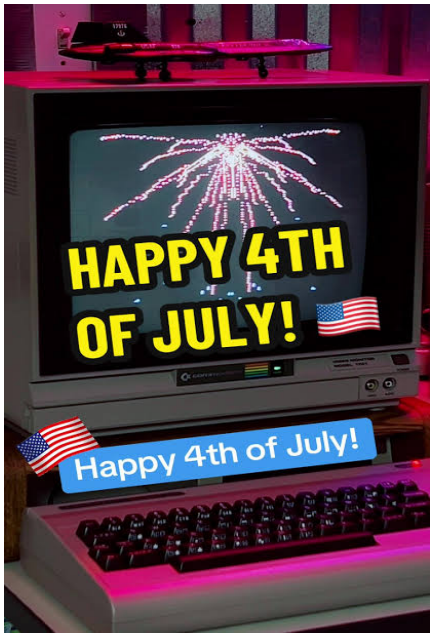
The Interface

"Taking 8-Bits Into The 21st Century"

Volume 44 Number 5
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Blowing Up Stuff Commodore Style!

Commodore and FCUG celebrate America's 250th Birthday.

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Newsletter of the Fresno Commodore User Group – Fresno, California
www.dickestel.com/fcug.htm



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

- By Lenard R. Roach

IT ALL STARTS HERE

With this and future articles, I will attempt to start an exhaustive review of the games that are found in the book, "Bible Basic," by Bernard Bangley.

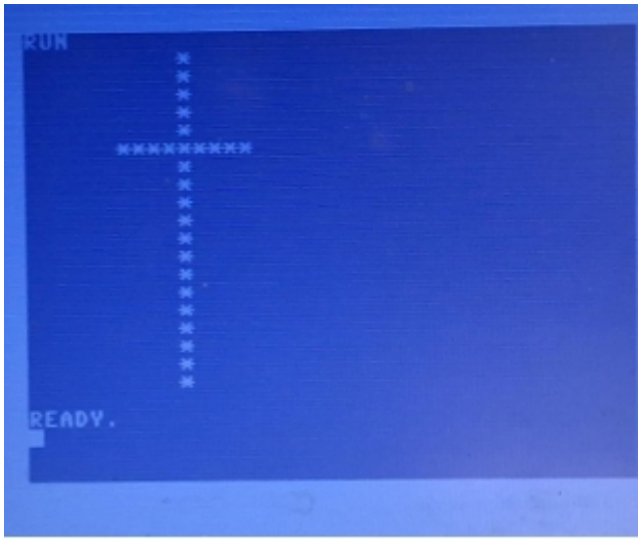
What about the other book, "Bible Computer Games Book 2?" Will you be covering that book as well? I tried; in fact, I started but then raised an eyebrow in suspicion about something that struck me as odd about the book. Before anything could be put into the computer in the way of code, the coder had to type in a few BASIC lines (provided in BASIC by Mr. Conrod) stating specifically that the code and source code found in his book was copyrighted material and any unauthorized distribution of the contents, be it in either print or completed program, must first be granted permission by the author. I was going to write about Mr. Conrod's programs, but they were protected by the laws of the Copyright Office. If I were to write about his programs, this may have led to serious problems both for myself and the publishers of this article.

However, "Bible Basic" was written (or so it appears) as freeware, and therefore, writing an article about the book's contents should cause no trouble for myself or the magazines in which this piece may find itself printed. In fact, Mr. Bangley encourages changes to the code he provided in his book. I pray that this means articles about the contents of the book are also welcome. In my opinion based on the paragraphs in the book, Mr. Bangley offers the code and source code as freeware and open to the general public, especially to those who use the Commodore brand of computers.

So here we go… The first program that a would-be programmer would come across at the start of the book is simply called "The Cross." This is a simple BASIC program that only displays a cross created by putting both horizontal as well as vertical asterisk symbols together, forming the shape of a cross. There is not much to speak about when it comes to this program, except that coming from a book about Christian software, this would be a perfect place to find it.

Even with a novice understanding of BASIC, a coder may have other ideas on what can be done with this simple image, like changing the color of the cross, making the cross scroll across or travel up and down the screen, and having the cross fade in and out. The coder can change the width and length of the cross to fit most anywhere on the screen. With a little more skill, he/she can combine the

image as the opening screen to the rest of the programs found in the book.



The Cross written by Bernard K. Bangley © 1983

If I understand Mr. Bangley's reason for coding this small program, it is to show some of the easy ways to program in BASIC and still get some cool results. Back in the early 1980s, the youngsters that were in Mr. Bangley's Sunday School class got a kick out of just making the cross appear on the screen any time they executed the word RUN followed by the return key. I remember my early days of Commodore (1989?) as an adult running BASIC programs found in a number of Commodore coding books available and freaking myself out as the image (or text only in text adventure games) would come onto my screen after keying in just a few simple lines of code. It soon became an almost nightly ritual at the Roach home to go through a code book or two and agree on a program that we would like to have come to digital life. With her skills of ten key and typing, my wife at the time was usually the elected person to type in the program. Once it was done and the program saved to disk, the rest of the family would take turns playing whatever game was chosen. There were some duds in the collection, but mostly there were a lot of great pieces of software waiting to be brought to life from the pages of the Commodore 64 books.

But I digress and apologize for taking this detour into a paragraph that has nothing to do with the present subject. Let's continue…

Mr. Conrod makes it absolutely clear that the programs in his book are copyrighted material and can not be distributed as freeware, privately or publicly. I'm also guessing that Mr. Conrod doesn't mind changes and improvements made to his work, but coder beware! If you are planning on making any changes to Mr. Conrod's programs and distributing said changes, even as freeware for others to use your new code, then that code subject by law becomes Mr. Conrod's property. Mr. Bangley takes a different approach. Even though the book is copyrighted material just like Mr. Conrod's book, he does not hold the source code in the book to any legal restriction. The presentation of the Good News is supposed to be free to whomever wishes to hear. If the programmer is up to it and wants to take a program like "The Cross" on a wild ride up, down, and through the thousands of BASIC commands found in the Commodore computer, he/she is free from any rebuttal from Mr. Bangley. The programmer can even make "The Cross" sing, and dare I say, dance on the monitor screen, and all without (supposed) threat of a lawsuit. The more a user has knowledge of Commodore BASIC, the greater and more

fantastic the program can be. All of that coding, new and old, can be distributed as freeware to the general public.

This whole article is not to be meant as bashing Mr. Conrod or promoting the fanboys of Mr. Bangley; I'm only trying to show that the original writers of Commodore (or any other computer) code have full legal rights to their work and can make any restrictions on said work binding through the law. I've done this same procedure myself when I started out writing in BASIC. When done, I would send a print out of my program along with the required money to the Copyright Office in Washington, DC. In about eight to twelve weeks, I would have the original TX-40 copyright document in my hot, little hands. I was now in full legal command of my work, and any changes by anyone would have to go through me. In my mind at the time (and this is just me talking), I worked for weeks if not months on these lines of code that I went and got copyrighted, and I'd be boiled in oil before I let anyone mess with all my hard work. Looking from hindsight (and we all know that hindsight is 20/20), I was just being a brat that was clutching his favorite toy and refusing to share it with anyone. If anyone tried to take the toy away from me, I would hold it even tighter to my chest and scream, "Mine! Mine!"

I present the source code that makes up "The Cross." This way anyone who would like to type in the program on the Commodore 64 can start having fun making the cross.

```
10 FORX=1TO19
20 IFX=6THENPRINTTAB(6);
"*********":GOTO40
30 PRINTTAB(10);"*"
40 NEXTX
```

Code to The Cross written by Bernard K. Bangley, © 1983

CLASSIC QL TRANSCRIPT WITH DAVE HAYNIE

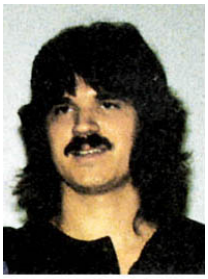
Part 1

If you were a Quantum Link subscriber, you will remember the Commodore Forums. They were live, online conferences hosted by Commodore engineers and other high-profile figures, where users learned about programming secrets, hardware projects, and upcoming products. [Below is one of] the 30 original transcripts of those forum sessions, an extraordinary slice of Commodore history.

(Dave "Hazy Dave" Haynie was a Commodore and Amiga engineer, originally hired by CBM engineer Bil Herd. He worked on the Commodore 128 but was more well-known for developing various Amiga computers. He worked for Commodore Business Machines until the last day of the company's existence.

In the below transcript, Fred Bowen, Jeff Porter, and Hedley Davis are mentioned, all of them being CBM engineers.)

QuantumLink Personal Computer Network
C128 Forum
March 30, 1987



Dave Haynie

Dave back in the day

Hazy Dave: Hi, Folks! My name is Dave Haynie, and I'll be "speaking" tonight. I'll especially talk about the C128D, though of course I'll answer any C128 questions, or Commodore questions, that I can. ANNOUNCEMENT!! The C128 Upgrade ROMs ARE AVAILABLE. Fred Bowen has posted a list of fixes in various places; I don't know if that list is here. It does fix the CAPS-LOCK Q bugs. Anyway, these will be available from repair centers, who'll put them in for you, soon. They are available NOW directly from Commodore. Send $21.95 + $3.00 shipping/handling/whatever with your name and address to: Service Department CBM 1200 Wilson Drive West Chester, PA 19380 ask for "C128 upgrade ROM kit". This upgrades the 3 C128 ROMs; there's no need, of course, to upgrade the C64 ROM. And now, on to questions…

Question: We have unofficial reports of the new 128 ROMs being available directly from CBM. True? What address and cost? Will 1571 ROMs follow shortly?

Hazy Dave: Hey, do I have ESP or what? I hear from Fred the 1571 ROM is to follow soon. They were originally on the same schedule, but late-breaking 1571 bugs forced a delay on the 1571 ROM. I'd expect the 1571 ROMs in a month or less; I'll definitely post the info here next month, or perhaps sooner if they become available earlier.

Question: My 1571 will not work in double. side mode but single side works OK. Logic problem? Any hints, tips, etc. appreciated. Tnks.

Hazy Dave: If you've started it up with a C128 in C128 mode, told it to HEADER a disk, and that disk comes out as a 1541 (single sided) disk, there's definitely a problem with the drive. Most likely a bad chip somewhere, though I'm not familiar enough with the 1571 logic to guess which one. You'll probably have to take it in for service, but try to format as I mentioned first. You could try a new cable, too.

Question: As a new owner of the 1750 RAM unit, I would like to know what the prospects are for a RAM disk for the 128 mode.

Hazy Dave: RAM disk software for the 1764 on the C64 has been done, so I would expect a version for the C128 to be no big deal. I'm not sure of the priority given such a program, at present. I'm not directly involved, but I do know the guy working on it (Hedley Davis, also designer of the 1351 mouse), so I'll check on this and hopefully have some news next month.

Question: Hello Dave- missed having you last month

Hazy Dave: Sorry about that — the big snowstorm we had here knocked down my phone line for a few days.

Question: Will the 128D have the new 128/1571 ROMs?

Hazy Dave: As far as I know, it will. The C128 ROMs are done, the 1571 should be very shortly. The 128D will also come with 64K video RAM standard, in the US version. European versions currently ship with 16K, just like the regular 128, but this is all changing with the new C128D.



The European, plastic-cased C128D

Question: Jeff Porter, my 1670 doesn't answer right at 1200 baud. works fine in 300 baud. still on warranty. should I take it back or am I doing something wrong?

Hazy Dave: Well, Jeff's not here, but I'll try an answer myself. When you're talking to the modem from a terminal program, it senses the baud rate when you type out the user port. So in that case, if your terminal emulator or Q-Link package is set to 1200 baud and the modem doesn't properly respond, it's probably bad. On the other hand, if you're running a BBS of some kind, the modem will set itself according to the baud rate of the incoming connection, and it's the responsibility of the BBS package to ask the modem what baud it's running at. If you know the BBS does this correctly, and it's still not working, it's probably a bad modem

Question: having purchased a c128 computer (dated 1986) I tried to load PAPERBACK WRITER 128/64. It would not load in 128 or 64 m mode. I noted that it also had the CAP/LOCK q problem. Another c128 at the same store acted identically, although their demo (dated Nov. 85) loaded the program. I returned the computer for a refund. What is the problem, and will it be corrected in the near future?.

Hazy Dave: The CAPS-LOCK Q bug is on ALL C128s currently released. There are ROMs that fix this available, though as far as I know they're not shipping in C128s yet (they may just now be starting). That's not going to hurt PaperBack Writer. I'm not that familiar with PBW specifically, but I do know of a bug that's in programs we've seen from Digital Solutions and Batteries Included that will cause programs trouble in newer C128s and C64s. This is a program bug, and I believe that both companies have fixed it in their latest revisions. Specifically, older CIA chips (6526) in C128s and C64s had an interrupt bug. When an interrupt came into the chip at the same time that a program was reading the chip's interrupt register, there was a chance that the interrupt would never register. The new chips correct this bug so that the interrupts always register (new chip is called 8521). It's hard to imagine how a program could be hurt by catching instead of ignoring

interrupts, but that's the story. So if it dies, best return the program and not the computer for the latest rev.

Question: I've downloaded a program from my local BBS, and saved it as a PRG file. I then reset my 128,and tried loading the program. The 128 gives 'File-Not-Found' error, but it's on the directory. I tried saving it as a SEQ file, and my word processor will load that, but a SEQ-to-PRG file program gives File Not found. I tried renaming the file, but that gives the error. It's not an ARC or LBR file; it is a basic program. Help!

Hazy Dave: Hmmmm…. I've never encountered that myself. Obviously you've checked the directory and found the program there, as a PRG file, so that's where we start from. My first impression would be to check the file name for invisible characters. I know with the VT100 emulator you can get a backspace saved as the first character in the filename, which can look normal but never show up. So try renaming it. Maybe you could LOAD "FILE.PRG" instead of just LOAD "FILE". I've just been informed that a bad directory entry might cause this behavior (Thanks Jeff62), so that's another possibility.

Question: What new mods will it have that are new?

Hazy Dave: For the C128D? C128D will be essentially a C128 and 1571 in a metal box. The video RAM will come standard at 64K, and the new ROMS should be in all units. Nothing else really different; the keyboard's detachable, which is nice. I've always had a C128D at home (the older, plastic case version), and it's MUCH easier on desk space than the normal C128.

Question: Is GEOS in the 4th bank of the C-128D?

Hazy Dave: 4th Bank? You mean the internal ROM, I presume. No, GEOS on either the C128 or C64 is always RAM resident, at least to date. It would be nice in ROM, wouldn't it, but I haven't heard any plans at all to ROM it. Then again, I haven't talked with the Berkeley folks since CES in January (where they showed a very nice, preliminary 80-column screen GEOS for the C128). Wow! We've currently got 31 folks here, 112 questions in the queue. Please be patient, I'll answer as fast as I can.

Question: On the 128D, is it 100% compatible with the 128?

Hazy Dave: Yes. The original C128D used the same exact PC board as the normal C128. They've sold almost 1:1 C128D vs. C128 in Germany. Unfortunately, the old design was an FCC nightmare and too expensive for the US market, so the new version is mainly a layout change. Of course, if any program were written for the D that requires 64K of video RAM, you'd have to upgrade your C128 to run it, but other than that, compatible. They use the same ROMs.

Question: Why is the char. set in graphic 3 mode so strange? Why not a normal set? Example: The 'I' comes out a '}'.

Hazy Dave: The problem is that you've cut down on the number of visible pixels across

the screen from 320 to 160, trading pixels for colors. So the character set come out as every other pixel repeated twice. Very ugly; a wider font would look much better, but only give around 20 characters across (this mode intended mainly for graphics).

Question: Will the 128D have more RAM allocated to the 8563? If so, what enhancements will this allow?

Hazy Dave: YES, 64K video RAM for the 8563. This allows multiple 640×200 monochrome graphic or text screens as well as full 640×200 color screens. The 640×200 color screen is a little weird; it's in some ways like the 40-column hi-res mode, where each "character cell" gets its own foreground color. The neat part is that, instead of 8×8 cells, you can program much tighter cells, for much better color distribution. Fred Bowen did one with 2×2 cells.

Question: when will the 128D be available?

Hazy Dave: I'm not really sure about this. I expect it to be out sometime this spring, but I haven't heard any definite release dates. Most of the engineering work is complete, and I know it's well into FCC testing. I'll pass on an official date as soon as I hear one. The old versions been selling in Europe for quite some time now.

Question: What is the specific function of ROM update?

Hazy Dave: The ROM update corrects all known bugs in the C128 Kernal operating system, BASIC, editor, and monitor. There's a very big list of everything that was done, put out by Fred Bowen. It's on some BBS systems, don't know if it's here or not. It was also, I believe, published in Twin Cities 128 magazine.

Question: Is the new 1571 ROM available from Commodore?

Hazy Dave: The 1571 ROM's not ready yet, though I'd expect it within the month.

Question: On the 80-column 128, can I change the border color without affecting the rest of the screen? and does the128D have changes from my 128, besides the detachable keyboard and built-in drive?

Hazy Dave: Unlike the VIC display, the 8563 doesn't have a separate color for the overscan (border) area. The best you can do, if you want the appearance of a border, is to make all the character locations reverse video of the same color; this will create the appearance of a colored screen with border and characters the same color. The main enhancement to the C128, other than what you mention, is 64K video memory for the 8563.

Question: [how] much will it cost?

Hazy Dave: I'm not sure of an official price, but I think they plan for it to sell for the same or possibly less than a C128 + 1571 -- somewhere in the $500 list price area.

Question: what are the prospects for the C-128D becoming the basis for another computer: C128-D Portable?

Hazy Dave: I don't think there's a whole lot of internal interest in a fully portable C128D. The original C128D has a handle on the side, and the keyboard clipped underneath. Along with adding $40-$50 to the cost (difficult assembly of case) and some FCC problems, this is still a heavy box, and that's without monitor. A combination 40/80 column monitor, and it's too heavy for the general public to accept as portable.

Question: If the user installs the ROMs, will it invalidate the warranty?

Hazy Dave: According to the note I received, it will. So if you're still under warranty, better take it to a service center. For do-it-yourselfers, the operation is rather painless. Something like 5 screws hold the 128 together, the toughest part is removing the shield. The ROMS are on the left and they're socketed; of course, care must be taken to insert them in the proper direction. If you put them in the wrong ROM sockets, nothing will die. I imagine they'll be sending instructions for this — if I find out they aren't, I'll write up a set and post them everywhere.

Question: Is it possible to use a double-sided disk in the C128? If it is, how are they formatted.

Hazy Dave: If you have a 1571, you're probably using a double-sided disk right now. The 1571 has read/write heads on both sides of the disk, so there's no trouble at all. If you're stuck with a 1541, you can't use a DS disk in the way it was intended. Some folks punch write notches in both sides of the disk, and use it in "flippy" fashion, read/writing only one side at a time. This will work, but it wears out your disk much faster.

Question: why is the 128D so much more expensive then the 128???

Hazy Dave: Because it has a built-in 1571. The prices quoted for the 128D are list prices; the prices you see in the stores are usually very much discounted. However, when a machine is new, it generally sells closer to list until the initial demand is down. When the Amiga first came out, it sold at full list, around $1495, for the first half a year or so. Then some discounts crept in. Now you can get a system with monitor and some extras for under $1000. Same principle. There are currently 114 questions in the queue. I'm typing as fast as I can!

Question: Does Lou Wallace's BASIC 8.0 promise to be a worthwhile addition to the 128?

Hazy Dave: Yes. It looks very good, and Fred Bowen, of Kernal and BASIC fame, has been very interested in it. 80-column FAST graphics, lots of other goodies (this is an extra 32K we're talking about, that's larger than BASIC 7.0). The only question is who's going to bring it to market. Fred wants CBM to do it, but CBM isn't currently too interested in marketing anything other than original systems software. But if it comes out and you program in BASIC, buy it immediately!

Question: Can I tell by the serial # if my C128 will work with the new RAM expansion modules?

Hazy Dave: Not as far as I've been able to tell. We tried tracking down the REV 6 units by #, but no good. The good news is that, out of over 1,000,000 C128s, only about 4,000 are the REV 6 PCB, which has trouble with the RAM expansions. Clipping a pull-up resistor in the 1750 is all that's needed to make it work with the older C128s, but then it won't work with the new. The "REV" number is on the circuit board's underside, near the Cartridge Port, but you'll probably have to take it apart to see this #.

Question: My April 'Update' doesn't list a C128 forum. Have you been canceled or moved to a new time/date?

Hazy Dave: There's definitely one scheduled; I don't have the date handy, but I think it's earlier in the month. Still at 10. May is definitely the 3rd Monday.

Question: Is there a utility program that will allow the 1750 cartridge to be used as a RAM drive in BASIC?

Hazy Dave: There's some work by CBM being done on this, though I don't know its current status.

Question: Any chance of commodore packaging the GEOS 128 software with the 128d?

Hazy Dave: There's probably a good chance, if the 128 version is done and Berkeley is willing to go along with it. I don't know the official line on this. I'm informed the forum next month is April 13th.

Question: Is there really a c128D????

Hazy Dave: YES! They've been selling in Europe as long as C128s have been. Soon to be in the USA.

Question: How is the 128d different from the 128?

Hazy Dave: ONCE AGAIN… The C128D is a C128 with 64K video RAM plus integral 1571 drive in one metal box. With detachable keyboard.

Question: Why was the 1700/1750 RAM expansion not provided with another port to replace the one it occupies?

Hazy Dave: 1) Many things wouldn't work in such a port, as they use the same resources the 1700/1750 uses. 2) Nearly impossible to pass FCC testing that way, and it puts the unit in a completely different FCC class. 3) Costs $30 more.

Question: Will it be possible to make a 128d with dual drives installed!

Hazy Dave: No plans are in the works for this as of the moment. The older C128D has a power supply in the way that would make modifying the case for this impossible. It might be possible to hack up the newer box to fit a second drive, but I doubt very much this would ever surface as a real product.

Question: Is anybody working on some 128 software? I haven't seen anything that uses just 128 mode besides the WORD WRITER,

FINANCIAL PLANNER, etc. Is anybody working on games???

Hazy Dave: I've seen all kinds of productivity/business software — 3 or more word processors, spreadsheets, etc. Games are another thing. Unless you really need 128K for such a game, or want to use the 80-column screen for some reason, why write a program for C128 mode, and limit yourself to a market of 1 million, when you can write a C64 game with an audience of 7 million? The 40-column mode of the C128 offers a few enhancements, but not much difference over the C64, as far as games are concerned.

Question: Will the 128D have the new SID chip?

Hazy Dave: I believe they'll be going with the new SID, though the circuit board is laid out for both as I recall. The new SID runs from 9V versus 12V, is supposed to be a bit more stable, but otherwise isn't any different than the 12V part.

Question: I've been wanting to add a volume control for the speaker in my 1660. could i put a potentiometer inline with one of the speaker leads, or would that screw something up? Thanx SA

Hazy Dave: That's really not a good way to make a volume control. It shouldn't hurt anything, and might even work for this application, but for anything with high quality sound, a volume control must be part of the amplifier design or distortion will result.

Question: Jeff, why is it that the 1660 has ports on the rear of the modem for external sound input/or/output, not sure which, and the 1670 doesn't? My friend made an answering machine with a voice synthesizer with his 1660 and SAM speech through software and a cable… Is there any way I could do this with my 1670?

Hazy Dave: Well, Jeff's not here, but this is an easy one. The 1660 NEEDS the SID chip for sound generation for autodialing, thus the sound input. SID can easily synthesize touch tones (as well as voice). The 1670 is more intelligent and contains its own tone generator, which unfortunately does limit its use as an answering machine.

Question: WILL THE 1571 drive included with the 128d be compatible with the 21 sec. back up hardware??? and is there gonna be a Geos 128 included with the 128d

Hazy Dave: I'm not familiar with the "21 sec backup hardware", but if this is hardware that plugs into a 1571, I can say MAYBE. Some additional integration has been done on the 1571 circuit in the C128D (fewer chips), so depending on what this does, it may or may not fit. Software may be the new 1571 ROMs, depending on their readiness.

Question: Is the new 1581 going to be compatible with the 128?

Hazy Dave: 1581 was designed for the C128, and is really nice, usually 2-3 times faster than a 1571. Also handles things like super side sectors for relative files the size of the disk (800K). The 1581 won't support may 5

1/4" protection schemes, but then again, you can't fit a 5 1/4" disk in it. The 1581 format is always MFM, so it could be used with a program similar to "BIG BLUE READER" to read IBM or Atari ST format 3 1/2" disks.

Question: Will the 128D be affected by the threatened trade war with Japan?

Hazy Dave: Not yet, but who knows? I think the 128Ds are being made at our big plant in Hong Kong. But if DRAM prices go up a lot, it will raise the cost of all computers. We can usually get parts from other places, though, so it probably won't be noticeable. Depends on how much the US screws things up.

Question: Are the ports on the 128d at all hidden or are just spaces out the back that will make the 128d with modem and ram expansion stick out very far!

Hazy Dave: The C128D that'll sell in the US has a back side very similar to that of the regular C128, only difference is the cassette port is around one side. The ports couldn't be recessed, or we'd risk the possibility of compatibility problems with things that wouldn't fit.

Question: Will the 1581 utilize the fast serial mode and burst modes of the 128?

Hazy Dave: Yup, 2-3 times faster in general than the 1571, due to the natural speed increase you get from a 3 1/2" drive (less distance to travel).

Question: did you know you can override 128 to 64 by turning on your c-128 [with your] hand holding the commodore key and you will enter 64 mode?

Hazy Dave: Yes, I helped put that feature in. We found that some things played games with /EXROM and /GAME on the expansion port, preventing the C128 from properly detecting C64 cartridges and going to C64 mode automatically. So we put that in to give you a way to force C64 mode.

Question: what is the “new 128d'?

Hazy Dave: The original C128D has been sold in Europe as long as the C128 has. It’s a plastic cased unit, and uses the same C128 PC board as a regular C128 plus a 1571 daughter board. The "new" C128D is on a single PC board and in a metal case.



The metal C128D, a.k.a. C128DCR

Question: what is the memory amount of the 1764?

Hazy Dave: 256K

Question: Can you give us a reason to buy the 1581, when for the cost of two 1581's, we can buy a 20M Hard Disk?

Hazy Dave: Can you really? If you want one, buy it. And maybe for the price of two 20 meg hard disks, you can buy a 40 Megger. They won't fit in your shirt pocket. It's really a matter of personal preference and how much you can afford. I've got all 3 here (the hard disk is actually on my Amiga…). I rarely if ever use 5 1/4" floppies anymore, but I do use floppies all the time. Gotta back up that HD, and transport stuff somehow.

Question: is commodore ever going to to release the 1581, the 3.5" minidrive, for the 64/ 128?

Hazy Dave: YES! They're making them in the Far East right now, and the code for the ROM was just released to MOS for ROMming. The problem has been that most of the new code development was done by a consultant (used to work for us, then left).

Question: Is there a 1571 ROM available that will correct the problem with relative files?

Hazy Dave: The new ROM corrects bugs in this area. It does NOT implement super side sectors, which is the mechanism you need for relative files over about 180K long. The 1581 has it and allows them nearly 800K long.

Question: why is there a feature on the software on my 1660 modem to change the baud rate?

Hazy Dave: Modem software is usually written to support a variety of modems, even if the modem you buy it with only works at one speed. It's easy to do in software; keeps the author from needing a new version every time a faster modem comes out.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE)



MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

By Robert Bernardo and/or Dick Estel

JULY 2026

Since our meetings are held in a restaurant, our computers, monitors, other equipment, and ourselves often attract the attention of other patrons. Probably five or six times a year, someone asks about what we are doing.

At the July meeting we had a year's worth of visitors, at least seven people asked about our activities and stayed for anywhere from one to fifteen minutes. Our visitors included a young woman who is a game developer and stayed at least five minutes as Roger gave her a tour.

There was a man who chatted with us for about five minutes, at least three who looked briefly then left, and finally two junior high age boys who played a game on the Ultimate 64 and got a long C128 demonstration from Roger. All of them left with a copy of our membership application.

In attendance were Robert Bernardo, Bruce Nieman, Roger Van Pelt, Dick Estel, and Dick's daughter, Teri Liddle, who joined us for lunch only. Teri had met Robert decades ago when she attended our first few picnics and knew Bruce from hiking with a group that Dick belongs to.



We had our usual wide-ranging pre-meeting discussion, as well as conversations that were not strictly about Commodore and Amiga during the meeting. One subject was earthquakes and the A-bomb tests in the Nevada desert in the 1950's, which registered on the seismograph. In addition, the flash could be seen from the central California foothills.

During a discussion of film formats, it was reported that Super 8 film is coming back. Members had just one question -- "Why?" Robert brought in a few magazines, including the resurrected Compute!'s Gazette, Pitstop Retro (printout from this on-line only publication), and Amiga Future from Germany (available in an English language edition).

Robert will have a Commodore/Amiga presence, under the banner of the Vintage Computer Festival, at the Bay Area Maker Faire in September.

Later this year, Commodore International will be releasing their flip phone, and over 9,000 have been pre-sold already. Available for a few years, the Mega 65 now has two, new cores, making it usable as a C128 (40-column only for now) and as an Amiga.

Robert had returned from a major travel adventure, starting with the Seattle Pacific Commodore Expo, with 40 people in attendance. It was the last time for the event to be held at the Old Rainier Brewery Intraspace, since the large expo space will be remodeled into a number of smaller rooms. A search is underway for a new location

After PaCommEx, Robert flew from Seattle to New Jersey and had his picture taken with William Shatner on a mock-up of the USS Enterprise bridge at the Star Trek Tour in Ticonderoga, New York. We encouraged Robert to write up the very bad day he had getting to the east. Although painful, he now has a story he can entertain with for years.

Using two small porcelain figures, Robert "The C=" Bernardo confessed that he beat a cow to death in a rice field. The sheriff's department said that this could be the first case of a knick knack patty whack.

Finally after all that talk, the software/hardware presentations began. Robert explained that the beige C64C on the table was no ordinary C. Though the case and keyboard were over 30 years old, the motherboard inside was a 2026 Ultimate 64 Elite II board, which was almost the same board as those in the new Commodore 64 Ultimate from Commodore International. He showed the old metal shielding and old motherboard which had been removed from the case. Unfortunately, a peek at the new board was impossible since the case was attached with Torx screws (no one had a Torx screwdriver). The pushbutton power switch of the older, 2018 Ultimate 64 had been replaced with a two-way rocker switch, and the wall-wart of the older version had been replaced with a USB 3.0 cable and USB power pack. He powered up the machine, emulated disk drive sounds coming from it. The familiar blue screen was there as were the familiar Ultimate menus, now accessed via an upward movement on the rocker power switch.

Robert proceeded to go through a list of new C64 games downloaded mostly from itch.io .There were the platformers – Adrian and a Friend in Need, Princess Amelia, Duckling Rescue, and Petal Panic. There was the platform shooter – Infe2tation. There was the horizontal shooter – Chrome Horizon. Two snake games were Munchyworm and Gravity Snake. Captain Victor Stormbeard and the Undead Treasure was a scrolling fighter game, and Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo was another fighting game. Cocytus Ruins was a dungeon crawler, and Broken Altars was a graphical exploration game. Finally, there was Comchinko, a C64 version of the Japanese Pachinko which was a vertical type of pinball game. Robert had few successes in playing the games (he should read the instructions!), but Roger was more patient and was able to do well in the games.

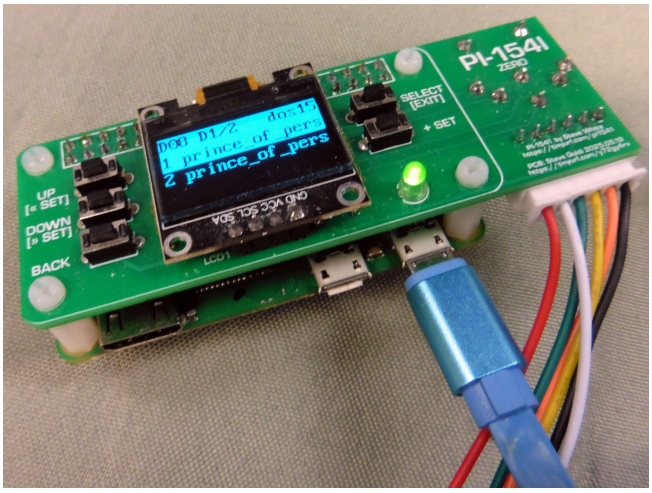
Robert wanted to show off various games on the C128 in 128 mode. First was the new 40-column game, H.E.R.O Is Back. Part shooter and part fly-through-the-caves, the C128 H.E.R.O. Is Back seemed to have a more detailed screen than its C64 counterpart. Roger was successful in going through different levels, whereas Robert failed miserably at the beginning. Then there was the classic 80-column game, Cloneimals. Advertised in the 1990's as being the only 80-column scrolling game and with a price of $29.95, Cloneimals was released a few months ago as freeware. The club C128 only had 16K of video RAM; Cloneimals needed 64K. However, Robert ran it anyway, and surprisingly it worked, though the soft sprites didn't look right. And though this was supposed to be the final release version, the program's author, John Brown, admitted that parts of it weren't fixed, like the collision detection that Robert reported to John years ago. Finally, Robert tried to show off the new, 80-column text adventure, Iowa Jack and the Crystals of Chaos. The opening screen showed a nicely-drawn close-up picture of Iowa Jack (who definitely looked like Harrison Ford/Indiana Jones) flanked by a woman on the left (who did not look like Karen Allen/Marion) and another gentleman on the right (who did not look like Indy's father played by Sean Connery). There was a very long prologue to read that introduced the characters and their mission in the story. Then

the screen said to change to disk 2 in order to play the game. Unfortunately, with Roger's SD2IEC being used on the C128, both Robert and Roger didn't know how to change to another .D64 virtual disk. Roger's SD2IEC didn't have a NEXT (disk) button, just a RESET button. Giving up, Robert said that next time he'd have to convert the .D64's to real floppy disks.

To wrap up the meeting, Robert showed off some bits of hardware – a serial-to-IDE board from Germany, a SD2IEC which obtained its power from the joystick port, a 128 gig USB stick in the shape of a tiny, brown C64; and a Pi-1541 with a custom Pi-1541 "hat." The Pi-1541 was supposed to function like that of a mechanical 1541 disk drive and would directly connect to any Commodore 8-bit computer which had a serial port. It was supposed to be more compatible than a SD2IEC and perhaps just as compatible as the Ultimate 1541 (from the same maker who made the Ultimate 64).

Robert had bought the $20 Pi hat from Steve Guidi at PaCommEx. The $22 Raspberry Pi Zero, a computer in itself, was bought from Vilros.com and was sent directly to Steve who configured the Pi Zero. Steve then mailed the Pi Zero, board stand-offs, plastic screws, and special serial cable to Robert. Robert had just received these a few days before the meeting; he had only enough time to assemble the Pi hat along with all the Pi Zero parts. The completed Pi-1541 needed testing.

With the help of Paul, another meeting visitor who had a strong interest in DOS PC's, Robert figured out how to power up the Pi-1541 and how to use the tiny screen on the device. He placed a C64 game into the root directory of a microSD card, which Steve had prepped with special Pi files. He inserted the card into the Pi-1541. The Pi-1541 recognized the card and showed its contents on its screen. The device was connected to the club C128 which was in C64 mode. Robert used normal LOAD and RUN commands to start the C64 game.



Pi-1541 + "hat". USB power (left), serial cable (right)

Though the club computer had JiffyDOS, the Pi-1541 had no JiffyDOS drive ROM on its microSD card; therefore, there was no loading speed-up on the game file. After what seemed like a long time, the game finally loaded, and Robert ran it. Thinking of how a FastLoad cartridge sped up the loading on a SD2IEC, Roger suggested that the FastLoad be tried with the Pi-1541. Aw! Loading that same game file took just as long with the FastLoad as it did without the FastLoad. In other words, the Pi-1541 did not recognize the FastLoad. Robert would have to investigate what fast loader did work with the device.

Compute!'s Gazette -- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compute!%27s_Gazette
Mega 65 -- https://mega65.org/
Commodore International -- https://commodore.net/
Maker Faire -- https://bayarea.makerfaire.com/
Pacific Commodore Expo NW – https://www.portcommodore.com/pacommex
Pitstop Retro -- https://pitstopretro.com/
Star Trek Tour -- https://startrektour.com

AUGUST 2026

COMMODORE FACTOID

As of July 21, Commodore International has sold 27,030 C64 Ultimate computers and 9,365 Commodore Callback 8020 Flip Phones. The Callback has sold as many units in just 3 days as the C64 Ultimate did in its first month.

Source -- https://slapsoft.com/c64_sales.html



Officers and Keypersons

President …..... Robert Bernardo
Vice-president ..... Roger Van Pelt
Secretary/Treasurer …..... Dick Estel
The Interface Editor ….... Lenard Roach
Librarian …..... Roger Van Pelt
Club equipment …..... Roger Van Pelt
Meeting place reservation ..... Dick Estel

-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 Panera Bread, 3590 West Shaw, 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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any programs found in our library which may violate these standards.