

# TPUG Newsletter

Views and News of Toronto Pet Users Group, Inc.

P.O. Box 48565, 3605 Lakeshore Blvd. W., Etobicoke, Ontario, M8W 4Y6

(416) 253-9637

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Autumn 1998

## From the President -

Summer days are getting shorter and nature is about to do a slow metamorphosis in the scheme of life. TPUG like nature is also changing trying to accommodate our members needs and deal with the dilemmas of our time. With the growth in popularity of MS-DOS machines and the Internet it has become more difficult to maintain a foot hold in the computer market with out of date 8 bit machines. Only the Amigas may truly benefit from the Information age. This is not to say that the 8 bit machines should be discarded, after all they are a piece of history, but cannot access the internet fully. Only MACs, MS-DOS, and AMIGAs can view picture files found on the Information Highway. The 8 bit machines can access the Internet but only in text mode, pictures are too detailed for them to view.

The sad part is BBSes are being ignored, or at least TPUG's has been. In the last newsletter we announced the termination of the clubs BBS due to the lack of use. As of Aug 10/98 the BBS has closed. Since it has become cheaper for us to have a web site and interest has fallen below one person a day on the BBS, the board, me included, decided to terminate it. Some of the files will likely move to the web site. Special thanks to Sylvia Gallus and Steve Punter for their time and effort in maintaining the bulletin board system. TPUG's web page is getting frequent inquiries and has generated several new members. Ian McIntosh has done a fine job of setting up and maintaining the web site.

It is text only so 8 bit machines can benefit without missing information that they would miss in pictures. This is a very time consuming commitment thus we can be a little slow responding to requests. I would also like to take this opportunity to say Thank You to Ian for a job well done.

On October 27/98 at 7:30 pm there will be a Freenet demonstration at VIDEO LINK. Jim Butterfield will be one of the hosts. Everyone is welcome regardless of their computer type. Ian may demonstrate our web-site, so come out and ask questions. *NOTE: THE CENTRAL C64/C128 MEETING AT THE YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY IS CANCELLED FOR THIS NIGHT ONLY*

Special thanks to Ron Anderson and George Cripps for their very large equipment donations. Maybe in this newsletter or the next there will be a list of equipment for sale.

Also very special thanks to John Buller, who has left the board of directors, under good terms. He will continue as Amiga Librarian and meeting coordinator. His insight and candour will be greatly missed at the B.O.D. meetings.

Our Annual General Meeting is also coming up October 8/98. A phone campaign will reminded members to come and information on up coming meetings may also be announced. This is your club, so be there and help us and yourselves to have a better club.

Tom Luff

For users of all  
Commodore Computers :

- \* PET/CBM
- \* SuperPet  
\* B-128
- \* VIC 20
- \* Commodore 64  
\* PLUS-4  
\* C-16
- \* Commodore C 128
- \* AMIGA  
PC/MS-DOS

\* Registered products of  
Commodore Business  
Machines, International  
and/or their assignees.

## Table of Contents

President's Comments.....	1
Member Information.....	2
TPUG News.....	3
FreeNet Demo.....	4
Correction (Amiga).....	4
Tom's World.....	5
Touch Tablets.....	7
Core Memory.....	8
Advertising Humour.....	9
Chicago Expo.....	9
Project G.....	10
Wheels.....	11

## Member Information

Voice Info (416) 253-9637  
Please leave a message

e-mail: [tpug@icomm.ca](mailto:tpug@icomm.ca)

## Membership Rates

Canada ..... \$25  
USA ..... US \$25  
International ..... US \$25

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Meetings ..... Tom Luff  
..... and Ernie Chorny  
Shows . Tom Luff & Ernie Chorny  
Webmaster ..... Ian McIntosh

## Newsletter

Editor John Easton (416) 251-1511  
..... [jeaston@idirect.com](mailto:jeaston@idirect.com)

## Meeting Schedule

**Amiga Central:** Second Tuesday of the month.

Contact - George Cripps (416) 255-1436  
7:30 pm at Videolink - 53 Lucy Avenue, Scarborough  
Lucy Avenue is one block south of Danforth Avenue, between two and three blocks east of Victoria Park Avenue.

**C-64/128:** Fourth Tuesday of the month.

Contact - Tom Luff (416) 503-0753  
7:30 p.m. in the York Public Library, 1745 Eglinton Ave. W. (just east of Dufferin), in the Auditorium or Story Hour Room.  
**NOTE: October meeting is at VideoLink (see FreeNet article)**

**Westside and Amiga West:** Third Thursday of the month at Alderwood United Church, 44 Delma Drive. Delma Drive is just west of and parallel to Browns Line, south of the Queen Elizabeth Highway, north of Horner Avenue. From the west, exit QEW at Evans Avenue, east on Evans to 2nd stoplight, south on Gair to Delma Drive. From the north or east, follow signs from QEW or Hwy. 427 to Browns Line, exit right to Evans Avenue, turn south on Gair (first stoplight) to Delma.

Contact - Tim Luff (416) 503-0753  
or George Cripps (416) 255-1436

## TPUG on the Internet:

<http://www.icomm.ca/tpug>  
e-mail: [tpug@icomm.ca](mailto:tpug@icomm.ca)



Well folks, President Tom, with this issue, makes good on his election promise of a regular Quarterly Newsletter. Good work Tom - all it really takes is fanatical (meaning, take no excuses) encouragement of our sometimes tardy reporters and scribes.

This issue owes a nod of acknowledgment to e-mail and internet-related connections. With the assistance of Myke Carter (MYKEC@delphi.com), we managed to get some background on the development of WHEELS from its author Maurice Randall (ARCA93@delphi.com) - thank you folks. And would we be breaking any confidentiality rules by mentioning that at one time y'r Editor was the designated TPUG Sysop on Delphi? Yes, that was a loooong time ago, in a world far away! Hey, we thought the world needed us - but Deb Christensen soon set us straight. Ya see, she thought she owned an exclusive Commodore spot on Delphi - and she certainly knew how to play executive hardball.

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*Articles, letters, tips, questions, art, etc. are welcome. Send hardcopy or disks "Attn: TPUG Newsletter", or use Internet e-mail.*  
*Advertisements are also welcome. Member's small ads are free. Commercial ads are \$100 per page with a \$10 minimum.*

**Notice to new owners of SuperPet and CBM 8296 machines**

TPUG has copies of the Waterloo LANGUAGE DISKS (3 in 4040 format) as supplied with the SuperPet on original purchase.

TPUG has the EXECUDESK disk (8050 format) as supplied with the CBM 8296 on original purchase.

These disks are an integral part of the operating systems of the above machines and since Commodore insisted on referring owners of these machines to TPUG for service, we have added these somewhat proprietary (and also virtually unobtainable) disks to our library - all part of the TPUG mandate of service to our members.

We also will attempt to search out copies of original program disks to replace corrupted disks. In this category you will find such programs as VISICALC, WordPro, and PaperClip.

**TPUG News**

**A  
TRAINING SESSION FOR ALL MEMBERS**

on using  
"THE TORONTO FREENET"  
with its access to  
THE INTERNET AND WEB SITES

Don't miss it! Keep the date open.  
- October 27 - at Videolink -  
Call Gord at (416) 421-8715 for info.

**Classified**

*Another member-service!  
For Sale:*

2 - C64s, 2 - 1541 disk drives, colour monitors, joysticks, printers, and printer interfaces.  
Call Tom Luff (416)503-0753.

D.L. Johansen  
Box 912, Troy, MT, 59935

**COMMODORE GAZETTE**

Magazine-on-Disk  
Christopher Ryan  
5296 Devonshire Rd.  
Detroit, MI, 48224-3233  
(313) 882-0811 (4thru 10 PMEST)  
chris.ryan@metro-1.station-1.com

**Miscellaneous Commodore Hardware and Software** is available from :

INSTANT 1581 DRIVE KIT ..... \$49.95  
Includes Upper & lower Shell with logic board & faceplate, a serial cord and power supply box.

POWER SUPPLY ONLY (1581/41-II) ..... \$24.95  
UPPER CASE ONLY ..... \$9.95  
LOWER CASE ONLY ..... \$9.95  
1581 LOGIC BOARD ONLY ..... \$14.95  
SERIAL CABLE ONLY ..... \$8.95  
-OPTIONAL:  
1581 JIFFYDOS ROM....add ..... \$32.95

10% shipping and taxes are extra for Ontario and Canada residents (PST/GST)

Mail cheque or Money order to:  
JP PBM Products By Mail  
Box 60515, N.Sheridan Mall P/O  
Downsview Ontario, M3L 1B0

Note: Dealers and User Groups Welcome!

**J.P. PBM Products by Mail is the NEW Manufacturer of Super Snapshot Cartridge V5.22 - NOW SHIPPING**

We are pleased to offer this cartridge regularly \$89.95. For a limited time SAVE \$15 WITH THIS AD. UNTIL November 30/98.

**CURRENT Commodore Club MEMBERS SAVE \$5 MORE** off the regular price before freight and taxes.

Mail Cheque/M.O. to:	SSv5.22 Cartridge	\$89.95	
JP PBM Products by Mail	save \$15 now		-\$15.00
BOX 60515 N. SHERIDAN MALL P/O			
DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO	* C= Club Members (-\$5)		-\$ _____
CANADA M3L 1B0	* 32K RAM add \$19	+\$ _____	
	subtotal		\$ _____
	+7.5% Freight	\$ _____	
All Prices Are Cdn. Funds	Subtotal		\$ _____
20% Exchange On US Funds	Ontario Res add	8% PST+\$ _____	
Send \$2 for a catalogue on disk (1541 format)	Canada Res add (CDN FUNDS)	7% GST\$ _____	
	TOTAL	\$ _____	

Whenever one door closes, another opens. As outlined in our last newsletter we sadly closed down the longest-running Commodore BBS in perhaps North America. Seeing this milestone pass was not without nostalgic remorse but your Board of Directors felt that the time had indeed come.

In the early part of 1998, the BBS had been down some two months - and no-one barely noticed. Except for Ernie's timely updates about what is going on, and the somewhat vitriolic dialogue between Ernie and Roman, very little use was being made of it. The procedures were somewhat awkward, the documentation somewhat less-than-user-friendly and the exposure limited to existing C= Users. With the tremendous availability of other Service Providers with much-wider scope, it seemed imprudent to continue - especially in a Club with decreasing income, and relatively increasing expenses. By closing the BBS, the Club will save between \$400.00 and \$600.00 per year. That's a lot of \$25.00 memberships. Again our deepest appreciation go out to -Steve Punter= and -Sylvia Gallus= for their many years of dedicated service.

As a complete duffer (one and a half years) I had found the Toronto Freenet was easier to use, relatively-well documented with help screens, and offered so much more in giving access to the Internet and World Wide Web. The variety of Special Interest Groups (SIGs), the timeliness of announcements and updates, the access to local, municipal, and federal governments and institutions, and the ability to E-Mail made TFN a worthwhile and valuable communications medium.

And IT WAS FREE!!!! (but donations are most acceptable, even desirous!)

When I learned that the TFN would hold training sessions, I jumped at the chance to have an All-Club Meeting to outline some of the features of this new (to us) system. A call to TFN, however, revealed that the formal trainers had been discontinued, Survival Guides (documentation) were no longer available, and even overall expertise was limited. However the mention of a meeting of about 30 people sparked their interest (must be something about donations) and we are working on a format for the meeting.

At this meeting, with the help of Chris Johnson (TFN) and Jim Butterfield, we will outline how to access TFN, to send and receive e-mail (using Pine and the editor Pico), to access SIGs, to get on both the Web and the Internet. A real learning experience!!! DON'T MISS IT!!!

Over the next few months, we'll see about coordinating the production of documentation, duplicating HELP screens, and producing helpful hints to make your 'Text-Tours' informative and enjoyable. By working together on this project, we can create our very own Commodore Communications Community - and let the world know that TPUG is alive and well in Toronto!!

Plan to attend the seminar Tuesday, October 27, 1998 at VideoLink, 53 Lucy Avenue at 7:30pm. - 2 blocks east of Victoria Park (to Sneath Ave), 1 block south of the Danforth to Lucy Ave. See you there.

**Correction Notice**

- and a thankyou to Mike Byron at *Computer and You* for the following correction to an article that appeared in the Spring '98 (Volume 6, Number 2) issue of the TPUG Newsletter "*Using Zip Drives on the Amiga - Part Three*" by John Buller. John did request responses and/or corrections, so here we have it:

Locate the third-from-last paragraph .. it reads as follows:

*Save the changes and close the file. Now you're almost finished. Using the Workbench, click once on the ZIP-PC icon and use the menu Icons/Information to open the icon project window. Click on the line DEVICE=0 in the tooltypes box. A copy of this line will appear in the box below the tooltypes box. Change the line to read DEVICE=5 or DEVICE=6, depending on the SCSI unit number you have set on your Zip drive. Press return. Click*

*the 'New' button and type the new line DEVICE=scsi.device. Press return. Click the 'Save' button, which closes the window.*

Now, change any reference to DEVICE=(any number including zero) to UNIT=(any number including zero).

On my count, that entails three changes [yr editor].

**COPIERS, PARTITIONS and STUFF**

When I first got my C64, I had no tape drive or disk drive. Copying was not an option. Later I obtained a tape drive. Copying could be done on a dual cassette recorder or loading a basic program and saving it after changing the tape. Even after getting a disk drive (second hand) I had no demo disk and still loaded and saved BASIC programs to copy them. This was fine except other file types could not be copied. It was only later when I was able to use the demo disks from my brand new disk drive that I was able to copy all file types and my own disks. These programs were slow and not very friendly, not to mention DULL. It seems Commodore had no idea what colour or pizzazz could do to make a program more appealing. Thank God for 3rd party programmers.

Being involved with TPUG or any user group one becomes exposed to a great number of new ideas. In this case I am talking about all the different copiers. Names like MAVERICK, SUPER SNAPSHOT, JIFFY DOS, FAST HACKEM, COPY II, and many others (trademark names), each having features the others may not. JIFFY DOS has a speed up routine for disk accessing, a DOS wedge and the convenience of a file copier all on ROM. (a ROM is required in each part of the computer system) FAST HACKEM was great as a fast stand alone disk copier if you had the hardware, a MSD Dual Drive. SUPER SNAPSHOT was a utility cartridge packed with a file copier, disk copier, nibblers, memory copier(snapshot), several m/l monitors and many more including a terminal program. MAVERICK is another utility program on disk with a wide variety of features. One feature, which is also found in Super Snapshot, is a disk parameter program. After a disk copy of a copy protected disk you would run the parameter for that particular disk on the copy to inject the protection scheme fixes making the program runnable. Another feature was the GEOS handing routines, such as transferring boot files from an original GEOS 2.0 (C64) 5 1/4 inch disk to a 3 1/2 inch disk to make a bootable work disk for your 1581. Copy II was user friendly and ran in C64 mode and in both 40 and 80 column modes of the C128.

With the evolution of Commodore drives other problems arose. 1541s store 664 blocks of memory(256 bytes/block, 35 tracks) using a maximum of 144 file names in the directory. The 1571 is a 5 1/4 inch, 2 sided disk drive having 1328 blocks of storage

(70 tracks) but the directory has the same 144 file names limitation. The directory is the same size and place as the 1541. The 1581 is a smaller disk with 80 tracks and 3160 storage blocks and a maximum of 296 file names. A new feature in the 1581 are partitions.

**PARTITIONS**

A partition is a block of tracks, in multiples of 40 sectors, starting with sector 0 of the first track chosen. A minimum of 120 sectors is the smallest partition allowed. The directory track, track 40, must not be used. After setting up the partition it is necessary to enter and format the partition. If you format without entering the partition you will end up with the disk being re-formatted. Use the following example to make and move into a partition:

```
OPEN 15,dv,15      -open command channel-dv=device no.
PRINT#15,"/0:partition name,"+CHR$(starting track no.)+CHR$(start-
ing sector no.)+CHR$(low byte)+CHR$(hi byte)+",C"
                  -low byte, hi byte is the number of sectors needed
                  -if 720 blocks is to be the partition size then
                    hi byte=INT(720/256)=2
                    low byte=720-(hi byte*256)=208
                  we will start the partition on track one
```

This is the way it should look:

```
OPEN15,8,15
PRINT#15,"/0:TPUG
FILES,"+CHR$(1)+CHR$(0)+CHR$(208)+CHR$(2)+",C"
```

When deciding on the partition's size remember to add one extra track for the directory. The above example sets up a partition with 680 blocks for storage and 40 blocks (which is one track) for the directory, which equals 720 blocks. If you look at the directory now, it will show a file named TPUG and its file type will be CBM. To format it try the following (channel 15 must be open):

```
PRINT#15,"/0:partition name" -selects the partition you wish to enter
PRINT#15,"N0:directory name,id" -just like formatting the disk
```

All partition and directory names are restricted to 16 characters and 2 characters for the id. The commands will look like this:

```
PRINT#15,"/0:TPUG FILES" -enters into partition
PRINT#15,"N0:TPUG FILES,98" -formats the partition
                              -a different name could be used
```

Three disks which have a partition making feature are the 1581 TOOLKIT, the SUPER 81 UTILITIES and the 1581 DEMO disk (a program call PARTITION AID). Just answer the questions and it does the rest. I would recommend using a newly formatted disk having no other files. If you need to use a disk having files already present, then do two things 1) make and use a copy of that disk, incase something goes wrong, 2) check the BAM to insure you can find enough tracks side by side or you can end up writing over existing files. (1581 TEST & DEMO DISK has a program called SHOW BAM)

With the partition now formatted you can start saving or filecopy to it. Using the above commands you can partition the partition if the first partition is large enough. NOTE: you can move only in one direction with partitions. To move backward to another partition you must return to the disk's directory (referred to as the ROOT directory) using "PRINT#15,/" and then start through the partitions till you get were you want. Do not forget to CLOSE15 when you are finished and *never validate a disk with partitions because validating will wipe out partitions and the files in it.*

### COPYING TO A DIFFERENT DISK SIZE

Copying from a 5 1/4 inch disk to a 3 1/2 inch disk or vice versa can only be done using a file copier. Track and sectors as well as the directory are laid out differently on the two disks. 5 1/4 inch disks have 35 tracks to a side, each track can have 17 (as in track 35) to 21 (as in track 1) sectors with the directory to be found at track 18. The 3 1/2 inch disk has 40 tracks to a side, with 40 sectors on each track and the directory is found on track 40. A disk copier, which copies a disk sector by sector placing them in the same track and sector on the other disk, would run into a couple of snags, the main one being finding the directory.

Most people need to copy a 5 1/4 to 3 1/2 inch disk. If you are copying a pirated program, first shame on you. You would likely find a file copier would work the same as if it were a legitimate unprotected commercial disk, ie LOADSTAR Magazine disk or PAPER CLIP III a word processor disk. Many original commercial disks have write protect schemes and may only be copied to the same size of disk using a parameter disk copier. To get a protected program to a different size disk you first need a small miracle. SUPER SNAPSHOT is just that miracle. It has a snapshot feature which copies the contains of the C64's RAM and saves to disk a file which can be file copied to any disk. There are others like this out there but I am more familiar with

this one. They all work the same way, they fill the RAM with a particular character. The snapshot feature will copy what is in RAM excluding the fill character. Saving it out to disk as one or two linked files. See snapshot programs' manuals for further details

One scenario in which neither this nor a file copier will work, is when a program goes looking for information at a particular track and sector.

In the case of FLEXI-DRAW 5.5, after snapshotting the program, loading is much faster and I don't need to select my input device because it was already selected when I did the snapshot. So it can save loading time because now all of the separate modules are in one file.

Like most new ideas they may not work at first. Don't get discouraged and don't be afraid to experiment. But it is always wise to be safe, use write protect tabs when ever you do copying (on your source disks only) and try new ideas on your backup disks before you do it to an original. One last thing when in doubt ask someone. Have fun and good luck.

NOTE: Snapshot programs are intended to be used for personal use only. Any copying of programs whether you are copying your programs for someone else or if someone copies a program for you from their library is illegal when done without permission from the COPYRIGHT holder. This is pirating software and is frowned upon by TPUG.

Tom Luff

### Beatles in your computer?

#### Yesterday

Yesterday,  
All those backups seemed a waste of pay.  
Now my database has gone away.  
Oh I believe in yesterday.

Suddenly,  
There's not half the files there used to be,  
And there's a millstone hanging over me  
The system crashed so suddenly.

I pushed something wrong  
What it was I could not say.  
Now all my data's gone  
and I long for yesterday-ay-ay-ay.

Yesterday,  
The need for back-ups seemed so far away.  
I knew my data was all here to stay,  
Now I believe in yesterday.

If you have been following along and reading the TPUG newsletters that you receive, you will have noted that I have been doing a series on commodore input devices.

In this article I am going to talk about the touch tablet. The two tablets that I will be discussing are the Koala Pad by Koala Technologies and the Animation Station by Suncom. There were others, such as the ChalkBoard Power Pad; but the two I used are the ones in my own collection. These two tablets being the most common will give a good indication how any touch tablet will work.

The Koala Pad, probably the most recognized tablet device of them all was made available for the C64 about 1983, with an initial cost of approx. \$75.00 U.S.. It also seems to have become the standard for all other future tablet makers. The Koala Pad is a very well constructed unit. The device is a 6" x 8" unit housing with a 4.25 x 4.25 inch active surface area weighing about a pound. The unit has two large control buttons at the top for controlling the use of the cursor. The active surface of the pad is a pressure sensitive area which is manipulated either with a plastic stylus or your finger. (note: I own two Koala Pads and do not have a stylus for either one.) If you own a stylus, hold onto it tightly as they seem to be easily lost. It would have been nice if Koala had of attached a holding clip for the stylus to the unit. I used the Suncom stylus because they had the foresight to include a holder for the stylus and therefore it is still with the unit.

The Koala Pad comes with two different softwares and manuals for each. The first software is an Instant Programmers Guide. The manual is short; only nine pages, but if you program this should give enough information on including the pad into your work.

What is included in the program are Koala Pad Fundamentals, examples are: reading raw data, Plotting dots, scaling data and making musical tones. Next is a Hi Res Cursor which includes the cursor, a soft keyboard utility and the Early reader keyboard. Then there is a chapter on making sprites, and then also how to create an overlay for the tablet.

The second software is the Koala Painter program. This program also comes with a small easy to use manual. This manual is only 25 pages, but explain all the functions very clearly and precisely so you will be up and drawing within minutes of loading the program. Like most other paint programs Koala Painter gives

you all the commands and functions necessary, such as draw, frame, circles, boxes, rays and lines. There is also copy which allows the user to copy a picture to another area of the drawing window. Swap is also a nice feature as it allows you to work on a second drawing window at the same time. The swap and copy features work well together as the images can be moved from window to window. The one command that I recommend you use carefully is the erase command. This command deletes the whole window at once. It does not work like an eraser. Luckily the Oops command lets you get back to your last previous window.

The one downside with the commands is the lack of a printer feature. What the manual gives in place of printing is an explanation on how to photograph the screen. If you have a cartridge such as Super Snapshot, then you can do a screen dump and print your picture from there. Saving your pictures is a simple process. You just put a disk into your drive and use the "init disk" command and this will format and create a data disk. There is storage space for up to sixteen pictures. Also under the save command there is a small number of preprogrammed pictures that you can utilize with your own artwork.

I found the Koala Pad's cursor movements to be very clean and precise. The cursor did not jump around the screen when not being activated by the pad. There is a slight blinking of the cursor, but you get used to it very quickly once you realize that it doesn't affect the movement of the cursor.

The Koala Pad is supposed to have the ability to be used as another input device for other software. Geos is the primarily the program that is most recognized as being able to use the Koala Pad. Unfortunately when I was using it, I was unable to get the cursor to react on the menu bar. Although once I opened the GeoPaint program, the koala pad seemed to work fine with its menu. Maybe it was due to the fact that I was using it with Geos 128, but I think I will stick to using my 1351 mouse when using Geos.

The Koala painter software that came with the Koala pad, was limited to using just the tablet feature. But somewhere in my travels to the multitude of garage sales and swap meets I have acquired a backup of the Koala painter which gives the user the ability to use a 1351 mouse or the Koala Pad. It uses the mouse feature as flawlessly as it does the tablet.

As I noted at the beginning of the article, I also tested a second tablet. The tablet was Animation Station by Suncom. You may recognize the Suncom name from some joysticks in your collections. There is a predrawn grid pattern on the tablet, plus a stylus attached in a slot right on the tablet. This is a very convenient feature, as it will help prevent the loss of the stylus. The tablet has a set of four buttons. Two of the buttons allow you to do a function, and the other two allows the user to undo a function.

The software included with the stylus is Design Lab Software by Baudville Graphics. It also includes all the features necessary in a drawing program. Unlike the Koala pad, there is a printer driver for the Commodore 1525 printer included. If you have a more current printer, you will probably wish to utilize a cartridge screen dump for a better quality printout. Another feature that Animation Station has that was not on the Koala painter is the spray can. This functions the same way as the spraying feature in Geopaint.

When you first read the advertising on the outer box, and then glance through the manual, your anticipation to tackle the tablet is greatly enhanced.

What a disappointment the tablet becomes, once you've loaded up and are ready to draw. The cursor jumped around uncontrollably on the screen, and would not follow the commands of the stylus to the tablet. And yes I did double check that the plug was in the computer properly, as well as reloading the

software a couple of times. Trying to get the cursor to move to the corners of the screen was next to impossible. The manual stated that there were two adjustments located on the back of the tablet, but my tablet did not have them. There was a switch on the front of my tablet but that only allows the tablet to work as an analog joystick for some game use. It did not affect the cursor while using the stylus.

This could be a lemon tablet, because the software worked beautifully with the Koala pad hooked up.

Suncom had advertised the fact that there was to be a multitude of software produced or being produced to work with the tablet and could be purchase separately. I have not been able to acquire any of these programs so cannot comment on whether they were created or not.

As I said at the beginning of the article, these tablets are part of my own collection. I like messing about with the tablets, mostly the Koala pad because of its flawless usability. The graphic programs for both tablets are good, functional, and easy to use software, that give many hours of drawing fun for both children and adults alike.

Therefore if you haven't yet acquired a tablet for your collection, then I strongly suggest that you keep your eyes open for one, as they are a bonus to any collection.

*Tom Haslehurst  
tomhas@idirect.com*

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## Core Memory

*George Conklin*

Way back when I didn't know a heck of a lot about computers, a friend I met through church walked me through the firm he worked for. The year was around 1967 and the firm ... well, it made 'heavy iron' in St. Paul, Minnesota.

As we walked he said, "If you knew computers, I couldn't bring you in here, there are too many trade secrets to be seen."

One room I do remember is the core memory room. A group of middle aged women sat making core memories! He told me they were largely of Eastern European descent and had almost unique reflexes which allowed them to thread the cores.

Cores were little ferrite (iron dust) 'donuts' with two wires through them in one direction and one wire at a 90 degree angle. They were the memory of computers before solid state memory was developed. The cores were jiggled in a plastic tray until they were properly aligned. Then the women would pluck thin wires from vertical tubes and 'throw' them - in a javelin like toss - through the holes in the aligned cores with a deft movement. There might have been 30 cores in the horizontal (two wire) direction and 50 vertical. When they finished the ends of the wires were soldered and the whole assembly set into a frame. Large computers of the day required a number of such frames.

My friend told me the firm had been trying to locate an off-shore place to make core memory at a lower price and it was very difficult to find workers who could manage the deft movement.

It was only a month ago that I learned that the firm had been able to train women in an Asian site to make core memory. I was having lunch with my computer friend's former wife who now lives in the Bay Area. She laughed and said the Asian site had become 'famous' in the trade.

It needs to be said out loud, falling trippingly from the tongue.

*The Hong Kong Core House.*



*I normally ignore internet humour, but while trying to read this one I spent five minutes laughing and crying.*

[Allan Higgins, Toronto, [Allan@XanderTech.com](mailto:Allan@XanderTech.com)]

Read this...

1. The Dairy Association's huge success with the campaign "Got Milk?" prompted them to expand advertising to Mexico. It was soon brought to their attention the Spanish translation read "Are you lactating?"
2. Coors put its slogan, "Turn it loose," into Spanish, where it was read as "Suffer from diarrhea".
3. Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux used the following in an American campaign: "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux".
4. Clairol introduced the Mist Stick, a curling iron, into Germany only to find out that 'mist' is slang for manure. Not too many people had use for the "Manure Stick".
5. When Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the US, with the smiling baby on the label. Later they learned that in Africa, companies routinely put pictures on the label of what's inside, since many people can't read.
6. Colgate introduced a toothpaste in France called Cue, the name of a notorious porno magazine.
7. An American T-shirt maker in Miami printed shirts for the Spanish market which promoted the Pope's visit. Instead of "I saw the Pope" (el Papa), the shirts read "I saw the potato" (la papa).
8. Pepsi's "Come alive with the Pepsi Generation" translated into "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave", in Chinese.
9. The Coca-Cola name in China was first read as "Ke-kou-ke-la", meaning "Bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax", depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 characters to find a phonetic equivalent "ko-kou-ko-le", translating into "happiness in the mouth".
10. Frank Perdue's chicken slogan, "it takes a strong man to make a tender chicken" was translated into Spanish as "it takes an aroused man to make a chicken affectionate".
11. When Parker Pen marketed a ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to have read, "it won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you". Instead, the company thought that the word 'embarazar' (to impregnate) meant to embarrass, so the ad read: "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant".

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## Chicago Expo

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Here's a copy of a press release (or advertisement) as it appeared in the most recent issue of "COMM-ADORE", the newsletter of the SWRAP User Group in Chicago.

### CHICAGO EXPO!

For Commodore Computers

Hosted by the SWRAP User Group, Inc. (South West Regional Association of Programmers)

Featuring MAURICE RANDALL and WHEELS 128!

WHEN: Saturday, OCTOBER 24, 1998 - 9 AM - 5 PM

COST: \$5.00 per household family

WHERE: Holiday Inn Conference Room LANSING, ILLINOIS

DIRECTIONS: Lansing, Illinois is a southern suburb of Chicago. Take Interstates 80/94 to Exit 161N, Torrence Ave North. Turn left at the light by Checkers, then left again and follow Frontage Rd to the hotel.

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## Project G History, (or What is this Wheels ... Really?)

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### A Look At How It All Came About

Once upon a time, Maurice Randall bought a Commodore 64, and it came with a graphical operating system called GEOS. At first he had little to do with it. It seemed cumbersome and slow, and he didn't have much use for it. Of course, it was like most people early on, he only had one disk drive! GEOS is awful to use with a single drive. There really isn't much point in it. Soon, he acquired a second drive, a 1581, and then he got a Commodore 1700 REU and found out that he could increase the capacity of this 128K ram expansion unit to 512K. He bought the chips and performed the operation. He began to take another look at that GEOS system and got so interested in it that he upgraded to GEOS 2.0. Soon afterward, he got a 128 and had to have GEOS for that. He was hooked.

Over the next several years, Maurice learned how to write GEOS programs, and he got quite familiar with the system. Back early on when he sent in his GEOS registration card, he filled out the little questionnaire that came with it. It asked what type of applications you would like to see developed for GEOS. He filled in a suggestion about a fax program. And they probably had a good laugh back at Berkeley Softworks when they saw that one! Little did he know that he would someday create that piece of software himself.

A few years back, Maurice realized a need for something better in the way of disk drivers for GEOS. Sure, that was already done, Configure had disk drivers, and gateWay had disk drivers. But there was just something there that was missing. For one, the native driver support on the CMD devices was never perfected. The RamLink was supported, but not really like it should be. There were ramdisk drivers, but they could also be improved. Maurice jumped in and started a new project. He began to study a couple of the existing drivers to see what there was that he didn't like. He saw there was room for improvement. So, he wrote his own variation of the drivers and adapted it to work on the CMD HD in the native partitions. Previously, only gateWay supported this type of driver. But Maurice had already created a user interface known as geoSHELL, and it was flexible enough to be used with any GEOS driver. Soon, Maurice had his own version of the native driver that he could use with geoSHELL and did not need gateWay to use it. geoSHELL had the ability to install the drivers during bootup. He had to avoid using the Desktop, though, as it was written in

such a way that it would only work with 1541, 1571, and 1581 type devices. And it was really a cobble job making it work with 1581 drives. The Desktop failed to follow certain GEOS programming rules, which caused it to not work with the native driver.

Using the native drivers was nice, since subdirectories allowed better organization of files as well as making better use of the available space. Pretty soon Maurice did a version of the driver for the FD drive and then the RamLink. But these drivers still were not perfect. Using native partitions within GEOS was difficult, not from a user standpoint, but from the actual design of the operating system. The biggest problem was that the block allocation map (BAM) couldn't be stored in memory, like GEOS has always done it. A native BAM can be as big as 8K. The BAM is what keeps track of the sectors that are in use on the disk.

Eventually, Maurice got the idea of replacing Configure. This only seemed logical since he had a small collection of disk drivers and it was Configure that has always stored and installed the drivers during bootup. But that also meant coming up with drivers for the other types of disk devices. This included the 41, 71, 81, and drivers for the FD, HD, and RL using 1581 partitions. Then there was the 41, 71, and 81 ramdisks too. Maurice took the drivers he had created and modified certain parts that were specific to the type of device that the driver was to be used with.

Then a wild idea popped in his head. OK, now we've got a new Configure, but we could really use a new Desktop. Sure there's geoSHELL, but a good Desktop was still needed. He had started on something like that a few years ago and never finished it. It was called Dashboard and was to be released for the 128. Maurice dug out the source code to it and started modifying it and changing things until he came up with something even better.

One thing led to another, and another, and another. Before you knew it, Maurice was working on upgrading the whole darn operating system. So, what began as a rather simple project of studying the problems in one disk driver, has led up to a rather major undertaking. Maurice has created an operating system with the feel of the old GEOS in many ways, but with a whole fresh new look to it and many new possibilities buried within.

Maurice Randall  
ARCA93@delphi.com

Steve Grassman and I got to view first-hand the unveiling of Maurice Randall's new GEOS upgrade, called Wheels 64. We were all impressed! And why not? This program does everything but change the oil.

Maurice demoed the installation process and then showed everyone why Wheels is a spectacular piece of software. We are all aware that GEOS 2.0 is now ten years old. Thus, many recent improvements in the Commodore scene have been ignored. Today, Commodore users need an operating system that will allow at least four drives, that will make maximum use of new technologies like the RAMLink and the SuperCPU's SuperRAM card.

Many users have worried, "What's the advantage of having great new hardware from CMD if you have no operating system capable of taking advantage of it."

No longer a problem!

Wheels *does* require extra memory in the form of 128K RAM. This is equal to the memory found in the 1700, the smallest REU that Commodore made. When you first boot up from a particular disk or partition, a dialog box ask you what RAM memory you want to use. There are four possible choices.

1. 17xx series REU
2. geoRAM/BBG Ram
3. RL/RD DACC Partition
4. SuperCPU/SuperRAM card

However, Wheels is a very smart program. It is able to figure out in advance which devices are available to you and which are not. Those that are will be listed in a bold typeface. Those that are not will be in italics.

We teased Maurice about one thing in particular. He is also the author of geoSHELL. Well, I thought that now Wheels is rolling, geoSHELL would be put on the shelf. However, geoSHELL is an open operating system that invites modification. Thus, any future new improvements in the

GEOS operating system may show up first in geoSHELL. So Maurice created within Wheels a desk accessory which will find geoSHELL anywhere on the four drives and memorize its location.

Up to now, you needed a program called 'getshell' on every disk and partition, if you wanted these advantages. Now, 'getshell' is actually built into the Wheels system. Is Maurice secretly using Wheels to promote geoSHELL? [Hello, Bill Gates! :-) ]

Think of your four drive devices as a 4-drawer file cabinet. It used to be that when you opened any drawer, all you found was one box! Just one undivided place to store your goodies. Now you can divide your file storage into partitions (folders), up to 255 in each drawer. Not only that, you can have separations within a folder (sub-directories) which all you to more easily organize special projects.

Wheels will allow only 4 drives (numbered 8-11) to be accessible at one time. However, it allows you to open up to 16 windows at one time. A window may represent a drive (drawer), a partition (folder), or a sub-directory (pocket within the folder). But Wheels departs from our model of the file cabinet when you create a system directory (abbreviated sys dir).

GEOS has always used an area called the 'border' as a way to move files from one page on the disk to another. The border area is therefore, accessible from any page on the disk. Wheels has upgraded the 'border' idea to a sys dir, which can be used to store all the files you commonly use on every disk!

For instance, my sys dir stores ALL my applications, printer drivers, input drivers, fonts and desk accessories (like photo manager). I establish this sys dir in nearly every new disk or partition I create. Then, if I want to make a sub-directory, I can use the same sys dir there that I have already established. I do not have to copy these same files into each sub-directory, thereby saving 'tons' of memory.

Remember the current method for creating GEOS work disks. By the time you load it down with all your applications, drivers, DA's, fonts, etc., there was hardly any space left to actually do your work! Wheels strives to alleviate this kind of duplication.

The biggest breakthrough, however, is Wheels' ability to incorporate native mode partitions. CMD developed this new technology in order to create fuller utility of their large storage devices. While the 1541, 1571, and 1581 drives restrict us to 160K, 320K, and 800K respectively, CMD's native mode partitions can vary in size from 64K (256 blocks) to 16MB (16 million bytes)! Unfortunately for GEOS users, this advanced storage system has been difficult to use. GateWAY was specifically developed for this purpose, but in my highly biased opinion, it has always been highly flawed. But Wheels makes this new technology as easy to use as a comb and a brush! You'll soon be wondering how you ever got along without them.

Maurice took some pictures of the EXPO with his new digital camera and converted the pictures to PS format so that I could bring them to you. Just one picture can easily be 600K in size. By using Wheels, I can work from a 16MB partition which scoffs at such 'tiny' objects and invites more to follow.

If you are a dedicated 128-user, do not despair. Maurice claims Wheels 128 is already 70% complete, and for the first time, he is accepting advance orders.

If you are considering that you might want to own some Wheels of your own, keep in mind that it only requires an REU (or other RAM device), a single disk drive, and GEOS 2.0. However, this program really 'struts its stuff' when you combine it with a CMD storage device, such as an FD-2000, a CMD hardDrive, a RAMLink, or a SuperRAM card. You'll discover that this new Wheels is the greatest thing in racing ... uh ... er ... Commodore!!!

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