THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

– by Lenard R. Roach

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ORIGINAL?

A question was brought up to me one day: "What ever became of the original work, 'Run/Stop-Restore?'" But before I get into that, I guess it wouldn't hurt to rehash the points as to how I got the idea and why I saw the need to publish the work in the first place?

I was skimming through an issue of The Kansas City Star newspaper one day and saw a compilation book of one of the sports journalist who happened to write for the paper being advertised on Page One. I think this book was an overview of this gentleman's first twenty years as a sports analysis for The Star. His career stretched way back into the days when the Kansas City Royals won their first World Series in 1985 and this book was a "best of" analysis book from his career with the paper. It was being published by The Star itself.

For some reason this advertisement stuck in my head and I stewed over it for a number of weeks during the summer months of 1999, wondering if I could do something similar for all the writings I've done for the Commodore User's Group of Kansas City's newsletter, "Ryte Bytes." I quickly put the notion out of my head thinking that, with my schedule of working two jobs and trying to

raise my sons and be a good husband, it would not work out well.

Then came the layoff of October 1999 where both jobs downsized me to where I was quickly sitting at home plugging around on the Internet filling out applications online and dealing with occasional interview. Nothing was biting even though retail shops were gearing up for the holiday season. Later in the month the thought of compiling those articles into a book came back to mind. I did some research at the public library on "How To Self Publish Your Own Book" and decided that, with a copier I acquired from one of my jobs, this project might be doable. The first thing I needed to do was print off all the copies of my articles from the start of my Commodore writing career in February 1995 to the then present. This process took a week of waiting for my 9-pin Commodore printer to print off each article at the lightning speed of 32 bits per second. During this process I decided that the book should be done in all-Commodore hardware, or as much of it as possible. This would hopefully give the book the "real feel" of a Commodore work of art.

After printing off all the documents and compiling them into some sort of order, I instantly saw that I was going to fall short of the necessary quota of pages needed to have the book bound at the local bindery. During this time off from work I was listening to several lectures on local radio and one particular lecturer always started his speeches with an introduction to what he was going to talk about. This way, after you heard his intro, if you didn't want to hear the details of his talk, you could change the station. I thought I would do the same with my book, adding an introduction to each article and giving the reader opportunity to either skip that particular section or to read on. Most of the introductions (which I called "facades" for the simple reason that I liked the sound of the word) were no more than a page or two in length. They were quickly inserted into the manuscript at their proper points but even

after all that the book still fell short of pages. Time to enlist some help.

While the missus dug in her heels and worked her fanny off while I was unemployed trying to support a starving artist and kids, she still found time to help with the project. Even the boys were enlisted. Their mission: Help Dad create illustrations that would best define the heart of each story found in the book. My youngest was just learning to read and my oldest didn't have many ideas but he would, in the end, contribute the best artwork in the whole book, "The Commodore Commando." The wife was also devoid of suggestions but did add a drawing or two. It was mostly up to me to make the artwork happen. By this time it was mid-November and I found low paying job as a custodian in a mall food court. I found time between customers to draw in a spiral notebook many of the illustrations found in the manuscript. Since I didn't own a color printer I knew I had to make sure everything looked its best in black and white. Sadly, I'm a terrible animator so the pictures were ugly at best, but an artist friend of mine checked over the art and confidently told me that, even though the work was not top notch, the art would bring a little lilt and humor to the book. I was happy with that so those pieces, plus the work done by my wife and sons, would go into the book. Finally, after two months of hard work, the interior of the book was done. Now I needed a cover.

The back cover was going to be easy. I was told in one of the How To books that this piece had to be worded in such a way that a person who read it would want to buy it. I even had a chance to get a quote from a fellow Commodore user to add a little clarity and panache to the back cover. The front cover, well, that was going to be difficult. I needed something original and not previously copyrighted. After mulling over it for a while I decided I would be a good leader and pass the buck onto none other than my youngest son. I told him what I wanted: "What does Commodore mean to you?" My youngest thought about that for a few minutes then sat down with paper in hand and in about five minutes had the cover drawn. It was a picture of a house with smoke coming out of the chimney. I was surprised to say the least but when, in his handwriting, he wrote the title of the book across the top of the page followed by the words, "by My Dad," I was instantly brought to tears. When I asked him, "Why a house?" he said, "Your computer is in the house and so are we." Enough said. The cover stood.

Even though the text, cover, and back were done, nightmares stilled loomed over the book as the massive chore of making ten copies of the interior (the front and back cover for each copy would be produced by the bindery) began. The plan: Make and sell ten copies of the book, put the profits back into making ten more copies (taking a very small percentage out for royalties), and continue this process for as long as possible. The object was to get "Run/Stop-Restore" into the hands of the general public and allow word of mouth be our sales team. The first hiccup to this so-called "flawless" plan was the hand-me-down copier. For some reason I assumed that it was ready to go without worries, but the 23,000 copies the machine had made previous before my acquisition of the unit (or so the counter said) I should have taken as a sign that trouble was coming. About 1/3 of the way into the printing process the toner ran out. The simple solution would have been to buy more toner but the unit was so outdated no toner company in the Kansas City area had a replacement cartridge. I thought we were at a stopping point until my wife came up with an idea to collect all the old toner and recycle it back into the cartridge by drilling a small hole into the top of the toner chamber. To my surprise this idea worked and production was back under way.

Next came a real head scratcher that no one could solve: About 3/4 through the project the copier began printing "ghost" images of what was being

copied off the sheet on the glass. This time I wasn't going to mess with the local copier companies but went right to the source and called the manufacturer of the machine. They told me over the phone that they never heard of such behavior from one of their products but for a high shipping and repair fee they could "look" at the machine at the home office and let me know how to proceed. By this time I put foot in mouth over several BBS' and said this book was coming out soon. I was left with no option but to let the problem ride and finish the last three or four copies of the book go with the "ghost" images, hoping that the Commodore community would be more excited that there would be a new Commodore product on the market than what it looked like. With financial gifts from family I got the ten copies funded, bound, and ready for the market. Despite the looks of it, I was excited to have my first book in print even though I did everything practically by myself.

Trying to sell copies to my own Kansas City Commodore group was a bust. These people already received the club newsletter on a monthly basis and have already read the contents via that media. Not a single copy went to anyone there. I then reached out through electronic means to tell everyone that I had this work for sale and still no bites. I was dejected. My first big attempt was a big failure. Soon it was five years after first printing and I has nine copies left (one went to the wife for a keepsake). It was time to cut my losses and just enjoy the fact that, even though it wasn't a success, I could chalk it up as my first real book. I started to give the last copies away to whom I thought would enjoy such a read. At church we had one person incarcerated for a crime he didn't commit so I mailed him a copy of the book. We also had one person deployed in Iraq who would enjoy hearing from home so I sent her a copy. I mailed a copy to the famous "Lord Ronin" of The Village Green fame, and finally one copy reached the hands of the president of The Fresno Commodore User Group.

I had five left...

"Lord Ronin" was gracious enough to give the book a fair review in his newsletter reporting that, though the book was a pleasant read, it had some problems in spelling, punctuation, structure, and even the font I chose from my Commodore printer was "hard on the eyes" of the reader. "Lord Ronin" was neither rude nor belligerent with his comments about the work but was polite in his approach on the errors I made. The gentleman in prison was released on probation not too long after he got his copy and told the congregation in testimonial time that he never knew so much about the Commodore computer as he did before receiving the book and was grateful for my gift. I think he may have shared the book with fellow inmates. The woman in Iraq also shared the book with fellow soldiers and was home a year or so later after I sent her a copy. She gave me a replica of an original Iraqi dagger as a thank you gift which I put in my computer room. I never heard a direct review from the FCUG president but I remember reading a clip about him sharing the book with a fellow Commodore user. This person didn't even open the book but threw it on his coffee table and called it a "piece of ****." It bothered me reading about such an incident then but I've picked up a thicker hide now, so let them complain. I was invited to the 2005 Commodore Vegas Expo where I got my feet wet again by standing on stage and giving a pitch for the book wherein two people approached me at my table and each bought a copy. I was so elated to finally make a sale after such a long drought that I called the wife who was touring Las Vegas while I was at the show and told her about it. She had to calm me down over the phone because I was being such a spazmatic but I didn't care. I was finally a selling author. Dream fulfilled.

Why a book like "Run/Stop- Restore?" There are so many "how to" and "history of" Commodore books and articles out there that to write another

one would have been redundant. I needed a fresh approach that would appeal more to the non user of Commodore in this century more than those with many years of experience behind the keyboard; to bring "fresh meat to the table," per se. It was obvious to me that overdosing the reader on technical terms or informing them with names, dates, and places seemed to not accomplish that goal so, I thought I would bring my hand of storytelling to the fray and hopefully bolster user as well as non-user participation. As of this writing I have yet to accomplish my intended goal but thanks to readers like you I'm beginning to make a dent into this well forged armor.

So, back to the question posed by the title of this article: What has happened to the book now? As far as I can tell there is one copy sitting in my writing files in the computer room that was left behind by my ex-wife when she left me. Two copies remain unaccounted for, but with the technological advances made by computers and life in general, the need for more copies of the original manuscript remains moot. Over 90% of the pieces found in "Run/Stop-Restore" can be found in the 10th Anniversary Edition, but things were added to the 10th Anniversary Edition that are not in "Run/Stop-Restore" and vice versa. Again, referring to advances in publishing, "Run/Stop-Restore" looked so juvenile that, even after all this time, I'm not going to resurrect the old manuscript. The master copy of the book remains in storage in a small hovel in the town of Keytesville, Missouri and remains under guard of my good friend and cover designer, "The Vector." Who knows? If a day comes that my material that I put down on paper makes it big, those possessing any original works may actually get to say, "I knew him when ..."
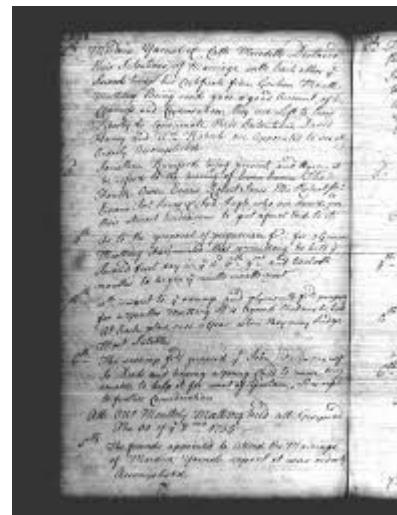
MONTHLY MEETING NOTES

by Robert Bernardo

MARCH 2019

As usual, we met at Bobby Salazar's Mexican Restaurant. Robert arrived first and started taking down the chairs and setting up the tables in the back room. David came in later, followed by Roger. During lunch, Bruce came in but only stayed a few minutes.

For this meeting, talk centered around the first-ever Commodore Los Angeles Super Show. It will be held on April 27-28 at Toolbox LA in Chatsworth. Robert had already scouted the area for nearby restaurants to the venue.

After the discussion on CLASS, Roger talked about data transfer via television video! Various classic computers, including Commodore 64, could have received such data transfer when users in Europe watched certain t.v. shows. There would be a flashing pixel(s) in the corner of the t.v. screen, and that would be the data coming through to specialized receivers that the users would have. Then that data could be converted to a program on disk/tape! Roger showed a YouTube video that demonstrated how this was done.

Robert brought his Ultimate 64 (http://ultimate64.com) again, but this time with new firmware revision 1.10, a newly-painted case, and a new carrying case. He explained that the breadbin case was found in storage. It had already been painted black by a south San Francisco Commodore dealer who had converted an old C64 motherboard into what he called a "C64GS." (Not really because a true C64GS had a reduced-cost/reduced-component board and came from Germany) Robert threw out the old board and installed the U64 board in its place. For added board support, he installed the 3D-printed brackets from CoreI64. The black paint needed touching up, and Robert went to a hobby shop, bought Tamiya Color Paint for Plastics, semi-gloss black; and resprayed the case. He bought new chrome badges for where it said Commodore and Power on the case. He used the original dark brown keyboard to complete the look.

The carrying case came from Harbor Freight Tools. It had the aluminum frame/black plastic suitcase-look and came with a carrying strap. The interior was lined with pluck foam which was removed in spots to contain the U64 breadbin, the SD card-to-USB adapter for the U64, and the U64's power supply. Laid over this was a presentation folder that had color photocopies of the U64 website which briefly introduces the machine and its operation.

With the club C128 at the ready, Robert showed off the new 128 40-column games, Knight Lore v1.10, Two Days to the Race, and the Space Invaders demo. For the C64 side of the computer and with the use of the SD2IEC, we ran the new 64 games, Bruce Lee – Return to Fury, Boulderdash Junior II, and Street Defender v1.6 for VR64. We connected a VIC-20 and with the SD2IEC and ran the new programs, Go-moku (which needed 24K expansion), Two Days to the Race (which needed 32K expansion and played exactly like the C128 version), Snake, Spaceship, and Realms of Quest V Beta Track. The last

program was not a game but a compilation of "music" to be used in the future game, Realms of Quest V. However, the term, "music," must be used very lightly. The members agreed that each musical number sounded more like noise or special sound effects or highly out-of-tune compositions. (Ah, the look on their faces!)

The meeting ran long, and Robert was the last to leave. He stopped by the front counter to reserve the room for April. However, the counter person said that under a new restaurant policy, the room would have to be reserved with an $80 deposit which would be returned after the meeting. He paused for a second and went to the back room. Another counter person came out and said that from now on, the room would cost $100 a month (no returnof money) and could only be used a maximum of 3 hours. He said that our group was taking up space that another group had wanted that day, even though we had reserved that room weeks in advance. Shocked, Robert replied that he'd have to discuss this with the club.

Thinking fast, Robert thought of where the club could meet for free. The idea came immediately. Do what the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network did for its meetings -- meet at Panera Bread Restaurant. Robert scouted the local Panera's that afternoon. The Clovis Panera was too crowded, and the north Fresno Panera was too busy and not conducive to setting up computer equipment. The last Panera on West Shaw Avenue proved to be a wonder. It was far less busy than the other two Panera's, had a restaurant area in the back with multiple electrical outlets, and even had a covered patio with electrical outlets. This was the spot for FCUG meetings from now on!

APRIL 2019

After 6 1/2 years at our previous venue, the Fresno Commodore User Group met at a new venue, Panera Bread Restaurant at 3590 W. Shaw Ave. in Fresno. At that meeting were Robert, Roger, David, Brad, Randy, and Mike. With Robert leading the way, the group aimed toward the back of the restaurant, which was where most of the electrical outlets were. Taking over a few tables, Robert set down boxes of items to present and also set up a Commodore SX-64.

Unlike the previous venue where a waitress came to the table to take orders, the group went to the front counter and ordered food from there. It took a bit longer to place the orders, because most members were not that familiar with the Panera menu, but the food was ready far more quickly than at the older venue.

After eating lunch, talk concentrated on Commodore. The day before the meeting, Robert opened up "Bernardo Studios" at University Square Inn. At the studio, he and Roger spent hours filming a video, tentatively titled, "The C64, SuperCPU, and Giga-CAD." With his knowledge of Computer Aided Design programs, Roger made a presentation on the German program, Giga-CAD, arguably the most sophisticated C64 CAD program. The video will be edited and shown at future C= shows.

Robert spoke about the Commodore Los Angeles Super Show which was to be on April 27-28 at Toolbox LA in Chatsworth, California. He was hopeful that it would be successful, though he acknowledged that he didn't know what attendance would be, i.e., would it draw outside people rather than those associated with the sponsoring club, the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network?

Another topic of discussion was the Brixty Four. Composed of Lego bricks, the Brixty Four comes

in different versions – just the case, the case and the keyboard, or the case plus keyboard plus motherboard. A user could source his own parts (bricks) in order to build the Brixty Four, he could buy the parts from website, or he could buy the pre-built units from the site.

https://www.perifractic.com/Perifractic/Takeout_Store/Entries/2018/11/17_The_Brixty_Four.html

The pre-built option would cost hundreds of dollars! Robert showed one of the Brixty Four videos found on YouTube.

On a side note, Robert told how a member of the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network bought a MechBoard (fully mechanical, modern keyboard) for his C64C. That MechBoard cost $300!

Then Robert started opening boxes. First, it was a box full of new books, the book being "The Vintage Commodore 128 Handbook" by Margaret Morabito. The book, which originally was supposed to be published in 1985, had been held from publication, the author updating it and finally releasing it this year. The book will be sold at a discounted price at the Commodore Los Angeles Super Show and at the Commodore Vegas Expo.

In the other boxes were items from Tim Harris of SharewarePlus.blogspot.com. He had sent over these items to be sold at the above shows, with the monies going to pay down the costs of those events. The goodies were the C64/128 FM Radio Module, the Final Cartridge III+, LumaFix 128, the C64 Multicart+, Trackdisplay for the 1541-II, a Pi1541 (Raspberry Pi not included), the 1541 Diagnostic cartridge, cynthCART 64, and SD2IEC for the C64/128/VIC-20/SX-64 user port.

Robert was able to demonstrate some of those items on the SX-64. The Final Cartridge III+

was noteworthy in that it was a modded implementation ofthe classic FC3; the new version had more utilities available in its drop-down menus. The C64 Multicart+ came in a nice case and had 63 games built into it. The 1541 Diagnostic cartridge needed more instructions for interpretation of its results on the SX-64's built-in disk drive. The cynthCART 64 played its music well with the SX. However, because the SD2IEC was programmed as drive 8, it could not be used with the SX, due to that machine's disk drive already being drive 8 (the SD2IEC would have to be reprogrammed on a C64 that did not already have an attached disk drive).

David bought the Final Cartridge III+, and Randy bought the pi1541. Robert thanked them for supporting CLASS and CommVEx.

Because of the quick speed of Panera's service, the meeting was able to end earlier than it had in years past. After the meeting, Robert met with two of the Panera people who manned the counter. They reaffirmed that the club was causing no problem and that we were most welcome to have meetings in their restaurant.

NEXT issue

Once The Manure Is Cleared Out Of Only Lord Knows What, I Hope To Have The Next (Late!) Issue Of "The Interface" As Soon As Possible. Thank You For Your Patience As I Get My World Back In Order. -L-

Vintage Commodore 128 Personal Computer Handbook
2019 Survival Edition
MARGARET MORABITO
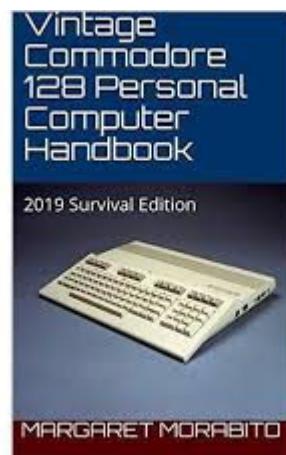
BOOK INTERVIEW

Interview with Margaret Gorts Morabito, the author of the new book - Vintage Commodore 128 Personal Computer Handbook: 2019 Survival Edition

by Eric "AmigaLove" Hill

In this exclusive interview Mrs. Morabito (aka Marg) talks about her time at RUN Magazine in the 1980s as well as her inspirations for writing and publishing a book about the Commodore 128 in 2019. She also expands on her experiences with the machine and the impact it made on her life.

EH: Thanks so much for taking the time to talk with us, Marg. And congratulations on publishing your book after all these years.

MM: You're welcome, Eric. Good to be with you and thanks for reaching out to me about the book and for this interview.

EH: What compelled you to pull your C-128 out of storage in 2016 and start using it again?

MM: Well, this was in the back of my mind for quite a while. But, I never quite got around to digging out my Commodore equipment until I

had to clean out my porch. That forced me to pick up my three C-128s, various 1541 and 1571 disk drives, and my old 1902 monitor and physically move them. I decided at that time to find out what worked and what didn't, after all those years of storage and periodic relocation. Once I began to set up my C-128 system, I was hooked again. And, here I am today, with a published book and having lots of fun with my Commodore 128. Also, I have five granddaughters, ages 1 to 10. Four of them are at ages when they can use the C-128 and get some fun out of it.

EH: When you started to update your manuscript, who did you envision your key target audience to be in 2019?

MM: I had two groups in mind. First would be the old timers, like me, who had a C-128 kicking around in the porch, attic, or some out of the way spot. Many of these C-128 owners probably haven't used their computers in a long time. Life kind of gets in the way. At this point, decades later, many of us would not remember how to use the C-128. The second target group would be the younger people who now want to have a retro computer. There are C-128s out there at garage sales and in online listings. I wanted people to know how to use this versatile computer. Many of the C-128s that are for sale don't have manuals with them, or software, or peripherals. I figured that by updating the book, I could help both groups to get a good restart or start in using the C-128 in 2019 and beyond.

EH: You mention at the beginning of the book that your original manuscriptwas written in 1985, but it ultimately wasn't published. Did [the publisher] DATAMOST give you a concrete reason why?

MM: Kind of, but I wouldn't say it was concrete. I had a contract with Datamost in February, 1985, and I started right away working on the book. During that summer, they designed a flyer, which

they distributed and had received pre-publication orders. (I included it in the book for historical perspective.) Late in the summer, after having written the manuscript, someone from the publisher phoned me and simply told me that they would not be following up with publishing the book. I was stunned and disappointed. In September, I received a letter from the president of Datamost stating that "due to current demands of the market", they didn't feel that they could make a profit and wanted to let me try to find another publisher. I discovered later that Datamost went out of business soon after.

EH: After sitting in a box for all these years, you write in the book that your son encouraged you to dust off the original manuscript and make it more contemporary. Is your son an active Commodore or other vintage computer user today? Did he grow up in the 1980s and live the Commodore lifestyle, too?

MM: My son did grow up in the 1980s, with Commodore computers in the house. We had a VIC-20, C-64, Plus/4, and a C-128. The C-64 got used the most by my son and my daughter. I encouraged the kids to use educational software like StickyBear, Mr. Rogers, and the RUN educational programs and games. My son, Michael, is an engineering professor now, and does a lot of technical writing. He had just finished helping me put together a book on the early history of our Congregational Church and Meeting House here in Rindge, New Hampshire. That editing and self-publishing process went so well, that it seemed like we should dig out the Commodore book. The main reason for doing it was to have a sense of accomplishment at finishing this project. Better late than never! He just bought a Commodore 64 for his kids and is using the sections of my C-128 book that deal with the 64 mode to help get it running. (When he's ready, I'll give him one of my C-128s.)

EH: How long were you at RUN Magazine and at what point did you leave? Did you work for any other Tech Publications?

MM: I worked fulltime at RUN from 1984 to 1987, as Technical Editor and eventually Technical Manager. This was an exciting time to be involved. Commodore was at its peak and we had a very large readership. After I left RUN, I continued to write for the magazine as an Associate Editor for a year or so. I was also a Contributing Editor for AmigaWorld and wrote the lead article about the Amiga in their Premiere Issue in 1985. I wrote for Link-Up Magazine, doing a series of articles about telecommunications. And, I wrote at various times for CD-ROM Review and inCider.

EH: Is there an article that you wrote back in the day - or a particular industry event you witnessed - that in hindsight seems particularly noteworthy?

MM: There was a lot of development in the Commodore world going on at that time. Here are some of the most notable things that I witnessed:

The opening of QuantumLink (Q-Link) was significant to Commodore users and specifically to me: it led to my career in online education. As most of your readers will know, Q-Link was a Commodore-specific online network, which opened in 1985. I developed the Tutoring Center, Q-Link Community College, Parent-Teacher Information Exchange, and the Resource Center. The Resource Center column that I wrote for RUN was helpful to parents and teachers in sharing information about using the C-64 and C-128 for education, and the column was brought onto Q-Link. Being an English teacher by training, the educational aspects of computing were my primary area of interest, and in particular the use of telecommunications for education. (If you're interested in seeing what I've been up to in the field of online education since the early days of Q-Link, take a look at a brief history of

CALCampus, the school that I founded, located online at http://www.calcampus.edu/calc.htm .) In 1986, I attended the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. The big excitement at that show for Commodore people was Q-Link and its newest addition, Habitat, which was developed by Lucasfilms. At the show, Lucasfilm's developers demonstrated Habitat to me and other media people. For the August 1986 issue of RUN, I wrote an article, entitled "Enter the On-Line World of Lucasfilm", in which I discussed the online world of Habitat and its residents, Avatars. Later in 2008, prior to the release of the science fiction movie, "Avatar", my article was cited in the New York Times Magazine as being the first print article that used the term Avatar in its newest meaning. I don't know if it was the first, but it was a noteworthy article in terms of online interactive gaming history.

Lastly, the appearance of the Amiga in 1985 was big.

EH: During your research for updating this book, you spoke with several Commodore alums, including Bil Herd. Did you ever go to the Commodore offices in Pennsylvania during the course of your work at RUN? And If so, what was the vibe like back then?

MM: Yes. In 1985, I went to Commodore headquarters in West Chester, Pennsylvania. I went down there to be introduced to the new Amiga. I met with Amiga engineers (I actually can't remember their names at this point) who demonstrated the computer and answered questions. I would say that the atmosphere at that time was exciting and full of anticipation. This was something totally different from what we had been covering with the 8-bit computers at Commodore. There was a lot to take in. As a result of that visit, I wrote the AmigaWorld article mentioned earlier. At some point, I was given an Amiga 500 to work with. In 1985, I had thought that I would follow up the C-128 book with a

similar book about the new Amiga. When the C-128 book got shelved, I didn't pursue working on the Amiga book.

EH: You mention in the book the choice consumers had between the Amiga and the C128 in in 1985, where the C128 was the best 8-bit computer for the common person at a far less expensive price point. Did you ever make the leap to Amiga? What systems did you ultimately migrate towards after the demise of Commodore in the mid-90s?

MM: While I had an Amiga 500 and wrote about it in its first year, I didn't use it much after 1985. My favorite was the C-128. I used that for my Q-Link work and for writing articles. I did get a Commodore PC-10 (their PC-compatible) and used that for my other online work on PC-Linkand AOL. And, I always hung onto my original C-64 that I bought for $199 at Child World in late 1983. I use Linux on a Dell computer for my work these days.

EH: I must admit I personally found your discussions around CP/M software to be completely fascinating as this was one aspect of the 128 I never really tapped into. Are there particular CP/M programs that you used or use regularly?

MM: I'm glad that you liked my coverage of the CP/M mode. I have received several positive comments about that section of the book. The CP/M mode interested me back in 1985 and in recent years. I use it regularly now, mostly for playing text adventure games. Back then, I didn't have the time to play these text adventures, so when I was refreshing my knowledge and use of CP/M on the C-128, I gravitated to them. I'm not that great at them, yet. I've been playing Wishbringer. I finally found the Magick Shoppe, but now I can't get back to town. If anyone has a suggestion, let me know.

Brian, at ParticlesBBS, was quite helpful. He transferred many of the CP/M text adventures into disk images. I write about this in the book. His work has made it much easier to run CP/M text adventures on the C-128. And, after doing quite a bit of experimentation with the SD2IEC, I use that device with CP/M all of the time these days.

EH: Did you use Commodore hardware to write and submit your articles back in the day? Or did RUN use early computerized typesetting machines?

MM: I used Commodore computers to write my articles. I would write them at home, print them out, and then give them to our editor in chief, Dennis Brisson. From there, they would go to other members of our editorial staff for proof reading, creating pull quotes, and arranging for photos and illustrations. Eventually, the proof copy of the article would get back to me for a final read and then it would go into the final version of the magazine for printing. We didn't submit articles in electronic form when I was there.

EH: What are the most common programs you find yourself using these days on your C128?

MM: Nowadays, I use all three operating systems on my C-128. I am currently writing a short story, called the Chronicles of Olga and Antonio. It is a family biographical story, written in an old timey style. I started writing it with SpeedScript 128+, but recently moved over to Word Writer 128. I'm using the 128 mode in 80 columns monochrome. I recently acquired a Commodore MPS 803 printer, which I use for my rough drafts. I also use the 128 mode when I access my UNIX Shell account for e-mail and reading articles on the Web. As mentioned in the book, I use KipperTerm 128 for that.

I use the 64 mode in color. When my grandkids visit, they like to play the 64 games. I have some

of the old ReRUN games and education programs, as well as many commercial games that have been made available to the public. I also like to use the color 64 mode terminal programs to access Commodore BBSs. I currently am using the CCGMS 2019 terminal program.

EH: What could people born in the 21st century learn from the 128?

MM: There is a lot that could be said about this. I think that 21st century people can learn to appreciate the simplicity of the 8-bit world. Just look at boot up time, for example. I can turn on my C-128 and it takes only 2.5 seconds to completely boot up. Try timing your boot-up on your modern day PC.

People have more control when using the C-128 than when using a modern PC. Having control over things these days seems to be a vanishing aspect of life. With its built-in BASIC, in either 64 or 128 modes, you can learn to write programs and by doing that, you can control the computer. You can see how things get done. There is not as much distance between the programming level and the user level on the C-128, as there is with modern PCs. Even if you don't write programs, you can load and list BASIC programs and actually see the commands that make things happen.

People can learn that having fun with retro technology doesn't have to cost a lot. You can start off easy with just a used C-128, an SD2IEC, and a TV. Download software for free from the Internet and you'll have more than you could possibly need. The C-128 provides a lot of territory for exploration and learning. While sometimes it might take a bit longer to master certain aspects, such as learning how to use CP/M, the journey itself is a learning experience.

Lastly, you can take your time with your C-128, and not be infringed upon by pop-up windows

and unwanted-to-be-seen images. All in all, it's a good way to experience wholesome fun while using your computer. And, there are lots of people out there, of all ages, who are ready to lend a helping hand and to share in the joy.

EH: Marg, thank you so much for talking with us today. I hope you realize how much excitement your book has generated in the Commodore community. Speaking for myself, I found the book a total pleasure to read and will use some of the chapters as a future reference. Cheers!

MM: Thanks for your kind words, Eric. Glad that you like the book.

Final Notes:

Whether you're a fan of the Commodore 128, or thinking of picking one up for the first time, I highly recommend Marg's new book and reading it cover to cover. Much of it was written in 1985 and is an interesting historical document in its own right. But the text is completely updated by contemporary observations and experiences where Marg offers relevant advice for folks reading about this interesting 8-bit machine today. It's a fine addition to any C= fan's bookshelf.

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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.

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