Southern Districts Commodore Users Club Inc

The Dispatch Disk
February 1990

Welcome to the February edition of "THE DISPATCH DISK". I hope you like the new layout. This came about from a sudden inspiration only one night before the deadline. The old layout was copied from previous issues and was done to enable me to get the issue out without too many hassles, while at the same time learning something about putting a newsletter together. Sadly it was getting a little tired with one of the big problems being; "Who reads the front page"? It always seemed to contain exactly the same as last issues. Well I hope that some of you will read this page now.

The theme for tonight's meeting is WORDPROCESSORS. The demonstration tonight will be on several of these including Speedscript, Easyscript, Geowrite and The Write Stuff and our thanks go to those people who will be speaking tonight.

The topic for next month's meeting will be DISK CATALOGUE PROGRAMS. At present we hope to be able to show you two of them, namely "SUPER CAT" and "D.C.M.R.- Disk Catalogue/Manager Reporter". Quite a mouthful but a very good program. Best of all it is Public Domain and copies should be available from Jeff at next months meeting. We would also welcome demonstrations of any other programs that members may be using.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Jenny Easton to the club. Jenny has agreed to take on the job of Secretary which is most welcome.

Lastly, in order to tidy up our membership list, I would ask you all, old members as well , to fill out a new Membership Form please.

See you next month.   Terry Pitt

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL
THE FUTURE OF USER GROUPS

I believe that user groups have a very important role to play in the future of the C-64 and C-128. In fact I believe they will be the ONLY way in the future! There will come a day, maybe not too far away, when Commodore will stop making these machines. The signs are already there.

The C-128 and C-128D have ceased production and their accessories are getting very hard or impossible to find. Have you seen a NEW 1571 disk drive for sale recently? The main reason the C-64 is still in production is the large number that have already been sold (in excess of 8 million) which has led to product familiarity. To the uninitiated, computers can be intimidating, but a C-64, "Joe Blow owns one of them and says they're easy to use". It seems that everyone knows someone that owns a C-64.

The other thing that is keeping it going is the huge software base which is in excess of 10000 programs. This means that there is a program to make the machine do almost anything.

This brings me back to the topic under discussion. A large percentage of these programs are Public Domain. If production of the C-64 stops, then commercial software production will slow down or cease also. That leaves only Public Domain software, and where do you find out about it? Your local User Group.

What happens if you acquire a new piece of software or hardware and then experience difficulties using it? Where do you go to get assistance? There is only a limited amount a dealer can or will do under warranty, and if it is a piece of software, he may well know less about it than you do! There is a place you can go to where you will find someone who has already experienced the problem and worked out a solution. You guessed it, its your local User Group.

These are just a couple of the ways User Groups can be of benefit to C-64 owners. So how about it? What can you do to support YOUR local User Group? The answer is to be a part of it. Help out by giving a demonstation. Ask questions and make suggestions. Write an article or even just an outline for this newsletter. Volunteer to set up the chairs or sell the tea and coffee. There are many different ways in which you can help our group to grow and survive for the future. Go to it.
    Terry Pitt - Editor

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MAGAZINE LIBRARY

WE have added the following magazines to the library this month.

ZZAP-64 - August and October, 1989 This is a great magazine to check out games before you buy them and it can be a great help with instructions for those games where "you have lost the instructions". It also contains 'cheats' and 'unlimited lives' POKES for games.

COMPUTE!'S GAZETTE December 1986. This issue contains 'A Buyers Guide To Commodore 64 Simulation Software', 128 Quicksort (Sort at lightning speed on the 128), The Animals Show (Write your own songs then let the animals perform them on your 128), Fast Hi-Res Dump for 64 & 128. We have the disk available with the type in programs.

COMMODORE MAGAZINE October, 1989 issue. This contains an article describing how to build an A-B switch to enable you to switch between 2 printers, tells you how to interact with GeoPublish and heaps of Tips and Tricks for the 64 & 128.

WHAT ELSE IS IN THE LIBRARY

Compute!'s Gazzette - Nov 1984 :- Disk Auto Load for C-64, Bulletin Board Review, "Bagdad"(a type in game) plus reviews.

Compute!'s Gazzette - Dec 1984 :- "3-D Labyrinth"(a type in game), Trivia Games Reviews, Disk/Tape Backup plus reviews.

Compute!'s Gazzette - June 1985 :- "Dynamic SID Editor", "The Freeze Factory" (a type in game), "Relative Files Demo", Tape Program Rescue plus reviews. The type in programs from this issue are available on disk from the librarian.

Other magazines in the club library include :-
Commodore User - Dec 1985
ZZAP-64 - Jun 1988
Disk Users Handbook
Your Commodore Hardware Buyers Guide 1988

Compute! June - 1988 :- Descriptions of 49 Supersonic Flight Simulators.

Australian Electronics Monthly Aug. 1986 (contains details of how to build a Commodore Modem Coupler)

Electronics Today International Aug. 1986 (contains project ETI-1602: C64 Function Switches).

Please see last months "DISPATCH DISK" for a more detailed description of what is in each magazine. We have started up this library in the interests of the members. Generally, we will only include magazines which are relevant to the C-64 and C-128.

Most of our club members have boug a Commodore magazine at some time, rea and then put it away for future reference. The magazine is most likely still sitting there gathering dust. If yo have one or two (or more) magazines whi fall into this category, how about makin donation of them to the Club library so that other members can also share in t wisdom which you gained from your purchase. Jeff Carey or any Committee Member will accept your donation and it be quickly added to the collection.

If you know an ex-Commodore user wh may have old magazines stored away, please ask them if they would be prepar to donate them. Magazines of particula interest are :- Compute!'s Gazette, Run, Commodore User, Zap 64, Commodore Magazine (Aust. & USA), Ahoy, Info, Commodore Computing International.

128 LIBRARIAN

Your current Disk & Magazine Librarian a dedicated C-64 User and his bank balance suggests that even if his inclinations change, his financial position will not allow him to purchase a 128. As result, while he can copy 128 Public doma disks, there is no way that he can test run new library programs or prepare a brief description of what the programme does. Therefore we are calling for a volunteer to be '128 Disk Librarian'. The volunteer's workload will not be heavy - duties will include bringing the 128 PD Dis Box to meetings so that they can be copied, at his/her leisure run the variou programmes on the disks thus ensuring that they do work and write a brief description of what the programme does for the Library and the Newsletter. Of course, we would like the volunteer t come along to committee meetings on the Tuesday the week before each meeting. This is optional but good fun as we spen at least equal time talking computers as we spend on Club business. The benefits are that anytime you want a 128 Public Domain programme, it is right there at home and as we get more programs, gues who gets to test them first!!! If you are interested, let Jeff Carey know tonight or at 294-8447.

SPEEDSCRIPT

In conjunction with tonight's theme of Wordprocessors, we have available from the Island Software Club, it's Public Doma Wordprocessor 'SPEEDSCRIPT'. The disk contains all the instructions which can b viewed on screen or printed out. Copies available tonight priced at $5 per disk.

MAGAZINE LIBRARY RULES

There is no charge for borrowing magazines from the Club Magazine Library but borrowers must be paid up members for 1990. Please put your receipt numbe on the borrowing slip.

Because the library stock is extreme limited at this stage, only one magazine per family per month can be borrowed.

Loans are for a ONE month period a a $1 fine will be imposed if the magazine not returned at the next meeting. If yo are unable to attend, please contact a committee member to make alternative arrangements.

Jeff Carey - Librarian
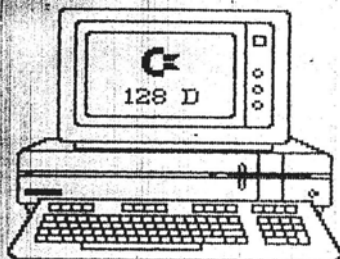
AN

INTRODUCTION

TO

BASIC

PROGRAMMING

TERRY PITT

This series of articles is written for the newcomer to computing and aims to introduce them to programming using the C-64 and BASIC V2. The commands here are also usable on the C-128 and where better alternatives in BASIC V7 exist, they will be compared and discussed also.

When programming in BASIC, two of the most useful commands are those which enable program execution to be halted, to allow the operator to enter data as required. These commands are INPUT and GET.

----- INPUTA or INPUTA$ -----

INPUT stops the program, prints a question mark on the screen and positions the cursor one space to the right, awaiting either numeric or string data to be entered via the keyboard. To signal the end of the data, the [RETURN] key is pressed. The usefulness of the input statement is enhanced further by its ability to include a printed prompt, which can include cursor control codes, on the screen, to describe the data which needs to be entered.
Eg. 10 INPUT"ENTER YES OR NO [Y/N]";A$
The printed prompt is limited by the screen editor to 68 characters and the data to 78 characters. It is possible to enter more than one item of data from one INPUT statement, but the data items must be separated by commas.
Eg. 10 PRINT"ENTER TWO NUMBERS":
20 INPUT"SEPARATED BY COMMAS";A,B
The input statement is checked to ensure the correct type and amount of data has been entered and the following error messages may be encountered.
1) REDO FROM START:- usually when string data is entered instead if numeric.
2) ?? (extras) indicate the computer is expecting more data
3) ?EXTRA IGNORED means more data was entered than was requested.

The chief disadvantage of the INPUT statement lies with the need to press the [RETURN] key after data entry. This is confusing to the novice as well as being annoying and time consuming to the more experienced user.

----- GET A or GET A$ -----

The GET statement scans the keyboard and checks if a key has been pressed. If it has, then its value is assigned to the variable nominated and the program continues. If no key has been pressed then a null (0 or "") is assigned. GET on its own does not halt the program however. A little more must be added as shown in line 60.
Eg. 10 PRINT"SELECT DIRECTION BY NUMBER"
20 PRINT"   NORTH   (1)"
30 PRINT"   SOUTH   (2)"
40 PRINT"   EAST   (3)"
50 PRINT"   WEST   (4)"
60 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN 60
70 IF A$="1" GOTO 1000
80 IF A$="2" GOTO 2000

90 IF A$="3" GOTO 3000
100 IF A$="4" GOTO 4000
This simple menu causes the program to loop at line 60 until a key is pressed, evaluates it, then continues, jumping to the lines indicated in lines 70 - 100.

In line 60, we could have used
60 GETA :IF A=0 THEN 60 as we were only interested in numeric data. This is not recomended however, as a "?SYNTAX ERROR" will be printed if anything other than numeric data is entered. It is far safer to read the key as a string variable and convert it to numeric data afterwards using the VAL function. This leads us to the next part of the article
"BULLET PROOFING YOUR PROGRAMS"

The previous program has a BIG defect! No matter how simple you make it, someone will press the wrong key! This can cause all sorts of problems from unplanned program halts from SYNTAX ERRORS to extra linefeeds ruining your screen displays. For this reason, it is wise to include checks to allow only valid keypresses through. In the previous example we would add the following line;
65 A=VAL(A$) : IF A<1 OR A>4 THEN 10
This addition checks the value of the key to see if it is inside the the range allowed (1-4). If it isn't the program loops back to the start, reprints the screen and waits for another keypress.

If both letters and numbers must be accepted, then the ASC function could be used in place of the VAL function.
Eg. 65 A=ASC(A$) : IF A<48 OR A>90 THEN.
This will check the keypress against the table of ASCII codes and will allow the numbers 0-9, the letters A-Z and : ; < > = ? and @. All other keys will be disallowed.

----- GETKEYA$ -----

If you own a C-128, you can replace line 60 with 60 GETKEYA$ as this halts program execution automatically, and waits for a keypress. This makes programming faster and simpler as well as simplifying renumbering etc.

To finish up with, here is a more advanced program which shows an interesting way of using a FOR/NEXT loop to check a GET (or INPUT) statement for valid keypresses.
10 PRINT" SELECT SEARCH METHOD"
20 PRINT" SUBJECT   (S)"
30 PRINT" AUTHOR   (A)"
40 PRINT" KEYWORD   (K)"
50 PRINT" TITLE   (T)"
60 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN60
70 FOR L=1TO4:IFA$=MID$("SAKT",L,1)THEN
ON L GOTO 1000,2000,3000,4000
80 NEXT L:GOTO10

I will explain how this program works in next months tutorial as I will not be able to conduct tonight's. Hovever, if you read this article as well as your user guide and by experimenting with different routines by yourself, I hope you won't miss out too much. Remember to save your experiments on a disk or tape and bring them along to next month's meeting, where we can look at them. Next month's topic will be a look at FOR/NEXT loops to see how they can be used to simplify programming. By the way feel free make suggestions about any topics you would like to see covered in this series.

See you next month.   Terry Pitt
Exercise 1 (bring it with you next month)
Write a program using INPUT (or GET) to choose from a SQUARE, RECTANGLE or CIRCLE, enter its dimensions, calculate its area and then print out the results on the screen.   Remember K.I.S!

TYPEWRITER

In contrast to the wordprocessor programs of tonight, try this simple one. (It may need changes to suit your printer)

```
10 POKE 53280,14:POKE53281,15
20 OPEN 4,4,7:POKE650,128
30 PRINTCHR$(14):REM UPPER & LOWER CASE
40 PRINT"[CLR][BLUE][RVS][14SPC]TYPEWRITE
R"
50 PRINT"[RVS]C4 SPC]TWO SCREEN LINES TO
ONE ON PAPER.[3SPC][UP]"
60 POKE 1104,31:REM LEFT ARROW
70 GETA$:IFA$=""THEN70
80 PRINTA$;"[LEFT ARROW][LEFT]";:REM LEFT
ARROW - TOP LEFT ON KEYBOARD
90 IFA$=CHR$(20)THEN L=LEN(B$):B$=LEFT$
(B$,L-1):GOTO70:REM DELETE
100 IFA$=CHR$(13) THEN 130:REM PRINT
110 B$=B$+A$:IFLEN(B$)=80 THEN 130
120 GOTO70
130 PRINT#4,B$:B$="":GOTO70
```

WANTED

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED.

The committee needs people to assist in the following areas :-
(1) 128 disk and book librarian
(2) Arranging tea and coffee at meetings
(3) Club publicity in newspapers etc.
These are relatively small responsibilities and would not take up much time at all, so please give them some thought.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS.

Several people are desired to write or locate articles for the club newsletter. Some of the things we are looking for include short basic routines, program or book reviews and hardware projects.

CLUB EXPERTS

The club is trying to build up a reference list of "experts" on various pieces of software such as GEOS, Easy-Script, Superbase, etc. as well as BASIC, music, graphics etc. to help in answering queries from other members. If you can help please contact a committee member.

FOR SALE

Public Domain Software Disks from $2.00. Catalogue Disks, only $ 1.00. See Jeff Carey at tonight's meeting.

Brother 1109 AP printer. 75 cps draft, 19 cps NLQ. Friction or Tractor feed. RS232 input. More suited to Apple IIC computer, but will work with C=64 with interface (not supplied). $250.00 ono Contact Terry Pitt on 381 3216

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees will remain unchanged this year and are as follows .

JOINING FEE –
(New members only) $ 5.00

MEMBERSHIP FEE –
(New and existing members) $ 10.00

All members are reminded that these fees are due and can finally be paid. Please accept my apologies for the delay, but it was due to circumstances beyond my control. Due to my absence, please pay your fees to the Librarian, Jeff Carey, after tonight's meeting.

Terry Pitt - Treasurer

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 21st. of March at 7:30 pm .

SUBJECT
    Disk cataloguing programs
    Eg. Super Cat, D. C. M. R. etc.
    Beginners BASIC workshop cont.

Remember, any suggestions regarding topics for demonstration at meetings can be left in the suggestion box provided.

LOCATION
    Meetings are held in the house behind the Salvation Army Hall which is situated in Elizabeth Rd. at Morphett Vale, just in from Beach Rd.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the writers, and are not necessarily of the club's comittee members.

The use of the word "Commodore" in no way implies any connection with any organisation bearing that name.

No part of "The Dispatch Disk" may be copied or reproduced in any way, without the written permission of the committee and the author.

MEETING RULES

1) NO SMOKING
2) NO DRINKING
3) NO SWEARING

We are allowed the use of this house through the generousity of The Salvation Army in return for which we give them a relatively small donation. We seek your cooperation in respect to the above, as a breach of these conditions could find us looking for other clubrooms.

We cannot dictate what members do in the privacy of their own homes. However whilst you are attending meetings you are requested to refrain from copying any copyright material.

Thankyou - The committee

Wordprocessing
A brief history

by Sian Powell

In the beginning there was paper. Monks used to script beautiful texts onto creamy parchment with the help of scratchy quill pens. Cloistered in their bare little cells, they produced great works of art.

These illuminated manuscripts, although absolutely beautiful to look at, were a little less than satisfactory at disseminating information. They took days and weeks to script and hours to read. It didn't matter all that much in those days, because not too many people could read.

As the world progressed though, speed and ease of reading and writing became of paramount importance. The typewriter, when it finally arrived, certainly revolutionised communications. Although, to look at the first prototypes of typewriting machines, it's hard to believe. They were huge, clumsy, cumbersome objects. The secretaries of those days had to have wrists like heavyweight boxers to actually make the keys strike the paper.

Amazingly enough, typists did get the swing of producing copy from the iron monstrosities - in fact, almost too well. They began to type too quickly, and the keys developed a tendency to jam in horrible iron tangles. Finally, a keyboard configuration was developed to slow the typists down. It was the most difficult arrangement of keys that could be devised. This keyboard layout is still with us today, in the age of electronic marvels. The qwerty system is still used on the most sophisticated of computers, just as it was on the early typewriting machines.

Typewriters have had their heyday, and sadly they're on the way out. They have been replaced with the shining advance guard of this brave new world of communications - the word processor. It wasn't even a fight. The typewriter is disappearing gracefully away from offices. The odd machine is still hanging around for old time's sake, or to address the occasional envelope - but the spirit is fading fast.

At first the typewriter companies, with huge investments to protect, developed half-breed computer/typewriters, which were basically not much more than your average, ordinary typewriter with a small LCD screen for copy preview. Sometimes they even had a small rudimentary memory. But these machines had the inexorable march of progress against them, and soon they too began to slip slowly into the swamp of obsolescence. The typewriter companies very sensibly began to develop word processors and computers. Companies like IBM, Commodore, Wang, Olivetti and Brother saw the light and sank huge sums of money in communications research and development.

It's not hard to see why. Word processing has it all over typing like a sheet of continuous paper. The advantages of word processing are multitudinous and the disadvantages minor to non-existent. The first word processors were large,

and by today's standards, rather slow. They were dedicated word processors, which basically means they didn't do anything except word processing. They had all the functions of the modern word processing program which runs on personal computers, but less versatility.

And of course, you can't use a dedicated word processor to work out spreadsheets, play games, organise a database, balance your chequebook or learn to speak Italian. But even these early dedicated word processors enjoyed a huge measure of popularity, basically because they were so efficient and economical compared to typewriters.

Firstly, word processing uses so much less paper. This may seem fairly unimportant to non-Greenies, but it has a direct correlation with time and convenience. Instead of furiously tearing the sheet of paper from the roller, squashing into a ball and tossing into the nearest wastepaper basket when you make a mistake typing, word processors allow you to coolly cursor back to the error, correct it, and continue merrily on your way without turning a hair. Instead of innumerable drafts, covered with scribbled corrections, the first piece of hard copy is nearly always the last.

Word processing has other huge advantages - the ability to move blocks of text around saves on time, effort and frustration. White-out and carbon paper collect dust and cobwebs, shoved right to the back of the word processor operator's desk. And the sheer portability of word-processed documents is a luxury. Just tuck a couple of disks into a breast pocket and stroll casually out of the office.

This is not to say that word processors are the be-all and end-all of the communications revolution. They have the odd quirk and idiosyncracy just to keep the user on his toes. For instance, the uncanny ability to lose information from disks. They always seem to choose the exact moment when you have lovingly put the finishing touches to a much laboured over piece of writing, escape to save, and Blammo! All gone, vanished into that twilight zone of wordprocessor fatalities. It happened to this article, which nearly made me turn in my journalist's card and take up something less hazardous to my peace of mind, like bomb defusing. Of course, these disasters can be prevented with a simple and effective measure. Always back-up, on another disk, everything you write. Otherwise you continually run the risk of tears before teatime.

The other handy dandy thing about modern word processing programs is they often have dictionaries and thesauruses built in. Or at the very least, the hook-up is there for these references should you wish to buy the separate programs. These computer aided dictionaries are amazing things. In these days of modern education, it's horrendous how

WORD PROCESSING

many kids can't spell for peanuts. They're excellent at reducing modern classics to newspaper headlines, but i before e is totally beyond them.

A dictionary program will run through a document typed in by one of these spelling incompetents and stop at every single misspelled word. You then have the choice of ignoring the computer and progressing to the next word, or correcting the mistake, or adding the word to the dictionary. In this way you can build up a mini-dictionary of words peculiar to your trade or profession, and in the future the computer will skim past them, unless of course, they are misspelled.

Some programs will even guess at the word you are trying to spell and offer you a choice of correctly spelt alternatives. Dictionary programs will often let you know exactly how many words you have typed, which is a blessing for journalists and other poor fools who have to write to length.

The thesaurus program is a fairly new innovation, and works in exactly the same way as your well-thumbed paperback. Now that elusive word that was on the tip of your tongue is rapidly available on the tip of a chip!

Secretaries should really get down on their knees and worship the inventors of modern word processing programs. Not only have they been saved tons of work, it's the most boring work. Typing the same old letter over and over again would drive a saint to distraction. Now secretaries can type in the prototype letter, and on a separate document a list of names and addresses, go away and have a cup of tea and chat, and leave the computer chortling to itself.

In a remarkably short space of time they will have the required number of personalised letters. Unfortunately, this mail merging facility of word processing programs is not infallible. I have seen beautifully presented letters, with a neat 'Dear Dapto. 2250'. This can be a bit disconcerting, but once you have the hang of mail-merge, you'll never go back to laborious typing.

Of course, the finished word processed product depends entirely on the print formatting capability of your word processing program and the quality of your printer. There are numerous printers available, from cheap little dot matrixes that do the job quickly and legibly, but without much class, to expensive daisy wheel printers that are slow and noisy, but produce beautiful, letter quality type. The new laser printers seem to combine the best of both worlds. They are speedy, relatively quiet and produce nice type. Unfortunately, they are also very expensive.

The choice depends entirely on your needs. If the hard copy is destined to be read only by you and your colleagues, a dot matrix printer is more than adequate. If, on the other hand, you are sending letters to potential clients - a laser or daisy wheel printer may be needed to make the correct impression.

Even the most elementary of word processing programs allow you to choose how you want your finished hard copy to look. Most word processing programs have at least some of the following options available:

Justified type. This means that you can format the page so the lines begin and end exactly at the left and right margins. The computer adds the correct amount of space between words to allow this to happen. Many books and magazines use justified type, it can look very professional. This article, for instance, is set in justified type. It only works well with fairly wide sections of type, though. Set in columns too narrow,
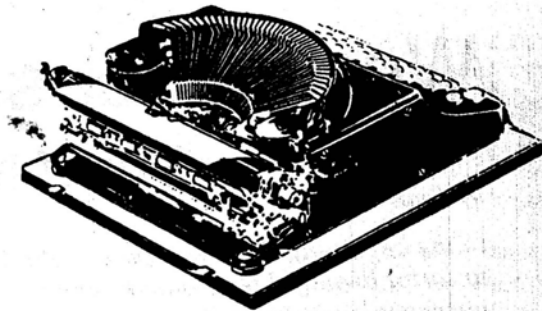
justified type can look very strange.

Flush left, ragged right. This is the ordinary way of formatting a page. It results in an even line down the left hand side of the page, and the lines ending within a right margin, but not evenly. Flush left, ragged right is basically what you get from an ordinary typewriter.

Bold and italics type. Simple commands in the word processing program will allow you to nominate certain pieces of copy that you wish to be bold or italics. It is a neat way of emphasising a word or sentence, and it looks far more professional than underlining, although you can of course underline should you want to.

Subscripts and superscripts. These are the little numerals or characters that appear slightly above or below the line of type. They are often used in academic documents, and are simple to employ with a word processing program.

Variable pitches. Changing pitch means you can alter the way the type looks. You can make the type condensed or with more space around the letters, depending on what is required.

Headers and footers. These are the explanatory lines at the top and bottom of pages. Again, they are often used in academic treatises, or in newsletters. The computer, formatted correctly, will automatically enter headers and footers on every page of the document.

Fonts. A font is a particular type style. Serif fonts have the little squiggly bits on the letters, and sans serif fonts are more modern characters without serifs. Some word processing programs will allow you to choose the font style.

With all these commands at your fingertips, you can do just about anything with your pages. You can produce a slick piece of finished copy, a professional letter, or a long, legible article. The permutations are endless.

As are the number of word processing programs available. Anything which so conveniently and efficiently fills a gaping void is bound to have hundreds of variables available. For the Commodore computers alone there are a number of programs. In general, it is fair to say that the more features a word processing program has, the more expensive it will be. The program you choose will depend entirely on your needs and the state of your finances.

This month we take a look at two of the fray, both of which have something special to offer. Kwik-Write, a new entry to the market place, is exceptionally inexpensive, whilst still offering many of the features found on far more expensive packages. Super Script is a step up from the very popular Easy Script, operating on both the Commodore 64 and 128 in 80 column mode. Whilst Pocket Writer, also known as Paper Back Writer, fits the bill as a more proffessional answer. Next month we will be covering several other names, as well as comparing all who show their face in an all out showdown. - Ed.