

# CURSOR

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

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## MEETINGS - WHERE & WHEN

**MAIN MEETING:** Tuesday 1st September 1987 in the *Bardon Prof. Dev. Ctr. 390 Simpsons Rd. Bardon*. Entrance through Car Park in Carwoola St. Doors open 7pm (library), Meeting starts at 8pm sharp. Library closes at 9.30pm.

\*\*\* MORE on Modems and Telecommunications \*\*\*

**WORKSHOP:** Sunday 13th September 1987 (1pm - 5pm) in the *Guidance Officers Training Ctr., Bayswater St. Milton*. Bring your programming- or hardware problems, as well as your own computer equipment! Opportunity to copy our Public Domain Disks. PLEASE NOTE: Workshop Meetings are for MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Colin Shipley - 38 2511 a.h.

**AMIGA MEETING:** Sunday 6th September 1987 (1pm - 5pm) in the *Playground & Recr. Assn. H.Q. Bldg., 10 Love St., Spring Hill*. Amiga Library open from 1.30pm - 2.30pm. Bring your own computer equipment to copy our Public Domain Disks! - Ph. Steve McNamee - 262 1127 a.h.

### REGIONAL MEETINGS

**CANNON HILL** meets on the 4th Saturday of the month (12noon - 12pm) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Barry Wilson - 399 6204 a.h. or Ron Jarvis - 399 6981 a.h.

**CAPALABA** meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba State Primary School. (Redland Education Centre.) Ph. David Adams - 396 8501 a.h.

**KENMORE** meets on the 1st Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Kenmore State School Library. Ph. Peter Reeve - 378 2665 a.h. or Keith Hadland - 378 6698 a.h.

**KINGSTON** meets on the 2nd Friday of the month (7pm - 10pm) in the Kingston State School. Ph. Peter Harker - 800 4929 a.h.

**PINE RIVERS** meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine High School. (rear entrance). Ph. Bruce Wylie - 359 9779 a.h.

**SHERWOOD** meets on the 2nd Friday of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State School. Ph. Leigh Winsor - 379 2405 a.h. or Philip Parkin - 818 1172 a.h.

**THE GAP** meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month (7.30pm) in the Gap State School. Ph. Julianne Fallen - 300 2982 a.h.

**WAVELL HEIGHTS** meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the Wavell Heights High School (library), Brae St. Ph. Cor Geels - 263 2839 a.h.

**SUNSHINE COAST** meets regularly. For meeting times, dates and places: Ph. Harvey Riddle - 071 / 42 1036 or Ph. Vic Mobbs - 071 / 94 1330

**MARYBOROUGH/HERVEY BAY** meets on the 4th Monday of the month (7pm - 10 pm) in the Sunbury St. School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade - 071 / 21 2271 (w) or 21 5059 a.h.

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

**PRIMARY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP** meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month (7.30pm) in the Aspley State School. Ph. Bill Weeks - 208 8620 (work) or 341 2823 a.h.

**PROGRAMMING SUB-GROUP** meets during the Main Meeting in our Club Rooms. Ph. Jim Vick - 345 1878 a.h.

**CP/M SUB-GROUP** meets during the Main Meeting in our Club Rooms. Ph. Steinar Johansen - 207 3065 a.h.

PLEASE NOTE: COPYING OF COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE IS NOT ALLOWED AT OUR MEETINGS!!!

Do you want to form a Sub-Group in your District?

Contact our Sub-Group Coordinator, Terry Steer (Ph. 808 2424 a.h.) for details.



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## EDITOR'S NOTES

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Another A.G.M. is behind us and this one has brought some changes in its wake.

First and foremost our Treasurer Lester Bennett has decided not to stand for re-election, as he wishes to devote more time to his work and his Amiga.

Lester, who doesn't have an accounting background, decided three years ago to take on the job of treasurer, mainly because nobody else wanted the job. Considering that at that time our financial records weren't in the best condition, he tackled the job with all possible vigour, and by the end of his first year as treasurer our auditors were very pleased with the fine job that Lester had done. Well, the rest is all history, and we can only say: "Thanks Lester for a good job well done."

We are pleased to announce the appointment of John Van Staveren as our new Secretary. John has already acted for quite some time as the 'understudy' of our Treasurer, and we feel that our 'kitty' is in good hands.

Another senior committee member who didn't stand for re-election is our Newsletter Editor, Ralph De Vries. However, after further discussions he has decided to return to the fold, but there will be some new names on the mast head of future editions of CURSOR. (Note to our erudite readers: yes, we do know that a mast head is normally the front page of a publication, but in the case of CURSOR our mast head appears on the penultimate page!)

One major change, which takes effect from this issue, is that we have a new printer for CURSOR. Our senior member, Terry Steer, has made us an offer which we couldn't refuse, and from now our newsletter is going to be produced on a high quality photo-copying system which should result in an overall improvement in quality. By setting up our pages in A4 format and then reducing them to A5 size we expect to get a further improvement in quality. Hopefully we'll be able to incorporate some further improvements in the newsletter's appearance during the course of this new financial year.

In this issue we have another major contribution from Dr. Denis Wright of Armdale, as well as the first edition of our new Games Column team. However a very large section of this issue is taken up with Reviews, with several articles from new contributors. It is good to see that so many new contributors are deciding to give it a go. Welcome on board, all!

We would like to draw your attention to Phil Gurney's regular column - Cursory Notes - in this issue. Phil, like some other members before him, is asking some very pertinent questions which more and more of our senior members are starting to ask. The answers aren't always so easy to find, but Phil's article certainly makes you think.

Keep those contributions rolling in!

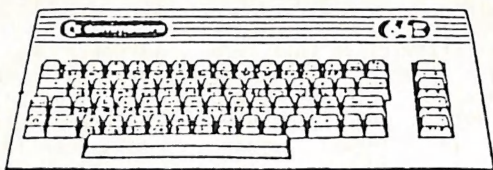
The Management Committee

# commodore COMPUTER

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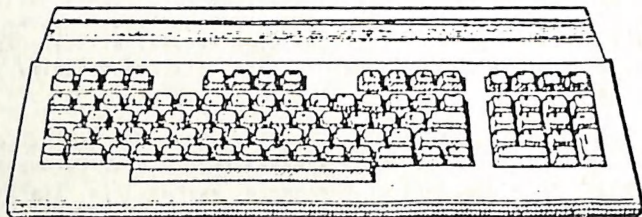
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## R A N D O M   B I T S

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### MAIN MEETING (4th August)

The Annual General Meeting has been and gone. As mentioned in the Editor's Notes, our Treasurer Lester Bennett has stood down after holding the position for three years. Thanks to his hard work our finances are in fine shape. We welcome John Van Staveren as his successor. John has for quite some time now acted as Assistant to the Treasurer, and should be a worthy holder of this office.

Our Newsletter Editor has decided not to stand for re-election, but see the Editor's Notes Column for the latest news.

The feature talk was given by our Technical Coordinator, Greg Shea, who covered the subject of Modems. Unfortunately time was against us again, but as there was a great deal of interest in the subject there will be a second talk on modems during our next meeting.

### AMIGA MEETING (2nd August)

The main features of this meeting were a demo given by Mark Constable on Amiga Sound, used in conjunction with Midi interfacing and synthesizers, which was very well received. Steve McNamee talked about programming in C, using the Lattice C compiler. This was another talk received with a lot of interest. Public Domain (Fish) disks are now up to No.88. Fortunately the prices of our blank 3,5" disks are down to \$35.00 now!

### IT REALLY HAPPENED!

Have you heard the one about this member of a well known computer club who was renowned for his unrivalled collection of computer software - it was probably without parallel in the whole of Brisbane. Now we are not concerned how he came by this collection of software, but fairly recently he got a surprise visit late one night by two members of the Commonwealth Police Force. Well, you can imagine how he felt - perhaps the end of that very fine collection! But boy, did he utter a sigh of relief when he found out that they picked the wrong address - they were after some local drug peddlars, and were definitely not interested in pirated software!

### AN UNUSUAL SERVICE

One of our more widely travelled country members is Tony Mitchell. A member of the Federal Police force (no, he was not in on the above mentioned raid!), he has moved from Toowoomba, to Canberra and now is a resident of Sydney. He own a 128 and an Amiga and now offers a Digitising Service.

By supplying him with a Black & White or Colour photograph, Tony converts this into a digitised picture in either PrintShop or Doodle format. You can than either view your photograph on the screen or print it out on your printer. You can also, with the right type of paper, produce a screen-print for a T-shirt etc.

See the 'Bytes' column for further details.

### FROM COMPUTE!'S GAZETTE - SEPT 87

There were some interesting tidbits of information in the September issue of the Gazette. It looks as if Desktop Publishing (DTP) is now on the way for the C-64! GEOS have a program called geoPublish and Timeworks are releasing The Timeworks Desktop Publisher. Another new one from the GEOS people is called geoProgrammer for Machine Language fiends - it consists of a geoAssembler, geoLinker and geoDebugger.

## NEW SUB-GROUP COORDINATOR

We are pleased to announce that Cor Geels is taking over from Rob Adamson as Coordinator of the Wavell Heights Sub-Group. Welcome on board Cor!

## A RIP-OFF?

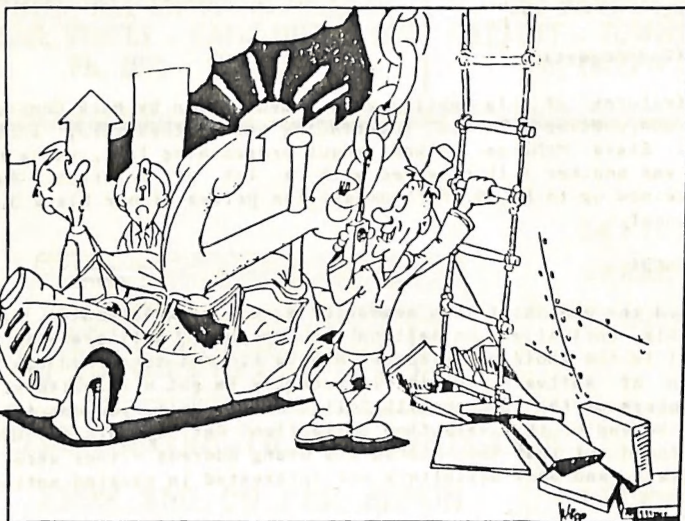
Recently I chided one of our regular Cursor contributors, Murray Smith, about the condition of his printer ribbon. Well, he must have taken my words to heart, because he hot-footed it to a local C.....r electrical store who ordered him one 803 ribbon for which he had to pay over \$28.00!!!

Well, we don't know if he was ripped off, but it sure sounds too expensive to us. If you do need new ribbons or have your old ones re-packed contact either of the two following suppliers, who would certainly sell you one for less than \$15.00:

P.R. Business Machines P/L, 611 Wynnum Rd, Horningside - Ph. 3894155

or

Jane's Computer Supplies, 48 Cribb St, Hilton - Ph. 3690420



"ER, SKIPPER.... REMEMBER THAT SUPER-DUPER NEW NAVIGATION COMPUTER YOU SAID WOULD TAKE US OUT TO THE FLEET IN THE FOG LAST NIGHT?..."

## CBM & IPL-DATRON AGREEMENT

In July the Australian Commodore Company signed a \$12 million agreement with IPL-DATRON, a Sydney based computer peripheral distributor, to market a range of PC printers. Under the agreement, IPL-Datron will supply laser, dot-matrix and thermal printers for the entire range of Commodore computers, from the C-64 to IBM compatibles as well as the Amiga.

This means that in the future Commodore will be marketing several computers from the OKI stable, including the Laserline 6 (compatible with HP Laserjet+), as well as 10" and 15" dot matrix printers with single and dual 9 pin print heads. There will also be a non-impact thermal printer in the range.

According to Tony Serra, "the printers will be so keenly priced that it will be difficult for anyone to overlook them."



## GOODS & SERVICES

PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS (C-64 & C-128) - \$3.00 ea (+ \$2.00 Postage - up to 5 Disks)  
PUBLIC DOMAIN TAPES (C-64) - \$2.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage Per Order)  
BLANK DISKS 5,25" (DS/DD) - \$12.00 per 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage) - [No Libr. Case]  
MULTI-COLOURED DISKS 5,25" (SS/DD) - \$18.00 per box of 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)  
COLOURED DISKS 5,25" (DS/DD) - \$22.00 per box of 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)  
DISK BOXES (hold 90 5,25" disks) - \$20.00 ea (+ \$5.00 Postage)  
PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS FOR AMIGA 3,5" - \$6.00 ea (+ \$2.00 Postage - up to 5 Disks)  
BLANK DISKS FOR AMIGA 3,5" - \$35.00 per 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage) - [No Libr. Case]  
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks: *Temporarily Unavailable*  
"PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK" (for C-64) - \$5.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
"STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES" (for 1541 owners) - \$2.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
"C-128 MEMORY MAP" - \$2.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
"AMIGA DOS SUMMARY" - \$3.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
"AMIGA BEGINNERS GUIDE" - \$7.00 ea (+ \$2.00 Postage)  
TURBO-ROM for C-64 or C-128: Members Price - \$40.00  
Customised Version (Your choice of Screen Colours + Your Name on Screen): \$45.00  
AMIGA SPECIAL PRINTER CABLE - \$25.00  
USER PORT PLUG (with Key Way) - \$8.00 (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
USER PORT PLUG BACKSHELL - \$3.00 (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
USER PORT to CENTRONICS CABLE - \$35.00 (+ \$1.00 Postage)  
ADDRESS LABELS (23 x 89 mm) - \$14.00 per 1000  
RIBBONS for MPS-1000, GX-80, LX-80 PRINTERS - \$8.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)

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. - (Descenders on p,g,q,y j.)  
(Also requires exchange of ROM chip.) - Supplied & Fitted \$30.00  
UPGRADE EPROM to convert 1526 Printer to 802 Printer - \$20.00  
Contact Lester Bennett on 800 1243 before 8pm on weekdays for more details.

Available for Hire to Members only: 1526 & 1101 Commodore Printers  
For details contact John Van Staveren on 372 3651 (after hours)

### COMPUTER ADDITIONS

by Anthony Thyssen during Milton Workshop Meetings. If this is not suitable contact Anthony on 371 1233 to arrange installation at his Taringa premises.

### SERVICES OFFERED:

RESET BUTTONS: \$6.00	RESET RE-ENABLE: \$6.00 [Tap reset switch while pushing this button to reset a protected program.]
DEVICE NUMBER CHANGE: \$6.00	
C-64/128 COMPUTER SELECTION SWITCH: \$6.00	
TURBO ROM INSTALLATION: C-64 with Socket or C-128 \$6.00 C-64 without Socket or C-128D \$10.00	
WRITE PROTECT SWITCHES: \$6.00	WRITE ENABLE SWITCHES: \$6.00

### The Following Items To Order Only:

SERIAL SWITCHING BOX: \$14.00	SERIAL PORT DOUBLER: \$14.00
EXPANSION PORT PLUG: \$10.00	CAPACITANCE METER BOARDS: \$14.00
RAM CARTRIDGE - 8 KByte: \$40.00, 16 KByte: \$55.00	

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## C U R S O R Y . N O T E S

---

by Phil Guerney

Quandary. It has faced others in this group and it is worrying me more and more lately. The quandary is "Why I am sticking with Commodore computing gear?".

If you bought your Commodore computer just to play games then I don't suppose you'd be reading this. If you are like me, then you bought it because it seemed the best and cheapest way to play with your own word processor or spreadsheet, to program in BASIC and other languages, to learn machine language, to have fun with computer graphics and sound, to make use of programs like Printshop or Newsroom, AND to play games. If so, then also like me you may be wondering if you still have the cheapest and best computer for the purpose.

The C64, 1541 disk drive and 1701 monitor in front of me at the moment cost me \$1230 three years ago. I use an IBM-clone at my work which cost \$3500 when we got it, but every week the price of clones seems to fall a bit more and now I could buy an equivalent system (monochrome graphics, 640K, 20MB hard disk) for less than \$2000 and a twin floppy system for less than \$1200.

I know that for all "applications" and high-level programming the clone beats the Commodore 64/128 systems hands down. For colour graphics and sound as well as games, the C64/128 wins easily. I was going to begin this paragraph with the word dilemma, but my dictionary defines a dilemma as having to make a choice between two evils. I'm not sure whether there is a word for having to choose between equally attractive alternatives - because having both systems seems to be the only way out!

---

I borrowed the CP/M cartridge from the software library along with the two languages we have to run under the C64 CP/M operating system (TurboPascal and Nevada Cobol) so that I could include benchmarks for these languages in my listings of alternative languages for the C64 - but I couldn't get the CP/M system to stay alive for more than a minute or two. At any moment from turning on up to the time it took to load the CP/M software, then load a program such as TurboPascal, a couple of characters like exclamation marks or quote marks would suddenly appear at a few random points over the screen and the whole outfit was then frozen. I just managed to get TurboPascal running once to the point where I could get it to list the disk directory. Many other attempts never reached the opening screen. So I asked Greg Perry who immediately said that the CP/M cartridge only worked with the very earliest C64's due to subtle design changes. I bought mine in April 1984, but that is obviously not old enough.

So, if your C64 is newer than that, don't bother trying the CP/M cartridge. Anyway, there's hardly any software in 1541 disk drive format for the CP/M system other than those two languages. I'll just have to get a C128 to play with true CP/M (but I probably won't - see the first item!).

---oo0oo---





Your program, in its simplest form, might look like this:

```
10 LIST 10000-
10211 CAR REGISTRATION DUE
10508 SHE/HE WHO MUST BE OBEYED'S BIRTHDAY
10629 MEETING 1.00PM WITH JOHN SMITH
```

When you run the program, the first line simply lists the remainder, so there's no need to worry about syntax beyond that line. When some appointment comes up, you just create a line for it (though you should check by listing that date first to see if you already have something else against it. Otherwise the first entry will disappear forever!) Your computer will automatically sort it into its proper line sequence when you list or run the program. If you want to print the diary, you use the simple printing command:

```
OPEN 4.4:CMD4:LIST
PRINT#4:CLOSE4
```

That's it, in a nutshell, and it works very well. However, you can smarten it up a good deal and make it more versatile, without much effort at all. Try adding the following lines. Do NOT put a space anywhere (up to Line 100) unless indicated by {SPACE}. Use the CTRL key with the colours mentioned (e.g., {CYN} means CTRL key with the C key). Likewise for {RVS} (= CTRL9) and {OFF} (= CTRL0).

```
10 POKE53280,6:POKE53281,0
20 PRINT"{CLR}{6 DOWN}{RVS}{BLK}{SPACE}LIST10900-10999:
{YEL}{2 SPACES}DIARY{2 SPACES}{WHT}{SPACE}SEPTEMBER{SPACE}{YEL}{2
SPACES}{2 DOWN}{OFF}"
30 PRINTCHR$(158)
40 PRINT"{HOME}":PRINTCHR$(30)
50 PRINT"{RVS}{HOME}{CYN}{SPACE}PRESS{SPACE}{WHT}{SPACE}
RETURN{SPACE}{CYN}TO{SPACE}LIST{SPACE}MONTHLY{SPACE}ENTRIES.{OFF}"
60 PRINT"{HOME}{DOWN}{RVS}{PUR}{SPACE}PRESS{SPACE}{WHT}{SPACE}
RETURN{SPACE}{PUR}TWICE{SPACE}IF{SPACE}NONE{SPACE}FOR{SPACE}TODAY.
{OFF}"
70 PRINT"{HOME}":PRINTCHR$(30)
80 LIST10906:
```

You have now completed the short program which sets up the screen. (If it's right, it should look like the illustration at the end of this article.) Now type the diary framework as below. As many of the lines are repeated, just replace line numbers and make minor adjustments (e.g., Line 10000 is the same as Line 10002, so you only need to change the last 0 in 10000 to a 2 and press RETURN, and Line 10002 will be done. If you group identical lines together when typing it in, they can be done very quickly. Line 10906 is for demonstration purposes only.



```

10000 *****
10001 ***** 1987 DIARY *****
10002 *****
10003 *****
10900 -----<<<<<<SEPTEMBER>>>>>-----
10906 WRITE ARTICLE FOR CURSOR NOW!
10949 -----
10950 ++ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER+
10951 -----
10999 -----
11000 -----<<<<<<OCTOBER>>>>>-----
11049 -----
11050 ++ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR OCTOBER+++
11051 -----
11099 -----
11100 -----<<<<<<NOVEMBER>>>>>-----
11149 -----
11150 ++ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR NOVEMBER++
11151 -----
11199 -----
11200 -----<<<<<<DECEMBER>>>>>-----
11225 MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL MY READERS
11249 -----
11250 ++ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR DECEMBER++
11251 -----
19999 -----
20100 -----<<<<<<JANUARY>>>>>-----
20149 -----
20150 ++ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR JANUARY+++
20151 -----
20199 -----

```

[NOTE: To save space, I have omitted LINES 20200-21299, (i.e., February-December next year) but they follow exactly the same pattern you see above.]

<p>Wouldn't it rot your socks? - (as a good friend, not unknown to CURSOR readers, says when he makes a clerical error.) I forgot to mention something important. I should be able to squeeze it in here! →</p>	<p>Line 20 (as it appears in the program) lists the diary on the screen for September only, when the RETURN key is pressed. You can list any part of the diary to the screen by altering the line nos. in that LIST statement.</p>
---	--

```

50000 SAVE"@0:DIARY",8
50110 OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(27);CHR$(51);CHR$(15):CLOSE6:REM LINE
SPACE NL10
50120 OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(27);CHR$(83);CHR$(49):CLOSE6:REM SUPER
SCRIPT NL10
50130 OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(27);CHR$(15):CLOSE6:REM CONDENSED
CHARACTERS NL10
50140 OPEN4,4:CMD4:LIST10000-10999
50150 PRINT#4:CLOSE4

```

#### How to use Lines 10-80

If the current month is October rather than September, LIST Line 20, and alter the month to October or whatever one you want.

To list the day you want at the top of the screen, LIST Line 80, and alter it accordingly. If, for example, you wanted to list Christmas Day, change Line 80 to:

```
80 LIST 11225
```

The best time to make these changes is after you add new daily entries and just before saving your updated diary.

#### Explanation of Lines 50000 and above:

These are lines never run as a program, but saved for your convenience when re-filing your updated diary or printing it. Note how it works below:

50000 This saves you typing the SAVE WITH REPLACE command every time you want to update the diary. When you've finished updating the daily entries, simply

- (a) LIST line 50000
- (b) Put the cursor on the 5 in 50000
- (c) Press the space bar five times
- (d) Press RETURN, and your disk file will be updated.

What if you have too many entries for one BASIC line (i.e., 80 characters)? An example's the clearest way to explain it. Suppose you have too many entries for 30 September. Go to a blank line on the screen, and type:

```
10930 LIST 10950-10998
```

(Press RETURN)

Change the original line number 10930 to 10952 and press RETURN. Use lines 10952-10998 for any extra entries. You have nearly 50 lines to use in this way, but it's unlikely you'll need that many.

#### Lines 50100-50150

These are printer commands that can be used in exactly the same way as line 50000. Even when the READY prompt comes up, because it has only six characters, it won't overwrite the printer commands. Just List 50000- and use the cursor and space bar to execute that part of the program line by line in the same way as described for Line 50000.

Note that the lines specified for printing in Line 50140 are only for one month (in this case: September). You can specify as much of the diary to be printed as you like by altering those line numbers. (For example, if you want to print October-December, change the lines mentioned in Line 50140 to 11000-11299

NOTE: Lines 50100-50150 produce very tiny characters on the NL10 Micronics. If you have a MPS 802 or other Commodore printer, use the following.

```
50110 OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(25):CLOSE6:REM LINE SPACE MPS 802
50120 OPEN4,4:CMD4:LIST10000-10999
50130 PRINT#4:CLOSE4
```

If you have another sort of printer, I'm sure you know or can find from your printer manual the necessary print commands.



## A FEW TIPS

1. Try to keep any daily entry to just one screen line, rather than the two which BASIC allows. It will print out neater. (Using 80 characters will print right across the page.) Abbreviate where necessary. For example, one of my daily entries reads:  
10804 CAR/MING EXEC CTEE 1PM/TRNG 7PM  
(which tells me that I have to get the car serviced today, a meeting of the Executive Committee at 1 pm, and hockey training at 7pm.)
2. Don't try to start a daily entry with a number, such as an appointment time. BASIC will be confused by it, warning you of a syntax error.
3. Don't use a question mark in a daily entry - it will come out when listed as PRINT.
4. Delete an entry for a date that's past by typing the line number on a blank line and pressing RETURN. But what if it's a recurring date - an annual event that you want to keep a more permanent record of, like a birthday or anniversary?  
Simple - just replace the first digit (which is always a 1) with a 2, press RETURN, and then delete the entry for this year. Next time you list it, it will appear beyond all this year's entries. Do that with any line you want to repeat for next year's diary. (If you are still using it the year after next, you can change all the first digit 2s with 3s in the same way. Incidentally, the highest line number you can list in BASIC on the C64 is 63999.)

Well, there it is! It works like a charm. No excuses for forgetting SHE/HE WHO MUST BE OBEYED's birthday or a wedding anniversary next time round!



---oo0oo---

Dennis has kindly made his modified Diary program available to us, and it has been passed on to Bill Bohlen for inclusion on the next Public Domain Disk.

Editor

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## REVIEWS

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### DOLPHIN DOS

by Peter Roulstone

My updated membership card and receipt arrived in the mail the other day and when I opened it, lo and behold our highly esteemed Secretary Norm Chambers had appended a note with a request to do a review. So now here I sit trying to put seven months experience with DOLPHIN DOS down on paper. O.K., I'll do my best!

First, what is Dolphin Dos I hear some of you ask? Dolphin Dos is a package that streamlines the disk operating system for your C64 and 1541. But I have a quick loading cartridge I hear you say again. Ahh, but this is NOT a cartridge and is in fact installed inside your computer and disk drive. Installation can be done by anyone with a bit of electrical knowledge, in fact my own was put in by yours truly. A new Kernal chip goes into the C64 and comes with a switch in case Dolphin Dos needs to be switched out (which happens rarely). Two chips need to be taken out of the 1541 and a motherboard put in their place with the chips installed into the top of the board. Two sets of wire lead off the board - the first leads to a switch, like the one on the C64, and switches out the Dolphin Dos in the drive; the second is a parallel cable which leads to the user port of the C64. This cable is the major factor in speeding up disk operations. Instead of just one bit of information travelling along the serial cable at a time, several bits move along the parallel cable simultaneously, thus cutting down considerably in access time.

Because of the difference in design Dolphin Dos needs a special fitting to allow it to be installed in the older 1541's.

The following is a benchtest, comparing speeds between a normal load, a fast load cartridge and Dolphin Dos:

	<u>Normal</u>	<u>Fastload</u>	<u>Dolphin Dos</u>
Easy Script	1'02"	58"	18"
SpeedScript	16"	6"	2"
Load 127 BLK PRG File	1'22"	36"	4"
Save 127 BLK PRG File	1'27"	1'27"	8"
Load 31 BLK SEQ File	22"	22"	5"
Save 31 BLK SEQ File	27"	27"	10"

Loading and Saving of RELative files is also increased by a factor of 3 with scratching and validating being increased by a hefty factor of 6.

The story doesn't stop there of course. Disk commands are cut down by replacing the normal CBM syntax with the 'At' sign (@), the same as in most Dos Wedge programs. Fast format is available to format a disk in 20 seconds with the added advantage of being able to format to track 40 for an extra 85 blocks.

There's also a built-in machine code monitor, but this item is not as versatile as some other M.C. monitors.



The Function keys have been programmed to get certain functions quickly with a single key press, eg:

F1 LIST	F2 SYS \$0 (Monitor)
F3 RUN	F4 VERIFY
F5 LOAD"0:1",8,1	F6 SAVE"0:
F7 Display Directory	

Two minor headaches, the "Save & Replace bug" and the "Knocking" (caused by certain types of disk 'copy protection') have both been refurbished with the knocking down to a more tolerant and safer level. The drive also starts up when a disk is inserted in the drive, allowing the disk to centralize on the hub, as in the newer 1541's.

Before you go racing down to the corner computer shop to purchase Dolphin Dos, the price tag is around \$170:00 - a price that quite a few people would scream at, until you realise that the features are very outstanding and worth a little bit more. But then, because I have Dolphin Dos installed, I am slightly biased, so I'll leave the final evaluation up to you.

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### The Commodore 128 Subroutine Library

by David D Busch - published by Bantam Books

(our copy from B.C.F. Bookstores - 107 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane)

by Jim Vick

This book is aimed at the computer owner who wishes to try programming for themselves but is not sure exactly how to go about writing some of the routines they wish to use. The level of the book is fairly low, being aimed more at the novice rather than the experienced user but it still has some good tips that may be of interest to all programmers.

The book is very well documented with a list of all the individual subroutines at the front (84 in all), broken into areas of common interest and an index at the back in alphabetical order.

The main areas which the book covers are:

Business and Financial---with routines for such things as loan repayments, rate of return, date formatter, regular deposits etc.

String handling---with routines for inserts, sorts, encoding, decoding counters etc.

Games routines---for checking joystick movements, drawing on the screen, using paddles, flipping coins, dealing cards etc.

Graphics and sound---this covers bit map drawing, moving shapes, graphics plotting and creating a range of sounds for use in programs such as sirens, planes, helicopters, clock and so on.

Software tricks---in this section the book looks a range of utility type routines that do various useful things such as checking elapsed time, creating programmed keys, a simple terminal etc.

The final section called Bits and Bytes shows how to calculate decimal, hex and binary notation, allows you to find the value of an individual bit in memory and change it, calculate primes etc.

All subroutines follow the same general format which is:

A description of what the routine is going to do.

A listing of the routine follows with all the hard to read graphics characters listed as their CHR# equivalents.

A brief description of how the routine may be used.

A line by line description of what the routine is doing and what must be done to make it work.

It tells you what variables etc. you must supply in the program to make it run.

It gives an idea of suggested enhancements to modify routines.

And finally tells you what the result of the routine run will be and what the output will look like.

Generally I think the book is very well written and would be of use to any relatively inexperienced programmer who wishes to develop their skills by incorporating the routines explained in this book.

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COMPUTE!'S BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO COMMODORE 64 SOUND

by Compute! Publications - R.R.P. \$22.95

(Our copy from B.C.F. Bookstores)

by Clarence Stock

This book is arranged with "A Definition of Terms" as the introduction, rather than a glossary usually found at the rear of a book. The definition of terms is more a definition of concepts, as not only are there written definitions, but also pictorial drawings in some cases which assist in the explanations.

Chapters within the book include SID - the Sound Interface Device, Music and the Sound Editor, Sound Effects, Advanced Functions and the last chapter is called Putting It All Together. The appendices cover Beginners Guide to Typing in Programs, How to Type in Programs, Automatic Proofreader (same as on the different Compute!'s Gazette disks) and a Commodore 64 Sound Memory Map.

The first chapter on SID (Sound Interface Device) explains the procedure involved for your C-64 to make simple sounds. Program 1-1 is exactly that - a program which produces a simple sound. Thereafter follows an assortment of programs using different tones, volume adjustments, changing the shape of the sound envelope and using a variety of waveforms. Overall this chapter provides a basic description of the SID. Without a firm understanding of this section the remainder of the book would be most difficult to comprehend.

Music and the Sound Editor shows how to program music on your C-64, how to use it as a musical instrument and how to store and play the music. The program starts with "Yankee Doodle", followed by a variation of time and rhythm - it is modified into an interesting piece of music. The second main portion of this chapter covers a "One - Voice Sound Editor" program which makes it easy to enter notes, alter the length of the sustain, enter pauses, save a piece of music, load previous compositions and play the assembled melody. The next section describes the method of playing two notes at the same time, thereby producing harmonic sounds. A number of programs are provided to demonstrate harmony and disharmony in music. The tuning on of all three voices is the last part of this chapter. A program is provided which has each voice tuning on in turn, the combination of which produces a chord. The Chord Editor



program is similar to the One-Voice Sound Editor previously described, but allows you to program all three voices at once.

The Sound Effects chapter looks at four different sound types; Hard sounds, Soft sounds, Slowly Rising Tapered Sounds and Slowly Falling Tapered Sounds. There are 34 demonstration programs to try, starting with the "Short Beep" and finishing with the sound of "Crunching Snow". A very interesting section.

Advanced Functions deals with features available on the SID chip not previously covered and a further explanation of basic sound functions, i.e. the initialization process, pitch control, frequency calculation, pulse width, the envelope generator (ADSR), multi-volume sound, test bit, additive synthesis, ring modulation, synchronization, resonance and filter selection.

The last chapter, Putting It All Together, shows how to successfully insert sound effects and music routines into other programs, thus combining graphics and sound. Sixteen demonstration programs are provided, from a bouncing ball to a sound game as examples.

In summary, I feel that the book is good value for money, except that I prefer a hard cover. The detailing of the C-64 sound production, along with many demonstration programs makes this book a recommended tutorial for all those who desire to obtain a better understanding of the C-64's SID.

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#### COMPUTE!'S MACHINE LANGUAGE ROUTINES FOR THE COMMODORE 64

(Our copy from B.C.F. Bookstores)

by Phil Guerney

First be warned that this book will hardly teach you anything about machine language (ML). It is a compilation of articles that mostly have appeared in Compute! and Compute!'s Gazette that give (usually short) ML programs that are either "Basic Aids" such as auto line numbering, "utilities" like character and sprite editors or graphic commands.

Most programs given are in the form of either BASIC loaders or MLX formatted fast entry (mistake proof?) listings. Only 2 out of 31 articles give commented source code listings to see how the programs work. To actually learn ML, Compute!'s other two books - The First (and Second) Books of Machine Language - are much better. With that aside, this book contains a very good collection of programs including Ultrafont+, which is the best programmable character editor available on the C64.

Other useful ones are the Sprite Magic sprite editor (throw away all those written in BASIC), the "two-sprite two-joystick" and "multiple key scan" routines for game writers, and "Ultrasort" for application writers.

Almost all can be had for free by borrowing the original magazine issues from the club library, but here for \$29.95 you have them all together for much less than a Compute! subscription. If you do buy the book, then please don't bother typing the assembler and disassembler given in BASSIC - use the Commodore assembler on the club's PD disk A1 or Compute!'s own LADS (an assembler in ML) from their Second Book of ML and also on a Club disk, and use the disassembler that is part of all ML monitors like Supermon. Also don't try to enter all 12 pages containing 11,382 numbers to get Ultrafont+ - use the Club and get a copy from someone else instead!

by Murray Smith

If you are an avid reader of our beloved newsletter CURSOR you may have noticed that two other such articles of mine concerning the product Freeze Frame (July'86 and March'87). If that is the case, take note - the news isn't all good this time.

I must stress the fact that the previous articles dealt with hands-on experience, whereas this one contains personal opinions of both myself and other nameless parties.

Freeze Frame Mk.IIIB is the latest in the line of snap-shot type copying programs or, if you prefer, back-up device might be a more appropriate definition. This version was brought out to cater for the introduction of 'Anti-freeze' in most new software titles (a form of software protection mainly employed by UK software manufacturers - Ed.). It is obvious that the software industry would share a dislike for products like Freeze Frame.

I think it is fair enough to say that we have all strayed a little from time to time, but after all nobody's perfect. The individuals who seek to gain profit from such illegal actions are the ones who should be feeling guilty - not us. Most software takes a lot of time and effort to put together, so you can't help feeling sorry for programmers when they get ripped off.

Micro Accessories of S.A. cannot be accused of deserting their customers. I am impressed that they don't allow their products to become obsolete, hence the update service of products like Freeze Frame. However I do have a couple of criticisms. To upgrade to the current version of Freeze Frame will cost you \$25.00 (eight dollars more than the last upgrade). Does this mean that the next upgrade will cost me \$33.00? I never hesitated at the offer of updating my previous workhorse, Freeze Frame Mk.II for the Mk.III version - \$17.00 seemed fair enough considering the added facilities. If buying the regular upgrades means forking out more and more money I would have to think twice about purchasing this unit. The alternative would be to use one of the cheaper programs on the market. Could the reason for the higher prices have something to do with the production costs? I am unfamiliar with such things - perhaps someone else could shed some light on the subject.

More of an observation than a real criticism, but some users of Freeze Frame may have encountered failures in some of their attempts to do back-ups or copy files. This could be due to the fact that Freeze Frame does not take kindly to some peripherals like printers or extra disk drives. Disconnect these and your problems may be solved.

In my opinion Freeze Frame is a quality product. Some hackers may disagree; I've been told that they find FF difficult to 'fiddle' with. If however you are in the position of wanting to transfer your cassette-based program collection to disk you won't go far wrong with Freeze Frame Mk.IIIB. I'm sure that you will find its performance outstanding, even though you are a little lighter in the pocket.

[Murray is treading on dangerous ground when talking on the pro's and con's of copy-protection; in fact many computer magazines have dealt extensively with this topic in the last year or so, and we are sure that the last word on this ticklish subject hasn't been written yet. However, products like the hardware based Freeze Frame and software based ones like Fast Hack'em forever more need 'upgrading', because of new copy-protection schemes - and who's to say you are paying too much for these upgrades?

I'd say that in most cases users just get fed up with these perpetual upgrades after a while and then just forget about it. - Editor]



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## LIBRARY FILES

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by Jim Vick

This is a copy of a message that is currently up on our bulletin board which I thought may be of sufficient general interest to warrant printing in Cursor. I guess that for the average user it is probably not of as much use as it is on the BBS but who am I to say what may or may not be of use to anyone, so back to the BBS message.

As you have no doubt seen, a number of files have been posted to the BBS under the directory of Library Files, and in the future you will see from time to time sequential files that end with the file name extension .LBR - these are Library Files. Ok, what is a Library File? A Library File is a collection of programs or sequential files which have been made into one large sequential file by a special program that can create or dissolve Library Files back into their original form. How does it work? In the Downloads section of the board you will find a special section called Library Files - towards the top of the directory you will find three programs called LIBRARY 3.2 which is a C64 version, LIBRARY V7.0 also a C64 version and LIBRARY 128 V1.4 which is the 128 version.

To create a Library File you run the program which asks you if you wish to create or dissolve a Library File. It also asks if you are using one or two drives - it will work with one drive because, when it rewrites the file to disk it adds to the end of the file the suffix .LBR. In this way you can always identify a library file. It also enables you to use the same file name if you wish for identification purposes. The program then reads the disk directory and asks which files you wish to make into a Library File; they can be all program files, all sequential files or a mixture of both, but remember, if using the one drive there must be sufficient space on the disk to hold all the programs on the disk plus the same amount of space for each program put into the Library File.

To dissolve a Library File the same program is run but this time you answer that you wish to dissolve a Library File. After asking for a Library File Name the program then turns the single large file into its separate parts.

This format will be used to put large groups of public domain software onto the BBS and also to put up programs that have a number of separate parts - this should help to avoid the confusion which occurs from time to time when you are trying to make sure that you have all the separate parts of a program.

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For the benefit of those members who don't own modems it should be explained that these so-called Library Files are a means of compressing files in such a way, that the overall file size is considerably reduced, which in turn means that the files in question take up less space on the disks of the Bulletin Board System (disk space is always at a premium on a good BBS). The second major advantage is that because the files are compressed it takes less time to download the files.

A rather similar system is employed on the Amiga, but on this computer (and many other computers as well) they are called ARC files. These have to be 'de-arc'd' to be able to read the information. [Ed.]

# Maintaining Your Computer Equipment

Ian Wright, Toronto, Ont.

Are you a "novice" computer user? If so, then you should put this article aside for a few months – not that the topic is complicated, in fact it's simple, but I'm going to talk about fixing and maintaining computer equipment. Since any attempt to open and "mess around" with your new equipment will void the warranty, you really shouldn't – not yet anyway!

Those of you who are "experienced" with computers can use this kind of information right now. Experienced computer users are called by that name because they have "experienced" such things as the left shift key that doesn't work... the disk drive that won't read old diskettes... the printer ribbon that jams... the joystick that won't always fire to the right... and so on. Old timers are full of experience. Each of these experiences can be indicative of computer equipment that is in need of maintenance.

As your equipment gets older the mechanical parts can get tired, storage media can be corrupted, and dust and dirt can creep inside – diminishing its original performance. A few simple tools and a little time, and you can have your equipment like new again – without waiting two weeks and paying a \$70.00 minimum bench charge for someone else to do the same job.

For most maintenance on computer equipment and peripherals you'll need a set of screwdrivers. I suggest an assortment of sizes in three different types: Phillips, slotted and, (in Canada), Robertson. Use the correct size of screwdriver for the screws on your equipment. Oversized screwdrivers will mash the screw heads and undersized ones will slip out uncontrollably and score your machine – or you.

Don't scrimp on the quality of your screwdrivers. Good quality tools will last you a lifetime if they're not abused; cheap tools will turn an easy job into a nightmare. Two kinds of pliers are necessary for computer work – needlenose pliers (for removing the small screws on the inside of your 1541 when they're loosened, for instance), and locking pliers (for a secure grip on a Phillips or slotted screwdriver when a screw is obstinate). Those big adjustable pliers have no place near delicate electronics equipment. Again, buy good quality tools as a long-term investment.

Other "tools" include cotton swabs, 111 tri-chloral-ethane (tape head cleaner), glass cleaner, an artist's paintbrush, a fine-tipped soldering iron and an ink eraser. Nothing highly specialized. Nothing exotic. But all these tools will help to clean and maintain your computer equipment and will save you both money and grief. Let's fix a few things.

1. A video screen can develop an immense charge of static electricity that can attract dust and dirt faster than a magnet attracts metal filings. If you wipe the charged screen and touch your computer this same charge can blow your computer chips (and give you a nasty jolt!). Pick up a disk while you carry this electric charge, and you can destroy whole sectors of precious information with no hope of retrieval. The remedy – keep a bottle of glass cleaner and tissues handy and clean the monitor screen often. If the hairs on your arm rise when put near the screen it's time to spray and clean again. You will not only clean the screen, but the moist spray will discharge that deadly electrical field before it does any damage.

2. Are you using an interface unit like a BusCard, G-WIZ or a 1650 Auto modem? An occasional cleaning of the unit's edge connectors will reduce errors to a minimum and the best tool for this job is the common ink eraser. Lightly rub the rough eraser over both surfaces of the connector. Many interface owners do not realize that there are actually two "edges" (one across the top and another across the bottom) and they are not interconnected so they must both be cleaned.

3. Run a vacuum cleaner over the keyboard, drive and monitor occasionally. A soft brush attachment will dislodge the hair and dust balls that have gathered between the shift and Commodore keys, for example, before they gum up the works. If you smoke and compute, this should be a weekly chore because smoke and ash leave carbon deposits – the worst kind of dirt for electronic equipment.

Open your computer once every few months and vacuum out the dust and debris that's covering the circuit boards and electronic parts on the insides, too. A fine soft paintbrush can help to "stir things up", but be gentle. You want to clean – not re-arrange those electronic parts. Your disk drives and printers will also benefit from this treatment. Clean works best.

4. Sticky or inoperative keys require maintenance – but also require you to open the case and void your warranty. If your machine is already more than a few months old – go for it. There are lots of tiny screws to remove after you've opened the computer and before you get to expose the keys from underneath the brown cover – don't lose them. I suggest putting them in an ash tray or saucer along with the screws from the main case. Once inside, you should see a whole series of round white plastic plungers with black centres – these rubber centres are conductive and the contact tips should be dark and rough, not shiny and serrated. The actual contact points, however, are on the circuit board (the brown cover) and both of these need to be clean for the keyboard to function properly.

Use the eraser – or use a swab dampened with tape-head cleaner (don't use other alcohols because they will leave unwanted mineral deposits) – to carefully clean the gold contacts on the circuit board. When that's done, use very fine sandpaper to gently buff the rubber contact tips on each plunger. You may have to un-solder a couple of wires to release the keyboard cover to get at all the keys. Just remember to solder them back!

5. How do you know if your drive is aligned properly? Don't wait until your precious disks cannot be read. A quick check once a month will let you know if your disk drive needs attention and will save you a lot of grief. Use the original Test/Demo disk that came with your drive unit. If you've written on it, scratched material from it, or damaged it, then get another one. Don't get a copy. You want a disk that has not been altered since it was mastered at the factory. Be sure to put a write protect over the notch in the side and put the original disk in the drive. Gently close the door and then validate the disk using the short program listed below – but watch the drive light carefully. If there's any flickering before the drive stops, your drive needs alignment.



```
10 open 1,8,15,"V0":rem (use both
    "V0" and "V1" for dual drives)
20 input #1,e,e$,lr,se:rem get error message
30 print e:e$,lr;se
40 close 1
```

6. Don't scratch a file that lists in your directory with an asterisk or star beside it. Don't write to the disk; don't leave it; VALIDATE it immediately. The asterisk means that file was not closed properly and an unclosed file is a "poison" file because it will eventually scramble all the other files on that disk. As an extra precaution, you should copy (not backup) all those files to a brand new disk.

7. Regular maintenance will keep your disks tidy and reduce problems and it is a good idea to re-write data disks that have had a lot of save/scratch or save@ activities. The BAM (the directory track) has been written and re-written to many times over, and the tracks and sectors of any one file are probably scattered all over the disk surface. Again, don't use the backup command, but use a COPY/ALL or UNICOPY-type of program that will re-allocate the files. Your disk access speed will be faster, and the chances of bad files will be less.

8. Use a power bar to turn on your computer and its peripherals. I know Commodore has written: "The computer should be turned on last. . .", but I've had Commodore computers that have powered up together in daily use since 1979 without problem. The Commodore statement above comes from their 1541 disk drive manual, yet the CBM Users Manual for 5 1/4" Drives states just the opposite! As far as I'm concerned, the most convincing argument comes from the electronics repair experts who say that the on/off switches are often the first items in need of replacement on modern microcomputers.

9. Don't write on your disks using different drives - stick with just one drive if possible. If you must use different drives (at work and at home, for instance) you should always re-write files from other drives onto your own disks using your own drive. This is especially true for those with new and "old" style drives, but it can apply to any mix-and-match situation. Any disk operation other than READ is dangerous if the other drive you're using is slightly out of alignment. You could overwrite existing sectors slightly and the error might not show up for some time. This disk maintenance system is as essential as keeping backup files for the multi-system user.

10. Don't lay your disks down with the labels uppermost. The Commodore single-head drives have the head on the bottom and read the *underside* of your disk. I cringe when disks are thrown carelessly aside, or piled in a heap without their covers. Use the disk sleeves provided. Accidents await the careless - but if you spill coffee, strawberry jam, or ashes over your precious data disk all is not lost. You can open the disk jacket by prying up the folds to expose the shiny brown disk. Don't touch anything but the edges of the disk medium. Next wash the disk and replace the soiled jacket with a new one and seal it with tape. If it's still readable, copy the files to another new disk immediately.

11. Do you have some spare parts for your printer? A large organization I deal with went into a frenzy when they discovered there were no printer ribbons available and there were jobs queued up and waiting. Similarly, you know that your daisywheel will lose the letter 'E' late on a Sunday afternoon when your report is due Monday at 9:00 am. Keep spare parts on hand. Another printer tip is to leave the right hand tractor loose on a tractor feed system. This will reduce paper crumpling immeasurably.

12. Using drive cleaners has yet to prove worthwhile. I know of many drives that have been working daily for five or even more years without ever needing to have the heads cleaned. The very abrasive pads that come with some cleaning kits should not be necessary at any time. If you really must clean the drive head(s) rub them with a swab dipped in tape-head cleaner. Grinding off the heads to make them clean is not a smooth idea.

13. A joystick that won't fire, or won't move in a particular direction can be fixed by opening the case and checking the five contact arms inside. Cleaning, or slight bending, of the spring-metal arms can quickly put a "broken" joystick back in operation and you can go back to saving the universe.

Maintaining computer equipment is much easier than maintaining the family car - as long as you are aware of the special needs of electrical equipment. Many of the tips I have listed came from people asking questions at club meetings, or from my eavesdropping on the answers to other people's questions on electronic bulletin boards. If you have any tips or tricks you would like to pass on to other computer users, please write to me c/o this magazine.

--oo0oo--

This article was originally  
published in the  
Canadian T.P.U.G. magazine

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R U N N I N G   C O M M E N T

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On behalf of Bob and Margaret Conway of Ballina and John Alcorn of Lismore I would like to thank Norm Chambers for calling on us on the 8th July and showing us a trick or shortcut with computers.

Norm's original intention was to call on Bob and Margaret at Ballina, then come up to Lismore to see myself and others but when he arrived at Ballina at about mid-day he asked Bob to give John and myself a call to see if we could go down to Ballina which suited us ok. I guess he was too taken up with the water front view at Bob's place and the everlasting supply of Margaret's coffee which I think he never stopped drinking!

We appreciated Norm's presence and were sorry that he could not stay longer, as we could have asked a lot more about computers. I think it was almost 8 o'clock when Norm departed for Maclean and to catch up with George Harris, and I believe George left Norm's motel well after midnight, knowing a lot more.

We hope to come up to one of your Sunday workshops at Milton when the weather warms up and the days are a bit longer.

Thank you Norm Chambers also for your time when we ring you for help on a problem or want something sent down - we do appreciate it.

Bill Parker (Lismore)

P.S.

Four of us are licenced HAMS - Bob's call is VK2DRJ, John is VK2JWA and mine is VK2KDI, and just returned from overseas is Harold Moss whose number is VK2CHM.

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Not many Users Groups could count themselves as lucky as ours, who not only have a first rate Secretary, but also a first rate Public Relations Officer!

Imagine the following situation: Norm Chambers has been told by his boss that he'd better take those two weeks holidays or else he'd lose the lot. Norm, not having lined up any plans to go away for this holiday, decides that this is a good time to write out membership receipts and keep the group's database up-to-date. After about nine days of this he decides he needs a break from it all, jumps in his car in a Southerly direction and spends the rest of his holidays visiting our members on the North Coast of NSW. He ends his trip and his holiday by visiting Peter Gadsby and Denis Wright in Armidale. We believe his wife won't speak to him, because he has neglected all those domestic chores!

But this is not all what Norm does. In the course of his work he has to pay regular visits to the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns. Now, when he is away from home, do you think that he stays in his motel room watching tele? Not our Norm - he visits our computer friends in these towns to exchange information!

Norm has now been our Secretary since October 1984 (I seem to remember that I may have had something to do with his appointment), and he has been a tower of strength ever since. So I would like to join Bill Parker, and I'm sure all our other members, by saying: "Thank you Norm".

Ralph De Vries



by Dan & Reuben Phillips & Mark Walterfang

Hello joystick junkies, welcome to the new improved, endorphine enriched Games Column. Jamie Ogden has resigned, leaving us in his wake.

We will be making a few changes - first and foremost the introduction of a different rating system [hooray! - no more 'hookability'!!! - Ed.]. Games will now be given an overall score, based on a four star system (just like in the movies!). Hopefully this will be a more relevant system of assessing a games' worth. We feel that a score out of one hundred is akin to measuring a pinch of salt by counting individual grains.

\*\*\* ARKANOID (Imagine)

At first glance this looks unnervingly familiar; those of you who were twiddling joysticks in the era of the Atari 2600 will probably think that this game is an attempt at exhuming the age-old favourite, Breakout. In fact, it's an extremely accurate arcade conversion of the coin-op of the same name, which is really the game that unearthed Breakout all over again. It is a standard move-the-paddle-bounce-the-ball-bust-the-bricks game, with a few frills to keep it interesting. Overall, a difficult but enjoyable game.

\*1/2 ARMY MOVES (Imagine)

Picture this: Junior walks up to the tall, sleek glass counter clutching his cash in his tiny fist. Scanning the selection of games for something attractive, his eyes light up as they hit the slick and shiny package with Army Moves and another tough dude picture splashed across the front. Immediately the rest of the universe becomes unimportant and he parts with his hard-earned cash, buys the game, takes it home, loads it and is psychologically scarred for life. Not because of any war-like realism it may contain, but because of its slow, unrewarding and frustrating game play, watery sprites and crude, poorly-defined graphics. The game comes in two sections, the first a difficult, small-screen version of Moon Patrol, and the second a Purple Turtles variant. Might have been passable as a budget game, but at the usually exorbitant Ozisoft price, forget it.

\*\*\*1/2 INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST (Pandora)

Remember Gauntlet? The game in which you scooted about boring mazes, shooting things and collecting goodies? Well, forget it! This game takes the Gauntlet theme and dresses it up with great graphics, sound effects, clear and uncluttered gameplay, and best of all, it's in one load. Your mission: to infiltrate a 4-storey German fortress, kill just about everyone and save your comrade. It must be said though, this is yet another in the 'Rambo meets Commando - Who cares Who Wins Part 22' genre, in which one superhuman All-American must depopulate the entire nation with his letter-opener. It is the best of its type though, so if you're after an overhead, wall of lead, shoot-em-dead game, then look no further. Highly recommended

HINTS AND TIPS

Thas' noo ow yer mek porridge (for want of a better opening line to the all-new, phantasmagorical, "How to be Imortal" corner).

We'll start with some POKES for some of the more popular games (supply and demand strikes again).

DRUID as most of you know, the top-selling 64 game in Australia this Christmas. And for those of you who still can't complete all eight levels, here's something to gee you along - LOAD, RESET (with a reset re-enable), POKE 35731,12: POKE 35744,0: POKE 37940,0: POKE 39421,0: POKE 35779,76: POKE 35780,215: POKE 35781,1139: SYS5120. What does it do? Oh, a host of things..... Invincibility, automatic power refill, unlimited chaos & invisibility, the ol' walk-on-water trick.....:

KRAKOUT, the Arkanoid clone, can have its completion made much easier by entering (C) on the high score table. That's '(', 'C', ')'. The trouble is that it only lasts on the first 25 screens. Perhaps someone can find a code for the next 75?

MUTANTS - if you bought this game.... congratulations! Good, isn't it? But it's rather difficult to complete as it stands, so - LOAD, RESET & POKE 9273,230: SYS4096 to restart the game with an infinite number of fighters with which to combat the evil Survivor Zero Corporation. Hurrah!

FUTURE KNIGHT - a well-publicised tip, but a good one at that - hold down the keys B,U,G,8,7 all simultaneously to change Future Knight into Future Cheats.

THE EQUALIZER - LOAD, RESET and consequently POKE 48865, the number of the screen you want to play - from zero to 16. SYS 16606 restarts. Oh, thanks to our very own Mark Walterfang for that one.

And as the obese blue guinea-pig said to the rabid VZ200 user..... well, I can't remember what he said, but it was something to the effect of that if you have any tips, send them into us NOW, receive fame and fortune and a CONSIDERABLE ego-massage for the price of a postage stamp.

That's all for this month. Send any suggestions, tips, questions, answers, requests, cheques to:-

GAMES COLUMN - 11 Coultis Street, Sunnybank, Qld, 4109

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## D I S K E R R O R T I P

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by Denis Wright

If you are getting disk error messages that either slow down or abort data transfer between computer and disk, try making a copy of the troublesome disk on your best (or only!) drive and then use the backup in place of the original. Copying the whole disk often straightens out minor problems.

The disk error bug often happens when you have two drives and they aren't talking to each other too well (i.e. their alignments vary). You can control this to some extent by always using the same drive to write to the disk. Reading from it doesn't matter, though one drive may have less trouble than the other.

Incidentally, fast copiers like Hack'em aren't always the best for this sort of job. Good old COPY Q, slow as it is, lets you know exactly what's going on with every block on the disk. In fact, a disk scan on COPY Q is often a revelation! However, if a number appears in a sector on the screen in place of a + or - it doesn't necessarily mean an unrecoverable disk error. COPY Q is very sensitive to and faithfully records minor glitches that won't always upset a file or program.

You can also file copy from the (unprotected) offending disk to a new one, which usefully corrects errors. Once again, I've found that fast file copiers may fail with a suspect file where slow, simple file copiers succeed. As a last resort, try to read every problem file directly to the computer (if a program file) or through your word-processing program (if sequential) and re-file them on your disk. Then do a disk scan with COPY Q to check for bad blocks. With luck, you won't find any!

P.S. Even better, get your alignment problems fixed!



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## BYTES

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### FOR SALE

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Commodore 8032 Computer and 8050 Disk Drive

For further details contact Tony Bunney on (07) 377 3323 (a.h.)

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VIC-20 Computer - \$100.00

Memory Expanders for VIC-20 - Details on application

Contact Barry Wilson on (07) 399 6204

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### TO SWAP

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Six Games, including Bobby Bearing (T), Rockfords Revenge (T) and Fighting Warrior (D). Will swap for White Lightning, Petspeed Compiler or Laser Basic. Will also consider swapping or selling for other good offers.

Contact Jamie Cooper at 19 Bottlebrush St. Allingham, or Ph. (077) 778870.

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### SERVICES

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C-64 Digitizing Service: Have your Black & White or Colour photograph digitized (B&W preferred for better results), in either PRINT SHOP or DOODLE format. Cost for 2 photographs is \$7.00, including disk and postage, and \$1.00 for every extra photograph required.

Contact Tony Mitchell at 1/13A Mons Street, Vaucluse, NSW, 2030

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## SOME USEFUL TIPS

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by John Murray

A foam six-pack stubby makes an ideal disk box capable of holding about 30 to 40 disks. Glue in pieces of heavy cardboard to act as dividers.

A strip of black electrician's tape makes an excellent "write-protect" tab.

A computer (or other type of) magazine holder can be made from a wine cask: Drink entire contents of cask, wait 48 hours and remove (wine) bladder through tap hole. Cut out the tap side of cask with a utility knife, stand cask on its side and fill with magazines. The appearance of the magazine holder may be improved by the application of colourful adhesive paper. The cask should provide sufficient space for about 15 "Compute" sized magazines.

[ It must be obvious from the above that John Murray has successfully combined two hobbies, namely drinking and computing! --- Ed.]

MAIL BOX

This month must be 'Pen Friend' month. We have received three requests from overseas of Commodore users who wish to contact our members for exchanging information and software. They are the following:

Alain Folschweller  
2, Rue Charles Richet  
57050 METZ NORD  
France

He is 18 years old and will converse/write in French or English. He owns a C-64 with drives and MPS 802 & 803 printers. Interested in programming.

J. Narayan Kumar  
21 G.D. Naidu Street  
Colabatore - 641018  
India

He (?) is planning to buy a C64 or C128 with drive. Wants to exchange tips and software. Also interested in IBM PC computers.

Brian Grella  
8 Hickory Ridge Drive  
Fredericksburg, VA, 22405  
USA

He is a C64 owner and member of an Adventurer's Guild Users Group. Interested in exchanging ideas concerning programming or related topics.

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*I currently own a 128D and wish to buy a printer. It would be used for such things as printing labels, program listings, screen dumps and possibly assignments. A single sheet feeder would be helpful for other occasions but they are very expensive. Some printers in mind are Rite-man C+, MPS 1200, Star NX-10C. Which of these printers do you recommend and is there any way of using single sheets cheaply?*

*The thought of buying a backup cartridge is also on my mind, although they seem to be rare around Brisbane, so I may have to send overseas to purchase one. I prefer either the Action Replay, Mk3, or Freeze Frame, Mk4. Do you know of any stores in Australia where I could purchase one of the above cartridges and for how much?*

*Could you also tell me where I could get a cable which allows you to view 80 columns on a standard colour TV and do you recommend this as a cheap alternative to buying an 80 column monitor?*

Stephen Pugh

*Oh dear, here we go again - the 'getting your fingers burnt' dept! You know Stephen, you might as well ask me which model car to buy - these are loaded questions! But seriously, my recommendations (read: my personal preferences) don't count for much, so I have to generalize. You seem to be concerned about single sheet paper feeding. Well, all three printers mentioned above will cope with single sheet feeding at no extra cost to you, so that's not the problem. At some stage in the past we have looked at all three printers (or four if you include the Citizen 120D, the 'father' of the MPS1200). Now each one has their advantages and disadvantages,*



so I'll just mention a few points and leave you more confused than ever!

Both the Riteman and NX10C have the best tractor feed mechanism which does not waste so much paper. On most printers when you have finished a page and want to tear it off, you have to line feed the paper to be able to tear the printed sheet off - the result is that the next page is past the top-of-the-page position to start printing again, and you have to line feed to the next sheet. Result a wasted sheet of paper. Thus I have literally wasted hundreds of sheets of paper and kept my family in scribbling paper! The Riteman and Star NX10C printers have their tractor feed placed before the printhead, which means that no paper is wasted when you tear off the printed sheet. However there's more to printers than tractor feeds alone. Out of the three printers mentioned the MPS1200 has the widest range of printing features. It will print from 5 to 20 characters per inch, in draft, NLQ, italics and bold, and most of these features can be combined. Now the Riteman doesn't offer Elite (12 Char. per inch) and the Star doesn't have Italics! The MPS1200 does have the best implementation of the Epson mode, but there's a 'bug' in program listings on the 1200 (every so often lines don't get printed at all in substantial size listings). On a side by side comparison with a screen dump program I felt that the graphics printout from a Star NX10C was better than the same printout from a MPS1200. On the other hand if you use GEOS the MPS1200 can give you a full size printout of the total screen area, which I believe is not supported by the other two! Currently the Riteman has no Australian distributor, so there could be servicing problems. Physically the Riteman is the most compact printer and the Star by far the largest! Do you see now why I won't make any firm recommendations? Just compare features, price, guarantee, servicing arrangements (Brisbane, 'Down South' or overseas) and take it from there!

You are probably quite right about non-availability of backup cartridges in Brisbane - in fact the total Commodore software/hardware scene in Brisbane is rather sad at present. In the Australian Commodore Review you will usually find an advert of Micro Accessories in South Australia who distribute Freeze Frame.

I don't know of any ready-made 80 column cables for use with a C128 and TV set. However it's only a very simple cable consisting of a DB-9 plug, which is wired up to pin 7 (video signal) and pin 1 (ground) of your TV lead. Note, this will ONLY give you a monochrome 80 column output! If you decide to have such a cable made up contact Greg Shea, our technical coordinator for advice.

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*I don't know if seeing my "name in lights" in Mail Box before has anything to do with it, but I have decided to have another bash!*

*In the last letter I mentioned a '1530' printer. Sorry, this should read 'Citoh 8518', a 15" version of the 8510. Apparently SuperScript works, but Wordstar, PrintShop etc. will not.*

*I have read in this and other newsletters of Commodore owners complaining (and justified in most cases) of a lack of interest Commodore shows to the owners of their products. 64 Owners cannot complain - the life span of this machine must have set some records, with software houses literally pouring out good products. One look in any Commodore magazine will prove this.*

*The same cannot be said about other models. At the moment Commodore must think that the C128 has 'leprosy'! Apart from a few programs, most of these being 64 "updates", there's precious little to look at. Even the then General Manager for Nth America, Nigel Shepherd, in an interview in Compute's Gazette (Oct 86) put more importance on a RAM expansion for the 64 version of GEOS than the introduction of the 128 version. "We don't see it really as being as crucial for the 128, in as much as the 128 already has 80 column capability, so it doesn't need GEOS to give it that. You can use the 64 version of GEOS on the 128, anyway, in 64 mode."*

#### ANGER and FRUSTRATION

*Why should a person with a computer with full 80 column capacity have to put up with a 'scrolling' 40 column screen? The most hated phrase a 128 owner can hear is*

"you can use it in 64 mode anyway". If I wanted a 64 I wouldn't have bought a 128.

Maybe the fault lies with us. We are all too ready to accept this treatment from manufacturers/retailers. Commodore must have used the 128 as a 'stop-gap' model, selling it while the Amiga was in the sales doldrums - if the Amiga flopped (not much chance really!) then the 128 would at least hold ground. As it turned out they claim that the 128 is the fourth fastest selling computer in history. Now if they would only SUPPORT it.

Imagine how good NewsRoom, Printmaster, etc. would be in 80-column hi-res, how fast it would work in 2MHz. Only having three colours in 80 column hi-res won't be a problem - how many people own colour printers?

It might be possible to get all the Users groups around Australia to join in together to petition Commodore (both here and in America) to, at least, encourage software companies to support their products, and with any luck they might wake up to the fact that if they show support for their own product they might even sell more! (read more profit.) The 64 proves this!

Enough of the 'whingeing'. I've said my bit; now I challenge you all to reply!

Jim McCarthy (T'ville)

Yes, it's all a bit sad isn't it Jim? Commodore's best 8-Bit computer, with sales of over 1 million (well, that's their claim), and hardly any software beyond the 'big three' of production software, namely Word Processing, Data Bases and Spread Sheets.

That's the penalty you pay for making it '64 compatible'. I wonder if Apple will have the same problem with the Apple IIGS, which is also compatible with earlier Apple models?

Perhaps I saw the writing on the wall a bit sooner than most of my fellow members when I decided late last year to dispose of my 128 for the same reasons that you have brought up. However I honestly don't think that one can blame Commodore for the lack of software. The only thing they should be blamed for is for releasing the 128 two years too late!

Imagine yourself as a software developer. You can either develop your new software for the C-64 (+C128), which means a potential 7 million users, or for the C-128 with the claimed 1 million users. What would you do? On top of it all there's the sad story of the 1571 drive problems (see the articles in previous issues of CURSOR), and you are in an even greater quandary. So, back to the C-64.

Now on top of it there's the new Amiga 500 at similar prices to the 128, and so we see Commodore fouling their own nest! Not a pretty sight, is it? There's talk about a 128 CR model (which stands either for Cost Reduced or Component Reduced) at lower prices to compete against their own products. Perhaps in conjunction with their 3.5" drive (if it works!!!) they might be able to rescue the 128, but I remain sceptical.

We have a lot of C-128 members in our group now. It's a very fine computer, particularly if you are into programming, but a computer can only succeed with software support. Perhaps it's time that some more of our C-128 users spoke out.

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Greetings once again from frosty old Armidale! May I pass on to you my commendation for your brave decision to split Cursor into two editions. I'm sure that it was the right thing to do by your members, although I'm also aware that it doubles your editorial load and complicates financial and administrative matters. Someday, no doubt, I'll upgrade to some great new machine, but not until the C64 fails to do what I need, and so far it can do just about everything required. There must be thousands of us around who think like this, so the C64/128 will be the bread-and-butter of your membership for a long time to come. Please keep up the good



work. You probably don't realize it, but we isolated members need you much more than our Brisbane-based brethren. They don't know how lucky they are to have the personal contact with like-minded people that we long-distance members crave for.

A quick question about this expensive new 256K expander Commodore is bringing out. I'm not a programmer, so it has no interest for me in that respect. But I would be very interested if it could be used as extra RAM for word-processing files such as Easyscript or Superscript. Imagine having 5000 lines of available memory instead of 500! But I guess that would mean a completely new word-processing package, wouldn't it? Is it technically feasible to change the existing Superscript program to take advantage of that extra memory? Any thoughts on this?

Denis Wright (Armidale)

I am typing this reply after just checking our group's bulletin board, which carries several messages about the Cursor split-up. It is interesting to note that none of these messages were in favour of splitting up Cursor!

It is quite obvious from these messages that these members have completely missed the real reason for issuing two editions. To satisfy our Amiga members (now getting close to 100) it was necessary to offer them a similar newsletter in terms of size as the 64/128 edition. By splitting it in two editions we can contain costs. If we issued one newsletter of 60 odd pages per month we would have a considerably higher printing bill, as well as higher postal charges. By offering the alternative issue as an optional extra at cost price, we hope to satisfy those members who are interested in what's happening 'on the other side' of the fence.

It appears that we are doing something right for the benefit of non-Brisbane based members, to judge from your letter and many similar ones like it. All the same we would at all times like to hear from country members about particular topics which they would like to see covered. As roughly a third of our membership is based outside Brisbane it is vitally important to look after their interests as well.

You will be pleased to know that we know as much as you do about Commodore's memory expansion unit as you do - ZILCH! Yes, we are suffering here too from the dreaded 'information vacuum'! We don't even know if Commodore has any intention of releasing the 64's memory expansion unit in Australia (or for that matter the 1581 3,5" disk drive). In fact we haven't even seen the 128's memory expansion units which we do believe are available. Our President has tried to obtain one of these units from Commodore for review, but as yet we haven't struck it lucky yet.

Perhaps the whole thing is tied up with prices. The C-128 expansion units cost \$199.00 for the 128K model and \$349.00 for the 512K model. Even at discounted prices we are looking at \$175.00 or \$300.00, and we must assume that the C-64 expansion unit will also be priced in this vicinity. As a C-64 Family pack can be obtained for \$300.00 at present, people will think twice before spending several hundred dollars on an expansion cartridge, for which they won't have a great deal of use.

However, from the admittedly limited amount of information available, it appears that these units can only be used successfully by non-programmers if the programs themselves are configured to use the expansion units as a RAM disk. It appears that at this stage only GEOS will support the C-64 expansion cartridge. In the case of the C-128's RAM expansion units I believe that both PaperClip II and Vizawrite support these units.

If and when these expansion cartridges show up (if ever!) we are sure that Greg Perry will do an exhaustive review.

Your August review of the different word processors with which you are acquainted would be of great interest to members with the more expensive printers.

I think that perhaps a fair number of owners of 801 and 803 printers are consoled with the fact that underlining is out and that they are more or less stuck with the coarse shape of the letters.

There might be some people who purchased their 64 family pack fairly recently and found it with a voucher on which they could order the then current GEOS program for \$25.00. It is a word processor with some unique features and could be of interest to members who do not spend day after day behind their typewriter, and who want to produce something with different fonts, in different sizes, do underlining, some bold printing, and include the odd sketch. Even though the program has since been updated, there might still be some vouchers floating about (advertise in CURSOR).

In my opinion the superseded program still represents value for money in those circumstances, if it is still available.

Recently we saw Greg Perry give a demonstration with the new version, but of course not all members could be present at that event in Bardon. It seemed that a lot of people were impressed.

#### Cor Geels

Your suggestion is worth following up by those members who do have the older 7-pin type Commodore printers which don't offer all the latest features. It is easy enough to say "go and buy a better printer", but we aren't all of us in the Alan Bond category, and thus we look at other ways of obtaining better results with the existing equipment.

To my knowledge the GEOS offer card is still supplied with the C64 family pack, but when one of my relatives ordered his copy of GEOS some six months ago he still received the old (1.2) version, despite the fact that the new version (1.3) had been on the market for quite some time. Perhaps one of our members has purchased one recently from Commodore - if so we would like to know if they are now supplying version 1.3.

I would like to take this opportunity to lodge a serious complaint against Commodore and other Australian software distributors regarding the lack of an update policy on software. As an example, in the UK owners of SuperScript and SuperBase can upgrade to the latest versions of these programs for a minimal amount. Commodore, who distributes these programs in Australia, has never offered the same service, or if they have, they keep awfully quiet about it! In a recent issue of R.A.M., the newsletter of the Tuggerah Lakes Commodore Users Group, there's an interesting article of one of their members who tried to obtain backup copies for the 'Pocket Series' of software from Imagineering. After five months he still didn't have working backup copies for his programs! I feel that it is time that we as a Commodore Users Group should approach Commodore and all other software distributors to get some straight answers regarding updates or backups of Commodore software. If no satisfactory answers can be obtained we should then approach the manufacturers to outline our complaints.

Ralph De Vries



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## D I R E C T O R Y

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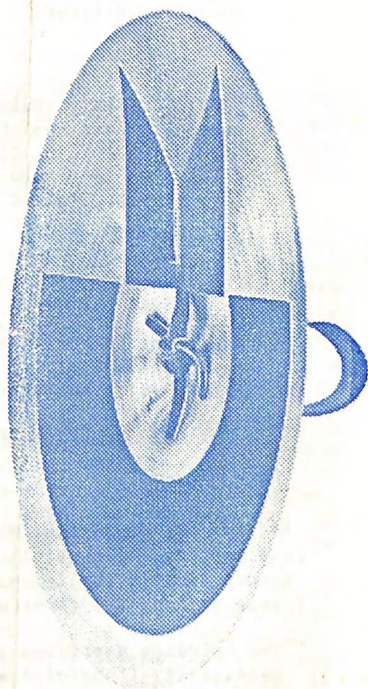
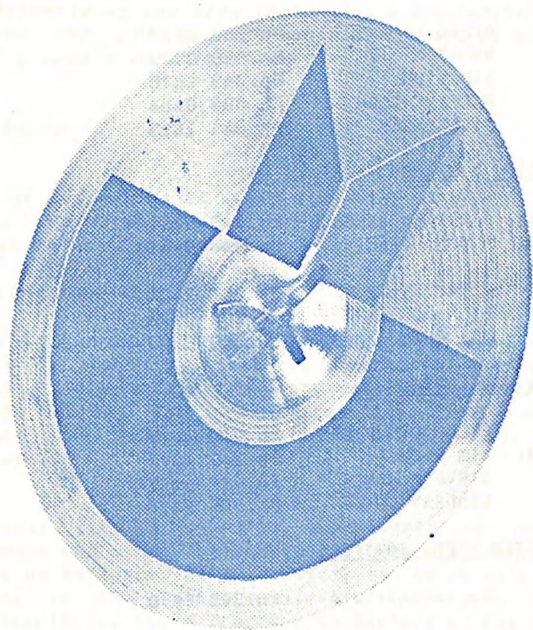
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