



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

In Search Of Specific Software

-by Lenard R. Roach

You come up to the spired building, curious to learn what on the other side of the doors, which itself has the shape of a small wooden cross affixed to it. The doors open effortlessly, allowing you to enter into the welcoming foyer. Not too far into the structure you see a booted Commodore 64, which stands like a lone sentinel in this, somehow hallowed building. As you walk up to the computer you see on the screen a loaded program. The program seems to invite you to grab the standing joystick off a little to the right and start game play. You pick up the joystick, glare at the game on the computer screen, and let the fun begin...

Nice set up. The Commodore computer set up all nice and neat in the sanctuary of a church asking attendees to stop by and give him a shot at the game loaded into memory. Of course, it all depends on what up on the screen. I sat down in my computer room and started searching Google to find Christian software especially coded for the Commodore computer, narrowing my

search down to either the Commodore 64 or the Commodore 128.

One thing I instantly found out was there were a significant amount of Bible reading and study programs, but as I searched further I found out that these pieces of software were quickly abandoned for the larger memory and faster processors offered by both IBM and Apple computers. The good news is that before software developers moved off the Commodore platform they did write and distribute these studies for the Commodore and they are still available for the machine from third and fourth party dealers as well as private collectors. Finding a good, solid, original copy of the programs may be hard to locate in this, the 21st century. If it wasn't for the preservation efforts of those few who can transpose Commodore computer programs to the Internet there would be nothing left of them. The best location I've found for Bible software is: www.biblecom.tripod.com. The site is monitored by Pastor Robert Dallmann of the Elim Fellowship of Lima, New York. I do not know how old this information on the Internet is so I will state that I am not responsible for the accuracy of this information.

This little bit of data is great for older children and adults who use the Commodore for study and productivity but what about those younger than, say, fourteen? Is there anything in the Commodore universe for them? Fear not, true believer, there is!

There is listed on Amazon copies of the book, "Bible Computer Games Book 2" made for the Commodore 64 and other

formats that use BASIC as the programming template. This book came out right after the release of Volume one of the same work but for different formats older than the Commodore. Authored by John Conrod, this book teaches both the Bible in type in games as well as showing the reader Commodore BASIC. It's hard to get full data on this book from Amazon, but they give enough information to let the shopper know what kind of games there are. I will have to buy the book (it's out of print but Amazon has used copies on sale for about \$3.68) and see for myself what the book contains and give all the readers of "The Interface" a full report.

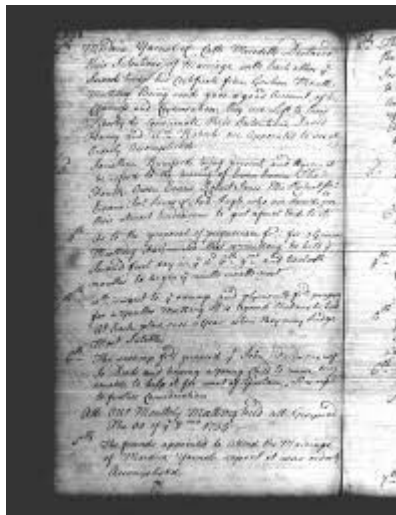
When I brought this idea of writing an article about Christian software for the Commodore up to Robert and Dick, they suggested that I put a blurb out on Homestead and see what bites I get. I remember the days of discussing such subjects like this during my BBS cruising days and if you mention the name of Jesus in any other form than a swear word then you start a firestorm. I don't know if I'm up to the defense of the gospel online. I sucked as an apologist then and I suck as an apologist now -- and all I'm looking for is Commodore software in relation to the Bible. I debated with atheists, Hindus, Catholics, the KKK; everyone, and all I wanted to do is what I aforementioned. I know that 1 Peter warns me to be ready to give an account of the faith that lives in me but COME ON! I just want to chat on the boards or play an online game. We're suppose to be in an Age of Enlightenment, but it's only for the philosophical set and not the crazies. Oh well, I'll take a stab at Homestead for that data but I must admit I'm a little leery. When I made an

investigative search on pornography for the Commodore I was directed to one website that has it all so there was no need to search further, and some of the sights on this website would make a hardened Marine blush!

I know that I have got into debates with a few "super geeks" that claimed that the computer is completely man made and there was no "god" involved. This would follow the premise of man trying to make himself out to be THE God, and, well, I was told that if one person will not listen to reason, you move on to the next person. I know that in the movies, like "Star Trek: The Motion Picture," people believe that computers can amass so much knowledge that the machine will achieve a consciousness. I'm not too sure. We have a lot of machines already here in the 21st century that have a lot of data and they still act like computers, requiring a designer and a programmer to make them into what they are. I'm amazed as to how far graphics and memory have come since the days of the Commodore and people are still expanding on such devices to make them more powerful and faster, but I don't think that anyone can beat the good ol' calculating machine that was put into the head of every human being on the planet. It's still faster, more productive, and has not needed an upgrade for the past who-knows-how many years. The reason why I was told there was not any Christian games for the Commodore back in the day was it did not fit the "genre" of the computer. What does that mean? I thought "programming" was just that and it did not matter what market you were trying to reach as long as said market was willing to shell out greenbacks to get the product offered by the market, be

it Christian, porn, or whatever. The last I looked money was money no matter if it was being handed to you by a priest or a pimp. Something must have got lost in translation.

So, here is where we sit on the subject with very little data to go on even from such a large search engine as Google. Sure, the market corrected itself as computers got faster and held more data, but for the Commodore, it just isn't much.



MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

November 2015

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

We had the usual attendance, Robert, Roger, Greg, Louis, Vincent and Dick, all hungry and ready for a good Mexican dinner, good talk about Commodore, and some interesting software and hardware demos. It was noted that this month marks the 34th anniversary of the founding of the club.

Obtained from the SC3 Arcade Party and the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network meeting, Robert once again had some items to give away, including an empty C64 case, and a rare Tandy 102 laptop, both claimed by Louis. There was also a Commodore MPS-801 printer, which had no takers.

However, there were also C64 game cartridges and a broken C64, the C64 and a few of the cartridges being claimed by Roger.

Greg advised us that he has a conflict and can't host the December meeting, so it will be at our regular Fresno location, and we will travel to Patterson, about 100 miles northwest, for the January 17 meeting.

The issue of admission vs. table rental for CommVEx (July 30-31 in Las Vegas) was discussed once again. It was pointed out that expected table rentals, at any reasonable price, could not produce enough income to assure the continued existence of the event. The decision stands to charge \$20 admission for the event (covers both days) with no charge for tables.

Robert reported that the Vintage Computer Festival will return in 2016 to Silicon Valley after an absence of several years. It will be in August at the Computer History Museum in San Jose.

Attendance was up at the recent Amiga show, AmiWest in Sacramento, and Robert is planning a Commodore exhibit for the 2016 Maker Faire in San Mateo.

In presentations, for the VIC-20 we tried out a couple of new games - the very

entertaining, action-packed, space-shooter Pulse, and the more strategy-based Demons of Dex. For the C64, we tried out the preview of the adventure, Athanor: The Awakening, but Robert couldn't get very far with his limited knowledge of the parser vocabulary; he kept going around and around in the same area of the adventure without any exploration farther out. But before we started the presentations proper, we watched the on-line video of COS, the Commodore Operating System, from JIM64.

<http://64jim64.blogspot.com/2015/09/cos-has-been-released-for-commodore-64.html#comment-form>

Very interesting, but is it practical? And will it be further developed?

For the C128, Roger understood how to play Monty Hall, a text simulation which uses the Basic 7.0's RANDOM function and challenges the player to pick among 3 choices in order to earn money. We also tried Robert Willie's alpha version of SAM 128 (Software Activated Mouth), but because Reciter, the easy-to-use input module for the English language, had not been converted to SAM 128, we had to use phonemic language to get SAM to speak. After much trying, we got SAM 128 to say, "Hello". We had more success in just running the SAM 128 demo which spoke a complete, pre-programmed sentence.

For the classic Amiga, we tried out a few random, graphics, and games disks from the massive disk collection of Jason Forster. We used an Amiga 500 with 1 meg. of Chip RAM and switchable Kickstart 1.3 and 3.1. Some of the disks ran, some needed more

RAM, some needed PAL-only video. Many days of investigation would be needed to catalog each disk and determine the requirements of each disk.

December 2015

-by Dick Estel & Robert Bernardo

Though the December meeting began late due to miscommunications, we finally gathered at Bobby Salazar's Mexican Restaurant. In attendance were Robert, Roger, Louis, and Vincent.

As lunch proceeded, we voted to keep the same roster of FCUG officers for 2016 and to send our annual donation to St. Jude Children's Hospital. Robert reported that if the Nostalgic Computers exhibit is approved for the 2016 Maker Faire in San Mateo, he plans to have a VIC-20 set-up and an Amiga 1200 set-up on display. Because v.p. Roger still did not have transportation to and from meetings, other than his brother's car, Robert offered to loan one of his father's old vehicles -- an early 80's (but later to be discovered as 1979) Cadillac DeVille. The only problem would be that it would cost \$800 to get it running again (mainly tires and battery); Roger would pay for the registration and smogging. Roger declined the offer.

After lunch finished, we settled down to watch William Shatner in his pre-PET/VIC-20 days narrating the 1976 AT&T show, Microworld. Basically, it was a video of how the components were made for computers and how computers can deal with data.

Then we had some adventure gaming time!

For the VIC-20, we tried out at the classic, The Lair, and for the C128, it was the semi-classic Westfront to Apse. Unfortunately, the newly-redone Ultima IV Remastered for the C64 would not run from the SD card drive which Robert brought; that program would have to be converted to a real disk for use in a future meeting. Once again, Robert did not get very far in the adventure gaming department, though Roger was more successful in understanding and using the adventure commands. In fact, Roger was so intrigued with the VIC-20's Lair that he said he would try out more of it at home.

For the Amiga, we examined the Kickstart adapter kit for the Amiga 1000. It would take a little bit of soldering to install it, and in addition to the Kickstart 1.3 that was already in the A1000, it would need a KS 2.04 chip (KS 3.1 would be overkill for the requirements of the machine).

Finally, we played with newly-released beta version of BoulderDash 128 by Jason "Pyrofer" Wright. Jason was an attendee at CommVEx 2015 and had come all the way from England to show off his 80-column RGB adapter prototypes. Now he had developed the first 80-column C128 game seen in years, and it was quite a nice port of the original C64 game. The character, Rockford, moved across the screen briskly, and the boulders fell well. Robert thought the boulders didn't fall fast enough, because Rockford could move out of the way if he were quick enough. However, it was later confirmed that in the original game, Rockford had the same characteristics. In fact, BoulderDash 128 emulates the original version's screen very well. One thing Robert and the others agreed was that it was difficult to see the exit to the next level; if

the exit were to have a contrasting color to the background, then the player wouldn't have a hard time searching the 80-column screen. The only thing the beta version needed was music and/or sound effects and perhaps more levels. Jason had admitted that music and sound effects were last on his to-do list, because he had to understand where to use them in the computer's memory.



THE WORLD OF COMMODORE 2015

-by Paul Quirk

Saturday, December 5, 2015 marked the day of the annual World of Commodore, put on by the Toronto Pet User's Group at the Admiral Inn in Mississauga, Ontario. It's an annual tradition for our household and a great opportunity to catch up with old friends while making new ones. It was especially nice to see my friend Bob Yewchuck, writer of one of my favourite blogs, "The Bob Angle," on his birthday.

There was the ever-popular freebie table, where I scored a couple of Jumpdisk disk magazine covers that I don't yet have, an MPS-803 printer, and a 2gb CF card, while my son scored a collection of Amiga magazine cover CD's. There was also the raffle table. This year saw a lot of attendees enjoying the show; at 11:00, it was

Going On Strong For 34 Years!

becoming so crowded, it was sometimes difficult to move around! It was great seeing so many people enjoying the hobby of retro-computing. For me, it was nice to spend time with Dan Kovaks as he demonstrated his Commodore 128 connecting to the Internet. Thanks to Dan for selling me his spare 64NIC+ which I'm still trying to get working.

It was really good to see that Jim Brain of Retro Innovations was able to make it this year; his products are a favourite of mine, because he offers useful, well-made products at decent prices, typically in the \$50-\$60 range. He brought his usual bag of goodies this year.

It was also great to see Joe Palumbo of JP PBM return with his variety of products, most of which are original, some still in shrink wrap. For a mere \$20, I was able to buy an upgrade Agnus chip for my Amiga 2000, so that it now can address a full megabyte of video memory instead of the 512k that was standard when I bought my Amiga. This was an upgrade I had always wanted. I was also able to buy a hard-to-find video adapter for my Commodore 128 for only \$10, and [I] enjoyed perusing his collection of software. Joe continues to be a valuable source of original software and hardware for the retro-computing community.

There was a fire alarm at the Admiral Inn before lunch hour, which added some drama to the event. It turned out that someone left a cigarette butt by a vent and was not caused by Dan using his Commodore 128 to connect to the Illuminati as we had first suspected. The demonstrations started after lunch,

beginning with Zbigniew Stachniak's presentation of Early Microcomputers from Microsystems International Ltd. The nice thing about these presentations is the fact that we get to see examples of these early computers.

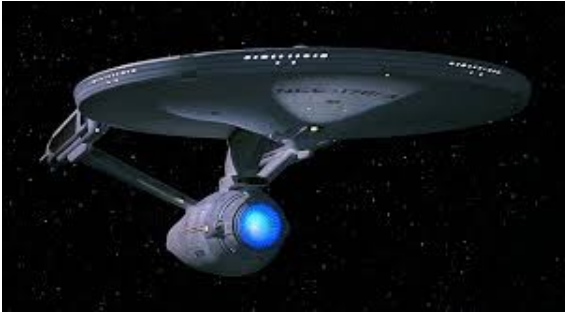
Next up was Leif Bloomquist's demonstration of his Wi-fi modem for the Commodore 64 (and 128). At \$150, it's a nice, comprehensive package that goes well with any modern C64 that you may want to take to Starbucks.

At 3:00, Jim Brain teamed up with Leif to demonstrate his new products for the Vic-20, including a MIDI controller that works both ways (using the Vic as a MIDI instrument as well as having the Vic controlling another instrument), along with a device for the Vic that stores game images and provides various types of expansion.

At 4:00, Trevor Grove, formerly with the University of Waterloo, presented "SuperPET development: A view from the trenches," providing a unique perspective of developing for education.

Unfortunately, my son and I had to leave after this time to attend a family function, but the raffle draw happened at 5:00, followed by Dan Lasowski's presentation of "C64 Music Jam with Fastfingers."

All in all, it was an excellent way to spend the first Saturday of December. We got the T-shirt which I will surely show off, and look forward to next year. Who knows, maybe I'll cook up something to contribute at the 2016 World of Commodore!



CP/M AND STAR TREK

-from PC World Magazine

-by John Wenz

How an outdated operating system could have kept some Star Trek material from the public eye on the 50th anniversary of the show.

[Who would have thought that Gene Roddenberry used CP/M to store information for his show, Star Trek? Well, that is the case, as reported in the article below. However, when a person thinks about it, Gene would not have used CP/M for the Original Series (because personal computers did not exist at that time), but rather for the early Star Trek movies and even possibly for Star Trek: the Next Generation). If only the people who recovered the Gene's CP/M data would have used Commodore 128's... And the writer of the article doesn't know that three new CP/M games have been released. Read on.]

Gene Roddenberry's "lost" files have been restored again, just in time for the 50th anniversary of the show. But it wasn't that they were truly lost. It's that they were virtually unreadable by modern computers. Unless you've delved deep into retrocomputing, CP/M probably doesn't

mean much. But the operating system, short for Control Program for Microprocessors, was an early operating system that was eventually driven to extinction by MS-DOS. The last CP/M release came in 1983, and since then it's faded into obscurity, with few copies existing today.

It also happens to be the operating system that was used by Gene Roddenberry. While a few disks were DOS-compatible, a large chunk were readable only by CP/M computers. And as relayed by PC World, DriveSavers Data Recovery couldn't get Roddenberry's old computer to boot up. Eventually, they resorted to backwards engineering the data on each individual floppy disk, essentially creating a disk image. That process took three months, and even then large portions of the old magnetic storage mediums in the disk were corrupt or damaged.

The disks, more than 200 in all, were delivered to DriveSavers in small batches due to the secrecy of the project on the part of Roddenberry's estate, who still aren't divulging what was on the disks, waiting until later this year to announce. There are about two to three megabytes of data recovered, accounting for about 95 percent of the total files on the disks.

So later this year, we'll finally find out what's on the disks. But had it not been for a few preservationists and months and months of hard work, the files might never have been saved, especially as the old floppy disks continued to decay. With it, a piece of Star Trek history might have been lost forever.



MEMORY LANE

-by Dick Estel

INTRODUCTION

This is number 16 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.

RANDY CLAYS

Randy Clays was a major contributor to the club at the time I joined in about 1988, and for a number of years after that.

He was the club librarian and keeper of the equipment, a considerably more challenging job at that time than it is now. He brought all the library disks to every meeting, along with the club equipment. The amount of equipment is about the

same, but we no longer transport the library except by request.

The plastic bins that simplify carrying and storing the club computer, disk drives, etc. were originally obtained and labeled by Randy, and I guess it's a tribute to the maker that these items have held up under fairly heavy use for over 30 years!

At one time Randy was an installer for the local cable company, which included sales work, but I believe he changed occupations some time before he left the club. We were happy to see Randy at our reunion lunch in 2006.

Club Officers

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

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.