The Interface

Taking 8 Bits to the 21st Century

A History of Our Calendar

(A conversation about the Julian vs. the Gregorian calendar at our last meeting convinced us it was time to reprint this article.)

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons." Popular Mechanics, 1949

The calendar which most in the Western World use today is called the Gregorian calendar. It is the result of a revision made to its predecessor, the Julian calendar. The Julian calendar came about under the rule of Julius Caesar who ordered it in 46 BC to replace the mess preceding it.

The Roman calendar in use about 738 BC consisted of a 304 day year divided into 10 months, with a month of 22 or 23 days added every second year. Political manipulations later added two more months. By the time of Julius Caesar, the calendar was some three months ahead of the seasons.

To rectify things, the year was made 365.25 days, divided into 12 months, each having 30 or 31 days, except for February, but with a day added every fourth year. However, to realign the calendar with the seasons, Caesar decreed that the year 46 BC would have 445 days!

The Julian calendar was the standard for 1500 years. But a year is actually a little less than 365.25 days. Consequently, by 1580 AD, the calendar was 10 days ahead of the seasons. This prompted Pope Gregory XIII to revise the Julian calendar. To permanently correct the slight error, he decreed that years ending in 00 would NOT have an extra day, unless divisible by 400. Hence, the year 2000 will see an extra day in February; but 1900 was NOT a leap year.

Then, to realign the calendar with the seasons, 10 days were dropped from October: the day that would have been October 5, 1582 became October 15th!

Not every nation immediately adopted the Gregorian calendar. For instance, Britain and its colonies didn't adopt it until September 2, 1752. By then, of course, the old Julian calendar had drifted off another day. Hence, what would have been September 3rd became September 14, 1752. This explains why George Washington's birth date is shown on today's calendar as February 22. Actually, he was born February 11, 1732 under the Julian calendar.

FCUG Web Site Activity

Gaelyne R. Gasson not only provides us a free spot on her server for our web page, and Emails us a statistical summary every month. This summarizes the summary.

Total requests from July 16, 1997 to October 31, 1999: 1,882.
Total requests in the seven days ending 10/31: 30
Average successful requests per day: 2 (4 in the week ending 10/31)

The month by month count:

Oct 1999:   131
Sep 1999:   85
Aug 1999:   97
Jul 1999:   85
Jun 1999:   71
May 1999:   115
Apr 1999:   186
Mar 1999:   140
Feb 1999:   134
Jan 1999:   154

Dec 1998:   48
Nov 1998:   50
Oct 1998:   31
Sep 1998:   26

Aug 1998:   34
Jul 1998:   27
Jun 1998:   32
May 1998:   39
Apr 1998:   49
Mar 1998:   34
Feb 1998:   32
Jan 1998:   56

Dec 1997:   28
Nov 1997:   37
Oct 1997:   56
Sep 1997:   44
Aug 1997:   44
Jul 1997:   17

Busiest month: Apr 1999 (186 requests for pages).
Busiest week: week beginning 18/Apr/99 (52 requests for pages).
Busiest day: 18/Apr/99 (34 requests for pages).
Busiest hour: 18/Apr/99 20:00-21:00 (14 requests for pages).

Postal Service BBS Numbers

The U.S. Postal Service has a BBS to supply postal information. The number is 800-262-9541. It has a 30-minute daily limit. In addition to information displays, the BBS allows you to leave Email with questions, suggestions, gripes, etc.

(From Civic 64/128 Gazette, Oxnard CA 2/96)

Scape

by Robert Bernardo

As the holidays draw near, people start buying gifts for all their loved ones. However, there is probably one friend that we forget. That would be our Commodore computer. Wouldn't it be nice to bestow a present upon our favorite machine --the machine that plays our games, does our work, picks up our e-mail, and cruises the World Wide Web?

C= gifts can be in any price range. It's the thought that counts. At virtually no cost, you can decorate your computer with some stickers or handmade covers for the keyboard and drives. If you fancy yourself an artist, you can give your computer a paint job! Years ago Compute!'s Gazette magazine had a competition on who could best repaint their computer, and at this year's World of Amiga show in London, the grand door prize was an Amiga 1200 computer, artfully airbrushed with a glossy black, outer space background complete with planets and nebulas.

Your Commodore would look even more decorative if you leaned a good magazine or book on it. By taking out a subscription to the GEOS Publication, GO64!/Commodore World, Commodore Scene, or Commodore Zone; or purchasing The Internet for Commodore C-64/128 Users, you'd be assured of fine reading.

At the lower end of the price bracket, you could buy a disk or two from your C= club's collection of public domain disks. A step up would be to buy some used, commercial software or used, minor hardware, like a FastLoad cartridge or clone. New, unopened software is available from CMD, Centsible Software, and other retailers. Let's not forget the new software that comes from other

sources, like Loadstar, Maurice Randall (Wheels 64/128, Geo-FAX), Nick Rossi (Novaterm 9.6), and Arndt Dettke (GoDot), to name a few. Purchasing their products will encourage them to develop their software further.

Looking for something more substantial? If you only have one disk drive (or just a tape drive!), then buy one, two, or three extra disk drives. Provided that the drive device numbers are different, GEOS/Wheels can use the extra drives, and disk copying becomes so much easier with more than one drive. An extra disk drive doesn't have to be of the 5 1/4 inch variety; Commodore 1581 and Creative Micro Design FD-2000's can use 3 1/2 inch disks--the latter one using high-density disks. With the exception of the FD-2000, all of these drives can be readily found in the used market. If you really want brand new equipment, CMD sells new 1541's and FD-2000's.

Perhaps your Commodore looks a bit lonely. Then you could buy an extra C-64, C-128, VIC-20, Plus/4, or PET to keep it company. The first three can easily be found in the used market, and CMD sells the C-64 new. Also, CMD has new, repairable power supplies which will keep your C-64/128's going much longer.

Not satisfied with small-time gifts? You can jump to the major league with the purchase of a faster, external modem; a Postscript printer, a RamLink, a SuperCPU 64/128, the abovementioned FD-2000, or a CMD hard drive. Ranging in price from the low hundreds to the multi-hundreds, these hardware items will transform a C-64 or C-128 into a power machine.

O.K., there you have it. To drive home the point a little further, I've rewritten the song below to fit our Commodore lifestyle. Have fun singing it, and if you don't like the order of the items, you can

switch them around. As the song stands, it would cost about $8,509 to buy all of the items! And that's according to prices and shipping from Creative Micro Designs, Centsible Software, Loadstar, Maurice Randall, and the used market. (My thanks to fellow Commodore user, Kevin Baysinger, for giving me inspiration and ideas to finish the lyrics. Oh, yes, I know that a FastLoad-type cartridge doesn't speed up the disk drive but the serial bus access. It just sounds better the way I wrote it.)

The Twelve Days of Commodore Christmas

On the first day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
A cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the second day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Two ram expanders
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the third day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the fourth day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the fifth day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,

Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.
On the sixth day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Six FD disk drives,
Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the seventh day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Seven speedy modems,
Six FD disk drives,
Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the eighth day of Christmas

I bought my Commodore
Eight 1 gig hard drives,
Seven speedy modems,
Six FD disk drives,
Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the ninth day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Nine Loadstar diskettes,
Eight 1 gig hard drives,
Seven speedy modems,
Six FD disk drives,
Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the tenth day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Ten sturdy joysticks,
Nine Loadstar diskettes,
Eight 1 gig hard drives,
Seven speedy modems,
Six FD disk drives,
Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the eleventh day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Eleven RamLinks running,
Ten sturdy joysticks,
Nine Loadstar diskettes,
Eight 1 gig hard drives,
Seven speedy modems,
Six FD disk drives,

Five SCPU's,
Four megs of mem'ry,
Three Wheels upgrades,
Two ram expanders,
And a cartridge that speeds up disk drives.

On the twelfth day of Christmas
I bought my Commodore
Twelve games of action,
Eleven RamLinks running,
Ten sturdy joysticks,
Nine Loadstar diskettes,

JPEG Conversion Comes to Commodore

JPEG images are a common format for the PC (the letters stand for Joint Photographic Experts Group, an organization that developed this and other computer file formats). Until recently getting a JPEG (AKA JPG) file into Commodore format involved getting it into some other PC form at first.

There are at least two programs to do direct JPG to GIF files for the Commodore. One is available without charge from Gaelyne R. Gasson=s web site.

Here are her comments:

This utility will convert .jpg images to .gif format. It is offered with no guarantees.

The file must be available via FTP or the Web, and the converted GIF file is always named "file.gif", so you'll need to save it with a different name if you intend to convert more than one image.

The utility is rather unforgiving, so if you get a file with zero bytes back, check the URL carefully to make sure it is correct. Always

remember to add the 'slash' at the end of the URL as shown in the example, and don't forget to check whether the .jpg extension is lower or uppercase (.jpg is not the same as .JPG).

You can use the example as a test if you like -it's a photo of our home.

Example format:

URL : http://videocam.net.au/images/
Filename : house.jpg

To check out this utility, go to http://cbm.videocam.net.au/ then find the JPEG CONVERSION link. (You can=t access it with a graphic browser, it=s just for text-based browsers, which of course you will be using if you are accessing the site with a Commodore.)

And another note from Gaelyne:

Stephen Judd, the smart guy who now edits C= Hacking has just posted a URL to a web page about a very new JPEG program for the C=. It's early days and has a few rough edges, but once again, the word impossible has been changed to "oh yea, we can do that too."

The URL is:

Meeting Note: At the December meeting Dick will bring his digital camera and Robert will bring the hardware to (hopefully) transfer pictures into the Commodore.

The Future of GEOS Publication

by Willis Patten

(Editor's note: *GEOS Publication* has been around for several years, and as far as we know, is the only GEOS specific publication based in the United States.)

The time has come for me to take steps to drastically reduce the cost of my beloved Journal GEOS Publication.

I have come up with two proposals, one of which will presumably apply to those of you who have access to Email, and the other for those of you who do not.

For those of you using Email, I will put my Journal in Email format, using essentially the same type of materials as the last few issues have contained. Of course, with two major changes: no fancy fonts nor graphics. I regret this, but at least it will keep the Journal coming to you if you will accept it in this manner.

Once your subscription runs out, renewals via Email will cost you $8.00 a year. This will help defray Internet costs and business costs. Unless you notify me that you wish back issues instead of Email issues, I will continue as we have been except Email, and your forthcoming issue will be in January, 2000.

I hope you will accept this as an attempt on my part to do the best I can to serve you and give you full value for your subscription money.

For those of you NOT using Email, I can finish out your subscription with back issues published before your current subscription began. That is the only thing I can offer you, and I hope it will be agreeable to you. These issues would come to you as the November issue did, during odd months

until your subscription is used up. My business, like most Commodore Publications, is suffering a 50% loss in subscriptions, and I simply am not making ends meet. Actually, I would be operating in the red were it not for my own out of MY pocket donations to keep it going. As CMD says, it is not "cost efficient."

Rev. Willis C. Patten wcpat@iglou.com
 http://www.ocslink.com/~andrews/geospub.htm

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

We finally had a winner of the big $20 jackpot in November. Sandy Dippollet's was the second name drawn (Keith Sohm lost out). Sandy kindly donated the prize back to the club to apply toward our renewal of *Commodore World/ Go64* magazine.

We draw names till there's a winner, stopping after the third name, and if none of them is present, the pot goes up to $10 the next meeting.

Our other 1999 winners have been Ben Briscoe, Jack Fisette, Pat Spears, Helen Silvas, and Jim Kirby.

Absentee names drawn in 1999 include Pat Spears, George Savaros, Art Gumprecht, John Weaver (twice) Doug Cunningham, Zella Mallard, Bill Clark, Les Crites, Virgil Leisure (twice), Art Gumprecht, Martin and Maria Marquez, Ben Briscoe, Marie Terry, John Weaver, and Keith Sohm (twice).

Modern Aphorisms
(from Random Bits newsletter of NOVACOM via Pixel Pages newsletter of MPCUG)

This is a particularly good set of puns... and all too familiar to those of us who are true Internet Geeks! Enjoy!

1. Home is where you hang your @
2. The e-mail of the species is more deadly than the mail.
3. A journey of a thousand sites begins with a single click.
4. You can't teach a new mouse old clicks.
5. C:\ is the root of all directories.
6. Too many clicks spoil the browse
7. The geek shall inherit the earth.
8. A chat has nine lives.
9. Don't byte off more than you can view.
10. Great groups from little icons grow.
11. Fax is stranger than fiction.
12. What boots up must come down.
13. Windows will never cease.
14. Modulation in all things.
15. In Gates we trust.
16. A user and his leisure time are soon parted.
17. There's no place like http://www.home.com
18. Oh, what a tangled website we weave when first we practice.

And finally:

19. Give a man a fish and you feed him for a

A Thank You Card

From Robert Bernardo

Now that my Commodore travels are over for 1999, I'd like to give my belated thanks to all of the following people who greeted me, extended their hospitality and friendship, and aided me in my quest to find Commodore.

First and foremost is Peter Hanson, his wife Barbara, and daughters Katey, Jody, and Krissy. They were my hosts during my three-week stay in England. Peter is also the Plus/4 king of England and an avid

Commodore 64 and Amiga fan. Another big thanks goes to Mike Vainola of Chelmsford, England, who provided C-64 and Amiga programs for me. Mike and another new British C= friend, Selwyn Astin, led me around London to find the software/hardware shops of Computer Exchange and Retro Computers. Also thanks go to Graham Howden, proprietor of Retro Computers and editor of *Retro Classix* magazine. More thanks go to Allan Bairstow, editor of *Commodore Scene* magazine, Elizabeth, his wife; and Faye, his daughter; for letting me stay at their house two nights. We attended the DejaVu II demo party, and there we met another C= friend, Jason Kelk, editor of *Commodore Zone* magazine. Thanks to the organizer of DejaVu II, Mark Sonning, for letting me attend the show. Also another bit of thanks to Jean and Tony Salter --Jean being a Commodore on-line friend I
finally got to meet.

Back in the states and at the Vintage Computer Festival, I would have had a more difficult, less enjoyable time if it weren't for the help, advice, and company of these friends who visited and/or stayed at the FCUG table: Larry Anderson, PET collector and SYSOP of the C= bulletin board, Silicon Realms; Diane Hare, Larry's wife; Todd Elliott, GEOS programmer; Ed Hart, president of the Fremont-Union City-Newark, Hayward User Group; Clark Murphy, vice-president of FUN-HUG; Randy Abel, president of The Other Group of Amigoids; Garry Wolfe, former Commodore engineer; Marty Franz, co-developer of the Warpspeed cartridge, and VMAX! and SuperKit 1541 programs; and all of the countless people who visited the FCUG table during the show (including the print and video reporters and photographers). Though not able to attend, FCUG vice-president Helen Silvas deserves thanks, too, because she provided the artful banner to decorate our table at the festival. Last but not least, a big thank you to VCF's organizer, Sam Ismail, for

permitting us to have a table there and promote Commodore. Here's to a bigger and better show next year!

Let's not forget another successful FCUG picnic that we had on Oct. 10 at Sandy and Ingrid Dippollet's house. I'm always amazed at the turnout, and the food, door prizes, and good talk were flowing. Thanks to all the members who make

How Do You Use Your Computer?

by Steve and Cyndi Collins

(From Commodore users of Rochester C.U.G.O.R., January 1988) (Editor's note: This is even more true today!)

Here's another trend we see occurring! Many of you are settling into your computer systems, and are no longer exploring various capabilities. For myself, I've centered my use of my system on a word processor, data base, spread sheet, and one telecommunications program.

Admittedly, there are several other interests in my life that are now occupying a great deal of my time, and I now see my computer system as a productive tool to accomplish specific goals in an efficient and organized manner. Gone are the days of tinkering with programs or hardware, just for the joy of learning. Now the emphasis is on writing a professional looking letter, or quickly determining costs on a major project. Several other club members have mentioned similar experiences to me during the meetings. For all I know, this may be a very common progression for many of us in the home computer world.

With these thoughts in mind, you might want to let club officers or board members know about the changes in your computing life. This will help them move the club in the direction that will best serve the members.