The Chief Sez

Running a bulletin board used to be fun. It should be fun. When I started my BBS I really enjoyed running it. It was very active with a lot of local users who called to enjoy the many features of the board. I remember when "Spy-Vs-Spy" was the most popular game on the board with callers fighting to get on just to play, groups forming to combat other groups, message bases full of messages challenging each other back and forth to see who could whip who in the game and so on. Battle was another great game with users calling two and three times a day just to play that one game.

Where has it all gone? My board has not changed that much. Possibly that is the problem. There are literally hundreds of on-line games on my board. Users rarely go to the game section. There are hundreds of text files. It is a rare user indeed that ventures into the text file area. I have hundreds of on-line movies. I don't remember when the last time I saw a user in the movie section. There are RLE files, again, unused. What is the sense of it all?

The average user on my system anymore spends about 10 minutes on-line. They go to the UD section to see if any new files have been uploaded. If any are found they will download the new files then log off. Occasionally one will go through the subs, usually looking for an answer to a question he may have posted earlier.

Not only is it no longer fun to run a BBS, it is getting quite discouraging. Quite frankly, I'm running out of ideas, and patience. I keep hearing that people think it will pick up but it doesn't. People have many ideas but none seem to work. Perhaps the time has come to start looking for a new hobby. When one loses interest or ceases to enjoy a hobby it is time to move on.

Anyone for fishing?

-ℛ-

> **Mailing labels reading
> 1291
> expire with this issue.**
>
> **If you've received a free
> copy we invite you to
> subscribe.**

N I S S A N e w s

By: Al DeRosa (BUCKO)

Greetings fellow NISSA and NON-NISSA sysops. Now that turkey day is over and done with I hope all of you had a great one and didn't over eat as I most likely did (this was written before Thanksgiving).

This month we have some exciting things to talk about, first and foremost, NISSA has it's first PFile disk available to all members. It's a full disk consisting of some plus files written by Dr Moffett and yours truly. Included on the disk are:

* A totally online configurable "+.on", with online editor.

* A totally online configurable "+.am", with editor. You must be running THE GRUNT's LMP automaintenance to use this.

* A SUPER FAST "Top Ten" written by Ray Kelm for 2.0 and converted back to 1.2 by Dr Moffett. To use this you must own PF6 in order to have the ml "++ sort" which this file uses.

* A new version of "+.direct" which you can set up for specific users to download specific files.

* The NISSA PFile contest winner: "IMAGE Teleflorist".

* My "im" modifications which add approximately 1,000 bytes to your free memory at boot up.

And many more files. We are also including the latest guidelines and the latest NISSA Boards list and a couple of NISSA C/G screens.

Now here's hot to this. There are several ways of doing it. You can send me $1,000, or you can call either The Wrong #][BBS or Commodore IMAGE BBS and download it, for FREE! If you do not want to call you can still get it a couple of different ways. You can mail me in a reusable disk mailer (not some piece of paper which when I open it will be destroyed) a blank disk with enough postage to get it back to you and I will copy the disk and mail it to you, OR you can send me $3.00 in a money order made out to Albert DeRosa and I will mail the disk to you, the $3 is for a disk, disk mailer, and shipping. Any way you go you'll be getting a disk with some really great files on it. This disk as of this writing will be available on November 23rd, which has already passed. For NISSA members wishing to download it, it will be in a free download area in Zipped format so you can get the full disk as we have set it up. For regular IMAGE sysop's who wish to download it all of the files will be in regular download area's in ".sdp" packs, I guess you could say one of the advantages of wanting to help others and doing so, you get the full disk. This disk is a HOLIDAY GIFT from NISSA to it's members. We hope to be able to put a disk together every year. So if you would like to get involved with next years disk start writing some original files now and submitting them to NISSA. Maybe next year we could put together two disks. If anyone has any problems

with any of the files please bring it to my attention. The mailing address to send to is:

NISSA
P.O. Box 111
W. Harrison, NY 10604

Other happenings. We now have our new N.E. Regional Board. That is Titanic Resort (216-232-1716) located in Ohio. AMAZER is the sysop. Many of you will recognize him from the many files he has written and debugged in the past. Welcome aboard as a Regional Mark.

The latest NISSA Update files should all be on the Regional and Administration BBS's by now so if you haven't gotten it yet you might want to soon.

The calling tree is going over better then what expected. Larry has done a great job getting it together. My hat is off to you Larry.

Welp that about wraps it up. We at NISSA want to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy Holiday season! Enjoy Folks.

Al

NISSA Southwest
By: Larry Hedman (X-TEC)

NISSA welcomes the following new members The Hideaway G0480 (517) 852-0867; Point Of Entry G0075 (216) 475-8634; and Shadow Hollow G1038 (714) 984-6208. Additionally welcome back Last Wizard's Realm G0729 (215) 724-6912.

The Calling Tree is doing great! Better than we had ever expected. It has generated many favorable comments from the members using it and it seems to have done much to generate new interest in NISSA. Membership is steadily increasing and NISSA members are becoming more involved in the organization. Al and I are both very happy to see the change and we're looking forward to a great NISSA year in '92.

As Al mentioned in his article the NISSA Holiday disk is ready for distribution. I hope every NISSA member gets a chance to download the disk. We put a lot of time and effort into preparing the Holiday Disk especially Al who conceived the idea and did most of the work. The disk is free and it's our way of saying thanks to all the members who have made NISSA a great organization and have helped it grow. We're looking forward to many more new members in '92.

This month I'd like to clear up a few misunderstood concepts about NISSA and at the same time answer some of the questions that have been appearing in my netmail. It appears to me that many IMAGE owners think that in order to join NISSA you must have some programming knowledge of the IMAGE software or a huge download library or a Lt. Kernal hard drive or be capable of providing sysop support or pay a membership fee etc. None of these are true. Perhaps in the beginning you had to qualify to become a NISSA member. I remember when I joined I had to either own a Lt. Kernal or be a plus-file writer. Now according to the NISSA Guidelines ANY legal IMAGE owner is eligible to join NISSA and have ASSC status. NISSA's basic goal is to help registered IMAGE sysops

run and maintain their systems, help promote and protect better plus-files and in general raise the quality of Bulletin Board Systems. There are essentially four classes of NISSA boards each of which can provide a certain level of support to IMAGE sysops. Upon applying for NISSA membership IMAGE boards are classified as Associate Sysop Support Center (ASSC) boards. An ASSC board does not need to be capable of providing sysop support although many ASSC's do. As an ASSC you are recognized as a NISSA member and NISSA in turn will do all it can to help improve your knowledge and experience level as well as help you maintain your system. We will observe the ASSC's as they develop to determine who among them is improving their systems, developing a better working knowledge of IMAGE, and improving their level of IMAGE support. From those whom we feel can provide a higher level of support we select the Sysop Support Boards (SSB). SSB's are selected from sysops who apply for SSB status. First of all they must have held ASSC status for a minimum of six months. They must have proven themselves capable of providing Sysop support and they must be very knowledgeable about IMAGE and the problems and solutions often encountered. SSB boards must also be free of illegal software or pirate UD sections. In the past SSB applicants were required to take a test given by NISSA Administration to determine their eligibility. This is being rewritten in the new NISSA Guidelines which will be released

January 1 1992 and will consist of an interview given by NISSA Administration. We feel that this is the best way that we can select the types of boards that can adequately provide true IMAGE Sysop support in much the way that the technical support line provides. The third level of NISSA board is the Regional Support Board. The Regional SSB will act as a communication link between the NISSA boards and NISSA Administration and will act in part as NISSA Administration. They are chosen for their technical skills, support skills and cooperation. There are four Regional SSB's, one for each corner of the country. Through the Regionals NISSA is more capable of disseminating information quickly and efficiently. Last there is the NISSA Administration boards. Our primary responsibility is controlling NISSA's actions. We listen to suggestions, hear complaints, make decisions, and try to promote NISSA and the interest in NISSA by it's membership.

I hope this has helped to explain the concept of NISSA. We are doing our best to try to keep up with changing times. Your ideas and suggestions are very beneficial in helping us make decisions and develop new ideas. Thanks for all your past support and we hope to see many new members in the future.

May you and yours have a most joyous Holiday Season. From all of us in NISSA!

Larry Hedman (X-TEC)
Commodore Image BBS
(619-429-8192)

U.S.S. Menahga][
Matthew Kurth
CAPTAIN KURTH

On February 25, 1990 I trudged through the drizzling rain to Toys-R-Us. Inside I saw my prize in the display case. Solemnly I carried out the small faded box. Fifteen minutes later. I was the proud owner of a 1660 300 baud modem.

A week later I called Q-Link for the first time. And two days later my buddy Surgeon General dialed a local BBS called Northern Lites a DS-2 1.0 system. I was enthralled.

Two weeks later I had a 1670 (300 Baud was too slow) and calling Big Bubba's BBS and Captain Video's (IMAGE 1.1 & C-Net 12.0) daily. What a rush. By April 1, I knew I wanted to be a SysOp. Bubba was at IMAGE 1.2 and Cap Video had announced that he was switching to IMAGE 1.2. At first IMAGE was confusing with its 2 letter commands and seemingly bland color schemes. But after I went 2400 in Mid-July I was hooked on IMAGE. Bubba had customized his system with color and it never looked better.

The most important and instrumental influence in my decision to work toward my own BBS was a SysOp named Mother at Master Chin's Dojo. We chatted often and soon I found myself SIGOp and SubOp of many SubBoards.

My next meeting was with Dr. DX at Radio Hill BBS. He was an open person slightly skeptical of this young upstart calling every other day to the system but after awhile I feel I proved that I was a competent user and SubOp of the local Top Ten List. I will never forget Dr. DX's patience, tolerance, and kindness as I spread my wings experimenting with MCI Commands and C/G Graphics.

Come August I dialed a BBS known as The Time Warp. It was advertised as having a Grumpy SysOp which I found was NOT the case. The Doctor was very kind to me and again I soon found myself regularly leaving ideas and comments to him and he was very appreciative of my input. I became SubOp of Star Trek which I soon changed to USS Menahga][a ship I designed from other Star Trek ship designs.

In September I bought a 1581 and an 8050 and gearing up to order IMAGE. Then Zappa of Zappa's Revenge went down and I snatched up his 20 Meg Lt. Kernal. Suddenly I had a 20 Meg Kernal but no BBS.

That December my IMAGE arrived and I began immediately to customize it thanks to Mother, The Doctor, and Johnny Reb of Dixieland.

At precisely 12:00:00 AM on January 1, 1991 the USS Menahga][officially opened to the public. NetWorking soon followed and I was rolling. In Mid-February I founded USS Menahga][Productions an IMAGE-Modifying group. At first it was mostly little stuff-- converting +.on mods to the +.on/modules format and small modifications to the other +-Files.

Since the BBS's opening I have continued to learn through tri-

al and error and I thank everyone on the Net for not yelling TOO loudly as I bent the NetWork Rules a bit. I especially would like to offer a special thanks to Fred for his devotion to IMAGE the C64 and *The Reflection* and for being patient and tolerant as I bombarded him with my queries and problems and yes, my many mistakes.

Now at the start of October I am slightly disappointed. After 10 months I have received only 1690 Calls to the system. Fred and many other SysOps are commenting on how calls are dropping and how fewer users are positively contributing. But I am not worried. I make as positive contribution as I can and support my fellow SysOps through USS Menahga][Productions. The Doctor with whom I often communicate assures me that the calls will return.

I offer this piece of advice: Never lose sight of the road ahead. If you keep up your hopes and make an honest effort you will not fail. Life renews itself every spring and I am assured that the calls will too!

Feel free to beam up to any of the USS Menahga][Productions SysOp Support BBSes:

USS Menahga][
(815) 923-2382
SysOp Captain Kurth

The Time Warp
(708) 426-6292
SysOp The Doctor

Excalibur
(503) 726-4946
SysOp Merlin

Nirvana!
(807) 939-1116
SysOp GOD!!!

Auf Wiederlesen!

-cR-

Frustrations of a sysop

By: Bill McNamara (SPIDER)

You sit and look at your board for a few moments after you have worked on a "mod" that has taken you the whole week-end to figure out. Then the phone rings. The AA on your modem lights up and the ping and then the pop and the user is on his way in.

If it is "+.on" file you have been working on and it asks if he wants to try it you hope he says yes. But no, he goes to the E-Mail section and then the graphics that you spent an hour working on is

Today I decided I couldn't live without the second computer. With charge card in hand I went to my good old computer store to buy a new 64 or, if they had one, a 128D. I walked in and grabbed my usual salesman and told him my 64 finally died and that I would like to buy a new one. He just laughed at me, and tried to sell me a full blown IBM 386 telling me the CBM market is dead! Why invest in a SLOW game computer? Get a real man's computer. This infuriated me and I told him what he could do with his IBM. I also reminded him that he wouldn't be where he was now if it weren't for the Commodore 64 computer which he sold and ran his business on up until a few years ago. I walked out mumbling some obscenities to myself, and headed over to my local Toys R Us. I knew they HAD to have something. I walked in and headed to the computer section and found what I was looking for both the 64 and 128D, I was ecstatic. I then looked at the price tags and upon closer examination found the 128D to be well over the $450 price range, which was ridiculous. I then looked at the 64 the good old trusty 64, $299. It was the Test Pilot System with the Keyboard and drive. What do I need a drive for? I have two 1541s, one 1581 and an 85 meg Super Lt. Kernal. I tried to work a deal with the salesman having him sell me just the keyboard and I would give him my old keyboard and then he could return it back to Commodore saying it was bad. The salesman looked at me and laughed and said it wasn't worth his

time over a game computer. Again infuriated I walked out mumbling the same obscenities as from the first store. On my ride home I started thinking about whether I was right in continuing with a "Dead Game Computer", and when I got home I went through the For Sale NetSub and found some deals on computers, I then went through some catalogs from stores which still carry CBM equipment and the best price I could find was $139 for a 64. Sheesh! I had just about given up hope when I read an old issue of Run Magazine and saw a little article on a special program Commodore (Yea the people who are supposedly abandoning us) is running, a 64 for $64, I was surprised. I quickly gave them a call and yes indeed there is such a program, and it takes two business days to get the computer if you use a credit card. Since the price was so low I didn't believe it and asked them some questions, such as does it work? Does it come with a power supply? Is this for real? I found out that the answers to all of my questions were YES. The unit is a rebuilt 64 with power supply and they ship it via Federal Express. I quickly yanked the credit card from my wallet and gave them my number so I could get it on order. Then the tricky part came into effect I had 10 days to return my 64 to Commodore.

To make this long story short, as of this writing I haven't gotten the keyboard yet, I just ordered it two hours ago but, yes Martha, Commodore still remembers it's roots, and they are doing a DAMNED GOOD JOB supporting

aborted.

Then he sees the menus and after looking at them for 5 minutes he tries only one thing, the UD section. There he looks at stuff he has seen before and instead of uploading something or posting something in the subs. He logs off. Only to leave you feedback that your board sucks because you don't have any new warez. Where did the heck that name come from anyway?

Has this happened to you? Do you feel bad if you put the mod in that will not let them play games or use the UD section until they go to the Sub Boards first?

I had this problem for the first three months my board was up in Phoenix, AZ. I pleaded with my new users to post and respond. If they needed credits and I saw that they were good users I would give them the credits they wanted to download something that they saw in the UD section. But this went no where.

Then I made up my mind. This was my board. It was in my house and the people using it were in effect guests. I backed up all but one UX section and then killed all the files that were in the most popular UD section. I found a man who could make me tee shirts and copied my log-in screen to them. I used them as bait for the top ten users of the week. I then waited for people to call back. Some never did. The ones who did started to post and respond more. My feedback section started filling up with subop applications. I had a user making log-on screens for me. I had a former IMAGE sysop who has not had his

board up for years start calling and helping out with stuff. People started using the board again. I still have some of the leeches who do nothing but download. But now i do not feel bad at all when i lower their access or deduct credits. If they are using my board. In my home. They should have some manners and obey the rules.

If some quit and go on. It's ok. I would rather have 10 good users than 200 bad ones. Besides i have more fun doing this
than they have calling.
Spider

-*R*-

By: Al DeRosa
(BUCKO)

A couple of | Life |
months back Fred wrote an article about when his multiplexer (muxer) died on him. Well here's a story that I'm presently going through.

Two days ago my 64, which my BBS runs on, decided to go to breakfast sometime between 3:31 AM and 7:30 AM. It still hasn't come home. So I have given up hope of it ever coming home. These past two days have been a living hell. What I used to take for granted, having a dedicated computer for the BBS, has disappeared and my trusty 128 has turned into the BBS computer, thus leaving me with nothing. It's amazing how little things like not having to log on to read my e-mail now is a task since if someone is online I can't do it until they log off. Then having to take the BBS down to work as host for Q-link. Sheesh, it's pitiful.

us now. I'm done bad mouthing the company. They can't do me wrong anymore!

Al DeRosa
The Wrong #][BBS
(914)/328-9078

Ed note: He has the new computer and it is working very well.

-*R*-

My say

By: AVATAR

I do agree that it is our responsiblity and not IMAGE's to promote our boards and to better the service we provide to the modeming community. The IMAGE company and the IMAGE system have gone a long way in assisting sysops by making our lives easier so that we, the sysops, can pursue other endeavors such as plus file writing, text files, c/g animation, and some of the more relaxed pleasures of modeming. But while we each try to run our boards the best we know how we have to also keep in mind what the user wants. Providing the latest and greatest mods don't mean anything if we have no users to appreciate them.

I guess what it boils down to is that among the many talents it takes to be a sysop juggling is one of them. Learning to see the fine line between giving the user those extra goodies and inundating them with too much is something we all have to figure out for ourselves.

Hopefully sooner than later..
Av

-*R*-

Programming Workshop

Last month we began writing a plus file. We started the file and selected a random number between one and "ur" (the number of users you have. We'll continue:

```
802 gosub1065:gosub1001:&,2,2
```

We have now opened the "u.config" file (1065) and positioned to read or write to the record defined by our random number (1001). The &,2,2 reads in the first field of that record (The handle).

```
804 ifa$<>"^"anda$<>"RES'then
808
```

This is really a bit sloppy but serves to illustrate what we are doing. The statement in line 804 simply checks to see if the record we have chosen is a deleted or reserved account. If not it skips the next line which is:

```
806 goto818
808 fori=1to24:&,2,2:tt$(i)=a$:next
```

We have now read in all 24 fields from the user config for the user defined by the variable in x.

```
810 r=int(rnd(1)*950)+50
```

We are now selecting another number, this time between 50 and 1000. You can change either the low lime (50) or the maximum.

```
812 d=val(tt$(19)):
tt$(19)=str$(d+r)
```

As you probably know, tt$(19) is the field credit is kept in, we have just added a random number of credits to the user, now to write it back:

```
814 w$="":fori=1to24:w$=w$+
tt$(i)+r$:next
816 gosub1001:print#2,w$
```

(continued next month)

Looking Back

As I look back over the last couple of years it is interesting to note the many changes that have occured.

IMAGE V1.0 was released a little over three years ago, in Octoboer of 1988 amid a firestorm of controversy and high expectations.

The program proved to be the "state of the art" in Bulletin Boards but left some room for improvement. About six months (or so) later, in February of 1989 the IMAGE 1.1 was released. This program had quite a few improvements, but one fatal flaw. It simply would not work on many systems, and the common thread seemed to be IEEE drives. We reluctantly withdrew that product from the market.

In an attempt to satisfy everyone we continued to work on the 1.1 system, eventually working out all of the problems and adding a wealth of new features. We released the upgraded system as 1.2 in November of 1989, and sent free copies to everyone that had purchased a 1.1 even though most of those that had purchased 1.1 had working systems.

Since that time we have continued to work on the system. Upgrading it by adding the network and the Turbo-rels.

We have seen the network grow from a tiny 13 board expirament to a large 100 board network spanning three countries including Australia and Canada. It has since been pared back to about 70 boards but still goes very strong.

The addition of the turbo-rels and the updates to the turbo-rels introduced the "CMD Mods", an update that made IMAGE fully compatible with the CMD drive. This made the system into a 1.2A.

Following that we released some of the routines that we had been developing for the next version. These included the ECS, user biographies, autoweed and so on.

We continue to work on the system. Often times it seems to take a long time to get things done but that is due to several factors. We don't have full time programmers, just people that work on the program in their spare time. We also try to make sure that the program will work on all systems and that involves extensive testing.

I'm frequently asked when the next version will be released. The question is often couched in such phrases as "I won't hold you to it, I just want SOME idea". Quite frankly I don't HAVE any idea, and if I did I wouldn't say anyway so it dosn't do any good to ask.

Let me just say this.

Merry Christmas
from all of us at
New Image Software

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St. _____

Zip _____ Serial # _____

Products

IMAGE 1.2 From 1.0	$25.00_____	
PFile Disk #3, 4, 5, 6	16.00_____	Ea.
(Indicate selection)		
GFX Disk #1, 2, 3	10.00_____	Ea.
(Indicate Selection)		
Networking	20.00_____	
Turbo Rel Subs/SIGS	20.00_____	
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The Reflection	*$15.00_____*	
(12 ussues)		

Note: Some "package" prices are availabvle on IMAGE products, call for details. (801-423-2209)

Send all orders, with check or money order to:

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P.O. Box 525
Salem, UT 84653