



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

Ripping Esophagus

- by Lenard R Roach

Since I've been tooling around on my Commodore using it to help with my budgeting needs, my gaming fixes, and the occasional word processing chores, it just brings a little piece of mind knowing I can rely on this technology to hold true and not to waver. Let's face it, I've been watching people like my son constantly having to go to the computer super store in Overland Park (we don't have anything like that in Kansas City, Kansas) on a monthly basis and pick up this expansion or that upgrade to "keep up with the Joneses" per se. In Commodore the Joneses have settled down, taken residence, and even sprouted roots. There's nothing to really catch up on with the machine. Sure, Commodore has memory expanders and processor excellerators, but we are still using the same BASIC that was originally designed back by the manufacturer without any drastic changes or upgrades. I guess it goes to show you that when you find something that works you don't mess with it.

I also took time out to look at the calendar and saw that we are in the middle of the year. It's well past time for me to start working on my new Commodore book that I promised at the 2015 CommVEx and posted on YouTube. Thanks to

wonderful publications like "The Interface," I have a host of material to pull from -- maybe a little too much. What's worse is: I don't know which stories from 2010 to the present I should use. Therefore, I would like to ask for the help of the members of FCUG. Here's the deal: If you are a regular reader of my column in "The Interface," and you actually find some of my material good to read and would like to see it in conjunction with other stories found elsewhere (in which case I would seriously question your mental stability), then send me an email to lenardroach@yahoo.com and tell me about it. The top 30 most popular stories will go into the new volume. The working title to the new book is: "Shift-Clr/Home" with a subheading of: "More 8 Bit Thoughts In A Gigabit World". Seven years is a lot of material to go through but you shouldn't have to read all of that just to choose your 30 best; you can choose only one or two or five or even a dozen. Any help would be beneficial. If you would, also include a short sentence as to why you like the story. This will give me an approach on how to write the introductions to each installment.

Some people have asked, "How did you choose this style of formatting when it came to putting your first book together?" I actually got the idea from a radio preacher who shall remain nameless. Every time his segment would come on he would always introduce his own sermon of the day. I found it a little egocentric for a pastor to call his own sermon "amazing" and "life changing" before the listener gets to hear the message. I think that the listener should get the chance to say if that is so. When I use the same terms while describing one of my stories I say it tongue in cheek and most of you know that and so, because you know how to take a joke, don't call me on the carpet for it. Some of you even joke back in your comments or emails. I appreciate that.

If anyone has been following my career (without the use of Facebook) then you know that I've been writing for local Wyandotte County, Kansas

churches, Commodore Free, and Reset. I don't know what happened in my personal life but I've been able to write a 2 to 10 page document about three times a week, and the ideas keep coming into my head. I've had to open a separate file on my computers to keep track of my ideas or else this Old Man will have a some timers moment and forget what I thought up. I credit prayer and clean living for this upsurge in imagination. I'm looking forward to seeing what all this comes down to in the end. Cheese and crackers, dear reader! How many books and compilations already exist of my scribblings that just need to be scooped up and organized? Only my IT guy would know for sure.

Speaking of who, my IT guy had to get a second job, which has started to consume more of his time, that, in the process of working, allowed my website to go belly up so, as of this writing, there is no www.lenardroach.com for the time being. I hope to have it up again soon. My IT guy did say in a post that since all my data was destroyed from the website he would rebuild the site with all new material, so be on the look out for an all new website whenever it comes back.

I also want to give a personal "nod o' the bald head" to our illustrious Fearless Leader for introducing me to the Commodore writing opportunities that have presented themselves to him, and he was nice enough to share them with us in a group message. I hope that you, as the reader, will also load your favorite word processor into your Commodore computer and write something about your adventures with the machine that might bring a smile (or a smirk) to someone's face. Don't know what to say? Ha! Neither do I half the time, but if you just start pecking away at your keyboard about anything and the next thing you know is you have an article or story on your hands. Be sure to "save early and save often" as my Commodore teacher instructed. If you need any kind of help I'm sure that our Fearless Leader, Mr. Estel, or myself can assist. Please contact us when the time arises. Our best mode of communication is email.

Also, if you can think of anything that we need to write about in "The Interface" then please let us know. If we can't stop long enough to hear about what you want addressed about all things Commodore then "The Interface" has failed as a publication. No reasonable question refused.

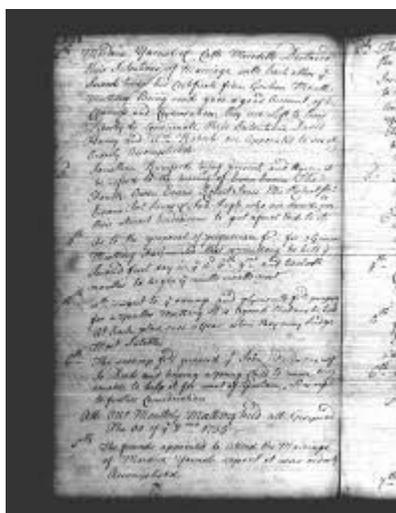
As I'm sure you've noticed, a cover sheet has been added to "The Interface." Sometimes (make that always) I don't know what to put on the front cover. I would appreciate some suggestions from FCUG attendees for ideas. I know I should at least have a "class photo" of all the attendees of an FCUG meeting and some shots of the latest CommVEx but that covers two issues; there's still four more to go. I've even put my cat on the cover because I'm running out of ideas. As you can see, I'm trying to pull away from a newsletter format and go for a magazine look.

I would also like to ask the membership to help Robert, Dick, and I with filling "The Interface" with new material. One thing our Fearless Leader has stressed is that we try to keep our magazine fresh and to struggle to avoid filling our paper with reprinted articles. I know that we have some tech heads in FCUG and an article or two on minor maintenance would be welcome. Also, Vince, I'm calling you out by name to plug some of the things you found and use on the VIC-20. I personally know squat about it so a tutorial on software and BASIC would interest me. Don't know how? I was told by Syd Field, screenwriter, that you sit down with pen and paper and DO IT! Don't worry about verbiage; don't worry about structure; don't worry about punctuation; just DO IT! *You* may be the next Tom Clancy and do not know it. I personally follow the style of Earl Derr Biggers who wrote in the 1910s, 20s, and 30s. Who knows? You may like the hurrahs and "atta boys" that you get and change your life's major. I know I did.

There you have it! Lenard's gripings, moanings, complaints, and pleadings for the next two months.

Please make note on your calendar that CommVEx is less than 45 days away. I will not be attending due to work conflict and I spent all my CommVEx savings on food and other junk like fixing my cars. I can already begin to see that 2017 is also starting to project that I will be a "no show" as I will again be dropping money into fixing my second car. Sorry.

Please enjoy this fascinating issue of "The Interface." I'll check back with you in a couple of months....



MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

-- May 2016 --

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

Everyone was on board for a fast-paced May meeting – Louis, Vincent, Greg, Robert, Roger and Dick.

Over lunch we discussed CommVEx, films about Jack Tramiel, Maker Faire, and a variety of other topics.

In addition to watching another installment of "Growing the 8-Bit Generation," we learned that an overseas filmmaker is planning another film

focusing on Jack Tramiel, but taking “a different approach,” whatever that may be.

Robert will be going to Maker Faire the coming weekend, showing off Commodore VIC-20 and Amiga 1200 set-up's. And Dick offered to contact two individuals who may be willing to make presentations at CommVEx.

Dick announced that he will be reducing his participation in club meetings and will probably attend four to six meetings per year. He will continue to handle all other club duties.

He also advised members that he will be sending out questionnaires in order to write biographical articles on each member for the Interface.

Dick reported that he had received an email from a new club, the New England Commodore Enthusiasts. It is essentially a Facebook group, with no actual meetings at this time.

During the meeting we had a visit from Randy Smith, who was a member long ago in the 1980s and 90s. He is still a Commodore user and needed a new monitor for use with his C128D. Robert was able to provide one from his extensive hardware collection.

Robert and Dick enjoyed getting back in touch with Randy, who was meeting the other members for the first time.

Robert set up his VIC-20 which has been modified to use s-video and loaded up the demo version of a game called “Pulse,” which several members tried out. Robert will show the full version of the game at Maker Faire.

Robert also showed the Behr-Bonz cartridge, a newly released game cart with 127 classic VIC-20 games. There was no case, but the device will fit into a standard VIC-20 cartridge case.

-- June 2016 --

-by Robert Bernardo

I was the first to arrive to our scheduled meeting on June 12, followed by Greg, Louis and Vincent, and Roger. Treasurer/secretary Dick was absent.

With the arrival of Roger, he and I immediately got to setting up the equipment, Roger with the club C128 set-up and me with the VIC-20 and Amiga 1200 set-up's.

While eating lunch, we started the meeting. There was no old business that anyone could think of. However, we did have discussion about the July 30-31 Commodore Vegas Expo; Jim Drew had new hardware to exhibit at the show, and CBM engineer Bill Seiler was coming in to speak about his involvement with the VIC-20. Though Louis had his doubts about attending CommVEx, when he and Vincent heard about Bill attending the expo, he definitely said that they would be attending, Vincent wanting to get his VIC-20 autographed by Bill.

Under new business, Louis started off with a reports about the C64 Reloaded and the proposed Amiga Reloaded boards from Individual Computers.

I followed with my report on another successful Vintage Computer Festivalers' exhibit at the Bay Area Maker Faire this year. Once again hundreds of faire attendees went through the exhibit with me showing off the VIC-20, Amiga 1200, and Texas Instruments TI-99/A. Once again the reactions of the attendees ranged from "Oh, my God... I'm in heaven" to "Thank you very much doing this" to "I used this/these when I was growing up" to "This is a floppy disk/cassette/cartridge and we would load our programs from it." Once again the exhibit won an award as being one of the best at Maker Faire.

Finally, Greg ended the new business segment of the meeting with a downer. He reported that he might be moving to South Haven in northern Mississippi. Almost his entire computer and arcade machine collection would be following him there. We would lose a faithful member.

Next we saw another 20 minutes of the video, Growing the 8-Bit Generation. While we were doing so, Randy Smith visited in order to turn in the Commodore monitor which he received at the May meeting. The 40/80-column switch on it was acting up, and I said that the monitor would go to Ray Carlsen for repair. Randy also gave a CMD hard drive for Ray to repair, the front panel switches not working reliably on the unit. After watching a bit of the video with us, Randy then departed.

We then started the hardware portion of the meeting. In order to use the ZoomFloppy, Louis tried to install applications on the two Windows XP laptops that I brought. Without the applications the ZoomFloppy would not be able to convert disk images into real floppy disks that the Commodores could use. Ultimately, by the end of the meeting, Louis was unsuccessful in installing the applications.

On the Amiga 1200 I showed off two of the most popular games that were played at Maker Faire – Rodland, a cute Japanese-style platformer, and Fightin' Spirit, an arcade-style fighting game. Vincent and Greg amused themselves with the many vintage games which were in the Behr-Bonz cartridge installed in the VIC-20. In fact, at that moment Greg e-mailed the creator of the cartridge, Francois "Eslapion" Leveille, in order to buy a cartridge, even though Greg did not have a VIC-20 in his collection.

We took a brief look at the Chalkboard PowerPad tablet, this time with Leo's Lectric Paintbrush for the C64, though we did not run .D64 for the

program. We'll have to schedule more time for it at the next meeting.

As usual, the meeting ran late, and the last of us did not leave until almost 5 p.m.



A CHAT WITH NIGEL PARKER

The Interface caught up with busy man Nigel Parker of the "Commodore Free" magazine genre and he gave us the time of day to answer a few questions...

The Interface: Good day, Nigel. Thanks for your time.

Commodore Free: Thanks for having me.

TI: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

CF: I live in the United Kingdom, I work as a network engineer for a manufacturing company, married with a son. Trained as a carpenter (am fully trained and time served) worked as a manager sales person for Silica who imported commodore machines into the U.k. (dream job) Nothing much to tell really

TI: Who or what got you interested the Commodore line of computers?

CF: I loved reading the various magazines in the newsagent, occasionally I would buy one! I saw a Vic 20 and knew it was the future, a friend had a zx81 we played at programming it, it seemed hard work as you had to press the right letter to get

commands rather than type. Later after much pestering my dad said his friend had a vic 20, we went round, although his friend couldn't use the machine, I managed to show them both how to load games and get the output on a tv! My dad seemed impressed and that Christmas I had only one present a vic20 I still have and use it to this day, it was amazing I purchased a few memory upgrades and moved to the c64 then an amiga 500 and finally an amiga 4000, I still own these machines and more, Except the amiga 500 I had to sell this to part fund my amiga 4000

TI: What is your personal opinion on the direction Commodore is going today?

CF: Commodore as a company,? Who knows, Who cares its not the same commodore now anyway just a name. commodore as a retro platform well the sky is the limit, new tricks, games and applications appear, some generous invents a piece of hardware and its like being back at school and a little kid again

TI: Which publication did you rely on the most for Commodore information back when you started? Which one do you rely on today?

CF: Oh heck ! commodore format, ZZap 64, Amiga format and goodness know how many more, personal computer shopper as well I think it was called I liked this as it was full of adverts!

TI: What is your absolute favorite piece of Commodore software to use or use most often? Why this particular piece?

CF: Probably GEOS, it was amazing at the time, still is given time I would produce Commodore Free on this (well the wheels upgrade) but I just don't get the time, Amiga wize its dr t's KCS level iii a truly great piece of Midi software for the Amiga, has some bugs.

TI: What made you decide that the world needed

a new Commodore themed publication especially now? How would your magazine differ from previous publications?

CF: Well commodore scene magazine stopped production, I couldn't find anything to fill the spot for for a laugh I released Commodore Free issue 1 I setup a website and release issues 2 and 3 the amount of downloads was amazing news travelled very fast about the issues, I guess all I wanted was a magazine I could read in the bath, and if you print out the pdf it's a good bath read, someone in a forum said they print it to line their bird cage, I guess it takes all sorts.

TI: Who or what was your biggest influence in making this decision?

CF: Well I asked Alan Bairstow the then editor of commodore scene if he would have an issue with me releasing a free magazine as his was subscription, when he said go for it! There wasn't anything to loose

TI: Why did you call your magazine Commodore Free? What other titles did you consider before deciding on this one?

CF: Robert Bernardo suggested Commodore United, but as it was a free commodore magazine it seemed to lend itself to Commodore Free

TI: Did you expect the reception your magazine had on the world? Why is that?

CF: Not really, it was a shabby hastily put together release, I struggle with content as I am the only text finder and regular reviewer. I would like to thank all my readers and there kind comments and of course the Commodore Free haters as in a way they promote the magazine as well.

TI: Out of all your staff and contributors, who would you say is your favorite or most influential? Why this particular person?

CF: I cant answer that each person is essential with there help and assistance, I also use TMR for some technical assistance on the Vic 20, He didn't want to be named, OH dear I just named and shamed him

TI: What do you see in the future for yourself and Commodore Free?

CF: Hopefully more time to create a better class of magazine, more professional, I would love to offer an AT cost professional glossy magazine I can post out !

TI: What is your favorite American made food/dish? Why?

CF: Twinkies, I saw them on a tv show, they finally came to the UK so I started eating them

TI: Without looking it up, what do you think the term "redneck" means? Why that conclusion?

CF: OH I don't want to be hated for this, I presume it's a working class American farmer possibly makes moonshine (for personal consumption) at weekends, without farmers to look after crops and agriculture we would die of starvation. I guess apart from the Moonshine I wouldn't mind being a redneck wasn't there a group called the rednecks or something cotton eyed joe didn't they sing that. I like watching the American Pickers the country and the people they meet is truly Amazing, some of these collectors deserve an award they are preserving history Oh and I like porn stars as well, not the dirty ones I mean as in they porn items for cash (oh its not going well is I this description) you walk in with an item and try to sell it for cash to them its father son and granddad with a friend all working in one shop. Very interesting some of the items and the history they carry.

TI: Any other comments you want to share with the readers of “The Interface?”

CF: I don’t know what I would have done without commodore I said to Bil Herd I was a shy kid and without my computer I wouldn’t have found friends, true we all talked about computers but it brought me out of my shell and allowed me to express myself, gave me an interest in music passing grades 8 in practical and theory on the piano and guided my life towards support in computers and sales of computers, I still remember being in silica when one of the directors said commodore had filed for chapter 11, I couldn’t speak, Couldn’t believe it! The end of a chapter.

TI: What does your personal arsenal of Commodore machines look like?

CF: I don’t really collect machines they seem to find me I have:

Various commodore 128 machines
An amiga 600
Various commodore 64 machines
An amiga 4000
And of course my vic 20
I own various CMD hardware

TI: What else can you add for us?

CF: I think without commodore the computing history would have been very different, people often cite Microsoft and Apple, but Commodore was up there with the best of them just people like writing them out of history, Its odd that I chose an American brand most of my friends has spectrum and BBC micro machines, but the differences bring people together.

TI: Sir, we thank you kindly for your time, thoughts, and comments. We at “The Interface” wish “Commodore Free” a long and healthy run.

CF: Thank you.



Member Biographies

– by Dick Estel

“Memory Lane,” our series of articles honoring former members, is now complete, so we move on to current members. Everyone was sent a list of questions, and we are creating a sort of biography of each person from their answers.

The author is Dick Estel and he is responsible for any errors or misunderstandings that get printed. To allow everyone some extra time to complete their “assignments,” Dick has chosen to start off with his own write-up.

The Interface: Please provide brief biographical data: Place of birth, family status, occupation, current place of residence.

Dick Estel: I was born in Merced CA in 1939, but was raised and lived in rural Mariposa County in the Sierra Nevada foothills. After graduation from Mariposa County High School in 1957 I attended Fresno State College, receiving a BA in radio and television broadcasting in 1962.

I worked for a few years at radio and television stations in Fresno, Coalinga, Tulare, Bakersfield and Salinas, mostly writing advertising copy. In 1976 I began a 26 year career at the Fresno County Department of Social Services. I retired as a Program Manager in 2002.

I got married in 1963, and divorced eight years later. I lived in central Fresno for 30 years, and in 2008 I moved to a condo in Clovis, a city of 100,000 northeast of Fresno.

My parents, who never used computers, passed away in 2005 and 2007. I have two daughters, two adult grandsons, and two great grandsons, all of them living nearby. All of them use various computers and devices, even 18-month old Jack, who can find the songs and games he likes on the iPad

TI: Do you recall a time when computers were not a common fixture in most homes? Elaborate to your heart's content.

DE: Since I am nearly 77 years old, the answer to this question is clearly YES. I don't know when I first became aware of the existence of computers in general, but I know I wrote an essay about the value of computer knowledge when I was a senior in high school. This was in reference to using large scale computers for business, not a home product.

TI: What is your first memory of being aware of home computers (not necessarily using one; just any knowledge of their existence)?

DE: This is almost lost in the mists of history, but it was probably reading something about Radio Shack selling a home computer.

TI: What is your earliest memory of using (or trying to use) a computer – your own, a friend's, at work, in a store.

DE: I looked at a computer in Radio Shack and tried to do something on it (maybe play blackjack; I'm not sure). I must not have looked like a likely buyer, since no one in the store offered any help, and I was unable to get anywhere with the

machine, so I walked out. The price was also a barrier at that time.

TI: When did you get your first computer and what was it? When did you get your first Commodore computer and what was it?

DE: It was several years after my failed attempt at Radio Shack. I had been using computers to a limited extent at work (mainframe access), and knew that I wanted a computer some day. I saw an ad in the newspaper for a Commodore 64, loaded up my 3-year old grandson in the car, and drove the short distance to Sears. We came home with a Commodore 64 (\$199) and a Blue Chip Disk Drive (about \$150). The drive did not work; I went back and they exchanged it for a 1541 at no additional cost.

I was used to the many different ways in which client information could be viewed via the mainframe at work. My plan, which was in fact just a fantasy, was to catalog my collection of over a thousand 45 RPM vinyl records, several hundred albums, and a growing number of audio cassettes. I wanted to be able to enter a song title and immediately see a list of all versions; or an artist, and see all songs and albums by that person.

I soon realized that this task could be accomplished on a very limited basis with a data base program, but that it would take a lifetime to complete data entry, and information retrieval would be painfully slow. I found that I could create a well-designed list in a word processing program, and have the information I actually NEEDED, if not everything I WANTED.

TI: What computers have you owned?

DE: Several C64s and 128s; I owned an Amiga for about five minutes, which I bought to get the included 1084 monitor. I immediately sold the computer to Robert Bernardo. I have owned at

least five or six Windows PCs, the first one being an Acer, and the current one a custom-made box from PC Workshop, a computer store that is now out of business. I also have a Dell laptop that I take with me on long trips, but seldom use otherwise.

TI: How often do you use a Commodore computer - daily, weekly, monthly, rarely?

DE: If I had answered this question 20 years ago it would have been "every day, till late at night." Now the only time I use a Commodore is at FCUG meetings, and I don't do much of that. Back in the day I used GEOS to produce the club newsletter, and also created a series of graphic disks with material scanned with the Commodore Handyscanner. Of course there were many other computer projects. I was never much interested in games; I got PacMan and Frogger, and still enjoy them once in a while, but that was about it.

TI: Did you ever use a Commodore of any kind at work or for work purposes?

DE: I'm not 100% sure but I think I may have used it at home to write some memos and other simple word processing items for work. I remember taking my SX64 to work one day, so I did something work-related but can't remember what.

TI: Do you use a computer at work, and if so what type. How do you use it or what do you use it for? (If retired, answer based on your final year or two of work).

DE: My first connection with computer use at work consisted of input documents that we filled in by hand. They then went to data entry clerks who entered the information via terminals into the mainframe. By the time I retired, every employee

had a desktop computer which was used daily. The line staff was still entering the same type of data we had done by hand, but using the PC to enter it.

In my own specialized position, I mostly used word processing programs, but also did a significant amount of research via the Internet.

TI: What computer-type devices that are not specifically a laptop or desktop do you use (iPad or other tablet, smart phone, other). Have you used any in the past that you no longer have or use?

DE: I have an iPad and an Android smart phone which I use every day. When I travel, I use the iPad to access my email. I use the phone mainly for text messaging and phone calls; the screen is too small for satisfactory internet use.

TI: If you have a spouse or children, what is their computer use?

- Have their own computer or device
- Use your equipment
- Do not use it

Which person in your family uses a computer at home the most?

DE: When my grandsons were young they used my computers for games and later for various Internet activities. I live alone so there is no one in the house routinely using the computers other than myself.

TI: What Commodore magazines did you subscribe to or read, and which did you find most helpful?

DE: I subscribed to *Run and Compute! Gazette*, and to several short-lived publications produced by small-scale, semi-professional writer/publishers. These included *Commodore World*, *Commodore Mailink*, a couple of GEOS

specific magazines, and a couple of others I can't remember the names of. I also read Compute and .Info from time to time. I thought that *Run* was the most useful to me.

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

TI: What are your predictions or expectations for the future of Commodore brand computers?

-The Small Print-

DE: I am still amazed that Commodore has held on so long, especially considering that its final demise was being predicted in the mid-90s. I think a small group will continue to use them and develop for them as long as a machine still boots up.

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.

TI: 14. When did you join FCUG?

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.

DE: In 1988. After a year of struggling with various programs, a friend at work mentioned that there was a Commodore club in Fresno. I went to a meeting, joined the same day, and I'm still here.

TI: Any final thoughts?

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.

DE: I will always be grateful that I got involved with computers, and to the guidance and social interaction I experience with FCUG. Computers have opened up a whole new world, in gathering information on the Internet, and in communicating via email with people to whom I would rarely or never write a letter.

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.

Club Officers

>>--> Officers and Keypersons <--<<

President Robert Bernardo
Vice-president Roger Van Pelt
Secretary/Treasurer Dick Estel

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.