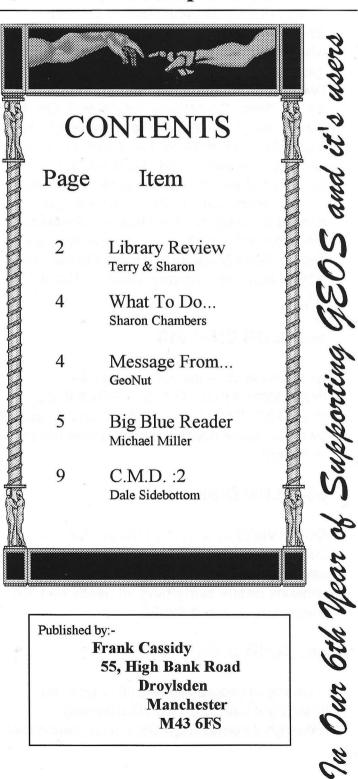## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This Issue brings Part 2 of the Big Blue Reader Sogwap Softwares excellent program for transferring files between C 64/C128 and MS-Dos based machines. The concluding part will be published in the May issue.

Another continuing saga is reproduced on pages 9 to 12 named as CMD :2. It may seem to the casual reader that the author and geoClub are praising CMD very highly. As perhaps the only supplier left to the serious C64 user it is perhaps just praise. Far too many CBM supplier have found user support very lacking culminating it their demise. Even the original manufacturer has failed to support the very people who put them where they were. CMD in continuing to support the C64 user deserves all the good publicity they can get.

Page 4 has a tip from Sharon on gluing back together that most important part of any plastic item that is always the one that breaks. Accompanying this is a message from geoNut with regard to a copyright free disk based LoadStar that should be available from the Library by the time you read this.

See you all in May -- Happy Geosing

Frank

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In Our 6th Year of Supporting GEOS and it's users

The April Disk Review

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From Sharon and me, a 'belated' Happy Easter to you all. So, to start off with, a couple of very sincere Thank You's. To Sharon for doing the past couple of Reviews, where would I be without her, and also to 'geonut' Dave Elliott. For the past few months I've been having trouble with my disk drives, all 3 of them. Sometimes they'd work OK, but mainly they just sat there and stared straight back at me. Then Dave came to my rescue and sent me an old 1541 he'd still got, thankfully it works OK, first time, every time. So, on having said all that, it's time I got around to doing the April Review. Again our sincere thanks to Peter Hunt, and through him, to Peter McGuinn, Jeremy Stokoe, and others who I've probably missed - Thank You All.

geoCLUB DISK 510

geoView to view the following pics - DOOM001; APOLLO 1 & 2; DOCKKIDS; DISDOBO; BALLON; AKIRA. Don't be put off by the obscure names, there's some decent stuff here.

geoCLUB DISK 511

QUICKVIEW to read the files on this disk. It's from Peter Hunt, and I s'pose that you could say that it's Peter's version of the **Bible**. It contains nearly everything all neatly laid out. Something a little different.

geoCLUB DISK 512

A variety of programmes on this disk, but basically it's all to do with **Gardening**. Although it comes from Oz, which means that the seasons are reversed, no doubt some of you who are gardeners might pick up a few tips.

geoCLUB DISK 513

This disk carries on from the previous one. It contains such things as - **Germination needs; Green manures; Sowing guides, Raising seeds** etc. All in all, something very different to the norm.

geoCLUB DISK 514

From Peter McGuinn comes the following, some more of his 'artistic talents' on show. **geoVIEW** plus **SCANART 1 & 2; MEDIUM SIZE; CLIPART A; LARGE ASTERISK; OBLIX; LIONS; CANCER.** Buy this disk, if you buy no others, it's excellent.

geoCLUB DISK 515

Carrying on from the previous disk, here's some more from Peter - **ANIMAL 2; XMAS 2; EASTER; MONKEY; CAT; DOG; RABBIT; GRUMPY; MICKEY; TREE 1,** plus 9 other great pictures. Once again, Thank You Peter.

geoCLUB DISK 516

Another picture disk, **geoView** plus - **DCPATCH; B-52H; DESMOINE; BABYCRGE (A pram to you and me); DC10; B-2; CORVEVE.** Some more really good art.

geoCLUB DISK 517

Again carrying on from the previous disk - AQUA-3; CORY3; CORMEM; CLAIRE31; COREVH; DOOM02; EARTH-2.

geoCLUB DISKS 518 and 519

A Basic disc really (LOAD"*",8,1) but it's runnable from within Geos. Just click on the AUTOGRAPH icon, which loads the actual programme to view the GG type graphics - ALS DEVIL; ALS HOWL; ALS HWEEN; ALS SCRCRW1; ALS TRICK. Altogether there's 26 different pics, all of which are very good. To view the other side, DISK 519, just remove DISK 518 turn it over, then select New Disk from the menu.

geoCLUB DISK 520

I guess that this ought to be placed into the Basic section of the Library as well. I think it's also to do with gardening as well, Just click on the BOOKDISK 64 icon, and follow the prompts. Or just type in LOAD"*",8,1.

geoCLUB DISK 521

Similar to disks 518 & 519, some more excellent pictures in that GG format. There's 34 in all, just click on AUTOGRAPH, follow the menu, and away you go.

That's it for April, as usual, if anyone has got anything that they'd like to be considered for the library, please send it to either Sharon or myself. The cost of our <u>double sided</u> library disks is still £1.30, and this includes the P/P as well. Oh yes, Frank got my e-mail address wrong last month, it should have read - terryj@griffin.co.uk. Now available for all to see on -
http://www.griffin.co.uk/users/terryj/Homepage.htm
Bye 'till next month - Take Care - Sharon & Terry

ADDENDUM

An error crept into the March Library review; Basic Disk should have been Basic Disk 71 & 72. Apologise from Sharon

And I, made a blunder too. In one of the FOR SALE Ads I put the wrong telephone number in for Peter Evatt. It should have read 0113 2939262. Sorry Pete !!!

Whilst mentioning blunders; They do say, "always back up your important work". How very true this is. This newsletter was all but finished and I had saved 99% of it to disk as back up, a normal procedure or me and when finished a final back up is always made and put away in a safe place. What a relief then when, without thinking I deleted all files in my GeoNews sub directory. I made such a good job of it there was nothing there even for 'Undelete' to find. Nothing left, not even my standard letter " thanks for enquiring about geoClub.....". A total disaster avoided, but BE WARNED. It can happen to any of us -

Make a Back-Up

A Generous FREE Offer

Ian Swain has acquired a whole stack of C64 5¼" disks full of PD and shareware programs some Geos amongst them. Anyone who would like some can have them with pleasure just contact Ian and arrange collection . They are available Free Of Charge but Ian does not want the responsibility of posting packages and so this is strictly a " come and grab a few" offer only, no sorting, no preferential treatment just collect as many as you want then take the opportunity to buy him a pint. There is some sort of a geoPub committee meeting at the North Euston Hotel in Fleetwood at irregular intervals, an ideal place and time to meet , collect a few free disks and buy a round at the bar. Meetings times and dates can be discovered by ringing 01253 874474 ask for Ian .
(It all sounds a bit doggy to me. GeoClub nor any of it's officials can be held responsible for any geoClub member who is lead astray by who-so-ever. These break away factions are all very well but..............................).

What to do

when that small bit of Plastic Breaks Off
By Sharon Chambers

Like me, I bet over the years, you've had the odd bit, break off you computer, printer or anything else thats plastic and small. If like me, you've tryed out a number of different glues, in the small hope that it WILL WORK this time. But after waiting longer than it said on the pack, you pick it up and Very Gingerly and place it back. Thinking all is well. It may even last, just long enough for you to forget you ever had a poblem. And there you will be, sitting there doing nothing and it will happen.

1. It will full off again. Or...
2. You move it, and it keeps moving. Or...
3. You go to use it and it's not there any more. Or...
4. It goes ping and fulls down, somewhere very dark, small and impossible to get to.

Hands up all of you who have had this happen. If there is anyone reading this, who hasen't had this problem, then I think we all have to HATE YOU. The rest of us have all had this happen to them. Does anyone know why it always happens on the one small bit that keeps that Very important bit in place. For my example, I will tell you about the single sheet feeder/holder on my printer. It has two holders that move left to right, to hold different sizes of paper in place. One day I noticed that one side kept on falling off. On having a good look at it I noticed that a small bit that fits into a grove, had snaped off. Luckly I found it under my fan fold paper. The only thing was that I knew that all the glues that I had tried before don't work. So what was I to do!. Try gluing it again with a glue that I have tried before, and know won't work. Or try my old friend, Blu-Tack (I think most of us, must have a bit of this someware, holding something in place). So what was I going to do!

I had to go out that day and do some shopping, and as luck would have it, I came across a new glue, called UHU ACTION+ PLASTIC GLUE. On it, it stated: *Strong, Rigid Bond * Sticks most Plastics * Additional Nozzle for precision work. There I stood, thinking could this be it, could this be the Glue I had been waiting for! Was it going to work. I handed over my 99p, and home I went. After reading all the instruction, I gave it ago. Can you guess what happen. No it didn't fall off. I fact it worked, and is still working today, 3 month later. I now go around the house looking for anything that needs mending.

So for everyone who has had this problem I hope that this information, will help you in the future. If anyone has problems in getting this glue, please fill free to write to me, as I may still be able to get it from my local shop. Wishing you happy mending.....

Greetings All,

GeoNut here, I have just placed Loadstar 148 into the library. This edition is freely distributable and you will be reading about it inthe Library Review soon.

The reason for this short note is to inform you that there is one file missing from the disks. It is a compressed file called hacking.txt. At over 700 blocks it would simply not fit on a 1541 disk. A pity because when un-zipped it becomes Commodore Hacking by Jim Brain and is full of usefull infomation on all sorts of Commodore prg's, files etc. If you own a 71/81 then send a disk with postage and I will supply a copy. To un-zip Wraptor on Loadstar 148 must be used and it will only un-zip to a printer via the serial line. Using Wraptor is straight forward, just set the output device in this case to 4 (printer) and away it goes. Be prepared for a long wait, at over 10,000 bytes to print takes a wee bit of time. If you do send for Loadstar 148 another surprise is that it will be on 3 double sided disks instead of the normal 2. I get the 1581 version because it contains more as how to use hacking.txt as an example.

When you receive your voting slip remember to tick the box GEONUT for Vic President. To be brutally honest,there will be 4 boxes to tick and they will all be for GEONUT. I want a fair ballot. No cheating, no corruption but plenty of bribery.

Happy Geosing

GEONUT (*You can say that again*)

BIG BLUE READER

SOGWAP Software
by Michael R. Miller

This is part 2 carried over from last month the series concludes with Part 3 next month

** Big Blue Reader 64 Disk Commands: **

GOTO MAIN MENU = To return to main menu.

VIEW CBM DIR = View Commodore disk directory.

VIEW MS-DOS DIR = View MS-DOS disk directory.

CHANGE DRIVE # = Use this for more than one drive.

OTHER CMDS = To enter your own disk commands.

CHANGE DRIVE I/O = Change source and destination drives.

Use "OTHER CMDS" to do the following:

Format Commodore disk = "N:DISKNAME,ID"
Rename a file = "R:NEWNAME=OLDNAME
Validate disk = "V
Scratch a file = "S:FILENAME
Initialise drive = "I"
Force 1571 to 1571 mode = "U0>M1
Force 1571 to 1541 mode = "U0>M0
Disk verify off = "U0>V1" (1581 and new 1571 ROM drives only)
Disk verify on = "U0>V0" (1581 and new 1571 ROM drives only)

ADDITIONAL BIG BLUE READER 128 OPTIONS

VIEW DIR
Purpose: Display a Commodore, MS-DOS, or C128 CP/M dosk directory on the current destination drive (See "CHANGE DRIVE I/O").

DATE
Purpose: Enters or changes the date. The date and time will be recorded on the MS-DOS directory for any Commodore or C128 CP/M files you copy to MS-DOS.

To set or change the date use the <+><-> and <RETURN> keys.

TIME
Purpose: Displays and sets the time.

To set or change the time use the <+><-> and <RETURN> keys.

UTILITIES

The UTILITIES function has three options you may choose:

1. CHANGE DRIVE I/O
2. FORMAT MS-DOS DISKETTE
3. 1571 SPEED UP

CHANGE DRIVE I/O
Purpose: To change the SOURCE and DESTINATION disk drive.

All files are loaded from the source drive and saved to the destination drive. Valid drive numbers are eight to eleven. Valid drive types show as either 1541, 1571, or 1581 disk drive. Use the [F1] and [F2] keys to select drives.

** BBR 64 includes this function under the "DISK CMDS" option.

Please note: A 1541 drive cannot read from nor write to MS-DOS diskettes and any attempt to do so may lock up your system, thereby requiring you to re-boot the Big Blue Reader.

FORMAT MS-DOS DISKETTE

WARNING: Formatting a dikette will completely erase it.
This BBR 128 option will format an MS-DOS 5.25 inch 360K double sided disk using a 1571 on the current destination drive. Once firmatted, the disk can be read from and written to using the Big Blue Reader 128/64 and most but not all IBM PC compatible MS-DOS computers.
Disk formatted with BBR cannot BOOT MS-DOS with system files.

Note: If you need to format C128 CP/M disks,

please BOOT CP/M on your C128 and use the CP/M "FORMAT" command. Choose either the C128 1571 or Commodore 1581 disk formats.

1571 SPEED-UP

Every time the Commodore 1571 writes a sector to a Commodore (GCR) disk, the 1571 automatically verifies that the data was written correctly. The 1571 Speed-up function disables this automatic write/verify action -- with the slight risk of losing some data. This will speed up writing to Commodore disks by about 30-50%. This function first resets the 1571 by issuing a "UJ" command, it then executes a short program within the 1571 drive that bypasses the normal write/verify action. Note: The new 1571 ROMs have essentially this same routine built in. Simply send the disk command "U0>V1" to activate the disk verify off, and send the command "U0>V0" to turn the disk verify on.

Resetting your 1571, by turning it off and then back on, will return your drive to normal.

ADDITIONAL UTILITY PROGRAMS

BIG BLUE READER (for the 64)

The program BIG BLUE FORMAT for the Commodore 64 allows you to format various 5.25 in MS-DOS disk formats using a 1571 disk drive. (The most popular MS-DOS disk format is 360K DS-9.) Disk formatted with Big Blue Format can be read from or written to using Big Blue Reader and most but not all IBM PC compatible computers. To use simply LOAD and RUN the program then follow the prompts. The space bar may be used to change drives should you have more than one 1571. Note: You can format 5.25 inch 360K MS-DOS disks from within the BBR 128 program.

1581 MS-DOS FRMT (Available for both C64 and C128)

This program will format 720K MS-DOS disks using the 3.5 inch 1581 drive. There are two versions of this program, one for C128 and one for C64, each is found on the appropriate side of the disk. To use simply LOAD and RUN the program

named, "1581 MS-DOS FRMT". The program will automatically seek the 1581 drive and then ask you to press <CTRL><F> to start formatting a disk. If you are using more than one 1581 you may use the space bar to seek out the next 1581 drive.

To load the following C128 programs, turn your C128 on without inserting the BBR 128 disk into the drive.

BIG BLUE BACKUP (for the C128)

Big Blue Backup will back-up standard 5.25 inch MS-DOS disks using the 1571 disk drive. Single sided disks take about four minutes, with only two disk swaps. Double sided disks take about eight minutes, with only four disk swaps. If you are using two 1571's you will not need to swap disks. The backup copy will be exactly like the original.

To use, LOAD and RUN the program. Follow the prompts, exchanging the source and destination disk as indicated. Be sure to write protect your original. The source disk is your original. The destination disk will be your backup. The destination disk is formatted automatically. While the program is working, the screen will display which side and which track is being read from or written to at that time.

If a disk error occurs, you will be prompted to <I>gnore, <R>etry or <A>bort reading or writing that particular track. If you choose <I>gnore, the program will continue ignoring the error, and thus corrupting data on that particular track. If you choose <R>etry, the program will try again to read or write that particular track. If you choose <A>bort, the program will abort the backup process, leaving you a corrupted disk. Once the backup is complete, you may then backup another disk.

EXAMINE FILE (for the C128)

The EXAMINE FILE program will load any Commodore file into memory. Then by using

the built-in C128 MONITOR you can examine the file for its content, structure, etc. The program BLOAD's files intoC128 memory Bank 0 starting at HEX $2000. Program files are relocated to this address, with the first two memory locations holding the load address of the file. Files larger than 224 blocks will fill all of bank 0 from $2000 to $FF00 with the first part of the file.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

READ ME FILE

The "READ ME" file on the BIG BLUE READER 128 or 64 disk may contain important update information not contained in this manual. Use the PRINT option of the Big Blue Reader to read this file.

FILE TYPES

The Big Blue Reader will easily transfe most files. This includes Commodore PRG, SEQ, REL, and USR files. Also most MS-DOS and CP/M files can be transferred. NOTE: Commodore RELative files (which can only be read by a 1571 or 1581) are treated like SEQuential files, with the side sector information ignored.

FOREIGN MFM CP/M DISK FORMATS

Big Blue Reader 128 can read and write three C128 CP/M disk formats: C128 single sided (1571 GCR), C128 double sided (1571 GCR) and Commodore 1581. CP/M disks in other formats will need to be copied to one of these three formats using the CP/M "PIP" command. This includes MFM CP/M formatted disks for the following computers: Epson QX10, IBM-8 (CP/M-86 on the IBM PC), KayPro II, KayPro IV, Osborne (double density), and any other CP/M disks readable by your C128 CP/M+ system.
Note: Big Blue Reader 128 runs in the C128 mode.

1700/1750 RAM EXPANSION MODULES
Big Blue Reader 128 utilises the 17xx RAM expansion module as a large file buffer. It does not use RAM Disk software, which may crash the system.

C128 80-COLUMN SCREEN
When printing non-text files to the 80-column

screen it is possible to corrupt the 80-column display so badly that you may need to reset your C128.

OTHER DISK COMMANDS

You may send any of the Commodore 1571/1581 "CHGUTL UTILITY COMMANDS" to your 1571/1581 disk drive using the OTHER CMDS.

COMMODORE 64 File Limits
Commodore 64 programs generally have a limited amount of storage available for data. Generally C64 programs can handle files of 20 to 100 blocks (5,000 - 25,000 bytes). If the MS-DOS file you want to transfer is larger than what will fit into your C64 application you will need to split the file.

First look through your program manual or user's guide for memory limits. You may also try loading a large file into your program and see if you get some kind of memory or overflow error, then simply resave the file and check the size of the resaved file. If the program crashes, this method won't work. Note: Ten (10) blocks on a Commodore disk is equal to about 2,500 bytes, 32 blocks is equal to about 8,000 bytes.

FAST SERIAL vs BURST MODE TRANSFER RATES
The Big Blue Reader 64 utilises fast serial routines to transfer data. These routines can transfer data as fast or faster than the C128 Burst mode.
Big Blue Reader 128 uses "Burst Mode" to transfer data to and from MS-DOS disks. Burst Mode is achieved on the C128 by special hardware lines at the serial bus. When the Commodore 128 is in C64 mode, burst mode is disabled by the C128 circuitry.
NOTE: A product called "C64 BURST ROM" from Chip Level Designs, gives the C64 "Burst Mode" when used with a 1571 or 1581 drive. The product automatically gives fast directory, SEQ and REL file access, as well as Burst mode Loading of program files.
COMMODORE 1571 ROM UPGRADE

It is advisable to obtain the ROM upgrade for older 1571 disk drives. The new ROM (available from Commodore Inc.) corrects most of the bugs that the Commodore 1571 had and increases the performance of the drive noticeably. For example; Big Blue Reader can read and write MS-DOS files faster using the new ROM.
The most noticeable way to tell if a 1571 has the ROM upgrade is to insert a few flippy disks into the drive while it's in 1571 mode and see if it reads the directory immediately. With the old ROM, the drive light flashes and it usually takes about ten seconds for the drive to start reading the directory. A flippy disk is a disk formatted as a single sided disk (1541 mode) on both sides by flipping it over; the Big Blue Reader 128/64 disk is like this.

NOTE: To force the 1571 drive into 1571 mode in Basic, type:

OPEN 15,8,15,"U0>M1":CLOSE15

COMMODORE 1581 3.5 INCH DISK DRIVE

The Commodore 1581 is a 3.5 inch disk drive, with a storage capacity of over 800K. Big Blue Reader 128 and 64 can read and write 3.5 inch 720K MS-DOS disks as well as standard Commodore 1581 disks using this drive.

BBR 128 can use the Commodore 1581 to read and write C128 CP/M 1581 files.

COMMODORE 1581 PARTITIONS and SUB-DIRECTORIES

The Big Blue Reader supports some Commodore 1581 sub-directories features. This is done by issuing direct commands through the OTHER CMDS in the DISK CMDS option. For example "/0:xyz" will bring up the sub-directory named "xyz". While "/" will bring you back to the ROOT directory. Also physically changing disk in the 1581 disk drive will return the root directory of a Commodore disk. See the 1581 User's Guide for more information.

Commodore 1541 users PLEASE NOTE-

The Commodore 1541 disk drive CAN NOT read nor write MS-DOS disks. The 1541's hardware deems it impossible. Even if the 1541 could read or write MS-DOS disks, the 1541 is only a single sided drive, while most MS-DOS disks are double sided (360K DS-9).

USING TWO DISK DRIVES WITH THE BIG BLUE READER

In order to use two disk drives with BBR you may need to change the device number of one of them. It is best to do this using the switches on the rear of the drive.
Also when you are using two drives with BBR you may need to change the source and destination drive using the CHANGE DRIVE I/O option. Keep in mind that BBR 128/64 has its own fast load for both 1571 and 1581 drives.

HELP AND TROUBLESHOOTING:

1. Big Blue Reader 128/64 can work wonders, but not perform miracles, only GOD can do those.

2. Normally in order to transfer text files between Commodore and IBM MS-DOS you must use Commodore SEQuential files and MS-DOS standard ASCII files. Modt of the better word processing, database and spreadsheet programs have various file input/output options. You may have to try various input/output options to find a compatible combination in order to transfer some files using the Big Blue Reader.

3. If BBR 128 or 64 fails to load or operate properly, try disconnecting your printer. Some printer-interface combinations, interfere with the fast serial communication. Don't just turn your printer off, but unplug it at the disk drive. As a last resort try unplugging everything except your monitor and a 1571 or 1581 disk drive.

Part 3 : The concluding part will be in the May issue .

Anyone who uses this software who would like to make comments about it and/or how they have found it helpful. Please drop me a line and share it with others. I will endeavour to put an acomanying article with next months conluding BBR about how I transfere between both formats. Frank

Creative Micro Designs :2
Commodores Main Developer

This is part two of Dale Sidebottoms article, the first article I typed from Geos Publication. I then sent a letter to Dale explaining what i had done and would he send part two. The next thing to happen was an unexpected phone call from Dale his self and the arrival of both parts one and two of his article with permission to re-print in the News. What Dale would have ideally liked is for both his articles to be put into the News as is to show what can be done with a Commodore and a laser printer. Although U.S. paper is slightly smaller than our standard A4 this did not cause any problem. What did happen is that I could not get a good quality copy(we have the latest technologic copiers at work)that would show off how good the finished article is in hard copy. My apologies Dale but I did try to keep your article as was. Dave Elliott

PART TWO.

I love to receive any Commodore magazine or newsletter.They always contain information that challenges and inspires me. One of the biggest surprises arrived with the Nov/Dec 95(issue 11) of Commodore World. Inside was a "CMD/CW Market Survey". I found some of the questions particularly intriguing.

Consider question #18.
(a) If you were to buy another computer at this time,what platform would you consider most seriously ?
A. MS-DOS B. Macintosh C. Amiga
D. Other......(b) Why ?

This is a touchy subject because it touches the fear that haunts us all. No matter how delicate the user,the nagging thought persists that someday.......due to an inability to stay current or a lack of parts......Commodore will cease to exist as a viable platform. Everyone of us may be forced to move on to some other computer: MS-DOS, Mac, Amiga, or Other. But why does CMD want to know ?.

I perked up when I read question #23:
(a) Would you be interested in a new CMD computer if it had compatibility with existing Commodore Software or Hardware.....?
(b) What features would you deem to be most important and what specific compatibility level would you consider satisfactory ?
(c) How much would you be willing to spend on such a computer without monitor ?
(d) Would you still be interested if it required you to purchase an SVGA monitor(approx. $200 to $300)

If your mother-in-law asks if you want to replace the carpet in your living room,your first instinct is to think of it as an idle question. But if she continues to prod you,asking what texture and colour you prefer,you begin to think that maybe you'll soon be walking on a new carpet.

Question #23 struck me that way. Part (a) seemed like an idle question until I read (b), (c) and (d). Suddenly it began to sound like CMD might be serious.

> " Remember the C-65 ?. It sounded too good to be true,and indeed it was! It felt like a cruel hoax to those who had taken the advanced ads seriously."

On the other hand, we have been disappointed so often by the prospects of a new computer. Remember the C-65 ?. It sounded too good to be true, and indeed it was! It felt like a cruel hoax to those who had taken the advanced ads seriously.

Consider this,I decided to wait for the results of the survey before investigating further. I sort of poured the whole thing into a pot and pushed it on the back burner to simmer awhile.

Meanwhile CMD was busy developing the SuperCpu. There were many delays of course,and for months we waited and watched and wondered if it would really happen. Maurice Randall is a good friend and a member of the Lansing Area Commodore Club(LACC). Reading their newsletter the Double Click,I learned that he was demonstrating a SuperCpu prototype for his user group way back in May!. It was obvious that CMD was getting "SUPER CLOSE" to a finished product.

My mind travelled back to 1990 and an article entitled LETS GO FASTER,which first appeared in the Jan/Feb issue(#5) of geoJournal. The author Joe Tom Collins, believed that a faster processor for the Commodore was quite possible. Commodore (CBM) computers have had a few drawbacks for a long time. Slow drives with small storage space, limited memory,and slow processor speed have all contributed to the perception that Commodores are TOY computers or GAME MACHINES...

As the 64 pushes towards its tenth anniversary, we've seen a lot of yester-years problems start to fade. The Creative Micro Design's(CMD) product, JiffyDos as well as other products have speeded up the drive access. Commodore, in some of its brightest decisions, made the 1571 and 1581 disk drives...... and CMD is now producing a full-fledged set of hard disk drives with SCSI standard used in almost every computer....
CMD is also making a ram expansion unit (RAMLINK) offering..as much as 16 megabytes in the not so far distant future. This brings us to the last big inadequacy of the Commodore 8 bit line.....Processor Speed.
Here he demonstrated how thoroughly he had done his homework. He explained that the Commodore and Apple computers are distant cousins. They all use the same type of processor. Zip Technologies had created speed up chips for the Apple computer. There was no reason why it couldn't work for us too!.

So he called up the Commodore support line and the technicians said it should be possible but that their marketing people said that SPEED was not a big issue with Commodore users. Well he was incensed and no wonder. We know why CBM thought that a speed chip was unnecessary,and it had nothing to do OUR desires.

CBM's marketing department was already unhappy because so many Commodore users were not switching to the Amiga!, The last thing they needed was a faster processor to make the C-64 even more attractive.
    At the time I was the editor of the LUCKY LINE the newsletter of the LUCKY user group. I loved his article so much that I made it the main feature of our summer 1990 issue. . The big movie

on the marquee back then was DAYS OF THUNDER starring Tom Cruise. Tom played a racing driver named Cole and Rowdy was his main competitor. The cover I designed fully expressed as best I could the frustration we felt, knowing that we were being held back and not allowed to compete on a more equal footing.

Joe Tom Collins spoke of Commodore drawbacks, such as slow drives, small storage,and limited memory. He then explained that CMD had solutions to all of them except the last and perhaps the most challenging....a slow processor. Now nearly seven years after he pleaded seemingly invain for more speed, Joe Tom Collins has what he lobbied for. I hope that he is around to enjoy a well deserved victory !!. It occurred to me that the SuperCpu represents the greatest technological advance in the Commodore since the Commodore 64 and 128 !. The developers of this kind of hardware could produce anything !!.

Problem: When a company has done everything it can do in a particular field,it soon develops itchy feet . I certainly did not want CMD to move on to other markets, but what could they do for an encore !. Suddenly I realized that my pot was boiling. I pulled it off the back burner and opened it up to discover that CMD/CW survey. No longer able to contain my curiosity I called CMD and talked to its co-founder Charlie Christianson.

DALE: You sent out a survey at the end of 1995. What were the results?.
CHARLIE: We have entered the data in our computer,but we haven't really had time yet to analyze the results. The SuperCpu has complete priority right now.
DALE: Question 18 of your survey asked about other platforms. Do you remember which were the most popular ?.
CHARLIE: Yes. About 50% chose MS-DOS, 30% for Macintosh,15% for Amiga and 5% for other.
DALE: What about question 23?. Have you seriously considered introducing a new Commodore-compatible computer ?.
CHARLIE: It is a possibility, but nothing is imminent.
DALE: Because MS-DOS as the most popular

alternative,would this new computer have two modes;one a C-64 and the other MS-DOS.

CHARLIE: NO. We have no intention of producing MS-DOS. MS-DOS has in effect taken the home out of the home computer market. Almost everything purchased today is a mid- to high-end business machine. It will generally cost $100 to purchase it and another $1000 for the software if you buy it legally. You've invested over $2000 (to balance your chequebook, follow investments, help the kids with their homework and surf the net). This kind of cost is out of line for most families !.

DALE: What kind of computer does CMD envision ?.

CHARLIE: We plan to use the same 65816 processor now used in the SuperCpu,except that this would be a whole new computer!. It would have two modes: (8-bit processing) and CMD Native Mode(16-bit processing). It would be designed to work with a TV or SVGA monitor and could be used with all the modern peripherals such as CD-ROM devices. We hope to be able to sell this new home computer for about three hundred dollars,probably $299.

DALE: How far has CMD gotten in the planning process ?.

CHARLIE: We are just starting. CMD has a hard conceptual design and the beginnings of a prototype. We are entertaining discussions with venture capitalists to gauge their interest in the possibility of producing such a machine. As I said nothing is imminent. We are at least 2 years and millions of dollars away from an actual product!!.

He also explained that the 65816 processor was used in the Apple IIGS. Through the Internet CMD has already received inquiries from people who programmed for that computer and would like to program for us!.

It is dangerous to dwell in NEVER-NEVER LAND. In part because we have been disappointed there in the past. Remember CMD'S new computer isn't even out of the

incubator. But if we can maintain reality and still enjoy dreaming, imagine the implications. How would you feel to see magazines on the shelf again extolling the virtues of your platform. Returning to earth we must realize that such PIE-IN-THE-SKY possibilities are years from fruitition. Still as Patrick Hendry once asked, WHY STAND WE HERE IDLE ?. Aren't there some steps we could be taking to make this dream a reality. I believe the answer is YES !!. Lets start with these.

The first thing we can to do help them is DO NOT CALL. When I asked to report this to you, CMD's greatest concern was that they would be flooded with calls asking for details they would be unable to provide. It is too early to know what the future holds. Certainly we should be getting some kind of progress report in CW before long,but CMD has its hands full for now finishing the SuperCpu for the 128.

I assured them that we would respect their request. Please help me keep that promise.

Secondly,we must work to maintain market share. We need to continue to strengthen our user groups. In the last issue(#16) of CW, Jayne Rice president of the Tampa Commodore Users Group (TCUG), suggested five ways to increase our membership. They were very good and I recommend them to you. The one I felt should be added to the list was to emphasize the importance of recent retirees.

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In the LUCKY club, we find that several of our newest and most active members come from this group. They have much wisdom,vitality, and a deep respect for those things that have proven their character over time. Another way to maintain market share is to increase our use of the internet. Whenever a user group fails there are often faithful Commodore users left stranded and alone. The Internet provides a way for us to maintain close contact

over long distances.

That is why the LUCKY club has elected to create an internet TELEPHONE BOOK of Commodore Users. So if you are CONNECTED please send us your internet address and your name, if you choose to share it E-MAIL your data to the club or to me. More information will be given later.

The third thing we must do is to maintain our balance. If we never see a next generation computer,are we going to quit ?. I hope we will continue to enjoy what we already have!!. Today we have the best hardware and software that Commodore users have ever known. Never has there been a better time to own a Commodore. We need to enjoy what we have and yet seek to expand upon it.

To expand we need to invest. If you want CMD to build your next computer, take full advantage of the one you have now by following the suggestions Joe Tom Collins made over six years ago.

Achieve
      (1) faster disk access
      (2) greater disk storage
      (3) more memory and
      (4) much faster processing speed
by turning your TOY into a MEAN SUPREME computing machine !!!. These products are available from CMD.

By the way it just occurred to me that there may be one exception to CMD's don't call request. If you are lucky enough to own millions of dollars and are intrigued by the concept of venture capital...if under these circumstances you want to know more about this pie in the sky next-generation, Commodore compatible DYNAMITE in home computing....why not give them a call. I suspect they'll be glad to get it !!.

Some users balk at investing a couple hundred dollars upgrading their Commodores. Why ?. Don't miss part three of this series, where we'll discuss CMD and CAUTIOUS MARKET DECISIONS.

AUTHORS NOTE:
    Commodore once referred to Commodore Business Machines Inc (CBM). They are now bankrupt. Therefore the word COMMODORE as used in this article never refers to the Commodore business except in the quotes from the article by Joe

Tom Collins. Otherwise it always refers to the Commodore 64 and 128 in their various forms or to the community of Commodore enthusiasts throughout America and around the world.

Write to Creative Micro Designs (CMD) at P.O.Box 646,East Longmeadow MA 01028 U.S.A or call them at 001 800 638 3263.

The Lansing Area Commodore Club(LACC) P.O.Box 1065,East Lansing MI 48826. The club newsletter, the DOUBLE CLICK is edited by Maurice Randall. Maurice also has a BBS called the speed zone. If you want to visit call 001 517 322 2386.

LUCKY is the Louiseville Users of Commodore of Kentucky Inc. P.O.Box 9551 Louisville KY 40209-0551 U.S.A. E-MAIL them at 3050@iglou.com

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Well, that's real thought provoking stuff written by Dale. Perhaps some of you have your own thoughts and feelings on the matter of the so called demise of the C64. If so, why not drop a line to the editor of this publication who will be happy not only to publish them in YOUR newsletter but also pass them on to Dale for some feed back from Europe. You can submit in any format even handwritten as long as it is legible. I look forward to hearing from you, who are, or should be, interested parties to CMD's attempts to keep you and your 8 bit machine in line and up to date with modern technology.

Thanks also go to Dave (geoNut) Elliott for getting this to us. Frank