CURSOR

MENU

MAIN MEETING: on **Tuesday 10th May** 1988, in the Bardon Prof. Development Centre, 390 Simpsons Rd. Bardon. Entrance is through the Centre's Car Park in Carwoola Street. The lending Library opens at 7 pm. Main Meeting starts at 8 pm sharp and finishes at 10 pm.

=========>   **A ROBOT DEMONSTRATION BY KEITH COTTERELL**   <=========
as well as BEGINNERS CORNER & PANEL DISCUSSION

C-64/128 WORKSHOP: on **Sunday 8th May** (1 pm – 5 pm) in the Guidance Officers Training Ctr., Bayswater St. Milton. Bring your own computer equipment. Public Domain Disks are available for copying.
NOTE: FOR MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Colin Shipley – 366 2511 a.h.

AMIGA WORKSHOP: Sunday 8th May 1988 (1pm – 5pm) in the Ithaca R.S.L. Hall, cnr. Nash & Elizabeth Sts., Rosalie. NOTE: FOR MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Bruce Wylie – 359 9779 a.h.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL: 4th Sat. of the month (12am – 9pm) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Don Friswell – 343 1735 a.h.
CAPALABA: 3rd Saturday of the month (1pm – 5pm) in the Capalaba State Primary School (Redl. Educ. Centre). Ph. David Adams – 396 8501 a.h.
KINGSTON: 2nd Friday of the month (7pm – 10pm) in the Kingston State School. Ph. Peter Martin – 290 1537 a.h.
PINE RIVERS: 1st Sunday of the month (1pm – 5pm) in the Strathpine State High School. Ph. Barry Bean – 269 7390 a.h.
SHERWOOD: 2nd Friday of the month (7.30pm) in the Graceville State School. Ph. Leigh Winsor – 3792405 a.h. / Philip Parkin – 8181172 a.h.
WAVELL HEIGHTS: 2nd Tuesday of the month (7.15pm – 9.45pm) in the Wavell State High School, Childers St. Entrance. Ph. Cor Geels – 263 2839
SUNSHINE COAST meets regularly. For meeting times, dates, places: Ph. Harvey Riddle – 071 / 421036 or Ph. Vic Mobbs – 071 / 941330
MARYBOROUGH/HERVEY BAY: 4th Monday of the month (7pm – 10 pm) in the Sunbury St.School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade – 071 / 215059 a.h.

Copying of Commercial Software is NOT allowed at any of our Meetings!

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

<u>PRIMARY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP:</u> meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month
(7.30pm) in the Aspley State School. Ph. Bill Weeks - 3412823 a.h.
<u>PLUS/4 SUPPORT GROUP:</u> - Clarence Stock is acting as support coordinator
for Plus/4 owners. Ph. 397 8894 a.h.
Are you interested in forming a Sub-Group or Special Interest Group?
Contact our Sub-Group Coordinator, Terry Steer, for details.

GOODS & SERVICES

PUB. DOM. DISKS (C-64/128): $3.00 ea (+ $2.00 Postage up to 5 Disks)
PUB. DOM. TAPES (C-64): $2.00 ea (+ $1.00 Postage Per Order)
BLANK DISKS 5,25" (DS/DD): $10.00 per 10 (+ $2.00 Postage)
PUB. DOM. DISKS AMIGA : $6.00 ea (+ $2.00 Post. - up to 5 Disks)
BLANK DISKS 3,5" (DS/DD): $30.00 per 10 (+ $2.00 Postage)
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (40 disks) - $15.00 ea (+ $5.00 Postage)
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (80 disks) - $20.00 ea (+ $5.00 Postage)
1541 DISK DRIVE COVERS: $10.00 ea (+$1.00 Postage)
"PUBLIC DOMAIN INSTRUCTION BOOK" (C64): $5.00 (+ $1.00 Postage)
"STARTING WITH DISK DRIVES" (1541) : $2.00 (+$1.00 Postage)
"B.B.S. 64 INSTRUCTION BOOK": $3.00 (+$1.00 Postage)
"C-128 MEMORY MAP": $2.00 (+$1.00 Postage)
"AMIGA DOS SUMMARY": $3.00 ($1.00 Postage)
"AMIGA BEGINNERS GUIDE" (CLI etc.): $3.00 (+ $1.00 Postage)
"AMIGA EDITION of CURSOR": $10.00 annually (to financial members only.)
TURBO-ROM for C-64 or C-128: Members Price: $40.00 (+ $2.00 Postage), or
Customised Version (Choice of Screen Colours + Your Name on Screen):
$45.00 (+ $2.00 Postage)
AMIGA PRINTER CABLE (A500 / A2000): $25.00 (+ $1.00 Postage)
USER PORT PLUG (EDGE CONNECTOR): $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 (+ $2.00 Postage)
DISK NOTCHERS (for 5,25" disks): $8.00 (+ $1.00 Postage)
RIBBONS for MPS-1000, GX/LX-80 PRINTERS: $9.00 (+ $1.00 Postage)
RIBBONS for MPS-1200/50, Citizen 120-D PRINTERS: $12.00 (+ $1 Postage)
RIBBONS for RITEMAN C or F PRINTERS: $13.00 (+ $1.00 Postage)
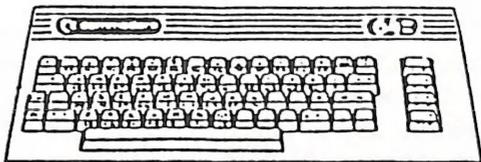<u>ALL orders to P.O. Box 274 - Springwood - QLD - 4127</u>
<u>Cheques to be made out to: C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.</u>

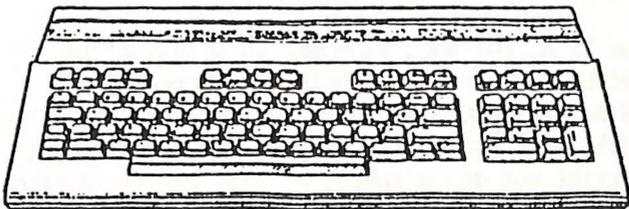For Hire to Members only: 1526 Commodore Printer
For details contact John Van Staveren on 372 3651 (a.h)

COMPUTER ADDITIONS

by Gary MacMinn (Ph. 848 2271 a.h.) and Philip Van Der Vliet
(Ph. 848 5753 a.h.), at the Milton Workshop (see page 2).

SERVICES OFFERED:

RESET BUTTONS: $6.00
RESET RE-ENABLE: $6.00
DEVICE NUMBER CHANGE: $6.00
C-64/128 COMPUTER SELECTION SWITCH: $6.00
40/80 COLUMN SELECTION SWITCH for C-128 $10.00, C-128D $15.00
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 made up to Special Order Only:

SERIAL SWITCHING BOX: $14.00
SERIAL PORT DOUBLER: $14.00
EXPANSION PORT PLUG: $7.00
CAPACITANCE METER BOARDS: $14.00

C. C. U. G. (Q.) INC. MEMBERSHIP FEES

	Joining Fee:	Annual Membership:
Ordinary*	$10.00	$25.00
Country/Associate	$10.00	$15.00
Student/Pensioner	$10.00	$15.00
Family/Business	$10.00	$35.00

(*Within the B'ne Metropolitan Phone District)

Direct all membership enquiries to: *The Secretary, C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.*
                                        P.O. Box 274, Springwood, Q'ld, 4127

EDITOR'S NOTES

In this issue Doug (Merlin) MacLurkin is starting a column called **Wicked Wizardry**, and a jolly good idea it is too. However, for this column to be successful, Doug needs input from our members. Most of you have at some time or another found ways and means of making aspects of your computing easier or better. Why not share this information with your fellow members and pass it on to Doug for inclusion in this column? You can send your tips etc. to: Doug MacLurkin, 326 Bowen Terrace, New Farm, 4005.

Welcome back to two of our regular contributors, Paul Blair and Denis Wright, and a very warm welcome to George Harris who contributes an article on packet radio - very timely in view of our April talk by Steve Hudson.

STARTING AN ARGUMENT

Following the letter in the 'Mail Box' column in this issue by Fred Hawley, I would like to add my five-cents' worth about GEOS. I consider the Geos operating system a flop. Trying to make a C-64 behave like an Amiga or Macintosh with their windows, icons, mouse and pointers (WIMP) is becoming a very costly exercise indeed - just add up the cost of the different modules and you'll see what I mean. To get the best out of the system you really need a second drive and (if it were available) the memory expander. If you add all this up you may as well buy an Amiga 500 as it is cheaper!

Not only is the cost too high, but when it comes to printing the quality is just not there with the majority of printers currently in use. Time and time again we see printouts with fine white lines chopping up the characters - this looks very amateurish indeed. Five years ago we marvelled at being able to print out any graphics at all, but we are now getting a lot more sophisticated and we want something more professional looking. Simply put Geos is too slow, too expensive and too clumsy. In the USA Geos might be a feasible proposition, but in Australia it is far too expensive to be a viable alternative operating system.

Well, that's my point of view. Do you agree or disagree? Let us have YOUR views (on disk please!) in forthcoming issues of your newsletter.

Ralph De Vries

RANDOM BITS

MAIN APRIL MEETING

Despite the inclement weather there was a very good turnout for the PACKET RADIO demonstration, organised by **RON RICH** and given by **Steve VK4 FEA** and **CHRIS VK4 BCM**. We were also pleased to welcome our member **GEORGE VK2 KET** from MacLean in NSW, whose article on packet radio appears in this issue. Our thanks to these gents for a very informative lecture.

REMEMBER !!!

Our May Meeting is being held on <u>THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH!</u>

————>   **TUESDAY 10th MAY**   <————

"Well, this certainly buggers our plans to conquer the Universe."

CHANGES

Doug MacLurkin will take over the Public Domain Disk & Tape sales with immediate effect, as Mark and Vivian Eckert have disposed of their C-128 computer (more Amiga traitors!). We are sure that Doug will tackle the job with his usual efficiency.

ERRATUM

In last month's RANDOM BITS column it was stated that the annual sub for the <u>Amiga edition</u> of CURSOR was $6.00. The subscription rate for this edition is $10.00 per annum. The editor regrets.

NEW COORDINATOR

We welcome Don Friswell as the new coordinator of the Cannon Hill sub-group. Don's (after hours) phone number is 343 1735.

LIBRARY NEWS

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from Allan and Doreen Horne

The software (cartridges, tapes and some disks) plus several books for the Vic-20, previously available for borrowing at the group's main meetings, are being transferred and, by the time this gets to publication, will be available at our Cannon Hill Sub-Group. Interested members of our group will be able to borrow the material between 2 pm and 4 pm at the sub-group's meetings on the 4th Saturday of the month.

And now for the bad news... A stocktake was conducted of the Library books during the meeting on the 7th March. It seems that in a two year period since the beginning of 1986, fourteen more books have disappeared from our collection.

As if that is not bad enough, it has been found that portions of books, borrowed from the library, are being removed (read stolen) - to be specific, the Micromon section from "Compute!'s First Book of Commodore" and several selected chapters from the book "Commodore 64 Game Construction Kit".

Most of the books now "lost" are out of print and cannot be replaced and for the C64 particularly, it seems that new books are going to be hard to come by in the future.

It probably is a waste of time and CURSOR space, but it needs to be said - will those responsible for the theft and/or vandalism of our books please bear in mind <u>that their fellow members of the library have a right to the use and enjoyment of these books as well</u>. These books were purchased with their subscriptions and intended as a permanent source of information - not just for the benefit of the unscrupulous few we are unfortunate enough to have in our midst.

ABOUT SUCCESS

by Paul Blair

A lady came up to me one night at a User Group meeting, obviously wanting to talk. Her opening gambit was "This might seem like a trivial problem to you, but I can't see what I am doing wrong. I'll never make a success of this computer thing..." She was writing her own program, had come to a dead end, and had the courage to seek help.

A printout was produced, and as we chatted away about it, she told me she was about ready to use her computer as a door stop. So many of the things she had tried 'were not a success'. That last word caught my ear, and I'm not too sure I heard much else of what she said. But a few moments later she took the printout back from me, said "Ah! I see what I'm doing wrong" and vanished back into the mob.

Her words had gently reminded me that success (or failure) is a relative thing, and we each of us in turn must decide which applies to us. Some of my mail tells me the same thing about their authors. So I'm moved to write a few words to all of you who find it difficult to decide whether the effort you have to make in learning about your computer is worthwhile.

I'm sure some of you don't mind one way or the other, or perhaps don't recognise the signs. You use your own computer for business or as an entertainment centre, and writing your own material is not to your taste. But consider for a moment. Every neat spreadsheet you prepare or game you conquer is a test of your success or otherwise. If it doesn't compute, then you know where you stand (or sit!).

That result, one way or t'other, is pretty clear cut. But when you decide to take the plunge and roll your own programs, then the measure of your skills is not always as simple to detect. This is so especially if you come to the job a bit in awe of the whole thing after using software written by others.

It pays to remember a simple fact. No one has ever written a working program of any reasonable size that runs perfectly the first time. A few

(a very few, I suspect) get it right the second time. And so it goes. Even when it does seem to be working the right way, a copy to a friend for "beta-testing" (which only means testing by someone who hasn't seen it before) may turn up some unexpected/unwanted results. This is probably the hardest phase to survive.

So what is success? I have a few criteria. The first is to pull out something you wrote, say, three months ago. If it looks a bit dated, or you can spot something you would do better if writing it again, then you are a success. If you tackle a task you've not tried before, like writing relative files or making some background music, and it works (even sort-of), then that's success too. If you write some short note about what you have discovered in the wee small hours, bingo! And if you volunteer something you have written for inclusion in the club library, then you are making great strides, and can be proud of your achievement.

One last bit of advice to the diffident. Find a friend to work with. If you don't want to be an individual success, be a group one. Discuss, argue, criticize, and don't forget to laugh a bit. Later, maybe, you can go on and be a world beater in your own right.

I hope my lady (who I've never seen again) is happily programming away out there. She will no doubt make other mistakes as she sharpens her skills. But I like to think of her as a success.

DOES YOUR DATASETTE BEHAVE?

by Angus Norrie

My Datasette used to give trouble when loading. No more! Now, I use the following routine:--

(1) Rewind the tape and set the counter to zero.
(2) Fast forward until near the start of the program. Stop.
   (3) Press play. Stop when the counter is exactly at the start of the program. (I always start on a ten.)
(4) Load as usual.

It works perfectly for me.

WICKED WIZARDRY

by Merlin MacLurkin

Trick No 1:-

When making a header for a disk or a name for a file I have always liked to use the full 16 characters allowed in order to give as complete a description as possible of the contents. Unfortunately this has involved counting across the screen or on my fingers! So, why not let the computer do it for you?:-

Type in S(shift A) "1234567890123456",8 (shift/return). NB it must be a shift/return otherwise you will be saving an interesting numerical file! At least you can be certain it will have no more than 16 characters!

Now cursor up to the 1 after the first inverted commas and type in your file name and press return. If the name be shorter than 16 characters use the space bar to erase the extras and close the gap with the delete key. After the file has been saved cursor up and type V(shift E) over the S(shift A) to verify.

Trick No 2:-

Disk labels always seem to be too small. I like to get as much of the directory as possible on the label which makes it easier to find a file &c. but what can you do with the average label which is about 2" by 1 1/4" or 3" by 1"! However there is space at the top of the disk between the notch and the top of the hole of approximately 5" by 2" which can be used for a label.

At the supermarket you can buy sticky backed sheets of material in all sorts of colours and designs (for lining shelves,cupboards &c). Cut it into strips about 4 1/2" wide and feed it into your printer. Don't go wider than 4 1/2" or you will snag in the disk drive and don't go down more than 1 3/4" or you will cover the hole. Use compressed mode or if your eyesight be good use superscript.

You can use different colours to help identify subjects such as games, utilities &c.

Perhaps somebody could produce a program which would print out the header and directory in 3 column form and in compressed mode.

PACKET RADIO & COMPUTERS

by George Harris. (VK2 KET)

How about that horrible blank page in the March issue!! Shame on us! For twelve months now I've read our editors pleas for articles to go in OUR magazine and justified my guilt by saying that as I'm only a new-comer I don't have as much to offer as those more experienced and that one day when I feel that I am up to writing a fully authoritative trea-tise on the ins and outs of the C64 then I will do so.

I realise now that day will never come, even if I live to be a hundred, and that the little that I have picked up is an awful lot more than I started out with and may possibly be of use to someone who is just beginning.

For me, it all started with a second-hand C64 for my birthday eigh-teen months ago. Having always had an interest in electronics and being a regular reader of various magazines I became more frequently aware of articles concerned with the printing out of weather maps and the like, received on short-wave radio from satellites and ground-stations. I contacted a local radio club and not long after saw my first amateur radio shack, complete with resident computer. My life hasn't been the same since! I immediately started studying for my amateur license, at the expense of less computer time unfortunately, although I do use an excellent program for morse-code training, and gradually accumulated bits and pieces of equipment along the way.

Up till now the main marriage of radio and computer in my shack has been with a thing called packet radio. What is packet radio you say? Is it something that you add electricity to, to get instant grilled tuner and digital chips. Joke? Well, a packet is a block of digital infor-mation of a user determined length, usually about 128 characters long, that contains an address, the senders identification, an amount of information and a checksum of the total. It is transmitted and received between, in this case, two amateur radio stations. About fifty per cent of the time now, my C64 is hooked up to a home made modem that is in turn connected to an fm V.H.F. radio transceiver. When I wish to connect with another amateur, I type in his callsign followed by the callsigns of any digipeaters, if any, that are on the route and hit the return

key. A digipeater recognises its own callsign and retransmits error free
signals heard, thus allowing V.H.F. to be used over distances normally
to great. These digipeaters, mostly unmanned, have a reasonably intel-
ligent T.N.C.(terminal node controller) built in and check every digital
packet received for errors. If the error code does not add up then the
digipeater asks for a repeat before retransmitting the corrected packet.
If the person I connect to is not home ,but his rig is switched on, then
I can leave a message in his screen buffer. From where I am situated in
Maclean, N.S.W. I can connect directly to bulletin boards and indivi-
duals between here and Brisbane by routing my call through Lismore and
Mt.Cotton. The Sydney bulletin boards and individuals can be accessed
via the Coffs Harbour, Pt.Maquarie and Newcastle digi's. As well as the
unmanned digi's, most amateurs leave their equipment in a mode that
allows automatic digipeating of other peoples traffic, thus forming a
fairly comprehensive network.

The radio BBS's work pretty much the same as telephone BBS's (with-
out the 'phone bill!) I can leave a private message to an individual or
a bulletin for all to read. I can also have a message forwarded to
another BBS anywhere in the world and this might be done either on
H.F.(high frequency) or sent via amateur satellite. A fair number of the
BBS's are Commodore but the larger ones are usually I.B.M's or the like
with hard disc storage and contain a considerable amount and variety of
files full of useful material.

An item of interest at this point is that Amsat will, in the very
near future, be launching yet another amateur satellite with, I believe,
one of several on board radios being dedicated to the packet mode.
Uosats 1 & 2, designed and operated by the University of Surrey, have
been in the amateur service for some time now, and a "listen only" news
bulletin has been regularly transmitted in the digital mode.

Amtor is another form of amateur and commercial communication using
a computer and is similar to packet in some respects, and although it
uses a less sophisticated error detection and correction method, has at
times, certain advantages. Three more types, without err/det/corr. are
ASCII and radio teletype using the Baudot code and the time honoured
Morse code.

There are many other uses for the computer in amateur radio, the
most obvious being the myriad programs of electronic formulae for every-
thing from designing antenna to matching circuits, winding coils, plot-

ting signal paths, log books, and the tracking of amateur satellites.

Another use, in my own case, is the decoding of broadcast transmissions. Although I still haven't printed out a weather map yet, I do quite frequently tune into some of the many news-agencies broadcasting worldwide and read "up to the minute" news on my monitor by demodulating their radioteletype. From what I read it would appear to me that there is a lot more going on in the world than we hear about through our regular media outlets.

Well, I hope that those reading this with more experience than I will forgive any errors and not be too bored with it all as I am sure that there will be many to whom it will provide a new aspect of what the humble C64 gets up to.

BITS AND PIECES

---

by Denis Wright

I have to carry disks back and forth between work and home, and I've found that the best container for them is a plastic lunchbox you can buy from most chain stores. It measures 22 x 16.5cm across the widest part of the lid, and will fit in about 30 disks (as long as you put them in across the lunchbox and not lengthways) with a neat space for your disk notcher beside them. Carry that under your arm and people will say - as they do to me - "Gee, mate, I knew you were crazy about computers, but floppy disks for lunch??!!"

Want to capitalise a heading quickly using Superscript? Add the following to your defaults file, put the cursor on any part of the line below the heading, and try using:

    *f=ˆo/abˆjˆm/ac

While on Superscript, I've puzzled a few people by having the following in my defaults file:

    *f=/ssfˆˆˆˆˆˆˆˆˆˆˆˆ

This is the only way I have found you can automatically delete up to 6 resident characters in the Search & Replace facility via the programmed

keys. Two up arrows delete one character. At least it makes it possible to program repetitive Search & Replace operations using the defaults file.

Superscript again! If you try to program keys in direct mode, you are limited to 20 characters before having to link with another key using ^& [nextkey]. It's not always realized that this limitation doesn't exist in the defaults file. I guess it's theoretically possible (I haven't tried it, mind!) to program just one key to execute a series of commands up to the limit of the command area. But what happens if you want to change the operation of an extra long default-programmed key in direct mode? Just hit /sc and then the HOME key. Odd things appear to happen - part of your text disappears. Nothing to worry about; just hit RETURN and the macro command is gone; and your 'lost' text reappears.

Got a Star NL10 printer? It's not always realised that you can supercondense characters and text using the following command (in its longest Superscript form) and appropriate line spacing:

        *sa6,27,51,10,6,27,15,6,27,83,48

(or in BASIC):

```
OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(27);CHR$(51);CHR$(10):CLOSE6
OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(27);CHR$(15):CLOSE6
OPEN6,4,6:PRINT#6,CHR$(27);CHR$(83);CHR$(48):CLOSE6
```
It's great for printing disk labels.

How to scramble a disk - do what I did; place your battery-powered watch on the desk and accidentally put a disk on top of it. The battery's magnetic field can create a very confused disk - and an even more confused computer when it tries to read that disk.

How would you like to have - simultaneously - GeoWRITE and GeoPAINT plus the entire desktop plus scores of fonts at your fingertips, and still find you had 400 k of memory left to play around with? No, not a dream or even an Amiga, but a mega-memory Macintosh SE I've been using. This isn't a plug for Macintosh - just a comment that GEOS is a terrific training ground for these machines. If you know how to use GEOS properly, you can sit straight down to a Macintosh and make it work! (But I can still whip up a Superscript document on the C-64 twice as fast as anything on the Mac. I kinda like that megabyte of memory though....)

REVIEWS

COMPUTE'S FIRST BOOK of COMMODORE 128

by Douglas Maclurkin

In a search for a hastily gathered and incohesive (should that be incoherent?) series of articles, one would find it hard to go past the chapters in this book. I note it was published in 1986 which, in the rapidly advancing computer world makes it almost antediluvian. The 128 first came on the market about that time and no doubt the people at Compute scouted around, gleaned a few articles from past magazines and threw them quickly together and rushed into print in order to be the first on what they hoped would be a burgeoning market. Alas, the result is this hodge-podge of bits and pieces.

For example, I cannot see any reason why a whole ten pages in a 'First Book' should be devoted to the Save-with-Replace Bug (@0: to you & me). Surely this belongs in a magazine and not in a textbook particularly a 'First Book' textbook. Also, why do we need a memory map? Are we going to plunge into machine code or is it assumed we are already experts in this area?

The chapter on CP/M is kid's stuff (attention all those with puerile tendencies). It merely skims over the surface and like a constipated bird has little abil ty to drop anything of benefit.

After all that,you may wonder whether I found any helpful parts in the book. Surprise! Surprise! I did.

There is a good article explaining the dynamic keyboard and also I used the Autoboot programs quite successfully.

The rest of the book is rubbish.

Caveat emptor (let the buyer beware).

To paraphrase Shelley (not Neville but Percy Bysshe) "Hark to the trumpet of a prophecy". Doreen our library Queen has asked me to review the GEOS books. If any member already has experiences with GEOS I would be glad of their reports. In the meantime make sure you don't miss your next copy of Cursor, the 64/128 newsletter.

-ooOoo-

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

by Dennis Cheshire

This fairly new book has been released by Sams Publishing in the
USA. It is similar in style to their earlier publication, the C-64
Repair Guide which I felt was fairly poor, however some preconceived
ideas were quickly put to rest as I got stuck into this volume.

The text introduces the reader to the topic at a leisurely pace at
first, but soon comes to grips with the nitty gritty of its title. One
glaring deficiency of this book is the fact that it deals with three
different models of the 1541 drive simultaneously. This not only causes
confusion; it also can cost you a lot of money and wasted time. (I
wonder for example how many PLA chips have been blown because U17 and
U18 have been transposed between seemingly identical C-64 models.) No,
this is a real trap for the unwary who want to repair their 1541 drive.

However, as we proceed, we find that the diagrams presented are
accurate and easily read but are often split up over several pages. The
'fault trees' are long winded but do seem to arrive at the correct con-
clusions. (Although I must admit that I have only checked those ones out
where I have experience of those particular types of faults.)

In conclusion, a good guide to the qualified repairer who should
already be conversant with its contents, and thus he/she probably won't
buy the book!

In my opinion, it is foolish for the inexperienced user to dive into
the innards of a 1541 drive except for minor mechanical problems or
cleanup jobs, as swapping IC's can be a very expensive exercise indeed.

BASIC 8

by Ted McNally

BASIC 8 is a high resolution graphics program for the C-128 in 80
column mode. The program was written by L.R. Wallace and D.F. Darus and
is marketed by Patech Software Inc. The cost of Basic 8 is US$39.95 and
an overseas packing charge of US$7.50 applies. The cost of an overseas
bankdraft is A$7.10 and the exchange rate is the rate of the day of
application. Send to Patech Software Inc., P.O. Box 5216, Vancouver,
WA98661. Allow about four weeks.

Basic 8 adds over 50 new graphics commands to the standard C-128 basic. A single command allows the drawing of boxes, circles, 3D lines and a multitude of solid shapes. Commands are included for windows, fonts, patterns, brushes and storing fonts, logo's, drawings etc. in buffer areas for very quick recall.

Also included is **Basic Paint**, a flexible icon based drawing application, written in Basic 8. Basic Paint supports an expanded video ram (64K), ram expanders, joystick and the new 1351 mouse. Basic 8 has several printer drivers and these allow the graphic screens to be dumped to the printer. Basic Paint is a great program and is probably by itself worth the money.

Printers supported include Epson FX80, Panasonic 1091, Star NX-10, Olivetti PR2300, Star NX10-C, Mannesman Tally Spirit 80, Gemini II, MPS 801, Seikosha 1000, Gemini 10X. It is possible to write your own printer drivers, but you need to know some machine code. Also included in the package is an icon-based desk top utility which provides quick access to your Basic 8 creations. A run time module is supplied so that programs using Basic 8 can be run without Basic 8 installed in the computer. A good 188 page manual is provided. In the latest release two other packages are provided; Basic Write and Basic Print, but I have not seen these.

Basic 8 is totally compatible with Basic 7.0 and needs an RGB monitor to show off its true power. Basic 8 features one monochrome and four different colour display modes. Monochrome has a bit mapped density of 640 x 200 pixels, but the colour screens vary, depending on colour resolution. The C128 and 128-D computers in Australia use the 8563 video chip which has access to 16K of dedicated ram. Evidently the new models released in the USA have 64K of ram dedicated to the 8563 chip. Basic 8 works quite well with smaller ram models, but evidently is much more powerful and flexible with the extra video ram. The manual explains all this and goes on to show how to upgrade your video ram to 64K. C-128's with 16K of video ram have 4 choices of screen resolution, e.g.:

640 x 192 colour, 8 x 16 pixels.   640 x 176 colour, 8 x 8 pixels.
640 x 152 colour, 8 x 4 pixels.   640 x 164 colour, 8 x 2 pixels.
Basic 8 lets you display all 16 colours on the screen at one time.

I didn't find the graphics commands all that easy to use, but I am not much of a programmer. I eventually got some of them right by trial and error. They are certainly very powerful commands.
Briefly here are some examples. Set up:-
@Walrus - 0 or 1 (0=16K video ram, 1=64K video ram).
@clear - Clears screen and sets bit-mapped colours.
@color - Sets screen colours. @mode - Selects screen combinations.

@screen - Selects drawing screen. 16K = 1 choice, 64K = 8 choices.
@text - Sets up standard text screen.
Drawing Commands:-
@angle, @arc, @brushpattern @circle, @sphere, @char, @copy, @box, @line
@flash, @dot, @grow, @scale, @paint, @sclip. @ptr, @origon, @scroll,
@style, @view, @window.
Memory Management:-
@buffer, @struct, @send, @store, @dat, @stash, @zoom, @pattern, @font,
@display, @lstruct, @cbrush.

These commands are powerful, some examples:-
@char,structure#,column,row,height,width,direction,"char.string".
@box,x1,y1,z1,x2,y2,z2,shear direction,shear value,thickness.
@grow,x step,y step,z step. (@grow controls the thickness parameter in
multidraw. It controls the number of times lines are drawn. + and -
values decide the direction the line is thickened.)
@hcopy,secondary address,height,density,rotation.

The program disk is not protected in any way, but the commands have
complex parameters and a manual is needed to use Basic 8. From the
original disk you are asked to make:-
A Basic 8 work disk, for writing and editing your programs.
A Basic Paint work disk. Contains the 80 col. colour paint program.
A Basic 8 Runtime disk. Basic 8 programs on this disk cannot be edited
or listed, and this disk can be sold or given away. Programs on this
disk can be made to auto-boot or be selected and loaded and run from a
menu using a joy stick or mouse.
Your own programs, using the powerful features of Basic 7.0, and
using Basic 8 to liven up the visual effect, run very well. However a
Basic 8 logo flashes onto the screen for a second or so as your program
gets going. I would prefer not to have the logo, but some might like it.
I don't know if it can be removed. If you like Basic 8, it is available
on a rom chip (US$19.95) that plugs into an empty socket in your C-128
or C-128D. Holding down the control key on power-up activates Basic 8.

At about A$72.00 the program seems good value. For anyone wanting
more information on Basic 8, I'd suggest the article in the Oct.87 issue
of "Ahoy". Also there's an advert on page 137 of the Dec '87 issue of
"Compute!'s Gazette.
I would like to hear from possible other users of Basic 8, in parti-
cular anyone with Basic Write and Basic Print. I can be contacted by
phone on (074) 274 358 at night.

CURSOR ARTICLES

by Cor Geels

As mentioned in the March issue of 'CURSOR' (Mail Box Column) I have finalized the task of going through all our club periodicals since early 1983 and squeezing what I thought could be an item of interest into a few lines in some sort of index system. I have named the disk "CURSOR ARTICLES" and it is now in the club library.

I am sure a lot of people will know far more about some of the subjects than I could hope to highlight, particularly because many subjects were written by 'real computer people', like Jim Butterfield, Paul Blair, Greg Perry to name a few.

In those instances I have quoted what I thought was a bit of a guide, and then mentioned the author, the pages and date of that Cursor. If the parent (Club) copy of this disk program is updated monthly, a newcomer who has a disk drive can buy a ready made history of some hints, reviews, experiences and opinions which may be of some help.

Perhaps somebody can write a monthly, (ready to type in), update for members who have a copy of the disk and wish to keep their records up to date, and submit it to the Editor for inclusion in a future 'CURSOR'.

As an afterthought I have created a file "COMPUTER WORDS" which is almost empty. It would be nice to see this file built up with cooperation of members who can explain the fundamentals of some terminology in a few lines of text, for even laymen to understand.

Perhaps something along the lines of:

DIRECT MODE=NO LINE NUMBERS;BASIC STATEMENTS LIKE: PRINT 12 OR PRINT "HELLO"; THEY ARE CARRIED OUT WHEN THE RETURN KEY IS PRESSED; THEY DON'T GO IN MEMORY

If something like this entry is saved with the loaded file "COMPUTER WORDS", it slots in automatically under the letter "D".

Using the feature "DISPLAY" it will show roughly as typed on a 40 column screen, but prints out with a full stop after "HELLO" and through on the same line.

Hopefully our Editor would be able to squeeze an item or two like this into Cursors with holes in them so every now and then.

—ooOoo—

GAMES COLUMN

by Dan & Reub Phillips & Mark Walterfang

REVIEWS (out of four stars)

*** THUNDERCATS (Elite)

Lion-o's friends have been kidnapped and the Eye of Thundera jewel
has been stolen. So, Lion-o has to rescue the other Thundercats and
recover the jewel. The player controls Lion-o and fights across a
series of horizontally scrolling levels. Wielding a sword, Lion-o has
to fight off various adversaries all with evil intent, jump holes and
break open boxes containing extra lives, swords and blasters. Graphics
are good, sound isn't so good. Overall, Thundercats is a very playable
and well polished game, especially for one based on a cartoon.

ON FINDING CHEATS FOR GAMES.

All of the cheats and POKEs (except for the ones sent in by readers,
and the ones in the first column) appearing in the past columns have all
been worked out by us. Finding POKEs isn't really all that hard, BUT
first you need to have some knowledge of machine language. If you don't
then go away and learn it and don't come back 'till you have.
You have? Good! Ok, first of all you have to find the start address
of the particular game. To do this load up the game, then after break-
ing out of it (with a reset switch or whatever), load up your monitor
and look for where the program code looks like it starts. Whenever you
try to restart a game, make sure to re-load it if your monitor has
loaded over some vital piece of code.
After you have found the start address, you can do whatever you want
- for example, if you wanted to disable sprite collisions you would have
to change the part of the game that checks for collisions. Location
$D01E is the address which reports sprite to sprite collisions, so, you
would use the 'hunt' command (or whatever your monitor uses) to search
through memory for the bytes $1E,$D0 (remember that numbers are stored
in low byte, high byte order). Disassemble from one byte before the
addresses reported and you will probably find something like LDA $D01E.
This could be changed to LDA #$00, NOP - so that no sprite collisions

are ever reported. Restart the game and hopefully you should have no
sprite collisions!

Another example - suppose you wanted extra or infinite lives in a
particular game. One way to do it is to note the amount of lives given
at the beginning of a game. If, for example, the player is given three
lives, you would search for a LDA #3 ($A9,$03) or something similar, and
note all occurrences down. Now for a bit of trial and error - disassem-
ble one of the addresses and change the LDA #3 to LDA #whatever. Then
restart the game and see if you have extra lives, if not try another
location. If you do find it, you can then search for the part of the
program which decrements the location which holds the amount of lives,
then, if you NOP that out, you'll have infinite lives.

So, cheat finding boils down to this: decide what part of the game
you would like changed, try to work out how that part would be pro-
grammed, search for it and remove or modify it.

As well as a reset switch, a reset re-enabler (which is sold by the
club) is a very handy gadget to own. This simple little device allows
you to reset 'reset proof' programs. Or even better, get an 'Expert
Cartridge' or something similar. These cartridges allow the user to
break out of a program, modify it with a built in monitor (which uses no
computer memory), then restart the program from where you left off. The
'Expert Cartridge' also allows you to examine and change zero-page and
the cassette buffer etc. (these areas of memory are wiped out with a
normal reset switch. Because of this, programmers sometimes put some
vital code necessary for the game to run in them).

Finding cheats for games can also be very helpful to your programming
skills as well - especially if you intend to write a game yourself. If
you do find any cheats, send them in and publish them in this column.

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

MAIL BOX

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*How about allocating a bit of space in our magazine for questions
members might be pondering over, something that puzzles them. I suppose
it really does not matter whether people use their own name or a pseudo-
nym as long as the question is computer related and to the point. Most
readers will think about the question and some of us might benefit from
the explanation, if so far as possible layman's language is used. Such
question and answer sessions will also reach our country members, who
always miss out on discussions at meetings.*

I feel that since I raised the subject I should start the ball rolling, so here goes (Pardon my ignorance):

Looking at a disk directory printout I saw that the heading (reverse printed) title and ID (identification) were OK but then there was a 1 instead of the usual 2A at the end. I vaguely remembered having heard that the 2A stood for the way the disk was formatted. I looked through some books but of course did not know where to find it. This time a couple of 'phone calls did not help other than: 'I'm sure it has something to do with "DOS". I looked at other directory listings, and sure enough, there were more strangers, even on some disks which I had originally bought 'ready made' from the club.

When I compared these with the later issue of the same title I found that the newer club disks are marked 2A.

I looked up "DOS" (disk operating system) in the 1541 manual and read (73) DOS 1 and 2 are read compatible but not write compatible, etc. I thought that means something like: the 1541 drive will read from either disk, but you cannot save 2A DOS stuff on a 1 DOS formatted disk.

I am sure that in my ignorance I have in the past saved some programs to disks with DOS 1 and they seemed to come up when loaded. My questions are:

1. "Does it matter?" I think the answer is "YES", because otherwise why bother having a DOS 1 or DOS 2A.

2. "What does it do differently?"

Of course I can format a disk (title and ID only) which then gives a 2A ending and then copy all files or programs from a disk ending 1 with the aid of a copy program onto that 2A disk.

3. "Does it achieve anything or am I only tricking myself?"

Cor Geels

There's no need for a separate "Question & Answer" type column; we have tried it before and it never attracted much attention. We feel that this Mail Box column will take care of both letters and/or questions.

The story of the different versions of DOS is quite involved (that's what 2A stands for) - in fact it is firmly tied up with the different versions of Commodore Basic. There have been versions 1, 1.1, 2,1, 2,5 and 2A amongst others, and I have probably left a few out! Some of the older Public Domain disks started life as PET disks and were often copied on 4040 dual drives - hence the different versions of DOS. You were quite correct in assuming that you can read the older versions of DOS, but it isn't always possible to write to them.

Hopefully this article will be read by our 'disk guru', Paul Blair, who may be able to explain the history of DOS in his own inimitable way.

First I want to thank the members of the CCUG for the friendly reception I received at my first group meeting. I was very impressed, primarily with the "club spirit", so evident throughout the entire assembly.

I would like to support and encourage the aims so eloquently expressed during the debate concerning the redevelopment of an atmosphere of learning and participation. I, as many others, I am sure, have gradually increased their interest in hobby computing and found that without outlaying vast (by my definitions) amounts of money on software, etc, about which we knew nothing. Under this environment we can only progress.

Many of your members have forgotten more about computing than people like myself have learnt to date. It is these snippets of information that would help us enormously, i.e. How to get the most out of cassette or disk drive, how to use a printer, how to buy cheap second hand equipment, as well as the use of a simple data base or word processor, etc, etc. When time and/or funds are limited, it is obviously best to learn as much as possible before making a purchase, but at this early stage of my understanding, I can use all the help I can get. So please write anything, it does not have to be a treatise of world shattering proportions. I am sure no one would criticise any item offered which was written to help a fellow member. Someone out there will read it, and be another step towards gaining the enjoyment that you yourself derive from hobby computing, and being a member of such a worthy group.

Again, many thanks for the encouragement I received at my first CCUGQ gathering.

Allan Gray.

At long last I have made time to write to CCUG(QLD). I note from the March edition of 'CURSOR' that despite the fact that many people still own a C-64, the number of programming experts is rapidly diminishing as they are now heavily involved with the AMIGA.

Whilst this undoubtedly makes things difficult for members who attend meetings in Brisbane, it becomes almost impossible for country members like myself to obtain advice or assistance.

I would like to suggest, therefore, that 'CURSOR' include a programming section which must have a problem page. I do not know if your workshop meetings deal with programming problems, but if they do, I am sure that the

problems raised and solutions given would be of great interest to readers who are unable to attend meetings.

Furthermore if readers are encouraged to submit programming problems, either from their own programs or magazine programs which do not work, then they will stand a good chance that some reader will know the solution and contact them direct and/or send the answer to 'CURSOR'.

I feel sure that this suggestion, if adopted, would easily fill your blank page.

As a start, I am having problems with a 'Compute Gazette" (Dec '87) program called Disk Rapid Transit. I have double checked my typing and it is correct. When RUN the main menu appears OK, however if option 1 or 2 is selected, instead of a second menu or a directory appearing, the screen goes to an 'insert disk instruction'. I have monitored the program and the second directory is certainly there (starting, I think, at $0F1F). Unfortunately, my limited ML capability has not allowed me to track down the error, hence the call for help.

In my next letter I intend to include a short program I have written which makes use of the keyboard buffer.

David Belson [174 Buderim Garden Village, Buderim - Ph. (071) 445672]

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Our thanks to Allan and David for their suggestions. When we analyze the results of our survey we will take their suggestions into account.

Not having seen David's 'Disk Rapid Transit' program I'm unable to comment; however Compute!'s Gazette listings are notorious for their errors, so it's quite possible that a rectification will appear in a following issue. In the meantime I have enclosed David's address and phone number in the hope that one of our members has the solution to his problem.

I'd like to comment on member David Beere's discourse on the merits of GEO WRITE (Mail Box, April '88) for letter writing.

Having a need to write numerous letters I have come to these conclusions:- although I appreciate GEO WRITE's W.Y.S.I.W.Y.G. format and ease of writing, editing and saving text, printing is a different matter. Geos's WRITERS WORKSHOP clearly wins the well defined and clearly legible stakes if you use the COMMODORE FONT together with the DRAFT QUALITY MODE and then set your printer in N.L.Q. mode. As far as I'm concerned GEO WRITE's many fonts, although interesting, leave a lot to be desired when it comes to the actual _printing_ of letters. Having tried them all I've gone back to using

Draft Mode (i.e. the printer's normal fonts). I now use Easy Script exclu-
sively to compose, edit and save all my correspondence and print out on a
Star NX-10C printer.
   Any further comments, readers?

Fred Hawley (Bathurst)

BYTES

FOR SALE

CARDCO +G Printer Interface for C64/128. It is in working order - $50.00
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Contact Ted McNally on (074) 274 358 (after 6 pm)

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Editor	RALPH DE VRIES	Ph.300 3477

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM: Phone Number (07) 344 1833

Sysop	GREG SHEA	Ph.399 5979

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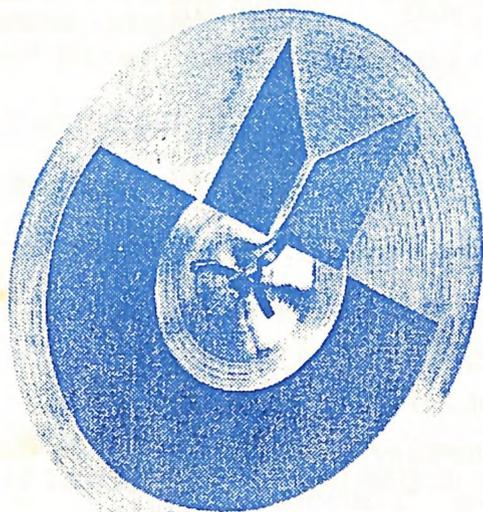
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