



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA BUGS!

- by Lenard R. Roach

"Well, this is a change of events," I said to myself.

I was sitting one Sunday evening at my Commodore desk, leaning back in my chair, and staring at this flashing cursor that was on my monitor.

That cursor wasn't supposed to be there...

What was supposed to be there was a message claiming that the computer was cleaning up some "loose ends" before reloading the main menu in case I wanted to access more programs in my entourage of menu driven software I've compiled into a single disk...

But that main menu wasn't there. All I had was the flashing cursor. Now the question was: Where did I go wrong?

I am so thankful that I have not released the "5 Program Bonus Disk" to the Commodore public because each time I think the stupid thing is done, another quirk shows up causing me to re-enter the code and find the elusive bug. This time the "bug" was in "The Ledger," my bill recording and

tracking program. It was something minor, most possibly, to the advanced Commodore coder and seasoned user, but I fancy myself someone who codes programs for the intermediate and novice user, still being one myself. I tried being that "lofty and mighty" super coder but I didn't like the feeling it gave me, so I came out of my ivory tower and now live among the populace.

But let's get back to my question: What did I code wrong? At first glance from my chair it would seem that I forgot to add the "clean up" code and the reboot code, but I know I did because "The Ledger" did do the clean up and reboot before. Clearly a mystery to me.

All right, the first thing I needed to do was reboot the program and re-create the problem. I typed in RUN at the flashing cursor and was once again back into "The Ledger." I tried thinking of what I was doing when I last entered the program. Ah, I was reading some bill data that I saved earlier in the month and I needed to access the Jim Butterfield directory reader that I modified to work with all my programs, but I set it up to only be accessed by typing LIST at the first line of each selection on the menu. So, I chose #2 (Read A Bill File) which then asked for a file name. On this input I typed the LIST command and watched the directory of the disk in the drive. Pressing any key on the Commodore will stop the read.

A second menu, similar to the main menu, popped up on the screen. I remember the reason I wrote that menu was because the RETURN command sent the program into a loop that could only be broken by an elimination of the RETURN and install a duplicate main menu. On both menus, 'Q' meant quit the program and start the data cleaning process on the disk in the drive. I had a good feeling that I've already found my "bug" and I spent only five minutes on the Commodore. A quick press of the Q key confirmed my suspicions. There was my flashing cursor again just where it was last time. Cute. Now a new

task arose...

Where in all this code did I put this subroutine for the second menu?

To answer that question I would usually print off the code onto a Commodore printer, but with mine being in need of a ribbon, another avenue had to be explored. Thankfully, Commodore, in their genius, allowed the Commodore 64 and the Commodore 128 in 64 mode to scroll through a BASIC program, one line at a time, with about a one second hesitation between lines by simply holding down the CTRL key after you type LIST on READY. Using this feature, I was able to find the broken subroutine in about five minutes.

Naturally, the subroutine was near the bottom of the text, but it didn't matter. After thinking about a fix, I concluded a simple GOTO command plus the line number to the clean up subroutine would do nicely. After creating a new line number and inserting the GOTO, I re-saved the program using the "@" function provided in the user's manual. Now to run the "fixed" program.

At first relaunch everything went all right. All my menu commands worked the same as well as my functions. When I came to the second menu I had good news and bad news: The good news was there was no flashing cursor; the bad news it was replaced with ...

FILE OPEN ERROR.

Cute.

I know I opened a file at the beginning of the program in the Set Up subroutine, but I couldn't delete it or else it may throw off any other subroutine that needed the OPEN line. A quick fix was to go to the line referenced to in my new GOTO and add a CLOSE15 command, which is what I did. After doing so, I re-saved the program and rebooted it (using the RUN command) and quickly blitzed through to the problem and, upon

hitting Q, I was met with...

SYNTAX ERROR IN (#)

ARGH!

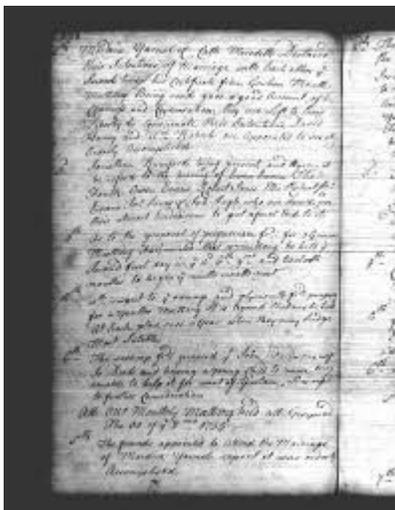
I've only been working on "The Ledger" for thirty minutes but it felt like hours since I was putting a lot into it, and it was getting late; I had to work in the morning. By now I had the line number memorized so I just typed it in a LIST command and rewrote the whole line to read:

```
CLOSE15:OPEN15,8,15:PRINT#15,"V":CLOSE
15
```

I know there are a lot of OPEN and CLOSE channels in "The Ledger," but when I saved and ran the program the third time, it finally did what I needed. It finally worked, so I quickly adopted the Army cliché, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" What was broke was broke no longer, so I'm going to let it stand -- until the next glitch.

What's the moral of this story? Programming in BASIC has its ups and downs. Few things feel better than writing subroutine after subroutine, tying them all together with several GOSUBs and GOTOs, and running the whole thing on your Commodore. Fixing bugs and problems is just par for the course. A good "punch in the arm" for any coder is when a total stranger recognizes you, comes up, shakes your hand, and says something like, "I use your software and it's great." That little comment could bring more ideas to a template, and more software.

The Next Issue Of The
Interface Should Be Out
Sometime Around May
15th



MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

January 2017

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

We had our biggest attendance for many months in January, thanks to a new member and the appearance of one we haven't seen for four years. Brad Strait not only made a long overdue appearance, but he paid his dues and said he would probably be able to attend more often. Meanwhile Bruce Nieman, who attended his first FCUG meeting in December, joined the club. Welcome!

Others in attendance were Greg Dodd, Louis and Vincent Mazzei, Roger Van Pelt, Robert Bernardo, and Dick Estel.

Dick presented the annual financial report. The treasury was down slightly from last year, but we have had very few expenses, so there will be enough for any costs that are likely to come up during the year.

There was a lengthy discussion of CommVEx. With the Plaza Hotel unable to guarantee a room until April, Robert booked the nearby California Hotel. There were certain limitations, including

no Friday set-up and the need to remove all equipment at the end of the day on Saturday. This did not go over well with a number of people who have attended in the past, and a "rebel force," including members of our now former co-sponsor club in Las Vegas, are apparently planning a competing event for the same weekend. CommVEx will proceed as planned, and time will tell how things work out.

Robert discussed several possibilities for demos at CommVEx, including some that would be on video if the demonstrator is not able to attend.

Louis and Greg reported that they are discussing the formation of a new user group, one that will support all the many orphan computer platforms, such as Radio Shack, Texas Instruments, Atari and others. The tentative name is Classic Platforms United (CPU), and details will be revealed as they are developed.

Robert showed a section of a new Brian Bagnall book, "Commodore - the Amiga Years." The .PDF file was only available to Kickstarter backers, Robert being one of them.

Also we saw the first 12 minutes of the new film, "Viva Amiga, the Story of a Beautiful Machine" which had Amiga engineers and historians talk about the history and current state of the Amiga computer. It is available on Hulu and on iTunes, disc formats coming later this year.

Members watched as Bruce booted up his Amiga 2000 for a quick look. This demo was very short since he had to leave early, but we were able to discover that it had a 68040 processor and a graphics card. Bruce said he will be it back for the next meeting.

Roger displayed a collection of updated Commodore games on a flash drive. They have

been configured to be as much like the arcade versions as possible. We saw Frogger, Donkey Kong and Jr. PacMan, while Greg demonstrated his proficiency, rarely getting "killed."

February 2017

-by Robert Bernardo

Driving from Stockton, president Robert arrived to the meeting 20 minutes early. He started setting up the equipment. V.P. Roger arrived later, and both of them set up their various computer hardware bits. Roger helped Robert set up the two Dell 2001FP monitors Robert had recently bought from the East Bay Area. The Dell's had VGA, DVI, s-video, composite inputs, and a stereo headphone jack/stereo speakers. The Dell's were not your ordinary flatscreen LCD monitors, because they could scan down to 15 KHz and thus were usable with classic Amigas with the appropriate RGB-to-VGA adapter. Also under s-video and composite modes, they were NTSC and PAL-compatible.

Eventually, members Brad, Louis, Vincent, and Greg came in, and everybody started ordering their food. While everybody waited for their food, Robert informed the group that Maker Faire was coming to San Mateo in May, and once again, an application was put in to have a classic computers' exhibit. He also said he would be traveling to the Pacific Northwest in April so that he could check up with the Living Computer Museum, the venue for the June Pacific Commodore Expo NW. As for July Commodore Vegas Expo, he reconfirmed with Louis about the presentation on modding the Plus/4.

Just as the guys finished lunch and started seeing part 2 of the video, "Viva Amiga: the Story of a Beautiful Machine," member Bruce dropped in, and Roger and he went out to bring in Bruce's Amiga 2000 system.

As they were setting up, Robert showed the new Ray Carlsen power supply for the VIC-20 (early model) and the Canadian 3D-printed, VIC-20 cartridge case for the Final Expansion 3, Rev. 11

Back to the A2000, Louis and Robert verified that it was running OS 2.0. Then Louis opened up the machine so that everybody could see what was in it – an A2320 scandoubler board for VGA output, a Progressive Peripheral & Software 68040 28 MHz. board with 16 megs of Fast RAM, a Supra board with 4 megs of RAM, a MegaChip for 2 megs of Chip RAM, and a Trumpcard SCSI board with a 120 meg. hard drive. It was a very capable machine.

However, on closer examination, Louis discovered corrosion "fuzz" on the legs of the old Ni-Cad clock battery. Both Robert and Louis urged Bruce to have the battery replaced as soon as possible so that no more damage could be caused. Louis even offered to replace the battery at the next club meeting, a task that would not be easy to do because the various boards and the internal power supply in the Amiga would have to be removed.

Then Robert and Roger concentrated on Commodore 8-bit business. Without JiffyDOS in the Vincent's VIC-20, Robert couldn't figure out the long commands to open the .D64 files on the Compactflash card in Robert's uIEC-CF. Oh, well, the VIC-20 programs of \$B, Maxi-Edit, and Cask Jumper would have to wait for another meeting.

For the final part of the meeting, Robert and Roger tried to make sense of the C64 educational program, "Bear Jam", for the Chalkboard Powerpad. In past meetings Robert had brought what he thought were all Chalkboard Powerpad programs – Leo's Links, MicroMaestro, and Leo's Lectric Paintbrush. However, he recently discovered that Bear Jam was available for download, but he didn't discover where the

instructions were. Thus, Robert and Roger were poking at the Powerpad, trying to make Bear Jam do something for some purpose. They found some pressure points on the Powerpad which activated some graphics on the screen, but what did they mean? After many minutes of trying to discover the meaning and the manner of the program, they both gave up and promised to make a concerted effort to find the instructions on-line



THE VIC 20 IN THE MOVIES!!

One of my Commodore contacts on Facebook told me that the VIC-20 was appearing in the new movie, "John Wick: Chapter 2". He even joked, calling the machine a Wick-20. So, I had to go to the cinema and verify this information. I saw the movie, and there was a retro-communications center, complete with corded, dial telephones; operator-controlled, telephone switchboards; upright, manual typewriters; pneumatic message tubes, and a VIC-20!

The first appearance of the VIC happens at about 1 hour, 12 minutes into the movie. It appears for a second or two -- a close-up of the full computer with fingers hitting the keys. The next appearance happens near the movie's end at 1 hour, 53 minutes. First, a close-up shot of fingers typing on its keyboard, then a shot of the monitor (which looked like a green screen or black-and-white monochrome monitor... hey, the shot was only a second or two and so, it was difficult to study it),

and then a final close-up of the RETURN key with a finger pressing it. On the screen were supposed to be John Wick's accounts being cancelled/deleted. The background was dark with the information being typed into the lighter foreground (inverse). The font and blanks where the information was being inputted were large, but the shot was so brief, I couldn't tell if the movie makers were using the VIC's native resolution (maybe another computer was used to display the info).

With repeated viewings of the movie, another user could be more exact on what was shown. Of course, when the DVD, Blu-ray, and digital file become public, then you freeze the exact shots and add/correct to what I wrote here.



People Still Use the Amiga Today, and New Viva Amiga Documentary Shows Why

Debuting at MAGfest this weekend (January 7, 2017), the new film gathers developers and fans across Amiga decades.

-by Jeremy Reimer

Many years ago when I began writing the History of the Amiga, I was surprised there were so few accounts of what was truly a remarkable computing platform. Fortunately, time, nostalgia, and Kickstarter have combined to make many more recollections possible. Case in point –

director Zach Weddington was able to raise funds in 2011 to make a documentary called Viva Amiga, and it's now available to watch in 12 languages and several streaming formats. The movie premiered at this week's "MAGfest", an annual games and music celebration outside of DC.

Viva Amiga is a wonderful look at the the history of the platform, the people who built it, and the users who loved it. The opening title says it all, "One Amazing Computer. One chance to save the company. One chance to win the PC wars." This message sets the stage nicely for a dramatic and passionate tale.

Viva Amiga starts with the dramatic launch party for the Amiga 1000 at Lincoln Center in 1985, next jumping back in time to cover how Jay Miner and his colleagues started the Amiga project. It highlights the Amiga's strengths in graphics and video, saving a special mention for the Video Toaster. The excitement of Amiga developers and users at the time comes through clearly in the documentary. One of them describes the most passionate users as "people who weren't striving to be millionaires. [They were] people who were striving to express themselves in new and creative ways."

The fall of Commodore in 1994 is covered briefly, as are the many attempts to revive the Amiga platform that followed. An interview with Trevor Dickinson, CEO of A-EON (one of the few attempts that succeeded), covers the then-imminent release of the Amiga X1000 tower running Amiga OS 4.1. There is some footage from the AmiWest Expo in 2010 that celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Amiga. (Amazingly, I attended this event—I even have the t-shirt—but completely missed meeting Zach at the time!)

Throughout, the film uses both close-up shots of real hardware and painstakingly-crafted 3D

renders of the same. This juxtaposition echoes the way that the Amiga existed in two forms - one as a real thing that people could buy, and the other as an idea that ignited people's imaginations.

The film also has some great interviews with key Amiga engineers like RJ Mical, Dave Needle (who sadly passed away last year), and Dave Haynie. I also enjoyed the interviews with Amiga users, many of whom (like a chiptune DJ living in New York) are still using Amigas today. As one fan [Robert Bernardo] said, "Some people think that for the Amiga to be truly great it should die, because then everyone will think it's a true classic. But I don't think that way."

Even all these years after Commodore went bankrupt, it's remarkable Amigas are still being used, and new Amigas are still being sold. That lasting impact is partly why I've been inspired to document the history of this machine and its culture throughout the years. But even as someone deeply familiar with topic, Viva Amiga does a great job of telling the story of why the platform's legend remains active more than 30 years later.

If you couldn't make it to MAGfest, Viva Amiga is available now on iTunes, Vimeo OnDemand, Amazon, and Google Play among other platforms. [The release on DVD and/or Blu-ray is still to come.] For news on possible future screenings, follow the film on Facebook.





Member Biographies – Lenard Roach

“Memory Lane,” our series of articles honoring former members, is complete, and we have now moved on to current members. The interviewer is Dick Estel and he is responsible for any errors or misunderstandings that get printed.

Now let’s get to know Lenard.

The Interface: Please provide brief biographical data: Place of birth, family status, education, occupation, current place of residence.

Lenard: I was born on April 5th, 1963 in the then little town of Olathe, Kansas at the Olathe Medical Center that sat at the corner of Buchanan and Santa Fe streets. I was born to Roger Robert and Rose Marie Roach. I was supposed to be the girl of the family, but surprised everyone when I arrived a boy. I am the youngest, but tallest of three brothers. The others are both tough guys and mother scum buckets in their own rights. Even with all of us being over 50 years of age, I wouldn’t want to mess with my brothers in a lighted alleyway with the sun out. Redneck justice runs a weird lot. I currently work as a clerk (a.m.), courier (afternoons), delivery driver (p.m.), and a custodian (nights.) I hang my various hats in a little house in midtown Kansas City, Kansas in a small subdivision called Coronado Hills just off 62nd Street. This used to be military housing

during the Cold War but was abandoned in about 1972 and sold off to developers who made it into someplace for regular folk to live.

I am currently 53 years old. I is a high school graduate, the last graduating class of Olathe High in 1981. GO EAGLES! I would like to become a full time author so I can go to work in my underwear and work when I want and quit when I want and get a check in the mail every day.

TI: What is your first memory of being aware of home computers (not necessarily using one; just any knowledge of their existence)?

LR: I was working at the Venture Department store as the custodian in Overland Park, Kansas and saw that the electronics department had, right next to the Atari 2600s an Atari 5000. I wanted to figure out why a gaming system had a typewriter attached to it. I messed with it, but wasn’t interested.

TI: Do you recall a time when computers were not a common fixture in most homes? Elaborate to your heart’s content.

LR: Oh yeah! I thought that the 13” black and white TV was cutting edge, and the addition of a UHF band was way out of this world. Also, window air conditioners took up the entire window and, in many instances, busted window frames from being so heavy. A computer? That was NASA stuff and was always going to be in the hands of the government.

TI: What is your earliest memory of using (or trying to use) a computer – your own, a friend’s, at work, in a store.

LR: Back in 1981, a classmate who was the only student in the computer class because he was so advanced, saw me walking by and asked me to sit down and try it. I don’t know what computer it was, but I played the game he had loaded (I think

it was a space shoot 'em up) and died in three seconds or less. I decided then that computers weren't for me; they would never replace the typewriter.

TI: When did you get your first computer and what was it? When did you get your first Commodore computer and what was it?

LR: My first actual computer was the Commodore 64. I got it as a hand-me-down for Christmas from my future ex-wife's best friend. I pounded that thing to death and sent it to the Commodore shop of College and Metcalf in Overland Park, Kansas dozens of times for them to fix it.

TI: What computers have you owned?

LR: I had a very short stint with a TI99-4/A. Darn thing didn't boot, so I pitched it. We currently at the RC4BCS have a Commodore 128 and all three major disk drives, two laptops that are functional and two that are FUBAR, one Mac Mini that I use for a TV in the kitchen, and the man/boys have various gaming systems and two game ready PCs

TI: How often do you use a Commodore computer - daily, weekly, monthly, rarely?

LR: Weekly. I use the Commodore 128 in 64 mode to keep track of my checkbook and to pay bills. I'm in current need of a printer for it, preferably an MPS 802, so I can use all the software I wrote for the Commodore to pay my bills.

TI: Did you ever use a Commodore of any kind at work or for work purposes?

LR: Negative. When I got into computers people were already trashing the Commodore for the faster and more memory IBM and IBM clones.

TI: Do you use a computer at work, and if so what type? How do you use it or what do you use it for? (If retired, answer based on your final year or two of work).

LR: Wow! Everything is computerized now. You can't even walk into the break room without running into a computer. I have a Windows 7 Professional that I use as a register at the convenience store and another Windows 7 Professional for the office in back.

TI: What computer-type devices that are not specifically a laptop or desktop do you use (iPad or other tablet, smart phone, other)? Have you used any in the past that you no longer have or use?

LR: My "little buddy" has been my iPhone 4 which is only good for music, internet (when wifi is available) and iNotes. The old phone is small enough to fit perfectly in my hand and I use it mostly for making writing easier when I make a stop in my job as a delivery driver. I write while the vehicle is being unloaded/loaded. I also break the law and sometimes write while driving, so if any officer is reading this, look out for a fat guy in a delivery van doing what seems be to texting and driving. (NOTE FROM DICK: A look at the map shows various US and state routes that can be used to bypass KC and the mad deliveryman.)

TI: If you have a spouse or children, what is their computer use?

- Have their own computer or device
- Use your equipment
- Do not use it

Which person in your family uses a computer at home the most?

LR: Oh my Lord! My house is a computer paradise! I've got computers in every room in the house, with cell phones being used in the bathroom. Xbox, Playstation, PC, Mac, you can't take five steps in my little hovel without stubbing

your toe on a tower or game console. If I sold all this, I could pay my debts and come to CommVEx 2017 on the kids' dime! Funny part of it is, they do not touch my Commodore or my laptop. These have been declared sacred and untouchable under curse of death, somehow...

I think it's a three way tie for computer use, but I dominate the productivity part of the equation while the boys in my home game themselves sick, but it's the reverse for cell phones. The boys use their phones for productivity and Dad uses his phones for music and internet.

TI: What Commodore magazines did you subscribe to or read, and which did you find most helpful?

LR: All of the magazines I read (Gazette and RUN) were extremely helpful, but RUN took a personal interest in me back in 1992 and gave me \$150 for a 26 block program called "Check It Out" so RUN is my favorite magazine out of them all. Gazette was more for the advanced programmer while RUN catered to the newbie and wanna be's, which was who I was at that time.

TI: What are your predictions or expectations for the future of Commodore brand computers?

LR: I think that Commodore has a market available for it now as things are starting to spin back to where retro is cool again. If Commodore would play on its retro style I think it can have a bigger chunk of the pie that just being a retro user's plaything. This would take strategy, but I think it can be done.

TI: 14. When did you join FCUG?

LR: You'll have to check with Dick on that data. I don't remember. I know it was not too long after my first visit to CommVEx when Gabe was 13 and he's 23 now, so I'd say, based on that math,

it's been 10 years ago, but again, I'm guessing. Please check with the official records keeper of the club. (ANOTHER NOTE: Regrettably, the official records keeper does not have records of who joined when, so let it stand as "ten years ago.")

TI: Any final thoughts?

LR: Yes, please do not give up on your dreams whether they involve the Commodore or not. I'm starting to live my dream after 50 and you can start anytime. Don't let anyone say to you that it can't be done for they are just trying to shut you down because they already have been shut down. Misery loves company so don't be miserable. Starve misery to death. Be active. Seek completion in your life. Surround yourself with successful people and always keep asking questions. Stomp out stupid in your life and help prevent it from setting in on those you love and care about because - you can't fix stupid once it has set in. Play more; think harder. And finally, whenever you can, kick the devil in the nuts; God knows he's kicked you there twice as many times. That's my sermon and I'm sticking to it.

Club Officers

>>--> Officers and Keypersons <--<<

- President Robert Bernardo
- Vice-president Roger Van Pelt
- Secretary/Treasurer Dick Estel
- The Interface Editor Lenard Roach
- Librarian Dick Estel
- Club equipment Roger Van Pelt
- Meeting place reservation Dick Estel
- Grand poobah of the VIC-20 Vincent Mazzei

-The Small Print-

The Fresno Commodore User Group is a club whose members share an interest in Commodore 8-bit and Amiga computers. Our mailing address is 185 W. Pilgrim Lane, Clovis, CA 93612. We meet monthly in the meeting room of Bobby Salazar's Restaurant, 2839 North Blackstone Ave., Fresno, CA. The meetings generally include demonstrations, discussion, and individual help.

Dues are \$12 for 12 months. New members receive a "New Member Disk" containing a number of useful Commodore 8-bit utilities. Members receive a subscription to The Interface newsletter, access to the public domain disk library, technical assistance, and reduced prices on selected software/hardware.

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