Paul MN 55104. An open letter:

March 3, 1987

Dear Loren:

Now that you have revealed your true age, I will have to cancel my subscription!

As a professional journalist, let me tell you that it matters not to me whether you are fifteen or fifty - the only thing that counts is the quality of the magazine in my mailbox.

In that regard, you have been doing an excellent job. My only carp would be with your previous cracks about the Midnite, a magazine for which I sometimes write reviews. I know that you later changed your mind about their ethics...and you were right to do so. In the several years I have contributed to them, I have never been told what to write, nor has the essence of a review been changed, no matter who the vendor was. The diversity of opinion provided by several reviewers (and updates) is a major strength of the magazine.

While it is true that they sometimes review products sold by their distributorship, they have been as hard or harder on those products as any others they have evaluated.

Each month's issue of TC 128 contains information I can use, but as a Genie/Compuserve/QL subscriber, I would rather see more original material as opposed to downloads from those services. I recognize the difficulty of coming up with material every month, but I think it's reasonable to assume that many of your readers look in on at least one of those systems from time to time. This is not to say the information contained in those sections is lacking, just repetitive.

Continued good luck in your venture....my renewal will follow shortly.
Sincerely,
Jeff Lowenthal

Applications

SPEEDSCRIPT BOOK: $9.95 reference book for *Speedscript*. By Charles Brannon, from Compute! Publications.

This book has quite a bit of information to help you use *Speedscript* more efficiently. It has version 3.1 of Speedscript for the 64 and the VIC, as well as the MLX machine language entry program for both computers. It even has the source code for the 64 version of Speedscript and an overlay to explain the use of the function keys. It also has two handy reference cards that do the same job as a cheat sheet. One covers editing commands, the other covers printing commands.

This book also has two more programs for *Speedscript*. *Scriptsave* by J. Blake Lambert is a utility that saves your text to tape or disk every ten minutes to guard against power failure; and a program that will convert screen codes to PETSCII, PETSCII to screen codes, or the same conversions for true ASCII.

An optional disk is available for $12.95, or you can buy the two together for $19.95. The disk includes all the programs from the book, plus the source code for the VIC version of *Speedscript 3.1*.

If you have *Speedscript 3.0* or higher, this will offer you a lot of help. If you don't have *Speedscript*, this is a chance to get a very professional wordprocessor at minimum expense. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. W. H. Lambdin

PRO-WRITE: $124.95 word processing program on disk for the Amiga. From New Horizons Software. Unprotected. Requires 512K and Kickstart 1.2. Allows multi-tasking.

For any computer user who started out with the simple text editing programs that came out five years ago, or who struggled with the complexities of *WordStar*, any word processor on the Amiga is bound to look amazing. Real WYSIWYG word processing is certainly a big step forward. Add to that the built-in fonts and multi-tasking of the Amiga, and any program *looks* good. ***Pro-Write*** adds color and on-screen graphics around which you may enter text, and it is fairly quick in moving, cut-and-paste, changing fonts, etc.

But when it comes to getting words on paper and effectively communicating ideas, ***Pro-Write*** is not particularly outstanding. It lacks a spelling checker, mail-merge, and multiple column capabilities. It works only in the interlace mode which will quickly drive anybody's eyes buggy unless they have a long persistence phosphor monitor (which the Amiga 1080 is not). The only real advantage it has is the color. And this is a narrow advantage: Not that many users have color printers; color is inconvenient and expensive to reproduce; and, the output of most color printers is inappropriate for mass reproduction. An individual copy of a color document is nice. But would you mail color copies to all the members of your users' group?

Anyway, I don't believe that ***Pro-Write***'s greatest strength is all that useful. If you have a color printer, fine - you will probably get some pleasure from ***Pro-Write***. But if you are looking for page-layout software, look at Gold Disk's *PageSetter*, or Brown-Wagh's *Publish*; for more standard word processing, look at Micro Systems' *Scribble*, or *Textcraft*. AVERAGE. Tim

Graphics

PRINTMASTER PLUS: $34.95 graphics page printing utility on disk for the C64. From Unison World. DOS prot cted, joystick optional, printer requi ed, additional graphics disks available at extra cost, no statement of warranty.

Last year, Broderbund won a copyright suit against Unison World forcing them to change the appearance (in jargonese, "user interface") of their *PrintMaster* program. While reprogramming the visual layout and wording Unison World wisely used the opportunity to correct a few flaws and add some outstanding new features to the original program.

First up is the new menu screen, ala *Mondrian*, now divided into several rectangles. Title box, graphic box, and an instruction box giving current selection status, share the top three quarters of the screen while a horizontal box on the bottom holds the choice menu. This screen, no called "Project Choices," contains the same items as the old *Printmaster* with some new titles: Card, Stationery, Poster, Calendar, Banner, Drawing Pad, Hardware Configuration, and Exit to BASIC.

Taking most important things first, we enter Hardware Configuration to find that several new printer drivers have been added. A neat little printer test helps you properly align the paper. A data disk can now be formatted here.

Upon entering any of the printing choice modes you will find the most impressive improvement. You can now preview your selection after almost every choice. This cause for celebration is heightened when you see that in placing a graphic in card and poster mode, you can place them on the diagonal in five areas in regular size, or thirteen in half size. You may also select a new Freehand option which allows placement in any arrangement of 15 locations in regular size or 35 locations in half size. If that doesn't whet your appetite, in the Poster mode you can use two different graphics. You could have Godzilla meet a giant Baby, or an army of tiny frogs leaping away from big tennies. You can now use the texture patterns under a graphic and add text. The Preview option is a blessing when laying out these combination placements.

Banner mode also allows two graphics. If you have bee frustrated by having both your graphics facing the same direction, you may flip one in the Drawing Pad graphic editing mode, save it, and use it as the second graphic.

There is an additional font in the text mode where all the old features remain for changing size, font, and placement. The only loss to the user from this undoubtedly expensive reprogramming is the new manual. Well organized and illustrated, it has been pared down to the essential but, in covering all versions of ***PrintMaster Plus*** in one manual, they somehow "plumb forgot" to include any mention of the C64/128. An Addendum/Errata sheet gives all the necessary instructions but makes one feel like a "poor relation." Since all the other machines possess multiples of 64K, a little confusion is added to the insult of sifting through unobtainable options.

Registered owners of *PrintMaster* can receive a ***Printmaster Plus*** update by sending a request for a disk and manual with a check for $15, or request a back-up disk only with a check for $5. If you didn't register, include proof of purchase. RECOMMENDED. Sue Albert

WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS?

Welcome to the Midnite Software Gazette, an off-the-wall publication of the Central Illinois PET Users. (PET is a trademark of Commodore Business Machine Inc.0 It is our attempt to fill the vacuum in PET reviews since the PET GAZETTE folded a year ago. Until then, nearly every available PET program was reviewed quickly. Since, lots of PET programs have been offered for sale, but very few reviewed. Some of the new programs are VERY expensive. Who wants to spend $100+ on a program that may be junk?

Who are we to do the reviews?...Just PET owners with lots of software. JS has written some published reviews. The rest have other writing experience. Between us, we have all models & varieties of PET equipment, except the 8032. We want PETdom to prosper. Good software will help. We will point you to it, & steer you away from trash.

The Gazette is mailed FREE to all who send a self-addressed reply envelope with two stamps to this address:

Central IL PET Users
c/o Jim Strasma
3838 Benton Dr.
Decatur, IL 62526
U.S.A.

(Overseas airmail postage for 1 oz. is $0.52U.S.) If you want the next issue, send an extra envelope. We do not charge for subscriptions. (We also don't turn down contributions.) We will not notify you of new issues. As each issue is done, we stuff it in the envelopes on hand, & mail them. Your job is to copy the newsletter for others! This should be a quarterly review, but all we guarantee is--it will be worth every penny you pay for it!

Authors willing to risk a review are invited to send in programs. Only your reviewer will see them. PET users are welcome to send guest reviews. Be honest & fair in them. Keep them short, or they'll be edited. If you have a program you want to sell, but can't see spending $2,500 for a full-page ad in Byte, we'll review it for you. If your program isn't already advertised widely, we'll include your address or phone number in the review so folks can order your programs. (This isn't a come-on to build our library. We have too many programs already!)

Our key questions of a program are:

1) Who can use it?
2) Does it work?
3) Is it fun?
4) Does it do anything important?
5) Is it worth the cost?
6) What don't the ads say?

In this first issue, the reviews are by Jim Strasma & Jim Oldfield. Later issues will include offerings from the rest of the club. All reviews are the opinion of the reviewer; like all human efforts, they may include errors. Corrections are welcome.

VISICALC, $200 from Personal Software. Protected. needs 32k & disk. This is a super program, as Apple owners already know. It is both highly useful and fun to use. The instructions are the best yet. Well worth the cost. My only gripe is that it uses a dummy ROM at $9000 & runs out of memory too soon. A functional ROM would leave more memory for data. Otherwise, it's perfect. -JS

WORD PRO 2 & 3 $200 & $300 from Professional Software. Protected. 2 needs 16k. 3 needs 32. Both need disk. As most PET users know, this is the other super program. PET word processing is second to none with these. Both are very well documented. Use 2 for a great letter. use 3 for anything longer. In regular use, either is worth its cost. 2 uses a dummy ROM at $b000, 3's dummy is at $a000. 3 has more commands than Commodore has ROM sets. -JS

PROFILER, $100 from Intermountain Data. Needs a disk. Claims to maintain 1100 files per diskette, but only about 100 can be in the same database. No way would I pay this much for a 4k Basic database manager with sequential files! -JS

JINSAM, $150 & up, from Jini Microsystems. Protected. Needs 16k & a disk. Not for DOS 2. The best available PET database manager. Very complete. LOTS of documentation. FAST random access to 650 records. Over 150k of well-written Basic programs, & add-on modules to do about everything. Uses a dummy ROM at $9000. Current version takes some setup & lots of disks. Well worth it for serious uses. Far better than their earlier JINI database, sold by the Computer Factory for $125. -JS

TALKING CALCULATOR, $15 from Programma International. Needs 16k plus second cassette buffer. Not for Basic 4. A must for blind people, & great fun for kids. Very recognizable speech. -JS

BASIC PROGRAMMER'S TOOLKIT ROM, $50 & $80, from Palo Alto ICs. Not for Basic 4.0.* Best known of all PET programs. Adds several vital commands to Basic. In ROM at $b000. Uses end of second cassette buffer. Fine manual. If you write programs, you need it! -JS

DISK-O-PRO, $75 from Skyles Electric Works. Basic 2 only. Good imitation of Basic $.0 for those who don't want to throw out old programs. Has other added commands, notably beep, scroll & print-using. 4k ROM at $9000. Compatible with Toolkit ROM. Software compatible with programs for Basic 4, unless they use machine-language ROM calls. Works even during program execution. Slows Basic 20-30% in use. Manual is too brief. Has a fair list of no-no's. Ignoring some crashes Basic. Not quite as good as having both Basic 2 and Basic 4. Like Basic 4, uses most of second cassette buffer.-JS

EXTRAMON, $15 from Programma International. Not for Basic 1.* 2k SUPER monitor. Does for machine-language what the Toolkit ROM does for Basic. Lots of VERY useful added commands. OK to exchange. -JS

KRAM, $100 from Computer Factory. Needs a disk & 16k. Excellent & fast random file manager. Fine manual. Comes with a simple mailing list program. Actually uses its ROM at $a800. Can't have multiple keys to the same data, a serious limitation in uses that need later sorting. Alternative to JINSAM for those who need to write their own programs. -JS

ASM/TED, $50 from Eastern House Software. Best cassette-only assembler commercially available. Needs 16k. Not for disk* or Basic 4. Printer driver available on request. Versions available for most 6502 computers. Includes nearly every desirable command, even conditional

assembly & macros. Slightly confusing manual. -JS

MAE, $170 from EHS. ASM/TED perfected. Well mated to disk & printer. Needs 32k. Not for Basic 1. Good manual. Includes LOTs of useful accessory programs. The word processor module, included, is better than Word Pro 2 in many ways. Latest version is relocatable & compatible with ASM/TED tapes. Has its own user group (started by me after reviewing MAE for COMPUTE.) -JS

CBM ASSEMBLER PACKAGE, $80 from Commodore. An excellent assembler, similar to MAE. Not for cassette or Basic 1. Fine brief manual. No macros. Handles high & low parts of labels better than MAE, & allows reseting of program counter during assembly. Sends output to disk. Needs a special loader to get it back in memory. -JS

RABBIT, $30 & $50, EHS. Basic 2 only. Quadruples the program loading speed of PET's cassette. Available on tape or in ROM. The ROM sits at $a000. If that spot is free, get the ROM. It saves 40 seconds loading Rabbit itself each time you reset PET. Compatible with Toolkit ROM. Adds a well-done repeat key feature, hex-decimal conversion & 2 memory tests to Basic. Least cost way to faster program loads. ROM version uses part of second cassette buffer. Unfortunately, doesn't speed up data files. -JS

PLANET MINERS, $15 from Avalon Hill. Intermediate complexity. Good game of strategy and chance. Many variables to contend with. Your mission is to be the wealthiest of 4 families, after exploring and mining the planets of our solar system. Figure on spending some time playing, as this game takes thought and planning. -JO

MIDWAY CAMPAIGN, $15, AH. Intermediate complexity. If you like war simulations, you'll enjoy this one. Scaled version of the Battle of Midway between the U.S. and Japan during World War II. The computer is a tough opponent. It takes charge of the Japanese forces, which outnumber yours. As in PLANET MINERS, you must read the well written instructions if you expect to beat the computer. -JO

HEARTS 1.5, $15 from Dynacomp. If you need to have a card game of Hearts, then you'll buy it; otherwise, don't. -JO

GAMES PAC II, $10, Dynacomp. A collection of games, primarily of cards, e.g. Acey Duecy, Crazy 8's. 6 small programs merged into 1 program that requires 16k. User groups have better versions of these games, at a better price. -JO

PENNY ARCADE, $8 from Instant Software. Easy. The only good program in this collection of 8k games, is Solitare. With a little dressing up, it's a good card game. To my knowledge, it's the only Solitare program available for the Pet. -JO

MICROTHELLO, $10 from AB Computers. Challenging to impossible. For anyone remotely interested in Othello, I recommend this program. Written in basic and machine language, it is FAST. Has 6 levels of play. Forget level 5; it's nearly impossible. You use a blinking cursor to move, & you watch the Pet analyze the board, while thinking about its moves. It has many options built-in. You'll enjoy playing it. -JO

DATESTONES OF RYN, $15 from Automated Simulations. Intermediate complexity. The same concept used in this role playing game is used in their other fine program, "Temple of Apshai". The graphics are adequate but slow. it's all in real time, which makes for a good game. If you can't afford "Temple", then buy "Datestones", & save some more for the rest of A.S.'s fantasy role playing games. -JO

Now for a couple of hardware reviews:

THE BASIC SWITCH, $130 & up, from Computer Center of South Bend. For those upgrading to either Basic 2 or Basic 4. Flips quickly & easily between 2 versions of Basic. Includes an extra socket for the Toolkit or whatever. Instructions for the upgrade to 4.0 are sparse so far. The best way to go to 4.0, if you can afford it. Too bad it doesn't also flip the other two ROM sockets. -JS

DIAL-A-ROM, $88 & up, from Kobatek Systems Ltd. The best answer to the rash of new ROM programs for PET, & protection ROMs used in other programs. Switches instantly between 6 ROMs at any one address. Comes in a very nice case that sits next to PET. Has a lite to show PET is on, plus an on/off switch you'd be better off without. -JS

FLIP SORT, $35 from Quiet Designs. a very pretty disk organizer, in static-resistant smoked plastic. Includes a built-in carrying ridge & internal dividers. Said to hold 60 disks, but 30 is about tops for regular use. Much easier to use than anything else I've seen. -JS

That's it for this first issue. Notice we left out programs by JS--Keysort2, Supersort1,1, & the ASM/TED User Group disks U1-U3. Conflict of interest keeps us from reviewing ourselves. An outside review would be OK.

Last words... JS's rumor mill reports that Commodore has a 96k PET. (That's nothing...Fred Hambrecht has a 640k PET...with time-sharing!)

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*=Some PET owners have found ways around these limitations in programs.

Games

BUREAUCRACY: Interactive Fiction Plus for Amiga ($39.95) and C128 ($34.95) from Infocom, Inc., Cambridge, MA

Did you ever have one of those days when every time you wanted to open a door you had to go out and build a doorknob and lock? Did you read Catch 22? Up The Down Staircase? If you can answer 'yes' to any of those question you'll be right at home in this latest world created by Infocom.

Technically it's a poor soul's nightmare when everything in the system goes wrong and nothing works quite the way it should. Sort of like real-life. That's why it's called ***BUREAUCRACY***. But put in those terms it sounds too tame. Saying that it's a voyage through a world where EVERYONE except you is stark raving mad (or perhaps just dumb as a can of beer) doesn't do it justice either.

The famous Douglas Adams wit is here, but this game was written by a Douglas Adams out to get his revenge on mankind by driving us to distraction! (Notice how I have cleverly set the distinction between US and THEM?) I have seen grown men break down and cry after the first 20 minutes with ***BUREAUCRACY***. (It was easy, I looked in the mirror.)

Briefly, the thesis is that you've moved to a new town. You've filed a change-of-address form so that you can get your paycheck and other important junk...but the bank sent it to your old address...and the rules forbid giving you another one! The guy at your old address hates you so he won't help. Your boss keeps telling you he's not in...and both your old and new girlfriends are headed out of town with other guys! Add to this the fact that practically EVERYONE you talk to seems to be on some other wavelength. You have to muddle through all the bureaucratic red tape and somehow get to Paris or you'll lose your job.

You'll find yourself dealing with all the little things that make life so much fun to live...A bank that (during the few minutes a day it is open) seems to watch you to see which window you are headed for so they can either close it or staff it with a brain-damaged teller who speaks no known language; A travel agent who has the answer to only one question, and you must guess what the question is; a computer nerd who seems to have adopted you as his personal good luck charm; a cab company that has its OWN idea of where you should go; restaurant 'waitpersons' who will walk you through an ENDLESS list of options and then bring you whatever happens to have been sitting around the longest in the kitchen; an airport apparently designed by Timothy Leary while he was on a bad trip; an airline attendant who wants to make sure you eat your dinner (because no one ELSE will eat it); and an assortment of other loveable characters.

What makes ***BUREAUCRACY*** so scary is that you will quickly find yourself doing things that make absolutely no sense, and then seeing the absolutely PERFECT logic behind them!

Just about the time you are ready to give up and throw your ***BUREAUCRACY*** disk (still in the computer) out the nearest window, that fabulous Adams wit comes along to restore your sense of proportion.

I suspect that ***BUREAUCRACY*** will go down as one of Infocom's finest efforts. It's DEFINITELY not one for those who are easily intimidated.

A highly-placed, usually-reliable source at Infocom divulged some highly classified information to me during a clandestine meeting in the parking garage. (Actually they had lost both our cars and we met by chance while we were searching for them.) Although Infocom and Doug Adams are taking full credit for producing this fantastic game, in actuality it is a COMPLETE FRAUD. It is not really a game at all. Doug Adams somehow got his hands on a copy of the new Aptitude Test being given to prospective IRS and GAO employees. He merely transferred it to disk format. If

you successfully complete the game in less than four months you have a promising future with the Government.

As you are doing this game there is one thing you MUST keep in mind at all times if you are going to survive: 'Just because you are paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you!' HIGHLY RECOMMENDED! -Art Lewis Kimball

COMPETITION KARATE: $25 game on disk for the C64. By Edward Badasov, from Etcetera. For one or more players, paddles optional. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This is a role-playing karate adventure game. Players control teams of karate students. The game displays the students in matches with each other. The graphics display each move, punch, and kick. The object of the game is to advance your student through the ranks of karate belts to become an instructor. You may create as many students as you wish. you can fight in tournaments and regular matches or work out in one of five karate schools. Each school has its own computer controlled karate instructor, each with their own distinctive styles. Each student is rated for strength, agility, quickness, stamina, perception, courage, arms, legs, and body. In the fights, you can punch, lunge, backfist, watch arms, watch legs, retreat, front kick, side kick, and spin kick. The game does have a save option. Average playing time is 15 minutes to 10 hours. RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

BATTLEFRONT: $27 game on disk for the C64. By Roger Keating and Ian Trout, from Strategic Studies Group. For zero to two players. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This game for the advanced player covers World War II combat from a different perspective. You command up to 60 battalions of troops, but you issue orders to the divisional and regimental HQs. The HQs direct the actual movement and actions of each battalion. The screen shows a scrolling hex-grid map that can be as large as 39x8. Each hex represents one kilometer. Four turns equal one day. the scenarios included last about 28 turns. The game uses a variation of SSG's familiar menu system to give orders and access reports. The unique system puts you at the level of corps commander. Units are battalions, each are rated for administration, leadership, supply mode, fatigue, experience, and much more. Scenarios include Crete-1941, Stalingrad-1942, Saipan-1944, and Bastonge-1944. New scenarios will be published in SSG's magazine, *RUN5*. The computer can play either or both sides. You can also design your own scenarios and save them to disk. Average playing time is 1 to 4 hours. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

RINGSIDE SEAT: $27 game on disk for the C64. By Carl Saracini, from Strategic Simulations. For one to three players. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

The object of this introductory level game is to manage your fighter most effectively in order to win the match. This is a simulation of pro boxing where the player acts as managers for the fighters or as judges for fights. The game has 45 individual fighters included on the game. The screen shows the ring, fighters, condition of each fighter, blow by blow commentary, and injuries sustained. Each fighter is rated for his actual abilities that he had at his prime, such as style, hitting ability, stamina, speed, and strength. You can manage one or both fighters or have the computer control both. You select the strategy for that round, such as charge in, stick and move, or go for the KO. You can also judge the fight instead of managing it. You can make new fighters and save them to disk. Average playing time is 30 minutes to an hour. RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

GOLAN FRONT: $39.95 game on disk for the C64. By W.J. Nichols, from Simulations Canada. For one or two players. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This intermediate level game is a simulation of the 1973 Syrian-Israeli battle for the Golan Heights. The Syrians are trying to recapture the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in the 1967 war. The map covers the area from the Jordan River to Damascus. One turn equals twelve hours. There are two maps with 200 unit counters. The game features no graphics. The screen shows reports, displays, and more. Units are divisions/brigades. The game uses a point map, no squares or hexes. The game has armor, infantry, SAM units, air missions, political events, ceasefire, limited intelligence, moral, supply, and more. The games lasts 25 or more turns. Average playing time is 10 to 0 [sic] hours. The game does feature a save option NOT RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

SPITFIRE 40: $23 game on disk for the C64. By MicroSoft, Ltd, from Avalon Hill. For one player. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This introductory level game simulates air combat in World War II, flying a Spitfire fighter. The screen shows a detailed cockpit view and separate screen for the instrument panel. The game is a very complex simulation, you cannot just grab the joystick and go. You must work the flaps, rudder, ailerons, and many more functions of the plane. The game has an option for an easy version, practice runs, and attacking enemy fighters and bombers. You can save a log or your flight history to disk. The history of your experience sets the difficulty level each time you fly. Take-offs and landings are included. The game has 5 scenarios with many options. Average playing time per game is 30 minutes to 1 hour. AVERAGE. Tony A. Tompkins.

BATTLE OF ANTIETAM: $32.97 game on disk for the C64. By Chuck Kroegel and Dave Landrey, from Strategic Simulations. Zero to two players. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This game features Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced difficulty level simulations of the September 1862 Civil War battle. The Union has Lee's army backed up against a river and outnumbered 2 to 1. The game uses the same graphics system as *Kampfgruppe*, a 42x36 square grid map, but with different unit symbols. There are 200 yards per hex, and one hour equals one turn. Units are 1/2 of a brigade (2-3 regiments). The game includes Infantry, Calvary, and Artillery. The object of the game is for the Union to smash Lee's army and win the war. At the higher levels of difficulty, there are added rules and special features. Units are rated for manpower, effectiveness, fatigue, morale, weapon type, mode, facing, command control, route status, and disruption status. Average playing time is 5 to 10 hours per game, and a game save option is available. AVERAGE. Tony A. Tompkins.

KAMPFGRUPPE: $39.95 game on disk for the C64. By Gary Grigsby, from Strategic Simulations. For one or two players. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This Advanced level simulation covers platoon level scenarios on the Eastern front from 1941 to 1945. The screen is a 60x60 scrolling grid map, 2 minutes equals a turn. Games last 20 to 30 turns. The screen shows a scrolling map, units as icons, terrain, and more. The object varies with each scenario, but all include pursuits, meeting engagements, and assaults. The computer keeps track of each individual tank, vehicle, artillery piece, and infantry. The game includes tanks, tank destroyers, anti-tank guns, assault guns, halftracks, trucks, mortars, artillery, flamethrowers, grenades, machine guns, and rifles. Rules cover line

of sight, hit probabilities, HQs, and command control. The game has five levels of difficulty. You can also design your own scenarios. Average playing time per game is 1 to 3 hours, and the game does have a save option. RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

NAM: $27 game on disk for the C64. By Roger Damon, from Strategic Simulations. For one player, joystick required. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This Intermediate level game simulates tactical combat during the VietNam War. You control the American and Allied units. The screen is a 50x50 square grid map. units are squads. The graphics and game system are similar to *Field of Fire* and *Panzer Grenadier*. The object of the game varies with each scenario. The game includes a wide variety of combat situations including ambushes, city fighting, airmobile operations, clearing out a tunnel complex, and defending a strongpoint. The game has three levels of difficulty. The game includes infantry, support weapons, airmobile infantry, AFVs, helicopters, civil police units, artillery, and hidden units. Average playing time is 1 to 4 hours, and a save option is provided. RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

NORWAY 1985: $23 game on disk for the C64. By Roger Keating, from Strategic Simulations. One or two players, DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This Advance level game, the fourth in the *Germany 1985* series, is the winter battle between NATO ski units and Soviet troops in Norway. The screen is a 28x39 scrolling hex grid map that covers part of Norway. Battalion sized units, 4 hours per turn, 3 miles per hex. The game lasts 15 to 17 turns. The NATO units are trying to capture a crucial airfield and the Soviets must prevent this. The infantry and mortar infantry on skis are the only NATO units in the game. The Soviets also have ski troops. There are three levels of difficulty, hidden or exposed movement, and reinforcements. The game has a unique set of rules for both sides. The computer can play as either or both sides. Average playing time per game is 3 to 4 hours, and a game save option is available. AVERAGE. Tony A. Tompkins.

RDF 1985: $23 game on disk for the C64. By Roger Keating, from Strategic Simulations. For one or two players. DOS protected, 90 day limited warranty.

This Advanced level game is the second in the *When the Superpowers Collide* series. The Soviets have seized oilfields in the Persian Gulf. Elements of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force are sent to recapture this vital area. The screen is a 28x28 scrolling hex grid map that covers part of the Persian Gulf oilfields. Battalion sized units, 4 hours per turn, 2.5 miles per hex. The game lasts 21 to 23 turns. The units are shown as icons. The U.S. forces must secure the oilfields and airbases in the area and defeat the Soviet forces that have invaded the Persian Gulf. The game includes infantry, armor, artillery, paratroops, air superiority, and air strikes. There are three levels of difficulty, hidden or exposed movement, and reinforcements. Average playing time is 5 to 10 hours per game, and a save option is provided. AVERAGE. Tony A. Tompkins.

ACE OF ACES: $19.95 game on disk for the C64. From Accolade. For one player, joystick required. DOS protected, 90 limited warranty.

This is an excellent Introductory level game about World War II air combat missions over Germany. You command a British Mosquito fighter/bomber trying to shoot down enemy aircraft, bombers, and V-1 rockets. You must also bomb enemy trains and U-boats. The game has excellent

3-D graphics and uses a real time system. You control the action for the pilot and the navigator/bombadier. You see enemy fighters, trains, U-boats, aircraft controls, maps, and terrain features. Average playing time is 30 minutes to 1 hour per game. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. Tony A. Tompkins.

Hardware

Commodore 1351 MOUSE: $50 proportional (analog) and joystick mode input device for the C64 and C128. Warranted against defects for 90 days.

This input device allows the motion of a handheld item on a table to move an object on the computer screen. A heavy rubber ball on the bottom of the mouse rotates as the mouse is dragged across the table. The rubber ball moves some rollers to pulse a sensor which will cause a cursor, sprite, or whatever is supported by the software, to move.

The *1351* is an proportional (analog) mouse which replace the earlier *1350* joystick mode mouse. The *1351* provides two numbers (0 to 63) proportional to the mouse movement in the x and y directions. Each number is also associated with a "noise" flag bit which can be used to differentiate between mouse movement and signal noise. These two features allow software to easily control the location of the cursor on the screen and yet minimize jitters better than a trackball or joystick mode mouse. This mouse can also act as the earlier *1350* by holding down the right button when the power is applied to the computer or the mouse is plugged in.

Physically, the mouse is beige colored and connect to the computer joystick port with a very flexible cord. [The *1351* mouse is externally identical to both the *1350* mouse and, with the exception of the joystick port connector, to the Amiga mouse. Tim] The cable seems a bit long for use with the C64, but its 4 foot length does allow for routing as it is needed. It has two buttons, but the left one seems to be preferred (i.e., it is wired as a joystick fire button, whereas the right button is wired as a joystick up switch).

How does the mouse perform? Quite well when the software can accomodate it. With the 1351 driver in *GEOS*, performance is every bit as good as with the MacIntosh, which I used extensively one summer. Pointing with the cursor is easy and no concentration is needed. Simply think about where the cursor needs to go and your arm will move the mouse as needed, almost automatically. I am now of the opinion that *GEOS* should NOT be used without this mouse, for otherwise it is very awkward. The GEOS driver currently recognizes only the left button, not the right.

Using the *1351* in the 1350 or joystick mode gives mixed results for me. I am unable to fly with *F15 Strike Eagle* or skate down the rink with *International Hockey* with any degree of pleasure when using the mouse. Playing *Archon* with my children was okay because the mouse gave me a handicap that evened up the game for them. But programs that work well with a trackball (an upside down mouse) such as *Doodle!* will work well with the *1351* in joystick mode.

My overall conclusion is that a joystick cannot be replaced by a mouse in those programs which require prolonged action in one direction, which require rapid yet controlled movements in different direction, or which require great stability or precisely controlled amounts of action. Menu selection and drawing do not seem to have these qualities, so the mouse will excel in these applications. And, if this type of software can work with the *1351* in the proportional mode, then the mouse is the preferred input device. Therefore, if you have the right software, this mouse is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, otherwise, the cost of this accessory may be a bit steep for your pocketbook. Jim Kaminski.

MicroStuffer ***PRINTER BUFFER***: $89.95 64K printer buffer for Centronics parallel printers. From Supra Corporation. 90 day warranty to the original purchaser. Unit must be returned to manufacturer for repair or replacement. 1133 Commercial Way, Albany, OR 97321 (503) 967-9075

For several years I have looked at the printer buffer ads and wondered "Why would I want one ?" Now that I've returned to freelance writing and photography I know.

Printing long documents, even with a fast printer, is a time consuming process. Using the near letter quality mode available on many newer models means nice looking output, but an even longer wait.

Printer buffers accept data much faster than your printer can possibly print it. Then, after the entire document is in the buffer's memory, you can go on to other things with your computer. At the same time, the buffer is feeding data to your printer at the appropriate rate until the printing is done. You may be writing more pages, or even loading and using a completely different program while all this goes on.

Such a buffer is most beneficial to those writing long documents. There is another feature which may be useful to those who must print many copies of shorter documents. That is the "repeat" function which allows you to reprint everything in the buffer by pressing a button.

If you attempt to dump more than 64k into the ***MicroStuffer***, it will accept as much as it can, and then take the rest of the data as more is dumped to the printer. This means that your "first in" data is no longer in the buffer, and the repeat button will not give you a complete printout. Under normal circumstances this will not be a problem.

The unit also contains a more extensive self test that requires unplugging it from the printer and computer. Although they explain what the results mean, Supra Corporation cautions that attempting your own repairs will void the warranty.

The ***MicroStuffer*** is simple and effective. Once you own it, you'll wonder why you didn't get it sooner. RECOMMENDED unless you need a larger buffer than 64k. (But note that 128 and 256k buffers from other manufacturers are substantially more expensive than the MicroStuffer, which is frequently discounted to $60.00) Jeff Lowenthal

GEOPRINT CABLE: $39.95 user-port to Centronics cable for the Commodore 64 with *GEOS*. Includes disk with GEOS printer drivers.

This is an interesting, and often useful, alternative to parallel printer interface cards such as the Xetec *SuperGraphix*, Tymac *Connection*, etc. The ***geoPrint*** cable plugs directly into the user-port, the same port as a modem, on the back of the C64 or C128. From within *GEOS*, you select the appropriate special driver to send the GEOS output to the user port instead of the serial port. It is quick, easy, and cheaper than a standard interface card.

If, however, you should want to use your printer from BASIC, you will either have to write your own program to trap the output or hunt one up from somewhere else. Berkeley seems to want users to use ONLY their GEOS programs and thus do not provide you with any way to use their cable outside of GEOS. Most programs do not support user-port to Centronics output, with the exception of some European and English programs such as *Superscript*, with which the ***geoPrint*** cable works flawlessly, and *Superbase*, which requires that the printer add the automatic linefeed.

Abacus has published a machine language program for the Commodore 64 for a cable very similar to the ***geoPrint*** cable, and there are a few drivers in the public domain that will properly handle the output. More such drivers will be coming out very soon as users get ahold of the cable and write utilities to drive it.

The *geoPrint* cable is also somewhat over-priced. If you are not afraid of a soldering gun, you can build the same cable for less than $10 with parts from Radio Shack. You would still need the printer drivers for both *GEOS* and anything else.

I like the idea of this user-port to Centronics printer cable, and it would be nice if more manufacturers supported this alternative to the more expensive Commodore serial to Centronics interfaces, but the *geoPrint* cable is not a good buy unless you will not use your Centronics type printer with anything other than *GEOS*. NOT RECOMMENDED. Tim

GEMINI CV93: $6.47 (WAL-MART) cable/vcr three way coaxial cable switch.

What is this doing here? Well, I use this switch to allow me to go from my C128 (C64 mode or C128 forty column mode) to my C128 eighty column mode or to my old C64 (that my BBS runs on)... all at the touch of a button! NO MORE cable switching!!! YOU can consolidate all three (3) of your monitor outputs input one for your monitor! It's great! I love it! It comes with one RCA jack adaptor... I made a couple more myself, but you could pick up a couple more if you are not sure which end if the soldering gun gets hot... It really is easy if ya' need an explanation, drop me a SASE (at 111 Greenbriar Lane, Jackson TN 38305)' and I will try to help. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED! Rick Crone

BMC MONITOR *Model BM-12AUW*: $40 (K-Mart) monochrome video monitor.

I have used this monitor for almost a year now and it is one of the best buys I ever got on computer hardware. What the 80 column mode of the C128 is worth to me is just a part of the value of having a 'real' monitor... I used TV for screens before and while the color can be nice for some applications (especially games) the clean image from my little BMC is so much better for text applications (including programming)! I can use my old C64 with a PD program I have that gives 80 columns and get a great 80 column display... almost as good as the C128's. If ya get a chance to pick up on one of these at a good price like I did... well, don't be shy... don't stay dry... JUMP ON IN! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED for those with a need for a clean green display on a budget. Rick Crone.

ISOBAR NOISE FILTER and SURGE SUPRESSOR: $89.95 (four outlet model) and $119.95 (eight outlet model), discounts generally available. From Trippe Manufacturing Co., Chicago, IL.

So you live in a big city, you never have power spikes, and you have never lost data due to a power line glitch.

Congratulations! I was a member of that group for three years. And then I wasn't anymore. Lightning hit a half block away and cost me a Sony television set which was not even on at the time.

The chances of so close a hit happening again are probably remote, but I was made aware of the possible problems one may encounter with power lines. The same night, a friend in my user group lost several computer related pieces of equipment, and I realized it was time to buy some protection.

Deciding to protect yourself is the easy part - picking which device is difficult. You can spend as little as $5.95 or up to several hundred dollars. After looking over most of the units, I decided to go with the Isobar because it is an obviously well constructed unit from an old line manufacturer of electronics.

Such devices may typically contain one or more metal oxide varistors ("MOVs") plus filtering components like chokes and capacitors. Naturally, the cheaper units often contain fewer components, offering only bare bones surge protection and no noise filtering.

The *Isobars* contain everything, including torroidal chokes, and are

designed to reduce interference between peripherals as well as noise coming in on your power line. This isolation of other units plugged into the box may or may not be important to you. I found it necessary when I used my Mannesman Tally printer with Speedscript. Without it, the screen would go crazy during printing.

While I can't prove that they have been effective, I've had no obvious power line caused problems since installing them (one for the video/stereo setup also) and I do feel that I'm taking reasonable precautions. I confess that in a really bad storm I physically disconnect everything, just in case. That is the **ultimate** in surge suppression.

Short of that, the Isobars seem a good investment, even though they cost more than some other similar uni s. The circuit breaker, switch, sockets, a id case are of excellent quality. RECOMMENDED. And never, never use your 128 in the bathtub, even with a surge suppressor. Jeff Lowenthal

OVER VOLTAGE SENSOR (PROTECTOR): $19.95 (+$3 shipping & handling) computer protection device for the C64, from Tektonics Plus 150 Houston St. Suite 308, Batavia IL 60510.

This little device plugs into the power port of the C64 and the power supply plugs into this device. It monitors both the 9 volt AC and the 5 volt DC lines with a fast blow 1 amp fuse in line to blow in case of overvoltage condition in the power supply. Comes with a spare fuse and very clear problem/trouble shooting instructions.

I feel that this is a very worthwhile protection device, much cheaper than replacing the computer if your 5 volt supply goes overvoltage and burns up your chips. RECOMMENDED. Albert Irwin Reuss.

Applications

Timeworks UPDATE POLICY: $free with all Timeworks products. 444 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield, IL, 60015

Timeworks, one of the first companies to support the C-128 with productivity software, has a new and laudable update policy. Updates will now be priced according to how much the program has been enhanced, with minor improvements costing less than major revisions. This is not so revolutionary, although they are constantly improving their products, swatting bugs and adding features. Thus, *WordWriter* began as a rather ordinary word processing program, but has been enhanced over time to include a dictionary, thesaurus and outliner. All these improvements have been made available to owners of earlier versions at modest cost.

Additionally, Timeworks has maintained a **toll-free** support line. Considering that many of these products will be used by those new to computing, it's a great service. It is even more impressive when you consider that these are not expensive programs. These days, even buyers of expensive MS-DOS software are accustomed to **paying** for support, with toll-free support lines becoming a rarity.

Timeworks has copy-protected their software for the Commodore thus making it inconvenient to send them your one and only disk in exchange for a new one, especially with the kind of mail service we are getting in some areas today. Recognizing this, they will allow you to send them a check for the update ($19.70 in the case of *Swiftcalc*) and let you keep your older version until the new disk and manual arrive.

My new *Swiftcalc* arrived with a short letter stating that "To allow us to continue this service to others, please return your old material, along with this

letter, as soon as possible." Pretty civilized, I'd say.

And now, Timeworks has taken another step which is significant in the Commodore world. Effective with Version 2.3, they have dropped copy protection on *Swiftcalc*. As a legitimate application user, I wrote them that I considered this a major and commendable step on their part. It deserves our support, because it's obvious they are taking a major risk in allowing duplication of their program disks.

One argument for piracy has been that "software costs too much" and "there would be no piracy if backups were cheaper." Well, they can't get cheaper than the cost of a disk, so I hope this common wisdom proves to be true. Certainly Timeworks has upheld their end of the bargain, with excellent, well-produced documentation, significant upgrades and modest retail prices for their products. Although they publish software for other computers, they have not abandoned the Commodore market, and continue to produce innovative products like *Partner* for the C128 and the C64. If our machines are to survive in a world of MS-DOS clones, we need companies like Timeworks. I suggest that we let them know their trust is not misplaced. Jeff Lowenthal

HOW DOES IT RATE?

Overall Rating	**A**
Ease of Use	**A**
Documentation	**A**
Reliability	**A**
Error Handling	**A**
Value for Money	**A**

COMAL Starters Kit rated by The Book of Commodore 64 Software

Performance	**10**
Ease of Use	**9**
Reliability	**9**
Documentation	**8**

COMAL Starters Kit rated by The Best Vic/C64 Software (10 is highest possible rating)

Overall rating: * * * * *
Commodore 64 COMAL 2.0 cartridge rated by INFO magazine (5 stars is the highest possible rating)

Overall rating: * * * *
Commodore 64 COMAL disk (COMAL Starters Kit) rated by INFO magazine

COMAL is a well designed programming language now available for Commodore:

COMAL Starters Kit: $29.95
COMAL 2.0 cartridge: $138.95
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HOW DOES IT LOOK?

Electronic Phone Book

```
1) Insert your COMAL disk in drive*.
2) Type  LOAD ":*",8
3) Type  RUN     (starts COMAL)
4) Type  AUTO    (turn on auto line#'s)
5) Enter the program lines shown below
       (COMAL indents lines for you)
6) Hit «return» key twice when done
7) Type  RUN
   e=enter  f=find  l=list
   f
   What name? COMAL
   COMAL Users Group  608-222-4432
```

```
dim name$ of 20, phone$ of 12
dim disk$ of 2
black:=0; white:=1; yellow:=7
background black
repeat
    pencolor white
    print "e=enter  f=find  l=list"
    case key$ of
    when "e","E"
        enter'name
    when "f","F"
        input "What name?": name$
        find'name(name$)
    when "l","L"
        find'name("")
    otherwise
        print chr$(147) //clearscreen
    endcase
until true=false //forever
//
proc enter'name
    input "Enter name : ": name$
    input "Enter phone: ": phone$
    if name$>"" then add'to'file
endproc enter'name
//
proc add'to'file
    open file 2,"phone.dat",append
    disk$:=status$
    if disk$<>"00" then
        close // data file not found
        open file 2,"phone.dat",write
    endif
    write file 2: name$,phone$
    close
endproc add'to'file
//
proc find'name(search$)
    zone 21 // set auto tab to 21
    pencolor yellow
    open file 2,"phone.dat",read
    while not eof(2) do
        read file 2: name$,phone$
        if search$ in name$ then
            print name$,phone$
        endif
    endwhile
    close
    print "Hit «return» when ready"
    while key$<>chr$(13) do null
endproc find'name
```

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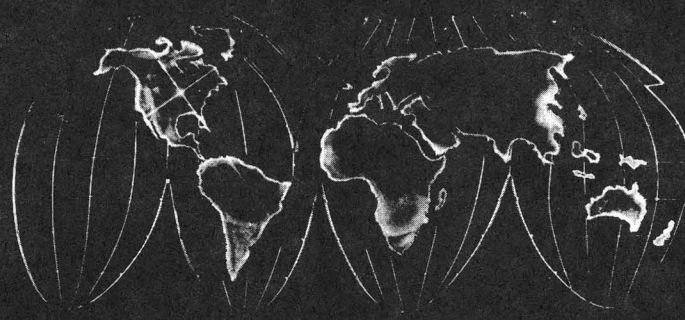

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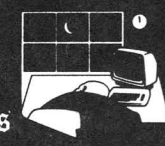

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