The Chief Sez

Ask and ye shall receive they say. I asked and received well. There was a great response to my request for articles as you'll see in this month's edition. There are some very good articles, some that are really thought provoking, and some that tell colorful histories of a couple of boards. I'm not sure how many of those that I received will make it into this months issue, but those that don't will be in a latter issue.

Well, the migration to IBM continues. This past month we lost Enchanted Forest (Dr.Bob and Enchantress). They shut down due to lack of activity which is really sad since that has long been one of the most popular of support boards and was always ahead of everyone else due to the Dr.Bob "mods" that eventually made their way to everyone. I'm afraid that more and more boards will follow suit as we get less and less activity on our boards. The way to stop the trend is to help promote each other's boards, promote usage and call other boards yourself.

It really isn't any wonder that the Commodore name is in such a sharp decline, they are becoming more and more a European company. The latest financial report from Commodore shows that fully 84% of their gross revenue comes from Europe. In Europe Commodore is the number two computer company. Only 11% of their gross now comes from the United States. The remaining 5% comes from Australia and Asia. It is interesting to note that 16% of their gross sales came from the C64 line, virtually all in Eastern Europe. They sold a million Amiga computers last year, and 800,000 C64s. While they sold more 64s in fiscal 91 than in fiscal 90 they made less money on them due to 'bundles' and package pricing. Of course most of the Amigas sold were A500s but they do have some impressive high end models with a floor model A3000, UNIX 3000 and several other models. Too bad they have never learned how to market in the U.S.

A final word. For all of those that contributed articles, thank you. Don't stop. If your article is not in this month, rest assured it will be in an issue soon, so write another one.

Happy Thanksgiving

NISSA News

By: Al DeRosa (BUCKO)

Greetings Fellow NISSA Members. Well, this month was another discouraging month for NISSA, though we did have some great things happen. We lost Instant Insanity, an SSB member from Ohio. Lizzard and Patsy are personal friends of mine and we got together this past summer and had a great time. They will be sorely missed. We also lost our N.E. Regional Support Board, Enchanted Forest. Dr.Bob from EFB had a lightning storm take out his 2400 baud modem a couple of months ago, and with the lull in users calling his activity dropped to practically nothing so he took his BBS down. Bob, too, will be sorely missed.

With that said, down to business. The Calling Tree which Larry has started seems to be going over very well he has many volunteers and it seems to be working out. If you are interested in contributing to the Calling Tree contact X-TEC at Commodore IMAGE BBS, Node CIB (67) on the IMAGE Network.

Also, available on all of the Regional Boards is the new monthly update file put out by Larry to keep members up to date, this usually has an article, the latest boards list and sometimes files which we feel all members might like. As I said, the update files are available on all of the Regional Boards and many of the SSB and ASSC boards, they can be downloaded on those boards.

Something I would like to discuss this month is activity on our boards. Many of you have VERY popular boards and many of us don't. What is it that you do to make your BBS so popular? I have seen VERY popular boards have their activity drop down to 10% a day, GearJammer's II is one of them. I can remember when I couldn't get on GJ2 for days, now anytime I call it's not busy, What gives? There's nothing different today than there was yesterday on these boards so why has activity dropped? Well, since I am one of the boards whose activity has dropped here is a couple of idea's for anyone who has the same problem. They are starting to work slowly but surely.

1. Answer Feedback and E-mail regularly, don't let it pile up for days then get to it once a week, users don't like to wait for days for an answer which would probably take you a minute or so to answer.

2. Get rid of old dead subs, there's nothing worse than doing an RA in the subs only to find 10 new responses on the first sub then 10 new on the last sub.

3. Weed out old online games that are rarely used. (Optional).

4. Get involved in your message base, even if it's once a week try to respond to as many new post and responses as possible, it will boost Sub Usage.

5. Modify some of the Text that the users see to a theme, I used to use a Phone Company theme, naming my local General Sub The Main Switchboard, and every ques

tion or text had something to do with the phone company.

There's a few idea's, IMAGE BBS's are everywhere if you want to make users call yours back then give them something to look at that is different than the one down the street from you.

Welp, since this is November and the holidays are approaching, NISSA will have a little surprise for it's members come the day after Thanksgiving, I won't let on now, but I am sure all members will enjoy it. This surprise will be announced in next months article here in the newsletter and will also be announced in the monthly NISSA update file. Look for an announcement the day after Thanksgiving. With that I end this article with Happy Turkey Day and have a great Month.

Bucko

NISSA Southwest

By: Larry Hedman (X-TEC)

This month we welcome eight new NISSA members. In order of application they are: THE PRINCE'S PALACE G0025 801-375-2646; THE 19TH HOLE G1025 617-321-3556; FOLKVANGAR G0004 405-399-2343; STARJAMMER G0840 303-364-0866; MAGIC BBS G0841 (Data line not up yet); NEW MADNESS G0174 716-834-1384; THE KINGDOM G0806 714-988-0061; and CIRCUIT BREAKER G0105 902-461-4317. Wow! Eight new members! This is by far the biggest month for new members in recent times. Welcome aboard new members!

Al and I have also been doing some housecleaning and we've deleted the following boards from the NISSA list as they seem to no longer be running: Master Chin's Dojo G0211; Cids G0230; Shadoworld G0324; Aphelion G0418; The Eliminator G0518; Jamaican Sands G0529; Instant Insanity G0531; Wrong Number 3 G0694; Chi-Town Connection G0716; The Grid Iron G0757; and The Wolves Den G0973. If anyone has other information that any of the above boards are still up and running please contact NISSA Admin as soon as possible.

One of the best successes recently for NISSA has been the calling tree. When October's NISSA monthly update file went out there were 23 boards participating. Since then in just one week since the file went out I have received messages from at least six more boards who wish to join. This is great! Al and I never expected this much success from the calling tree idea but I guess we were wrong. One thing this goes to show is that there are still quite a few dedicated NISSA members out there who are willing to help out a good organization. We thank you for your participation and we hope for continued success with the calling tree. With so much interest shown in NISSA it makes it a pleasure for Al and I to provide these monthly update files. We fully intend to continue the monthly updates as long as your interest persists.

The NISSA plus-file contest ended October 1st. The winning entry was IMAGE Teleflorist by Captain Keelhaul. For those of you

who have not seen this nifty little program it includes a plus-file and a data file. The data file contains about a dozen or so color/graphic floral arrangements which the user may browse through online using the "+.itf" program. If the user wishes he/she may send one or more floral arrangements including a message to any other user via e-mail. Of the eight contest entries IMAGE Teleflorist was chosen as the winner based on it's originality and by the votes of other users. We wish to thank all who submitted entries to the contest they were all very good.

September and October were two great months for NISSA. We've been hearing from you members quite a bit more and I hope we're getting out to you as well. We're trying to keep you updated as much as possible and we're always elated when someone drops us a line via netmail or whatever. Thanks for your continued support. It's you who are making NISSA the greatest sysop support organization in the BBS world.

Larry Hedman (X-TEC)
NISSA Administration
Commodore Image BBS
(619-429-8192)
IMAGE Net Node 67 @ CIB

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Note:

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Programming Workshop

This month we will try something a little fifferent. This column is the beginning of severa that will cover writing a plus file. What we will write will be a simple file that can be used in a couple of ways. Hopefully it will cover most of the common routines and possibly give someon some ideas so they can write a file of their own.

To start with we should decide if the file is to be a regular plus file, or an LMP file. In this case we will write a file that can be easily used either way. To do that we begin this way:
`1 gosub801:goto1812`
Then to make sure we have all of the essentials let's also add these lines:
`800 rem`
`999 rem`

With that done it would only be necessary to remove line 1 and the file will be an LMP FILE. All exits from the file will be RETURNS so that it would go back to 1812 if called from line 1.

Next, we know the file must start at 801 to do whatever it is we want it to do. Let's just select a random number and see where we can go from there.
`801 x=int(rnd(1)*ur)+1`

That will select a random number between 1 and ur which is the number of users on one's system. If you wanted to remove the sysop from consideration change the +1 to +2 thus insuring that the lowest number selected would be 2.

(cont next month)

My Say

By: Harry Rollins (KARTEK)

Once again I find myself wondering at the news of dedicated sysops leaving the net. Those individuals that have made life easier for many of us out on the fringes of the network and in the smaller communities. Many of us with just enough skills to use and modify the work of others to keep our boards alive. However after reflecting on the subject for a while it becomes clearer why it has become easier to give up the BBS's that we all have loved and dedicated our time and money to. The User base of late is really not that of years gone by. An intelligent conversation that doesn't get aborted by wise cracks and plain foolishness is rare. Many who call the boards now only are interested in what they can download or how many games they can play. Rare is the user who asks what can I do to make this board better or more active.

In light of all of this is it no wonder that sysop's are not willing to spend more time and money on a system that is being so misused. I think not, and as the time goes on I find myself dreading the maintenance and the hassle of keeping a board going. The trend seems to be to give our complaints to those in the administration areas to solve for us instead of trying to handle them ourselves. I wonder why most times a short note to the sysop would handle the problem and save everyone the grief and the hassle
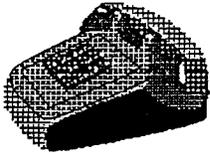
I have every hope that these trends will change and that BBSing will once again return to what it was when I first became involved with it. I will hang in there for a while yet and see. Things I would like to see are some more serious oriented Netsubs that are controlled to the subject at hand. A better form of communication between sysops with in any of the loops and a little patience with one another. None of us has been trouble free forever.

It is time for us to quit expecting IMAGE to do everything for us and for us to start helping ourselves. By becoming assets to the IMAGE network and BBSing we should be able to shape our Network and Boards into what they should be, not what the User base thinks it should be.

KARTEK

-R-

The Wrong Number][

By: Al DeRosa (BUCKO)

Well, since everyone else seems to be writing about the history of their BBS, why not do my own?

Bucko's Den was formally started November 22, 1986.

It all started back in August of 1986, I was calling Compuserve and all the BBS' I could, my phone bills were unreal, so I decided at that time I would start my own BBS. I called P-link and downloaded a couple of BBS programs, AAB-BS v6.7, Ribit BBS 7.6, and, get this, C-Net v3.6 (A PD version of a very early C-Net Release) I couldn't get the Ribit to work with my Mighty Mo modem so I trashed that and liked the AABBS because of it's ease of use. I finally put that system up at the end of October for a trial run to see if I enjoyed being a SysOp. In the following 2 weeks I got 1 call.

On November 15th I worked a trade for a pirated C-Net 10.0 which I put up on November 22th. The system was up Friday, Saturday, and Sunday only, from 6pm to 2am (Yeah, I know, pretty sad hours.) I loved the system and got my first real call on November 23rd, a 10 year old user who called from Chicago who didn't even know he was calling long distance. The system ran on a 64, 1541, and Mighty Mo modem, pretty small from what I have now. I was amazed at the ease of use and sheer power the 10.0 had and decided to keep it up for good. After about 20 users logged on I got worried about running a pirated copy of the program so I contacted Perspective to order the 10.0 and finally be legal, I ordered it alright and was surprised when they shipped me 11.1a instead of the 10.0 I expected.

For me that program was unbelievable at first, It ran flawlessly, and my users loved the new system which no one else around here was running. At that point I moved up from one 1541 to two of them and had a whole 1541 just for UD's. (Sheesh!) After about a week of running the system I decided I wanted a "modded" BBS and ripped apart the "cm" of 11.1a and started doing my "mods" for it, my users went crazy as the only other BBS around here done like that was the most popular board called "Don't Call Us". I finally got tired of hearing the alarm clock go off at 2am for me to shut the system down and I changed the hours of the BBS to 6pm to 6am on weekends only. With that the system started to fly, I was getting 10 calls a day and people were going nuts. THEN Empire came along. I was the only board in Westchester to have it. Calls went from 10 a day to 20-30 a day (mind you a 12 hour day). That's when the trouble started. The system was getting so much use that I thought it was my hardware causing the blue screens that I kept getting, so I bought an SFD-1001. Wow we were now the biggest part time BBS in Westchester! I now had 1 1/2 megs on-line. The calls continued

but the blue screens didn't stop.

At that time Don Gladden started writing the C-Net 12.0, and, of course, I upgraded. When I received my 12.0 I decided to splurge and buy a 1200 baud modem. With the new software also came a new name "The Wrong #][" and the phrase "The Wrong #][now 12 and 12" came into effect "1200 baud and 12.0". I paid $139 for that 1670 back in August of 1987.

After a few months of running 12.0 I bought my second SFD-1001 and a friend of mine loaned me 2 of his, so now we had 4 1/2 megs online. We really cooked. At the time I was big in warez, that was the main reason I put up a BBS, to get as many games as I could.

From that point on things for me started to change personally. I was no longer interested in warez, I just had them as an added incentive for callers. One of my friends and I formed a local SysOp group and started releasing "nod" files for everything from 10.0 to 12.0. ESA (Elite SysOp's Association) was designed to help other sysOps with their own systems. The Wrong #][became the HQ of the group. At that time the hours of the BBS changed again I finally went 7 days a week although still part time from 6pm to 6am.

In July of 1988 12.1 was supposed to be released and I leeched a copy off of Port Commodore before it was recalled due to many bugs. I was able to get it running and was the only BBS in NY to be running it. I ran 12.1 until it trashed my user list and I went back to 12.0.

In August of 1988 I was dev-

astated by the news that Don Gladden had left Perspective with his program. I tried to call Perspective to find out what was up with my order for 12.1 (The working version) only to get the usual answering machine. I called Don Gladden but couldn't get through to him, so I called the next best thing, Port Commodore. I called Fred voice and he told me what was up and if I wanted to stick with Don and his program and his new company they would honor the $7.95 upgrade. I said sure, why not? I had heard that the new 64 version for C-net would be a modified 11.1a and with all the problems I had with 11.1a I decided not to go that way. In October of 88 I received my IMAGE 1.0, heh first one too, E0001. The system was in great shape the users liked the new system and calls started to increase again.

In November of 89 I suffered a major problem with the system I lost an SFD and the other one, which was on loan, had to be returned. We were down to 2 1/2 megs. At that point I decided I was tired of paying $150 per SFD and spent $900 on a Lt. Kernal 20 meg HD. We went from the largest part time CBM board to the largest CBM board in Westchester. Our user base was hovering around 200 users. At that point my sysOp group ESA was disbanding so I decided to join the next best thing, NISSA. We now were involved with a national support group and things were looking better. The warez were history. IMAGE 1.1 was then released and it was a great enhancement to the system. The users who were calling

loved the changes.

When 1.2 was released I took a hard long look at what my system could do if it were 24 hours a day and changed to that. The calls started pouring in again. Since that time I have joined the IMAGE net formed All Tec Software with Doc Shade and Fred, then came the biggest addition to the system we went 2400 baud and we installed a new 85 meg HD in the Kernal. The rest as they say is history.

As I have always done in the past, on November 22nd (the BBS anniversary) I will put up my original Bucko's Den 10.0 BBS for all to see the many changes that have taken place.

-*R*-

The Pool

By: Neil Meineke

Clarisse Yarrow was a capable young woman. She was pretty too, but the rough and risky vocation she had chosen was already leaving scars here and there. She had not slept well for several reasons. It had been after midnight when they arrived in the Land Rover, a move designed to give the jungle creatures plenty of time to settle down before dawn. They had waited for a clear, moonlit night so they could travel the last several hundred yards with the headlights off as an added precaution. They had set up all of their gear the day before and she knew the electrified lines they had strung would keep away most of the predators, but she couldn't help worrying about the ones that could slither under or spring over it. There was also the anticipation of the events they hoped to witness and record when morning came.

She was also concerned about her new partner, Sam Brown. Clarisse knew she had no reason to doubt him. His behavior in the past week since his arrival had been just fine. That was part of the problem. She felt so strongly attracted to him that if he proved to be as undependable as his predecessor, she would be hurt if she had to let him go.

The sun would be rising in less than half an hour. The alarm clock she had set would cause no disturbance as it would only set off a vibration in her pillow, but she saw no point in leaving it turned on, she would never be able to get back to sleep.

She climbed out of her sleeping bag and poured herself a cup of coffee from the large thermos they had brought. She would have preferred fresh-brewed, but a fire was out of the question. She took a sip, then strolled over to their camera. They had rigged it with a shotgun mike which would track with the lens and point at what they were filming.

Her gaze swung to where the camera pointed from its position at a small break in the poolside vegetation. There was nothing stirring on that flat stony

stretch of beach laying open along the opposite side of the water. She could make out a few details in the pre-dawn light. The dark curtain of vegetation sweeping around the left hand side of the pool was reflected in the nearly calm water. Only small wavelets were being kicked up by the slight breeze. To her right the shores narrowed to a small stream which fed the river a few kilometers away.

Several birds started their reveille so she turned to go wake Sam, only to see that he was already sitting up. He waved her a good morning.

Smallestone awoke with a sigh. She knew what she had to do and she knew how she would do it...but she did not know how it would all work out. No one ever knew for sure. You could guess how someone might react...you had seen how they had behaved in the past...but you never knew for sure what might happen on any given day. She knew that the Great Light would appear in a few moments and she and her tribe would join voices in their daily hymn to God.

As she relieved herself she looked around to make sure all of her allies were nearby. The first one she looked for, as always, was her mother. Slenderhands was not only already awake, but she was nursing Smallestone's baby brother. Smallestone was lucky to have Slenderhands for her mother. Slenderhands was well respected in the tribe and

she was one of the favorites of the King. Smallestone smiled inwardly "After today," she thought, "the King might have a new favorite!"

Within fifteen minutes the tribe had completed their sunrise rituals and were moving toward the pool for a drink. Instead of staying near the center of the group formed by her mother and her aunts and their children, she hurried on slightly ahead. They knew what she was up to...it was normal.

As they neared the pool, outcroppings of rock became more numerous, thinning the vegetation. In a clearing ahead and to her left she spotted her goal...the King. He was flanked by his henchmen, Stronglegs and Bignose.

She drank her fill, then walked in their direction...but she was beaten to the punch. Longwaist moved in from the opposite direction, smiled at the King and turned to give him a good view of her ample backside. He had been with her several times before and he did not hesitate to take her up on the offer. They began walking together back into the jungle.

"Oh well," Smallestone thought, "if I can't have the King I'll go for the next best." She kept walking toward Stronglegs, smiling broadly.

That evening, back at their headquarters, Clarisse and Sam were viewing the film they had made. It had turned out very

well. Clarisse was happy. As it ended, Sam shut off the projector. "I was surprised to see that little female in estrus. She seemed too young," he said.

"She is old enough, just small for an adult baboon. I'm sure she was on her way to present herself to the Alpha male when the other female beat her to it." Clarisse got up and put some soft music on the tape player. "Say, Sam, would you like a drink?"

"Please, but just a small one."

On her way back she spoke, almost in a whisper, "By the way Sam, I'm over 21." She let a slight smile come to her lips and she lowered her eyes.

-ℛ-

The New Toy!

By: Steve Nurse (SHADOW)

Wow! A brand new hard drive. Nothing is going to stop me now I figured. Wrong. There's a new set of rules with my drive (a CMD HD40 by the way). For starters I waited five weeks for it but finally it came and oh joy, oh bliss. Now to laugh at the other Commodore sysops with 1581's stacked to the ceiling. Ha ha hah. Wrong. Here's how things went. The drive came and of course it was quickly unpacked and everything set up. All was going great, I had the manual out and turned to the Getting Started section. I glossed it over seeing as I have two degrees in computer programming and technical reference I knew what I was doing. Wrong. I turned everything on and ... Huh, why doesn't the HD work? Flip the power switch a couple of times, nothing yet. Play with the cables, nope that's not it. Is the supply plugged in? Yes, ok try it again. Hmm. Nothing. Read (Gloss) the manual again. Nothing, nothing, nothing. Now I'm getting upset because it is 20 minutes and my new toy I saved 8 months for isn't working. So I fret and pace and fume for a bit and sit down at the TV for a second or two to try to figure it out. Grrr. Anger. Suddenly a cry from my wife "Ahh. Honey did you turn the big switch on the POWER SUPPLY ON Yet?" She asks. I glance over and she smiles with the manual in hand. My do we feel foolish because she doesn't know the first thing about a 64 just Macintoshes (the Apples not the company!) So is there a moral here. Nah I don't really teach or learn from them and everyone always says check the manual (not meaning to gloss it over). Still I can't figure out how I missed that section of the power supply!

On another note publicly thanks to X-Tec (Larry) and Rough Rider (Clay) for you kind NetMails on my previous article the only reason I'm writing another I guess, and Fred's asking for one as well in the last newsletter. From all the chatter I see on the Net there's no reason someone can't write an article. I'm sure I won't win the Pulitzer for this! See you all later ;)

Shadow

-ℛ-

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