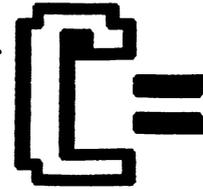
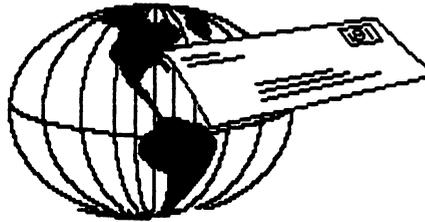


COMMODORE MAILINK

3-18-98

NEWSLETTER OF -
MEETING 64/128 USERS
THROUGH THE MAIL

MARCH 1998



===== MEETING NEWS =====

Welcome to the new members: Yann Barthelmy, Art Cook, Barry Evans, Chris Fite, William Gilmer, Ken Kill, Scott Parker, Donald Schultz, Julius Schwartz.

The group is sadly shrinking, we are down to about 185 members as of March. It is sad to report that four of our members have passed away. Our sorrow and sympathy go out to their friends and loved ones.

Many of our members are switching to that *other system* for the graphics and sound. I have looked at the Internet with that *other operating system* and yes, the graphics are striking and interesting. My big problem is with the speed that the web pages loads. Those of you that have used or are still using a 1541 drive will know what I mean that it takes "forever" waiting for the page to load. I use my commodore exclusively for the Internet because of the speed. By the time I can access the mail program on the Windows machine, I have gotten my mail and answered it with the Commodore and am ready to log off.

If any of you have children or grandchildren, introduce them to the Commodore 64/128. Remember this is where Bill Gates got his start. The opening screen on the Commodore says that the operating system is made by MicroSoft Corp. It should be interesting to them to see the progress of the computers from the 30's to the present.

Included with this issue will be the latest edition of our Membership List. Please keep this handy as there will not be another one until September, 98. As new new members come into the group their information will be listed in Mailink so keep that information handy also.

Tom Adams,
Meeting 64/128 Users Through The Mail

MAILINK CALENDAR

Here is a listing of the tentative dates and editors for the Mailink in the months ahead. Keep in mind that the editors could change and each one may have slightly different deadline dates.

MAY: Paul Berry -- his requirements are listed in the Editor's Desk.

JULY: Bruce Thomas --May 15th -May 21st

SEPTEMBER: Earl Williams --July 15th - August 21st - Articles, also changes in Bios, Volunteer for friendly correspondence, and Group Resource List Membership List, and "Information" section.

NOVEMBER: Hugh McMenamin, and Jean Nance. Sept. 15th - October 21st.

MEETING 64/128 USERS THROUGH THE MAIL: ADDRESSES, OFFICERS, AND POLICIES.

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FRANCIS REDMOND, Vice-president. Rt 7, Box 7614, Palestine, TX 75601.

BOLF L. MILLER, Treasurer. 492 Anscape St., Ventura, CA 93001. DUES AND DONATIONS. (Checks to the trust account must be made out to BOLF L. MILLER).

BRIAN VAUGHAN, 2101 Shoreline Dr. 362, Alameda, CA 94501-6245. MEMBERSHIP ADDRESSES AND BIOGRAPHIES; CORRECTIONS AND CHANGES

JEAN WANCE. 1109 Briarcliff Dr., Urbana, IL 61801. NEWSLETTER MANAGING EDITOR.

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JOSEPH F. FEHN. 3612 Puuku Makai Dr., Honolulu, HI 96818. EMAIL ADDRESSES AND CHANGES.

COMMODORE MAILINK.

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TAKE TIME TO SMELL THE FLOWERS

EDITOR'S DESK

WHOA! Here it is March, 1998 already. Editing this issue has been quite an experience. I thought it might be interesting enough to share with you. One article is about Fontmaster 128 which I used to produce this issue. The second article is about converting files from MSDOS to ASCII for use with WS-Illustrator II and again to Fontmaster 128 format. While I prefer using FM128, it does have some limitations which are annoying but I manage to work around. I find it gives a feeling of great satisfaction overcome those limitations.

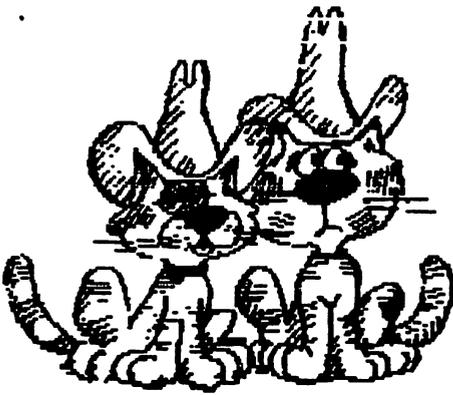
I hope you like the "look" of this issue as well as the articles submitted. Some of the material was keyed in manually in order to save time. I did my best to make sure to avoid and/or correct any errors in typing but it is possible that I missed some, for that I apologize. I did cheat just a bit --could not resist using some extra clip art. I have always loved different clip art and I have this fantastic library that I purchased for use on my son's Presario. I was unable to resist using some of it in this newsletter.

We always welcome articles, questions, and desperate pleas for help concerning our faithful Commodore machines and how we can continue using them effectively in the 21st Century. Many thanks to those who submitted items for this issue!

Greetings to those of you who joined us this month! We are glad to have you with us. We hope you will share what you know with us and please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it. We have all been there.

Editor for the May, 1998 issue will be Paul Berry. Deadline line for submissions for that issue will be April 15, but he will accept submissions up until the 21st. His address in the Mailink directory is correct but he just uses the regular 5 digit zip.

He says he can accept material in any sequential file format but prefers Write Stuff (Illustrator II) on either size disk. Include e-mail address if you have one.



† A P L E A †

We have always prided ourselves that "The Commodore Mailink" is almost entirely written by our members. Once in a while when someone saw something in another Commodore user group newsletter that was outstanding, and that they felt our members needed, we would reprint it.

Rolf Miller went through the back issues of "The Mailink on Disk" recently, gathered articles that he felt were still of current interest, and edited them to bring them up to date. We are grateful to Rolf for his work. Membership changes over time so that most members don't find that material familiar. However, we would rather not have to

depend on it excessively.

We have collections of material from other newsletters, including much from the Tulsa Commodore Users group newsletter, provided by Chris Fite. These, too, can be used when necessary, but we really prefer current articles written by our own members.

You may have noticed that the January Mailink had several items from past Mailinks, and from other newsletters. Ed Harler didn't get enough submissions to fill a reasonable sized issue, so he used what was available. In this issue, Jolene has included material from the past and from other newsletters, for the same reason.

This is YOUR newsletter. Don't depend on someone else to provide material for it. Every member has some knowledge, or experience, or idea, that could be worked up and sent to the editor. It doesn't have to be long and it doesn't have to be technical. Personal experiences with your computer, accounts of your correspondence with other members, feelings and wishes and reminiscences, are all of interest.

On the internet, the Commodore newsgroup, `comp.sys.cbm`, recently had a "thread", (continued topic), that started when someone asked, "What was your first computer?" That generated a lot of interesting accounts of the good old days. Another topic was "When will the last Commodore die?". Would anybody like to address those topics for the May issue?

We used to have a flourishing "Questions" column, which generated a lot of answers for "Feedback" the next time around. "Feedback" is also open for discussion of previous articles. Recommendations and reviews of new software and hardware are always welcome. How many members own the new CMD Super CPU for the C-64, and why haven't we seen reviews of it? Maybe the C-128 version will be out by the time this Mailink reaches you. What are your initial impressions? Do you have a favorite program of any kind that is still available from some source? Let us know how you use it.

So, please get that material rolling in. If Paul Berry can't use everything that is submitted to him, he will pass it on to future editors. We would much rather use a backlog of current member written articles, than old material or reprints from other sources.

On a different topic, Tom Adams had a plea in the January issue for a volunteer to edit one more 1998 issue. We now have editors for all of 1998, and for January, 1999. So if you would like to edit an issue, get in line and contact me about editing the March through November 1999 issues. That is, if you plan that far ahead.

Jean Nance
Managing Editor

SAYING GOOD BY

Some sad news comes with this issue. We have lost several of our members recently. A note from Shana Rothwell said that Bill passed away December 6, 1997. He had been in poor health for a number of years but his C64/128 gave him something to do and to look forward to. George Buffam Jr. and Theresa Gagnon have also left us as well as Milford Zeman. Our sympathies to the family members and prayers also.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FROM ROLF L. MILLER, TREASURER

Following is a summary of the trust account as of January 31, 1998

Balance			
1/1/88	\$2507.80	1/1/87	\$2732.83
CREDITS	308.00		3467.67
DEBITS	000.00		3692.80
1/31/98	2815.80	12/30/	2507.80

The Credits include all dues and donations received during the period. The Debits are all the expenditures (including advances) during the period. The cost of printing, envelopes, and postage for the January Mailink came to \$229.51 (advanced in December, 1997)

WHY SOME DIDN'T RENEW

ROLF MILLER

It happens: some don't renew their membership. On the other hand, a look through the current bio-pages will discover a number of new members. And isn't it amazing? After all, Commodore hasn't been an Xmas-List item for nearly a decade.

A reporter for the local newspaper (who plans to write a story about this subject) recently asked, "Why do so many people persist in using Commodore?" My initial response echoed what many say: "It continues to fulfill all my needs." But there is an underlying reason why this little 1/16th megabyte, 1MHz machine persists. The following illustrates this:

An elderly man whose sight had failed, gave up on using a typewriter because of the garbled results that occurred when his fingers wandered off the home row keys. The suggestion that he get a word processor met with two objections. First, was the cost, but the second is what really scuttled the idea. While a garbled text on a word processor could be corrected before the printing, his wife would be the one required to do the retyping.

A Commodore 64 answered both objections. First, cost is hardly an issue when it comes to the C-64 system, especially since a monitor isn't needed: the C-64 can utilize a TV. Second, the Talker version of the Write Stuff word processor reads aloud what is typed. The options include speaking the characters as they are keyed, saying just a word, reading a sentence or paragraph, or reading the entire text; another option spells aloud any words desired. Other options read the commands in the menu line, the file names in the load menu, the printer settings in the print menu, and any message reported to the display.

So, while his wife loads the program and sets up the printing, he types to his heart's content without the need of further intervention. This is why so many people continue to use the Commodore: IT CAN DO!





LOADSTAR AND US

Our members certainly are prominent in the Commodore community. Take, for instance, the recent Loadstar 164 disk magazine. To start out, the "cover" picture, entitled "HMS Loadstar", otherwise known as "The Spirit of Peoria", is a full screen colored graphic of a paddle-wheel steamer, by our own **Hugh McMenamin**. Three of the featured articles were written by our members: "Geezenstacks", a group of short useful programming routines by "Zeb" Larry, "Eight Off", a solitaire game, by **Maurice Jones**, and "Scrap Handler", a Geos utility for organizing picture scraps by **Roger Detaille**.

Loadstar is putting out a feature disk of eight previously unpublished solitaire games by **Maurice Jones**, "Eight Pack".

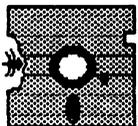
Ed Lang was one of two runners-up in the "Stamp Challenge" contest.

"Zeb" Larry had a letter to the editor in the issue, explaining that he was not able to resubscribe because other computer interests were too costly, especially the internet. Editor **Fender Tucker** replied that he was sorry to lose Zeb, but of course any time he had a program in an issue, he would get an "author copy".

Kenneth Barsky wrote asking if the CMD Super CPU would be able to speed up The Write Stuff word processor. Fender's reply was that the 64 version certainly does speed it up a great deal, it remains to be seen if the 128 version will do the same.

On a sadder note, there was a letter from the family of **Milford Zeman**, announcing his death. Fender had words of appreciation for Milford, and his obituary will be elsewhere in this Mailink.

Oh yes, I nearly forgot, **Fender Tucker**, the Grand Mojo of Loadstar, is of course one of our members. Hmm. Is the Commodore world a little like the town my mother used to describe, in which everyone in town earned a living by taking in the laundry of the other citizens?



COMPUTER VIRUSES

by **Chris Fite**, Dec 1985
Tulsa Area Commodore Users Group

Our Commodore computers are immune to the computer viruses which cause so much damage to PC type of computer programs and systems. Like a biological virus, the computer virus is small, makes lots of copies of itself, can be spread from computer to computer, exists in many forms with new species popping up from time to time, and it can cause great harm. A computer virus is simply a small program, written by a criminal programmer, that will automatically copy itself over and over again endlessly into your programs and into the computer's operating system, causing some or all of your programs or data to become corrupted, erased or malfunction. Imagine a years worth of business data disappearing or 1000 of your programs being destroyed. Our Commodore computers have their operating system program stored permanently in ROM (read only memory). A virus program cannot store itself into ROM because new information cannot be written into ROM. However the PC computer has all or at least some of its operating system stored on hard disk, which can be written to or written over, which means a virus can write itself into the operating system and then later start writing endless copies of itself into all the data and programs stored on the hard disk as well as onto any floppy disk inserted into the computer. In hindsight, the PC engineers failed to consider the criminal programmer, one who tries to write programs to destroy computer systems. Engineers designed locks for cars and homes to keep out criminals, but they failed to do so for the PC computers.

(Editor's Comments:) Recently I received an email warning me about a virus traveling via email. It stated that should I open it the virus would be unleashed. After passing this information on to other PC users I was informed that this was a hoax. This is not unusual, I was told that something like this makes the rounds every few months. I was then referred to a web site that exposes hoaxes. I am sharing it with you. <http://kumite.com/myths/>

BUSINESS CARD MAKING PROGRAM

written by Chris Fite, Apr 1987
Tulsa Area Commodore Users Group

Shown is a type-in program that will print 10 business size (2" x 3.5") cards to paper. That is a maximum of 12 print lines, each 35 characters long. You simply modify the "print" statements in the program to suit your needs, then run the program. Then you take the printout to a copy store like Kinko's and tell them to copy it to "card" stock paper (the floor copiers won't handle the heavy card paper, but their behind-the-counter copier will). Then you cut them apart with a paper cutter. The total cost (card paper plus copy charges) is about two cents per business card! And it's fast, it took me 2 hours to make 50 cards the very first time.

```
100 REM BUSINESS CARD2
120 REM BY CHRIS FITE 1987-3-13
130 REM PRINTS A PAGE-FULL OF BUSINESS CARDS, 10 PER PAGE.
150 OPEN 1,4:CMD1
190 FOR I=1 TO 5
200 PRINT*      COMMODORE COMPUTER CLUB
205 PRINT*      COMMODORE COMPUTER CLUB
210 PRINT*      _____
215 PRINT*      _____
220 PRINT*
225 PRINT*
230 PRINT*      C64 & 128 COMPUTERS.
235 PRINT*      C64 & 128 COMPUTERS.
240 PRINT*
245 PRINT*
250 PRINT*      MEETING 2ND MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
255 PRINT*      MEETING 2ND MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
260 PRINT*      IN MARTIN EAST LIBRARY AT 2601
265 PRINT*      IN MARTIN EAST LIBRARY AT 2601
270 PRINT*      SOUTH GARNET IN TULSA FROM
275 PRINT*      SOUTH GARNET IN TULSA FROM
280 PRINT*      7:00 PM TO 9:00 PM.
285 PRINT*      7:00 PM TO 9:00 PM.
290 PRINT*
295 PRINT*
300 PRINT*      CALL 251-3615 FOR MORE INFO.
305 PRINT*      CALL 251-3615 FOR MORE INFO.
390 PRINT*
395 PRINT*
400 NEXT I
1000 PRINT:CLOSE1:OPEN1:CMD1
1010 PRINT*(CLR)*;"HIT STOP RESTORE KEYS"
```



READY.

HELP NEEDED

Dear Sir/Madam,

The paper magazine 'Zine 64 from the United Kingdom is going through a bit of a change. After the next due issue (no. 10) Chris Holgate will relinquish his job as Editor due to other commitments. From Issue 11, I will be Editor and I need YOUR help!

At the moment I am in particular looking for foreign distributors and regular writers. I will however need contacts for News, Features, and Cover disk/tape contributions regularly. Of course, it would be nice if you were to let any possible readers know about the change too. Please keep in touch by:

Email: B00576@stedward.oxon.sch.uk

Postal: 'Zine 64, 7 Glyme Close, Woodstock, Oxon, OX20 1LB England

Thank you for your time, your help as well. Any comments/questions you may have will be very much appreciated. David Connolly

PROBLEM WITH SPEEDSCRIPT

FROM CHRIS FITE

My Speedscript (version 1 & 3.0) always adds one extra line feed per page while printing. A minor problem on one or two page documents but a big problem on multipage documents where bottom margin further to the bottom of each successive page until it begins to print on the paper's perforation.

What is wrong? What is the fix? (It is not my printers, or the printer's D.I.P. switch settings, I have already tried that.

SUGGESTIONS FROM VINCENT DYMEK

Using 1351 Mouse As Joystick

Hold down the right button on the mouse when powering up the computer. That's it! The mouse replaces the joystick.

Concerning the MailLink Calendar on the first page of the Jan.98 MailLink, Vince suggested that it would be a good idea to list the editor's name for each issue along with the deadline.

»» FEEDBACK »»

Additional Bio Information:

Newt Ludlum's enthusiastic endorsement on page 14 of the Jan. 98 MailLink accomplished more for this reader than he may have intended. It provided a peek into the background of some of the other members of the group as it pertains to Commodore use. There is no suggestions here to include such in the Bio pages. However, reading about how members got started with Commodore is not only interesting but also informative as to who might help in a given situation.

For example, the first computer to take up residence on this desk bore the name SINCLAIR. It contained all of 1K of RAM. The lack of programs back then necessitated learning how to program. It is amazing how much can be done with 1K of RAM. Next, came a 2K version, then a 16K expansion unit, then death soon after it became the TIMEX-SINCLAIR. The obvious successor bore the name Commodore 64. The number of today's Commodore users who started with SINCLAIR is also amazing. Consequently, when it's learned that another began with SINCLAIR, it's a sure bet that he/she knows how to program and it's likely that the approach to computer use is similar. How did YOU get started with Commodore? Rolf L. Miller

Chris Fite passes along some information referring to a mention of a low cost store to buy printer ink ribbons from AMERICAN RIBBON AND TONER COMPANY. They sell ribbons in bulk, like six to a pack. Calling their toll-free # (1-800-327-1013) will get you their catalog.

FEEDBACK:FILE SPLITTING

ROLF L. MILLER

Regarding Fred Knerr's request for sequential file splitters that work, the following are generally available and are known to work: BANANA SPLIT, SPLIT, and SLICE.

There are, of course, sequential file readers for the 64 that will read any length file. Here is a simple one liner. To slow the display, hold down the CTRL key. To pause the display, press the STOP key. To resume, type CONT and press RETURN. If reading is not resumed, type CLOSE 8 and press RETURN.

```
10 OPEN 8,8,8,"FILENAME,S,R":FORX=0 TO1:GET#8,G$:X=ST:PRINT G$;;NEXT
```

There are also sequential file viewers that handle up to 60K files and allow paging through the text.

However, as Fred noted, the want is to use a word processor's ability to search the bio-page files to find others with like equipment and interests. Hence, the need to split the files down to a size that will fit into the word processor (usually some 19K or 75 disk blocks).

The problem with most file splitters is that dividing is somewhat arbitrary, some divide the file into halves or thirds. Others allow selecting the resulting size. In either case, the splitting can only occur at track and sector boundaries. Where in the text the split occurs is not considered. This urged writing a splitter (called T S READ/SPLIT) that allows reading the text while the track and sector boundaries are displayed. This, at least, allowed seeing where a given track and sector split would divide the text, but it is a somewhat slower process.

If the file isn't too large, there are alternatives to file splitters. a 64 program called THE EXTRACTOR, a 64 terminal program that sports a near 44K buffer containing some capabilities. With either of these, a file not larger th 192 disk blocks for THE EXTRACTOR or 173 disk blocks for FRITZTERM.

One other alternative exists for those who possess Ram Expansion Unit (REU). In most instances, programs that allow the presence of an REU utilize it merely another disk drive. Consequently, it's just like having a high capacity disk drive: its use adds nothing to the capacity of the program. An exception is the FRITZTERM program. If it finds an REU plugged in, it automatically reconfigures itself and expands the buffer into the REU. This means that with a 512K REU attached, FRITZTERM provides a 554K buffer, the entire contents of which can be edited. (Understand that to use and REU on a 64 requires a heavy duty power supply) Rolf > Miller.



CINCINNATI COMPUTER CLUB

Official Users
Group Number 292
Meets at Norwood Plaza
Bingo Hall
c/o 31 Potowatomie Trail
Milford, OH 45150
513/248-0025

The Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club has a LOT of used commercial software for sale at very reasonable prices. The club also has lots of used computers, disk drives, monitors, some printers, books and accessories at bargain prices. Because of the low prices, postage will be appreciated. Since the list is so extensive, it will be provided on a 5 1/4" floppy disk as a sequential file exported from Superbase. The file can be accessed directly using sequential file readers on the same disk. Send a floppy mailer with

your return postage and address to:

Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club
c/o Roger Hoyer
31 Potowatomie Trail
Milford, OH 45150

phone: 513/248-0025

FOR SALE by Roger Heyer: Commodore hardware and software on individual lists. Send SASE for copies of either or both lists. Write to Roger at the address above.

Got a wish to try GEOS but only have a single disk drive?

If you a want a complete system Ihave a package for sale that includes:

GEOS 64 V".0 disks and manual
geoCalc in the original box with disk and manual,
1351 mouse in the original box with disk and manual,
1764 256K REU in original box with disk, manual & heavy duty power supply,
plus Commodore mouse pad (brand new in the original packaging).
Will also include 2 boxes of ten 5-1/4" diskettes (brand new-shrink wrapped)
or filled with PD GEOS software at purchasers option.
Asking price is \$120.00 US - includes shipping anywhere in Canada or USA.
Please reply by e-mail rbthomasfreenet.edmonton.ab.ca or snail mail (5528-
142A Ave. Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T4S 1J0 or by phone: 403-478-3613

5-1/4" DSDD disks for sale

I have alot of Generic 5-1/4" disks. The disks are sealed in boxes of 10 with large white labels on the disks and smaller self-adhesive labels on sheets in the boxes.

Asking price:

\$0.19 ea. disk(\$1.90 for a box of 10) when ordered in multiples of 100 disks.

\$0.25 ea. disk(in boxes of 10) when ordered in multiples of less than 100

With every order of 100 disks or more I will include a disk case (50,80,100) until I run our of those (no charge).

Postage will be extra from Western Canada. All prices in US funds. Please reply by email, snail mail, or phone (see ad above) with your address and how many disks you want so I can determine the postage cost. Bruce Thomas

This a request from William Haleen

I am looking for a parts list and schematic for a "reset" unit for my C64. I have the skill and willingness to do it myself but not the information. Please Help Me! I don' want to buy one, I want to make one myself as I am retired with time on my hands.

Books: (Prices include shipping.)

"35 Amazing Games for Your Commodore 64", (programs to type in). \$10.

"The Essential Commodore 128 Users Guide." \$10

"Machine Language For Commdoe dore 64 and other Commodore Computers." Jim Butterfield. \$10.

Language packages. (Prices include shipping.)

"Super Pascal" 128. Manual and disks. (Abacus). Also "Pascal, a Gentle Approach", Rambally and Rambally. \$20.

"The Commodore 64 Logo Workbook", two Logo disks, and some supplementary material. \$10.

Contact Jean Nance

FOR SALE by Rolf Miller Used C64 VENTILATED POWER SUPPLIES \$28 including Shipping & Handling.

The usual power supply that came with the Commodore 64 is a common cause of expensive repair bills. The reason is a design flaw regarding the voltage regulating IC (7805) which provides the +5 volts. The IC is well-designed, containing internal overload and overheat protection which automatically shuts down if an overload condition builds up. The design flaw is in the standard (brick) 64 power supply. The IC is mounted right next to the transformer in a air tight, resin filled plastic box. So, while the IC is protected against internal overheating, the external heat from the transformer breaks it down, the regulating circuit fails, and the computer's chips are fried in the process.

However, the "brick" isn't the only power supply Commodore made for the 64. They also made a ventilated model. Several other manufacturers produced similar units as replacements. Though it is seldom necessary, these units are also easily repaired. And if one does fail, it is usually a case of the the voltage regulating IC shutting down as it is suppose to, thus preventing computer damage. (If the desire is a new unit, contact CMD, POB 646, E. Longmeadow, MA 01028 Orders: 1-800-638-3263)

FOR SALE by Rolf Miller Used FAST LOAD CARTRIDGES \$17 including Shipping & Handling.

Obviously, Commodore did a lot of things right with the 64. But they underestimated the machine's potential. As a result, they believed the home computer user would be satisfied with the Datassette tape drive. And that led them to leave in place a flaw that crippled disk drive access. Instead of the speed that 128 users experience with the 1571, the 1541 limps along at some 20% efficiency.

Fortunately, this shortcoming can be partially remedied by fast loading programs and cartridges (there are some programs that don't like them). And the JiffyDos hardware fix by CMD (see their address above) is close to a complete cure.

There are two advantages to using a fast loading cartridge or JiffyDos. One is that

it remains active even after loading the program. Thus, any loading performed by the program is also fast. The other is the addition of a DOS wedge, which simplifies disk commands. For example, the disk's directory can be displays without disturbing what's in memory. (See the November '87 MailLink for a full discussion of the DOS wedge.)

From Donald L. Brown

I would like to:

**BUY - BEG -BORROW - STEAL
FONTMASTER 128 W/ SPELL CHECKER
BY XETEC**

All letters will be acknowledged.

I have been using Fontmaster 64 for a number of years and like it and donot want to change at this time to another word processor, even though it seems that most everyone is using TWS which I have. My only problem with Fontmaster II is the way the small m comes out. Maybe it's my printer, (Star NX 1000 w/Super Graphix Interface). Also it will not load using Jiffy Dos but I can live with that.

From Franklin R. Murrell Jr.
33 Forest Drive
Mystic, CT 06355

WANTED - I am looking for the following programs and books:

BASIC 8 (PRG),
GET MOST OUT OF BASIC 8 (BOOK)
BEGINNERS GUIDE TO BASIC 8 (BOOK)
SKETCH PAD 128 (PRG)
GEO CANVAS & GEOS UTILITIES (PD PRG) BY NATE FIEDLERS
Please Write With A Price

From Charlie Colwell Email: feemar@pacbell.net
Free For Cost of Postage:
Non-working C64s and 1541 disk drives for parts.
1 Okidata printer (works, needs new ribbon)
First Come First Served.

WANTED: Xetec Super Graphix GOLD printer Interface.
Will trade good working C64 with 1541 disk drive or pay \$\$



TIPS FROM TC3

The following tips were found and edited by Ed Harler from the September 1987 issue (#173) of the Tri-City Commodore Computer Club's newsletter.

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

But ... you can use the "*" characteristic to recover a file you just scratched in error, provided you don't do another file access in between. Just LOAD "*",8 and the file will be back in the computer's memory, ready to be saved again, even though it has been "erased" from the disk directory. Here's a tip from Jim Butterfield. If you get a "file not found" error when a boot program tries to LOAD another program and you can't list the boot to find which file is missing, just type SYS 62913 (64 only) and the file name will be printed on the screen.

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

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

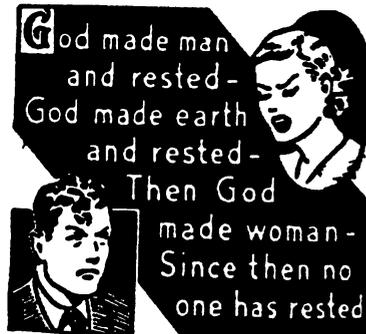
"?FTLENAME",8 or using a disk/block editor.

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

("C=/D" means hold the Commodore logo key and press "D".)

The result will be 25 "FILENAME",8:PRG and typing LOAD (or 1<SHIFT>-0) in front of the file name and pressing <RETURN> will load the file. To get a ",1) after the ",8" add <C=/D>

<C=/E> and leave off the <SHIFT->. A ":" isn't necessary if the ", 1" is used. Each keypress counts as one character of the sixteen character file name maximum. So, if you use ",8,1:", you can only have a ten character filename. If you push on a joystick or fire button while typing, you will get weird results.



ROBIN'S NEST

A Round Robin Alternative Rolf L. Miller 492 Anacapa St. Ventura, CA 93001. (805) 643-6666 E-mail: ba100lafn.org (that's BA100LAFN.ORG all lower case).

As editor of a local User Group newsletter, various sources are searched for interesting material with which to fill the 10 pages every month. A source that always proves good is writings of the past.

After all, one reason so many people continue to use the Commodore 64 is its built-in capabilities. It possesses the capacity to allow accomplishing continuing needs through application programming and peripherals without changing the machine. And since the machine hasn't changed, many things written in the past are still applicable today.

There is another benefit to perusing words of by-gone years. A wise man once said that there is nothing new under the sun.

The reference, of course, is to ideas. Thus, reading the old enlightens today's imagination.

Looking through some circa 1988 MailLinks found several articles proposing ROUND ROBINS. The idea envisioned a small number of members with like interests corresponding by circulating a disk among themselves. As the disk made its rounds, each participant would update their portion.

Besides talking about computer use, asking and answering questions, etc., using a disk allowed swapping public domain and shareware programs.

At first, interest seemed to flourish. Several announced their intention to start Round Robins, asking those interested to contact them. If all went well, a disk would be put together and sent to the first person on the list of those participating. The recipient would add to the disk and send it to the next person on the "flight" list, and so forth.

However, while the Gal's Round Robin (for women only to swap jokes, share favorite recipes, talk of kids and/or grandkids, report news on cosmetics or clothes, give hints on care of houseplants, and gossip about men) reported a complete round, others talked of "shaky starts." Then later reports spoke of confusion and the inability of some to access material on the disks. The latter apparently resulted in disks not being forwarded. As one pointed out, the success of a Round Robin depends on each participant adding to the disk and sending it to the next person on the list. Any break in this "flight" causes things to fall apart! And they did. It is plain from the interest expressed in these old issues that the idea of getting a disk which contains information and programs contributed by others in a Round Robin is intriguing. It is just as clear that the weak link is the dependence upon each participant forwarding the disk to the next in the flight line.

The following suggests an alternative.

THE ROBIN'S NEST.

To start, someone announces their intention to act as a ROBIN'S NEST for a particular area of interest (like GEOS, BASIC programming, etc.), along with a time frame for response (like Monthly by the end of the month). Those interested in the Round Robin begin by sending a 1541 disk to the NEST by the specified time which contains a PETASCII text file of bio-information (expound on the bio-pages), any questions, and (if applicable and possessed) a copy of a favorite public domain or shareware program. The NEST compiles the contents of all disks received by the specified time onto one disk and mails copies of it to each sender. Each recipient creates a response disk which is sent back to the NEST, again within the declared time frame, and so forth. In this way, the failure of one participant doesn't scuttle the whole. To act as a NEST does not require participating in the round, but it does require the expertise to place the text files received in an orderly format easily utilized by all, copy files, and copy disks. Consider the time commitment. Consider also that postage costs could run several dollars per round. To volunteer to act as a NEST, contact ROLF MILLER, telling the area(s) of interest and time frame. Also indicate if willing to begin immediately. Any who want to start participation immediately, contact ROLF MILLER for information of any immediately beginning NEST, or if there are any questions.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BRUCE THOMAS

A few fellow club members have written to ask me questions about GEOS, printers and file availability. Here are my answers so all members can benefit from this.

Q: My ink jet printer has an RS-232 connector on it. Can I use geoLaser or geoPublaser to print via a serial connection to my printer?

A: The geoLaser and geoPublaser are only for use with a Laser printer. The program instructs the Postscript Page Description Language in a Laser Printer how to draw the page, which resident fonts to use if the proper GEOS LW fonts were used in the document. Other than for output to a Laser Printer there is not reason to use either of these two programs for printing.

Q: What is the best method to make bootable copies of my GEOS disk?

A: the best method, and only one still readily available, is the geoMakeBoot program from Creative Micro Designs, Inc. (CMD). While the Maverick Utility previously available from Software support has a GeoBoot function it isn't as convenient or reliable as geoMakeBoot. Serious GEOS users should make backups of their boot disk and place the original in a safe place.

Q: I recently got a Panasonic KXP-1180 printer and need a driver for GEOS.

A: the Panasonic printers are Epson compatible. For this reason you won't see a listed driver for every individual printer in the GEOS manual (plus, most printers you will find today are newer than the GEOS manual). I have a Roland PR-111A which is the same as a Panasonic KXP-1091. This works perfectly well with the Epson FX-80 driver in GEOS. The nice thing about this is that there are plenty of variations on the Epson driver. Versions exist for multi-strike printouts, geocable connections (most names end in GC), reduced printouts, etc. the best option is to start with the Epson FX-80 driver and go from there.

Q: My friend recently downloaded some GEOS games from Jim Brain's site and they are in a compressed file with a .lnx extension. How can these be decompressed?

A: GEOS files that are on-line with an extension of .lnx to their name were likely created using GEOPACK from Spike Dethman's GEOS Disk One. GeoPack doesn't compress files but it will do the necessary conversions so GEOS files can be transmitted via modem. the other nice feature is that more than one program can be contained in the .lnx file. Running GEOPACK and choosing the .lnx file will unpack the .lnx file and convert the programs back into useable GEOS format. Unfortunately for GEOS users Spike no longer programs for the Commodore. While he did, he made some very handy programs. GEOS DISK ONE contains many useful input drivers, a couple very handy geoPaint utilities (Paint Rotate will rotate you geoPaint images 90 or 180 degrees either way and Click Pix make a geoPaint file a stand-alone image - no geoPaint needed to view it). Tom Adams has agreed to make copies of the disk for the cost of \$2 US to cover his cost of the disk and postage. If you get the disk from Tom make sure to send Spike the low \$9.95 shareware fee he requested. The programs are well worth it. If the file wasn't created with geoPack then you need a program like LYNX or OmegaQ-II to dissolve the compressed file and then use CONVERT to change it back to GEOS format. I am not sure what the legalities are regarding the use/distribution of OmegaQ-II since the demise of Q-Link but it is available from various sources as are various versions of LYNX.

Q: Where can I get DBGetFiles and GeoSourcer?

A. A DBGetFiles is a hand little auto-exec file that patches the GEOS Kernal during the boot process. After the patch has been installed you are no longer limited to the first 15 files in a file selection list box. There were a couple of versions (1.0 & 1.1) that were Public Domain and these are available from various sources and even at some Internet Web Sites. I am not sure if the author is still supporting the Commodore or not but you can write to:

Jean F. Major 119 Terrasse Eardley Aylmer, Quebec, Canada J9H 6B5

He had a disk of utilities including a higher version of the patch with more features and supporting more files. For some of the newer versions (1.2 and up, I believe) a RAM is a necessity.

A similar product is Roger Lawhorn's SUPERBOX which comes in 64 and 128 versions. Again, an REU is required for these patches to be effective. The disk with SUPERBOX is available from Jim Farris (Dr. Feelgood on the Internet) and while you're at it order Roger's geoPrint (better than Print shop for making banners, cards, and posters in GEOS) and geoLabel (a great GEOS Label making program). Write to Jim at:

Jim Farris 631 Higgins Drive Jeffersonville, IN 47130

Sorry no pricing information on these products.

As to GeoSourcer I am not familiar with that program. There is a little voice in my head telling me it is a program for creating source code from GEOS programs but I can't recall where or when I saw or read that information. Maybe somebody else can help out with this one. I do know of a Disassembler that runs under GEOS but can't comment on how good it is.

A good source of information and contacts regarding GEOS is the GEOS publication which is produced by Willis Patten. This newsletter is published monthly and is sort of like our group in that subscribers are from all over the world. The publication is in a Question & Answer format and features good articles from many sources about GEOS. Cost is presently \$14 for 12 issues for US subscribers, \$16 for Canada & Mexico

and \$18 for all others with increases to \$17, \$19, & \$21 respectively in April, 88.
all prices are in US funds. Write to Willis at:

GEOS Publications
7869 Woodcrest Drive
Louisville, KY 40218-3859

Of course, everyone already belongs to a great source of information in the form of asking questions of Meeting....Members. The bios that detail each member's interests and equipment will help in narrowing down who to write to with questions. There are also the folks, like myself, who have volunteered to be placed on the group resource list to answer questions that other members may have about software, hardware or of a general nature. I know I have to get Jolene (your editor for this issue) to give me help getting started with FGM when I get a chance soon.

It's your club and your computer. Get the most out of both by taking advantage of what you have available. Don't forget that you can also get some discounts because of your group membership. The Loadstar Letter is another resource full of information with a discount on the subscription because you are a member of our group. The more sources you have for information the better equipped you will be to make informed choices about hardware, software, books that will help you use the potential in your system.

Hopefully some of the above answers have helped those who asked and some who didn't but were thinking about them. If you have a GEOS question please feel free to ask. If you don't get a personal reply it just may show up in another Mailink later on. Until next time enGEO you Commodore!

THE MODEL 'T' AND THE LTD

by K. Dale Sidebottom



Submitter's note: The following article is from the September 1987 issue (#173) of the *Tri-City Commodore Computer Club's* newsletter. It was scanned by my friend, Sam Smith, and then edited by me. The scanning saved a great deal of keying, but the editing was still time-consuming. --Ed Harler

Do you own a Model T or an LTD? [1] Commodore, that is. Before you answer, give it some thought. Remember back to when you were a child listening to the old folks talk. When they spoke of cars, they often spoke with admiration of the Model T or "Tin Lizzie." It was the car that changed America forever.

"From October, 1908, until May, 1927, there flowed an almost unbroken flood of Fords, all of a mold but not identical, to the number of fifteen million. No other automobile model even began to approach such tremendous volume... During most of this time Ford produced as many or more than all other American motorcar manufacturers combined, and during all of this time the Model T, often modified, was *never basically* changed.["2]

It was Ford's Model T that put automobile travel within the reach of the average American family. It was loved and cursed the world over for its dependability and its idiosyncrasies. Even today among those who have never even ridden in one, the Model T holds a certain magic.

I don't know if we could say that the C64 actually changed the course of history, but in many wonderful ways it is similar to the Model T Ford. The Commodore 64 was the computer that first made personal home computing affordable to the average American family. Just as Ford's "flivver" once outnumbered all others, there was a time when there were more 64s in homes around America and the world than any other computer model. There were more programs written for the 64 than any other computer,

too. The Commodore 64 introduced a whole generation to color home computing, and it still retains a special magic even today!

It is said that "Henry Ford succeeded in building quality and dependability into his car which many other higher-priced cars did not possess.[3] Again, this sounds like the C64 which is still going strong fifteen years after it was introduced. A 64 doesn't last forever, of course, it just *seems* like it! At some point, even the most extraordinary products give way to Father Time. This happens even faster in the computer field than with automobiles. New models for cars can be introduced every year. With computers, it is more like every three months!

What makes this even worse for us is that Commodore Business Machines (CBM) failed to fulfill the promise of their own creation. The 64 was virtually abandoned by those who gave it birth. Only the continued support of user groups such as LUCKY have kept the Commodore and the Commodore spirit alive and well. But for how long?

Fortunately, Creative Micro Designs (CMD) has been lending us a hand. With the introduction of the SuperCPU for the 64 in August of 1988, they have put the final touches on an advanced computing system that we will hereinafter refer to as the Commodore LTD! Why, because when we combine CMD products with our 64s, we suddenly create a Commodore that is so far advanced beyond a stock 64 (with CBM peripherals), that it's like comparing an LTD to a Model T!

Some of you may protest saying, "This is ridiculous! Such a comparison is absurd!"

Let me compare the 64/Model T and the 64/LTD and you can be the judge. First, let's consider speed. How much faster can the LTD travel than a Model T? Two, three, maybe four times as fast? The 64/LTD can zip along up to twenty times faster than a 64/Model T. When you plug in a SuperCPU, you better fasten your seatbelt!

But speed isn't everything. How about power? The 64/Model T can "see" 64KB (kilobytes) at a time. After all, that's why they called it the *Commodore 64*, because 64KB was a lot of memory back in 1982. The 64/LTD can scan 16 MB (megabytes) of memory instantly. To see what a difference this makes, let's pretend that a 64/Model T can lift 64 pounds. Under those circumstances, the 64/LTD could lift eight TONS!!! Comparing 64 pounds and 8 tons, you have an inkling of the how much more powerfull the Commodore LTD actually is!

What about storage? Computers have to be able to access and store information. The 64/Model T can only access up to 800 KB on a single drive, because CBM never really allowed the 64 to "be all it could be." The 64/LTD by comparison can store up to 16 MB on a single disk drive or partition. In addition, it can access up to 4 1/4 gigabytes on a single hard drive. That means the old 64/Model T can only access the combined storage of five 1541 disks, while the 64/LTD can access the combined storage of up to 27,500 of the 1541 disks! Last of all, let's compare modem speeds. We know that the fastest modem that CBM ever made for the 64 had a baud rate of 2400 bps (bytes per second). Today, you can combine a 33,600 bps modem with CMD's Turbo carrriage and achieve up to 230,000 bps compression speeds. This is nearly ONE HUNDRED times faster that a 64/Model T could travel using a CBM modem! As you can see, the Commodore LTD is a superlative performer. But what will it cost? If you upgrade your 64/Model T to a 64/LTD, it will cost you about \$700. That covers the following:

40 MB HardDrive	\$250.00
1MB RAMLink	190.00
SuperCPU for C64	200.00
Beefed-up power supply*	57.00
Total cost	\$697.00

*Notice that the 64 requires a larger power supply when used with an REU or a SuperCPU. All comparisons in this article are made to the 64 because the SuperCPU for the 128 will not be completed until May 1988.

Am I trying to make the Model T" owners uncomfortable? Absolutely NOT!!! *I never wish to make happy computer users unhappy.* I *am* saying that we need to continue doing the good things that got us here! Since DAY ONE, it has been our "mission" to support those who used the Commodore as their primary computer.

You've heard, "Make new friends, but keep the old?" We are working hard to offer new opportunities to our members. But we should not neglect our heritage! The LUCKY Club once pushed the Commodore as fast and as far as it could go! We need to do that again!

Those of us who share this philosophy must first reach a unified consensus regarding one unalterable fact: The Commodore Model T has taken us as far as it is going to take us. Almost no one will drive a Model T forever. If we are to move forward from here, then we must enter upon a more modern "vehicle." What we desperately need is a Commodore-type computing "vehicle" that is as vastly superior to the old Commodore as the LTD compares to the Model T! Ah ha! LUCKY us!!! Such a "vehicle" just recently rolled out onto our dealer's (CMD's) showroom floor. I invite you to check it out. Then I encourage you to begin the process of planning and investment necessary to make it your own!

Who Is CMD?

Although CMD may be new to you, CMD is not new to Commodore. In fact, this year will mark their tenth anniversary!

It all started innocently enough in the mid 1980's. Mark Fellows had recently received his degree in Computer Electronics Technology. He was working with a band that used a Commodore 64 to control their drum machine by way of a midi interface. It worked great! One problem...it could take as long as two minutes to load programs between songs.

In frustration, Mark purchased books describing the operation of the C64 computer and its drives and, through a lot of experimentation and hard work, developed a fast load system now known as JiffyDOS. He began marketing it in 1986, advertising (*Computer Shopper,* *Electronic Musician,* and *Keyboard* magazines).

In 1987, he took the next big step. He joined with Charles A. Christianson, a family friend with a business degree, and formed a partnership called Creative Micro Designs (CMD). Today, CMD has the distinction of being one of the few Commodore support companies that hasn't shot itself in the foot. They work very hard to make products available while keeping expenses down. For this reason, the company is kept small. Considering all that they do, it is difficult for me to believe that this company has only six full-time and nine part-time employees!

It is interesting to note that this company grew out of the Commodore community. They believe so strongly in our purpose that WE are their only clients!

How important is CMD? Talk to an Amiga user! They have been abandoned much as we by the bankruptcies of CBM and Escom. When I talk to them, the comment I most often hear is, "I wish to God that we had someone like CMD."

Why? Because CMD has managed to pull together all the various facets of Commodore computing and put them under one roof.

Whether you need hardware, software, a magazine or repairs, CMD has become Commodore's one-stop shopping center. My highest compliment to them is that they seem to have become the commercial embodiment of the Commodore spirit. I hope that we can support them well enough that they can continue this service for many years to come.

How do you order products from CMD? If you want to ask for a catalog, send your request to Creative Micro Designs, P.O. Box 646, East Longmeadow MA 01028. When you order, you can call toll free at (800)638-3263. For technical assistance, call (413) 525-0023.

[1] The Ford LTD is now called the Crown Victoria. I considered referring to Commodore's new computer as a Commodore Crown Victoria.

but it took up too much space in the column. Whether it is call the LTD or Crown Victoria, it refers to the to the top-of-the-line in a Ford luxury car.

[2] "Henry's Wonderful Model T" by Floyd Clymer (no publisher or copyright date shown) p.103

[3] ibid, p.12

The Commodore Model T is comprised of the 64 and CBM peripherals listed below.

C64 or 64C

Storage devices include:

1541 disk drive...160 KB	for 5-1/4" disks
1571 disk drive...320 KB	for 5-1/4" disks
1581 disk drive...800 KB	for 3+5/8" disks

Additional Items are:

Commodore Modem...300-2400 bps
REU (Ram Expansion Unit)...256 to 512 KB

This comparison is for the 64 only. No monitor is included. The same monitor will work equally in either case.

The Commodore LTD is comprised of the 64 plus CBM peripherals in combination with CBM peripherals listed below:

c64 or 64C

SuperCPU for the 64...20 Mhz

1571 disk drive...320 KB	for 5-1/4" disks
1581 disk drive...800 KB	for 3-5/8" disks
FD-2000...	800 KB
	3.6 MB

CMD Hard Drive...40 MB to 4 GB(gigabytes)

Additional Items are:

RAMLink (works as an REU)

1 MB to 16 MB Storage

Turbo232 Cartridge up to 230 KBps(or the slower Swiftlink it replaced)
Any fast modem...14.4 bps and up.

SOME MORE USER PORT INTERFACING

BY ROLF L. MILLER

As noted in the User Port project in the January, '88 issue of the Mailink, pins C, D, E, F, H, J, K, and L of the User Port can be individually addressed. That means the computer is able to simultaneously control up to 8 different devices. The possibilities urged more experimentation. But, as the article also pointed out, programing multiple pins is a little more complicated than dealing with just one pin. According to the Programmer's Reference Guide, the on or off and input or output condition of the 8 pins is controlled by the bit patterns of the two addresses 56577 and 56579 respectively, pin C being bit zero. Address 56579 controls whether a pin's is input or output. When a bit is set, its corresponding pins is output. Address 56577 controls whether a pin is on or off. When a bit is set, its corresponding pin is on.

To set a bit requires adding the bit's value to the address. A bit's value is calculated by 2 to the power of the bit's number (0-7). To unset a bit requires subtracting its value from the address. One way to do this is to simply POKE the actual value of the desired bit pattern to the address. That value is determined by adding up the value of the set bits.

At first reading, this material made as much sense as a VCR manual. That's one of the advantages of writing articles: it helps clarify the understanding. Even so, what seemed clear didn't translate into the visual image this brain needs to embark upon experimentation.

That lack prompted constructing an interface that visually indicated the condition of the pins. It consisted of 8 Light Emitting Diodes (LED's) and their necessary accompanying resistors (salvaged from a scrapped 2400 baud modem) mounted on a cannibalized PC board that previously contained a Commodore 300 baud modem. The

resistors tied the LED's positive legs to the edge connectors that corresponded to pins C, D, E, F, H, J, K, and L. The negative legs of the LED's tied to ground (pins 1, A, 12, and N).

The results allowed seeing the affect of programming on the different port lines as indicated by the lit condition of the LED's. And it's a good thing because the results the mind envisioned for a given procedure often proved to be a figment of the imagination. In other words, the frustration avoided, more than made up for the time spent building the interface.



PREPARING MATERIAL FOR THE MARCH MAILINK

(or) Translating files from PC to Commodore

by Jolene Ehret with lots of help and advice from Walter L. Johnson and Bruce Thomas

What an adventure this has been! It all started when I began getting articles for the Mailink by Email on my son's computer (not a commodore). I was prepared to do a lot of typing to get the articles ready for the March issue. Then someone suggested I (I think it was Jean Nance, who referred me to Bruce Thomas, who then referred me to Walter Johnson) I convert the files... I heard from Bruce who suggested I use Big Blue Reader and said that he would contact Walter for more advice. This is what I learned:

First of all you have to format a DD 3-5/8" disk 720K (Most PC's give you a choice) then copy the files to the disk.

Next I tried my very old copy of Big Blue Reader (BBR). Loaded it on my Commodore 128 and it didn't work. Contacted Bruce and Walter again and they gave me some instructions but my copy BBR (we determined that my copy was too old) still didn't work. So did the next best thing and called CMD and ordered a new one --much improved! But it did not arrive in time.. but a copy of MSDOSCOPY (from Loadstar Extra #1) did come from Walter.

After that everything was a piece of cake. I loaded MSDOSCOPY and converted the files, saved them to disk. Then loaded Write Stuff Illustrator II and then the files and converted them to True ASCII. What a rush!

But that is not all... After a bit of struggling with Write Stuff Illustrator II. (I had not used it in awhile so forgot most of what I learned) I decided to go with what I know. You guessed it! I decided to use FM 128... That meant more converting, copying, etc. It has been a bit tedious. Keep thinking if I had the hard drive, etc. this would go much quicker.

Yes as I stated at the beginning this has been quite the adventure. I have been playing with my son's computer too much and forgot how much I enjoy my C-128 and especially my FM 128.

There appears to be some new interest for FM 128 developing so I plan to write a series of articles on this great program to hopefully increase in the interest and develop a demand for it and who knows maybe someone recognize the worth of FFM 128 and my dream of a new and improved version will become reality.



Fontmaster 128

AN EXCEPTIONAL
GRAPHIC WORD PROCESSOR

By Jolene Ehret

Yes, indeed Fontmaster 128 (FM 128) is truly an exceptional graphic word processor. When it arrived on the scene in the mid-80's it was way ahead of it's time. The 128 was still new and there was little software that took advantage of its potential. I purchased FM 128 and set about to learn to use it. How utterly disappointed I was when I tried and discovered that the FM 128 just did not work properly with my serially connected Seikosha printer. Sadly, I packed away my FM 128 and more or less forgot about it. Well a year or two or three later I decided it was finally time for a new printer. This time I did it right with the Super Graphix Interface and a parallel connected printer. What a difference that made! On a whim I dug out my FM 128 program and thought to give it a try. I wish that I had made note of that date because that was the day I truly fell in love with FM 128. It took awhile to figure out what 'formatters', & modifiers' and how to use them. The manual gives you bare bones instructions but it was the hands on, trial and error method that enabled me to master this program. I had to do this myself as there was no one else to turn to back then.

FM 128 was so new and untried that no one really knew what to do with it. There was nothing to compare it too. Imagine changing fonts word by word, and pitch PICA, ELITE, ALTERNATE with just one or two key strokes. Or go NORMAL, to Compressed, to EXPANDED, to TALL and get this -----
All in the same sentence. So much power, so much potential.

For a time I was content to write my letters with the fancy fonts and cute graphics on the letterhead and interspersed throughout the letter. But then.... Quite by accident I realized that if I could set the page length (pl) to the standard page length of 66, just maybe I could set it to label size.... hmmm! Oh golly it worked! And I was off and running again.... I had tried a variety of label programs and found them constrained. No longer! I had the ultimate label program FM 128... Even now the only software that comes close to making labels like FM 128 is possibly FGM and some of the GEOS Label Makers. But NONE of them can make the labels with such ease and simplicity as FM 128.

So where are we now some 10+ years since FM 128 was created? We have new and improved hardware... thanks to CMD and others who have persisted. We have Write Stuff word processor and Write Stuff Illustrator thanks to... R. Eric Lee. We have FGM ... thanks to Ron Hackley. We have GEOS thanks to all those creative people who have worked on it and contributed 100's+ applications to make it work better. FM 128 is still with us even though it has not been upgraded in years. It is still competitive with all those others. If only those remarkable people who created FM 128 had persisted and kept at it we can only imagine how powerful it would be by today's standards.

FM 128 software is almost impossible to find. Couldn't someone approach the author (Marty Flickinger) and buy it? I think it would be well worth the investment.

GEOFAX NEWS

FROM comp.sys.cbm



For the past couple of months I've been working here and there on a new upgrade to geoFax 2.0. This is not a drastic upgrade, but rather just fixes a few problems and improves some stuff. Here is the stuff that's fixed.

geoFAX v2.1 changes

- * auto-answer mode now answers more than one call.
- * tone/dial selection now saves as a default
- * minor improvement to NMI routine.
- * STOP key now stops and outgoing geoFAX document.

(This worked with geoPaint and also worked in previous versions, but was somehow goofed up in v2.0)

While doing some final testing last night (2/5/98), I was using a fax machine to scan some images. After capturing them, I would, then send them back to the fax machine to see how they turned out. Some of the geoFAX documents would cause the modem to hang up the line. Some users have reported this problem to me and I had it happening last night and found the problem.

While receiving, there might be an occasional bad byte, especially if the speed is turned up too high. GeoFAX doesn't have time to decode the incoming data, it just saves it all to disk. In geoFAX V1.5-1.7, the program would test some of the bytes while sending the file back to another fax machine and if a bad line was found it would repeat the previous line instead since it kept a copy of the previous line in memory. The problem with this, was it hogged too much memory and also caused a performance problem in having to analyze the line prior to sending it. The receiving fax machine isn't going to wait while we're fooling around, it's expecting data to keep on coming without stopping. So this was a problem too....

If modems didn't have a particular bug built into them that prevents geoFAX from using a part of the fax protocol that allows the sender to tell the receiver to pause for a moment, we wouldn't have this problem with spending a little extra time between lines of data. If that part of the protocol is used, the modem will hang up the phone line.

This particular part of the protocol is supposed to help out the computers that aren't particularly fast or those that have slow data storage devices. Our computers fit this category. But the people who wrote the fax routines that reside in the modems most likely never tested their work using a slow computer, so this modem bug just blew right on by them. This is the problem that has given me the most fits during the entire development of geoFAX.

When I get home later tonight, I'm going to put some code back into geoFAX that performs a little bit of testing on the line of data before sending it to the fax machine. If a bad byte is found, then geoFAX will ignore that byte. The rest of the line will still be sent and will come through to the fax machine as a bad line instead of causing the modem to disconnect the phone line.

What happens then when a fax machine receives a bad line? A real fax machine will reprint the previous line. This gives the fax image a stretched-out look... This is better than trying to print a line that decodes into junk. If only one bad line comes in, it's hardly noticeable. It's far better than interrupting the whole fax page and disconnecting the phone line. When you send a bad line to another computer running fax software, it may or may not deal with bad lines correctly. It all depends on how well the programmer decided to deal with things like this. The real fax machines seem to deal with it correctly though.

This won't occur when geoFAX sends a geoPaint image, because geoFAX properly converts the data to correct fax lines and sends every line exactly as it should be. Also, if you convert a geoPaint to geoFAX prior to sending it, the data will also be good. It's just when you receive a fax and send the same fax that the problem might occur. The fix I'll do tonight should take care of this problem.

When geoFAX is converting a fax to geoPaint, it will take the time to fix these bad lines. It also fixes the bad lines when printing a geoFAX document. It can take the extra time to do this during these operations, but there isn't much time to do anything while sending a fax to another fax machine.

I've got several people waiting for this V2.1 upgrade, and CMD is also waiting on an order of these. If things go good tonight I'll be packaging them up. I was trying to get this done last night, but ran out of time. Everything else appears to be working great with geoFAX.

Another thing I had to do concerned using geoFAX with Wheels 64 and a SuperCPU. Wheels runs at 20 mhz. all the time, unlike GEOS 2.0 which has to slow down to 2 mhz. when calling the routine "InitForIO". The only time Wheels slows down to 1 mhz. is during the actual byte transfers with the real disk drives, not the ramdisks or the RamLink. Plus, it stays at 20mhz. when using the HD with a parallel cable.

Certain operations in geoFAX are very timing critical. Even though it makes heavy use of CIA#2 for timing its operations, the 20 mhz. speed messes up some things. So another change I made to V2.1 was to insure that the SuperCPU was running at 1 mhz. while sending or receiving. Certain handshake functions with the modem just don't seem to work well at 20 mhz. I've spent the last 3 or 4 months off and on trying to figure this one out and decided to give up on it for the time being. Slowing the SuperCPU down fixes the problem for now.

Isn't it a bummer that our computers are TOO FAST now?:)

UPGRADE NEWS

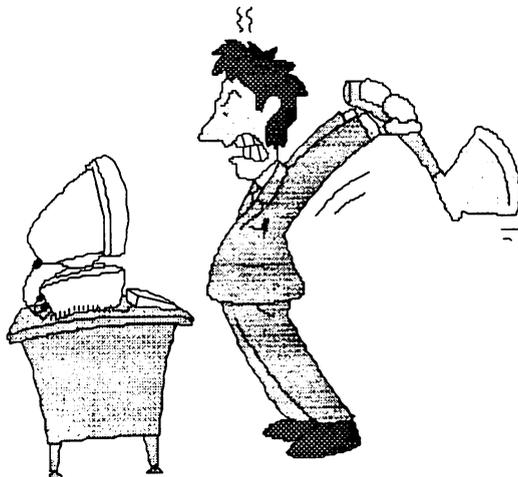
When geoFAX V2.0 came out, I gave all users of V1.5-1.7 a chance to get a free upgrade. If you had sent in your registration, it was automatic, I sent a free upgrade to you. GeoFAX2.0 came out in the spring of '97. At the end of December the free deal expired.

Users can still upgrade by sending in their V1.5-1.7 registration along with a check or money order for \$15 plus \$4 for shipping and handling to the North American addresses or \$6 overseas. This will get you the V2.1 upgrade.

There are still a few registrations that I received late in '97 that will get V2.1 for free. If you're one of these, it's still coming.

Current V2.0 owners can upgrade to V2.1 also. I've been keeping track of the changes I've made and will put them into a simple patch program that will be available for downloading from my BBS at (517)322-2386. Or I can email an unencoded version of the program to you. Just sent email to: arca93@delphi.com

To get the patch program from my BBS just sign on and leave me email. I'll then attach the file to my email response and you can grab it next time you log on. this patch program is only available to those who have sent in their registration. Be sure to provide your geoFAX I.D. number when requesting the patch program. I'll put the patch program together this weekend so people can start requesting it next week.
Maurice Randall





Please welcome the following new members whose bios appear with this issue: Yann Barthelmy, Art Cook, Barry Evans, Chris Fite, William Gilmer, Ken Kill, Scott Parker, Donald Schultz, Julius Schwartz

ADDRESS CHANGES & CORRECTIONS - See bios

Paul Berry
Richard Savoy

NAME CORRECTION

Edward Nordmark

E-MAIL ADDITONS & CHANGES

Ken Bronson - bronco48juno.com
Norris Elwood - gremlinMCI2000.com
Rodger Jarvis - rjarvismail.ultraweb.net
John H. "Zeb" Larry - zebeltogether.net
Sherry Freedline - qt@telerama.im.com
Gaelyne Gasson - gaelyne@videocam.net.au
Richard Savoy - richsav@juno.com