LUCKY REPORT

The NEW-GUI is Coming!

geos file disk options directory

□ A:LUCKY REPORT 3062k Free

IEW-GEOWORI

HD
81

B:LUCKY 4/97

71

C:System

FD
81

D:BLANK

In the town of Charlotte
Near the capitol of Lansing, Michigan
A New GUI is slowly being born
In the mind of Maurice Randall.

Meanwhile, the Commodore world
Anxiously paces the floor
Expectantly awaiting its arrival!
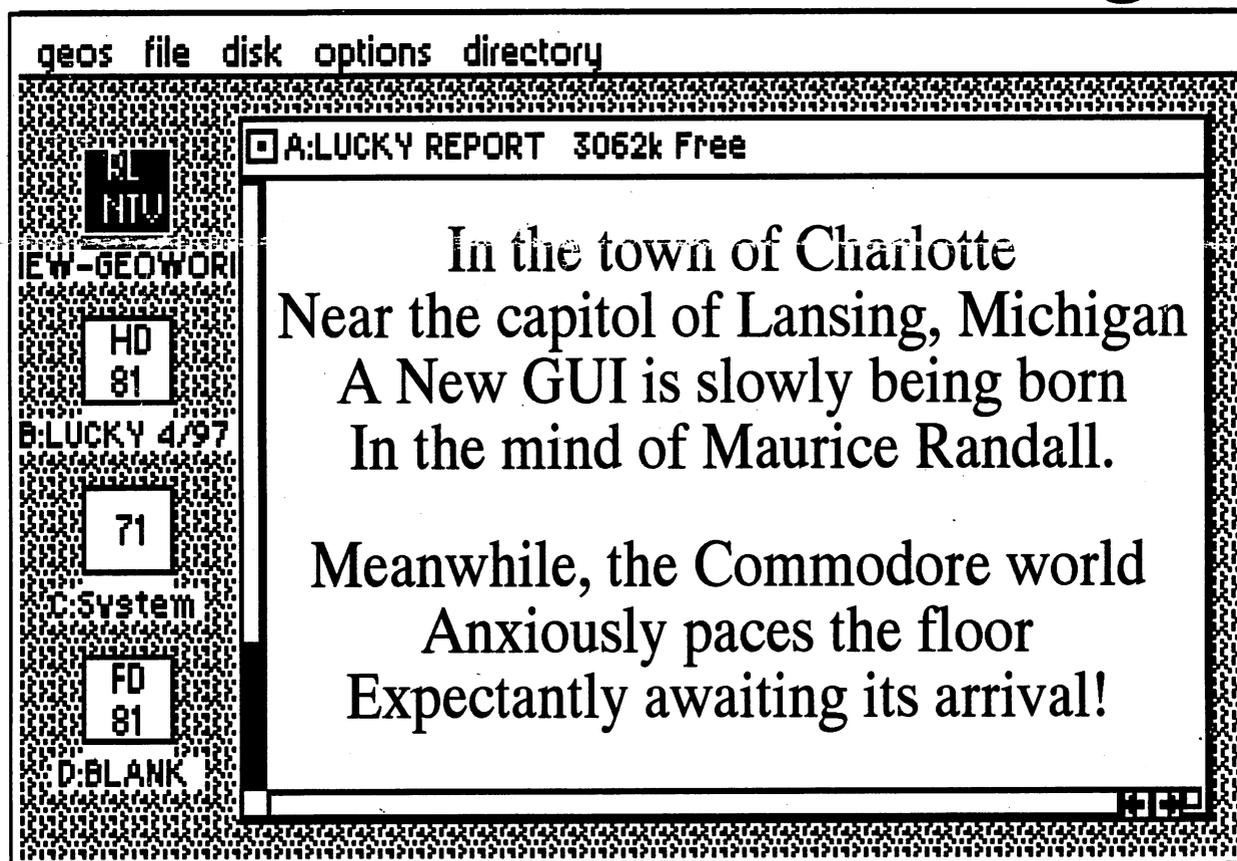
Also a Report on EXPO '97

And more on Gaelyne's Book--
The Internet for Commodore Users

TREASURER'S REPORT
by Bill Bunch
---April 1997---

Beginning Balance	**$ 530.11**
INCOME:	**$ 122.93**
Library	0.00
Raffle	22.00
Dues (5)	100.00
Interest	.93
EXPENSES:	**$ 91.06**
BBS	30.00
Newsletters copied	36.12
Newsletter postage	24.94
Ending Balance	**$ 561.98**
Variance	+31.87

An itemized statement of the above is posted at each monthly meeting.

LUCKY, INC. is a Non-Profit Organization whose pupose is to unite and educate users of Commodore computers and related equipment.

LUCKY in no way condones nor allows copying of copyrighted materials at any group function. Guilty parties will be subject to dismissal.

GENERAL MEETINGS are held the second Tuesday of every month at the Beechmont Community Center at 7:00 pm. Demonstrations are given on both hardware and software at these functions, with occasional guest speakers and a regular question and answer session. Also available to Members Only are Public Domain Program Disks from the Club's Library for a small copying fee.

BOARD MEETINGS are held at the Central Jefferson County Government Center, 7210 Outer Loop, at 7:00 on the Wednesday of the week following the General Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP is $20.00 a year, per family, which includes access to the LUCKY BBS, the LUCKY Library, a monthly newsletter, and special drawings.

The *LUCKY REPORT* is published monthly and is available at the General Meetings. DEADLINE for submissions to the newsletter is two weeks prior to the General Meeting. It is "published" on a C128 assisted by a 40MB CMD HardDrive, an FD-2000, and a 1571disk drive. Occasionally graphics are captured by a Handyscanner 64. Printing is done using PostScript on a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet IIP.

The IBM SIG for PC-compatibles meets the fourth Wednesday at the Southwest Regional Library at 7:00 pm.

The LUCKY BBS is operated 24 hours a day and is designed with Commodore users in mind. Special access is granted to LUCKY members, but all callers are welcome. The phone number is: (502) 993-5397. You can also E-mail us at luckykds@nirvana.otherside.com or gfv@iglou.com

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the officers or membership of LUCKY, Inc.

DISK LIBRARY
by Steve Grassman

. To avoid confusion, please direct all questions to the Library Assistants at the other end of the table. **PLEASE DO NOT BOTHER THE COMPUTER OPERATOR!!!** This will minimize mistakes on backups being made. *Thank you.*

To order diskettes, fill in the order forms provided by the Library Assistants. Make sure you **PRINT** clearly the information requested on the form. This will speed up the filling of orders.orders.

LUCKY Members Travel to EXPO '97

A Report on EXPO '97

by K. Dale Sidebottom

On Friday evening of last week, three members of LUCKY took off for **EXPO '97**. We stopped off in Indianapolis for the night at my parent's home. We thank them for a restful six hours of sleep before departing for Lansing, Michigan the next day. It took 4 1/2 hours to drive the distance from Indianapolis to the **EXPO '97**.

This EXPO is, to the best of my knowledge, the only regional "get together" for Commodore users of any kind. As such, we should both support and encourage it. Willis Patten, Roger Lawhorn, and I were pleased to be able to attend the EXPO and proud to represent LUCKY!

This EXPO is sponsored by the Lansing Area Commodore Club [LACC]. I was privileged to attend the 1995 EXPO and to be invited as a special guest to one of their monthly meetings that year. I didn't realize until we arrived that this year's EXPO was being held in their regular meeting room which, though large, could barely accomodate all the booths that were active there. I discovered that the LACC sponsors this event without financial help from any other club and was "operating on a shoestring."

Nonetheless, Willis and Roger and I enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. Despite its low budget, the LACC put on one hell of a show! We three all agreed that the real "STAR" of the show was what I shall call the New GUI by Maurice Randall. A GUI is a Graphic User Interface, pronounced "gooey." This project is only in the development stage and has not been officially named. When it is finished, it will provide serious Commodore-GEOS users with a new operating system, much like "Windows" for the PC. See page 5 for an in-depth report on this new GUI.

We were also impressed by Maurice's new **geoFAX 2.0**. This recent upgrade enables Commodore users to send and receive faxes using the lastest Turbo 232 cartridge and the SuperCPU from CMD. I was astounded to see him fax a comic strip and then reprint it

**Lansing, Michigan
Site of EXPO '97**

from his Commodore. It was almost identical to the original! Most fax machines have a resolution of about 200 dpi [dots per inch]. Our Commodores have a resolution of 80 dpi horizontally and 72 dpi vertically. His geoFAX program allows you to print out copies using either of these!

There were many other interesting displays, of course. Tim Lewis, the LACC President, demonstrated a Commodore music program that could play WAVE files downloaded from the Internet. In one example, you could hear on operator saying, "In case of emergency, call 911." Another loudly illustrated the boisterous burp of a satisfied beer drinker. I was impressed by the clarity of sound which these WAVE files produced from his Commodore.

John Lindemann is the Vice-President of the LACC. He is also a big fan of *LOADSTAR* magazine. In his booth, he displayed SID music files and colorful pictures of beautiful birds gleaned from *LOADSTAR*. I enjoyed them both.

Eric Knudsen was another knockout performer. He has fixed his hard drive so that it uses a ZIP drive instead. A ZIP drive is a hard drive that allows you to slip 100 megabyte [MB] disks in and out at will. It costs about $200 and the 100MB disks (called flopticals) are about $15 apiece. He piggy-backed this to a CMD HardDrive so that the ZIP drive would be accessed by the computer first. He was easily able to boot up GEOS from his ZIP drive.

Roger Lawhorn was really impressed by his CD-ROM player. When Roger owned a 486 PC, he enjoyed using his CD-ROM to play CDs! Well, guess what? Here was Eric doing the same thing with a program he had written for his Commodore. Roger is hoping to be able to *beta test* this one at home and soon!

Raymond Day also sparked interest with a demonstration of the C65---the ill-fated, almost-wonderful, and never-released advance upon the

Commodore 64. He showed that it shared a surprising amount of compatibility with the C64. He also demoed two 1541's hooked up *in parallel mode* to the user port (modem port) of his Commodore computer. This set up allowed him to copy a 1541 disk from drive to drive in only 21 seconds.

Craig Prendota there representing Delphi. This telecom service is similar to GEnie or America Online. I was surprised to discover that for those of us who already have an internet service provider, the annual fee to join Delphi is only $37! He was upset that the brochures describing this service failed to arrive in time for the EXPO, but I am sure he will send you one if you want more information. You can call (312) 767-3749 or write to Craig Prendota, 5223 S. Springfield, Chicago, IL 60632

Willis, Roger, and I all agreed on two things. We loved this year's show and want to return next year. However, I feel that some changes could strengthen the EXPO next year.

I believe that the LACC should not have to sponsor this thing alone. I recommend that they petition the clubs in the surrounding area for...say $25 each in financial assistance for next year. LUCKY, SWRAP in Chicago, and CCCC in Cincinnati would be good prospects. Then, with money in hand, the LACC could reserve a place large enough to accomodate EXPO '98 far in advance.

The time and place of next year's EXPO need to be published before the end of *this* year. I cannot emphasis too strongly that some of us must make vacation arrangements early in the year. The Post Office where I work requires annual leave to be scheduled in January.

My job has rotating days off which means that there is a one in six chance of me getting off on a Saturday. Fortunately, this year's EXPO fell on one of them. Otherwise, I would never have been able to get off work to attend this year's EXPO on May the third, which in the Louisville area is better known as **DERBY DAY!**

I believe the LACC has had difficulty in nailing down a time and place six months in advance. To improve the prospects for a successful EXPO in 1998, I hope they can arrange for more room, more advanced notice, and more clubs sponsoring the event. I hope that we at LUCKY will be able to do our part. Meanwhile, Willis and Roger join me in thanking the LACC both for a job well done and a wonderful time shared at EXPO '97!

HINTS & TIPS

This article is from Noel Nyman. He has such a wonderfully large collection of tips that, if it is printed decently, would overwhelm one newsletter. This month will be tips for using the screen and the disk.

-SCREEN DISPLAY TIPS-

TIP #1 -- Jim Butterfieldcalls the <RETURN> key the "DO IT" key. When you press <RETURN> on a line, you tell the computer to "do" whatever commands are on that line. But holding <SHIFT> while pressing <RETURN> is a "Don't Do It" key. If you make a mistake on a line, acccidentally get into quote mode, or just want to have a line on the screen without a "? SYNTAX ERROR", then use <SHIFT/RETURN>.

TIP #2 - If you want to create a screen of text as a display or to save with a screen dump pressing <SHIFT/RETURN> on each line is a hassle. Instead, try: POKE 768,123:POKE 769,164. All your cursor commands will still work. To go back to normal, use POKE768,139:POKE 769,227.

TIP #3 - By the way, you can press <RETURN> anywhere on a logical line and the entire line will be executed ... no need to move over to the end.

TIP #4 - You can enter more than one command, on a line at a time. Just use ":" to separate the commands.

FOR X=1 TO 5:PRINT TAB(X) "HELLO":NEXT will print HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO HELLO.

TIP #5 - When LISTing, or just about anything else, holding the CTRL key down will slow the computer to about half speed.

TIP #6 - To copy forty columns from one part of the screen to the present cursor location, use: POKE 780,HI:POKE 172,LOW:SYS 59848 (C 64 only) where LOC is the screen location (top left is 0, bottom right is 1000) and HI=INT(LOC/256) and LOW=LOC-HI*256.

-DISK DRIVE TIPS -

TIP #7 - You can use pattern matching to get up to five different combinations in a single directory listing: LOAD "$0:A*.0:B*.0C*" gives all files starting with "A", "B", or "C".

TIP #8 - You can list occurrences of a file type in a directory, or combine the request with a wildcard search: LOAD "$0:Z*=S" will show all Sequential files beginning with Z.

TIP #9 - To save multiple versions of a file, such as when writing a large BASIC program, SAVE "0:FILENAME" TI$,8. Each file name will have TI$, six numbers representing the elapsed time since the computer was turned on appended to it. Be sure the filename is ten characters or less.

4

Beta-Testing Begins on the New GUI!

by K. Dale Sidebottom

Everywhere I turn, Commodore fans are wondering when this new GUI will be available! It is still unfinished, and no release date has been set. Please do not call CMD! When it is ready, you'll read about it right here!

GEOS 2.0 was released around 1988. That is nine years ago. Since then, huge advances have been made in Commodore compatible hardware. CMD HardDrives, RAMLinks, and now a SuperCPU...imagine all the great things we have now that most of us never even dreamed of in 1988.

Clearly, what is needed is a modern operating system for our Commodores that allows us to use at least four drives at once. We need to be able to use GEOS programs from any drive and from any kind of partition, even those native-mode partittions which may be up to 16MB in size!. What good does it do to have modern hardware if you do not also have modern software to run it! Maurice Randall has the answer.

He is writing a program that will upgrade GEOS 2.0. It will be compatible to all GEOS software, however is actually an entirely new operating system. It has no name as yet, but I call it the NEW-GUI (pronounced "nu-gooey"). Remember a GUI is a graphic user interface like GEOS or Windows.

GEOS 2.0 had a CONFIGURE file that contained 5 disk drivers. In order to allow us to use all the new stuff, the NEW-GUI contains sixteen! All 16 are stored in the REU [Ram Expansion Unit] or RAMLink, which is required, so that they can be immediately available. You never have to worry if you have the right driver. The NEW-GUI can determine the one you need and activate it on demand!

Serious GEOS users know that the modern Commodore needs to access at least four drives...the hard drive, the REU or RAMLink, a 3 1/2" drive (such as a 1581 or FD-2000) and a 5 1/4" drive (such as a 1571 or 1541). Several programs have tried to offer four drive compatibilty but each has been limited. The NEW-GUI will allow you to lauch your GEOS programs from any drive. You can easily copy programs from drive to drive regardless of how they are formatted. You can even

Notice the simplicity of the opening screen.
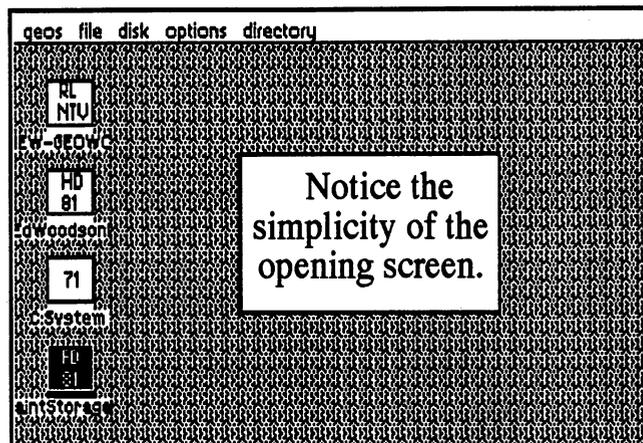
create and use "native-mode partitions" without fear of corruption or losing data.

Native-mode partitions are a special feature created by CMD to allow Commodore users to handle the larger files. Whereas we were once limited to partitions on disk that were 160KB, then 320KB, and then 800KB in size, native-mode partitions allow use to use partitions up to 16MB in size. Pretend that your Commodore has the power to lift 800 pounds. With the native-mode partition adding strength to the C64, it can now lift 8 tons! This is the ratio of the "power of storage" available in the NEW-GUI as compared to GEOS 2.0!

I received a beta-test copy of this program from Maurice while attending the EXPO '97. This article is based on observations made at the EXPO and my use of it during the last week.

When you open the NEW-GUI, it has a command bar at the top and an open screen beneath it. It is blank except that all your disk drives numbered 8 thru 11 are positioned as icons along the left margin automatically. If you have any drive such as RAMLink (usually configured as drive #16) that is not listed, you can double-click on the CONFIGURE file and a screen comes up that allows you to add it to the others.

I mentioned that an REU or RAMLink is required. Since not everyone has $200 or more to invest in a RAMLink, CMD will soon reintroduce the REU. Two models are being made available. A 512KB model will sell for around $80. The 2MB model will cost about $110. These products will enable GEOS users to enjoy the

benefits of increased great speed and versatility which will only be enhanced by this NEW-GUI!.

As I mentioned, except for the command bar and drive icons, the screen is blank. But you can change that by double-clicking on any drive. Suddenly a rectangular-shaped object appears that looks sort of like a desktop, but even more like a a window! Yes, it looks like a "window-screen!" We have often referred to GEOS 2.0 as "Windows" for the Commodore. This NEW-GUI makes it appear even more so.

Double-click on drive A, then B, then C, and then D. They ALL appear in overlapping window-screens. Just click at the top of the window and hold the button down. The window-screen becomes a dotted rectangular outline. You can now move it *anywhere* on the screen except that it may not block the command bar. Release the button and that window-screen is planted at a new postion. You can even move the drive icons around in the same fashion

While you can "only" use four drives at a time, the NEW-GUI allows you to open as many as 16 window-screens! For instance, my 40MB CMD HardDrive is formatted into 50 partitions. With the NEW-GUI, I could have the first 16 partitions all open at the same time.

I can easily transfer files by clicking on a file, then pause, then click again. An icon appears which I can drag over to any visible window and drop it. The file will be copied from that drive or partition to the other immediately. Notice, it doesn't matter whether you are using 1541, 1571, 1581, or even native-mode partitions. It doesn't matter if your drive or partitions are alike or different. Just pick up a file icon from one window-screen and drop it on another. NEW-GUI does the rest!

It is too early to know what the final product will look like, but the beta-test version shows several things the NEW-GUI does not have! It shows no icon for the wastebasket or the printer. These are not necessary, by any means, but we got used to them in GEOS 2.0. I am told that they will be made optionally available in the release version.

You have no desktop pad and no pages to turn. The window-screens scroll instead. Currently there is no way to change the position of the files on a disk. Hopefully, the final version will allow us to trade file positions so that our most often used files can be shifted to the front.

Just as you have no desktop pad, you also have no border. Instead you have a "system directory" which, like the old border, can be universally available throughout the partition. For instance, when I wrote my last newsletter, I used around thirty files to prepare the newsletter. Twenty of these were actually support files! Only about ten files actually contained data that got printed. This means that everytime I produce a copy of the LUCKY REPORT, I have about ten data files that are unique to each issue and 20 "support" files that are commonly used for every issue.

Let's pretend that I have 8 megabytes in my RAMLink (I do), and I format half of it into a 4MB partition for the NEW-GUI. I can create a different subdirectory for each project I am working on, but I only need ONE COPY of GeoWrite or GeoPaint or the DESKTOP. I can put these "support" programs into this "system directory" and it will be accessible EVERYWHERE within the 4MB partition. Obviously, this means that now GEOS users can save a lot of space by not having to duplicate the same files, such as the DESKTOP, on every partition ro disk.
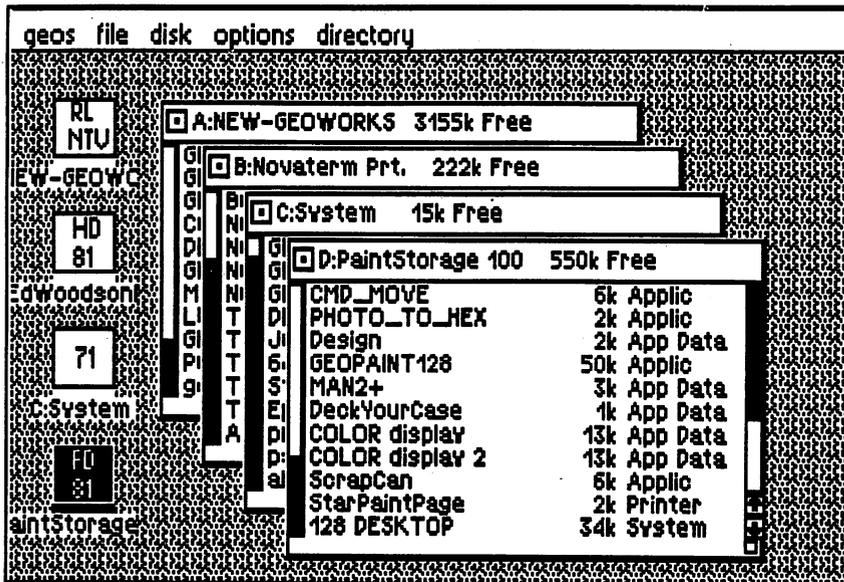
Your files are listed on the window-screens. (The beta-test version shows text only, but the release version is expected to include an icon mode.) These windows have a CLOSE icon in the upper left-hand corner. Along the left margin is a gauge showing you how much room is left on the disk. Along the right margin has a bar that slides up or down to view programs which are not currently visible. Below this slide bar are two arrows. Clicking on the up or down arrow will move the list of files in that direction.

In the lower left-hand corner is an empty square. Click inside of that and hold the button. The window becomes a dotted outline of that window-screen. You can now make the window as long and as wide as space permits. Releasing the button will "nail" it in place.

As for speed, my beta-test version of NEW-GUI will boot from the RAMLink in 5 seconds. Because it does not redraw the entire screen each time you erase or a make a change, NEW-GUI works swiftly even without a SuperCPU. Let me remind you, the NEW-GUI requires an REU or RAMLink; it does not require a SuperCPU.

Take time to look at the window-screens on the next page. Notice that four drive icons are along the left margin. Drive A is a RAMLink with a native-mode partition. Drive B is a HardDrive with a 1581-styled partition. Drive C is a 1571, and drive D is an FD-2000 formatted for a 1581 disk. I would imagine that when the final version comes our, the drive icons will be a little fancier, but isn't it great to see the variety made possible by Maurice's program!
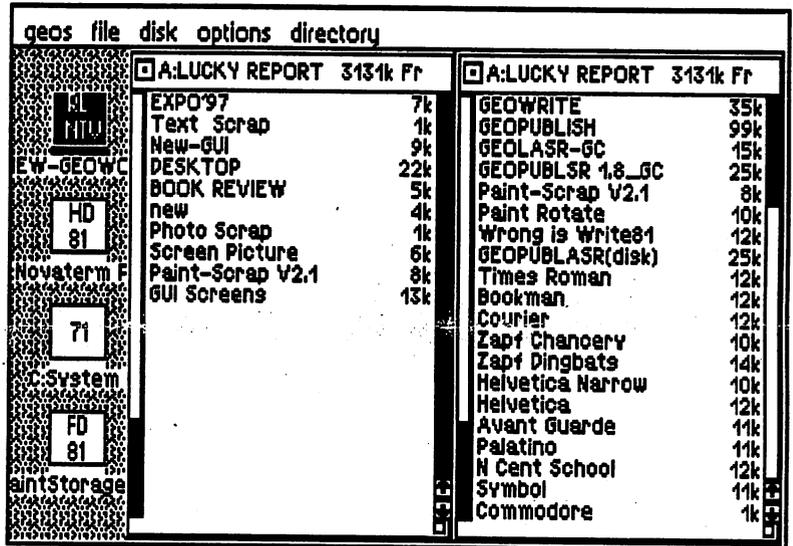
There are many things that have yet to be completed in this program. For instance, I missed not being able to rename files. A lot of the options showing on the command bar menus are not available yet. However, all this will be taken care of in time, I am sure.

A:NEW-GEOWORKS 3155k Free
B:Novaterm Prt. 222k Free
C:System 15k Free
D:PaintStorage 100 550k Free

CMD_MOVE	6k	Applic
PHOTO_TO_HEX	2k	Applic
Design	2k	App Data
GEOPAINT128	50k	Applic
MAN2+	3k	App Data
DeckYourCase	1k	App Data
COLOR display	13k	App Data
COLOR display 2	13k	App Data
ScrapCan	6k	Applic
StarPaintPage	2k	Printer
128 DESKTOP	34k	System

The Window-Screen to the left shows all four drives open. The one below demonstates how you can open a subdirectory (left) containing your data files and put the applications in the "system directory" (right) beside it.

The two window-screens are labeled identically here. On your monitor, they will be distinguished by different colors.

For now, it is great to know that this new GUI is on its way. You may want to know that this entire newsletter was written and published using Maurice's new program. It IS a challenge to do such a complex task while using a brand new operating system. However, this is the one operating system which many GEOS users would *die* for when it's finished! I hope that will be soon.

A:LUCKY REPORT 3131k Fr

EXPO'97	7k
Text Scrap	1k
New-GUI	9k
DESKTOP	22k
BOOK REVIEW	5k
new	4k
Photo Scrap	1k
Screen Picture	6k
Paint-Scrap V2.1	8k
GUI Screens	13k

A:LUCKY REPORT 3131k Fr

GEOWRITE	35k
GEOPUBLISH	99k
GEOLASR-GC	15k
GEOPUBLSR 1.8_GC	25k
Paint-Scrap V2.1	8k
Paint Rotate	10k
Wrong is Write81	12k
GEOPUBLASR(disk)	25k
Times Roman	12k
Bookman	12k
Courier	12k
Zapf Chancery	10k
Zapf Dingbats	14k
Helvetica Narrow	10k
Helvetica	12k
Avant Guarde	11k
Palatino	11k
N Cent School	12k
Symbol	11k
Commodore	1k

TIP #10 - Although LOAD "*",8 is billed as loading the first file on the disk, it actually loads the last file accessed, unless the new disk is initialized. To get the first file every time, use LOAD ":*",8

TIP #11 - But ... you can use the "*" characteristic to recover a file you just scratched in error, provided you don't do another file access in between. Just LOAD"*",8 and the file will be back in the computer's memory, ready to save again, even though it has been "erased" from the disk directory.

TIP #12 - Jim Butterfield again. If you get a "file not found" error when a boot program tries to LOAD another program, and you can't list the boot to find what file is missing, just type SYS 62913 (64 only) and the file name looked for will be printed on the screen.

TIP #13 - To keep file names as short as possible, use the <SHIFT-SPACE> key combination. For example SAVE "Z<SHIFT-SPACE>AP",8 will show as 25 "Z" AP PRG on a directory listing, and LOAD"Z",8 willload it.

TIP #14 - You can use the <SHIFTED-SPACE> to protect a file a bit by using it as the first character. CHR$(0) does a better job: SAVE CHR$(0)+"FILENAME",8. Try other control, color, and cursor characters. Clever types can usually get around this if they know how many characters are involved by using LOAD "?FILENAME",8 or using a disk/block editor.

TIP #15 - To make for fewer keystrokes when loading files, try: SAVE "FILENAME"<SHIFT-SPACE> <C=/D> <C=/U> <SHIFT-@>,8.

("C=/D" means hold the Commodore logo key and press "D"). The result will be 25 "FILENAME", 8: PRG and typing LOAD (or 1 <SHIFT>-0) in front of the file name and pressing <RETURN> will load the file. To get a ",1) after the ",8" add <C=/D> <C=/E> and leave off the <SHIFT-@>.A ":" isn't necessary if the ", 1" is used. Each keypress counts as one character toward the sixteen character file name maximum. So, if you use ",8,1:", you can only have a ten character filename. If you push on a joystick or fire button while typing, you can get weird results.

The Internet For Commodore Users

by Gaelyne R. Gasson

The Internet is a big place and it's not always easy to find all the in's and out's. There's a lot of Commodore specific information available on the Internet, but you have to know how to get to it, and that can be a Catch-22.

How do I get on the Internet? What term programs can I use? What the heck is FTP? Can I browse the World Wide Web with my C64?

Gaelyne Gasson (formerly Gaelyne Moranec), former editor of *CEE-64 Alive!*, has been writing about Commodore computers and modeming for several years, with columns and features in *Commodore World*, and *BBS Magazine*. She has also written about Commodore computing for other publications such as: *C=Hacking*, *Commodore Network*, and *Loadstar*. After answering countless letters helping others learn the ropes of telecommunications, she's written a book specifically for Commodore users who want to take advantage of the Internet.

The Internet For Commodore C64/128 Users is to be packaged with a special version of Novaterm v9.6 Lite by Nick Rossi. The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users covers the following subjects:

* Hardware Basics
* Terminal and Modem Basics
* Finding an Internet Provider Service
* Getting Online and Signing Up
* UNIX Shell Account Basics
* Welcome To The Internet

* Email
* Text Editors
* Newsgroups
* Telnet, Rlogin and Other Utilities
* FTP and Archie
* World Wide Web
* Gopher
* Internet Relay Chat (IRC)
* Advanced Email Topics:
    ❏ Offline Mail Reading
    ❏ Sending and Receiving Files
    ❏ Mail Lists
    ❏ Using Email to access FTP, WWW and Gopher
* Changing Your Online Environment
* Dealing With Files
* A comprehensive Glossary

* Commodore Term Program Key Equivalents
* Products Source List
* Internet Resource List

The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users has a PVC coated cover for durability and a plastic comb binding. The book is being published by VideoCam Services and should be ready for worldwide distribution by about the 11th of April.

VideoCam Services is a registered Australian business (0323082E) owned by Rod and Gaelyne Gasson.

Ordering information:
(All prices given below are subject to change)
The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users
ISBN: 0-646-31615-X
$36.95 Australian plus shipping

If ordering from Australia, the cost is $36.95 plus $5 shipping to anywherein Australia.

If ordering from USA and paying by cheque, please make the cheque payable to "VideoCam Services" in the amount of $40.95 US. ($29.95 plus $11.00 shipping).

(We're sorry, but money orders of any kind can not be accepted.)

Credit Card Orders:
VideoCam Services can accept most major credit cards including: MasterCard, Visa, Bankcard and American Express.

If ordering from outside Australia (USA, Canada, Germany etc.) and paying by credit card, your card will be billed in *Australian dollars* $36.95 plus $15.00 shipping. This is approximately $40.52 US, but varies depending on the rate of exchange. Orders can be accepted through postal mail, Email, or from the World WideWeb at
http://hal9000.net.au/~moranec/bookord.html.

Phone orders will also be accepted.

The prices above are for single copy orders and subject to change. Please contact VideoCam Services for bulk pricing.

VideoCam Services
90 Hilliers Rd.
Reynella, SA 5161
Australia

Call +61 8 8322-2716 or Email
gaelyne@hal9000.net.au

8

THE BOOK REVIEW of
Gaelyne Gasson's
The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users

Gaelyne Gasson has written a new book which will be a must purchase for many Commodore fans. Yes, it is a little "pricey," costing around $41.00 American, but this is a small price for what you receive. If you lived in Australia, it would only cost you $30.00 which is comparable to any good computer book sold at Waldenbooks. But Gaelyne recently moved from this country to Australia to be with Rod Gasson, author of QWRRK 128. To our chagrin, their romance has added $11.00 to the shipping charges on her book.

Perhaps it is fitting, after the Aussies have paid a premium for shipping Commodore products for so many years, that they now have a product that WE want very badly. The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users is a brave and broad attempt to put the entire spectrum of our Internet interests into one book, and she does so quite successfully.

I have only had the book for two weeks and read only half of it. However, I have browsed through it entirely and have savored enough to know that this book has been thoroughly researched and documented. So much of what was a mystery now makes sense to me and I am only scratching the surface.

Currently, Commodore users must "surf the net" using a "shell account" or a text-based interface. This is the original and the oldest method of telecommunicating on the Internet. However, it is not necessarily the easiest! I believe the most discouraging aspect of Commodoring on the Internet is that there are so many areas of interest and each may have its own protocol. They often seem to overlap, yet each is different.

Gaelyne starts with the basics and builds step by step until you feel that you can go anywhere and do just about anything on the Internet. She starts out by reviewing the modems, modem speeds, term programs, and cartridges that are available to us. She covers disk drives, virtual drives, and accelerators. She reviews the current software from the Novaterm 9.6 available in our library to the WAVE, an unfinished demo by Maurice Randall which allows Commodore users to browse the net in graphic mode (PPP) without being able yet to up- or download

anything! She explains in detail what these programs can and cannot do and even prepares us for important upgrades expected in the near future.

The disadvantage of any book is that it freezes knowledge in time. Gaelyne has done her best to overcome this by informing us of the most recent advances in Commodore telecommunications while trying to prepare us for the likely future.

We are fortunate in our area in that no one should have trouble finding an Internet Service Provider [ISP]. The largest locally is IGLOU which has a great menu driven shell interface.

I, unfortunately, am stuck in the boondocks of Floyds Knobs where the only service locally available provides a primative UNIX shell account. When I connect to the net, all I get is a prompt that looks like this..nirvana "$_

The underline-cursor awaits for me to make a choice, but I have do idea what choices are available! Until now! Gaelyne's book discusses all the options.

For instance, in her review of Email systems, she covered a programs called PINE which is probably the most common Email program found in shell accounts, including mine.

She covers the common commands for using PINE, most of which I had never heard of before! She also informed me that some versions of PINE will allow you to gather and read newsgroups like **comp.sys.cbm**. I followed her instruction to discover that my version of PINE allowed newsgroups, but my UNIX shell account did not. So I called tech support at my ISP and they told me that they will be installing that support for me before the end of the week.

The MORAL is---if you don't know what is available, you could be missing out on a lot! Thus Gaelyne's book is a valuable tool, explaining what is out there and how to get it!

Now getting back to the $41 pricetag. If you surf the net from a PC, you can find a zillion books to advize you, but if you own Commodore, there is only ONE. In that sense, this book is priceless! The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users is 323 pages of tightly packed, vital information. I recommend it to you highly.

K. Dale Sidebottom

The Commodore: Having Too Much Fun to Die!

by Philip S. Moore

The scenario is almost always the same. Computer people are gathered around comparing the processor power of their new Pentiums or Power PCs, when I comment, "My computer is a one megahertz Commodore 64." Conversation falters--then at least two or three in the group get a nostalgic, far-away look and say, "My first computer was a Commodore."

For many people, their first computer was a "Commie." It was a real computer with lots of available software, and it was cheap.

Most importantly, it encouraged users to experiment with writing programs, building databases, and reaching out across the phone lines to bulletin boards. This early success in computing encouraged them to move on to more serious machines with big price tags, dazzling processor speeds, and an ever-expanding inventory of peripherals. Some Commodore users, however, refused to grow up, and others like me went into a second computing childhood. As a result, the Commodore 64 and 128 live on in thousands of homes across the US and the world.

Silicon Visions and Freedom

"The whole purpose for computing is the expansion of human potential." If you can agree with this statement, then you will understand what I'm going to say next: Processor power has nothing--absolutely nothing--to do with your satisfaction.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that a 200MHz Pentium ProMMX is anything other than a dream machine, or that bigger computers aren't worthwhile. Along with my Commies, I have two 486 PCs (a desktop and a laptop) and three Macintosh systems, each one more powerful than the last.

What I'm saying is that computers are intended to fulfill a need. If they can do that, then you are satisfied. If they cannot, you will not be satisfied--no matter how big the hard drive or how fast the processor.

With that in mind, allow me to reintroduce the Commodore and a few of the loyal users who keep these machines operating today.

Lost Kingdom

Commodore Business Machines, Inc. operated from the mid-1970s until the early-1990s. The company started with a pocket calculator and ended with the dazzling Amiga.

In the late 1970s, in response to the birth of the personal computer, Commodore introduced the Pet. It was an 8K home computer that changed the industry with the novel concept that people wanted a computer to come fully assembled with all the necessary parts already attached.

Next came the VIC 20, a 16K home computer that could run off of a home television or a monitor, with programs stored on cassette tapes or disks. It came in a single-unit plastic case and could easily tuck under your arm.

Then a revolution started in 1982 with the introduction of the Commodore 64. It was dirt cheap--selling for as little as $300--widely available in department stores and capable of doing nearly anything you might want a computer to do. More C64s were sold than IBM PCs and Apple IIs combined.

A huge library of software was written for the Commodore 64--games, business applications and educational programs --and they were sold everywhere, from discount stores to mail order houses. So much software was produced, as a matter of fact, that it is still easy to find C64 programs for just about any purpose.

The C64 was joined in 1985 by a more powerful stable mate, the Commodore 128, and a host of niche market products, such as thePlus 4 (with four programs in ROM) and Commodore 16 (designed primarily to play computer games). Eventually, the Commodore 64 was redesigned and revamped into the 64C and the Commodore 128 became the desktop-designed C128D.

With hundreds of thousands of C64s and C128s in use, it was inevitable that this computer would not quickly fade away. The continuing vitality of the Commodore, 15 years after its introduction, is the result of something else: its continued utility for thousands of owners.

What Doesn't Kill You

"I am still a Commodore user because it will do anything that I need it to do and it just keeps getting better." Frank McKee, a 64-year-old retired numerical control programmer engineer for Lockheed Missiles & Space Co., is one of as many as 40,000 Commodore computer users in the US.

A self-described power user, McKee's collection of C64s and C128s are equipped with up to 16 megabytes of RAM, high resolution monitors, high density 3.5 inch floppy drives, 28,800 bps modems, 40 megabyte hard drives and accelerated 20MHz processors--all purchased in the last few years from a variety of companies that still support the Commodore.

Yet, despite his enthusiasm today, McKee's first Commodore collected dust for a decade. "I bought my first computer in 1985 and it was a Commodore 64," he said. "I didn't use it very much until I retired and I found a copy of GEOS 2.0 at my local Target store for $20."

GEOS, an acronym for Graphic Environment Operating System, was a turning point for McKee and a lot of Commodore users. It gave the C64 and C128 an easy graphical interface and a suite of applications which permitted advanced computer use, such as WYSIWYG word processing and graphics, as well as point-and-click spreadsheets.

LUCKY, Inc.
c/o Phyllis Bunch
2518 Browns Lane
Louisville KY 40220

For J.E. Sears of Harlington, Texas, the graphic interface was tailor-made for a private elementary school's computer needs. "I showed a C64 to a devout IBM fan and he was shocked that it would boot a point-and-click interface in seven seconds."

Sears has been helping the school maintain nine Commodore 64s and one Commodore 128. All of the computers are equipped with GEOS, along with 5.25 and 3.5 inch floppy drives, expanded RAM and 20MB hard drives. They are all linked to the Internet using 14,400 bps modems.

"Math drills and typing programs are what they are using most right now," Sears commented. "The students stay after school to play educational games, and they have GeoPublish (a desktop publishing program) with hopes of making a school paper. The teachers are thrilled with what these machines can do--and that we did it all for around $2,000, the price of a single IBM clone system."

While she uses a Macintosh system at work, Sears says that she prefers to "surf the Net and generally have a blast" with her personal C64. "I've written educational programs for the elementary level and I use the C64 for making video titles. I can fax and receive faxes which is great for scanning artwork."

The youngest user I know about is a 14-year-old in Raleigh Hills who acquired his C64 from a junk pile and planned to use it for a pop art lamp until he discovered what it could do. Now, according to his father, he ignores the family's 486 PC in favor of the Commie.

Getting Started

For those who are now trying to remember where, exactly, in their garage they left their Commodore and how they can get it working again, the best advice is ask for help. Try the Internet, online services, or the local user groups.

Online, you can reach Commodore special interest groups at Delphi Internet or Genie, or you can contact a variety of sites on the World Wide Web, including Jim Brain's site <http://www.msen.com/~brain/cbmhome.html> and Creative Micro Designs <http://www.cmdweb.com/>, the leading manufacturer of Commodore-compatible peripherals and software.

Last Thoughts

As I said before, computing is about expanding human potential. So is the Commodore obsolete? Only if you believe it is. Otherwise, the C64 and C128 can continue to fulfil the needs of the computer user because human potential doesn't come with a megahertz rating. It rests in the intelligence and imagination of the individual--which the old Commodore is ready to help you explore.