



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

by Lenard R. Roach

HAT RAISES EYEBROWS

One of the joys that I've found in being an older person is wearing clothing that advertises the era from which I originated. This also creates some fun for the wearer, as I hope to illustrate in the following narrative.

As some of you know, on the job it is sometimes customary to wear headgear that symbolizes the occupation or company where the employee works; police officers wear police hats, construction workers wear hard hats, and so on. On most occasions employees just wear a baseball-style cap with the company logo on the front. Then there are those fun people who wear a cap sporting the logo of their favorite vehicle line, weapon, or comedy emblazoned right on the front of their cap for the entire world to see.

Heck, I even have winter toques to wear that advertise the companies for which I work. As an employee, you sometimes can't escape the fact that you have to wear headgear while on premises or off-site but still represent the company.

When I went to the last Commodore Vegas Expo, I came across Tim Waite who was selling clothing which advertised the show and the Commodore computer. Poor Tim didn't even fully set up his table before it was flocked with onlookers and buyers, of whom I was one. As he was laying out his wares, I noticed that he was putting out a green ball cap with the Commodore logo

embellished on the front just above the bill. I picked it up and looked it over carefully.

"Interesting," I commented.

He went right into his sales pitch with me. "I have that hat in other colors, too. I also have t-shirts for sale which advertise the show. I'm selling them individually, or for twenty dollars, I'll sell you the hat and shirt together."

I came with about eight hundred dollars to spend on the show, so I didn't think the spending budget would miss twenty dollars. I whipped out my wallet and handed Tim a crisp Andrew Jackson. He gave me a shirt, and since I am a fan of the 1940's version of The Green Lantern, I took the green cap with the Commodore logo. Show onlookers were unimpressed when I sported these items on my person; however, when I got home to Kansas City, the fun began.

With the closing of the Commodore User's Group of Kansas City back in middle 2010s, in my area the brand name of Commodore became a bygone word that belonged to the 1980's. Because we got into the computer game early, only those of my age knew anything of Commodore or even recognized the symbol that represented it. Show the Commodore symbol to the younger generation... well, that's where the fun starts.

Here in Kansas City, I wear the very same Commodore Vegas Expo green ball cap on the weekends when I'm off work. Since I'm starting to show more scalp and less hair, wearing a cap puts a youthful look onto my aging frame. For a while I used to wear only my work caps on the weekends, but why should I advertise my job while I'm off-duty? It's about time, in fact well overdue, that I started to act like some of my redneck neighbors and sport a cap sporting my favorite pastime. Sure, even these yokels have no idea what the Commodore symbol is, but most have the sense not to pry into a neighbor's personal business. When I meet them on the street or at the local trading posts around town, I get a lot of stares, but hardly anyone asks, "What

the hail is that on yer hat?" Only the younger ones dare to ask me what that symbol is.

One day I went to the local convenience store, Minit Mart, to get fuel and a two-liter of Diet Mountain Dew, and the familiar clerk noticed the Commodore logo on my green cap. He stared at it for a moment, then pointed to the top of his own head indicating by sign language that he wanted to know what that symbol was on the front of my cap. I knew what he meant, but I couldn't resist having a little fun with him.

"Got a cut on your head you need me to look at, son?" I asked him.

"No," he answered.

"Then you must be asking me where there's a good barber?"

"**** it, Lenard!" he swore at me. "What does that thing on your hat mean?"

"That's the symbol for the Commodore computer," I told him.

I took the cap off and let him handle it for a minute. He studied the logo for a while, then handed the hat back to me. I put it back on my head.

"What's that?" he asked.

"It's kind of like a Nintendo 8-bit, only better," I answered, trying to help this young man find something he could relate to in his mind as to what a Commodore computer might be. We spent a while there at the counter (thankfully, no one else was in the store) as he and I talked about the Commodore computer and all the things that it can do, all the while my Diet Mountain Dew was getting warm and some miscreant was grabbing gas at the pumps before I could. A small price to pay for educating a young man about the Commodore computer. The funny thing was that he could have looked all this up by using the Internet on his phone and he could have read it for himself. But I guess it's best to get first hand

knowledge from someone who actually uses the computer.

That was one instance. The next opportunity came when I was dropping off my girlfriend after a long road trip from southwest Missouri for a Christmas visit to her daughter's house in Kansas City. The daughter Megan lived no more than a few miles from my own residence across the Kansas River. Megan noticed the green Commodore cap while I was helping her mother unpack her gear from the back of my Chevrolet Trax.

"What's that thing on your hat mean?" Megan asked me.

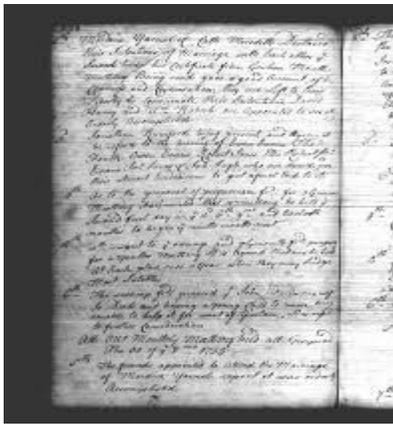
Instead of going into a lecture about the Commodore computer, its history, and its capabilities, like I did with the convenience store clerk, I tried a different tactic to have fun with her. I took the cap off and let her examine the symbol close up.

"That's the ever famous 1980's Commodore chicken lips symbol," I told her.

She handed the hat back to me. "Yeah, it does look a little like chicken lips," she said with a giggle. "That's the computer thingie that you have about a dozen copies of at your house, right?"

I have tried to get both my girlfriend and her daughter onto the Commodore bandwagon so they could enjoy the fun of retro-computing, but they both are too attached to their Windows-based laptops, desktops, and notebooks, and they can't find time to sit down and have some real fun with a computer that thinks with you and not for you. Several times I've tried to pawn off a system on them, even offering them some of my coveted SX-64's, with no results. Looking back now, I'm glad they refused those portable systems; the SX's all needed repairs, and I had to take them with me to the 2019 Commodore Vegas Expo so that show organizer Robert Bernardo could take them to the only West Coast Commodore repair person, Ray Carlsen. Our Commodore repair person in the

Midwest closed his doors decades ago. It would be a shame and an insult to give someone a computer that didn't work, anyway. I've already done that a couple of times in my Commodore career, and I would like to avoid doing that again. As you can tell from this story, I have had plenty of fun with my antiquated computer. Even with just the symbol alone, I can bring up a few laughs and raise an eyebrow or two. Ever since I got introduced to Commodore in the late 1980's, I've never been frustrated by it. The frustrated ones are those who are less learned or just don't understand. They don't understand how great the Commodore computer can be.



MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

by **Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel**

August 2021

Member Roger arrived first to the meeting, followed by David and then Robert who got there 10 minutes late. After the usual time to set up the equipment, lunch was ordered. There was plenty of small talk, especially about DVD recorders, while they waited for the food and while they ate when the food arrived.

The meeting proper commenced with Robert asking on a vote to pay Ray Carlsen \$75 for a new power supply that could connect the club C128 or C64/VIC-20CR and a 1541-II/1581 (it had three connectors which attach to those devices). He had already picked up the power supply on a recent trip to Ray's house in

Washington state. Robert made the motion, it was seconded, and the club passed it unanimously. Robert reminded the members of the October 16-17 Amiwest Show in Sacramento and the November 6-7 Commodore Los Angeles Super Show in Burbank. Robert asked Roger whether he would do a CLASS presentation on CAD 3-D (wire-frame only) or the more sophisticated CAD-M. He also asked if Roger wanted to do a video presentation or a live presentation at the show. Roger remained non-committal.

First up on the meeting's demonstrations, Robert showed a few new programs from a disk sent in by Christopher McGee. One of the programs was Kalied2, not to be confused with the earlier version of Kalied2 presented at the July meeting. This new Kalied (short for Kaleidoscope) asked for the number of iterations from 1-50. After the number was inputted, you pressed RETURN, and the program calculated and drew offset triangles on the screen, compared to the non-offset rectangles of the earlier version. Then Robert tried out Differentiator, a program which required a knowledge of calculus. The members couldn't get very far, because they couldn't remember their calculus.

Next, Robert had a presentation on the Deluxe Music Construction Set run from his Amiga 600. The members marveled over its on-screen piano keyboard and friendly user buttons. You could grab a note and move it to the upper or lower music staff. Or you could press the keys on the on-screen keyboard, and the notes would be placed in the staff automatically. Then after you placed your notes, you could press the PLAY button and hear your composition. The members couldn't figure out how to change the default musical instrument of DMCS; Robert didn't have the 120-page instruction manual, and there didn't seem to be one on-line. Roger was able to compose a little ditty but didn't save it to the hard drive.

Then Robert pulled out the new cartridge from Evie Salomon, the BackBit Pro, with its removable, card-edge connectors for the C64/128, the VIC-20, the Plus/4, and the Atari 800/XE. He

explained and showed the process of dropping programs from a laptop onto a microSD card and taking that card and placing it into a slot on the BackBit Pro. Robert had brought his Plus/4 for the presentation, and so, the BackBit Pro was used with its Plus/4 connector. He plugged in the BackBit Pro and powered up the Plus/4. No screen. He tried again and got a shaky screen. He removed the cart and reinserted it. (Ah, the problems of a dirty cartridge slot in the computer...) This time upon power-up, he had the BB Pro start menu come up with its selection of programs that Robert had just downloaded from his laptop. With the use of the F keys, he showed that utility menus could be brought up. Back at the start menu, Robert would cursor up or down among the programs or folders and push ENTER to run the program or go into the folder.

Robert had 3 new Plus/4 programs saved on the microSD card – Stop the Express, Encounter, and Archaeologist. The programs loaded at excellent speed from the BB Pro. They ran properly and displayed opening screens. Unfortunately, the Plus/4 would not respond to the joystick control nor to the joystick button. Was it a bad Plus/4 joystick adapter? Was it a bad TED chip in the Plus/4? There were no music/sound effects. Was it a bad adapter to the external speakers? Was it a bad TED chip in the computer? (The TED controls joystick and sound.) A saddened Robert said that the Plus/4 might have to go back to Ray for repair, though if it was a TED problem, Ray had no more replacement chips. It was a rare chip to get, and there was no modern equivalent of it.

After the Plus/4, Robert brought out the Ultimate 64 and ran the classic CAD-M from Loadstar disk magazine.

In this impressive program, you could easily design an object in wire-frame, solid-fill it, and rotate it. On the U64 with its maximum 48 MHz., the process becomes even more fun.

With the help of Roger who also had experience with the program, Robert showed off the CAD objects that came with program, solid-filling them and rotating them, the objects being a butterfly, a

jet, and rat (hot) rod. Then Robert cleared the screen and designed a C=, setting the points, filling it, and then rotating it. He remarked that his goal was to design a Commodore Los Angeles Super Show logo on CAD-M and then film it as it rotated. That video would be used in a CLASS commercial for YouTube.

The presentation was not without a bump. Both Robert and Roger couldn't get a stand alone program to run a CAD-M animation of its own logo. David had to leave early, but Robert and Roger kept trying to get the animation to run. The CAD-M instructions gave no help in how to get the standalone program running. Half an hour later, Robert figured how to do it. For the standalone program to work, the machine language part of CAD-M had to be loaded in its part of memory. The process was to load and run CAD-M, press the EXIT and CLR button on its menu, and then load and run standalone program.

With the CAD-M animation now running, Robert wanted to know how to keep the animation running continually (rotating round and round), instead of stopping after 1 1/2 rotations. Robert and Roger looked at the BASIC code of the standalone program, and though Roger was able to make it run 2 1/2 rotations by changing its number of statements, they couldn't determine how to make it rotate continuously.

Finally, to wrap up the meeting, Robert ran the venerable Giga-CAD program on the Ultimate 64. Giga-CAD had been a subject of 3 FCUG meetings a few years ago and an on-line Commodore Vegas Expo video starring Roger. Originally, Giga-CAD had been run off of disk where load times were slow and the loading itself was sometimes unreliable. With SuperCPU patches installed on the disk and with the use of the SuperCPU, rendering and rotation of objects was tolerable. However, the SCPU only had two speeds – 1 MHz. and 20 MHz. – and so that made for switching back to slow speed when navigating through menus or setting points (20 MHz. was too fast for controllability even with the patches installed).

This time Giga-CAD was saved as .D64 files on the SD card of the Ultimate 64, and the U64 had speeds ranging from 1 MHz. to 48 MHz.. There was no disk drive to worry about getting too hot from loading the many Giga-CAD component files. There was no SCPU to tax a weak C64/128 power supply.

The Giga-CAD main program still took some time to load; the Super Snapshot fast loader Robert had on the U64 was disabled or was incompatible. Once loaded the program ran more smoothly whenever it called its component files from the .D64s. Robert asked Roger to play around with the program on the D64, Roger being the expert in Giga-CAD. Roger took him a bit of time to recall how to use it; the menus were in German, he had not used the program in a couple of years, and Robert had not brought the translated, comprehensive, printed instructions. However, as Roger got more into it, he began to remember. He popped on a Giga-CAD object, skyscraper. At 48 MHz., it rotated better than at the 20 MHz. of the SuperCPU. In fact, he and Robert tried other, various speeds in the rotational experiment – 1 MHz. (C64 speed), 2 MHz. (C128 speed), 4 MHz. (Turbomaster speed), and 8 MHz. (Turbo 8 speed).

U64 maximum speed was fine for rotation and rendering, but it was not good for menu navigation and placing points; maximum speed made the cursor too jumpy. After some experimentation, Roger found out that 1 to 2 MHz. Was the appropriate speed for fine placing of points on the Giga-CAD screen, and 4 to 5 MHz. was good for the drop-down menu navigation. Roger asked for a way to get to these U64 speeds without having to go through the U64's set-up menu, i.e., perhaps a key combination to change speeds. Robert assured him that the only way (and a disadvantage) was to go through the U64 set-up menu. As the presentation ended, Robert encouraged Roger to make a follow-up video of Giga-CAD and its use with the U64. Robert could even loan out a spare U64 so that Roger could do his experiments. Roger was non-committal.

September 2021

by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

The Fresno Commodore User Group is getting back to almost normal. We still have to wear masks in some situations, but we are confident that the people who frequent our meeting place are the type of people who have the good sense to get vaccinated, so our worries are few.

On September 19 Roger, Robert, Dave and Dick met at the Panera Bread Restaurant that has proved to be one of our best-ever meeting places. On this particular date, we drew the attention of four other patrons who spoke to us briefly, all of whom had owned vintage Commodore machines back in the day.

The main order of business was our annual October club "picnic," which has for many years actually been a lunch at a different restaurant, with no equipment set up. We considered two excellent restaurants, and Dick called them to see about reservations and what things were like Sundays at 11 a.m..

Neither location accepted reservations. The Black Bear Diner reported that "Sunday morning is the busiest time of the week." Sal's Mexican Cantina told us, "When we open the doors Sunday at 11, there is a line of people waiting to get in."

Our mission was simple. Find a good restaurant that people didn't go to. Did we succeed? We'll find out October 10. We chose DiCicco's, probably the oldest Italian restaurant in Fresno. Different family members have opened locations around town and in nearby cities, but we will be going to what we consider the "original." It's not actually the original building, but it's in pretty much the same location and boasts that Frank Sinatra ate there when he was in town.

This year's lunch will be special in that it marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the club. About two years ago Dick spoke by phone with one of the founders, Chuck Yrulegui (roo-LEE-ghie). He told us that the club was started by

himself, Doug, and Kurt (he could not recall the last names). Chuck produced the newsletter the first year. We'll have more about this in a future newsletter.

Robert reported on a couple of upcoming shows – AmiWest in Sacramento, and of more interest to FCUG members, the Commodore Los Angeles Super Show (CLASS), to be held November 6 and 7 at the VFW hall in Burbank. The building includes a bar, and one entrance to the building is through this bar. Masks are required in the bar, but not in the section where the show will be held. The show is co-sponsored by FCUG and by the Southern California Commodore and Amiga Network (SCCAN).

Robert had invited David Pleasance, head of Commodore Business Machines UK, to CLASS, but because of pandemic travel restrictions, it was doubtful that he could get from England to Los Angeles in time for the show. However, other guests would be at the show, like Marc Rifkin of Commodore Business Machines (US) and Lenard Roach, author of Commodore books and editor of The Interface newsletter.

This led into a discussion of active Commodore clubs. The Clark County Commodore Computer Club (5C's) of Las Vegas maintains an ambiguous website, but former members recently confirmed that the club is no more. This organization partnered with FCUG to present most of the Commodore Vegas Expos. As so often happens, the club was held together by one or two individuals, and the passing of their president and the lost of their meeting place spelled the end of the club. Robert mentioned that there was the Central Texas Commodore User Group, and Dick verified that it was up and running. (The FCUG website has a listing of active clubs known to us at <http://www.dickestel.com/commactive.htm>)

Before going into hardware/software presentations, Robert talked about his discovery of the Retro-Printer Module, a device from England which would allow classic computers to print to modern USB printers. The RPM uses a

Raspberry Pi computer to grab the data coming from classic computer and then translate it into data the USB printer understands. The RPM not only is for Commodore computers but for other classic computers, like Spectrum, Atari, and more. <https://www.retroprinter.com>

With Robert's Amiga 600 set up, the club members looked at the Deluxe Music Construction Set for the second time. However, this time Robert brought the comprehensive DMCS manual. Roger promptly started going through the book in order to change the default instrument that the program uses. He was able to change the instrument, but he couldn't figure out how to use/play it.

Robert had brought a box of used, 5 1/4" disks that he recently obtained from a former C64 user. The members looked through the disks with David picking up at least one and Roger taking a few. On David's disk marked Trek, Robert became excited into thinking there were Star Trek programs. That excitement became disappointment when the disk directory was run and none of the programs were Star Trek-related. On one of Roger's disks, there was a BASIC program, Lunar Lander, written by the famous Jim Butterfield. The members ran the program on the club C128 (in 64 mode). Like later Lunar Lander programs, the player had to maintain thrust on his spaceship while trying to soft-land the lander and not crash it into the surface. This was a simple program; the spaceship was built from DATA statements, and the resultant sprite resembled an upright oval. Robert wondered whether more DATA statements could be added to build rocketship fins on the oval and make it look more spacey.

At the August FCUG meeting, the members tried out the new BackBit Pro cartridge with Commodore Plus/4. This month it was time to try it with various other computers. First, it was with Roger's VIC-20. No matter how many times Robert inserted the cart with its VIC adapter into Roger's VIC-20, the opening screen would not come up. Thinking the cartridge port on that VIC

was faulty or dirty, Robert tried out the BB on his VIC-20. No response... just a blank screen.

However, when he then tried the Behr-Bonz multi-cart from Francois "Leveille" Eslapion, he got an instant response right into the game selection menu.

Then Robert tried the BB with its Atari adapter on his Atari 800XL. (An Atari computer in a Commodore meeting!) The results were slightly more encouraging. Out of roughly every 12 insertions, the BB would be recognized twice. Most of the time, he got a blank screen, or he would be put into the Atari's self-diagnostic screen. When BB was recognized, he would get the menu. Sometimes pressing SPACE would select the game, sometimes not. On the BB's microSD card, he had a .crt copy of Star Trek: Space Operations Simulator. However, he could not figure out how to start it from the BB menu. He pushed the RETURN key, the SELECT button, even the button on the joystick in both port 1 and port 2. Nothing. He tried other keys. Nothing. However, when he inserted the original Atari Star Trek: SOS cart, the game came up right away and was playable.

Then he tried out BB with its C64/128 adapter in the club C128. Once again the BB was only recognized sometimes, no matter how many times the cartridge was inserted and reinserted into the C128. When it was recognized, he would easily cursor down the menu and press RETURN on the game he wanted.

Robert and Roger thought and thought. It couldn't be that all the cartridge ports in all the computers were dirty. And why did the same computers respond correctly when a more standard cart was inserted? Conclusions? The BB was unreliable. Roger called it "flaky."

(Robert reported all of this to BackBit developer, Evie Salomon. She decided that the cartridge firmware needed to be updated and that the cartridge could have cold solder joints. She asked that it be returned to her for repair.)

October 2021

by Robert Bernardo and Dick Estel

Back in the day, the club held an annual picnic in October, at the home of a member who had a large tract of land and a beautiful home on the edge of the Fresno-Clovis metro area. This couple passed away in the early 2000's, and we eventually settled on holding an annual lunch, which has a few, well-defined guidelines:

It's held at a different restaurant from the one where we have our regular meeting.

It's held at a different restaurant each year.

No formal business and no demonstrations are given, and discussion of computer-related matters is minimal. Also family members are invited, and the club pays.

This year we called a couple of places in advance, only to learn that 11 a.m. Sunday was their busiest time. We settled on DiCicco's, probably Fresno's oldest Italian restaurant in continuous operation. There are six locations in the Fresno-Clovis area, as well as Madera, Kingsburg, and Oakhurst (in the foothills).

The DiCicco family emigrated to the U.S. after World War II and came west in 1952. The "Four Sons of Italy" bought an existing restaurant and prospered. We ate in the location considered the "original," although it is a few blocks from the actual spot.

Different family members branched out and opened other locations over the years, and it has been a Fresno-Clovis favorite for roughly 70 years.

Robert Bernardo, Roger Van Pelt and his brother Aaron, Dave Smith, and Dick Estel were in attendance, and all agreed that the food and service were excellent.

Conversation ranged over a variety of topics. One was the closing of Rasputin Records (CDs, DVDs, etc.) in the old Tower Records building and the re-opening next door of the Mad Monk,

with an even bigger inventory than Rasputin's.

Robert and Roger told of their project to film a demo to be shown at the Commodore LA Super Show (CLASS) in November. "Bernardo Productions," set up in the University Square Hotel the previous evening, had to deal with the usual glitches, keeping them up 'til just after midnight.

The relative merits of Dish-TV, DirecTV, cable, and the increasing rates were thoroughly reviewed with some discussion of how to obtain discounts. There was a related financial topic, the scarcity and excessive cost of DVD recorders.

Despite being full of pasta, calzone, pizza, and/or spaghetti, we managed to conclude the lunch with dessert – for some of us a modest piece of cheesecake, and for Aaron, a sinfully decadent "Chocolate Madness" – dark chocolate cake, dark chocolate frosting, and more.

The DiCicco's story:

<http://diciccosfresno.com/our-story/>

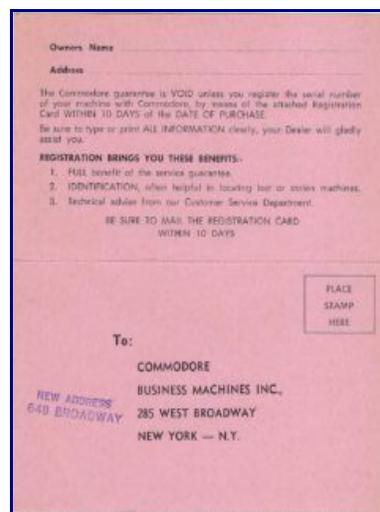
At our November meeting we will have our usual program, plus observance of the club's 40th anniversary.

Early CBM: Jay-Man Distributors, Inc.

by guest contributor by Dave McMurtrie



Jay-Man Distributors, Inc was a Jack Tramiel and Manfred Kapp business that was founded on June 19, 1962 in New York, New York, USA. As can be seen in this advertisement from June, 1963, Jay-Man was billed as an "Office Equipment Supermarket". I speculate that the Jay-Man name was derived from the combination of the first letter of Jack Tramiel's name and the first three letters of Manfred Kapp's name, however I've never seen any documentation to substantiate this speculation



The address listed in the Jay-Man advertisement is 648 Broadway, which was also the address of Commodore's United States based subsidiary, Commodore Business Machines, Inc., in the early 1960s. You can see the 648 Broadway address on this warranty registration card that came with a 1960 Commodore model 650 typewriter.

(This is the first of articles from the leader of the Commodore International Historical Society.)

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\$78⁸⁸

FREE BONUS: You receive FREE with each machine (optional at
... a 11.50 value)

OTHER CRAZY SPECIALS
Price and quantity from One Five and Good Station
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ALSO: Cover prices on typewriters, adding machines, calculators,
printing equipment, etc. - - - at **discount** prices

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Call **YUKON 2-7830** for Information and Prices
We take TRANSFER OF TITLE QUALITY of this equipment
within 30 days for \$10.00 fee.

When Jay-Man was formed in 1962 Commodore already had a strong retail distribution channel in the United States through their leased office equipment sales departments located in New York area Macy's department stores. Given this, it's not immediately obvious why Jay-Man was formed. What we do know is that Jay-Man was one of many Commodore-related entities mentioned in the Canadian Government's Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire Into the Failure of Atlantic Acceptance Corporation, Limited.

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Distressed Merchandise, Auc-
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(See our Advertisement Page 22)
JAY-MAN DISTRIBUTORS
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Atlantic Acceptance Corporation

So what was Commodore's relationship with Atlantic Acceptance Corporation? In Commodore's early years the company was fortunate to receive substantial orders for its Czech typewriters from Toronto's two largest department stores, the T. Eaton Company Limited and the Robert Simpson Company Limited. To fulfill these orders, Commodore required enough working capital to purchase the inventory. Commodore initially turned to a factoring company named Inter-Provincial Commercial Discount Corporation Limited for financing. Factoring companies essentially purchase a company's accounts receivable at a discount. This allows the factoring company to make a profit by eventually collecting the full amount of the receivables and it allowed Commodore to collect its receivables immediately rather than waiting for payment, albeit collecting less than the full amount.

With capital being a critical need for the fledgling Commodore enterprise, Jack Tramiel sought out better financing terms with the Czechoslovakian State Bank but was unable to meet their guarantor requirements. Tramiel then sought financing from Douglas R. Annett of Annett & Company who was also not able to help, but he did introduce Tramiel to a man named C. Powell Morgan who was the head of Atlantic Acceptance Corporation – a finance company located in Ontario, Canada. Morgan was interested in moving Atlantic Acceptance into the factoring business and Jack Tramiel was seeking a new factoring company with more favorable terms. Thus was formed Commodore Sales Acceptance Limited on March 4, 1959 with Commodore Portable Typewriter Company as its first customer. Commodore Portable Typewriter Company also had a 25% ownership stake in Commodore Sales Acceptance Limited. Through his negotiations with Morgan, Jack Tramiel not only found a new factoring company to finance his ventures, he was also partially in control of the new factoring company.

Jay-Man's role in the Commodore/Atlantic Acceptance saga

The overall Commodore and Atlantic Acceptance saga was enough to fill several hundred pages of a Canadian government inquiry, but Jay-Man's documented role in the overall relationship was fairly simple.

- Commodore Factors (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Commodore Sales Acceptance set up in the state of New York to handle factoring and commercial loans in the United States) was loaning money to Jay-Man Distributors to allow Jay-Man to purchase inventory from Commodore Business Machines. To summarize: a Tramiel/Kapp company was borrowing money from another Tramiel/Kapp company to purchase product from yet another Tramiel/Kapp company.
- On October 31, 1964 a company named Analogue Controls, Inc sold \$300,000 of machine parts to Jay-Man Distributors. It was perhaps not coincidental that October 31 was the last day of Analogue's fiscal year. Analogue Controls, Inc was a New York based manufacturing company that Commodore had purchased in 1963 to manufacture the Commodore Drycopy copying machines. These machine parts were in a warehouse/manufacturing facility shared by Commodore Drycopy and Analogue controls. Jay-Man never physically took possession of the machine parts, but Jay-Man's address on the invoice was shown to be 200 Frank Road, Hicksville, New York – the address of the Analogue warehouse. On February 1, 1965 Jay-Man sold the machine parts back to Analogue Controls for the same amount of \$300,000. It is believed this was done solely to show increased revenue for Analogue Controls for fiscal year 1964.
- On December 1, 1964, Jay-Man Distributors purchased copying machines and parts from Commodore Drycopy for \$524,265.31. Jay-Man paid this by assuming that amount of Commodore

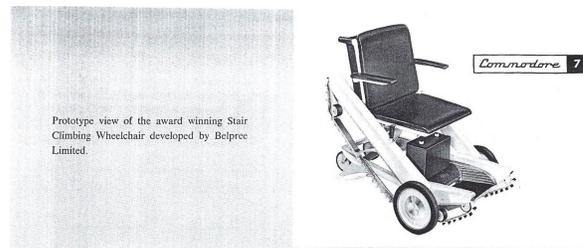
Drycopy's debt to another Tramiel/Kapp enterprise named Baronet Associates, Inc. This made Jay-Man Distributors responsible for repayment of a loan which had been advanced to Baronet Associates by Commodore Factors, Inc. Jay-Man had no assets with which to repay this loan. In fact, its April 1965 income tax return showed that Jay-Man was in debt to the tune of over \$800,000. To summarize: a Tramiel/Kapp company sold parts to another Tramiel/Kapp company which paid for those parts by assuming the obligation to repay a loan that had been made by yet another Tramiel/Kapp company.

The aftermath for Jay-Man

When Atlantic Acceptance Corporation collapsed in 1965, it threw all of Jack Tramiel and Manfred Kapp's business enterprises into complete disarray. Jay-Man ceased operating but still existed as a legal corporate entity until it was dissolved by proclamation of the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance on December 15, 1970.

The Commodore Stair-Climbing Wheelchair

by Guest Writer [Dave McMurtrie](#)



How Commodore Business Machines (Canada) Limited almost entered the personal mobility market.

Commodore? They were a typewriter company who moved into making computers, right? So many people know Commodore as the company who made the C64. Some of the more hardcore enthusiasts know about the typewriter beginnings and calculators. The really crazy collectors know about thermostats and filing cabinets. Tonight my

focus will be the stair-climbing wheelchair that Commodore built in the early 1960s.

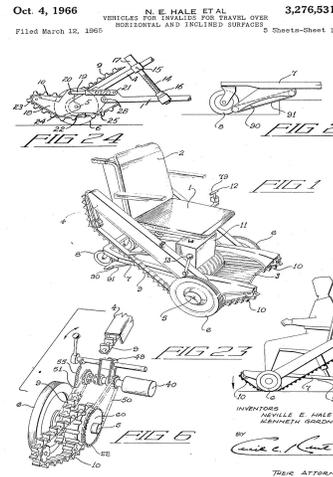
This post has its beginnings way back in 1947 (before Commodore existed) when United States President Harry S. Truman informally began what became the “President’s committee on employment of the physically handicapped”. Initially funded by the Bureau of Employment Security, it received formal US congressional authorization in 1949.

In 1961 or 1962, the President’s committee offered a \$5,000 prize for any inventor, foreign or domestic, who could create a working wheelchair that could climb stairs. Two Canadian engineers from Hale & Associates, Ltd., named Neville E. Hale and Kenneth Gardner saw an article about the reward being offered in August of 1962 and took on the challenge. It came to pass that a gentleman named Walter Kuettnner, who was the president of Belpree Company Limited in Canada, became interested in their project. You’re probably wondering what any of this has to do with Commodore.

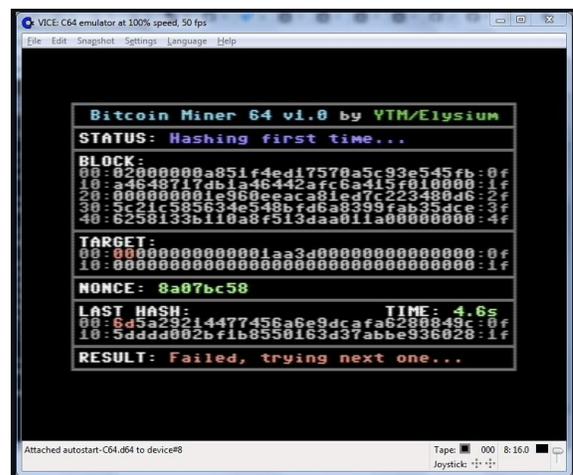


By 1962, Commodore was already in the business of marketing and distributing metal office furniture and felt they could see increased profits if they owned the manufacturing side also. Commodore purchased Belpree Company

Limited, a metal stamping company, on June 14, 1962 (along with Associated Tool & The Commodore Stair-Climbing Wheelchair



It’s unknown to me how close Commodore ever got to taking this product to market, but it’s a safe bet that the collapse of Commodore’s primary source of financing, Atlantic Acceptance Corporation, in June 1965 would have put an end to the project regardless. Hale and Gardner applied for a US patent on the device on March 12, 1965, which was granted on October 4, 1966 as US3276531A.



Mine Bitcoin with the C64

Maciej Witkowiak has developed software called C64 Bitcoin Miner, which is the most hilariously

inefficient way to mine Bitcoin.

by **Guest Contributors**

Cameron Coward and Michael Lavere

The Commodore 64 is one of the most important computers in history, along with being the highest-selling single computer model ever. It was sold for almost 12 years, from August of 1982 to April of 1994, though it was extremely outdated by the time it was discontinued. [Actual C64 production dates were from 1982 to 1992.] The success and popularity of the Commodore 64 can be attributed to its affordability and performance. It had a MOS Technology 6510 8-bit processor running at just over 1MHz, 64KB of RAM, and a special VIC-II graphics chip, which were all quite impressive at the time. But that hardware is laughably slow today, which is why it is amusing to see a Commodore 64 being used for Bitcoin mining.

Bitcoin is *the* cryptocurrency — so much so that it is almost synonymous with cryptocurrency in general. Bitcoin is entirely digital and isn't backed by hard currency, and there isn't any central authority that keeps track of Bitcoin balances or transactions. Instead, each transaction is logged within the blockchain, which is a massive ledger shared by every Bitcoin user. Transactions, encoded as “hashes,” that are added to blockchain need to be verified mathematically by multiple independent entities, which is a computationally expensive process. The owners of computers that perform those verifications are compensated with a small amount of new Bitcoin — usually with a value *slightly* more than the cost of the electricity required to perform the computations. Bitcoin miners build computers specifically for the task in order to earn money.

If you have a vintage Commodore 64 sitting around collecting dust, it turns out that you can use it to mine Bitcoin. You can do that with the help of software called C64 Bitcoin Miner developed by Polish computer programmer Maciej Witkowiak. This software does the same thing as any other Bitcoin mining software: it processes transaction hashes.

According to Witkowiak, his Bitcoin mining

software has several pluses, such as low power usage, and one minus, which is that it is “not very fast” (0.2 hashes/second). He says that to find one block on the Commodore 64 would take roughly “337 years and 10 months.” To put that into perspective, Bitcoin mining rigs today are often measured by how many gigahashes (billions of hashes) are processed per second.

In addition to the ludicrous inefficiency of using a Commodore 64 for Bitcoin mining, you also have to contend with some practical challenges of retro-computing. For example, the Commodore 64 did not have any built-in network adapters. So you'll need some sort of serial link or external modem just to access the Bitcoin blockchain. Obviously, you should never run C64 Bitcoin Miner to make money; in reality, you would spend far more on electricity than you would make in Bitcoin. But it would be fun to show your crypto buddies your “new” mining rig.

Download at <https://github.com/ytmym/c64-bitcoin-miner>



Zee C900 Computer Story

by **Guest Contributor Bo Zimmerman**

In 2003, a kind German fellow named Claus Schoenleber helped me get my hands on a pair of prototype Unix machines built by Commodore around 1984-85. One was a server (the Model 1) and the other a workstation/client (the Model 2). Because of the issues I had with them, it would take until very recently to get them working, and require the help of many, using teamwork only the Internet could make possible. That's the story

for today.

The C= engineers referred to these machines internally as "Z Machine" for their Zilog Z8000 chipset, but would be marketed as the Commodore 900.

It was rough being a software guy who collected old hardware in the early 2000s. My knowledge of basic troubleshooting was very weak, and the Internet was still mostly a desert for a niche hobby like this. As excited as I was about getting these machines, I quickly realized that their problems, and even their requirements and basic usage, were beyond my understanding.

Last year though, thanks to some encouragement from my friends at the Commodore International Historical Society and the Central Texas Commodore Users Group, I decided to apply all I'd learned in the intervening years and see what I could do with them.

The Model 1 (server) was the first one I tackled, as its power supply seemed functional. At first, the issue was just figuring out what kind of video it generated, but experimenting got me around to this simple monochrome PC monitor, which gave me a first glimpse of the machine in action. Unfortunately, the hard drive clearly had issues, so this was as far as I got.

In 2020, I was able to chat with a fellow named Santo who had a Model 2 he had gotten working, so I decided to give that one a shot. The power supply in that machine was non-functional, and the best efforts of my friends at the Central TX Commodore Users group to help me diagnose and repair it had progressed slowly.

But then Dave from the Commodore International Historical Society, whose interest in these machines knew no bounds, offered to send me a near-identical power supply from a U.S. Commodore PC-10 to get it working.

That was only the beginning though. You see, the Model 2 had a proprietary video standard to achieve its 1024x800 resolution, which means having a one-off monitor that didn't even have a known model number. I also lacked a video cable, and its 220V requirement was certainly an inconvenience.

Santo to the rescue though! He had discovered a jumper in his own monitor that allowed it to accept 110V, and when my home-made video cable still failed to produce a useful signal and I discovered that one of the wires inside the monitor had become disconnected, he photographed his own board to help me figure out where it was supposed to go.



And wahah! We have video!

And this is where new problems began to surface: the hard drive was unreadable, and the boot sequence reported memory errors.

The computer has 32 individually socketed 41256 ram chips, and the brilliant engineers at Commodore were kind enough to more or less report exactly which chip it was failing on the boot screen. Well, sort of. Either way, some experimental swapping with good replacement chips ended up fixing the memory issue.

The bad hard drive was a tougher problem. But Santo to the rescue again. He pointed me at the fine folks at pdp8online.com/mfm who produce a remarkable board capable of both hosting a working MFM hard drive for imaging, as well as emulating one using locally stored image files. Since my own hard drive was unreadable, I used a hard drive image he had taken of his own installation.

Of course, now there were new problems. The X-Windows-Like GUI desktop software required a C900 mouse, which I did not have, and the floppy drive with its proprietary format appeared unable to format a new floppy or read known-good ones.

And then even the keyboard started crapping out on me. Luckily, the C900 can use a standard PC

keyboard, which Claus had included in his shipment. I also later discovered that the C900 keyboard was fine, and that it was a stuck key that was not visibly stuck causing it to fail to boot. It was that ugly wide skinny stop/continue button in the upper-right.

After the keyboard, I tackled the mouse issue. Mr Santo provided me detailed photos of his own mouse, so I went to the schematics and prepared to build one from scratch, using perhaps an old Amiga mouse as a base. To my great delight, however, I discovered that the pinouts for the two were identical. The C900 mouse **IS** an Amiga mouse.

Now I was in business. I spent the better part of a month playing around with the demo software, using its Kermit terminal to do some wi-fi modeming, writing some little utilities in C, learning the cryptic keys of Emacs, and otherwise enjoying the machine. You can see some videos of the demos at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGw305IJ9iY&t=24s>, and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIpstuQbKMQ>

But eventually I wanted to revisit the Model 1/Server machine. If you recall, it had a bad hard drive. Well, I discovered the hard drive issue was merely intermittent, and I already had a good long-term solution when dealing with the Model 2, namely the MFM emulator. And so...

18 years was a long time to wait to finally see these machines happy and functioning again, but definitely worth it. 2020 may have been the worst year ever, but for a shut-in Commodore collector: not so bad! And definitely a team effort that only good hearts and the power of the Internet could provide.



I hope you enjoyed my little journey. Until next time...



David A. Freeman, 1958-2020

by Robert Bernardo

Dave Freeman was my go-to guy at the Living Computers: Museum + Labs in Seattle. Whenever I had a hardware problem -- missing cable, shortage of power strips, lack of extension cords, wrong monitor, or wrong cable connectors -- he was there to solve the problem, always with a smile and a can-do attitude. He never complained. He knew the little problems of the Commodore and Amiga computers that I was bringing into the museum for Pacific Commodore Expo. In fact, he knew of the many idiosyncrasies of the many other classic computers in the museum. He helped me move equipment out of my station wagon; he helped me move equipment back into the my station wagon... long past the official closing time of the museum... long past the time when the other workers had gone home.

I was concerned for him when I last saw him at PaCommEx in 2019. But he seemed to take his treatment in stride... philosophical. And I told him to take care, so I could see him at the next PaCommEx.

Dave passed away in late September, 2020. His obituary can be found at

[https://obituaries.seattletimes.com/obituary/david-
cameron-1080424287](https://obituaries.seattletimes.com/obituary/david-
cameron-1080424287)

and more about Dave, including photos, can be
found at

[https://www.forevermissed.com/david-alan-
cameron19580101/about](https://www.forevermissed.com/david-alan-
cameron19580101/about)

He was quite a hardware engineer. I hope that
whoever takes his place at the museum will have
the same attitude, the same friendliness.

Club Officers

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

President	Robert Bernardo
Vice-president	Roger Van Pelt
Secretary/Treasurer	Dick Estel
The Interface Editor	Lenard Roach
Librarian	Roger Van Pelt
Club equipment	Roger Van Pelt
Meeting place reservation	Dick Estel

-The Small Print-

The Fresno Commodore User Group is a club
whose members share an interest in Commodore
8-bit and Amiga computers. Our mailing address
is 185 W. Pilgrim Lane, Clovis, CA 93612. We
meet monthly in the meeting room of Panera
Bread, 3590 West Shaw, Fresno, CA. The
meetings generally include demonstrations,
discussion, and individual help.

Dues are \$12 for 12 months. New members
receive a "New Member Disk" containing a
number of useful Commodore 8-bit utilities.
Members receive a subscription to The Interface
newsletter, access to the public domain
disk library, technical assistance, and reduced
prices on selected software/hardware.

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