

CURSOR

NEWSLETTER of the COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.

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CLUB ROOMS: Bardon Prof. Devel. Cnt. 390 Simpsons Rd. / Carwoola St. Bardon

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MEETINGS

Next **Main Meeting** on Tuesday, 7th October 1986, in our Club Rooms in the Bardon Prof. Development Centre, 390 Simpsons Road Bardon. Entrance through Car Park in Carwoola Street. Doors open at 7pm (library). Meeting starts at 8pm sharp.

C-128 Software Demonstrations by Ken Charters and Jim Vick

Next **Workshop** Sunday 19th October 1986, from 1pm till 5pm in the Guidance Officers Training Centre, Bayswater Street, Milton. Bring your programming- or hardware problems, as well as your own computer equipment! Opportunity to copy our Public Domain Disks.

Coordinator: Colin Shipley.

PLEASE NOTE: Workshop Meetings are for MEMBERS ONLY!

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Cannon Hill meets on the 4th Saturday of the month (7.30pm) in the Cannon Hill State School.

Contact: Ron Jarvis (acting coordinator) - Ph.399 6981 a.h.

Capalaba meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba State High School.

Contact: Ray Clark - Ph.245 5710 (a.h.)

Kenmore meets on the 1st Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Kenmore State School Library.

NO PARKING in the school grounds!

Contacts: Peter Reeve - Ph.378 2665 a.h. / Keith Hadland - Ph.378 6698 a.h.

Pine Rivers meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine High School (rear entrance).

Contact: Bruce Wylie - Ph.359 9779 a.h.

Redcliffe Peninsula meets on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month (7pm) in the Clontarf High School.

Contact: Paul Janek - Ph.283 1663 a.h.

Sherwood meets on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State School.

Contacts: Leigh Winsor - Ph.379 2405 a.h. / Philip Parkin - Ph.378 5383 a.h.

The Gap meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (7.30pm) in The Gap State School.

Contact: Julianne Fallen - Ph.300 2982 a.h.

Wavell Heights meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month (7.30pm) in the Wavell Heights High School (library), Brae St.

Contact: Robert Adamson - Ph.266 8353 a.h.

Maryborough/Hervey Bay meets on the 4th Monday of the month (7-10pm) in the Sunbury School in Alice St.

Contact: Terry Baade (16 Mouquet Lane, M'borough, 4650) at 21 2271 (work) or 21 5059 a.h.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

AMIGA Sub-Group meets in the Guidance Officers Training Centre Bayswater Rd. Milton on Sunday 28th September (1pm - 5pm)

Deluxe Paint demo by P. Wharton

Contacts: Steve McNamee - Ph.262 1127 (a.h.) / Darryl Godfrey Ph.205 1983 (a.h.)

Primary Education Sub-Group meets 3rd Tuesday of the month (7.30pm) in the Aspley State School.

Contact: Bill Weeks - Phone 208 8620 (work) or 341 2823 (a.h.)

Programming Sub-Group meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month, (during main meeting - in our club rooms).

Contacts: Jim Vick - Ph. 345 1878 (a.h.) / Tom Kelly - Ph. 277 9900 (a.h.)

CP/M Sub-Group meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month, (during main meeting - in our club rooms).

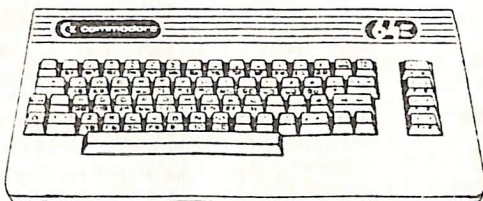
Contact: Regan Russell - Ph. 848 1353 (a.h.)


Contact Terry Steer for details on formation of new Sub-Groups.

commodore COMPUTER

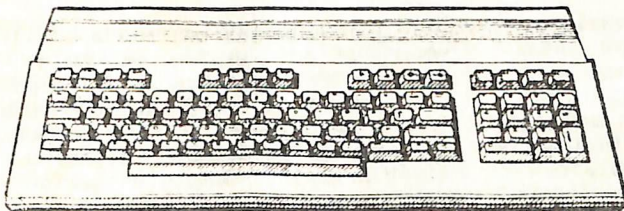
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EDITOR'S NOTES

Some Random Thoughts

"What's a computer for?" Have you ever asked yourself this question? Over the years I have seen a lot of members come and go in our group. Fortunately more come than go, otherwise we wouldn't be in existence as a group! I often wonder why they lose interest. Some of the causes that come to mind include:

Boredom - this would apply mainly to the kids that have their fill of computer games. Time to take up another hobby.

Financial - they have spent a mint of money on their computer and suddenly it's obsolete (read worthless) and they are not prepared or unable to change to the latest model.

Disappointment - they bought it for a specific purpose and it does not live up to the advertising blurb. Time to get out or buy a better (read more expensive) machine.

Another form of disappointment is also quite prevalent. I'm referring to that group who are under the impression that computers are so 'user-friendly' that they don't have to learn anything - the computer does it all for you. Probably another effect of misleading advertising.

Obviously there are many other reasons why computer owners lose interest. Note that I have not mentioned programmers. As a rule these are the most stable type of member, but even here a percentage is lost, either because they are unable to reach professional standards, or because they upgrade to a different brand of computer. Have you got any views on this subject? Maybe you even plan to quit computing for one of the above- or other reasons. Why not drop me a line with your views?

I am a bit overwhelmed when I see the ever increasing range of literature and software in our libraries. Last year we implemented

plans to increase the range of material in the libraries and since then it has snowballed. I was all in favour of this extension of these facilities, but feel that now is the time to start culling the material. There is so much duplication in software and books etc that it must become a bit of a nightmare to many members. Where do they start to choose? Do you want a copy utility? There are probably a dozen disks with copy programs. I'd hate to be a newcomer and make a choice out of that lot. Documentation is another problem. Again, what are the views of the members? Please let me know.

Some years ago our President wrote a program called Nice Lister for the C-64. This very neat utility translates program listings. Instead of meaningless graphic symbols to denote cursor controls, colours, function keys, etc., we have plain English text to describe these functions, thus making program listings much easier to read. When are you going to write a C-128 version of this handy utility Greg?

Our Sysop, Ray King has gone very quiet lately. How about some wise words from the world of modems and telecommunications Ray? I'm sure your fans are dying to hear from you.

This newsletter carries a small amount of advertising. We would like to see some more as it helps to defray the cost of printing etc. In the meantime we ask our members to give our existing advertisers first priority. Simply a case of helping those who help us.

This is my first attempt at setting up some pages in columns. As Superscript does not really support column printing as a feature it is a rather laborious process. However, I feel that with the small typeface used it improves readability. Any comments please?

Ralph De Vries

RANDOM BITS

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Another very well attended meeting. After wise words by the President, Secretary and Newsletter editor there was a brisk session of questions and comments from the floor. Bruce Wylie took the newcomers under his wing to introduce them to the ins and outs of our group. It was the intention that three of our members (Ken Charters, Jim Vick and Lex Hinckley) were to demonstrate a range of C-128 productivity software, but time was short and only some programs were demonstrated. Hopefully there can be a follow-up session.

AMIGA SUB-GROUP

Due to illness Peter Wharton was unable to give his lecture on the Deluxe Paint Program during the August meeting. This lecture will now be given during the September meeting (see page 2 for details). The group's public domain software library is growing at a steady pace and quite a few members made use of the opportunity to copy this material. Commodore has made the literature of the Amiga Software Development Kit available to the group - a gesture very much appreciated by us. We would now like to see some contributions of our Amiga members for this newsletter. How about some experiences of 8-bit Commodore users who have changed over to the Amiga? We are sure that many prospective Amiga owners would like to read about their trials and tribulations.

SUB-GROUP NEWS

A new sub-group has been formed in the Capalaba area. The coordinator is Ray Clark, and they meet in the Capalaba State High School (Community Hall). See page 2 for further details.

Andy Pascoe would like to see a sub-group established in the Ashgrove - Dorrington area. Interested members should contact Andy on 38 5240 (a.h.).

There are also moves afoot to start a sub-group in the Kingston district. We will keep you posted on further developments.

THE BUDGET

In last month's Federal Budget there was an item that may well have escaped your notice. We quote (Tuesday 19th August 1986): "Avoidance of sales tax occurs through the device of selling only the disks and tapes on which computer software is embodied and licensing the consumer to use the software itself; sales tax is then payable only on the value of the disks, which is a small fraction of the total price. The sales tax law is to be amended, with effect from midnight tonight, to ensure that the taxable value of the computer disks or tapes encompasses the software on them." In plain English this means of course that software will cost you more.

P.R. DEPARTMENT

Diane Bohlen, wife of our disk librarian Bill Bohlen, is a teacher at the Mt. Cotton State School. Recently a 'Computer Awareness' night was held at the school and Diane enlisted the services of Bill Weeks, our Primary Education sub-group coordinator, and Norm Chambers, our Secretary (and ex-teacher), who demonstrated computers and software. Some sixty parents attended who had the opportunity to try out both computers and programs

and, as a consequence, know a little bit more now about the use of computers in the class room and elsewhere.

HANDY UTILITY

One of the more popular programs for the IBM type computers is called "Sidekick", which offers a series of memory-resident utilities which can be accessed even while running other programs. In the USA the software company Timeworks have just released two cartridge based programs called "Partner 64" and "Partner 128", which seem to offer similar features to the above mentioned IBM program. The following features are available: appointment calendar & datebook, memo pad, phone list & auto dialer, name & address list, calculator, typewriter, label maker & envelope addresser, and a screen dump. Individually none of these utilities would set the computer world on fire, but having all of them on tap at all times, even while you are running other programs, could be very useful. We have not heard if or when these cartridges might be released in Australia.

GOOD NEWS

From "The Australian", 26-8-'86: Commodore USA has announced a profit of \$US 1.2 million for the quarter ending 30th June 1986. This result is \$US 125 million better than the same period last year and comes after four consecutive quarters of loss. Sales amounted to \$US 209 million, an increase of more than 58% on the corresponding period last year.

CARTOONIST OF THE YEAR?

Our cartoon competition has been a dismal failure - total entries received was one and that one (Lindsay Whipp's cartoon of our beloved secretary in last month's CURSOR) was drawn by hand! The really good news is that Lindsay has offered to do a series of cartoons to brighten up the rather dull and severe appearance of this newsletter, which surely will be appreciated by all readers.

We have therefore decided to cancel the Cartoon Competition, but we will accept any computer generated pictures that our members care to supply.

THE 64 000 BYTE QUESTION

Our first quiz has attracted several entries and Phil Guerny is prepared to supply both questions and answers in coming issues of this newsletter. So keep those entries coming in!

NEW COLUMN

An occasional column called "COMMENT" will appear in future issues. Comments can be from Committee members or, at the discretion of the editor, any letter or communication from members which is considered to be of more than passing interest.

CAN YOU HELP?

Peter Auld owns an 802 printer, but has no documentation. If you have an 802 instruction book Peter would like to make a photocopy of this documentation. You can ring Peter on 354 3836.

NEW MONITOR

We have heard that Imagineering have released a new RGB monitor with similar features to Commodore's Model 1901 monitor, but retailing for \$499.00 against Commodore's RRP of \$599.00. We'll keep you posted.



Lindsay Whipp

**FRANKLY FREDWHEN YOU SAID
'COME AND SEE ME RUN THAT
NEW DATA-BASE**

NEW PRINTERS

Elsewhere in this issue (Mail Box) you can read all about an Olympia printer which our member Hank Deucker recently purchased. The actual print quality is absolutely superb for a dot-matrix printer. This printer is a Centronics type and needs a separate interface. Hopefully we will have a sample print-out in the next issue.

An old favourite has re-appeared on the Brisbane market, albeit only in one outlet (Myers Brookside). It is the Star NX-10-C, a Commodore dedicated printer. Locally selling for \$529.00 it seems to have all the standard features (but no Italics). Nothing is known about servicing or warranty. The new distributor is Computermate Products (Aust) Pty. Ltd. of 9 High St. Mt. Kuring-gai, NSW, 2080. A recent issue of Compute's Gazette reviewed another Star printer for Commodore, model Gemini II. If this ever appears on the Australian market leave well alone, as it has a similar character set to Commodore's MPS 801! The NX-10-C however has properly formed letters.

NOTE: It is important to remember when purchasing a new model printer that some of these may NOT work with some of the many graphics programs on the market. Let the buyer beware!

GOODS & SERVICES

PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS - \$ 6.00 ea (Postage Paid)
PUBLIC DOMAIN TAPES - \$ 2.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage Per Order)
PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS FOR AMIGA [3,5" DISK] - \$10.00 (Postage Paid)
3,5" DISKS FOR AMIGA - \$50.00 per box of 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)
BLANK DISKS (ss/dd) - \$20.00 per box of 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)
COLOURED DISKS (Red, Blue, Green, a.o.) - \$3.00 ea (+\$1.00 Postage)
COLOURED DISKS (ds/dd) - \$22.00 per box of 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)
DISK BOXES (hold 90 disks) - \$20.00 ea (+ \$5.00 Postage)
DISK NOTCHER - \$8.00 (+ \$1.00 Postage)
"PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK" - \$5.00 ea (+\$1.00 Postage)
"STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES" - \$2.00 (+\$1.00 Postage)
"C-128 MEMORY MAP" - \$2.00 (+\$1.00 Postage)
TURBO-ROM for C-64 or C-128: Members price - \$40.00
Customised version (your choice of screen start-up colours + your name on the start-up screen): \$45.00
USER PORT PLUG (with Key Way) - \$8.00 (+\$1.00 postage)
USER PORT PLUG BACK SHELL - \$3.00 (+\$1.00 postage)
USER PORT TO CENTRONICS CABLE - \$35.00 (+\$1.00 postage)
COMPUTER DESKS (2 shelves - steel frame) - \$60.00

Address all orders to P.O. Box 274 - Springwood - QLD - 4127
Cheques to be made out to: C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.

UPGRADE CHARACTER EPROM for 801/1525 Printers.
(Gives Descenders on p,q,g,y, and j. Also requires exchange of a ROM chip)
Price (supplied & fitted) \$30.00
UPGRADE EPROM to convert 1526 Printer to 802 Printer - \$20.00
For further information on the above contact Lester Bennett on 800 1243 before 8 pm on week days.

AVAILABLE FOR HIRE TO MEMBERS ONLY: 1526 COMMODORE PRINTER
For details contact Roger Haigh on 399 8037 (after hours).

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EQUIPMENT MODIFICATIONS performed by Anthony Thyssen during main (Milton) workshop- and Graceville Sub-Group meetings.
For further details contact Anthony Thyssen on 371 1233 (a.h.).

SERVICES OFFERED:

RESET SWITCHES: Plug in	\$6.00	RESET RESTORER: Plug In	\$4.00
Built in	\$6.00	Built In	\$6.00
[On some 64's the plug in reset switch does not work. In this case you may return switch for a full refund or swap it for a built in switch.]		[Tap reset switch while pushing this button. This will reset any protected memory program.]	
DEVICE NUMBER CHANGE: Printer/Plotter 4-6	\$6.00	Disk Drive 8-9	\$6.00
TURBO ROM INSTALLED: Computer with Socket	\$5.00	Socket required	\$7.00
WRITE PROTECT SWITCHES (Price to be finalised)			
64/128 SELECT BUTTON	\$6.00 (Plug-in or Installed)		
SERIAL SWITCHING BOX (Order Only)	\$14.00		
SERIAL PORT DOUBLER (Order Only)	\$14.00		

COMPUTER INFORMATION STORAGE SYSTEMS (DATA BASES)

By Graham Robinson

WHAT IS A DATA BASE?

It is purely and simply an ultra-fast, ultra-effective capacious filing system that happens to work in a computer instead of a cabinet with drawers that slide in and out.

A Data Base is not the program you use in the computer to create your records system, no more than an empty filing cabinet is a records system.

Before we go much further I think we should look at some of the terminology that is used in modern information storage and retrieval (records) systems.

1) FILE. A file is a set of records that all have the same format or design, such as a set of Staff record cards etc. A file is made up of records. This is a major change in our past way of thinking. If you were asked to get the file on 'John Brown', you would in fact get his record out of the system, and not get out all of your Staff files.

2) RECORD. A record (or form) is an individual entry on a file, made up of fields such as the person's name and the particulars you want to record. Records are made up of fields.

3) FIELD. Fields are the pieces of information that make up a record. Examples are "name", "birthday", "address" etc.

4) SORT. This is one of the most important features of an electronic data base, as it allows us to sort our information under the various fields we have set up in our record

MANAGEMENT

Effective management is informed management. Manual systems of information storage and retrieval do not provide the necessary cross-indexing to enable us to access that information quickly. Unless we know the "name" or "key" it was filed under, we cannot find the information we require. It is impractical, and also virtually impossible for us to manually cross-index everything we file under all of the possible "key word" headings, and so we carry a lot of this cross-indexing in our heads. Think about the last time you looked for something you needed to know from an Admin Memo. How many thoughts went through your head as to where you could possibly find the information you wanted? It is the same with a lot of the information we file.

Fortunately, at last we now have the technology to overcome many of the age old problems of data storage and retrieval. The solution is Data Base Management on a Micro Computer.

Data Base Management is also called Information Storage and Retrieval Management.

In an ideal situation, a Data Base would contain every piece of information required by each and every section of the organisation. This is the Data Base element.

The next element in the system is the Management element, which brings an elaborate system of cross-referencing to the stored information.

The end result is a pool of information from which one or more people, who are sometimes very wide apart geographically, can extract specific data according to their own needs. In other words, a well constructed Data Base should support different "user views" of the same information.

WHAT FEATURES SHOULD A GOOD DATA BASE HAVE?

Some of the key features are:-

1) It must be easy to understand. To use the analogy of the filing cabinet, a system can be totally useless if a user sets up a system that is not obvious to every other potential user. How many times have you come across a filing system that only the one person who set it up knows his or her way around it? It is the same with any Data Base.

2) The program itself must be easy to use, and the information management system we set up with the program must also be easy to use. "dBase 11" is probably the largest selling data base program in the world. However it is not the easiest to use, particularly for a newcomer to computing. It is just possible for a newcomer to work out the intricacies himself, and tailor the Data Base for his work, but the cost in time, false starts and headaches is something we can all do without.

Ideally dBase 11 should be adapted for any specific implementation by an experienced person, not necessarily a computer programmer, but someone with a clear idea of systems analysis.

Whilst dBase 11 is one of the most complex of data base programs, it is, of course, one of the most versatile. Properly implemented, it can be used to set up a very good system.

There are very many good Data Base Programs available, and it would be worthwhile to have a look at many of the available programs to see which one could most effectively do the specific job you want.

3) A Data Base installation should be helpful in finding the information you require very quickly. In a filing cabinet we want to be able to find the right file in the shortest possible time without having to riffle through every file in the cabinet. If we have to do that we might just as well keep all our letters and memos in cardboard boxes in date order.

4) A Data Base must be adaptable. You should not, as has happened in many cases, have to change your methods of working merely to suit the data base. You should be able to amend the data base so that it meets your requirements.

5) A data base should relate to, or be compatible with, as many other kinds of program as possible.

Recently there has been a lot of progress in this direction, the Apple Lisa is one example, and programs such as "Lotus 1-2-3" and Timeworks programs for the Commodore 128 computer are two other examples.

The main objective in having an integrated approach is that data does not have to be re-entered each time you change programs. For example when changing from a Data Base program to a Word Processing program, you may want to access the same data to use in a report or a letter, and it is much easier (and usually more accurate) to let the computer read the data from a disk than retype it on the keyboard.

"CHR\$" AND NON-COMMODORE PRINTERS

by Ralph De Vries (with assistance of Greg Perry)

Every printer owner knows that to print out a Directory the command is:

```
OPEN 4,4 : CMD 4 : LIST  
followed after printing by:  
PRINT #4 : CLOSE4
```

The following is a typical sample of a Directory Listing in Commodore Mode:

```
0 ██████████  
18 "SUPER.AID.C" FRG  
14 "WEDGE.INST.D" FRG  
14 "TAP.INST.D" FRG  
21 "SUPER.DOS.INST.D" FRG  
42 "S.A.COMMENTS.D" FRG  
36 "XMON.INST.D" FRG  
5 "TAP.9B5B-9FFF.D" FRG  
10 "N&W.C700-CFFF.D" FRG  
12 "XMON.74CC-801B.D" FRG  
1155 BLOCKS FREE.
```

If owners of Non-Commodore printers try to print the same thing out in Epson mode (or a mode that resembles Epson) the result will be the same, except that the first line will not be in Reverse print.

If you do have a very long directory (you can have as many as 144 directory entries per disk) it is sometimes advantageous to be able to print the directory in Condensed mode and with line spacing set to 8 lines per inch, rather than the usual 6 lines per inch.

To be able to this on my Riteman C+ printer in 'Epson' mode I have to issue the following commands:

```
OPEN 4,4 : PRINT #4, CHR$(27) "O" (8 Lines per Inch)  
and  
OPEN 4,4 : PRINT #4, CHR$(15) (Condensed Mode)
```

Or as a combined command:

```
OPEN 4,4 : PRINT #4, CHR$(27) "O"; CHR$(15) : CMD 4 : LIST  
followed after printing by the usual:  
PRINT #4 : CLOSE 4.
```

So far so good, but when it came to printing something was very wrong. The line spacing was set correctly at 8 lines per inch, but the characters were still in Standard size. Try what I might, the printer refused to print out my directory in Condensed mode.

The day after I visited Greg Perry and told him about my little problem. We tried it out on the MPS 1000 printer in Non-Commodore mode, and again when printing out the directory it refused to print out in Condensed mode.

Greg, clever devil that he is, persisted however and solved the problem.

Here is Greg's solution:

The command to turn ON Condensed Mode is to send a CHR\$(15) to the printer. To turn it OFF you send a CHR\$(18) to the printer. Now, if you look at the first line of a directory on the screen you will notice that this is printed in REVERSE mode. To turn Reverse mode ON on your computer you either use Control 9 or (wait for it!) CHR\$(18)!

It will now become obvious what was happening. The poor old printer has just been told to print in Condensed mode [CHR\$(15)], and the first thing it encountered when it started to print was Reverse mode [CHR\$(18)] which it interpreted as the command to print in Standard text size mode, so it promptly turned the Condensed mode off! Result: printing in standard size.

The problem was now quite easily solved - all we had to do was to overtyping the first line of the directory in non-reversed characters and presto! As you can see from the following example it works like a charm:

```
0 "64 UTILITIES      " 38 2A
18 "SUPER.AID.C"    PRG
14 "WEDGE.INST.D"   PRG
14 "TAP.INST.D"     PRG
21 "SUPER.DOS.INST.D" PRG
42 "S.A.COMMENTS.D" PRG
36 "XMON.INST.D"    PRG
5  "TAP.9B5B-9FFF.D" PRG
10 "N&W.C700-CFFF.D" PRG
12 "XMON.74CC-801B.D" PRG
1155 BLOCKS FREE.
```

The moral of this tale is that when you use the Non-Commodore mode and you do strike problems it might pay you to check if the CHR\$ values of your printer commands might possibly conflict with the same values in your Basic computer commands.

Shortly after writing this article I chanced upon a program called "Tiny Directory" on one of the TPUG disks. After due modification I got it to work with my C-128 and Riteman C+ printer with the following result:

```
"64 UTILITIES      " 38 2A
18 "SUPER.AID.C"    PRG   36 "XMON.INST.D"    PRG
14 "WEDGE.INST.D"   PRG   5  "TAP.9B5B-9FFF.D" PRG
14 "TAP.INST.D"     PRG   10 "N&W.C700-CFFF.D" PRG
21 "SUPER.DOS.INST.D" PRG  12 "XMON.74CC-801B.D" PRG
42 "S.A.COMMENTS.D" PRG
1155 BLOCKS FREE.
```

Now, that's what I call a compact directory print-out!

On the other hand if you like your directories LARGE try 'Directory Plus' which is on of the latest public domain disks (No.31). Not only does it print out extra information, but it gives you the option to print out your directory in enlarged print as well!

--ooOoo--

Amiga Dispatches

Software news

John Foust, an Amiga developer and columnist for *Amiga Computers*, reports that the subLOGIC people told him that **Flight Simulator** for the Amiga would be out in August and **Jet** would be released in September. . . . Microprose are working on a version of **Silent Service** that should be available in the fourth quarter, and **Firebird** (of **Elite** fame) are porting a version of **The Pawn**, complete with digitized sound and voice. . . . Charlie Heath, author of **Txed**, announced that notices are being sent out to let current owners know how to upgrade to the recently released v1.3. . . . TDI Software have announced a bug fix/upgrade disk for their well-received **Modula-2** compiler, available for the cost of diskettes and shipping, and three new products: **Grid**, a file access utility; a disk containing **Modula-2** translations of many of the ROM Kernel and Intuition routines; and a **Modula-2** telecommunications package. . . . I've had a good look at **Flow**, an idea processor, and I was not impressed. At \$99.95 (US), it appears to have fewer features than **Kamasoft's OutThink** (\$39.95 US) for the CP/M side of the C-128 (see Adam Herst's review elsewhere in this issue) and is considerably more expensive. Of course, **Flow** is much faster and can be multi-tasked with other programs, but even the speed advantage is lost if you have an expansion RAM attached to the C-128. If you need this type of program for the Amiga, check out **Txed**, which sells for \$39.95 (US). I understand you can configure it to do most of what **Flow** does, and have a full-featured text editor to boot.

A company called **Taurus** in England has ported their **Acquisition** database management program to the Amiga. The program reportedly has full **dBASE III** compatibility, takes full advantage of **Intuition**, includes a compiler, can file data in IFF, will speak entries if desired, and has an approximation feature for when the user is unsure of the correct spelling of a search field. They claim that negotiations with interested distributors are delaying release of the product. . . . Michael Reichmann of **Batteries Included** has announced that **BI's Isgur Portfolio System** will ship later this summer. He

also announced the imminent arrival of **BTS, The Spreadsheet**.

Commodore's **Myndwalker** video adventure game for the Amiga is receiving rave reviews and, after seeing a beta version, I think the raves are probably justified. However, some users are experiencing a problem with 'broken sprites'. It seems that during the brain tissue part of the game, some machines will not display the **Myndwalker** character, and one of the viruses is smeared from the top of the display to the bottom. Larry Phillips of **ICUG** (International Commodore Users Group) in Vancouver has found a work-around for the problem: simply use the screen positioning gadget in **Preferences** to pull the display to the lower right-hand corner. Steve Ahlstrom, an Amigaforum sysop, says that there is a bug in 1.1 of the OS (Operating System) that allows sprites to be positioned outside of their hardware limits. This has been fixed in 1.2, but may be the cause of the problem.

CES (Consumer Electronics Show) in Chicago saw the announcement of many exciting products. Progressive Peripherals were showing versions of **Superbase** and **Logistix**, an integrated productivity program containing a database, timesheet and spreadsheet, complete with graphics. **Electronic Arts** is now shipping **Instant Music** and **Deluxe Video Construction Set; Marble Madness, Return To Atlantis and Adventure Construction Set** will follow shortly. **Instant Music** is a non-MIDI composition program for non-musicians that creates IFF files that can be integrated into other programs like **DCVS**. It apparently does not permit multi-tasking. . . . **Maxiplan** from **Maxisoft**, a Lotus-type spreadsheet, appears to be a significantly better product than the much-trashed **Maxicomm**. It's apparently fast and efficient.

Metacomco will be releasing a **BCPL** compiler for the Amiga. . . . **Megasoft** has released **A Filer**, a simple database program, and **A Term**, a terminal program. . . . **Datamat**, from **Transtime Technologies**, mentioned in last month's column is now shipping. . . . **Mimetics** MIDI interface and sequencer are on the user's shelves in New York. They have also been showing **Soundscape**, a full-featured MIDI and sampled-sound editing



by Tim Grantham

The Toronto area is becoming a hotbed of Amiga development. Anakin Research, of Rexdale, Ontario, is doing very well with a graphics tablet/software combination called **Easy1**. This is a tool for professional artists and designers that plugs into the expansion port of the Amiga. You can use the **Easy1** software to create IFF (Interchange File Format) drawings that can then be imported into other programs; alternatively, Anakin provides drivers for all the major graphics programs, including **Deluxe Paint** and **Aegis Draw**. The tablet has a resolution of 1024 by 1024 pixels, more than enough for the Amiga and future upgrades thereof. Brad Fowles, senior design engineer for Anakin Research, told me that they are currently developing digital signal processing software that will handle both audio and video sources. Brad also told me that **Musicraft 1.1** is also being completed here in the Toronto area, although there is some doubt that Commodore will ever bring it to market.

Despite yet another quarterly loss, Commodore has something to feel good about — Amiga reportedly outsold the Atari ST during the period December to February. I hope this trend will continue with **CBM's** latest announcement about their marketing strategy. It seems that when the Amiga 2000 model appears, the 1000 will be dropped in price to \$995 from \$1295 (US). As reported in last month's column, the A2000 will come with 2 megabytes of RAM, built-in IBM compatibility, and two built-in drives. It will also have five internal sockets for expansion boards and an optional hard drive. It will be sold in the \$1500 (US) range and I wouldn't be surprised if AmigaDOS is put into ROM.

program. Brad Fowles of Anakin Research told me that this is the best program of its kind, offering professional capabilities found elsewhere only on systems costing many times more... **Aegis Draw** from Aegis Development is now available. It works best if you have more than 512K RAM... Those who have seen beta versions of CBM's **AmigaTerm** have been pleased to see that it does not suffer from the slow screen output of **Online!** and other terminal programs, and can in fact keep up with 19,200 bps (bits per second)... **Chang Labs' Rags to Riches** accounting software has been substantially improved, now making full use of **Intuition** and multitasking.

Hardware

It is rumoured that the Sidecar will appear with ports for a keyboard and a monitor so that it could be used as a stand-alone unit. Also, it may have an expansion port extender, so that other Amiga peripherals can be plugged into it. Full communication between the Amiga and the Sidecar has been provided for, so that they have access to each other's files. A hard disk drive plugged into the Sidecar can be partitioned and used by both computers. While we're on the subject, it seems the **Transformer** will not work with a 68010 installed... There are persistent rumours that Commodore will be producing a DMA (Direct Memory Access) hard disk drive for the Amiga. The Tecmar and Microforge drives use software handshaking in their device-drivers and are consequently limited in their speed. A DMA drive could transfer data at typical speeds of 1.5 megabytes per second!...

The Agnes, Paula, and Denise chips are now available at \$70.00 a piece, it seems... Golden Hawk's MIDI interface should be shipping now... Roger Powell has completed porting of his famous **Texture** music editing/sequencing software to the Amiga. He is now working on a bus adaptor for use with Roland's MPU-401 interface or the OpCode interface... Cardco's Amega, their 1 Meg RAM expansion unit, should be available as you read this. It costs \$549.95 (US), can be stacked with other boards and peripherals, and features full auto-configuration.

Meanwhile, it's good to see that Comspec has substantially lowered the price of their 2 Meg RAM unit to \$1276 (Cdn.) from \$1450... SoftCircuits, Inc. has announced the arrival of their plug-in adaptor that enables the use of any standard 40 or 80 track 5 1/4 inch drive with the

Amiga. The drive must have its own power supply and standard connector cable. The interface supports disk inserted/removed... Apparently as part of a cost-cutting move, some new Atari monitors are using lower-quality components, resulting in an inferior picture. Many Amiga owners had been buying the Atari monitor because it had a superior resolution than the 1080 Amiga monitor, and was substantially cheaper...

Blits and pieces

CBM appears to have fumbled with the Amiga Theatre at Expo. Seems they didn't get sufficient guarantees of exposure — Ron Troy reported that only one machine was on display! Canadian artists, though, are very grateful for the estimated \$250,000 that CBM has poured into this project. It looks like the Amiga Theatre may continue after Expo 86 has finished, and the machine will take on a greater importance in its operation.

While the *Intuition* and *Hardware* manuals are now available from Addison-Wesley, the *ROM Kernel Manual* has been delayed yet again, presumably to allow for version 1.2 of **Kickstart** and **Workbench**. Addison-Wesley here in Canada say they have the *Intuition* and *Hardware* manuals in stock and ready to ship to dealers... Rockwell International's space division has purchased some 80 Amigas for their engineers and designers... The Philadelphia Phillies baseball team are using an Amiga and **Aegis Animator** to control the animation sequences on the giant screen at Veterans' Stadium... *Ami Project* is a magazine for anyone interested in programming the Amiga.

AmigaDOS 1.2

It is strongly rumoured that **Kickstart** will be put into ROM and thus will not have to be loaded from disk. It will also feature disk-caching, a more efficient directory track allocation algorithm for faster disk access, support for the 68881 math coprocessor, a **mount** command for partitioning, the ability to set the **ser:** device parameters (stop bits, x-on/x-off, parity, et cetera), and an interlace mode. This last one is interesting: I've seen two full-size (medium res) windows placed on the screen at the same time. Of course, one then has to put up with interlace flicker. There are a couple of work-arounds to this problem: use **Preferences** to change the colours to ones that flicker less (I found that orange on black worked well; others suggest green on black); or do as Joe Lowery has suggested: put on a pair of sunglasses! □

This is another extract of the Canadian **TJUG** magazine, *JUNE* (July?) 1986 issue.

We realize that at this early stage it is a bit difficult to expect lengthy articles of a technical nature from local Amiga users, as a lot of the introductory material has been published in commercial magazines.

As more books on the Amiga are becoming available it might be a good idea if present Amiga owners give us some short reviews on the usefulness or otherwise of this new literature, particularly in view of present prices of technical books.

We also would like to receive questions of a technical- or programming nature which we may be able to answer in the Amiga Column. These questions could be from beginners or more advanced users. All would be welcome.

Editor

Computers In The Classroom

by Lorrie McIay

As a teacher and a member of the education sub-group of the CCUGQ, I have been involved with computers now for a little over a year. During this time I have learnt an incredible amount and yet seem to know so little about these machines which are revolutionizing our world. In the classroom computers are fast becoming a necessary teaching tool. They have opened up a whole new range of ways to access information quickly. Computers are to today's children like slates were to bygone children. (yes, I used a slate in grade 1!)

Most children and adults in our present school system would have had some type of contact with computers. Many children are so accustomed to using computers, that teachers are often left open mouthed at the proficiency of their pupils. I know of very few teachers who could hold their own against an experienced child in a computer game.

Within the classroom the computer's use is virtually limited only by the teacher's/pupil's creativity and imagination. My class of grade 5 pupils have used such programs as 'Print Shop, Crossword Magic, Newsroom, Snerd (creature creation program in public domain), The Factory and Cave of the Word Wizard' to name a few.

'Newsroom' was used within my class as part of language arts. The children were given the overall picture of what a newspaper is and how it is run. They were given different topics to write about, (sports, feature articles, human interest etc) and then these were put together and edited. Skills such as writing, proofreading and sorting were enhanced dramatically. Cooperation was the key word in this operation.

The children were then shown the program which would put all their marvellous work into print. Illustrations were selected from the Clip Art disks to match the articles. The actual hands on work at the computer presented a big problem of time. There never seemed to be enough of it. But by using before school and during lunchtime this was overcome. The children learnt very quickly where to find the keys, when to change the disks, which disk contained what information and all the other myriad little details which are incorporated in producing work on Newsroom. I certainly learnt what having patience is all about!

I am extremely happy to report that our paper was a great success at school and sold for 10 cents a copy. Producing such a newspaper was very hard work and time consuming, but the children gained a great deal from having engaged in all the processes involved with its production. They learnt to think for themselves and make their own decisions and that to me is the essence of education.

--oo0oo--

COMMENT

by Jim Vick

After going home from the Annual General Meeting I gave some thought to our Users Group. We were a great bunch, we had all gone bravely along to the Annual General Meeting although there was a chance, maybe a slim one, but still a chance that we would actually be asked to do something, but luck was with us and we had again been passed over, even though we knew we would do a great job if given the opportunity.

Despite all the above I thought maybe there was more we could do, even though the exposure to the A.G.M was a particularly trying time, so I gave some thought to what could be done without actually standing out from the crowd. I even put pen to paper and came up with some simple calculations.

The Users Group has approx six hundred members and if we take it that we get twelve Newsletters a year (or is it eleven but no matter twelve is easier to calculate) this works out that if every Member put one article a year in we would get fifty articles a newsletter. Great calculating Jim.

So I said to myself maybe I should make a start, but what to write about, then I found this short missive in a book and it occurred that maybe it was of some relevance to what I had been thinking about.

A SAD LOSS!

The club was saddened to learn of the death this week of one of the clubs most valuable members. Someone Else.

Someone's passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with the club since its beginning. He did far more than a normal person's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to do, a social function to attend, funds to be raised, or a meeting to attend, one name was on everyone's lips. "Let Someone Else do it".

It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the largest contributors of his time to the club; whenever there was a need for volunteers everyone just assumed Someone Else would volunteer. Someone Else was a wonderful person, sometimes appearing superhuman but a person can only do so much. Were the truth known, everybody expected too much of Someone Else

Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is to do the same things Someone Else did? When you are asked to help, remember, **WE CAN'T DEPEND ON SOMEONE ELSE.**

How about it fellow Members?

THE 64 000 BYTE QUESTION

by Phil Guerney

Here are the quiz questions for September. There should be a question here for everyone - an easy one to start with leading up to an esoteric number five that should stump anyone who hasn't actually read about this feature of the C64.

1. There is just one key on the C64 keyboard that a program can not detect if it has been pressed. Which key is that?
2. The following numbers are stored in locations (decimal) 2048-2067 on a C64. What happens if you type RUN (Return) on this machine?

0, 17, 8, 10, 0, 153, 34, 67, 67, 85, 71, 34, 59, 58, 137, 49, 48, 0,
0, 0

3. Which one (and only one) of the following statements is true on the C64?
 - a) The integer variable A% is stored in less memory than the real variable A.
 - b) The integer array variable A%(1,1) is stored in less memory than the real array variable A(1,1).
 - c) Arithmetic using integer variables executes faster than arithmetic using real variables.

4. The following program uses the file open/close commands in an unusual way. With what devices is the program communicating?

```
10 OPEN 5,0: OPEN 6,3
20 GET#5, A$: IF A$="" THEN 20
30 PRINT#6, A$;
40 IF A$<>"*" THEN 20
50 CLOSE5: CLOSE6
```

5. Enter and run the following program. Then press the RUN/STOP and RESTORE keys together. Something wrong? Well press your A. Thyssen reset switch or equivalent if you have one. No good? Don't complain to Anthony! What's going on here?

```
10 FOR I=0 TO 2: READ A: POKE 4096+I,A: NEXT
20 FOR I=0 TO 8: READ A: POKE 32768+I,A: NEXT
30 DATA 76, 0, 16
40 DATA 0, 16, 0, 16, 195, 194, 205, 56, 48
```

Your answers to reach the Editor no later than Tuesday, 7th October. Postal address is P.O. Box 384, Ashgrove, 4060. The winner of this quiz will be announced in the November issue of this newsletter, and will receive a Public Domain Disk of his/her choice.

TRICKS FOR NON-TURBO ROMMERS

by Keith Hadland

For all you poor '64 owners out there who have yet to discover the delights of owning a Turbo Rom, here are some handy tricks to help you get by. This first one is for those annoying moments when you need to load the directory of a disk but can't because you will erase the current contents of the memory.

```
POKE 44,PEEK (46)+1 <RETURN>
LOAD "$",8 <RETURN>
LIST <RETURN>
```

To retrieve your program...

```
POKE 44,8 <RETURN>
LIST <RETURN>
```

One of the more useful commands incorporated in the Turbo Rom is the 'OLD' command. This command retrieves the contents of the memory after "NEW" has been executed, or even after a cold start (reset). These few lines achieve the same effect with the "NEW" command but unfortunately will not bring back a resetted program.

```
POKE 2050,8 <RETURN>
SYS42291 <RETURN>
POKE 45,PEEK (174) <RETURN>
POKE 46,PEEK (175) <RETURN>
POKE 47,PEEK (174) <RETURN>
POKE 48,PEEK (175) <RETURN>
POKE 49,PEEK (174) <RETURN>
POKE 50,PEEK (175) <RETURN>
```

Clear the screen and type LIST <RETURN>.

It may seem a bit laborious but if you have just successfully "NEW"ed your 500 line masterpiece, I guarantee you will frantically begin searching for this edition of CURSOR.

--oo0oo--

PROTECTIVE POKES

By Keith Hadland

To give your '64 BASIC programs that professional touch, try adding these interesting POKE's and SYSes in the appropriate places. First, to stop anyone breaking out of your program, add POKE 808,232 to the first line. This disables the RUN/STOP-RESTORE combination. If you don't want to make the program totally unstoppable, POKE 808,251 will disable the RUN/STOP key only. As I write a program, I run different parts of it to make sure they are working properly. If you are going to do this, make sure you only add these lines on completion of the program, or you could run into trouble.

Now that we've made the program unstoppable from the conventional keyboard, let's try to thwart all of those annoying people with reset buttons and Turbo Roms (with the Turbo Rom, programs can be restored after a reset by the "OLD" command). If <SHIFT><L> is added to a line of a program, a SYNTAX ERROR will be given if a listing of that line is attempted. This terminates the listing at that point. However, all that has to be done to overcome this is to call for a listing of only the lines past the trouble spot. All that is interesting but fairly useless. The best thing to do is to POKE 775,171. This will cause the computer to crash if a listing is attempted. To just disable LIST, POKE 775,168. Let's assume that despite your best efforts, the program is broken into. Here's where POKE 818,32 comes in handy. It disables the SAVE command. To enable, POKE 818,237. Of course, if the program is never run in the first place, even the best POKE's and SYSeS are useless, so you are going to have to find an autobooting routine and use it to make your programs run on being loaded. There are plenty of these in magazines and probably some somewhere on Public Domain.

REVIEWS

KCS POWER CARTRIDGE for C-64 - R.R.P. \$129.00

Review Sample kindly supplied by Sundown Computers, Chermside

by Lindsay Whipp

Many "Fast - Load" systems are now available for the C64, which is not surprising considering the lumbering performance of the 1541 disk-drive and the even more frustrating datasette. The locally made Cockroach Turbo-ROM seems to be the most popular system and, in addition to providing a welcome increase in Load and Save speeds for the 1541, also provides short, easy-to-use disk commands.

However, a new system is now available with some advantages but, regrettably, also some disadvantages. The KCS Power Cartridge offers a fast-load/save system with Basic Extensions, some of which are very handy indeed. In addition, an ML Monitor with built-in Assembler is included, and a method of "Capture-Copying" memory-resident software (Similar to "Icepic" and "Snapshot", but with limitations as discussed below). A reset button on the cartridge allows instant access to a menu of functions including screen dumps, disk copies, restart (pause control), partial or complete reset.

In the fast-load department, this unit suffers by comparison with the Cockroach. The chart below says it all:

Program Name	CBM	Cockroach Power-Cart.	
Summer Games	1.06	0.35	0.33
Newsroom	1.36	0.43	0.49
Print Shop	1.11	0.24	0.31
Easy Script	0.48	0.14	0.20
HHGTTG	* 1.12	1.01	1.05
Superscript	* 1.55	1.46	1.54
The Hobbit	** 1.50	0.22	0.36

The programs marked with one asterisk have a built-in turbo-load, and the one with two asterisks failed to run after loading with the Power-Cartridge.

In the Basic Extensions department, the extra commands supported include: AUTO: controls line numbering. Also a RENUM(bering) command which corrects GOTO's and GOSUB's as they are encountered, DELETE, which acts like a destructive LIST, and MERGE, which suffers from the usual bug of overwriting any lines of the same number occurring in both programs. DEEK and DOKE are two-byte PEEKs and POKEs- very handy for establishing unknown values passed from ML subroutines. PAUSE allows a definable pause in execution, and SAFE disables the RUN-STOP and RESTORE keys. PLIST causes a printer listing, and TRACE allows slow check-running of a Basic program. UNNEW is also a welcome addition, as is \$ - a hex/decimal converter. However, it should be pointed out that these commands will be recognised in programs only by a C64 fitted with a Power-Cartridge. Fine for your own programming but pretty useless if you want others to share your work!

In the Monitor department little needs to be said other than no surprises will be experienced. Very similar to Monad, and not anything like a good Symbolic Assembler (...my bias is showing...).

In the Screen Dump department (accessed via the reset button on the cartridge, which "pauses" the program in memory and offers you a menu of activities) things look a little brighter!

I tested this facility with a variety of programs, attempting to screen-dump some of the brilliant Hi-Res screens now prevalent in games particularly, and, with the strange exception of all Epyx software, the dump worked very well, taking about 4 minutes on a Riteman printer. Some highly colourful screens make pretty poor black & white prints, of course, but overall an impressive facility.

In the "Capture-Copy" department things also worked very well. I backed up a tape copy of Valhalla onto disk. The cartridge system saves the "snapshot" (to disk OR tape!) as three USR files, and subsequent loading of these must be via the BLOAD (B=backup) command, followed by CONTINUE (from where you left off when you "captured" the program). Obviously, without the cartridge in place, you can't use the files. You can't capture-copy programs and give them to friends!

In summary, then, I conclude that at the \$129 price-tag I wouldn't be tempted to buy this unit, but then I already have a good symbolic assembler for ML writing, and a Cockroach fast-load system, and use a 1541 disk-drive. Tape users may find the Power-Cartridge an attractive proposition, though. The fast-load facilities extend to tape loads, and the screen-dump facility is very nice indeed! But the PRICE!!!!....

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

by Lindsay Whipp

First impressions count! And over the last few days I have been developing a Love-Hate relationship with a new offering from Epyx, the **Epyx Programmers Basic Toolkit**. There is no doubt in my mind that this is a very significant package aimed squarely at the games programmer. Like the Power-Cartridge reviewed elsewhere, this is a Basic Extension package, together with an inbuilt Sprite Editor and a Character/Font Editor, but unlike the Power-Cartridge, contains a CREATE command, which scans your Basic program (like a compiler) and writes a self-booting version of it to disk together with the definitions for the Toolkit Basic commands. The program is then fully transportable.

The extended Basic includes over 100 new commands, and these leave you with a Basic/Pascal-type merger including many very useful and powerful tools.

Very welcome are the sensible graphics and sound commands, plus long-missed Basic niceties like ELSE, RESTORE(to line #), SORT(Arrays) and WINDOW. Pascal programmers will instantly recognise the advantages of DO....PROCEDURE.

Now, I like writing games. I always start with Sprite design, using a PD Sprite Editor, and save away a chunk of data from that. Then I move on to a Font Editor to redefine the character set so as to be able to PRINT in graphics characters (bricks, bushes, ladders etc.), and save the results of that session. Next comes writing the music (the long way, folks...pencil and manuscript) and converting the arrangement to data, also to be saved. And finally, the game routine in Basic is written in order to use the plethora of data. After the game is seen to be progressing as expected, albeit unacceptably slowly, ALL the subroutines calling the various chunks of data are rewritten in ML using a Symbolic Assembler, so that the Basic game program gets progressively smaller and smaller, and includes more and more SYS calls. All that is needed after this is to tidy up the package.

With the Epyx Toolkit, Sprite design proceeds much more smoothly because viewing your Sprites in action at the design stage is possible, even several overlays of Sprites. Even superimposed on screens made from the inbuilt Font Editor! You still have to write the music, of course, but causing it to be played is no longer a nightmare of preparing a regular blizzard of PEEKs and POKEs. VOICE and VOLUME commands cover all the essential parameters. And the extended Basic commands allow a far more compact writing style to actually use your Sprite and Font creations!

First impressions, then, of the Epyx Programmers Basic Toolkit are that Intermediate to Advanced Basic programmers will find this package a useful all-in-one environment for games design and writing. The 130+ page manual supplied with the package is clear and helpful, and includes a full description of every command. Whether it lives up to it's promise of "Hi-speed assembly language power using simple Basic commands" remains to be seen after some serious programming and experimentation, but I'm hopeful, folks, I'm hopeful!

Stay tuned, but don't hold your breath. When I've USED the package a few times a more balanced review will follow. Meanwhile, has anyone else used it?

REM: This copy of EPYX "Programmers' Basic Toolkit" was imported from the USA by our member Lex Hinckley, and will be added to the group's library. At the time of writing no details of an Australian release are known.

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MAPPING THE 64 - Published by Compute! Publications

by **Grant Robinson**

After owning my 64 for a while and seeing programs that ran so quickly in a mysterious "machine language" I bought a book (Programming the 6502 by Rodney Zaks) and learned machine language. But something was still missing - I didn't know how to apply it to my 64. And so I bought "Mapping the 64". This book goes through the Commodore 64 memory location by memory location explaining what each one is used for.

The book is divided into major sections covering locations used for important system variables and vectors, screen memory, sprites, Basic programs, Basic ROM routines, the other hardware chips (Vic-II, SID, CIA #1, and CIA #2), Character ROM, and the Kernal ROM routines.

Mapping the 64 gives a good insight for those who, like myself, are forever posing the question of "I wonder how that works?". It is not a book for the beginner, nor for those who have no desire at all to delve deeper into the machine than Basic. If however you would like to learn more of what goes on inside the brown plastic box with the keyboard on top then this is the book for you. The major attraction of this book would be for budding machine language programmers although there is a lot of information that can be applied through Basic. Throughout there are programs to serve by way of example in addition to the explanation of the memory location. Also where applicable the book gives the necessary values to poke to an address to achieve certain results (such as POKE 650,128 to allow all keys to repeat or POKE 650,64 to disable all keys from repeating).

While not giving detailed ROM listings of Basic and the Kernal as found in some other books, Mapping the 64 does give the starting location and an explanation of routines which is all that is needed in most cases for programming. Areas where the book excels are in explaining the CIA chips and their functions and possible uses, the VIC chip, and also the many locations and vectors used by Basic and the Kernal which would be necessary for implementing or understanding machine language programs.

A good way to learn how program in machine language is to look at other people's programs. Without this book my efforts at applying machine language to the 64 would have proved totally fruitless. It supplied the information needed to fully understand the Commodore 64 computer. As an added bonus it also gave me a lot of other useful information which can be applied via Basic. Simply a very handy book to have.

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SWIFTCALC 128 by TIMEWORKS

by Jim Vick

I found the program a particularly easy program to come to grips with, maybe this was because I have had some exposure to spreadsheets but I still felt that that this program was, because of its excellent manual coupled with very good screen prompts to guide you above average in user friendliness

Swiftcalc has a number of features which I feel are worth mentioning because of the help they give in entering information. The program features automatic selection of entries. If the first character entered is a letter it is automatically entered as a label, if it is a numeral it is entered as a value and if it is preceded by an equals sign it is entered as a formula. The program remembers in which direction the last move you made and will continue to move in that direction each time an entry is made (a screen prompt tells you which way you are going). Cell widths may be changed at will in several ways with an auto function so that if the information you enter will not fit the cell will expand to suit. Cells or groups of cells may be easily moved around the screen and can be formatted to suit the new location so that formulae transferred will still work in their new location. Swiftcalc has an interesting feature that allows you to enter a particular label as the start of a sequence and will then continue incrementing the sequence automatically. eg if you enter MON in a cell on moving to the next cell it will enter TUES, WED etc as long as you require. This will work for anything that has a sequence ,years, months, days or a number which will be incremented each move. In general it does all the things a good spreadsheet should do and because of the way the program is

structured it allows you to do them with a minimum of bother.

I found the manual to be a pleasant surprise, on the infrequent occasions that I was forced to refer to it I found the information easy to find and simple to put into practice.

This program is one of a group by Timeworks: Wordwriter128, Datamanager128, and Swiftcalc128. All share a common disk file system so that information from one program may be transferred to and used by another program.

Swiftcalc128 also has the ability to print spreadsheets sideways to take advantage of fanfold paper but I found that the whole procedure was extremely bothersome. To use this option you first create a special file on disc then exit the spreadsheet program and load the sideways program, which I had great difficulty in loading, then you can print your information, but oh so sloooooowly! It takes approx twenty minutes to print one page of fanfold paper on an MPS1000 printer. It certainly works and I guess if you only wanted a printout on infrequent occasions it would be worth the effort.

To sum up, a program I enjoyed reviewing and I am sure anyone who has a 128 and uses a spreadsheet would find it an asset to have.

BYTES

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FOR SALE

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300 BAUD MODEM, Auto Dial & Auto Answer - Direct Connect - Ideal for Bulletin Board Use - \$100.00 (+\$5.00 Postage)

1200 BAUD MODEM - Full Duplex - Auto Dial - Auto Answer - \$350.00 (+\$5.00 Postage)

RS232 INTERFACE - User Port to True RS232 - \$35.00 (+\$2.00 Postage)

Contact Lester Bennett on 800 1243 before 8 pm,
or P.O.Box 460 - Sunnybank - Q'ld - 4109

KOALA PAD incl. KoalaPainter, KoalaPrint, Instant Programmers Guide (Disk & Manual), Owners Manuals & The KoalaPad Book - in Al Condition - \$85.00

CONAN - C-64 Game on Disk - Top Condition - \$20.00

Contact Jason Cross on 369 1785 after school hours

SUPER RITEMAN C+ PRINTER, as reviewed in July "CURSOR" - Commodore Interfaced - Only three months old and in perfect condition - \$475.00

Contact Ralph De Vries on 300 3477.

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Contact Lex Hinckley on 393 5121 for details.

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MAIL BOX

FROM OTHER USERS GROUPS

Norm Chambers received a letter from Bruce McGovern, secretary of the Townsville C.U.G. He tells us that they have had a substantial turnover in membership, with more of the senior members dropping out, but with quite a bit of new blood coming into the group. For this reason they have gone back to 'basics' by demonstrating both hardware and software, Viatel, languages etc. The Amiga has also made its debut in their group. Maybe we can learn a lesson from this approach.

Despite the fact that Ipswich has practically become a suburb of Brisbane, we have always had problems making contact with the Ipswich C.C.U.G. - they have been a very elusive group! However, things are looking up, as they have now a fully-fledged committee, and they have also started to produce a newsletter. We wish them all possible success.

From New Zealand's Christchurch C.U.G. we now receive regularly their newsletter "Connection", and very good it is too! Although we always moan and groan about Commodore, service, and prices, it seems that our Kiwi friends are infinitely worse off. Particularly servicing problems seem to be a major headache over there. And as for prices their July newsletter carries and advert for a C-128D, with NLQ printer, Green screen monitor and printer paper for a total of \$2995.00! If you prefer a 1901 colour monitor you have to add an extra \$500.00 to the price. The Amiga is advertised at a cool \$3995.00. Maybe we shouldn't complain after all!

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Dear Ralph,

Thanks for the great newsletter. As the editor of a newsletter for a sailing association I can appreciate the work that you put into each production and the lack of input you receive.

The day after reading last month's newsletter I picked up the latest edition of a yachting magazine and read the enclosed letter which I felt was well timed.

Shall try to write some articles for CURSOR if I can find the time between writing about sailing.

Andy Jones

Dear Andy,

Your comments are very much appreciated, particularly coming from a fellow-struggler! The letter from the August issue of "Cruising Helmsman" magazine basically covers the same ground as Eddie Brook's article in last month's newsletter. As copyright is involved I am unable to reproduce it here, but will pass the article on to Eddie Brook.

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The following is an excerpt of a recently received letter:

I do have a couple of queries which you may be able to help me with. Firstly, I often see software advertised in RUN or GAZETTE which is unavailable in Australia. If I wished to import such things privately how do I get them through Customs without being X-rayed or scanned which, I believe, would corrupt the data on disks?

Secondly, I am in urgent need of an animation program for the C-64. I did see one in the club library a few months ago but cannot remember the name of it. If you could tell me the names of such programs and where I might find them I would be grateful as I am doing a unit at college which requires me to make and edit educational videos for children.

Rod Iffinger

Dear Rod,

I consider importing software from the USA a decidedly risky business these days, but not for the reason brought forward by you. The risk of damage by X-rays etc does not seem to be very great. I have never heard of cases of damage but I am prepared to stand corrected on this point. The real dangers lie in the actual obtaining of the software. Most of the discount advertisers are not prepared to export and if they do you will often have to wait for months, even if you have requested airmail delivery. By the time you pay the bill for the software, airmail charges of US\$10.00 or more, bank charges, and now sales tax as well, the package is usually getting pretty expensive. But the real problem arises if the software doesn't work. This is not as silly as it sounds. When Lex Hinckley recently bought some software on behalf of the group two packages wouldn't work! These will now have to be returned to the USA for replacement at considerable expense. Another aspect is software which utilizes the microprocessor clock frequency (tied up with NTSC and PAL standards - all highly technical), which will not run properly in Australia; in fact some packages won't even load here! If you have friends in the USA it may well be feasible to import goods from there, but I would certainly think twice about importing it through commercial channels.

The animation program in our library is "Movie Maker", by Electronic Arts. To my knowledge it is the only program of its type to produce animated sequences. I believe this program is locally available or can be ordered by your dealer. My suggestion is to try the library copy first to see if it meets your requirements. There's also a program called "Screenplay", which purports to do the same thing - however I have not seen it. If any of our members has a copy of this we would like to see a review in the near future.

--000--

Dear Sir,

To add a little more fuel to the "what printer to buy argument" I have just carried out this exercise as well and I think one point is generally overlooked - what is my next computer likely to be and will my new and expensive printer still work; thus only a centronics printer will do as they can be used with the IBM (& clone), 16 bit machines.

I purchased such a printer, and with a little C.C.U.G.Q. help - a circuit diagram for the cable and a printer driver, public domain disc UC, all went better than I had hoped for. Here I must point out I do not need

or generally use programs such as PRINT SHOP, which will not work, but my bread and butter such as BASIC, EASYSCRIPT, SUPERBASE, MULTIPLAN etc. work just fine. Easyscript now works as wordprocessor should and has all the functions such as enhanced print , proper underlining, super and subscript as well as italics and proportional print, and I am sure any other function provided by the printer one may choose.

I have used the printer with Superbase, again problem free, as both this and Easyscript cater for centronics printers. With Multiplan I use the option to send my printer output to disc, a little care is needed with the print options, then use my own basic program to 'dump' this file to the printer. Along the way gain a few extras such as speed (160 cps), compressed print, and letter quality output (about 80 cps). I have also found that the printer wedge and the COMMODORE M-64 accounting packages are compatible but give only a compressed, but very readable, print-out.

I could rave on at length but only wish to add that I found the dealer very helpful, he cheerfully let me test the printer with my software and equipment in his shop and demonstrated the printer with a PRINT SHOP type of program on a 16 bit machine. The printer is an OLYMPIA Electronic Compact NP and most importantly at \$465.00 I feel it is an unbeatable bargain. The dealer is SOUTH QUEENSLAND BUSINESS SYSTEMS of East Street, IPSWICH, Phone 281-2066.

I was assured by a proud owner last night that the printer works perfectly with PRINT SHOP, NEWS ROOM, etc at about 4 times the speed of his old MPS 801 using the XETEC Super Graphics Interface and that including the cost of the interface the price is still LESS than the present Commodore, Epson and Riteman prices.

Hank Deucker

Dear Hank,

I was in a bit of a quandary what to do with your letter; to place it in the 'Mail Box' column or the 'Review' column. As I was unable to reproduce your letter successfully in A-5 format it has ended up in the 'Mail Box' dept.

For the benefit of our readers Hank's letter was produced on his new printer and displayed all the different features that it is capable of. Without a shadow of a doubt this is the most closely spaced dot matrix that I have seen. I don't know if this letter was in "Draft" mode or "NLQ" mode, but if it is, as I suspect, Draft mode there just is no need for NLQ mode - it is absolutely superb!

We would very much appreciate it if you could prepare an A-5 page (roughly 5" wide by 7" deep) to display all the features of this printer for publication in CURSOR.

During the last meeting you said that certain retailers were getting pretty lousy with giving discounts to club members. I believe you mentioned 5% or less on major hardware; 10% used to be the norm. What's the club going to do about it? At this rate I'm better off getting my gear from Down South.

Stinger

Good to hear from you again Stinger! Yes, we agree and we will investigate the situation. In the last resort it's the dealers prerogative to decide if and by how much he is prepared to discount. Maybe a listing of dealers and the amount of discount they are prepared to offer to our members?

DISK LIBRARY

by Bill Bohlen

Disk 032 TEACHER PACK UR

This disk is ideal for classroom management. It includes such programs as Mark Manager and other classroom data bases. It also contains an ideal word processor for young children. Paperclip instructions included.

--oo0oo--

WRIST SUPPORT FOR USE WITH YOUR C-64

by Rob Adamson

If you are doing a lot of typing (e.g. word-processing or programming) on your C-64, you may have noticed your wrists getting tired or aching - you may be a candidate for the deadly R.S.I. - repetitive strain injury!!!

Seriously, you can make things more comfortable for yourself by counteracting the un-natural wrist posture produced by the thickness of the C-64 keyboard.

A wrist support can easily be made by forming a foam plastic block of dimensions:

38 cm long by 6 cm wide by 5 cm thick.
(These dimensions arrived at by trial and error.)

A handy source of foam plastic which will build up this block is a foam fruit case, which can easily be cut by a large sharp knife. The dimensions given came out of a fruit crate with 2 full slices and a half thick slice of foam. Glue the pieces together with Aquadhere - most plastics glues will melt the foam.

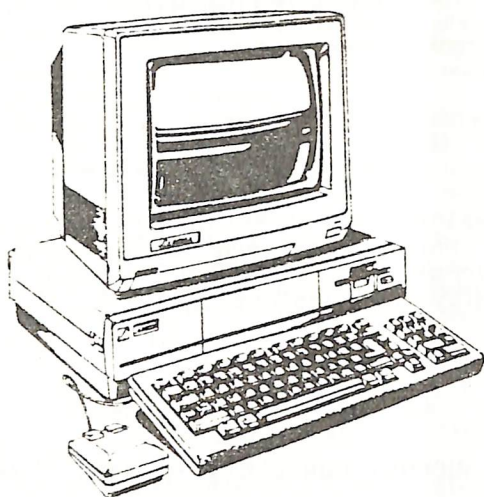
To finish off the wrist pad you can cover it with Contact plastic or fabric. Normally the pad will not move, but if the covering is slippery, glue the pad to a manilla cardboard folder, cut to size to fit under the computer; its weight will then hold the wrist-support firmly in place.

On the C-128, the thinner keyboard should avoid most of this problem, but even there, a thin pad may be beneficial.

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COMING IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF "CURSOR":

REVIEWS of: Advanced Music System - Data Manager 128
Vizawrite 128 - Superbase: The Book



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Please Note: The above phone numbers are private numbers, and most of our committee members can only be contacted after hours!
Greg Perry can be reached only between 10 am and 4 pm, and Maurice Hawkyard can be contacted between 9 am and 5 pm.

Address for newsletter mail only: P.O. Box 384 - Ashgrove - QLD - 4060.
Deadline for any particular month is the First Tuesday of that Month.
All other mail to: P.O.Box 274 - Springwood - Qld - 4127.

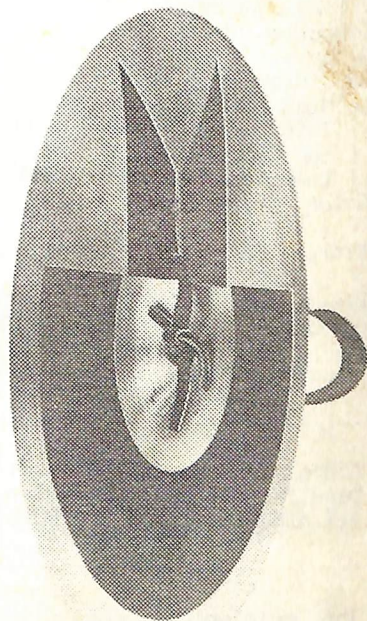
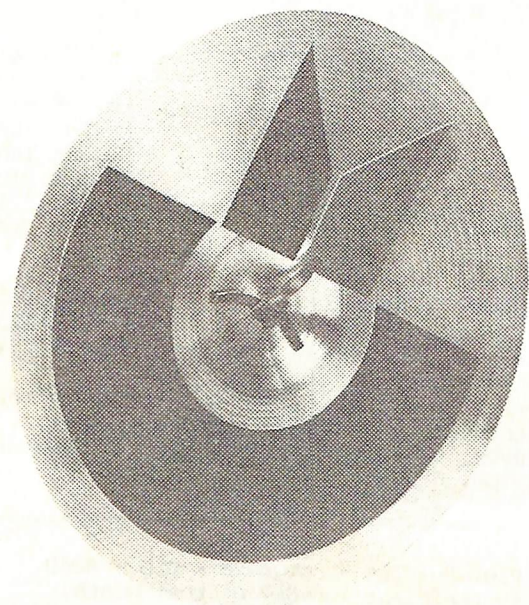
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