THE DISPATCH DISK

SOUTHERN DISTRICTS
COMMODORE USERS
CLUB INC.

COMMITTEE - 1987/88

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	Julie Collins phone 381 7202	12 Resolute Cresc.	Hallett Cove.
	Michael Knill phone 339 4959	5 Valeyside Dr.	Crafers.

Librarian : John Hancock - see above.
Library open 7:00 pm - 7:30 pm each general meeting.

Newsletter : John Hancock - see above.

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Next meeting : MONDAY 26th September at 7:30 pm.

Location : Salvation Army Hall, Elizabeth Rd. Morphett vale.
Subject : Family Night (School Holidays)

October : AGM

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* PICNIC ON SUNDAY 27th NOVEMBER *

Mr. J. Hancock,
Editor,
The Dispatch Disk,
2 Pat Crescent,
Morphett Vale S.A. 5162

Dear John,

I write in a sense of frustration and, whilst you have some involvement in the matters concerning my state of mind, I hope that you will take the criticisms as constructive not destructive or personal.

My first concern is relatively small and I guess small is the operative word. Like everyone else, I am not getting any younger and with age comes failing sight. Consequently, I find the reduced size of print of the Club newsletter annoying. Is there a reason? Are we going broke? How do other members feel about the size?

I fully realise that producing any Club newsletter is a time consuming, thankless task and that you were probably the only contributor to the last issue. But I did find the August issue disappointing. I find that it had little related to Commodore computers in it and that, I thought, was the purpose of the Club!

Speaking of purpose I found the demonstration at the August meeting both frustrating and boring. I thought that it was a particularly inappropriate demonstration to have on just after the Noarlunga TAFE demo when we had quite a few guests/enquirers present. Whilst not being an Amiga fan, I recognize that it is a Commodore computer and there are members interested in Amigas. I myself was interested in the fact that an Amiga can be reconfigured to run as an IBM/IBM clone, but having got that far, my interest stops! I am not the least interested in how "Wordstar" runs nor "Lotus 1-2-3" (especially when it doesn't run). I, too, work with IBM compatible machines at work. We use word processors and spreadsheets on them. Different ones! And I could probably argue that the ones which we use are better. But the place for that argument is surely not at a Commodore User group meeting!

I could not help but wonder how many of our visitors on that night even knew what a word processor or spreadsheet was. Perhaps we would have been better off giving a demonstration of "EASYSCRIPT"! Come to think of it, have we ever done that?

Perhaps I am alone in my thoughts, but I go to group meetings to see Commodore things, discuss Commodore problems and talk with Commodore users.

I said that I would be constructive and so I will be. Enclosed with this letter are a series of articles about the past/present/future of the C-64 which, I feel is downgraded by a lot of people. The articles attempt to correct this impression. I hope that you publish them over the next few months.

Additionally Ross Edwards and I are putting together a demonstration which will go for about an hour, in which we will attempt to show how the limits of the C-64's sound and graphics capability have been pushed well beyond its known capacity. We are entitling the demonstration "Duelling Demos" and we will be available to show it from mid - November onwards.

I have no objection to the contents of this letter being published and would welcome any debate arising from it.

Yours in Computing,

Jeff Carey

EDITORS REPLY

I welcome the above letter as the first such critical comment that has been received since the club started two years ago. I would also welcome any constructive discussion which may result from Jeff's comments. Since the letter is addressed to me I will therefore take it upon myself to comment on the criticisms in this letter.

The newsletter is reduced in size for convenience of handling and postage. In an attempt to redress the difficulty in coping with the small writing a larger print size is being used this month for most of the magazine. No the club is not going broke.

About the contents of the club newsletter, almost all of the articles are written by me and as such will naturally reflect my spheres of experience and interest. This is the least constructive part of the letter since no possible topics or subject matter is suggested for the newsletter. I too am at times disappointed with the lack of interest in the newsletter, but I should not be too critical of Jeff since (to my knowledge) he has written the only unsolicited articles printed in the newsletter.

The reason for the IBM on the Amiga demonstration was to show how the Amiga computer could be turned into a business machine quite cheaply, thus defying the contradiction, "Having your cake and eating it too". The Amiga computer is quite plainly a very much superior machine than the Commodore 64, or 128. It is much faster, has true multitasking, much more powerful graphics capabilities, more sophisticated sound, and much better screen control. If it is possible to couple this with IBM PC compatibility it then becomes an attractive proposition. Having said that quite plainly the demonstration should have ended but it did not, and this seems to be the essence to the criticisms. There seems to be a need for some basic instruction on operating and programming the Commodore 64/128. There are also a number of people who would like to get a little deeper into their computers. To accommodate the first of these needs a basic tutorial will begin this month starting with the simple operation of the Commodore 64 and go onto using BASIC and writing simple BASIC programmes. This is meant to address the needs of the beginners in our club.

There have been a number of demonstrations on wordprocessors, (including I believe Easyscript), and databases, but not spreadsheets. There have also been articles in the club newsletter on these matters. A Superbase tutorial is being discussed.

On the future of the Commodore 64, I can only talk about my experience. Three things have killed the Commodore 64 market in Australia, pirating of software, the price to power ratio of the Amiga and dealers, importers, distributors and the Australian Government's desire to make a profit from the poor software consumer. The success of BB Writer proves that there is still a market for good quality, reasonably priced Commodore 64/128 software. It does not matter what the Commodore 64 is doing in England or America if the dealers will not stock the software in Australia then it will be brought in from overseas by other interests.

Finally I would like to thank Jeff for the articles he has typed up and the promised demonstration, all input from any club member is warmly welcomed.

J.H.

* PICNIC ON SUNDAY 27th NOVEMBER *

COMING EVENTS

A picnic is planned for Sunday the 27th of November at court 1 at Loftia Park. A barbecue is planned with meat provided. The cost will be $2.00 per adult and children will be free. Bring your own salads, drink and barbecues. There will also be door prises. Money will be required by september if possible, or october at the latest.

Our A.G.M. will be on Monday the 31st of October. Start thinking about your involvement in the committee or nomination for committee positions.

* PICNIC ON SUNDAY 27th NOVEMBER *

COMMODORE PROFITS FROM AMIGA'S GROWTH

COMMODORE COMPUTERS of Westcheaster, Pennsylvania, yesterday announced a 13 per cent increase in sales of personal computers for this financial year.

Profit was $US55.8 million ($68 million) on sales of $US871 million, up from $US806 million last year.

The company's chairman and chief executive officer, Mr Irving Gould, said the increased profitability was due to sales growth for its Amiga and compatible microcomputers in Europe, North America and Australia.

In Australia, sales of the Amiga A500 rose to 28,000 since its introduction in August last year. Sales of C64s were up 30 per cent.

The managing director for Commodore Australia, Mr Tony Serra, said a five-year plan established in 1986, projected sales worth $100 million by 1991.

This was now ahead of schedule, he said.

He said Commodore was now able to talk about a dealer delivery base of 56,000 units and that there was "no reason to believe that the growth of Commodore in Australia will not continue to outstrip its competitors".

EXTRACT FROM "THE AUSTRALIAN" 30/8/88

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BASIC   Beginners All Purpose Symbolic Instruction Code.
Originally developed in the early sixties as an aid to
learning how computers operate. It was later adapted as
a computing *language*. Many forms of this language exist
today both as compiled and interpretive code produced by
many different companies. Some forms of the *BASIC*
language bear very little resemblance to the original.
compiler, interpreter, code.

Baud   Named after a nineteenth century French engineer Jean
Baudot who developed a transmission *code* still used in
telex machines. One baud is the speed of transmission of
one *BIT* and is used to describe the speed of transmission
of character transmission codes such as *RS232-C*. This is
NOT the same as bits per second which is used to describe
the rate of transmission of bit transmission codes.
ASCII, RS232-C

Binary   Means two. One of two states, on or off, 0 or 1, high or
low. Information in computers is stored in binary. Each
binary digit or *BIT* can represent one of two states.
Usually a *computer* memory location consists of eight bits
which can represent 256 states. This is called one *BYTE.*

Bit   One *binary* digit. This is a location or value having
one of two states.

Block   Sometimes called a "Cluster". This is the smallest
unit of information that a disk file may occupy.
Typical block sizes are 1k bytes, or 2k bytes. The
larger the block size the more disk space is wasted but
the less disk space is taken by the block allocation
map, and the faster the files are loaded. So there is
a trade off between disk space and speed with block
size.

Boot   This is the process of starting the computer. Many
computers for example the Commodore 64 have their
operating system in *ROM* or permanent memory. This
means that the computer is booted by turning it on. On
other systems an operating system must be loaded from
mass storage.
boot strap, cold boot, warm boot

Boot Strap
      This was derived from the saying "To pull yourself up
by your bootstraps." On older mainframes and mini
computers The process of starting a computer was quite
tedious and involved. Very little programme or data
was held in the computers internal memory while it was
off. Each time the computer was started a small
section of memory called "Hard wired memory" which was
simply that, a number of wire links plus a few
instructions entered into the computer by switches
would load a boot strap loader from some external
storage device such as a paper tape, magnetic tape, or

disk drive. The boot strap loader was a short
programme that did no more than enable the computer to
load another larger programme called the boot strap
often kept on another mass storage device. This would
then load the various sections of the operating system
required to get the computer into a operational state.
This then led to the term "Boot".
*boot, cold boot, warm boot, load, loader, memory, paper
tape, disk, drive*

Buffer   A buffer is some means of isolating a device so as to
make it work more effectively or to prevent damage.
This word is used is used in three general ways. First
it is used to describe a circuit which is used to
transfer the electronic signals but will prevent any
damaging signals from getting into electronic circuits.
Computers that have buffered outputs have this
protection. The output of a modem that is plugged into
a telephone socket has to be properly buffered.
Secondly a buffer may be a device to store information
until the device it is ready to use that information.
Finally a device to convert a signal of one format to
another format can be called a buffer. A *modem* is one
such device.

Bus   A Bus is a means of transferring data between two
devices. This involves the number and type of wires
used, the type of connector, how fast the data travels,
the means of detecting and correcting errors and the
messages sent and received (handshaking) to ensure that
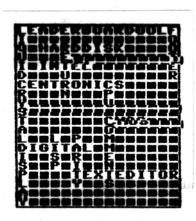correct data transfer takes place.

Byte   This is usually the unit of storage of data in a
computer. One byte consists of eight bits. A byte may
have one of 256 values, from 0 to 255.

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FOR SALE

SPECIAL
30 ONLY DISKS AT $9.00 PER 10
See Graham Hawes at tonights meeting.

AUGUST CROSSWORD

SEPTEMBER CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Wordprocessor
5. Type of Printer
6. Part of Disk
7. Keyboard Key
9. Row And Column Computer Programme
12. Acronym Sometimes Used To describe computers
13. Printer Pitch

DOWN

1. Prepare Disk
2. Type of Memory
3. Used For Indicator Lights
4. Computer Language
8. Commodore 64 Plugin
10. Computer
11. BASIC Command