



THE EDITOR'S GODZILLA

BIBLE BASIC
(A book review)

-by Lenard R Roach

This book seemed to take longer than a week to arrive via the United States Postal Service, but the emotional measurement of time always seems to differ from the physical measurement of time. In my impatience, I contacted son Gabriel in Double Oak, Texas, who occasionally monitors the incoming mail and my house with the security cameras via their respective apps on both his phone and on his computer. I asked him if my package had arrived. He assured me by text that it had not. The next night I was surprised that inside the mailbox was the long anticipated package. Once inside the house with the package and other assorted mail, I placed the letters on the entertainment stand and tore into the plastic binding that held the contents of the package. Revealed in the bright illumination of the overhead living room light was the book, "Bible Basic: Bible Games For Personal Computers." I waited for the next night to open the book and look through at the pages.

I sat down in my armchair at my regularly appointed time (about 3 am) and started to go through the pages meticulously. I was surprised at what I was reading. The author, Bernard K.

Bangley, had a double focus in mind when he wrote the book and coded the program text in "Bible Basic." Obviously, Mr. Bangley had in mind to bring text games to multiple personal computer platforms with a Christian theme, but he also wished to teach beginning BASIC to new users of home computers, especially the Commodore 64. The author did his best to avoid using specific BASIC commands, like PEEK, POKE, and INKEY\$. However, Mr. Bangley did add in a few exceptions for the Commodore 64, especially making specific code for the Commodore VIC-20 on quite a few entries, which speaks to the uniqueness of the VIC-20 as well as the Commodore 64 in relation to other computer platforms available in the 1980s.

We all cling to the Commodore for fun, entertainment, and productivity, and it deserves special recognition at all times, but I am speaking from bias here. As a simple BASIC coder myself, many of my programs that I have written use few to no BASIC commands like PEEK and POKE but are coded with the same intention as Mr. Bangley – to allow the user to improve on the code presented and to educate the beginning user on the ins and outs of the Commodore's BASIC 2.0.

Digging into the code book, I noted that many of the programs in this book were very short and would take up approximately one hundred to one hundred fifty total blocks on a standard 170K disk. A couple of programs were only one block in length while a few more go up to the size of thirty blocks or greater in my best estimation. According to the author, each game coded was to stimulate the user to code his or her own programs with the same Christian themes presented in the book. The author left room at the beginning of each program for the creative BASIC coder to add opening graphics and sound if he/she wished to do so. Mr. Bangley also

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encouraged readers to modify the programs presented in the book to the user's specifications.

The thing I did enjoy about Bible Basic was the appendix. In the appendix are subroutines that look fun to code with some splashed with a bit of humor. I've only skimmed the appendix and have yet to code all of the reward-offering subroutines, but those programs have sparked my interest into coding these modules into my Commodore 64 at first opportunity.

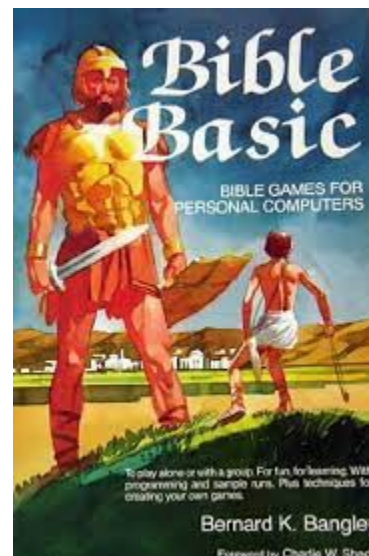
The first one on my list is the prize program. This piece of code will allow the user to select between A to Z and see what "prize" has been won. Most of the selections are funny, like "a hill of fire ants" and "twenty nematodes," among other choices. This should bring a chuckle or two from the children who get to use these programs.

The next program is a guess-the-number program in which the Commodore and like-minded computers allow the user to choose a number, and the machine tries to guess which number the user chose by multiplication, addition, subtraction, and division. Somehow, the computer always assumes that the number is three. It will be interesting to code this text into the Commodore 64 and discover exactly why that is.

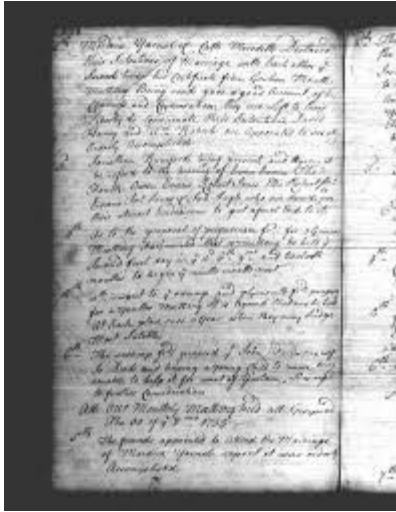
The next game I would like to code in and save to disk is the "Psychic Computer" game. The player enters the month of his/her birth, and the Commodore calculates their age and what year they were born. These programs are meant to be humorous and only appear to be doing basic math but a closer look at the source code shows that in reality, the player is the one doing all the calculating. Mr. Bangley definitely has a strong knowledge of BASIC and a great grasp of things to keep a young person's interest.

Lastly, I would like to code a program called "Ego Reward," in which the user receives accolades for doing such a good job in studying the Bible, i.e., some hurrahs plus whatever praises that the programmer would like to add. This program has the ability to make for some humorous puns that bring a little snicker from the player. There are other interesting subroutines offered in the book that are worth investigating, and since everything is in BASIC, you can bet that I am going to seek to add my own warped sense of humor to the mix.

On the surface, Bible Basic looks like yet another fun way to learn about the Bible with strong lessons and light humor as well as giving a user a glance into the simplicities and the complexities of coding in BASIC on the Commodore. I am looking forward to typing in these programs and observing how each program functions and compares to the Scriptures.



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MONTHLY MEETING REPORTS

-by Robert Bernardo & Dick Estel

MARCH 2023

A day with just a few rain showers seemed like a “dry” day after several atmospheric rivers in January, February, and March had brought heavy rainfall to the San Joaquin Valley and Sierra foothills, resulting in widespread flooding and evacuations in some areas.

On March 19, members of the Fresno Commodore Use Group braved the light sprinkles, and Dave, Robert, Roger and Dick appeared at the Panera Bread restaurant for our monthly meeting.

Robert placed on the table a 3D-printed version of the club name and logo, made on a 3D printer by Randy Abel, the leader of The Other Group of Amigoids in San Jose. This triggered a discussion of 3-D printing, with Roger describing a 90-foot rocket that has been made from metal using the 3D-printing technology.

Robert had re-activated Bernardo Studios to film demos with Roger and a commercial for the Commodore LA Super Show (CLASS). He took the production on location to Vasquez Rocks, just off of State Highway 14 northeast of Santa Clarita. This was where a number of scenes from Star Trek were filmed, and of course, Robert filmed a Commodore next to Kirk’s Rock, where the good captain fought the Gorn in episode 18. Watch for this commercial to appear on YouTube in the near future.

<https://parks.lacounty.gov/vasquez-rocks-natural-area-and-nature-center/>

CLASS is coming up April 15 and 16, and a few more things have been added to the agenda. David Pleasance, head of Commodore UK, will appear virtually to talk about the machine’s big success in Europe. The second thing is still a secret, so you will have to attend CLASS or wait for a post-show report. Also appearing long-distance from Australia will be Paul Gardner-Stephen, the man who developed the Mega65 which is the modern day replica of the Commodore 65.

Roger talked about the method of sending BASIC code via a flashing square on a television screen. A 1985 BBC tv show about computers used this method. There is a video about this at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxo1Gs46ti0> and an article at

<https://archive.org/details/PersonalComputerWorld1985-03/page/184/mode/1up>

Hypothetically, the interface for the Commodore and the software could be re-created, but how would the signal be sent to a CRT monitor and would the software be dependent on a European PAL signal (North America uses a NTSC signal.)?

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We moved on to software, starting with the Mega65 in C64 mode and various C64 games on the SD card that functions as a disk drive for this retro-futuristic machine. Various hiccups we encountered, but most games worked fine. Solitaire requires a working mouse, and the one Robert had, which had belonged to our late member Meredyth Dixon, was NOT working (it may have been non-functional, because Robert had set the machine for an Amiga mouse instead of a Commodore mouse). Super Bread Box, a jumping and shooting game, was partly functional, but the “bullets” Robert fired did nothing when they hit the target. Canabalt was a running game in which all you had to do was jump between buildings as the tempo between jumps became faster and faster.

Finally, a game that we all enjoyed was “Frogs,” in which you scored points by pushing other frogs into the water. We agreed that Frogs would be especially enjoyable if preceded by a drinking game. (To digress, what is this that frogs cannot live in water? Falling in the river in Frogger is fatal. Have all the game developers failed biology?)

One other game, Shotgun, kept us entertained for a few minutes. In this two-player game, you had to pick up your shotgun and shoot the opposing enemy before he shot you with his shotgun. The tricky part was that the shotguns disappear after a short time, and then the players had to start over in trying to destroy each other.

APRIL 2023

We had an unexpected and very special guest at this month’s meeting. In the early days of Commodore, Kurt Madden operated a computer store in Fresno, did extensive programming work, and was one of the founders of the Fresno Commodore User Group. He had done an on-line search and found our website, but assumed it was

just something “left over” and that the club no longer existed. He decided to visit our meeting place, and to his delight and surprise, there we were. We were equally delighted to meet him and learn more about the club’s beginnings.

He had a store, Micro Pacific Computer Center, in the Fig Garden Village Shopping Center, where he sold software by the ton, ran a factory-authorized Commodore repair center, and attended the big computer shows of the day, Consumer Electronic Show (<https://www.ces.tech/>) and Comdex (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COMDEX>).

Under the name Mirage Concepts, his company developed a Commodore word processor that was a big seller. He also produced a number of other software products. Eventually, the company went out of business and Kurt moved on to other projects.

In 2019 we talked by phone with another club founder, Chuck Yrulegui, who could only remember the first name, Kurt, of his colleague from the early 1980s. We were happy to fill in the blanks, and get some correct information that will be posted in the article that appeared in the March/April 2022 Interface.

Kurt was unable to stay for the meeting, which left it up to Robert, Bruce, Dick and Michael to carry on (Michael was late and missed out on the history lesson).

Robert gave a very positive report on the Commodore LA Super Show (CLASS), held earlier this month in Burbank. Paid attendance was 41, the largest of any FCUG sponsored event since the first Commodore Vegas show in 2005. Admission and raffle sales not only covered the room rental, but provided a nice profit to help fund the 2024 event, tentatively set for April 13 and 14.

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Robert also attended the LA Maker Faire April 1 in downtown Los Angeles. He had a table with Commodore, Amiga and another one or two vintage computers, which drew curious looks and questions from some of the thousands who attended.

We began the demonstration part of the meeting listening to some Amiga music (MOD) files, played not on an Amiga but on the Ultimate 64, which is a multi-talented modern computer, disguised in a classic C64 case.

Basically, Robert redid the presentation he had at CLASS, a presentation that our newsletter editor, Lenard Roach, had hoped to present at the show, but in his absence, Robert stepped in. Robert showed some Christian graphics with an interlaced picture of Jesus and then a PETSCII picture of Jesus. Then Robert ran the game, Satan's Hollow, a classic game marketed by Commodore Business Machines, a game in which the player shot down the horde of demons flying around and then tried to shoot a fire-breathing Satan. Michael played that game in full cheat mode and was pleased with its speed and the number of baddies to destroy.

We then put Michael to work with a reading comprehension game, the Baker Street Kids. The program displayed a series of paragraphs based on the Bible, with questions about various specifics. Michael got a B+, missing only one question.

Next it was Robert vs Michael in a fight game, SNK vs Capcom. A Super Street Fighter look-alike, the game had each player pick his particular character (different characters had different fighting skills) and then pick a country in which the fight was to occur. It was a rousing game. Robert and Michael kicked, somersaulted, jumped, and punched to the eventual winner who was... and then the game reset itself! Hmm, that

had never happened before. Then Michael played against his father. Pick character, pick country, fight! Though it was fun, it wasn't long before the game reset itself again... in the middle of play! It was time for the meeting to end, and as Robert was packing up, he checked the joystick connections. Joystick #2 was loose in its port, i.e., it was not plugged in all the way. Perhaps, that was the reason why the game kept resetting itself.



CAR RACING GAMES FOR THE COMMODORE 64

(Part 1 of 4)

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of NASCAR in 2023, Lenard decided to do a compilation article on the styles of car racing games available for the Commodore 64



Stunt Car Racer (published as Stunt Track Racer in the United States) is a racing video game developed by Geoff Crammond. It was published

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in 1989 by MicroProse, under their MicroStyle and MicroPlay labels in the United Kingdom and in the United States, respectively. The game pits two racers on an elevated track on which they race in a head-to-head competition, with ramps they must correctly drive off as the main obstacle. The game was released to critical acclaim. The Commodore 64 version's use of 3D vector graphics was met with critical enthusiasm, which was unusual for a game for that platform. It is considered one of the better racing games and games for Amiga, with many calling it one of the best such games.



Pole Position is an arcade racing simulation video game released by Namco in 1982 and licensed to Atari, Inc. for US manufacture and distribution, running on the Namco Pole Position arcade system board. It is considered one of the most important titles from the golden age of arcade video games. Pole Position was an evolution of Namco's earlier arcade racing electro-mechanical games, notably F-1 (1976), whose designer Sho Osugi worked on the development of Pole Position.

The game was a major commercial success in arcades. After becoming the highest-grossing arcade game of 1982 in Japan, it went on to become the most popular coin-operated arcade game internationally in 1983. In North America, it

was the highest-grossing arcade game for two years in 1983 and 1984 and still one of the top five arcade video games of 1985.

It was the most successful racing game of the classic era, spawning ports, sequels, and a Saturday morning cartoon, although the cartoon had very little in common with the game. The game established the conventions of the racing game genre and its success inspired numerous imitators. *Pole Position* is regarded as one of the most influential video games of all time, and it is considered to be the most influential racing game in particular. Its sequel, *Pole Position II*, was released in 1983.



Racing Destruction Set is a racing video game published in 1985 for the Commodore 64 by Electronic Arts. It was advertised as being Commodore 128 compatible. A version for the Atari 8-bit family, programmed by Rebecca Heineman of Interplay, was released in 1986 in the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany. The game allows players to design and race on tracks with a variety of vehicles. It is part of the Construction Set series along with Pinball Construction Set, Music Construction Set, and Adventure Construction Set.

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Chase H.Q. (チェイス H.Q., "Chase Headquarters") is a vehicular combat racing game, originally released as an arcade video game by Taito in 1988. It is sometimes seen as a spiritual successor to Taito's earlier Full Throttle. The player assumes the role of a police officer named Tony Gibson, member of the "Chase Special Investigation Department". Along with his partner, Raymond Broady, he must stop fleeing criminals in high-speed pursuits in a black Porsche 928.

Chase H.Q. was ported to many home computers by Ocean Software in 1989, including versions for the ZX Spectrum, Amstrad CPC, Commodore 64, MSX, Amiga and Atari ST. Taito produced versions for the Family Computer (1989), Game Boy (1990), Master System (1990), TurboGrafx-16 (1990), Game Gear (1991), and Saturn (1996). It was released for PlayStation 2 in Japan in 2007 as part of Taito Memories II Volume 2. The game was a commercial success, becoming Japan's highest-grossing dedicated arcade game of 1989 while also becoming a hit overseas for arcades and home systems. The game was also well received by critics. It was followed by three arcade-based sequels: Special Criminal Investigation (1989), Super Chase: Criminal Termination (1992) and Chase H.Q. 2 (2007).

Two spin-offs were also released: *Crime City* (1989) and *Quiz H.Q.* (1990).

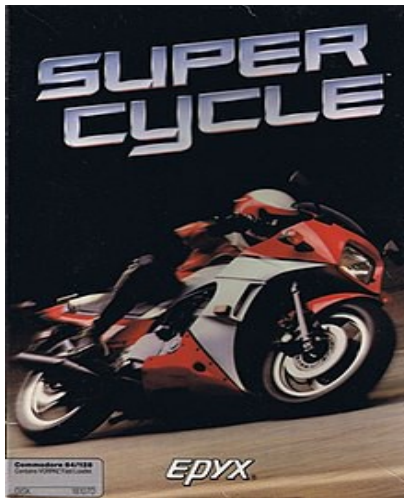


Special Criminal Investigation, also known as S.C.I. for short or as Chase HQ II: Special Criminal Investigation in some home versions, is vehicular combat racing game published by Taito for arcades in 1989. It is the sequel to the 1988 game Chase H.Q.



Super Hang-On is a motorcycle racing arcade video game released by Sega as the sequel to Hang-On. It uses a simulated motorcycle arcade cabinet, like the original game. An updated version was released in arcades 1991 as Limited Edition Hang-On.

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Super Cycle is a 1986 video game published by Epyx. It is a clone of Hang-On.

The custom cabinet was designed to resemble the craft that the player pilots in-game.

The arcade game was released in Europe by Jaleco, and in Japan by Namco and Sega. Home ports were released for the Atari ST, Amiga, Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC, and ZX Spectrum. An Atari Lynx version was published by Atari Corporation in 1991.

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-The Small Print-

The Fresno Commodore User Group is a club whose members share an interest in Commodore 8-bit and Amiga computers. Our mailing address is 185 W. Pilgrim Lane, Clovis, CA 93612. We meet monthly in the meeting room of Panera Bread, 3590 West Shaw, Fresno, CA. The meetings generally include demonstrations, discussion, and individual help.

Dues are \$12 for 12 months. New members receive a "New Member Disk" containing a number of useful Commodore 8-bit utilities. Members receive a subscription to The Interface newsletter, access to the public domain disk library, technical assistance, and reduced prices on selected software/hardware.



S.T.U.N. Runner (Spread Tunnel Underground Network Runner) is 3D racing/shooter game released in arcades by Atari Games in 1989. The player pilots a futuristic vehicle which can exceed 900 mph, through various tunnels and courses with changing environments, hazards and enemies. S.T.U.N. Runner uses polygonal graphics for the vehicles and track, and is based on an evolution of Atari's Hard Drivin' hardware.

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