The Interface

"Taking 8-Bits Into The 21ˢᵗ Century"

Blessed Holidays From All Of Us At FCUG!

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THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

-by Lenard R Roach

BREAKING THE LAW FOR COMMODORE NO MORE

In Jefferson City, Missouri, Governor Mike Parsons signed the hands-free cellphone act into law; if caught by either city, county, or state law enforcement officers, anyone using a cellphone in a method other than as a hands-free device will be fined a minimum of $150. This law went into effect on Monday, August 28, 2023.

Okay, so what does that mean to us citizens living in Kansas or those visiting from other states who cross the border to either work or pass through Missouri?

As the saying goes, "Outlaw guns (or in this case, hands-on cellphone use) and only outlaws will have them."

As my occupation is a contractor courier for Capital Express out of Omaha, Nebraska (they have a warehouse/distribution center in Kansas City, Missouri located on Topping Avenue in what citizens call "The East Bottoms"), we get our hotshot delivery orders from an app on our cellphones. When our phones chime, telling us that a new run was uploaded to our account, we need to look at our phones as quickly as possible

to answer the chime. It might be a pick up that is in our immediate vicinity. We can quickly detour off the previous run in order to pick up the new package and then be on our way again. Back at the transport hub, the purpose of dispatch is to maximize our pick up/delivery times using the minimal amount of fuel as well as save wear and tear on our vehicles. Steve, our dispatcher for the last twenty-plus years, is an absolute master at this art. It also helps that the app on our phones sends a constant signal to the dispatch computer in Steve's office and shows where each of the drivers are located at any given time.

With all that said, what does this have to do with the Commodore computer?

With the new Missouri law in place (paralleling with an equally strict law in Kansas that went into effect on January 1, 2010), it will make doing my job harder, not to mention writing Commodore commentaries. Because of my sometimes hectic schedule between jobs, I have to attempt to multi-task. This means that I have to try my best to write as well as follow the orders that are on my phone. Every so often, I'm screaming down a highway at 70 mph and using my Yahoo app to write a story about the Commodore computer.

Of course all of my readers would say, "That's too dangerous. Don't do that!" and I wholeheartedly agree, but in my profession one must take what liberties there are. To be honest, I hate doing the texting and driving thing because of the danger involved, but when it comes to deadlines one must do what one must do. Now that texting is illegal in both Kansas and Missouri where I frequent the most, I have to watch for traffic, concentrate on my phone, and be on the lookout for either smoky bear, city kitty, or county mountie. However, I text and drive far less than I used to.

I absolutely DO NOT endorse using my method of putting words on paper, but before the change in the laws in Missouri, it was legal to text and drive if you were over 21. Now that it is illegal, I'm going to save more of my writing for my laptop on a lazy Sunday afternoon and to no longer challenge the law and possibly cause an accident. No need to meet a deadline in a dangerous manner.

Have I ever been caught "writing and driving?"

Oh, yes, but only once…

I was driving home from the 2019 Commodore Vegas Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada. At each fuel stop along the way from Nevada to Colorado, the Ding Dongs and Mello Yello I was picking up lacked the proper nutrition necessary to give me my daily dose of vitamins and minerals. My plan was to make it to Hays to get a few hours rest before I started on the last leg from Abilene to Kansas City. The Hays rest stop/fuel center had an IHOP where I could get a decent meal. However, I was already tired after navigating the Rockies and driving the flatlands east of Denver. I was pushing the envelope to try and drive to Hays from the border.

Needing something to keep me awake—boom – out of my shirt pocket came the iPhone 4 the instant I crossed the border from Colorado into Kansas, and I started pressing letters while speeding eastbound at the same time. I began texting an extensive article on all that happened at the 2019 CommVEx.

Between being tired and the distraction of typing in information into the iPhone, I was doing a little bobbing and weaving in my lane. This little action caught the attention of a young yet exuberant Kansas highway patrol officer who noticed me doing the samba between the two lanes as I headed eastward. The officer was going westbound, but my driving caught enough of his attention that he crossed the grassy median and began pursuit. In less than a minute, he was on my bumper with lights on.

The Christmas display in my rear-view mirror got my attention quickly. Instinctively, I threw the iPhone onto the passenger's side floor board of the rental I was driving and slowly pulled over. The officer came to the passenger side of the car while I went for my wallet and driver's license. I rolled down the window, and the officer leaned on the door frame.

"How much have you had to drink today, sir?" the officer asked.

I picked up two empty bottles of Mello Yello from the seat and showed the officer. "About two bottles from what it looks like, sir."

The officer did not show any emotion. "May I see your license and registration, please."

I got out my wallet and gave the officer my license. I quickly explained that I was in a rental with the registration being available from Hertz. He went back to his squad car to call in my identification to dispatch.

Note to self: Don't be a comedian when you're under suspicion of drunk driving.

Even though I was confident I wasn't going to get a ticket for texting and driving, I was sure there was something the officer was going to try and pin on me. He came back with my license.

"The reason why I pulled you over was that you were all over the road, like you were driving under the influence or you were texting. Since you only seem to be drinking soda, that only leaves texting. Were you texting while driving, Mr. Roach?"

Preparing to give my answer, I sat up in my seat and looked straight at the officer. "I'm very tired, sir, and I was hoping to make Hays so I could pull into the truck stop and take a few hours rest before heading on." Yes, I lied out my fat, flatulent, flabby fanny.

The officer relaxed a little. "Where ya heading?" he asked.

"Kansas City."

"You got a long ride ahead of you," the officer commented. "You'd better pull over before then. There's a rest stop about ten miles west of here."

"Thanks," I replied. "How much further is Hays?"

"I'm not familiar with I-70 that far east so I can't say, but with the way you were weaving, I'd prefer you off the road as soon as possible before you cause an accident."

"Okay," I said.

"I'll follow you to that rest stop. That way I can be sure that you make it."

With a smile, I hid my disgust to being baby-sat. "Thanks. I appreciate that," I said.

Thank the Lord for my high school drama coach. I pulled off the shoulder and back into traffic while the officer went back to his squad car. I stayed at an even 55 (though the speed limit was 75) until the officer caught up with me. I never broke 60 but stayed in the slow lane until the rest stop was reached. I exited while rolling down the window to wave at the officer to let him know everything would be okay from here. He sped around me and continued east down I-70.

I parked under a shade tree. My head sank into the headrest. I had gotten out of a ticket but was

going to have to waste some time at the rest stop until I was sure the officer was several miles down the highway. I left the car running to keep the air conditioner going and tried to rest. After all, that's why I started writing and driving in the first place. I shut my eyes and thought about the CommVEx show.

Two hours later I woke up. The sun was sitting low in the western sky. While sleeping at the rest stop, I had lost a quarter tank of gas. I shut off the car, stepped out to stretch, and walked to the outhouse on property to relieve myself. After getting back into the car, I figured that with the rest I had gotten, I could make it all the way to Kansas City without stopping, except for fuel and snacks. Of course, I stopped at the IHOP at the Hays truck stop to give myself a nutritious meal of pancakes and eggs. It was an IHOP. You have to have pancakes when you go to an IHOP. It's an unwritten tradition handed down by truckers ever since the restaurant came into existence.

I made it home to Kansas City, Kansas by 9 pm that very night, completely ticket free.
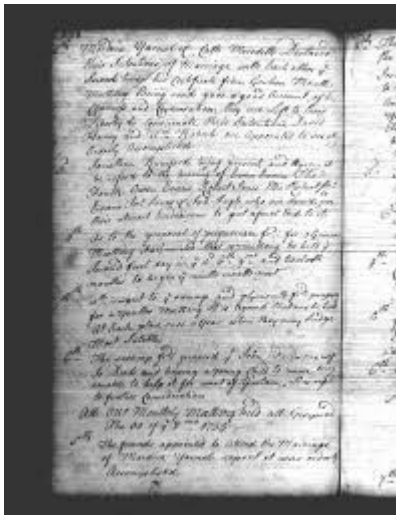
MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

November 2023

Attendance was small on November 19, but that was normal. The five regulars were there – Robert, Roger, Dave, Bruce and Dick. Robert gave a report on the clubs he visited in California, and most of them usually had single digit attendance, the norm for Commodore clubs in the 3rd decade of the 21st century. However, this was not true of the clubs he had visited in Europe recently.

What is lacking in quantity is made up in quality (hopefully). There have been interesting discussions, sometimes about computer-related matters and sometimes far off-topic. Certainly meeting the far off and interesting heading was Robert's report on the bandurria, a Philippine musical instrument owned by his late father, but given away before he passed. You can look it up on the Internet.

Robert recently attended two shows in California. The Bay Area Maker Faire, held at the decommissioned Mare Island Naval Base, drew thousands. A smaller turnout of 75 showed up at Amiwest Show in Sacramento, still a good increase from last year's count of 50.

Robert spent dozens of hours filming, editing, and posting Amiwest videos to YouTube. He spent 3 long days at the Bay Area Maker Faire, entertaining the many attendees who passed by him at the Vintage Computer Festivalers tables. He brought the Ultimate 64, Amiga 600, and THEA500 Mini to exhibit while others brought a Tandy 1000, BBC Micro, and a Mac Powerbook 1400C laptop.

At the end of Maker Faire, Robert was badly injured when he tripped as he walked to his car in the parking lot. He had fallen onto both knees and arms with lots of skin torn off and blood flowing. After Robert spoke about that, Dick remarked, "Robert, you have to be careful. You're not young anymore!" The things Robert does for Commodore!

Well known for his travels, Robert will be visiting New Zealand and Australia in March. The members look forward to his report on attendance and other matters. This requires a change in the meeting date to March 2, a Saturday.

Traveling closer to home, Robert recently visited Ray Carlsen in southern Washington. Ray was moving farther into retirement; at age 79 Ray had been doing electronic work for 60 years. In August he said he would continue to do repair work for Robert and a small number of special clients. In late October when Robert visited him, he was only able to test a few disk drives and clean their heads and politely declined to repair anything else that Robert had brought. Though he won't take on any more repair work, he will continue to make and sell power supplies till he

runs out of material to make them.

While in Washington, Robert filmed a commercial for next year's Commodore Los Angeles Super Show (CLASS), featuring a non-union dog who was not on strike. Watch for this epic production on YouTube as the tentative CLASS date of April 13 and 14 gets closer.
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Robert's trip to Oregon and Washington was not without problems. He was a couple of days late to the area, because in mid-Oregon, he started having electrical problems in the 1990 Ford LTD Crown Victoria, and by the time he got to Portland, the car was in full-blown breakdown mode. With a lot of visiting Auto Zone and O'Reilly's, he was able to get a new battery and rebuilt alternator (the first rebuilt didn't work; the second did). Fortunately, he had brought his tools and battery charger and spent hours removing and replacing the electrical parts in the parking lot of his hotel. The things Robert does for Commodore!

The membership voted to donate $50 to St. Jude hospital, which had been doing excellent work with childhood cancer for over 50 years.

Moving on to demos, Robert fired up THEA500 Mini. Most of the meeting was taken up with that machine and the new Aminimiga distribution which turns the Mini from a game machine to a full-fledged Amiga computer complete with desktop and folders full of productivity, graphics, music, and game software. Bruce was especially interested and concentrated on the graphics programs.

As the meeting neared the end, Robert and Roger ran the brand new File Conductor for the Commodore 128 in 80-column mode. Roger found it to be an easier-to-use disk drive file organizer than older organizers.

As Robert and Roger were packing up, young member Michael showed up with his family. Robert unpacked THEA500 Mini and let Michael play with that as the rest of the equipment was put away. Before leaving, Robert handed to Roger an AEA Pakratt PK-64 controller for ham radio and C64. He asked Roger to study it and make his findings known at the next meeting.

December 2023
-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

It was unseasonably warm on December 17, with light rain predicted, coming in from the south. The members had sympathy for fellow US residents suffering heavy rain, snow and wind in other parts of the country.

There was a good turnout, with Robert, Roger, Dave, Bruce, Michael (but just for a few minutes), Dick, and the latter's great grandson Jack, who was looking forward to exploring games on the club's ancient systems. He and his brother played on tablets where they are competing against and talking with other remote gamers.

Robert and Roger were very kind in setting up games for him to play, and he explored several, different games on THEA500 Mini with Aminimiga distribution, as well as Frogger and Donkey Kong on the C128 in C64 mode. Accompanying THEA500 Mini, Robert brought a 7" HDMI monitor, his new $54 Amazon.com purchase and just the right size to pack into a suitcase with the Mini. Jack found the 40-year old Commodore platforms a bit tame but enjoyed the games nonetheless.

When the meeting got underway, it was time to elect officers for the coming year. As done in the past, the current officers and board were re-

elected by acclamation. A list of officers can be found at the end of this newsletter.

With the full retirement of Ray Carlsen from repair work, the club members had been wondering where to go for repairs. The old saying, "when a door closes, a window opens," came to the rescue. Robert discovered that a Sacramento Amiga Computer Club member, Chris, did 8-bit computer repairs. Since he had a "day job," his Commodore repair time was limited, and when Robert presented him with four C64s in need of TLC, he asked to receive them one at a time.

Presentations started with Bible Baseball, a game in which you advance to the bases by correctly answering multiple choice questions. Jack took the controls and concentrated on this more than all the previous games combined he had earlier played. The other members all contributed their best guesses to the answers, too. The questions were fairly obscure and seemed to all come from the Old Testament, often with three choices that left all of them scratching their heads (their own, not each other's).

Dick and his great grandson Jack

Ultimately they got a hard question right, Jack hit a grand slam home run, and the computer was defeated 5-1. They took a brief look at Jewish IQ Baseball. Written by the same authors as Bible

Baseball, it was the same game as Bible Baseball except with more difficult Old Testament questions. The next game was Game of the Maccabees, which was divided into two parts. In first part, you shot spears at the five enemy soldiers who shot back at you with spears. If you press SPACE, then the second part presented even more obscure Testament questions to answer (which encouraged the members to move on to the next game). The last was Samson and Delilah, basically a platform game in which you as Samson have to jump and dodge the arrows of the enemies and try to get to Delilah. Even in the accelerated mode of the Ultimate 64, the game seemed too sluggish with Samson not being able to jump over the enemies properly.

Dick and great grandson Jack left, but the rest of the members carried on. Roger gave a very thorough presentation on what he discovered on the AEA Pakratt PK-64 controller for ham radio and C64. He talked about the theory behind it, how it was meant to be used, and showed how far he could get it working (it crashed when being put into full operation). He thought that it may have a bad capacitor that needed replacement.

On the Commodore 128 in 40-column mode, Robert and Roger tried out the latest TRIANGULAR microOS, now at v1.40 and released the day before the meeting. Compared to v1.35 which was presented at the June Pacific Commodore Expo NW in Seattle, you navigated the desktop more quickly in this version. The built-in games, Star Wars, Crab in New York (like Frogger), and Sim City, all ran more snappily as did the text editor, Words. It seemed easier to exit out of folders; in the earlier version, there was no way to exit and you had to turn off the C128.

To round out the meeting, the members saw various demos from the Top 10 C64 demos according to CSDB.dk (Commodore Scene Database), such demos like Wonderland XIV and No Bounds.

Beauticians agree: If your girlfriend draws her eyebrows too high she'll look surprised.

CHANGES IN WHAT WE KNEW

-by Robert Bernardo

As we Commodorians and Amigans head into 2024, the things that we knew are changing. Here is a brief summary of those changes.

Ray Carlsen, long-time repair technician of 8-bit Commodores, has retired from all repairs. As the premier tech of Commodore, he has been repairing our club equipment and my equipment for what seemed like always. He started electronics repair when he was 19, which makes it 60 years that he's been in that business. In the early days, he repaired radios and televisions. Eventually, he worked for the University of Washington (Seattle) in their IT department, and he retired from that job several years ago.

Actually, I've known Ray since 1998, and we've been friends ever since then. He will now devote more time to his wife.

Though Ray is out of the repair business, he still sells his power supplies, standard or custom. He will continue doing so until he runs out of the components he has stored away. His website is still active and is a great resource to discover how he did his repairs, to find schematics, and to find notes on various Commodore and Commodore-related hardware. To see the power supplies that he has for sale or to see the rest of his website, go to https://portcommodore.com/rcarlsen To contact Ray directly, send an e-mail to rcarlsen(at)tds.net

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Randy Abel, leader of The Other Group of Amigoids, is moving away after 30 years of running that club. Based in San Jose/Los Gatos, California, technically TOGA is an Amiga club, but really the members are into all kinds of platforms, including Commodore 8-bit, Atari, Tandy, classic gaming consoles, and various British and Japanese computers.

Randy is going to Austin, Texas, and looks forward to contacting the Central Texas Commodore User Group in that area. He will move in March, 2024, and other members are practicing in taking over his duties, i.e., what took one person (Randy) to run the club will now take 3 members to do.

When Randy has left, there is talk that the club will move a bit farther north to Santa Clara. Currently, the club's website is still at http://togausergroup.org

(Side note: Randy has been leader of TOGA for 30 years. I'll be quickly catching up with that, now in my 27th year as president of the Fresno Commodore User Group and my 19th year as leader of the Southern California Commodore & Amiga Network.)

Beauticians agree: If your girlfriend draws her eyebrows too high she'll look surprised.

Access to the Usenet newsgroups are changing. By newsgroups, I mean the ones that are currently accessed through Google, and the specific newsgroups that affect us are comp.sys.cbm, alt.c64, comp.sys.amiga.misc, rec.games.video.classic, and alt.folklore.computers .

I discovered the newsgroups back in 1995 when I was accessing my e-mail and the Internet through my C128, a term program, a 300-baud modem, and the dial-up shell account on General Electric (Genie) Information Services. At that time, a FCUG member urged me to go on-line, and though I was hesitant, I did and have never looked back. At that time, the newsgroups were a treasure trove of information with a worldwide reach, and many famous Commodore users and engineers posted messages in the busy forums. Nowadays, the newsgroups have a trickle of relevant messages with most of the new messages being spam.

Google has decided to shut down posting to the newsgroups, "Effective February 22, 2024, Google Groups will no longer support new Usenet content. Posting and subscribing will be disallowed, and new content from Usenet peers will not appear." Though any new posts after that date won't make it through, the newsgroups will still be able to be read as a historical archive.

There are other ways to access the newsgroups, including posting to them, but as of this writing, I haven't discovered an easy way to get to them. I'm told I have to have a newsreader...
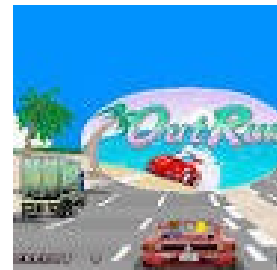

C64 Racing Games Compilation
-Compiled by Lenard R. Roach

(To celebrate the 75th year of NASCAR racing, Lenard hit the Internet and compiled a list along with some descriptions of some of the racing games that were available on the Commodore 64.)

Out Run

Out Run, also known as Outrun, is an arcade game by Sega. The game was published as a console conversion of almost every famous platform of the late 80s.

The aim of Out Run is to race on a track in the shortest time possible with a fast car bristling with PS and a co-driver fitting the luxury limousine. However, the track is not a racing track but a normal US American street. Other cars as further road users make for natural obstacles for our fast car. In the course of the game the track changes several times. There are tracks in towns, rural

Beauticians agree: If your girlfriend draws her eyebrows too high she'll look surprised.

tracks and even desert tracks.

If the player reaches the next checkpoint before the time has run out, the rest of the time will be added to the time he has to get to the next checkpoint. If he does not make it, the race is over. When driving through the checkpoint the track changes.

Collisions with other cars or objects at the roadside break the car and cost much time. If you whoosh into an object with a too high speed it can happen that the car overturns and driver and co-driver will be sitting on the street.

LeMans
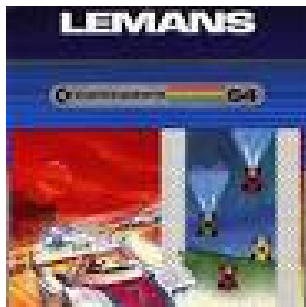
"Le Mans" is a car racing game where you need to drive as far as possible in a certain time. By overtaking other racers (which partially have a bit of an unconventional driving style, which does not make it easier) without causing a crash, points are added to your account (1000 points per 10 cars). If you reach more than 20.000 points before the time has run out, you receive further time units and you can go on driving. Next to the normal track you need to master driving on ice, in curves, at night and on motorways. If you crash you need to drive into the mobile garage (PIT), which is at the left roadside, which costs you valuable seconds. Additionally the number of cars overtaken until now is set to zero.

Auto Duel
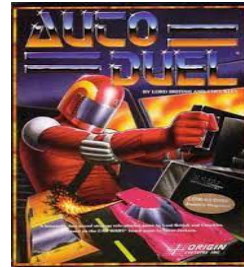
Autoduel is a role-playing video game published by Origin Systems for the Atari 8-bit family, Commodore 64, Apple II, and IBM PC compatibles in 1985. It was released in 1987 for the Atari ST and in 1988 for the Amiga and Macintosh. The game is based on the Steve Jackson Games series Car Wars.

Autoduel is set in the United States in 2030, where cars are a primary means of protection and defense, and the highways are dangerous stretches of land ruled by gangs and vigilantes with armed vehicles.

Gameplay

The player creates a character, naming them and distributing 50 points between three skills: driving, marksmanship and mechanic. The player's character starts in New York, Friday 1-1-2030. Without a car the player has to enter amateur night in which they are provided a vehicle in order to raise enough money to buy and equip their own vehicle. With their own vehicle, a character can begin performing courier missions between the various towns along the Atlantic seaboard—including Syracuse, Boston, Manchester (Origin's headquarters at the time, which could be visited in the game) and Atlantic City among a few. The character may also enter more distinguished Arena events to earn money as

well as take to the highways to fight the other cars and salvage their parts. In this sense, the game was very open-ended in what the player could do. The game also had a storyline, involving certain critical courier tasks, such as carrying important criminal evidence against "Mr. Big", through the dangerous terrain between cities.

The main feature of the game was combat involving customized vehicles. The vehicle construction portion of the game allowed a variety of power plants, guns, ammunition, mine-layers, smokescreens, oil slicks and rockets to be arranged onto an even larger selection of body and chassis types.

The game was developed using a top-down perspective and featured two distinct setting areas: the arena or highway style area and the city area. The highway and arenas allowed acceleration and driving skills to be used in a scrolling screen format, while the city area was a single screen in which stores and other attractions of a city could be visited.

Reception

Computer Gaming World in 1986 reviewed the game positively, noting, "The game design is clean, the graphics excellent and no bugs were found." The immense difficulty of the game was noted, as was the long learning curve. In emphasis, the review suggested bypassing the permanent death feature of the game and expensive in-game clones (backup saves) by making a copy of the character disk, to return to in case of character death. In 1992 and 1994 surveys of science fiction games the magazine gave the title two of five stars, writing that "Graphic and game play now appear very dated". Compute! stated that Autoduel combined role-playing, arcade, and strategy features, calling it "more than a game—it's a complete system of play ... overall game play is excellent". The

review concluded with "highly recommended". Game reviewers Hartley and Pattie Lesser commented on the game in their "The Role of Computers" column in Dragon #120 (1987), noting that the game "combines the feel of the Road Warrior movies with the fantasy role-playing action of the Ultima adventure games."

Steve Fuelleman reviewed Autoduel in Space Gamer/Fantasy Gamer No. 78. Fuelleman commented that "The game is pretty well conceived, but is marred by just enough technical flaws, substandard graphics, frustrating limitations, and general user unfriendliness that it just isn't much fun to play."

According to Bueche Autoduel was his only successful game.

Test Drive
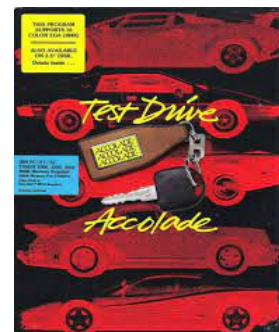
Test Drive is a driving/racing simulation published by Accolade. You are involved into illegal street races, and the goal is simple: get through the five stages as quick as possible. Before performing your "test drive" you're asked to choose one of the five cars: Lotus Esprit, Lamborghini Countach, Porsche 911, Ferrari Testarossa and Chevrolet Corvette. All of them have their own looks and driving characteristics. One thing these cars have in common: you're asked to shift the gears manually! To avoid

speeding tickets (that will cost time!), you have to keep an eye at your radar detector, or just make sure you drive at least 120 mph. But be aware of sharp bends filled with potholes and take care of the oncoming traffic on the left side of the road. A crash easily occurs! Watch your steering, and avoid all obstacles including cliffs on the right and the ravine on the left. When crashing your front window will break, you will loose one of your limited lives, and you will loose time since you have to accelerate again. After each of stages there's time to either measure your heart beat or stretch your legs. Your gas tank is being filled while your racing time, average speed and rewarded points are shown. The first stage is short and easy but the next stages become more difficult. Bends become sharper, while radar detector activity combined with hard traffic circumstances keep you concentrated more and more...

The graphics of this game are advanced for its time and the menu design is very original. While selecting your car, many technical details are provided. While driving, you see a cockpit with a the original dash board, including the original gear-lever in motion.

The game starts with a very decent intro. There's no textual menu. Just the first car appears. If you want to drive with it, you hit the button and it'll drive. Otherwise you can see the other cars by moving left or right. This way of menu construction can be found in other games by Accolade as well. Then directly you're there on the street. The design of the street itself is kept simple. At the right side there always is a mountain, at the left side a ravine. The others cars on the road are different from each other, but not very detailed. Although, detailed enough to recognize a VW Beetle from a truck, and in different colours. When you play the game more often, you will notice that there's no random appearance of the other cars.

The Duel: Test Drive II
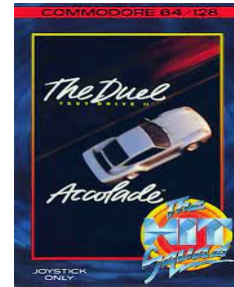
The Duel: Test Drive II is a 1989 racing video game developed by Distinctive Software and published by Accolade for Amiga, Amstrad CPC ,Apple IIGS, Commodore 64, MS-DOS, MSX, ZX Spectrum, Atari ST, Sega Genesis and SNES.

Gameplay

Like the original Test Drive, the focus of The Duel is driving exotic cars through dangerous highways, evading traffic, and trying to escape police pursuits. While the first game in the series had the player simply racing for time in a single scenario, Test Drive II improves upon its predecessor by introducing varied scenery, and giving the player the option of racing against the clock or competing against a computer-controlled opponent.

The player initially is given the opportunity to choose a car to drive and a level of difficulty, which in turn determines whether the car will use an automatic or manual transmission—the number of difficulty options varies between gaming platforms. Levels begin with the player's car (and the computer opponent, if selected) idling on a roadway. Primarily these are two to four lane public highways with many turns; each level is different, and they include obstacles such as bridges, cliffs, and tunnels in addition to the other cars already on the road. Each level also has

one or more police cars along the course. The goal of each level is to reach the gas station at the end of the course in the least amount of time. Stopping at the gas station is not mandatory, and one could drive past it if inattentive. The consequence of not stopping is running out of gas, and thus losing a car (life). The player begins the game with five lives, one of which is lost each time the player crashes into something. The player is awarded a bonus life for completing a level without crashing or running out of gas. In addition to losing a life, crashing adds thirty seconds to the player's time. Cars could crash into other traffic or off-road obstacles such as trees or by falling off the cliff on one of the mountain levels. They could also sustain too much damage by staying off the roadway for too long on the flatland levels. Players could also lose a life when using a manual transmission by redlining and consequently blowing the engine. Crashing into a police car instantly ends the game, regardless of the number of lives the player has left.

Police cars appear in every level, and if the player is driving faster than the speed limit when encountering one of them, the police car will follow in pursuit. If at any point while being pursued the police car is able to pass the player's car, the player is forced to pull over and receives a ticket stating the offense and the speed of the vehicle. While this does not cost the player a life, it does take away valuable time. Players can avoid being pursued by police by slowing down before encountering them, anticipating them through the aid of a radar detector, which comes standard in all vehicles in the game.

Vehicles

In the standard version of Test Drive II, the player has the option of using one of two vehicles (three in the 1992 console versions of the game). These vehicles are presented at the beginning of the game with technical specifications, including top speed, torque, and acceleration rates. The cars included a Porsche 959 and a Ferrari F40. The third car is a Lamborghini Diablo, only available in the console versions.

Computer versions

The computer versions of the game provided one course, referred to by the game as "Master Scenery", consisting of several stages. Each stage had one of three possible locations: a desert, with cacti along the side of the road; a mountain, with a sheer rock wall on one side of the highway and a cliff on the other, and occasionally a tunnel through the mountain; and a grassy area with trees.

Console versions

There are four available courses in the console versions of the game, each of varying length and difficulty. Each is a route on a public highway in a different part of the continental United States. The courses included are:

•"Desert Blast (Easy)" - seemingly takes place somewhere in the US Southwest.

•"City Bound (Medium)" - it is not entirely clear where this takes place, but in various parts of the course, Mount Rushmore can be seen.

•"East Coast (Hard)" - takes place in the eastern U.S., with the last section of the course including a view of the New England coast.

•"West Coast (Hardest)" - takes place in the US West Coast, and is the longest and most difficult course in the game. The Seattle skyline and Space Needle can be seen in the beginning parts of the course.

The game can technically be "won" if the players are not stopped by the law, at which point an

animated female police officer and the player character smile at each other. If the player is apprehended by law enforcement for various infractions, including evasion of police, on any course, the end sequence shows the same female police officer placing the player under arrest. It's virtually impossible to complete any given course without a police confrontation at the end of the game, due to the fact that the players must maintain high speeds to evade police cars on the highways.

Development, release, and lawsuit

According to the Accolade v. Distinctive lawsuit, Distinctive Software developed several software libraries for Test Drive II. The studio argued that it had only used source code that did routine functions, such as clearing the video screen, and that publisher Accolade did not own a copyright on those functions. Accolade argued that their contract for Test Drive II gave them the ownership and copyright of the final product—the game—and the source code used to create it. Distinctive (as Unlimited Software, Inc.) used the software libraries they created for Test Drive II for a MS-DOS port of Outrun, resulting in the aforementioned lawsuit. Distinctive Software won, so the rights to make the Test Drive games without the source code transferred to Accolade. The court also found that Accolade had failed to demonstrate that the balance of hardships was in its favor.

For non-console versions, Accolade later released two data disks, which included more playable cars. These were released on many platforms:

•The Supercars car disk included five cars similar to those in the previous game in the series, most of them in newer and faster versions, a Lotus Turbo Esprit, Ferrari Testarossa, Ruf Twin Turbo,

Lamborghini Countach and a Corvette ZR1. The Muscle Cars car disk included five muscle cars from the 1960s: a 1963 Corvette Stingray, 1969 Camaro ZL-1 COPO, 1968 Mustang Shelby GT500, 1967 Pontiac GTO and a 1969 Dodge Charger Daytona. The expansion did not change the police cars as well, however, so the player had practically no chance of outrunning a police car when caught speeding.

Later, two "scenery disks" were released, each containing an additional course:

•**California Challenge**, which included seven stages, each representing a section of a southbound crossing of the state of California.

•**European Challenge**, which allowed players to travel through six different European countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, and Spain.

Reception

Computer Gaming World stated that those who liked Test Drive would like this version more, but that those who did not like the predecessor's steering system should avoid it   Compute! favorably reviewed the game's realism, especially with a joystick, but stated that installation was overly difficult and frustrating.   Super Gamer magazine reviewed the SNES version and gave an overall score of 85% writing: "In truth not all that stunning to look at, but the realistic setting, four American highways with police, tunnels and oncoming traffic!"

The game sold 250,000 units.

Automania

Automania is a platform game in which the player must help Wally, who works on a car assembly line, build a series of ten cars. Each car consists of six parts that are distributed all around the stock room and must be collected to be placed in their correct positions on the car at the assembly area. The factory is populated with stuff that will kill Wally on contact, like robots, bouncing tires, and air cooling blades.

Stock Car

Commodore 64 games are generally renowned for their graphics, but this one is an exception; the main screen shows just a plain view of a brown racetrack against a green background, with four oddly shaped cars driving around it. This is

followed by a screen showing an oddly shaped driver collecting a cup. The poor graphics don't affect the playability. It's a pity that it isn't more visually attractive.

It's a one or two player game. You can choose between different circuits, and select the number of laps, speed, and other factors. The cars are controlled by keyboard or joystick, and you can turn left or right, or shift up or down through the four gears. When playing with a joystick it's easy to change gear by accident while trying to change direction. The third and fourth cars in the race are controlled by the computer, and are there to obstruct you. The real race is against the clock rather than the other cars.

It's not realistic, and even with good graphics.

007: Car Chase
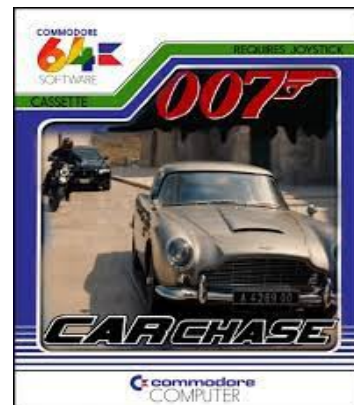
Players control a car that must drive on the road along with other cars. To deal with them, the car is equipped with a smoke screen and weapons which players can use to kill them. From time to time, a helicopter flies overhead and will launch missiles and torpedoes at the player, but they can be destroyed with missiles which their car is also equipped with. If the player's car comes into contact with enemy fire or collides with other cars, the player loses a life.

F40 Pursuit
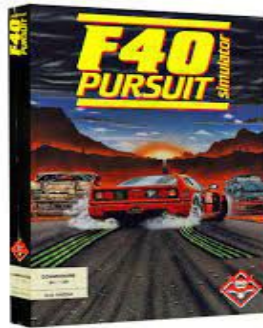
One-line Summary: A major disappointment in the history of the series.

The Good: The premise is sound; you are on the run from the cops and have to navigate the best way to the state line. You have a map to help you choose the best route; it's arcade racing with a sprinkle of strategy.

The Bad: Several major oversights hinder gameplay drastically. Objects pop up quicker than any human can react to them because the field of depth is so short... But the main problem is the control mechanism. You simplay cannot turn left or right fast enough to avoid obstacles and turns. Most computer arcade racing games offer unrealistic handling in comparison to real life, but CC2 is the only game I know of where the handling is severely degraded compared to real life.

The Bottom Line: There's no reason to waste time with this one; it's almost as if gameplay was added as an afterthought." Your best bet is to skip this disappointing underdog and play the superior sequel Crazy Cars 3 (a.k.a. Lamborghini: American Challenge in the USA) instead.

On - Track

EDITOR'S NOTE: An immediate search on the internet showed no available free information on this game other than the fact that it was published as a Commodore 64 game along with other computer platforms of the day.

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-The Small Print-

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