



## THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

by Lenard R. Roach

### TAX TIME & THE COMMODORE 128

Before the fatal deadline of April 15th, every citizen in the United States should have their tax returns prepared and in the mail. I associate with a lot of people who get the blessing of filing their returns using the IRS 1040EZ Form. Because I work as a sub-contractor for a delivery business here in Kansas City, there are people like me who have to spend the extra hundreds of dollars and go with the standard 1040 Long Form.

I was introduced to the incredible pain-in-the-butt 1040 back when I was fifteen years old. Back then, I sat down with a H & R Block tax preparer when I was ready to do my first tax return. She was cordial and very polite. She knew she was dealing with a rookie when it came to doing a return and was ready to help me get the maximum refund possible. In those days, there was no such thing as a 1040EZ, but they did have what was called the 1040 Short Form. When we first did my taxes, there was no such thing as a computer to do your forms on, and everything had to be done manually on separate forms by using pen and ink. It felt like forever as I sat there in that chair in her office while she poured over every calculation that was on my W2, but after being hunched over that form for a while, she sat up, looked over her work, and then looked at me.

“Lenard,” she began, “for all the money you've earned last year, you're not getting much of a return back. Now I want you to think. As you're a custodian, is there anything we could use to add to your deductions?”

I went into the description of a typical day as a custodian at the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company on Water Street in Olathe, Kansas. I was the contracted help in my department, so my paychecks and subsequent W2 came from Curl's Building Maintenance on 63rd Street in Kansas City, Missouri. I cleaned the entire building nightly from Monday through Friday from 5 pm to 9 pm, then drove over to the Southwestern Bell maintenance hub on Spruce Street and cleaned it from 9:30 pm to 11 pm, then bebopped from there to the Southwestern Bell Telephone sales showroom on Lindenwood Boulevard and cleaned it from 11:15 pm to midnight, and then I went back home.

She lit up after I went into the details of my job. “Do you know how many miles you put on your car each night when you drive from one building to another?” she asked.

“Not really,” I answered. “Maybe about thirteen to sixteen miles a night. Why?”

All of the papers she had just worked on were pushed to the side, and she pulled out a fresh form. This one was much longer just from appearances.

“Son,” she said, “those miles you put on your car each night are what's called a business write-off. Does Curl's give you mileage or fuel compensation for driving your own car between businesses?”

“No.”

“How long have you been driving between businesses this past year?”

“The whole year. Monday through Friday.”

The woman began to scribble away frantically on the new form, copying data from the old form that she just pushed aside, like my name, address, and numbers from the W2. Another infinity passed. Then she sat up from her desk with a big smile on her face.

“Lenard, with that little information you've given me on mileage, I've been able to calculate your new return. You were only going to get around \$600 back from the IRS on the 1040 Short Form and about \$75 from Kansas, but with the new information you just gave me, we've been able to more than double your return from both federal and state. The best I can figure, you're going to get about \$1,400 back from federal and \$125 back from Kansas.”

I about defecated on myself. I've never had so much money coming to me in one sitting before. I felt like I hit the mother lode!

“Now I want you to do yourself a favor,” she began to teach me. “I want you to buy a small spiral notebook that you can keep in your glove box of the car and each time you have to drive somewhere in your car for the company, I want you to write down the date that you did it, your starting miles, and your ending miles. Do that for the whole year. When we sit down here to do your taxes next year, I want you to bring me that mileage book, and together we'll pour over the numbers. I bet you that next year we can get you an even bigger tax return.” She leaned back in her chair with my form in her hand. “What are you going to do with all that money?” the middle-aged lady asked, still smiling.

Comic book store, here I come!

I anxiously waited at home for my anticipated checks to come in the mail. As soon as they hit the mailbox, I showed mom what I got from the

government. I put the checks into the bank and then took mom out to a nice restaurant first thing to celebrate my first ever tax return.

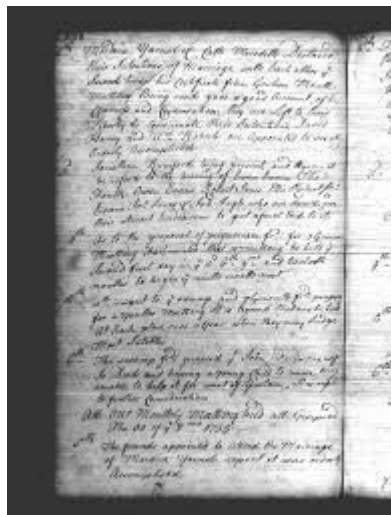
Time travel to this tax year. During the day I drive my car, picking up all my own expenses for Action Delivery on Gardner Avenue in Kansas City, Missouri, and delivering pizzas for Sarpino's Pizzeria on 95th Street in Leawood, Kansas at night. Each company gets its own mileage book. In my tax preparation arsenal, I also have my trusty Commodore 128 computer which houses all my work and home data on a single 5.25” floppy disk. I also keep hard copies of all my write-offs like cellphone bills, uniforms, insurance premiums, car repairs (even oil changes), tow bills, and other miscellaneous information that is necessary to keep for the purpose of taxes. In programs like Money Manager 2K (a program best used in 64 mode on the 128), I have an entire list of all my deposits, expenditures, and other things needed to keep the house running throughout the year. All the user has to do is go to “Print Year To Date” reports in the Money Manager program, turn on the printer (in my case, the hard-to-find Commodore MPS-802), put tractor feed paper into the printer, and press “Y.” Before long (maybe about five minutes), a copy of the entire year's income and expenses are printed out and ready for the tax preparer.

I still do my mileage logs in pen and ink, because in my professions, you can burn through a vehicle very quickly. In fact during this past year, I've burned through two vehicles – a 1998 Dodge Neon and a 2003 Nissan Frontier. I'm on my third vehicle, a 2015 Chevrolet Trax LS with all-wheel drive. I use the PRINT command (usually represented by the ? symbol to save time) to calculate in mileage the days I worked, then I total up the month, and I write down that total on the back of the sheet. Usually I can have about two months of daily mileage totals on each sheet of notebook paper. Then I total up the numbers to

give me the final number for the year. Just for kicks, I take the yearly total of mileage from one job, add it with the mileage from my other job, and then multiply the total by .55, which I think is the standard write-off per mile for the year 2020.

Even though the Commodore 128 and the Commodore 128 in 64 mode keep great records if calculated patiently and correctly, there are some write-offs that I have to keep on receipts, because they are connected with other purchases. For example, in 2020 I spent \$69 on work pants alone. I purchased those pants from Walmart, and they were added to my regular purchases, like Cap'n Crunch and frozen pizzas. I have to show those receipts to my tax preparer, underline the purchase on the receipt, and then calculate them out on a separate sheet of paper. I could take the time and use Money Manager to do the work for me, but that means creating a new category in the program set-up. Also, since the program runs best in Commodore 64 mode, the user only gets 150 entries per month. I found this out the hard way when I ran out of room one month by keeping detailed records. The program gives you the option to condense your records starting at Entry 140, but sometimes I need to go back further into the month and clean up the previous days to make more room. I'm sure this little error is due to the 64K limits to the Commodore 64. To clean this mess up, I started adding up (using the calculator feature on the Commodore) receipts and putting them into the computer as a whole. For example, if I got fuel at Minit Mart for \$20 and then later that day I have to stop in at a Quik Trip to get another \$20 of fuel, when I get home I would add the totals together and put it into Money Manager as a \$40 fuel purchase, putting it under the title of "convenience stores" with the subheading of "fuel." At the end of the month, these numbers would come out under the subheading of "fuel" for the month. It would be great if there were a C128 version of Money Manager just to access more board memory. Money Manager is a great program, but it does have its limits.

So, with all that said, it's time for all good citizens of these great United States to get ready at the beginning of 2021. Get your loose records together, categorize them, calculate the numbers, and try to glean something out of the leftovers of the year 2020. Here's to a successful return to all in the upcoming tax season!



## MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

We at FCUG do apologize for the delay, but due to the continuing pandemic there was no club meetings in the months of March and April. We do look forward to the day when we will be able to get together and discuss the latest advances in the greatest computers ever designed – the Commodore!





## WARHOL & THE COMPUTER

by Guest Contributor Chris Garcia

People don't associate legendary pop artist Andy Warhol with the computer. My first thoughts go to Campbell Soup cans, Marilyn Monroe, and his film works. While most of Warhol's creative output happened in the 1960s, when only a few serious artists had access to and used computers, he continued to paint and create artworks up until his death in 1987. Towards the end of his life, he began to create works using Amiga computers. It should be no surprise that Warhol was interested in computers; he'd been fascinated with popular culture for decades, and computers had moved beyond being mysterious tools to become items encountered in everyday life. That alone would get Warhol interested in them as commodity objects, but add to that the artistic potential of such machines and it's not at all a stretch to see his interest.

In Walter Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, he describes Sean Lennon's ninth birthday party at the Dakota Apartments in New York. Dozens of significant figures in the arts and entertainment industry were there to attend the birthday of the son of the late John Lennon, including artists Louise Nevelson and Keith Haring. Warhol was in attendance, as he was at a great many New York

society parties, but a slightly surprising guest was Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple Computer. Jobs brought with him a Macintosh computer. At first, Warhol and Haring watched as Jobs showed Sean how to work with the machine. After a while, Warhol took Sean's place in front of the Mac while Jobs tried to explain how to use a mouse. It took a while, but finally Warhol used the Pencil tool to draw.

"Look! Keith! I drew a circle!" Warhol said to Haring.

This was Warhol's introduction to creating art with computers, though Jobs had called him previously trying to give him a Macintosh. Warhol never returned his calls, seeing no reason to consider computers.

Less than a year later, Commodore launched the Amiga 1000 personal computer. The launch was held on July 23, 1985, in the Vivian Beaumont Theater, a part of New York's Lincoln Center. It attracted not only the typical technology crowd, but also those interested in music, film, and art. The Amiga 1000 was being positioned as a "multi-media" computer, usable in many fields of creative endeavor. Apple's Macintosh had launched a year earlier and was already starting to gain a following among the arts and design communities. Launching a computer at a major cultural venue was still somewhat new, but the scope of the introduction was on-par with the Macintosh introduction the previous year. One of the highlights of the event was the creation of a piece of art live, on stage.

Andy Warhol was the creator.

The subject of his work? Debbie Harry, best known for her work as the lead singer in the seminal New Wave band, Blondie.

The creation began with Warhol capturing an image of Harry and then manipulating it, using

ProPaint, a paint system that was still in the early stages of testing. A photograph of Harry was digitized and Warhol manipulated the colors of the image using ProPaint. The resulting image was quite similar to the silk-screened images Warhol created of stars such as Monroe, Elvis, and Liza Minnelli during his heyday.

The piece would be very easy to create today; in fact it might seem a bit primitive. In the ensuing years, programs such as Photoshop, as well as much-expanded research by the arts community, has made images like the one that Andy created at Lincoln Center seem downright ordinary. Still, Warhol was obviously having fun creating the work, and was heard to quip “the thing that I like most about doing art on the computer is that it looks like my work.”

Warhol had been involved with filmmaking dating back to the 1960s and the earliest days of The Factory. Many of the films Warhol made were in the style of the early silent actualities, though taken to a grander scale, with films of simple activities such as eating or sleeping. At other points, he shot newsreel-type footage of various art events, activities around The Factory, and music films, notably with The Velvet Underground. He shot hundreds of “screen tests” of stars and later produced various narrative works, some of which he directed, others by Paul Morrissey, including *Women in Revolt*, *Blood for Dracula*, and *Flesh for Frankenstein*. Many of Warhol’s films were poorly regarded by the cinema establishment. Poet and critic Dana Gioia once noted, “No director in human history has ever or will ever make worse movies. Warhol makes Ed Wood look like Ingmar Bergman.” Warhol also produced a television series for MTV from 1985 to 1987.

Warhol acquired several Amigas and began creating works with them, including a short film using the Amiga 1000 titled, “YOU ARE THE ONE.” This featured twenty digitized images of

Marilyn Monroe from 1950s newsreel footage, manipulated by Warhol with the Amiga. This was set to music. The film was never shown while Warhol was alive but was discovered in 2001 among many of Warhol’s computer disks. The music was discovered on another disk labeled “soundtracks for imaginary movies, i.e., you are the one.” Despite much legal wrangling, including the potential seizure of the film, the Museum of New Art in Detroit premiered the film in 2006, showing it only for one day.

Warhol’s other works created for the Amiga are somewhat more obscure, though one was used as the cover for *The Creative Issue of Amiga World* magazine. The image is of Andy Warhol with an Amiga. Like many of Warhol’s works, it was about the imagery of our world and how the artist plays in it.

While Andy Warhol’s traditional artworks may be far better known, had he lived a few more years, he may well have been the most important of all computer artists.



### **DEBBIE HARRY AND THE COMMODORE AMIGA**

(Debbie Harry, was a singer, songwriter, and actress who had the lead vocals in the band, Blondie. Some of her famous songs were “Heart

of Glass," "Call Me," and "The Tide Is High." Andy Warhol was an artist, film director, and producer who was a leading figure in the visual art movement known as pop art. Both of them appeared together on stage for the unveiling of the Commodore Amiga 1000 in 1985. Below is what Debbie recalled from that event.)

Later, Andy called and asked me to model for a portrait he was going to create live, at Lincoln Center, as a promotion for the Commodore Amiga computer. It was a pretty amazing event. They had a full orchestra and a large board set up with a bunch of technicians in lab coats. The techs programmed away with all the Warhol colors, as Andy designed and painted my portrait. I hammed it up some for the cameras, turning toward Andy, running my hand through my hair, and asking in a suggestive Marilyn voice, "Are you ready to paint me?" Andy was pretty hilarious in his flat-affect way, as he sparred with the Commodore host.

I think there are only two copies of this computer-generated Warhol in existence and I have one of them. Commodore also gave me a free computer, which I passed on to Chris [Stein].

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Harry, Debbie, "Face It: a Memoir," Dey St., an imprint of William Morrow, p. 196, c. 2019.



## NOVEMBER SCCAN MEETING... KIND OF...

by Robert Bernardo

(This is a report from our sister club, the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network, told from the perspective of club leader Robert Bernardo.)

Due to the pandemic, no SCCAN meetings have been held at our usual Panera Bread Restaurant in Northridge, CA. In mid-November, outdoor dining at the restaurant was available, but there was no electrical outlet nor shade for our monitors. Also Panera had instituted a 2-hour time limit on dining.

SCCAN member Jeff R. wanted to meet so that he could pick up his 2 monitors which had been repaired by Ray Carlsen. Well, I didn't want to drive the 3 hours down from Visalia to Northridge, and so, we compromised. He would drive up from his area, and I would drive down 1 hour, 20 minutes to the Bakersfield Panera Bread Restaurant.

We met on Saturday, November 19, at the noon hour, and he treated me to lunch at the restaurant. We ate in the outdoor patio which was shaded and had one electrical outlet! Of course, we tried to be socially-distant, him eating at one side of the

table and me at the other side of table. We talked a lot about computers, a little bit about Commodore (like the Mega65) but a lot about new news in the Amiga world (like new add-on's for the A1000). It was like having a SCCAN meeting but without the computers to look at! I speculated that with that electrical outlet in the patio, we would be able to have official SCCAN meetings. However, we realized that few if any would come from the Los Angeles area all the way to Bakersfield for a meeting.

We reached our 2-hour limit, though no one really came to shove us out of the patio. Being the good people, we left anyway. Jeff and I transferred the monitors out of my station wagon and into his car. We said good-bye to each other, both of us wondering when we would meet again.

Later that month, all outdoor dining was closed, due to the pandemic.

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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**Disclaimer** – The club, its officers, members, and authors are not responsible for the accuracy of the contents of The Interface or the results of actions based on its contents.

Our disk library contains over 3,000 public domain programs for the C64 and C128. Members are entitled to copies of these disks at no cost if a blank disk is provided. We do not deal with pirated, copyrighted, violent, or obscene programs. Please call our attention to any programs found in our library which may violate these standards.

# Club Officers

## >>--> 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