

The Interface



Fresno, California

June/July 1998

Taking 8 Bits to the 21st Century

Those Other Publishing Programs

by Val F. DeCot

You know which ones they are. You've actually used them, and many still do. Those other personal publishing programs, in addition to GEOS, that are available for your use on the Commodore computer.

"Computers
make it easier to
do a lot of things,
but most of the
things they make
it easier to do
don't need to be
done."

- Andy Rooney

It all started with the Print Shop, by Broderbund. The Print Shop could be used to design greeting cards, banners, stationary and signs. This was the very first program to really popularize home publishing. You see the results everywhere today; there is a Print Shop program for just about every computer platform. The program is simple to use, foolproof, and we have an immense collection of additional graphics available for use with it. In addition to the Print Shop there is the Print Shop Companion, which allows you to edit and create graphics, borders, and fonts, and even design and make your own monthly calendar.

PrintMaster and PrintMaster+ are two programs from Unison that are very similar to Print Shop and offer many of the same features. PrintMaster lets you add multiple fonts to a page and includes an on screen preview of your finished work. With either PrintMaster or PrintMaster + you can also view your graphics on screen. A large number of graphics are available, along with programs to convert the graphics between Print Shop and PrintMaster format.

The Newsroom from Springboard lets you create you own newsletter and include graphics of your own design or from the Newsroom's extensive library of graphics disk. This program is very easy to use. Text will fit and flow around your graphics, and you can add headlines and just about any other touches you might find in a regular newspaper.

Certificate Maker is another product by Springboard and it can be used to make any one of over 200 different awards. Each certificate can be customized by selecting different borders and fonts of various sizes. Your creations can be saved as a file on a disk for future use.

Awardware by Hi-Tech Expressions will do everything that Certificate Maker will do and more. You can create award ribbons, tickets, coupons checks, and more. Hi-Tech Expressions also produces Print Power which is another Print Shop clone that will help you create and print signs, cards, stationary, and banners. This company is also responsible for a series of personal publishing programs such as Partyware, which will print out banners, party hats, ribbons, place mats, cards, and more. It will also maintain a data base of names and phone numbers, birth dates and other important information. Heartware is used to produce friendship cards and love notes. While Cardware, well! you guessed it, creates greeting cards.

There are two other desktop publishing programs that deserve mention, but both need articles of their own to explain their many uses and features. The first is Outrageous Pages by Batteries Included. Outrageous Pages can be used to create and print invitations, calendars, name tags, certificates, and newsletters. The other program by Batteries Included is Paperclip Publisher. This program is for the serious Desktop Publisher. It comes with its own utilities, demo, hints, and tons of clip art.

There are many other programs out there that do many of the publishing and printing jobs that I've already written about. Some of them are Let's Make Greeting Cards, Let's Make Signs and Banners, and Let's Make Stationary and Calendars by Melody Hall (remember them?). There's Button and Badge Maker by IntraCorp. For our younger members we have the Muppets Print Kit,

Looney Tune Print Kit, Sesame Street Print Kit, and the Jetsons/Flintstones Print Kit, all by Hi-Tech Expressions.

Believe me when I say that I've just scratched the surface when it comes to great publishing/productivity programs for our venerable C-64's and C-128's. There are some good to excellent non-GEOS publishing programs still available for our machines and many are available from individuals and even businesses which still carry Commodore products.

24-Pin Printer Adjustment

Here's a program that is said to adjust the vertical spacing for Print Shop on 24 pin printers:

Type and Save; turn on printer and put it in IBM mode; Load and Run the program.

```
10 open 4,4
20 print#4,CHR$(27)CHR$(65)CHR$(7);
30 Print#4,CHR$(27)CHR$(50):
40 close 4
```

Disclaimer: This has not been tested by FCUG or

COMMODORE COMPUTERS: NOT READY FOR THE ORPHANAGE

by Lee Pasborg

Editor's Note: This was one of the most widely reprinted articles I have seen in any Commodore newsletter. I think we can agree that things are even better than we expected, eight years after Lee's optimistic predictions.

At some point it is time to wake up and smell the coffee. The sad fact is the 8-bit computer world is shuffling off to the orphanage. Yes, I know that the 64 and Apple II aren't orphans yet, but the manufacturers have got them in the basket and are ready to ring the doorbell and run. The magazines that feature our machines have either folded up or are withering away. Software is getting harder and harder to find, and little that is new is being introduced.

Our choices as users are simple. Either bail out, get a new machine and start over; or try to make the most of what we have, knowing that new hardware and software is going to be harder to find as the years pass. How you decide depends on what you want to do with your machine.

If you are primarily a game player, get an Amiga or fancy clone and play away. I have trouble with the idea of investing thousands of dollars to play games, but if you have the money to spare, have fun.

If you are a high-tech junkie, you are probably already in the 16/32 bit world, unless you are poor. If that's the case, I guess you are stuck with 8-bits for the time being. You can soup up your machine until it rivals the performance of the fancier models.

However, if you are a home computer user, you could stick with your orphan as I intend to do. Let's face it, the 64, 128 and Apple II are going to be orphans unlike any others. The Sinclair had only 1 or 2 K of memory--not enough to load in a decent program. The VIC 20 had 16 K but a 22 column screen. The Apple III, Lisa, and Plus4

never got off the ground, so there is little software that was written for them. The PC Jr. had that awful keyboard. When these machines became orphans there was little their owners could do with them. It is important to realize, however, that some of these machines are still being used today. User groups have sustained their owners over the years.

Apple and Commodore users do not have the same kinds of problems that the owners of other orphans had. The machines are well developed and well thought out. The 64 is capable of loading fairly sophisticated programs, including word processors and data bases capable

of servicing a small business. Expanded Apples and the 128 have even more features. There is nearly an unlimited supply of software still available for your machine. Millions have been sold, and they are not going to disappear. The 128 and the 80 column Apples have nearly all the features that most people need in a home computer. If you plan to stick with your machine, you

might consider doing some of the following:

1. Start accumulating the software you need now while it is still readily available. It's true that in the years to come you'll be able to get a lot of software for next to nothing, but you can't count on getting what you need this way. If you don't already have a good quality word processor, copy utility, etc., get one, preferably with all documentation.
2. If you run across hardware at a bargain price, consider buying it. Even dead machines serve a purpose--parts. Again, as time goes by, the prices for Commodore and Apple hardware should drop to next to nothing. An extra disk drive is always nice to have anyway.



3. Pick up books that cover your machine, especially programming reference guides. These are getting harder to find in the bookstores now, but a used one will do just as good a job as new--may even better, since the previous owner has probably marked the most useful pages already. Get the book even if you don't program or even understand most of what the book says; someday you may want to learn.

4. Join and support your local users' group. There you will find other hard-core enthusiasts who will be glad to share solutions to your problems. Someone will know how to get a program to run, or where you can get repairs done.

5. Don't despair! Orphans may have a harder time than others, but as long as they stay healthy, they can be just as productive as anyone else. The way I figure it, by the time the last 8-bit goes south for the last time, today's computers will look ancient. Consider the advances that have occurred in the last five years. If you and your orphan can hang on until 1995, it's likely that you'll see Amigas at yard sales.

So when the orphanage door opens for our favorite machines, it will be sad--becoming an orphan is not a happy event. But it need not be the end. After all, an orphanage is not a graveyard. As long as we keep using these useful, productive machines, their being orphans will really be irrele-

I've Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night

In April it took two tries to find a winner. First up was Juanita Eroles...then, for his first win ever, Dick Estel took home the \$5. In May, Doug Cunningham, Joyce Kearns, and Bruno Butti all missed out--so be on hand in June when we'll have a big \$10 jackpot.

What the Editor Said



Here at World Interface Headquarters we're always trying to make things better, to bring you the best possible Interface.

I started out using Word Perfect, which is very similar to using geoPublish. A few problems developed with this program; most important, objects (graphics, text boxes, etc.) will not always go where you want them. Certain types of objects refused to live on the same page with other graphics.

This led to the purchase of a \$20 publishing program. Economically, this is roughly equivalent to the various Print Shop clones that used to be available for the Commodore at \$4.99 to \$9.99. This program works fine, and has been used to produce The Interface for the last few months. It had a dismaying tendency to lock up the computer every time I used it, but I discovered a cure, and now it only locks up once in a great while. However, you always assume there's something better out there.

With this issue I have been using a \$100 program made by a fairly well known software company that happens to dominate the PC industry. Based on only limited experience as I write, this program is a few levels above its predecessor. One big improvement is the ability to place objects off to the side on a table. Naturally with all programs, there is a master template with which I start each issue. With other programs, if the president's column, for example, was on page 4 last time and is on page 6 this time, I had to remove the heading from page 4 and recopy it for its original source to

page 6. With MSP, I can keep it on the table, and move it onto the desired page with each issue. Interestingly, the Commodore program Paperclip Publisher has this capability, but geoPublish does not. It should. They all should.

Regardless of the tools used to make the product, it's the product itself that matters. Without desirable and interesting content, there's no point to the effort. If The Interface is not interesting and desirable to you, maybe it's time you used the tools at your disposal to write something you'd like to see published.

Our front page story this issue is not exactly earth-shaking, last-minute news--but it's part of our continuing effort to encourage everyone to be a publisher. Even if you don't produce a fancy job with graphics, you can accomplish quite a bit of self-expression with the various programs discussed.

If you'd like more details on some of the Commodore publishing programs, check out Text Disk AT02 with a review of Paperclip Publisher, AT08 with several reviews of geoPublish, and AT15 for Outrageous Pages, all written when those programs (and all of us) were young. Disk AT11 has an article covering desktop publishing tips.

Our heartfelt thanks to Henry Fry for the efforts he has given in handling the ribbon inking for the last couple of years. We appreciate Sandy Dippollet stepping in to take over the job. Remember, we ask you to limit your requests to no more than two ribbons a month, and include your \$1 payment when you bring in a ribbon.

Reminder: We're in a new location; still on the second floor at Manchester, but in the old Wherehouse Record store, next to Claire's Boutique.



Whew! I'm still trying to catch my breath. On May 8 I flew nearly 2,000 miles away to attend the Lansing Area Commodore Club Expo in Michigan. The LACC Expo is the closest thing we have to a national convention for Commodore computers. I returned from the Expo on Monday morning at 12:30 a.m., didn't go to sleep until 2, woke up at 5:48, went to work, and came back to baby-sit my nieces until 9:35 p.m., and finally returned home. Now I have the enviable/unenviable task of writing articles about my journey and about Wheels 64. Below is a message I posted to the Usenet group, comp.sys.cbm, and a response:

TO: Tim Lewis, President, Lansing Area Commodore Club

I had a fabulous time at the Lansing Area Commodore Club Expo, which was held last Saturday, May 9. Though the Expo officially ran from 10-4, I was still going on an adrenalin rush. So much to learn...so much to discuss...so much Commodore! I could have gone on and on!

I want to publicly thank Tim Lewis, the president of LACC, for his friendship and hospitality. I also want to thank the following officers, members, and attendees: Maurice Randall, Dale Sidebottom, Randy Harris, Fred Tafel, Verland Ward, John Lindemann, Eric Kudzin, Raymond Day, Tim Hewelt, Maurine Gutowski, Bob Campbell, and any others I may have forgotten. It was nice to meet the people behind the e-mail/articles. We met so briefly, and now we're separated.

Wheels for the C64 was officially introduced at

the Expo. The audience was hushed as Maurice Randall displayed the fruition of all his hard work. Wheels ran smoothly, beautifully. Many people at the show bought it; I myself bought 2 sets of Wheels and GeoFAX 2.1. For the next few days I'll be in deep study, trying to find out everything about this major upgrade to the GEOS operating system. I urge all GEOS lovers to order this important upgrade, the first since 1988. For those who aren't into GEOS, now is the time to buy GEOS and Wheels. For more information, contact Maurice at: arca93@delphi.com

Again thank you to everyone at LACC for a great Expo, and I hope one day to come again.

Truly, Robert Bernardo president FCUG

TO: Robert Bernardo

Robert, Thank you very much for being a part of EXPO 98! We at LACC are very glad that you made it out this year to join us! I am happy to hear that you had such a wonderful time, and that traveling out this far was worth the effort and time.

Now for a few thank you's myself: I want to thank all the people that joined us for EXPO 98. Without you, it would not have been what it was. It was great to talk to all of you and to see you all again. Robert Bernardo listed most of the people that joined us from out of town. We hope to do this again next year and we hope that everyone will be able to join us. Who knows, maybe Maurice will have AWheels@128 up and ready by that time...:) (Of course, I will have to get a copy for myself) Thanks again to all of you....I had a great time and will see you all again next year at EXPO 99!

Tim Lewis, Lansing Area Commodore Club

Product News

There has been another upgrade for the C-64 graphics and conversion program, GoDot. A new GIF picture saver can be downloaded from the GoDot website. With the GIF saver, a person can create a picture using his favorite Commodore paint/drawing program and save it as a GIF, ready to be used as a graphic on an Internet web page. This enhances GoDot's current ability to load GIF's. Arndt Dettke,
e-mail--god.adettke@t-online.de Internet--<http://members.aol.com/howtgodot/welcome.htm>



MegaCom Software is shipping the HP Printer Driver for GEOS, which has been upgraded to v2 from v1. The driver is for all HP-compatible inkjets and will print at 75, 150, and 300 dpi. In text mode, landscape printing is possible, and it's compatible with TextPrint v3. The full price is 29 deutschmarks, or if upgrading from v1 to v2, the price is 15 DM. Shipping is free within Germany; 10 DM to other countries. Mastercard is accepted. MegaCom Software, Britta Grimm, Langenfelder Hof 1 D-78652 DeiBlingen, Germany. Phone: 0 (049) 7420 1324. FAX: 0 (049) 7420 2608. Internet--http://home/t-online.de/home/MegaCom_Soft E-mail: MegaCom_Soft@T-Online.de

Doug Cotton reports that Creative Micro Designs is now shipping the v2 of the SuperCPU 128

20-mhz. accelerator, which has improvements in the firmware compared to v1. Creative Micro Designs, P.O. Box 646, East Longmeadow, MA 01028. Orders: 800 6383-CMD. Support: 413 525-8023. FAX: 413 525-8147. Internet--http://www.cmdweb.com

Ever received an e-mail message with HTML (HyperText Markup Language) written all over it? Ever wonder what the message would look like if the HTML were decoded? The first HTML viewer for the C-64 was released a few months ago--FairligHTML v0.99, a shareware program. FairligHTML reads true ASCII files, not PETASCII. Look for it on a Disk-of-the-Quarter. For the full, registered version, send \$5 U.S., 10 DM (German), or 40 SEK (Sweden) to Magnus Nyman, Runvägen 7b, 39352 Kalmar, Sweden.

Among others, Jason Compton, writer for Amiga magazines and frequent contributor on comp.sys.cbm, reports that Tulip Computers of the Netherlands is having financial difficulties. Tulip currently owns rights to Commodore 8-bit technology.

A COMEBACK FOR THE C-65?

In a related note, Myke Carter of the Tulsa Area Commodore Users Group (TACUG) reports that Take-A-Byte Systems is interested in acquiring the rights to the Commodore C-65 from Tulip Computers. Commodore produced less than 200 prototypes of this machine. Some of its capabilities were: 80-column screen in C-65 mode, full compatibility in C-64 mode, Basic 10, expanded internal memory, and built-in 3 1/2" drive. However,

Spring Cleaning? Don't Forget the Computer

by Dan Gutman

In more civilized times, spring cleaning meant taking up the heavy rugs and cleaning out the closets. These days, it means dusting off the VCR and getting the car washed--if we have the time.

But there's one thing you should give a thorough cleaning once a year--your computer system. All sorts of problems occur when dirt and dust get into delicate electronic parts.

Monitor: Spray Windex or Glass Plus on a lint-free cloth and wipe the screen well. Computer stores also sell anti-static screen cleaners. You might want to run around the house and clean all your TV screens at the same time.

Keyboards: Computerists are constantly told not to eat anywhere near the computer. Hardly anybody ever follows that advice. Consequently, most of us have keyboards filled with Chips Ahoy crumbs, pretzels, and last year's salami sandwich.

Common sense should tell you not to pour Fantastic or any other fluid onto your keyboard. And don't try to pry off the key caps to clean the innards. You're just opening a can of worms!

The only way to clean a keyboard safely is with air. Use a powerful vacuum with an attachment that can fit into small places, or better yet, blow the dirt out by spraying compressed air. These cans are sold in camera stores; photographers use them to blow dust out of their equipment.

Printers: This is where the dirt is the worst, because you have all that ink flying around. Clean the print head carefully with a damp rag or Q-tip soaked in alcohol. While you're at it, use a very

small nozzle on the vacuum and suck up all those bits of dust and debris.

The Computer Itself: If you know how to open up your computer and aren't afraid to poke around inside, there's nothing wrong with carefully cleaning it with a dry-damp Q-tip.

If the thought of opening up your computer makes you break out in hives, don't do it. You may do more harm than good.

If you've got a service contract, bring your computer in once a year even if nothing is wrong with it, so a professional can fully clean and check it out. A good time to do this is when you go away on vacation or business and won't be needing the computer for a few days.

If you smoke or have a cat that prowls around the computer, it's all the more important to clean it occasionally. You don't have to buy an expensive cleaning kit --but on the other hand, just any old rag will cause more problems than it is trying to resolve! Lint-free cloths and the correct cleaning solution will do wonders.

Before you clean ANYTHING, look at the instruction booklet that came with the component to see if any special procedures are indicated, and make sure everything is turned off AND unplugged first!

More Tips For Computer Maintenance:

Keep computer equipment away from radiators, direct sunlight, and other sources of heat. Make sure to leave a few inches of breathing room around all your components so air can circulate.

Computers don't like static electricity. Get an anti-static mat for your desk and the floor below the computer. Get in the habit of touching your

lamp or other piece of metal before you touch the computer, especially in the winter or if the room is carpeted.

Stash the cords and cables out of the way so children and pets don't trip over them.

Fumes from nail polish remover, ammonia, glue, and other liquid chemicals can react with magnetic surfaces. Keep them away from your floppy disk.

Get a dust cover, not just for the computer, but also for your printer, copy machine, and other electronic equipment. Tape a cardboard flap in front your floppy disk drive opening and leave it there all the time. Less dust will get sucked into your computer, so there will be less to clean out next year.

(Editor's note: Local office supply stores sell a kit containing a can of compressed air and an anti-static cleaner for around \$10.)

(From *The Computer Chronicle* via *Random Bits*,

Programs and Data Files

Some of the confusion people seem to have in using GEOS comes from a lack of understanding of this simple principle: There are two common types of files used on any computer platform:

Programs, often called Applications, are files you can RUN. Sometimes the word used is LAUNCH or OPEN or START. The idea is the same. A program DOES something, and you have to run it to get it to do that thing. Often a program consists of more than one file--but the idea is still the same; that group of files are used by the program to make things happen.

Data Files are what you create with a program. The Write Stuff creates text files, which can be as

simple as a letter to your uncle, or the Great American Novel. GeoPaint creates graphic files. And the GEOS Photo Manager creates Photo Albums.

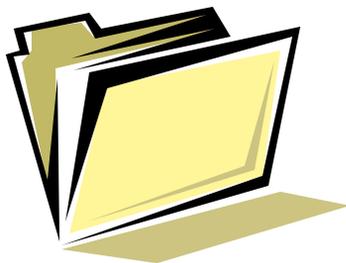
Almost without exception, a program that creates a data file can later modify that file. Equally important in many cases, different **programs** can share the same files. Sometimes you have to do something to convert the data file from its original format to the other programs format; sometimes it can be used as is.

And guess what: When the data file is being converted, that task is handled by a program-- sometimes the second program, sometimes a separate program, sometimes even the original program.

For example, Write Stuff can convert its standard screen code text files to PETASCII or standard ASCII format; and can convert both those formats to screen code. But geoPaint can't convert a Koala or Doodle file. So some clever programmer wrote a separate program to do this.

Most of these stand-alone conversion programs don't do anything but convert. Import Runner can convert several file formats to geoPaint, but can't do anything else with the original file or the new file.

Your computing life will be a lot easier if you can **program** your mind to **file** this information where it's easily accessible!



The End of the Century: 4 Years to Go

by Charles F. Carter

Most people are confused about the calendar system now in use. Yes, many of the computer systems will crash in the year 2000, the **last** year of the 20th century. This is why so many people miscalculated the millennium! Yes, the years ending in 00 (even hundreds) signify the **end** of a CENTURY!

The first year, the year traditionally looked upon as the year of Christ's birth, and the year upon which our calendar is based, was the year ONE. The tenth year was year ten and was the last year of the first decade. The first year of the second decade was year eleven, and the second ten years ended with the year twenty. The first year of the third decade would, therefore, be year thirty-one. Following that logical beginning: 1981 is the first year of the ninth decade of the twentieth century; 1990 is the last year of the ninth decade. 1991 is the first year of the tenth decade, and the year 2000 will be the LAST year of the tenth decade of the twentieth century ---NOT the beginning of the twenty-first century as is commonly assumed.

Most of us look forward to a change in numbers, much like watching the nines turn over to zeros when you have driven your car 100,000 miles. It is an event. With the calendar, the zeros signify the end of the millennium -NOT THE BEGINNING!

Most of us are aware that there is a calendar adjustment at the end of each century, i.e., the years ending in 00. But many people have the adjustment backwards. Every four normal years an extra day is added to the calendar and is known as February 29th. We are used to that phenomenon as being called leap year. This is really an imper-

fect adjustment, however. In 100 years the calendar gets a little out of whack and it is adjusted by omitting leap year at the end of each century --those years ending in 00. But even this centennial adjustment is still not perfect. So, in all centennial years evenly divisible by 400, an exception is made, and the leap year remains. (*Random Bits* Editor's Note: 1900 is not divisible by 400, so there was no leap year that year. My mother-in-law, a leap-year baby, did not get to celebrate any birthdays from 1896 until 1904; she went eight years without a birthday party from the time she turned eight until she reached her 16th birthday in 1908.)

Therefore, our leap year cycle is consistent for the years 1904 through the year 2096. The upcoming end of the millennium, year 2000, will be a leap year. Many, many people are insisting that the year 2000 will not be a leap year (quite a call-in discussion on a local radio station the other day). They must have forgotten the exception (i.e., if the centennial year is divisible by 400).

Class of 2000 -You are the last class of the 20th century! One more Olympics in this century --The 20th Century --The year 2000 In Australia!

One more presidential election in this century! -the 20th century! Many people have booked "end-of-century" celebration parties a year early.

(From *Random Bits*, March 1997, NOVACOM; Northern Virginia computer Club)



But Seriously Folks...



These are true stories from the Florida-based Data Retrieval Services, a company specializing in rescuing data from various computer media as floppy disks, hard drives, and tapes.

A customer handed them a stack of non-functioning floppy disks. DRS recovered the data from the disks using special techniques, and copied the data to fresh disks. Next day, the customer complained that the new disks wouldn't work either. So they got them back and noticed a slight curvature to them. They called and asked what she had done to them when she got them back. AJust what I always do--I stick labels on them, put them into the typewriter, and type a name on them.@

A panicky novelist lost four years of work to a malfunctioning hard drive. AHave you been backing up your computer?@they asked. AYes,@the writer replied, AI=ve been backing the computer up as close to the wall as I can get it.@
(from *Sectors*, newsletter of Hagerstown MD Group)

Hello and welcome to Psychiatric Hotline. If you are obsessive compulsive, please press 1 repeatedly. If you are co-dependent, please ask someone to press 2. If you have multiple personalities, please press 3, 4, 5 & 6. If you are paranoid-delusional, we know who you are and what you want. Just stay on the line so we can answer the call. If you are schizophrenic, listen carefully and a little voice will tell you which number to press. If you are manic depressive, it doesn't matter which number you press. No one will answer.

(From The Internet, via FUNHUG newsletter, Fremont CA, 2/96)