



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

The Time Is At Hand

-by Lenard R. Roach

In one month, Lenard should be able to attend the 2015 CommVEx held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

One month?

YARGH!

(Thud.)

Huh? What? Oh, sorry. I must have passed out for a moment, but the shock that, after all this time of waiting, CommVEx is less than a month away from being a reality. How are you set for this once a year event? I must admit ...

... I AIN'T GOT SQUAT ONE THING DONE!

I had this big list of stuff to do in the year that I had to prepare for the show, and I didn't even so much as sit down at the Commodore in the computer room and get things done. I wanted to program some games using the game construction sets I have here at the Roach Center, but I never sat down to learn the programs functions. Sometimes I think I'm too old to learn anything new, even when it comes to the Commodore, but that could also be called one simple word ...

LAZINESS!

Yup, I never had the desire to sit down and go through the programs and see what needs to be done. I'm more interested in writing my own code from a blank screen instead of using code provided by someone else, even if that code is to help me write code. Pride? Ego? Stupidity? Number three is my option, but number two is looking kind of right, too. Maybe its all three. I don't know for sure, but one thing I am sure of is that I had one year to get all this straighten out and I didn't.

So, Fat Man, what are you going to do for a presentation when to get to CommVEx?

Well, let me say that this year wasn't a total loss, just a mostly total loss. I did sit down over the winter and come up with my new "5 Program Bonus Disk" which contains five of the programs I use the most on the Commodore, a couple of which I wrote myself. Like I said in past issues of "The Interface," this is still a project in the works, but I will be offering it as a developer's disk for anyone who would want to try and make more out of it than I have. I know that when I demonstrate this package to the CommVEx attendees, there will be some suggestions come up for items that can be added to the disk to make it more user friendly and more helpful for those who access the programs. These five programs are:

"TEA.4.2" – The envelope writing program that addresses envelopes using a standard Commodore printer and your own envelopes. Most people nowadays use the Internet to pay bills and avoid spending the extra forty seven cents it takes to mail a letter anymore. I know that as a PC user as well as a Commodore user, this feature of modern computers is handy and makes for quick posting of a debt owed while good old fashioned snail mail takes the usual three to five days to get an envelope from one point to another. In many cases using an on line payment system costs the

user more than a stamp and therefore not worth it. If you have such a website that forces you to pay like some of mine, then “TEA.4.2” is a good program for you. As for a printer, those who still have the good old fashioned 9 pin printer around, it would be good to pull it out of storage, blow off the dust, and bring it back into service.

“Check It Out” – Even though this program is now the property of RUN magazine, and whoever now has the rights to RUN's programs, this update to the original magazine edition rearranges the line definitions and gives the program access to it's sister program “Check Mate” which will be discussed further down the page. “Check It Out” is the check printing program that, with a standard 9 pin printer, you can print on the face of any wallet size check the needed information and print that data onto the check. The November/December 1992 issue of RUN has the best description of how the program works. Please check it out (no pun intended).

“Check Mate” – When making out a check for the same amount over and over each month, “Check It Out” can take up some time as you re-input the data each month. “Check Mate” allows “Check It Out” sequential data to be saved in a simple one block file that is now accessible with the new version of “Check It Out” offered on the 5 Program Bonus Disk. “Check It Out” will ask for “Check Mate” data files each pass of the program and a simple Y or N answer will send the user to the appropriate subroutine.

“The Ledger” – This is my latest program work that came to my warped mind. Most people already have a ledger keeping program in their Commodore collection. I am hoping that this BASIC, simple written program will be easier to use and with the code not compressed into a encryption file, it can be modified by each individual user to meet special specifications. There is much work that can probably be added to this program, and when I get to CommVEx I will

be coming with notebook in hand to write down any suggestions that come from our austere audience. In short, “The Ledger” keeps track of who's paid and when then saves that data as well as any payments made in a short one block sequential file. This file can be manipulated from any of the menu driven commands written in the program code and saved into either a new file or the same file depending on the preference of the user.

“Money Manager with EZ Budget” – This is a program I spent a great deal of time typing in from a RUN magazine and is being offered on the 5 Program Bonus Disk as a helpful tool to keep an electronic checkbook and budgeting form on your Commodore. Even in the 21st century where check writing is almost obsolete this program can still be used to do balancing and budgeting information. I do not own the rights to this program but since it is freeware offered in RUN magazine I think a free distribution of the work is okay.

All these programs are daisy chained together with a master boot program that allows a user to choose which program to access, and also, when done, the program accessed will sweep back and reboot the master boot program in case there are other programs on the 5 Program Bonus Disk the user wishes to use.

WHAT I NEEDED/WANTED TO DO: It seems that the master boot program gets bogged down in the buffer of the Commodore when too many of the programs on the disk are entered. I've been studying the online versions of the Commodore Users Guide and what might fix the problem is adding a CLR command at the tail of each program before looping back to the master boot program. Also, combining the programs into one massive program may also fix it, but I will need a merging file to make all of that work. With CommVEx so close by, I will have to work on this after the show.

In “The Ledger” there are more things that can probably be put in, like setting a date in the program and having each sequential file check the date and see how long (in days) it is before the bill becomes overdue. Also a warning screen stating that a bill is past due might be a possibility. I'm just a simple redneck programmer and sometimes I'll get an idea but lack the algebra and proper Commodore expressions to make it work. Again, more study and a visit to the Commodore forums online might prove to have the information needed to make ideas work.

Most programmers in Commodore have moved on from simple BASIC into more complex programming languages but I still find a bit of comfort when reading a program text and deciphering what it means and how it relates to the text as a whole.

ALSO COMING TO COMMVEX – I will be bringing more copies of my book, “Run/Stop-Restore: 10th Anniversary Edition” to be won and sold at the show and I will take some time to plug it in front of our audience. I'm currently in negotiations with my printing company to try and get a deal from them especially for CommVEx attendees. Visiting authorhouse.com has shown my book has come down in price a little so maybe I can forward the savings onto attendees.

I will also be bringing and demonstrating the “Obligator Coordinator V2.0” which is the father to “The Ledger.” This program does what “The Ledger” does but with a little more pomp and a lot of glitches. Hopefully we all will be able to see together why this project was scrapped and maybe, with a little TLC from CommVEx attendees, we can make a Commodore program phoenix rise from the ashes.

To entertain the kids back home, I will be bringing Theodore Sheepdog, the church puppet, to interview those who wish to be put on YouTube

displaying their wares. Theodore will also be about Las Vegas having fun and hopefully finding some kid friendly characters to interview on the Fremont Street Experience that won't cost an arm and a leg in fees. A reminder to those who wish to cooperate: At the church is a fully functional C128 complete with monitor and drives that the kids in Kansas City has access to. Maybe a little demonstration of what you do for them will be helpful for them to use the machine.

This is all for now. When I post to the newsletter next time it will be to tell about the adventure in Las Vegas and the CommVEx show. Magazines are already bidding for this information from me so I pray not to disappoint.

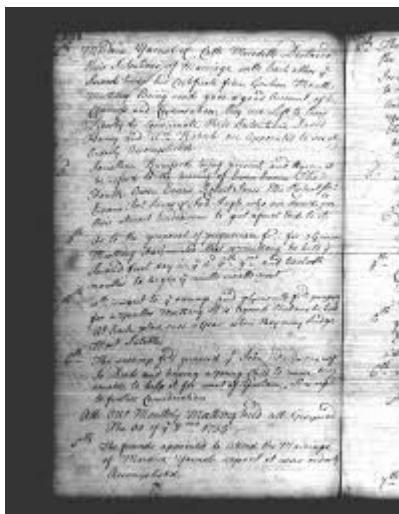
See Everyone In Las Vegas!

(One month. Wow!)



The July/August Issue Of The Interface Should Be Out On Newsstands Sometime On Or Around:

**September 10,
2015**



MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

– May 2015 –

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

We had a good meeting for May, with Louis, Vincent, Roger, Robert, Greg and Dick in attendance.

Robert had an exciting announcement regarding CommVEx. At Maker Faire the previous weekend, a man came up and started asking Robert questions about his Commodore background. The person turned out to be Leonard Tramiel, son of late Commodore founder Jack Tramiel. Leonard will be in Las Vegas in July for an event and decided that he would also be able to attend CommVEx.

Robert had many observations regarding the Nostalgic Computers exhibit of which he was a part of at Maker Faire. He noted that with hundreds of attendees going through the exhibit, it was standing room only, and Robert stood for hours just to let others sit and use the Commodore 128D and Amiga 3000 he had brought. Many attendees did not know there was still hardware and software development for Commodore and

Amiga. Many did not know that there were still clubs and shows devoted to these computers. Many did not know that the C64 Super Mario Bros was a re-done Great Giana Sisters game which itself was a clone of the real Nintendo Super Mario Bros game. Many did not know that the games Star Wars/Empire Strikes Back/Return of the Jedi had been converted to run on an Amiga.

Robert will be in Europe on our regular June meeting date, so we rescheduled the meeting to June 14. Robert will attend Amiga30 in Amsterdam, a celebration for the 30th anniversary of the Commodore Amiga computer. Many Amiga VIP's will be there.

Our demonstrations began with the long-delayed look at GEOS 128. The program booted up flawlessly from disk, and Robert did a short demonstration of geoWrite. The 80-column version offers a number of benefits over the original 40-column program, most notably the display of the entire page width, instead of the annoying sideways scrolling required in the C64 version. Several of us took a turn typing some brief text, then experimenting with changing the font selection and size.

The demo was of special interest to Dick. He no longer has a Commodore set-up, but he used GEOS extensively in the past, including producing the newsletter in geoPublish.

We also tried out geoPaint in both 80 and 40-column mode. The former is limited to black and white, including various fill patterns, but again allows viewing a full-page width.

Next Robert set up his Amiga CDTV, first released in 1991. Designed as a game machine, it contains what is essentially a complete Amiga 500, and with the optional mouse, keyboard and floppy drive, it can be used as a computer. However, we inserted a couple of the CDTV's

!!! Celebrating 33 Years Of Commodore Greatness !!!

proprietary game discs, Wrath of the Demon and Defender of the Crown II. The device has a large keypad, remote controller with numerous specialized buttons in addition to the normal joystick commands.

The Mazzei boys had brought their fire engine red VIC-20, and our first step was to run a joystick test program, Contact, which advised us that the item we were using was "a piece of cr*p." Regardless, the Wico joystick worked OK when we tried out Panicman, a PacMan clone that both Louis and Greg put through its paces, running up a respectable score. We also tried out Address Book, an April Fool's program which looks like a boring productivity program. However, when you picked most of the menu choices, you'd get a rude beep and a notice which displayed, "Access Denied." When you chose Play a Game, then you would be led to a type of math game. Then we tried Knossoss, a maze game which would show you a map of the maze at first, and then you'd have to go down corridors in first-person, 3D perspective, trying to figure out the maze.

Back to the C128, Robert ran an IPaint viewer for 16K video RAM C128's. We looked at various, 80-column IPaint graphics which natively displayed in 640 x 200, but because of the club's C128 with 16K video RAM, we could only see a portrait-sized window into the full image. If we had 64K video RAM, we would have been able to see the entire picture. The best IPaint seemed to be the detailed Biplane. There were many Doodles which were converted to IPaint, four Doodle images fitting in one IPaint image.

Finally from YouTube, Robert brought up a Computer Chronicles show from 1985 on his Mac laptop, and we learned about the "new" products coming from Commodore, including the C128 and the Commodore LCD computer that never made it past the prototype stage.

When the members had left, Robert and Roger

stayed to do further experimentation on the MMC64 cartridge with MP3@64 board. Would that combination play MP3 music? First, Robert downloaded onto his laptop some music from Trekcore.com - the original series, one-minute Star Trek Theme and the three-minute Goodbye Mr. Decker from the Doomsday Machine episode of Star Trek. Then he moved the music to the SD card. He inserted that SD card into the MMC64 and powered up the C128. Going to the File Browser, Robert found the theme song and clicked on it. It played flawlessly at 256 kbits per second... high-fidelity! Then for the second song, he clicked on that. It had been recorded at a lower rate, 128 kbits, but it too sounded fantastic. For the next meeting, Robert and Roger plan to have a wider selection of music for the members to hear.

We'd like to take a paragraph or two here for a salute to Bobby Salazar's Cantina, where we hold our meetings every month. They have a small banquet room which they make available to us, despite our small numbers. The service and the food are always good. Our waitresses go out of their way to take care of us, and we are allowed to occupy the room from 11 a.m. till around 4 p.m., although our total bill probably would not pay for such service in many places.

The business started as Sal's in 1942 when Bobby's father, Sal, a Mexican immigrant, decided there was more to life than picking peaches and opened a restaurant in Selma, about 20 miles south of Fresno. The family now operates several Bobby Salazar's locations, and in Fresno, Madera and Selma under the Sal's name.

Thanks to the management and staff for providing Fresno Commodore User Group with one of the best meeting places we've had in many years.

RELATED LINKS:

Amiga30 in Amsterdam: <http://amiga30.eu>

Amiga HDTV: <http://oldcomputers.net/cdtv.html>

Computer Chronicles:

<http://oldcomputers.net/cdtv.html>

CommVEx:

<http://www.portcommodore.com/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=commvex:start>

GEOS 128: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ekbi_1i8gwc

Bobby Salazar's:

<http://www.bobbysalazar.com/locations.html>

Sal's: <http://salsmexicanrestaurants.com/menu/>

Vincent's Red VIC 20 :

<http://dickestel.com/images/fcug398.jpg>

--June 2015 --

-by Robert Bernardo and Dick Estel

The June meeting was one of rare ones; only two members were going to be there, the other local members bowing out due to other commitments. Nonetheless, Robert brought a carload of C= items as usual. He arrived to the meeting on-time but had to tell the workers at Bobby Salazar's Restaurant that he was going to leave briefly in order to pick up another member (Roger) and that if any other members appeared, then they were to wait until his return.

Over a half hour later, Robert and Roger arrived and immediately started setting up the equipment. Because Robert had to transport Roger, there was no room in the car to bring the planned Amiga 1000. After another half hour of setting up equipment, they finally settled down to order lunch.

Robert talked about his plans to leave for Europe soon in order to attend the June 20 Back In Time Live concert of C64 music in Brighton, England, and the June 27 Amiga 30th celebration in Amsterdam. On the laptop computer, they looked at the updated webpages for the July 18-19 Commodore Vegas Expo at www.portcommodore.com/commvex. Interspersed with all this Commodore talk was discussion about Roger's rebuild of a classic 1980's Fisher boombox.

Then they viewed a new Bil Herd interview which was posted to YouTube by Polish C= fans. The interviewer was a young man who was going to university, and some of his questions were unexpected ones which asked Bil for career advice.

For the fourth month in a row, the 30th anniversary celebration of the C128 continued at the meeting; in honor of that computer, they tried out some C128 games, courtesy of the GENie Commodore File Library at CBMFiles.com. The games were all text-based – Star Trek 80, Keno 128, Starfighter 128, and Trucker 128. They spent most of the time on Trucker128 – a simulation which had the player drive a semi-truck across the United States and he had to do so without failing or dying. Because the game was created in the 1980's, many details, such as the price of gasoline, were from that time. Robert and Roger reasoned that those details could be updated by changing certain BASIC lines in the program.

In fact, the program could be made even more interesting by introducing "racy" elements in those details!

The rest of the time was spent going through the various programs on Robert's MMC64 cartridge and loading in more 128-bit Star Trek: Original Series music which was played through its MP3@64 board.

Robert had to meet his sister in north Fresno, and so, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30. Time had run out in which to demonstrate the games Blazer and Galaxy Apocalypse for the VIC-20; those games would be shown at a future meeting.



LET'S MAKE "OBSOLETE" OBSOLETE

-by Dick Estel

Maybe it's time to strike the word "obsolete" from the human vocabulary.

My hardbound paper 1985 edition Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary defines "obsolete" as follows: "1. Gone out of fashion; out-of-date. 2. No longer used or practiced."

Our Commodores have been "obsolete" for at least 20 years now, but they still work, people still use them, new hardware and software come on the scene on a regular basis. We even still sell a C64 now and then, although it's for one percent of the original retail price.

I suppose definition #1 could be said to apply, but definitely not #2.

The C64 made the VIC20 obsolete – but don't tell

that to Vincent, the club's Grand Poohbah of the VIC20. Even the earliest computers made still have their devotees.

Or consider the evolution of recorded music, from the Edison cylinder to streaming services. Cylinders, 78's, vinyl LPs and 45s, cassettes, and 8-tracks are all "obsolete." CDs and even MP3s aren't far behind.

And yet, every format is still usable, with the vinyl LP probably the most common out-of-date format still in use. But a cylinder, properly cared for and played on a still-functioning machine, will sound as good as it did originally, which is not to claim that it sounds great. I have 30 year old cassettes, well cared for, that still play as good as the day I made them, and of course, CD's should last at least as long as their owners do.

"Obsolete" cars, though lacking modern safety and convenience features, can be driven. They are expensive to maintain, and no one expects a 1928 Model A to take him down the freeway at 80 MPH, but they will perform they way the did originally. And if they are in great condition, they have resale value far beyond their original cost.

Even my hardbound dictionary is considered obsolete by some – but it worked just fine to launch this article. Now the only challenge is for us, as we age, to make sure WE do not become "obsolete"!





MEMORY LANE

-by Dick Estel

INTRODUCTION

This is number 13 of a limited series of articles saluting some of our past members, people who have made a significant contribution to the club. Our more recent members did not have the pleasure of knowing these men and women, some of whom have passed on. However, they made a lasting impression on the club and the author.

Questions and comments to our web address, info@dickestel.com, are welcome.

JEFF ADOLPH and DENNIS FITHIAN

There are several former members that I don't know a lot about, or don't have much to say about. This is a reflection on me, not them. For these folks, I will devote a couple of paragraphs to each and combine two or three in one article.

I think of Jeff and Dennis together because I believe they both joined the club at the same time, and they were friends prior to that.

Jeff Adolph was one of our few members whose primary occupation involved working with computers on the technical side, rather than just as a tool on the desk. He was in charge of

information technology for Valley Dental, a company that manufactured dental equipment, and also operated a number of stand-alone dental clinics.

Dennis was an X-ray technician for a local hospital, and served a short period as editor of the Interface. Both of them were very knowledgeable about the latest developments in telecommunications and all sorts of Commodore technology. These skills were of great benefit to the club during their time as members.

I've lost touch with Dennis, but we were fortunate to have Jeff join us for the reunion lunch in 2006.

Club Officers

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

- The Small Print -

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

Dues are \$12 for 12 months. New members receive a "New Member Disk" containing a number of useful Commodore 8-bit utilities. Members receive a subscription to The Interface newsletter, access to the public domain

disk library, technical assistance, and reduced prices on selected software/hardware.

Permission to reproduce content of The Interface is granted provided credit is given to the source, and when identified, the author. Club members are encouraged to submit articles, tips, or ideas for articles.

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.