

Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club

April, 2008 President's Page

Howdy Fellow Commodore Users!

As I write this, I am recovering from our inventory move the first weekend of April. I would like to thank the following folks for helping out: Roger Hoyer, Charlie Needom, Ed Gase, Oliver VieBrooks, Chuck Kern, and of course David Fisher. I would also like to take a moment to thank the Winkle family for the years we have kept our inventory on their property. I'm not sure I remember the exact date of when that move happened, but it seems to me it happened in the late 90s. I know we had an inventory in October 1998, so that would make it 10 years plus!

I left home at 8:45 AM expecting the hour drive to be somewhat eventless, as it was a Saturday morning. I walked outside and saw a hint of fog hanging in the neighborhood, figured no big deal. First big river I will see will be as I am approaching Morrow Ohio. I forgot to pack my work gloves, so I figured I'd buy a new pair at Home Depot just a mile away from me. After consulting with one of the sales clerks, she informed me they could be in three different locations. To anyone who has not seen the size of my paws, let's just say "one size fits all" doesn't apply to my hands. Large just isn't large enough! The first display the clerk showed me had only the one size fits all and large. I asked the clerk, if the other displays would have other sizes. She assured me that they did. So off to the other side of the store, I found XL gloves, tried one on. Guess what? It fit like a glove! (LOL)

I took my selection to the checkout, walked back across the parking lot to my car and proceeded on the continuing trip. By the time I got to Morrow, there was no fog present in the river valley. So my time was still looking good at getting there on time. Stopped at one of the traffic lights I popped out the CD I was listening to and decided to turn the radio on to listen to the weather forecast of the day. I looked up just in time to see a tractor trailer of hay going thru the intersection, and then a tow truck, and then a moving van, with a parade of other vehicles behind going thru the intersection. I thought to myself OK, this might slow me down some. On my way again as the light changed for me to go, I kept cheering as I saw each vehicle turning off to it's eventual destination. The line of vehicles was getting smaller and smaller.

Eventually, all had turned off the main road, without me passing a single one of them. Onward to my destination unfettered I said to myself! I had lost some time, but I might only be a couple minutes late. As I was approaching Blanchester, the time was almost 10am. As I turned onto Rt 28, I rounded the bend that goes into the city as you come in from the west side. There was a bicycle troop, cruising the street on it's way into town. Of course they weren't riding single file, either. So I had to bide my time following behind them until I could find a place to get around them.

Eventually I passed the group, which spanned for most of 1/2 a block. Onward to my destination, and I was "officially late"! I pulled into the Winkle homestead at 10:10 am. Figured I would be the last person to show up. It looked like everyone was there except Dave Fisher. Was he lost? Did his vehicle break down? Nobody had heard anything. So as we gathered at the barn ready to start, Jan made a brief announcement to those present, and let us go on with our work we had to do.

A stacking place for everything at the barn door was started for everything we needed to move from the barn loft. In short time, the move was finished, and still no Dave, or van/trailer. During the wait, Jan offered coffee for those who needed the beverage.

I heard the sound of gravel and strained my neck up to see who was coming down the driveway. It was Dave, with his sidekick Levi. Everything managed to be moved into the van and trailer, and a look at the clock showed it was just after noon.

A quick check of who was planning to make the trek to Dave Fisher's home indicated I was the only one (crazy enough) to volunteer. At least by that time, it turned out to be a nice sunny day. Perfect for a road trip.

Nevermind that regular gas at the gas station was \$3.35.9 a gallon. In order to make the trip, it will be a necessary expense. We stopped briefly to fill up our respective vehicles, cleaned up a little bit, and used the restrooms for their expected purpose. I sat in my car eating the Little Debbie Swiss Cake I had bought at the gas station as my dessert for lunch. (I thought to myself, this isn't litterbox cake, but it will have to do.)

After everyone was set to go, back onto the freeway we went. Arriving at Dave's home approximately at 4pm, I thought to myself how long will the unpacking take. Less than an hour later, we were finished. My job was finished with the exception of making the return trip home.

Thanking Dave for his donation of space for the club benefit, I packed myself back into my car for the return trip home. At that point, I had a thought going thru my mind wondering if I would make it home that nite, or if I would change my mind and get a hotel somewhere along the way home.

I decided to trek onward until I deemed it necessary to stop. I still had my dinnertime sandwich I had packed, only one bottle of Coke, and my pretzels and cookie were still in my feedsack. A roadside picnic table would be all I would need to have a moment to relax, and plan the rest of the trip.

I decided to go a different way back home, via I-70, rather than the original trip via I-74. As I was cruising down I-70, I remembered visiting a restaurant with my dad during my vacation last summer. I decided to revisit that establishment, since their food was tasty last time, and they have no similar establishment in Ohio. On my way to the restaurant, a ½ block away was my favorite frozen custard eatery. Had to remember to save room for dessert.

During my dinner, the hotels across the street were reminding me of how late it was getting. It was already after 6PM. If I got back on the freeway before 7 I should be home before 9. I finished dinner quickly, popped over to the frozen custard shoppe for my dessert, and then hit the freeway again. It was now after 7PM, I felt re-energized from the filling meal, and decided to make the trip home so I could sleep in my own bed. I knew of shortcuts that did not involve the freeways after crossing the state borders of Ohio/Indiana.

Rt 35 takes me thru some scenic farmlands just between Richmond Indiana and Dayton Ohio and I arrive in Eaton Ohio just as the sun sets. I noticed for the first time a historical marker in downtown that happens to name an individual who happens to have the same name as one of my friends from High School. I'll have to look that up on the internet I thought to myself. Waiting for the traffic light to change to allow me onward, the traffic let up enough to make a right hand turn on red onward to my last destination via Rt 127.

I knew that routing well, I would be home in a little under 30 minutes. When I got home, I thanked the lord for a safe journey, went to my apartment, and looked at the clock on the wall. It was the same time as I had left that morning. Twelve hours had passed since!

I tried to stay awake for the #c64friends chat, but grew increasingly tired. I believe I finally fell asleep around 10:30 Saturday nite. It was a long day for me, but it all was finally done. In case you wondered how much sleep I got? I woke up for lunch and went back to bed, but I figure it was about 14-15 hours of sleep.

I asked Dave Fisher to gather some photos of the move, so you may see some of those in our newsletter this month. Like I always say:

Keep on Commodoring!!
David Witmer Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club President
AKA Snogpitch

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Editor's Report

I am still looking for articles from our members. Anything related to Commodore computers will do. Articles should be in the format of your choice (though plain old .txt would be great). Articles should be submitted by email to six@thedarkside.ath.cx, or by plain mail to the address on the cover of this newsletter.

Finally, there are two things that you should all take the time to make us aware of: 1st, if you would like to receive your newsletter via email instead of print, and 2nd, if you would like to receive the annual disk (and if so, which format, C64 or PC) that we will be releasing starting this year. See the address information above.

New Member!

Some of you may recall mention of NTSC scener saehn/Style's C64 graphics competition entry which took first place at the 8bit Forever 2008 party held in Slovakia this past month. I am proud to announce that Saehn/Style is now a member of CCCC. Welcome to the club, Saehn!

uIEC (Micro IEC) Update

- I just saw this on comp.sys.cbm and thought folks here might want a preview of things coming this year to C=4.
David Witmer Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club President

----- Forwarded Message

From: Jim Brain <brain@jbrain.com>
Organization: AT&T ASP.att.net
Newsgroups: comp.sys.cbm
Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2008 23:26:16 GMT
Subject: uIEC (Micro IEC) Update

For those who do now know, uIEC and uIEC/CF are projects to allow a IEC-based CBM computer (VIC/64/128/etc.) to utilize a IDE drive formatted with a FAT filesystem or a CompactFlash (CF) card with such a filesystem.

uIEC development took some very interesting paths this year (more details if there is interest), but I am happy to report that the unit is working and I'm now concentrating my efforts on making it CF-card diagnostic (testing various cards I have here), and trying to increase compatibility. I have a deadline to have units for sale in time for the CCCC expo in late June.

I've taken advantage of the long list of features in another project (sd2iee) to make uIEC even more compatible and useful. So, here is a combined list of features:

- Supports IDE and CF cards (uIEC supports IDE/IDE, IDE/CF, or CF/CF if you have an IDE->CF adapter for the second card. uIEC/CF supports single CF card)
- Supports drives of any size, though support for >137GB drives needs more testing. :-)
- Supports FAT12/16/32 partitions of any legal size
- Supports partition-less cards/drives, or up to 4 primary partitions or 3 primary and 12 extended partitions. (Email me if you have more than 12 extended partitions on a drive :-)
- Supports FAT Long filenames
- *Transparent support for PRG/SEQ/USR file extensions, with REL support planned.
- Transparent support for P00/S00/U00 files, with R00 support planned.
- Supports read and write of D64 images.
- Block level disk access supported on D64 images

- Most CBM DOS commands (Scratch,Initialize,Rename,etc.) supported.
- CBM general config commands (U0, U+, U-, UI, U9, U:, UJ) supported.
- CBM block level commands (B-R, B-W, UA, U1, U2, UB) supported when in D64 image.
- CMD-style partition (\$=P) support
- CMD-style subdirectory (MD,CD,RD) support.
- CMD DOS Commands (G-P, G-<shift-P>) support.
- *Long form CMD directories (\$=T:*, \$=T:*=L) supported
- 1581-style/CMD-FD/HD-style wildcard matching supported (\$:JIM*RAIN)
- JiffyDOS fast loader equipped (PAL and NTSC support). Can be enabled or disabled via DOS command.
- Firmware can be updated by copying new firmware file to root dir of first drive, first partition and resetting unit.

(* noted items are in my WIP codebase, & are features in mainline codebase I need to enable in my variant)

I want to publicly thank Unseen of sd2iec for creating a very impressive codebase that made my feeble original attempt pale in comparison. Although I will regret not being the originator of the uIEC firmware, it simply made no sense to duplicate all of the features and require sd2iec to re-implement features already in the uIEC project. I think Unseen also appreciates another developer on his firmware project. My additions have primarily been to the FAT LFN code, the CMD HD commands, and multiple drive support.

In process is time-based directory pattern matching (>00:00:00 and <00:00:00), support for programs that determine drive type via M-R, and D71/D81 image support.

I'll refrain from listing the ideas in the enhancement bucket, but there are quite a few. At this point, I am prioritizing features that might make HW changes necessary, for obvious reasons. Firmware-only additions can be made after shipping. I'm happy to answer questions in the thread.

Jim

----- End of Forwarded Message

Introduction to the 1541 Ultimate Project

Ordering information can be obtained by emailing info@1541ultimate.net

What is it?

The '1541 Ultimate' is a storage solution for your Commodore home computer, such as the C64, C128, C plus4, C16, etc. This piece of hardware implements a 'real' 1541 diskdrive for Commodore computers, and is capable of storing the floppy disks on a modern SD-card, or MMC-card. It contains a replica of all the necessary hardware to be fully compatible with a real drive.

The '1541 Ultimate' can be used as a cartridge in the C64/C128, or as a stand-alone unit for use with other Commodore models with a serial bus. In cartridge mode, the user can view the SD-card content with just a simple push on one of the buttons, and 'mount' .d64 images into the floppy drive. In stand-alone mode, the user can use the buttons to navigate through the directories, or send IEC commands to a secondary device on the bus. This secondary device also allows saving and loading files to the FAT file system directly, but is not as compatible as the 1541 drive.

Context

The '1541 Ultimate' is a personal hobby project, that has grown into a mature device that can be very useful for current Commodore users. It enables the user to copy real 5.25" floppy disks onto an SD-card, and run them from there, without the C64 knowing that it is not a real drive it is talking to. Floppy disks are prone to aging, and many floppies are on the verge of getting unreadable. So in the context of the greater "Preservation Project" that is carried out by Commodore enthusiasts, the '1541 Ultimate' can do a lot of useful work.

Although I am not a company, I would like to make the '1541 Ultimate' hardware available for Commodore enthusiasts, especially because this piece of hardware is very powerful and can potentially do a lot more than 'just' implementing a replacement for the 1541 drive. I hope that people can understand that although this board has been made with a lot of care and enthusiasm, it is still a hobby project and not an official retail product.



Features

- Full emulation of a real Commodore 1541 diskdrive.
- Secondary 'IEC-drive' for direct access to FAT filesystem.
- FAT/FAT32 support, with sub-directories and long filenames
- C64 cartridge emulation; Final Cartridge III, Action Replay, Commodore 1750/1764 REU
- Flexible freezer menu to select, mount, create D64 images, browse disk images
- Configuration screen, with resident settings
- 'Stand-alone mode' - powered through Mini-USB connector, controlled through buttons and IEC.

Specifications

- Board size: 68 x 96 mm
- 250k-gate FPGA
- Full size 6-pin DIN connector (IEC)
- 512 kB SRAM
- 2 MB Flash ROM
- 32 MB SDRAM (the Plus version only)
- Full size MMC / SD card compatible (Mini/Micro SD possible with adapter)
- Stereo audio output
- 6-pin expansion pin-header for connection to tape port (for C2N emulation), or other future features.

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**The Cincinnati Commodore Computer Club is proud to present the
3rd annual C4 Expo.**

June 28-29 at the Drawbridge Inn

located at:

**2477 Royal Drive
Fort Mitchell, KY 41017**