



The Editor's Godzilla

-by Lenard R. Roach

CLIMBING TO THE TOP

A tale starring the Commodore computer

Back around 1988 or 89, the Human Resources department of Pickles Department Store chose an individual to write up a newsletter each payday to hand out to the employees every time the company handed out the paychecks. The person in charge of gathering information from the various departments, compiling the data, and making the data into a newsletter was a middle aged woman we'll call Kathy. She worked as secretary to the store manager who we will call Mr. Small. Yeah, not much love lost there. Anyway, Kathy had been doing a great job creating the newsletter and all of us who worked at Pickles seemed to enjoy it. It was fun to read about who got engaged to whom, who's having a baby, and other general nonsense.

One particular payday I picked up my paycheck and grabbed my copy of the newsletter (which we'll call, "Small Talk" in lieu of liability) and read on the front page that our dear Kathy was hanging it up as newsletter editor so she could focus on other interests at home. Did I forget to mention that doing the newsletter was a volunteer position and was done on the editor's free time? All the company did was pay for mass production. Yeah. Kathy had family she wanted to spend time with

without hunching over a typewriter making the paper.

"You serious?" I asked her as I glanced over the 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper.

She nodded. "My grandkids are growing up and I don't want to be wasting all my time doing stuff for the store," she said. "Why? Are you interested?"

"I don't know," I answered. "I don't think the outfit will allow me to work on both the newsletter along with my custodial duties."

"To be honest, you're the first person to show interest in the position," Kathy said. "As it stands, it's either you or no one, so from my standpoint, I don't see a problem from your department head." She gave me a sly smile. "Besides, I know you got that computer thingie at your house. I'm sure you'll be able to conjur up something."

"It's a Commodore 64, not a magician," I said, "but I can see what software is out there for it to produce a newsletter."

"I'm looking forward to your premiere issue."

A few days later, I was standing in the software store that I usually frequented waiting for my favorite clerk, Jazz, to get off the phone. From my side it sounded like Jazz was negotiating with a sister store to get some software to his location before his store closed a 9 pm. Jazz was dressed kind of odd this particular day, too. He was sporting a black tuxedo, complete with cummerbund and white dickie which was smartly adorned at the top with a silk black bow tie. As I finished sizing him up he got off the phone, stepped from behind the sales counter, and greeted me with a brotherly hand clasp.

"What up, bro?" Jazz said.

I gestured at his attire. "Not as much as you apparently," I responded. "Wedding or funeral?"

"Prom," he said in correction. "My cousin, Jaquanda, couldn't find a date to take her so Aunt Gertie asked me to step in. I thought I'd take one for the family. The dance starts at seven tonight. I thought I would save a step and wear the tux to work instead of going back home and redressing."

"Are you hoping that she'll find a date at the prom?" I asked with a smirk.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "As you rednecks say, 'Hail no!' I dropped a number of dead presidents on these clothes so she going to spend the whole night with Jazz, 'The sharp dressed man' whether she likes it or not!"

I laughed. This would be one show I know I'd be sorry to miss knowing Jazz the way I did, but he knew I wasn't at the software store to talk fashion. He looked me straight in the eye and asked, "So what can I do for the Kansas City Commodore Guru today?"

"The guru needs help from the software master," I said gesturing to Jazz. "I need to find software to turn my C64 into a newspaper press."

Jazz's countenance lit up. "Come with me, my man, and I'll show you what we got."

The rear of the shop had all the Commodore wares on display. This particular location was chosen because when a person first stepped through the front the first thing they would see was the big Commodore logo on the wall, be drawn further into the store, and then check out the display of packaged software on the sales shelves. Jazz took me to the Productivity selection and grabbed two pieces of software. He held up the one in his left hand and began his sales pitch:

"This package is GEOpublish which was released by Berkerly Softworks. It is a great piece of software and uses all the functions of GEOWrite and GEOPaint. It can really make an awesome newsletter complete with headers, banners, and crisp print. It only costs \$89.99, but it requires the GEOS operating system to function."

I stuck my tongue out in disgust. \$89.99 was out of my budget. Jazz turned my gesture into a put down.

"I appreciate the offer but I use toilet paper," he ribbed, "but all kidding aside I can see that the price is a little beyond what you wanted to spend, therefore, in my right hand, I'm holding a much cheaper, but just as effective product simply called, The Newsroom. This package is a stand alone program that does not require other software to support it. There are graphic modules for it that are sold separately, but The Newsroom comes with two disks filled on both sides with clip art and it is on sale for \$35.99."

There was no contest according to my wallet. I pointed at The Newsroom.

"An excellent choice for a skin flint who has moths incubating in his grouch bag," Jazz said, "but I think you'll still enjoy the software anyway."

To shorten this tale, I took the software home and booted the main disk of the three disk set into my Commodore 64. When they called it "The Newsroom" they weren't just looking for a fancy name for a product. The main menu was set up just like a newsroom with photo shop, article writing, formatting, printing, and even a wire service. Like Jazz said at the store, it wasn't a high dollar software package but it would get the job done. I began the chore of learning the ins and outs of the package almost immediately.

"Lenard, Kathy wants to see you," one of my co-workers told me while I was dusting the floor in

the cosmetics department. I went back to custodial storage to put away my dust mop and headed to the office. Upon arrival I met up with Kathy who was at her desk, but someone else was also in the office with us and it wasn't Mr. Small. A young, slender, blonde, woman with large round glasses sat in a chair in front of Kathy.

"Lenard, I'd like for you to meet April," Kathy said with a gesture towards the girl. I gave my signature salute to her then turned my attentions back to Kathy. I'm sure she saw my puzzled look that I was sure was dominating my face at the time.

"April is from the North Pickles store on the other end of the mall," Kathy explained (yes, there were two stores in the same mall), "and she also has expressed an interest in doing the newsletter for the store."

"Aw nuts!" I thought to myself. "\$35.99 gone to the outhouse!"

"What do you want to do, Kathy?" I asked.

"I came up with the idea of a little contest," she answered. "April here will do up her version of a newsletter focusing on the activities of the north store, while you spend your energies in the south store gathering and reporting news. By Friday I will want both of your versions of the newsletter on my desk by 5 pm and I will go over them this weekend. I'll let both of you know who I decide will be my successor on Monday." Kathy stood up. "May the best journalist win."

Kathy extended both her hands to April and myself. We both grasped either hand, then April and I turned and left together. As we walked into the hall I tried to make small talk with her.

"You want to do the newsletter?" I asked.

"Mm hmm," she replied. "It will be good practice for the field of journalism I'm going into after graduation from college."

She had a pleasant Alabama twang to her voice which was curved with a little lilt.

"Do you have a degree you're studying for?"

"Yeah," I replied. "To try and keep my body temperature at 98.6 Fahrenheit."

"I see you failed at your comedy career," she said with a sting in that lilt. "I see now why you push a broom."

I stood there stymied as I watched April sashayed down the hall and out onto the sales floor. I was going to wish her good luck but instead I decided to do my best to take this witchy woman down.

I've never been a newshound before, but I think I've read enough Superman comics and studied both Clark Kent's and Lois Lane's style that I can pull this off. I started pounding my beat in South Pickles, checking in with department to department looking for something to put into print. I only had a week but I gathered material that, with a little wording, I could make a great presentation. I didn't know what April was going to do for her copy of the newsletter but I expected to knock it out of the park with the Commodore 64 and The Newsroom software.

By Thursday, the day before presentation, I got off work and went straight home so I could start on the project. I did some sample newsletters that were presented in the user manual so I got a feel as to what I needed to do. Once home I sat down, booted The Newsroom into the C64, gathered my notes that I had strewn over my computer desk, and started to work. I figured the whole project would take me about four hours from start up to finished product.

Seven and a half hours later, just a little after midnight, I finished my final draft of my C64 version of "Small Talk," complete with clip art, articles, and a slight twist of humor. I slipped the draft into a 9 x 12 envelope and put it with my lunch box as to not forget it Friday morning.

"Lenard, Kathy wants to see you in the office," a co-worker told me Monday morning. How she always needs me when I'm dusting around the cosmetics department is beyond me. I did as before and soon I was standing in front of Kathy's desk and sure enough, April was already there waiting. She had that confident smirk on her face that said, "I win," but I refused to let that shake me down. The Commodore has never let me down before and I wasn't expecting it to fail me now. Kathy held two copies of paper in each hand and glanced back and forth between them. She put them face down in front of her, then clasped her hands together to address us.

"First of all, I must say you both did a fantastic job. Both are so good, in fact, that I couldn't decide which one should be the new editor. So, I took each copy home with me and, since I had my kids and grandkids over for Sunday lunch, I asked them to be an impartial judge to break the tie."

Kathy addressed me first. "Lenard, you showed a lot of whim that brought the paper alive and the grandkids enjoyed the little cartoon characters you put in it that also brought a little flavor to the text."

Now she addressed April. "April, you stuck to the facts and dug up a lot of things that was going on the the north store. How you got people to talk and gather your information I'll never know. I couldn't get hardly anyone to talk as much as you displayed in your version of the paper."

This did not sound good for the fat man...

"So," Kathy said, "when I asked my family which one they liked the best, one of my older grandkids

grabbed a copy of one of my newsletters and said, 'This one.' When I asked why and they said that it was a perfect balance of what each newsletter I presented to them was like. When I told them I'm trying to get out of this racket, they said that they looked at the newsletter I wrote as a way of keeping up with Mom and Grandma while she was at work."

Now both April and I were stymied. We gave each other a quick glance then focused our attentions back to Kathy.

"So what does this mean?" April asked for the both of us.

"It means that, despite both of you putting out a great effort in producing each a great version of Small Talk, I'm going to stay on and do the paper for the stores."

I tried to give Kathy a "there's more to it than what you're telling" look and it must have paid off. She looked down a little at the top of her desk.

"And getting an extra ten dollars from petty cash per issue for time and materials kind of sweetened the deal."

"Ah!" I thought to myself. "Cash talks."

With no more to be said, both April and I turned together and walked out. While cruising the hall side by side, I put my ego aside and spoke to April.

"Trumped by a two hundred year old statesman," I stated to her.

"Um hmm," she responded. "I put a lot of effort into it, too."

"I'm sure your version was great."

"And I'm sure your version was ... adequate."

I again stood in the hallway bewildered as I watched April saunter down the hall, wondering what in blazes I did to this girl to create such animosity? I guessed that she didn't appreciate a little friendly competition to boost interest in the stores. I'll never know, but what really got me was that, for the first time that I could recall in my short time in using the Commodore, we failed in winning a place in anything. It also didn't help that money was thrown into the mix to create sway in the decision. In politics as in business, I suppose...



WYNN "RETIRES!"

One of my great friends who so happens to be my sister-in-law (my oldest brother's wife) informed me in January 2019 that she unofficially "retires" from being my editor and proofreader of all my skits, plays, stories, articles, essays, newsletters, books, and magazines after about a decade of helping me look shway pimpin' in print. She did all this as a volunteer and received no monetary compensation from me or any affiliates I've done writing for. I wanted to take a few paragraphs and brag a little on her contribution to Commodore and FCUG.

Born on Paradise Island, daughter of Hyppolita, and created by Zeus, trained to be an Amazon warrior ...

Wait. That's not right ...

Believing the evidence presented by her uncle Jor El, the young teen was placed in an escape rocket and launched into space moments before her home world of Krypton exploded ...

Darn it! That ain't right, either ...

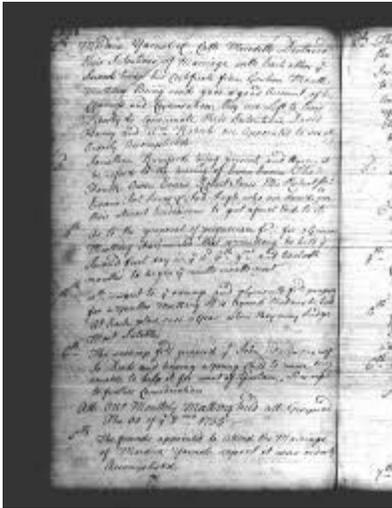
Hmm ...

Now that I think of it, even after all these years of Wynn being my sister-in-law, I don't know too much about her past. I don't know her maiden name, her kid's names, or even her siblings. I know she's mentioned them a few times when we've talked, but like a dense goat I didn't hear her. I must be that stuck on myself. What I do know is that she is dynamite in making people look good, bending over backwards to make sure a person was well taken care of and their needs met. When she told me she was a retired proofreader for a cookbook publisher I just nonchalantly asked her to look at some skits I've penned down for a local church. The rest is history.

I do know that Wynn loves her chihuahuas, reading (especially mysteries), Hot Wheel cars, and Beanie Babies. She is also a chef par excellence and I have been blessed time and time again to eat some of her delicious dishes.

Wynn's "retirement" leaves a serious hole in the staff at the RC4BCS. Her skills in making me look good were unparalleled but I wish her well as she enjoys more time with her immediate family and her menagerie of pets. I only pray that I've learned enough about professional proof reading from her to carry on with the work.

Thanks for all you've done, sis! May you be blessed ten times more than you've blessed me!
Love you!



Monthly Meeting Reports

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

January 2019

The first order of business at our meetings is to carry in the equipment. This can be just a few items or a few tables full. Sometimes we have as many as five computer systems set up, with no duplicates. More about that later.

Next the various systems are set up and plugged in, with all the peripherals needed for the day's events.

Only when we have completed these tasks do we sit down, place our orders, and attack the chips and salsa. The official meeting does not begin until we've nearly finished eating, but there is always discussion during lunch, mostly tech-related but sometimes straying far and wide.

To kick off 2019 on January 20, Robert, Roger, Dave, Brad and Dick held forth on how various companies failed to capitalize on their main product and either faded away (Commodore) or rose from the dead with something entirely new (Apple). There was mild debate on whether the iPhone will be the end of Apple; Mac almost was

the end of Apple, and the Amiga definitely was the end of Commodore. Brad pointed out that Apple had billions in cash, providing a pretty good cushion against future problems. The other unanswered question was whether Tesla can survive without Elon Musk, with Brad noting that it has barely survived with him. Robert passed around the new book, "Commodore: the Inside Story," written by former Commodore UK executive, David Pleasance. The book tells the story of David's rise in the company and then the Commodore's downfall, all from his British perspective.

In official business, Robert reported on the 2nd annual Retro City Festival in Pomona, which he attended in early January. The focus was on arcade and pinball games, but Robert and other members of the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network (SCCAN) had several exhibit tables featuring classic computers.

We also discussed the three shows that Robert and FCUG will present this year, the first being the Commodore Los Angeles Super Show (CLASS) on April 27-28. Plans to hold it at the Santa Monica Public Library did not work out, and the venue instead will be Toolbox LA, a co-working space in Chatsworth. Robert will make the final payment for the room early in February.

Everything is a "go" for Pacific Commodore Northwest (PaCommEx) in June, and our expo web designer, Larry Anderson, will have the website updated soon.

The final Commodore Vegas Expo (CommVEx) in August is still in the "very probable stage," with the contract yet to be signed. The final word should be out by late February/early March.

At the insistence of club members, Robert also told us about his trip to Ticonderoga, New York, for a tour of the Star Trek original series set. The tour was led by Captain Kirk himself, William

Shatner, still going strong at age 87. The weather was cold with light snow, the plane trip frustrating, but all worth the effort to stand on the bridge of the Enterprise. Robert remarked that this year at the William Shatner Weekend in Burbank he will make an effort to interview Shatner about his involvement with Commodore.

Moving to demonstrations, we finally got a look at Dave's 64 Mini in action. This is a replica C64, about the size of a VHS cassette, containing a modern game machine that emulates new and old Commodore games under Linux. Dave connected a keyboard, a joystick and a gamepad controller via 3-way splitter into the device's USB port. The display was fed into a Samsung HDMI monitor. Dave treated us to several games, including Boulder Dash and Choplifter.

Some programming of the machine can be done using BASIC. There's an on-screen virtual keyboard which Dave said was very tedious to use, but any USB keyboard can be plugged in.

As Dave ran the very intriguing game, Digiloi, on the 64 Mini, Robert loaded up the same game on the club C128 so that he could compare the game's SID music between each machine. Digiloi was programmed in assembly language using Commodore keyboard graphics. Considering the limitations of the tools at hand, the game looked very good and played smoothly.

Though Robert had a packed agenda with various stuff for us to try out, the rest of the meeting was devoted to testing the new Ultimate 64, a modern motherboard replacement for the C64. No legacy chips were used in the U64 (Robert joking that it was World War II German submarine sunk in 1940). Robert had put the U64 in an ordinary brown C64 case; however, if you looked around the back and right side of the computer, you would see that it was not ordinary, what with its dual USB ports, Ethernet port, HDMI port, missing RF jack and channel switch, and spacing gaps where

there should be plates covering the holes.

After connecting the U64 to Dave's HDMI monitor, Robert powered it on and had to switch the monitor to 4:3 aspect ratio instead of its standard 16:9 ratio. Then he showed the computer's configuration menus which were accessed with the machine's multi-function switch and the F2 key. With the computer configured (or so Robert had thought), he ran the Digiloi game. There was no sound from the game! Robert went back to the U64 configuration menus and verified they were o.k.. Still no sound. Robert connected a regular A/V cable to the back of the computer and hooked it into the monitor (which also had composite and audio ports). Sound came from the game via A/V cable! Finally, after going into the computer menus again and after much thought, it was determined that the U64 was connected to the wrong HDMI port of the monitor; one port allowed sound and the other didn't. When the HDMI cable was connected in the correct port, there was no problem with the sound.

Robert ran several games from the SD card USB adapter connected into the U64. He discovered that if you "Mount a D64" and then ran it, the Epyx Fastload (a cartridge emulated in the U64) would work. However, if you directly "Run a D64", the fast loader would be disabled.

Then it was time to test the U64's disk drive capabilities. He tried to load and run several disks by using the club 1571, the club 1581, and his own 1541. All failed to load and run. He could not even pull up a directory. It was back to the configuration menus. IEC drive and printer enabled... yes. Disk drive selection... change from 1541-II to 1541. Virtual drive disabled... yes. Still no correct response from real disk drives. Finally, on advice from Roger, Robert reset all the menus back to original with the exception of the enabling of the IEC drive. The real drives now worked correctly. The virtual drive option had to be enabled (though that seemed contrary to what

Roger and Robert understood).

With real drives working correctly, Robert loaded and ran 1581 Toolkit, the FCUG membership disk, and even a German GEOS disk. However, the GEOS disk only reached the desktop without any icons. Without a mouse, further GEOS testing would be difficult. Robert had wanted to test the U64's SID emulation (UltiSID)... would it recognize a mouse?

Finally, in order to test the UltiSID, Robert plugged in a Koalainter cartridge and a Koalapad into the computer. The U64 ran the cartridge but did not respond correctly to the Koalapad. No matter which way Robert moved the Koala stylus, he could not move the screen pointer lower than halfway down the screen. Even enabling/disabling the Paddle Control in the configuration menus made no difference. The U64 had failed. If the UltiSID was inferior to real SID chips, then the real ones would have to be installed in the U64's sockets (the U64 had sockets for two actual SID chips). Robert was now suspicious of U64's handling of paddles and a mouse; further testing would have to be done with applications that used paddles and a mouse.

Related Links

Retro City Festival -- <http://retrocityfestival.com>
 Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network -- <http://www.portcommodore.com/scgan>
 Toolbox LA -- <https://toolbox.la>
 CLASS -- <http://www.portcommodore.com/class>
 PaCommEx -- <http://www.portcommodore.com/pacommex>
 Larry Anderson -- <https://portcommodore.com/dokuwiki/doku.php>
 CommVEX 2018 -- <http://www.dickestel.com/commvex18.htm>
 Star Trek Set Tour -- <https://www.startrektour.com>
 64 Mini -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxtDmEZt3QM>
 Ultimate 64 -- <https://ultimate64.com>

February 2019

Nearly everyone who attended the February 17 meeting drove in the rain as they left their homes, with the temperature around 40. By the time we reached Bobby Salazar's Restaurant in central Fresno, the storm had moved east, and there was blue sky above us. Even so, this cold storm brought snow to very low levels, down around the 1,500 feet level.

Inside the restaurant it was warm and cozy, and there was a good turnout: Robert Bernardo, Roger Van Pelt, Dave Smith, Brad Strait and son William, Dick Estel, and Randy Stoller.

The main topic of the business meeting was the various exhibitions in which the club is involved. First up was the Commodore Los Angeles Super Show (CLASS) on April 27-28 at Toolbox LA in Chatsworth. Robert reported that Mark Ripkin, who worked at Commodore late in its run, will be at this show. Robert also reported that the Livermore Innovation Fair was coming on May 4 and that the application for the May 17-19 Bay Area Maker Faire had been submitted. He showed the updated websites for the June 8-9 Pacific Commodore Expo NW and the August 10-11 Commodore Vegas Expo v15. The Pacific Commodore Expo was being held at the Seattle's Living Computers: Museum + Labs, and Robert remarked that Matisse Fletcher, the events' coordinator who was in charge for the last two PaCommExes had moved to the Burke Natural History Museum in Seattle. Though she had moved, PaCommEx 2019 was still a go.

We have now committed to holding CommVEX 2019 at the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, the 15th year for this now-iconic event.

Robert was working on a video commercial for CLASS, and the script called for young students. After we finished eating, we went outside, and 9-

year old William Strait made his TV debut in a small but significant role for the commercial. Robert also photographed a brown C64 sitting on Randy's new Tesla, perhaps a contrast between old and new technology. Since some of us had never seen such a vehicle, we were intrigued by the presence of front and back luggage compartments, and the lack of traditional dashboard items which were replaced by a large video display.

Returning to the meeting room, Robert presented a salute to Valentine's Day by loading up Wordwriter by One Step Software and showing samples from a disk of "Love Letters 1: A Selection of Famous Love Letters." The definition of "famous" is highly subjective, because most of us found these missives severely wanting.

On a laptop, Robert brought up the website, <https://www.commodoregamebase.com>. This is an extensive collection of Commodore games and other applications, sorted by model (Commodore PET, C128, and VIC-20) and arranged alphabetically. Each game has a screen shot, and the game can be downloaded and run with an emulator or on a real Commodore.

The new Ultimate 64 (<https://ultimate64.com>) returned for further testing. After running a few games from the SD card adapter attached to the USB port of the machine, the U64 began giving trouble, i.e., the screen was not being displayed. Even after a reset and after a power-down, the screen reliably did not come back on the U64. Robert and Roger spent the rest of the meeting trying to get the U64 running again. When they did get the screen back, they would go through the U64 menus, trying to track down some kind of setting that stopped the display. By the end of the meeting, they had given up on trying to solve the problem. Robert did say he would bring the machine to the next meeting of the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network and have the members check it out, especially the one

member who had the U64, too.



Amiwest 2018 Show Report

-by Guest Contributor
Matthew Leaman, Managing Director
Amiga Kit and A-EON Technology

Amiga Kit has been sponsoring and attending [the] Amiwest show in California for twelve years. This year was no different, and we were pleased to support the efforts of the Sacramento Amiga Computer Club (SACC) by sponsoring their show for the thirteenth consecutive year. In the past SACC had to charge for entry to the show, but with the sponsorship fee they are able to provide free admittance to any Amiga fan that shows up on the day.

The event spans a total of four days so it was necessary to fly out to San Francisco the prior day. On exiting the airport, Paul Sadlik (OS4 beta tester), Daniel Muessener (Amiga developer), and Trevor Dickinson (A-EON co-founder) met me in Paul's car that he hired. He kindly offered to drive us to the official show hotel in Sacramento which is about two hours drive - thanks again, Paul!

The first two days are the traditional Amiwest Dev Con (Developers' Conference). This is a great forum for developers to come together and share ideas, discuss programming problems, and learn about new development techniques. There were about a dozen systems set up by attendees, mostly consisting of X5000, X1000, and some SAM 460/440. Steven Solie organises and leads the Dev Con as he has done so for many years prior. He

once again did a great job of putting together an agenda for the two days. This year there was a strong Amiga Developer Team presence with both Hans De Ruiter and Mark Ritter participating.

The Friday evening is the turn of the Classic Clinic. This is an event where users bring along their aging Classic Amigas which may need upgrading or even repairs. It is a great way of solving any problems by talking to knowledgeable users who are happy to help out in practical ways and advice.

Saturday is the start of the show. The day kicked off with speakers giving talks about their businesses. Trevor gave a good account of the A-EON and Amiga Developer Team activities during the last year and outlined our plans for the near future, revealing details about the next version of Enhancer Software.

The Amiga Kit tables were consistently busy through out the day with many existing customers asking questions, looking at our products, and chatting to me about their Amiga interests. It was great to put many faces to names that we regularly serve throughout the year on Amiga Kit Amiga Store. It was encouraging to meet new Amiga users. Nevertheless, every visitor to our tables received the obligatory Amiga Kit-branded pen!

Pizza was provided for lunch during the busy show schedule so I grabbed a few minutes to eat before resuming activities. The afternoon whizzed by and before we knew it the show was over for the day. The room was cleared for the traditional Amiwest banquet dinner preparations.

The banquet commenced early evening. It consisted of a two-course meal with an award ceremony and guest speaker. A posthumous award this year was given to Chuck Washburn who recently passed away. Chuck was a friend of Amiga Kit, helping us out for years with show stock coordination and long-term storage. He was

always eager to help us and other exhibitors with any questions or problems we had. He would work tirelessly behind the scenes of Amiwest to ensure the show was on budget and ran smoothly, coordinating with the hotel and caterers. He will be missed by all.

This year Amiga Kit asked to sponsor the Amiwest cake, and we were invited by SACC President Brian Deneen to make the first cut in the cake before serving to all diners.

The guest speaker was Daniel Muessener. He needed no introduction to many active Amiga users, having developed or ported many games, such as Wings Battlefield, Tower 57, and more recently, Wings Remastered. He has also been responsible for developing the OpenGL ES 2.0 library for the Enhancer Software. He gave an enthusiastic speech, albeit not in his native language, which was met with universal approval by all the banquet diners.

The second day ensued with a brisk start of visitors to our tables. We had a lot of interest in our Arcade Evolution Amiga Joystick which we have been manufacturing for many years. There were enthusiastic questions about the products we plan to release in the coming year for Classic Amiga systems. We handed out a few complimentary Boing Ball Rulers to visitors who expressed an interest in them.

There were a quite a few private exhibitors. Chris Collins presented a table full of historic Commodore calculators; [it] was interesting to see products from their early years. Another notable table was manned by Alex Carmona who showed his X1000 system in a Perspex case with LED lighting and LED-illuminated cooling fan. It was quite the light show! Other Amiga-like systems were represented. Paul Rezendes presented the latest MorphOS distribution (v3.11) and gave a speech about it.

Before we knew it, the afternoon came to an end, and the show concluded. It is traditional to attend a farewell dinner before we part ways until the following year. Over twenty Amigas descended on the restaurant which caused a headache for the server. Trevor was kind enough to pay for free drinks for everyone.

In conclusion, Amiwest was an exciting Amiga event with many friendships renewed [and] great ideas shared with interesting exhibits. If you manage to get the chance, please consider attending next year's show (www.amiwest.net).



SC3 Arcade Party: Back to Basics and the Backyard!

-by Guest Contributor Steven Hertz

The latest SC3 Arcade Party took place on November 10, 2018, at the good old "Backyard" location in Claremont. We always consider the backyard events to be a kind of homecoming, a time to get back to the basics of what SC3 is all about: games, friends, food, and most importantly, fun. This event, perhaps even more than other recent backyard blowouts, really did feel like returning home. Things were a bit smaller and quieter... but we believe better.

The November 10 party was as much about what was not there as what was. If you've been reading the last few event recaps, then you've seen us write

about the expanding trade area and the seemingly never-ending piles of gaming items on offer. We call it "trading" but it's become more about commerce over time. Game resellers ("flippers") are a real presence today in a way that they weren't just a few years ago. As we've stated many times, we have mixed feelings about it. After all, we're collectors; we want this stuff to be available. But SC3 is as much about celebrating the games – you know, having actual fun with them – as it is about simply acquiring them. We're never going to begrudge somebody for making a buckselling off a flea market find they don't want for themselves, but people coming to SC3 just to sell huge boxes of games for sale at eBay prices, while never actually playing anything? That's not really what we're all about.

So this time, we severely restricted the trade area and encouraged people to bring only the goods they could fit in a backpack. That kept away the flippers and resellers, and probably a handful of others. Overall our crowd was smaller than at recent events (about 150 people as opposed to 200+), but we view this a good thing. There was still a good-sized crowd, and the people that came were definitely there to play games and reconnect with old friends – exactly what makes SC3 events so special. What's more, the reduced trade area gave us more room to cram in additional consoles and vintage computers. Classic '80s computing platforms in particular had a larger presence this time around. In general, all the feedback we got on these changes was positive. Nobody seemed to miss the resellers. In the future we'll continue to walk the line between some active game trading and out-and-out commerce as best we can.

So there was less trading this time around, but thanks to Jay Forster and contributions from other attendees, there was plenty of good stuff in the raffle. In addition to video games, SC3 raffles almost always contain some "retrogaming adjacent" stuff, and this was even more so the case

this time around. Between vintage Care Bears, Dark Crystal lunch boxes, Lite-Brites and small CRT televisions, there was plenty to make any child of the '80s happy. No joke: the most coveted item this time around was an original Magnum P.I. TV tray. What can we say? Everybody digs that Tom Selleck 'stache. But naturally video games were covered too: piles of Atari 2600 carts, arcade boards and marquees, Pac-Man cups and plushes... the list went on. Big thanks to Jay for organizing the raffle!

As mentioned, the extra space allowed for even more consoles and monitors than usual. This event may have boasted the highest number of consoles ever at an SC3 event: by our count, 20. Vintage computers ranging from Apple II to Commodore to a 486 running DOS games (Wolfenstein 3-D!) were well-represented, thanks to Jay and Robert Bernardo. Vintage consoles ran the gamut from Atari 2600 through the Nintendo Wii, and there were two Sega Saturns... because why not? Thanks to William D. for bringing his incredible NeoGeo setup again. Our friends from Retro City Festival hosted a miniature NES World Championship, using the modified contest game ROM from back in 1990. (Look for SC3 to have a presence again at Retro City 2019, in January!)

Of course, classic arcade coin-ops were there too. At this point it's hard to remember which machines are making their SC3 debut, but this time around we had Mouse Trap and Pac-Land, which haven't been the most commonly seen. Of special note was the cocktail Gyruss machine, which appeared courtesy of long-time SC3 attendee and Gyruss expert Paul S., who was celebrating his birthday during the event. Unbeknownst to Paul, his wife had conspired with his good friend Webster to surprise him at the event with a Gyruss-themed cake. Paul was obviously touched, as were the rest of us. It was a sweet moment, the kind of thing that you don't ordinarily see outside of SC3 events.

This kind of moment sums up what SC3 is, and why we keep hosting it. It's friends and family bonding over their shared love of video games. That's what it's all about: the collecting and the commerce... all that has its place but in the end it's all about having fun with it, together. At each party we host, we're reminded of how much people enjoy our events and we're gratified that so many of you keep coming back. That was especially true this time around. Thanks to Clark P., David H., Sean B. and Joe O. for setting up and tearing down; Jay F. for bringing arcade games and the raffle; Robert B. for bringing the SX-64; Paul S. for Gyruss; Steve T. for donating sodas and waters; Camille R. for bringing pizzas; Lorraine B. and Ariana H. for working concessions; William D. for bringing the NeoGeo; and Ariana and Mercedes for doing the pizza runs! And of course, thanks to all our attendees!

If you're going to Retro City Festival (which you should), come by and check out SC3's table. The event will be held January 5th and 6th at the Fairplex in Pomona – not far at all from where the backyard party took place. This is only Retro City's second year, but they've already made plans to expand their attractions. It'll be a great show!

The date for SC3's spring event is yet to be announced. With the closing of Arcade 2084, we're scouting for a new location. We have a couple leads but nothing definite as of yet. Keep an eye on this site and our Facebook page for details. And as always, keep gaming!

Due To Problems On The Homefront, The March/April 2019 Issue Of "The Interface" Will Be Out As Quickly As Possible. Thank You For Your Undying Patience.

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-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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