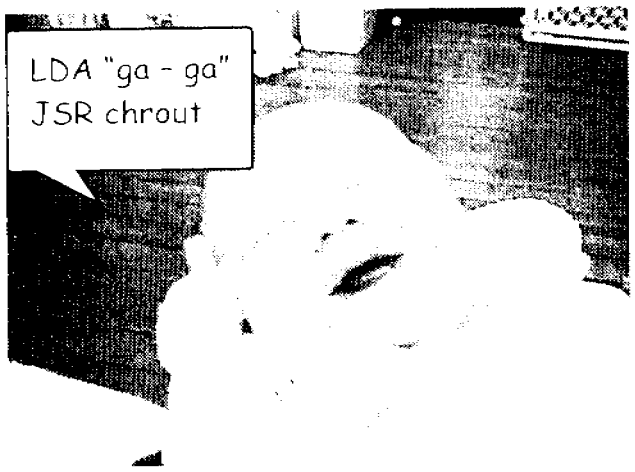
LOADSTAR LETTER #71



The Harbrons Do It Again!

By Jeff Jones. Heidi Inga Harbron was born at 6:42 p.m. EST on Wednesday, July 14th, 1999, at McKellar General Hospital, she weighed in at a hefty 9 pounds, 4.5 ounces. Robin Harbron is a Programmer/ hardware tinkerer extraordinaire who has written a number of programs and authoritative articles for Loadstar.

Loadstar Buries All Softdisk Mags

By Jeff Jones. Last month Softdisk became an Internet-only corporation, dissolving its IBM disk mag and PC software ventures. This comes after dissolving Apple II and Mac software titles. Way back in 1988, when I was hired at Softdisk, I was told by arch Commodore- hater, Dan Tobias, to expect to be out of a job in two years.

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Commodore Sightings!

By Jeff Jones. The number one Commodore sighting this month was the 7-22-99 New York Times article, "Living the 8-bit Dream in a 32-bit World," by Jennifer 8. Lee. That name wasn't a typo. This article included one Fender Tucker Sighting and a Fender Tucker quote. This article made some disputable mathematical claims. For instance, it would take 1000 C64s to run Word for Windows. Actually it would take one C64 with a virtual memory (a system that uses the hard drive for memory) operating system. The article also mentioned stars like "Douglas" Cotton (I guess that's Doug Cotton in a tie), Stephen Judd and Maurice Randall to name a few.

You don't see many Commodore Computers on televisions these days though I think I saw one on an old Eurythmic video: *Sweet dreams* are made of these. The problem with that sighting is that in the early 1980s there were apparently a number of keyboards that resembled the C-64. For instance the movie, *Chiller*, in a dark scene in the cryogenics lab, apparently uses a whole room full of C-64 terminals.

As for verified C-64 sightings, I saw the Delta BrainWave Sleeping System on cable. Buy this CD and you will supposedly fall asleep. Well, toward the end of the commercial, a woman is sitting in front of a Commodore 1702 monitor. I also saw a Commodore on HBO on July 22. That was in the movie, *Hello Again*, starring Shelley Long. While she's trying to convince the doctor that she's been dead, a C-64C with C-128 colors flashes in the background.

Last, Fender's gonna kill me, but sometime late last year he personally dropped a new catalogue in my mailbox. Since then I have, er, misplaced the catalogue. Inside was a picture of a Commodore 64 in packing material. The Commodore 64 wasn't for sale. It was the packing material! When you think about it, someone in the production staff must have been a Commodore lover.

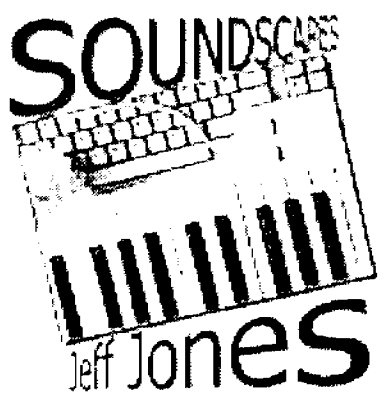
Modem Tax Another Web Hoax. Don't Email Your Congressman.

By Jeff Jones. While I value Email as much as USPS mail (except of course for checks), I must again warn that pranksters and con artists roam the net because Email is free. The Modem Tax hoax began in 1998 in Canada. Some prankster modified it to be US-based (though he/she forgot to change the bill number to a US-format bill number). It is probably the most widely circulated Internet hoax of all time, though one may also view it as simply a rehash of the original "Modem Tax" hoax.

(Continued on page 2)



Nothing's Better contains pop and love songs, and includes my (Jeff's) vocal debut.



Soundscapes is an instrumental album

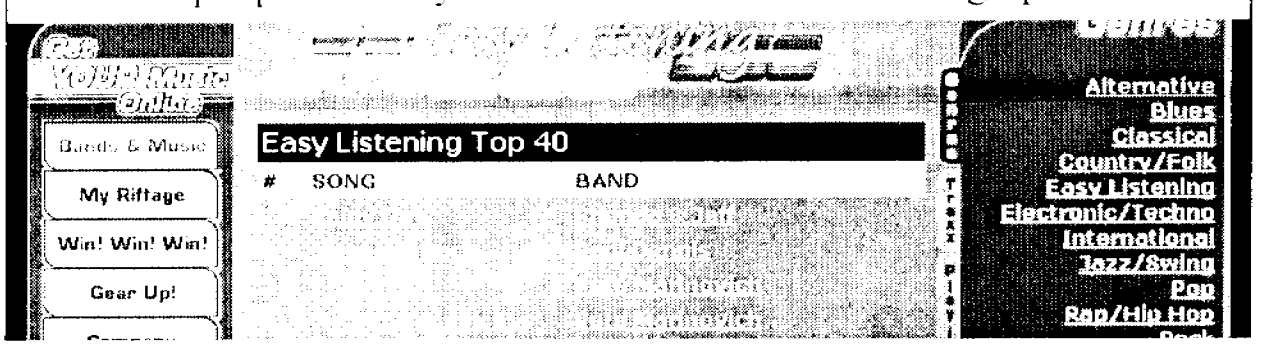


You can Be Free is a Contemporary Christian album

Rhonda & Jeff Briefly Have The #1 Song in Easy Listening on Riffage.com

By Jeff Jones. While I know that I'll never be a mega super music star, interesting things have been happening musically. First I got some sort of press or radio play (I think) in England, which spurred a surge of record sales there in one day. Now sales are back to normal — none. I've also started a new deal with Virgin Records and Riffage.com. People will be able to listen to my music in certain record stores, and Build a CD which may include my tracks on the spot. Hey! Was that a split infinitive?

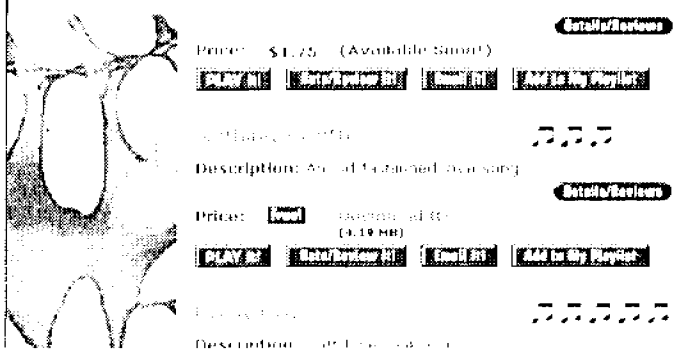
Some people hate my music and some love it. The graphic below



Screen shot showing our brief stint at number one.

shows that some people are rating our music quite highly . Still others hate it.

Now anyone in the world (who happens to be on the Internet, and has a non-maxed out credit card) can buy any of my three CDs (hint



Riffage.com uses a five-"star" or rather five-note viewer rating system for online music.

hint) for a mere $7.99 each. Riffage.com is so new that nothing there seems for sale yet.

http://www.mp3.com/artists/24/jeffrey_l_jones.html

Sorry, offliners. Purchases are web-only with credit cards. No mail or telephone orders.

GeoWrite 128 v2.2 Patch Available

By Todd Elliott. I'm proud to announce that the geoWrite 128 v2.2 patch is now available. If you are a heavy geoWrite 128 v2.1 user, then you simply can't afford to do without this upgrade! Even casual users will certainly appreciate the conveniences the upgrade offers. Anyway, enough flashy hype and bluster; Let's dive right in and list the following features which will be included in the geoWrite 128 v2.2 upgrade:

- Complete four drive support in its file requestors.
- Capable of booting up from any drive (A-D) when a datafile is clicked upon. Improved booting up sequence.
- Loads completely into expansion memory in Wheels equipped systems. In this case, geoWrite 128 no longer needs to access the disk device to retrieve its own modules, and simply fetches them from the faster RAM expansion. A very useful feature for users who only have 41's, 71's, 81's or FD's. This feature does not work in GEOS 128 because there is no reliable way of knowing how it manages RAM expansion.
- Semi-intelligent - Does not prompt the user to insert a new disk if non-removable media is used.
- Displays the DISK icon when a Native ramdisk is used. Previously, geoWrite 128 would not display a DISK icon (used to change disks or partitions) when a ramdisk is accessed. But native ramdisks have their own

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

subdirectories and the DISK icon is activated accordingly.
- Also displays the DISK icon if a RAMLink 1581 partition is used.
- The DISK icon is also displayed in the disk device from which geoWrite 128 was loaded from, because geoWrite 128 is now 100% ram resident.
- Autodetects whether it is running in GEOS 128 v2.0 or Wheels 128 systems.

To order the patcher program, simply mail a money order or check for only $6, including shipping anywhere in the U.S. Canadian orders are $1 extra, and U.S. funds are required. As for international orders, please email me for any details on how to obtain the patcher program. The mailing address is:

Todd Elliott
2906 Kathleen St.
Riverside, CA 92506

Be sure to note your mailing address and if any, your email address as well. Also, please note which disk media you want, 1541, 1581 or FD-2000. The FD-2000 disk format is preferred, but I can accommodate other disk media. The patcher program is only for the U.S. version of geoWrite 128 v2.1, and should work fine in GEOS 128 or Wheels 128 equipped systems. Also, there are a couple of other goodies that I will include on the disk, such as demos or graphics programs that I've created and as well as a SuperCPU-specific demo. (Due to its size, the SUPERCPU-specific demo is unavailable on 1541 disk media.)

Jeff Battles A Monster In Bathroom

By Jeff Jones. I will admit that I was sleep deprived, and on prescription drugs at the time. Nevertheless, this is a true account. The other night I went to close my bathroom window and unknowingly trapped a creature as I cranked the handle. It immediately shrieked and flapped about, trapped between my venetian glass slats and my screen. Can anyone out there tell me what this bug was?

This bug was huge, about two to three inches in length. It had a delta wing configuration and a black and pus-yellow underside.

This bug was robust — and LOUD! At first I thought it was a bat the way it banged against the window. It quacked like a duck from outer space — and probably louder than a duck. More specifically, it sounded like Burgess Meredith. I bathed it in Black Flag through the screen, but it *never* died. It just kept quacking louder every time I sprayed it. I suddenly remember that there was a small weak spot in my screen that I meant to repair with caulk. I could not imagine this thing inside my house. I had just seen a piece on an Australian spider that could bite through a leather boot. If this thing had a mouth, I knew it could draw blood from me. I thought it best to release the beast then. When I re-opened the slats, the creature immediately took off with one last and very angry quack. Most bugs are not so visually cognizant and would have to crawl around and discover that they were free. What was this bug?

C=Hacking Mag #18 Available Free Online

Hacking is a coder's magazine. You can find it at The Fridge, "A code storage facility."

http://www.ffd2.com/fridge/

This Issue's Contents:

BSOUT - Voluminous ruminations from your unfettered editor.

Jiffies -- Maybe next time!

Data Structures 101: Linked Lists

DS101 is a new article series. The idea is to review different data structures, with examples of their use in 64 programming.

This installment covers linked lists, and how to use them to make a zippy insertion sort with almost zero overhead.

Counting Sort, by Pasi Ojala

And, since we're on the subject of sorting algorithms, Pasi wrote up the counting sort. What's a counting sort? Well, read the article!

Main Articles

"VIC-20 Kernel ROM Disassembly Project", by Richard Cini <reini@msn.com>

This installment covers interrupts -- IRQ and NMI sources, the kernal handler code.

"A Diehard Programmer's Introduction to GEOS, and geoWrite Disassembly Notes", by Todd S. Elliott <Eyethian@juno.com>

As part of his effort to learn about GEOS programming, Todd disassembled geoWrite 128, and patched it to be more accepting of new devices and such. This article summarizes that adventure -- the

results and the lessons learned.

Masters Class: "NTSC/PAL fixing: FLI", by Russell Reed <rreed/*a*/egypt.org>, Robin Harbon <maebeth/*a*/tbaytel.net>, and S. Judd.

This time around the subject is FLI and IFLI graphics, and a tutorial on fixing them. Several pictures are provided for the reader to fix, in the included .zip file.

"Obj3d: The 3D object library", by S. Judd <sjudd/*a*/ffd2.com>

Obj3d is a set of routines for creating, manipulating, and displaying 3D worlds on the 64. It consists of routines to add and remove objects, move and rotate objects, render the display, and so on, and hence vastly simplifies the creation of 3D programs.

This article actually consists of three articles. The first article describes the library, and walks through a simple example program.

The second article is the "programmer's guide", containing memory maps and a list of all the routines.

The third article discusses "stroids", a more advanced example program in which a space ship can fly around a randomly drifting asteroid field, to demonstrate that sophisticated programs can be written with only a few hundred lines of code. The program is purposely left incomplete -- it's up to you to finish it up!

We had hoped to include a "3D Object Editor", written by Mark Seelye, but it wasn't quite done yet -- next issue!

Source code and binaries are included at the end of the issue.

Get Yer Geos Version of Hacking Mag #18!

Dear Jeff,

For a totally Commodore-friendly version of the latest issue of C= Hacking, download:

http://people.delphi.com/mykee/chacking18.wr3

Both uuencoded .ZIP files are uudecoded and unzipped for you.

The entire remaining text is also prepared in two convenient geoWrite documents.

A "read me" file is included.

The archive is 856 disk blocks in size so be ready for it if you want it.

Myke

P.S. Jeff, when I visited you in September 1995 at the Loadstar Tower you expressed great interest in having geoWrite versions of C= Hacking available. Finally, I've got all the hardware and all the software required to easily prep an entire issue of C= Hacking in geoWrite form! The issue is dated July 3.

P.P.S. I purchased from you guys "The Compleat Programmer" back in 1995. Along with it I purchased the extra C= Hacking Issues 5-9 disk (1581). Just recently I purchased my first FD-2000 floppy drive. Did you know that all 18 issues of C= Hacking fit on a single HD floppy disk if it's formatted with a single native mode partition? It's true. I used GZIP via my ISP's Unix shell account to compress them. Only 45 disk blocks remained on the floppy disk once I copied all 18 .gz files to it! Perhaps this could be a new way to market these issues with copies of "The Compleat Programmer" in 1999. We do have software now which is able to GunZIP .gz files. y'know. (Just a thought.)

Lord Hasenpfeffer

Jeff: Thanks for re-formatting Hacking Mag into a format more easily read by Commodore users. As Commodore compilations become more and more robust, it's ironic that these days it almost takes a PC to appreciate your Commodore on the net. As you know, I don't have a great appreciation for GEOS, but it is good for reading very large files.

I would like to have a place online for geo-fied documents like these. Just Email them to me at jeff@loadstar.com and I'll place them online.

Last, it's good to hear you're purchasing new hardware for your C-64. One reason the C-64 was all but abandoned by developers was the deep seated belief that "if you build it, they won't come..." Loadstar and CMD have ignored the advice of businessmen and have out-survived many of our PC colleagues.

Dear Jeff,

I would like to let your readers know a little bit more about Werner Wecht's patches for major BSW applications. His patches, as I understand it, basically changes a couple of bytes in a BSW application's dialog box table and creates a new dialog box property. This new dialog box property will force the GEOS system to use the MegaPatch3's enhanced dialog box, complete with four drive support. Needless to say, the

patches will only work with users having the MegaPatch3 GEOS upgrade and will not work with Wheels or regular GEOS v2.0 equipped systems. Also, it is not clear if the English versions of major BSW applications are also patched in this manner for English MegaPatch3 users.

-Todd Elliott

Jeff: Once again, thanks for the info. Glad to see that your new job hasn't taken you completely away from us.

Dear Mr. Jones.

Receeived LOADSTAR LETTER #70. Yes, I am a P.C. user, but I still get a lot out of the LOADSTAR LETTER. I read about computer stuff that I do not hear from Bill the Borg and the rest of the Borg Collective. Thanks again for telling Me about VICE, the C64 Emulator for PC Computers. It is Good to be back in the Friendly Commodore World. Recently I was looking at the D64 version- for PC Computers -of LOADSTAR #100. When I Read Your Document about TOOLBOX 100, I felt like you were Jedi Master Yoda, and I was Anakin SkyWalker. You are the Master Programmer, and I am the Young Apprentice. I Promise not to be totally sucked in by Bill, and become a Member of the Borg Microsoft Collective. LONG LIVE THE COMMODORE REPUBLIC!!! It was Good to Read that Fender, Judi, and LOADSTAR will at least be around until the end of 2000. I will be Ordering some more Back-Issues in the D64 format. Thanks for telling about MP3. I heard of it before, but since I do not have the Internet at Home, I never really read stuff about it. I went to the Library and was going to Download Yours and Your wife's MP3 Music, but it was way to big for a Floppy. Can I have a Friend Download the whole File, and then Copy Individual Songs on a Floppy. Will MP3 work on a Computer that is not Hooked up to the Web?

Goodbye for now Mr. Jones. Mega-Power Cubed-64 to You and LOADSTAR.

Signed: Jeff (Anakin) Puffer

Jeff: Yoda? Yoda!?! Why not Ben Kenobe? Besides, the new master these days is Lee Novak. I concede. The force is strong with him.

MP3 software works on computers with MP3 software players. They are not Internet-specific. If you're running a very old and slow PC, you might not be able to run MP3 software. As for my MP3s, all you need is a standard CD player if you buy them from mp3.com

Glad to hear you like Vice. I personally use Frodo for most quick things, and C64S for programming and disk-intensive projects.

Dear Jeff,

I have the Commodore 64 version of PaperclipIII word processing program.

I have saved some text to a blank disk for data storage.

I have not used these data disks for some time and when I went back to use these disks I was unable to read the directories on them.

I have used a program to read the track and sector of the disk and when I check track 18 sector 00 to track 18 to 20 there is nothing there.

I have checked other tracks there is some data there. I have tried the directory recovery that was on the Maverick goodies disk but that didn't work.

Any answers? Thanks Ron Auerswald RRA@aol.com

Jeff: I believe Paperclip uses a custom directory. Someone once sent us a disk like that and we gave up on trying to read the data. You might want to get someone who still uses Paperclip to get those files for you.

Why Bother Programming for GEOS?

By Todd Elliott. This is not to take away the fine prose that Bruce Thomas has so eloquently scribed in GEOS: Why Bother article as provided in LSL #66. Being the programmer that I am, pulsing in circadian rhythms of the 6502 bitstream, I can't but help suggest why we should bother programming for it. A caveat; GEOS is an OS, and isn't exactly suitable for cutting edge demo programming or game programming. We'll see why in a moment, but this isn't to say that one should do that stuff for GEOS. In fact, GEOS probably sure can use a couple diversions that these programs create.

From the programmer's perspective, GEOS really does give a lot at their disposal. If I had to do all the nice things from within stock CBM architecture. I would have to create a lot of code and suffer sleepless nights. I once coded a file requestor, and can see

how much work it took up. Loadstar has been preaching the gospel of making programs simpler and more intuitive to use for the past few years. GEOS has this concept down pat since its inception some 14 odd years ago. Want menus? With a little work in setting up a table, the programmer issues a JSR DoMenu. It can't be easier than that. Ditto for icons, dialog boxes, etc. Want your software to run on both 64 and 128 modes? Then GEOS is probably your best answer. Want to fully maximize the hardware from a stock c64 system to a CMD power user setup, but w/o the hassle of writing device drivers and specific device support? GEOS is your solution.

Yet, some programmers feel that they can do without GEOS; they don't mind the extra work that makes a program truly user-friendly, such as file requestors, menus, specific device support, etc. That's macho programming, and that's okay by my book. :) But, for those 6502 gurus who code applications in his cartridge freezer/monitor, here's the major reason why a programmer should bother programming for the GEOS platform: the way GEOS shares data.

Let's give several examples by comparing popular applications as opposed to BSW applications. In terms of features alone, Superbase 128 waxes geoFile 128 in just about each and every way. The FWS 128 blows away geoWrite 128. There are probably half a dozen spreadsheets that out-calculate geoCalc 128. But, let's get back to the database comparison-geoFile 128 has one thing that Superbase 128 barely has-data sharing with other applications.

The true power of geoFile 128 comes from its ability to pass data among other BSW applications and as well as any GEOS application that supports text scraps or photo scraps. Superbase 128 can only do this with its own Superscript 128 application, and to a lesser extent, export this data into a standalone file for later manipulation. GEOS is indeed an environment, a rich network of applications that all but work seamlessly with each other.

I can't imagine geoPublish being the premier DTP package were it not for this power that is contained in the GEOS environment. Maurice Randall could have created a FAX application that works from a stock CBM environment. But it works in GEOS instead, and its power is increased exponentially with paint drivers and the Intereceptor, allowing it to be integrated into the GEOS suite of applications and its vast panoply of GEOS third party software.

This power is one major reason why game or demo programming is rarely seen in GEOS. I mean, after all, what's to share in games? Demo programming can be very useful when it comes to screen savers, but even there, there's no data to share. A shame, as I would love to see a bumpmapper+plasma combo as my screensaver for my set of Wheels. :)

Lastly, here's an another reason why a 6502 savant should consider GEOS programming: it has one of the richest development tools of any custom OSes for the c64/128. For starters, the BSW application, geoProgrammer, has a powerful suite of tools at the programmer's disposal, the geoAssembler, geoLinker and geoDebugger and comes with one of the heaviest manuals in the business. There is even an updated version of geoDebugger. There is also the German toolkit called MegaAssembler, containing comparable features.

There's geoSourceror by Jean Major, which is a dedicated GEOS disassembler and was recently released into the public domain. Next, there's Concept, a breakthrough program that offers a truly integrated development environment for GEOS programming. There are reams of programming docs to get you started and up to speed in GEOS programming. There are active GEOS developers who have the near infinite patience and wisdom to help out problems or difficulties that comes with the territory of GEOS programming.

So, drop your Action Replay monitor or your intimate assembler of choice, and catch the eddy currents of cutting edge GEOS programming. Join the growing GEOS crowd, with its limitless potential still largely untapped.

Enjoy. -Todd Elliott

Free At Last On GeoCities

Wired reported that organizers of a Yahoo boycott have called a cease fire, satisfied the company has abandoned its claim to "owning" the Web pages of the site's GeoCities members. Geocities is the home of a number of C64 websites.

Yahoo revamped its terms of service for a second time to allay the fears of customers whom rival services had begun to lure away.

The new agreement says that

Yahoo will only use text, images, and sounds "for the purpose of displaying, distributing, and promoting your Yahoo GeoCities Site." Yahoo also promised not to change that portion of the contract without the explicit agreement of its members.

Interesting C-128 Q&A Taken From comp.sys.cbm

Now, I want you to know I am currently seeking to buy a 128. I guess I mainly want one for nostalgia reasons. I want to get the games and stuff I had when I was in high school.

What I want to know is why other people still want to use them. What are your reasons? Why are there so many websites for places that support the Commodore? (I'm really glad there are, especially if I manage to obtain one)

Does anyone know of good places to look for a 128 besides eBay?

Is the 128 really any better that the 64? The people I knew that had them kept them in the 64 mode most of the time? Was there any software developed for the 128 mode only?

How do the 64's and 128's compare to the PC systems available today?

Whew!

I don't know why but I really want a 128 now.

Thanks,

Alvis

Answer: Today's computer market is driven by "upgrade, upgrade, upgrade". I love showing people what I can do with just 1mhz and 64k RAM. Ok, so there's usually an REU involved, too :)

Dave Ross / Dr. Watson
watson@enteract.com
"Yesterday's technology today... for a better tomorrow!"

http://www.enteract.com/~watson

Answer: Nostalgia, hobby, game machine, business, letters, etc.

Does anyone know of good places to look for a 128 besides eBay?

Although the prices can be a little high (but their service is excellent and you can be sure the products *will* work (they test them extensively), unlike taking a chance with ebay o a thirft store where they may or may not work). try http://www.cmdweb.com as they still sell both used and brand new 64s,128s, and 128Ds.

Is the 128 really any better that the 64? Technically, the 128 is really better than the 64, but realistically, it depends on what you want to use it for. If your primarily interested in games for the 64, a 64 is just as good since in 64 mode the 128 is essentially a 64. But if you want to use business software or CP/M software, the 128 is better as in 128 mode, you get an optional 80-column mode (needs an 80-column monitor for this mode), can run at 1 or 2MHz, extended BASIC (for programmers), numeric keypad, and a full 128K of memory. Also, as implied, the 128 can run most CP/M software in its CP/M mode thanks to its Z80 processor (the 128 also uses an 8502 or is it 8510 processor (65xx compatible) in 128 and 64 modes). Some 128-only software includes:

Word Writer 128 GEOS 128 Pocket Writer 128 SwiftCalc 128 SpeedScript 128

There are many others, but far more software was made for the 64 than the 128.

How do the 64's and 128's compare to the PC systems available today?

Depends on what you use them for and whether you mean a stock 64 or 128 as well. Stock 64 and 128s aren't nearly as powerful, but realistically, most people don't need or use all the power of PC's and a 64 or 128 can do the same things (such as letter writing, which is basically typing something; almost any computer regardless of age is more than sufficient for that task).

But with CMD products, 64s and 128s are somewhat comparable to fast 386s and even fast 486s as CMD offers such things as:

FD-2000 3.5 inch drive (stores 1.6MB, with proper software, can read,write,format/transfer PC and Commodore files in either direction) Hard drives up to 4 gigabytes SuperCPU (for the 64 with a separate version for the 128) which accelerates these computers to 20MHz and can be expanded to 16MB. RAMLink ram expansion up to 16MB (both the SuperCPU and RAMLink are compatible and thus the 64 and 128 can have up to a combined 32MB of memory) Turbo232 interface for modem speeds as fast as 56K and much more! ;-)

Answer: Well that is strange. I prefer to use my 128 on the www. I prefer to use my 2 NEC laptops for playing "solitaire" so they are parked on the other side of the room. The best place to find a 128 is right here on this user group. Almost every week I see one or 2

(Continued on page 8)

for sale. Joe (AKA kilroy)

jfenn@lava.net
Ham KH6JF (since '37)
MARS (AARS) AB6JF (since '40)
WW2 Vet ARMY SIGNAL CORPS

Answer: The 128 has a vastly superior BASIC built into it, and it uses the full 128k while in BASIC. Most 128-specific software will be in BASIC, aside from GEOS, and a few word processors or terminal programs that use the 80-column mode.

IMO, the 128 is an awesome C64 software development tool! :) Built-in sprite editor, nice easy COLOR & SOUND commands, bitmap graphic commands, etc etc, so you can do all the high-level stuff in a C= environment before you slap it over to assembly. With the 128's built-in ML monitor, you can write up quick ML snippets quite easily, and there's much more memory to play with, as you can have the ROMs automagically banked out for you.

-- White Flame (aka David Holz) http://fly.to/theflame "White Flame (aka David Holz)" - white-flameParrot@geocities.

Data And Information as Property

By Jeff Jones. I hereby patent the following BASIC code:
100 geta$:ifa$=""then100

I hereby patent the following text printing algorithm:

LDY #0
-LDA TEXT,Y
BEQ END
JSR PRINT
INY
BNE -
END RTS

Anyone caught using this code without my permission henceforth will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Naturally I'm being facetious, but this is serious. As what point does an algorithm become a proprietary program? The BASIC and ASSEMBLY codes above are WORKING algorithms. Can a person force you to keep his trade secret?

What if Loadstar demanded that you only RUN our programs, but never ever list or disassemble them? How can we stop you from disassembling our code? Could it possibly be illegal to type LIST and watch code that you purchased, that is in YOUR computer, scroll by? Well, many software companies are taking that tack now. I just purchased a piece of software (which I won't name) that uses a licensed algorithm. No PEEKing. In fact, most every piece of commercial software these days contains some sort of patented code.

I use all sorts of programs on my PC that force me to agree to a EULA (Short for *End-User License Agreement*, the type of *license* used for most software) before I can use them. Programs and graphics are only really streams of numbers. How can they be patented? And just because you click on a button that says "I agree," is this a legally binding act?

The way the courts are acting these days, I don't know. One reason I was so much on Microsoft's side when they were first sued for the gross act of providing software that was "too good to be free" was because it frightens me the way people who don't understand computers make laws that bind us.

I own software that actually said that it couldn't be taken outside the United States. So if I take a trip to Hong Kong with my laptop, I can actually be called a traitor. The code that scrambles my credit card numbers online is too good for the rest of the world.

Does the government (or a software company) have control over how you use your computer when you have their software booted up? If they make a document that is 16 pages long, can they forbid you to read the 16th page? If I can't disassemble the code legally then can I hex read it? Can I rename it to a graphics format and see how the code looks?

One thing I hate to read is the "software licensing agreement". This is that page somewhere before or after the introduction that tells you that "by using this software..." or "by opening this envelope..." or "by breaking this seal", you agree to a bunch of arbitrary rules. On one new C-64 package I just got (not TWS) in for review it says, "Note: this is a copy of the License Agreement that you agreed to BEFORE opening the package..."

The law is clear on copyright. It also tells me that I can make ONE backup copy. You can make backup copies. Well, let me tell you, I have TWS on my original disk, my hard drive, RAMLink, and on the FD, which I take home on weekends. Is this copyright infringement? Nope. I'm the only guy using it. I have a C-64, Two 128s, two Amigas and two IBM 286s at home. I have software installed on multiple machines. Should I be forced to buy a second package for use on another computer? I think not.

(Continued from page 8)

The other side: It hurts LOADSTAR when five people have LOADSTAR but only one is actually subscribing. It also hurts LOADSTAR when two or more people pool their money for a single subscription. I think that's dishonest and illegal. There's nothing wrong with SELLING a piece of software -- after you've destroyed your backups, but to lend software with the intent of the borrower making free copies is a federal offense.

How unreasonable is this? Let's see: You subscribe to cable. You'd agree that it's illegal to tap into the cable wire and get cable for free. You'd also agree that it's illegal to buy cable from your cable company and then feed it to your neighbor's house through a splitter. That's piracy whether you charge your neighbor or not. I did it for my neighbor once when their cable was cut for a week. Told them to get it turned on quickly. We even loaned them the money. Well, they spent the money, and around the same time the Shreveport Times listed how many years I would go to jail if I were caught. I pulled the plug!

We all agree that people who don't subscribe, shouldn't receive. How about the fact that my cable box, supplied by the company, won't show me any channels past 72. My television tunes WAAAAAAAY past channel 72 and I pick up CINEMAX on 99, SHOWTIME on 98, VIEWER'S CHOICE on 97, SPICE on 96 and so on. Sometimes these signals are unscrambled even though I don't pay for them. The way the laws are written right now, it's illegal for me to sit and watch these channels.

One could argue that if it's illegal to "disassemble" HBO, it should be illegal to disassemble a computer program. If you do have a device that "disassembles" encrypted transmissions, men in black suits will arrest you, and your name will appear in the paper.

Kodak has patented the compression algorithm used in the Photo CD. Their format is no *secret*. The net effect of this is that they can *say* that the process is patented, which makes their product seem more prestigious. It also frightens away small companies from some companies from supporting Photo CD.

My position is this: If someone writes code so fantastic that they want to patent it, let them patent it, but at what point does life begin? Preventing competitors from studying the technology is something they should have to do through encryption and sleight of hand, not the law.

I don't want to come off as the typical young anti-establishment upstart. This is serious bidness. When software companies (or any other deep pockets) have a hand in the laws that affect you as well as smaller software companies, someone sold out. Just think: you have Apple suing another software giant, saying, "The GUI interface is ours!" GEOS squeaks by because it's a one-button system. Amiga squeaks by because you *release* the button to select instead of *pressing* it, but they're up for a lawsuit. Suddenly Xerox says, "Hold it! *We* had the GUI interface before all of you! We just don't sell the computer anymore."

We all may have a product to protect, but we should resort to ingenuity, not brawn. You never saw Ford suing GM for making a vehicle with a dangerous gas tank, didja?

Reverse PC Snobbery: The Time for Bashing PCs Is Over

By Jeff Jones. Dan Tobias pulls no punches. He is not impressed with the C-64, even though he's apparently most proud of one of the C-64 programs he wrote in the early 80s. He mentions this program, (warp something) and DOSMAN quite a bit like children. I pull no punches with Dan. I call him a PC snob and bigot. It may not be wrong to put down Commodores, but it's definitely a waste of time and breath.

It's not any prettier when MAC people poke fun at us or when MAC people poke fun at PC people. And, hey, I hate MAC's if only for costing so much, being so cute, and claiming to make me a better graphic artist by virtue of the machine. Being a pro photographer, I take great umbrage when technicians who use MAC's try to pull me over to the MAC side, claiming that my art would print better from a MAC than a PC. RGB 255 255 255 should be white on any computer.

The bottom line is this: We've gotta be civil. A lot of us Commodore people poke fun at Windows and spell it Windoze as if misspelling it is an act of solidarity. In our solidarity, we should not become obnoxious. We should learn from snobs and not be like them.

Computer Software We'd Like To See

KeyFind Give your desktop the power to find your car keys! Cutting edge technology "listens" to you move about your home or office and registers the exact location where you mindlessly placed your keys. It's SmartVoice feature leads you back to that location by telling you you're "cold", "warm", "hot" or "burning up".

LitiGate Lets you turn minor injuries into big bank accounts much faster than the court system. Just pick a wealthy celebrity and follow the easy steps.

WebSuck Locates every web site still under construction.

ButtMill Trim down those buns with your mouse! No more exhausting exercise programs.

ZitDoctor Defragment your face!

Mr. Dentist 3-D program lets you locate popcorn shells without using your tongue.

QUACKEN Quickly finds a holistic herbal remedy for whatever ails you.

SockTracker Use this application before you do your laundry. SockTracker Deluxe also does your laundry.

LunchShop Lets women split their lunch tab to one billionth of a penny. A must for restaurateurs who want to greatly speed up their table turnaround.

JobSECURE Uses your own voice to call in sick for you. Just choose one of hundreds of diseases and common ailments and JobSECURE will modify your voice accordingly.

AMENDER Makes altering the Constitution fun and easy. Change it to benefit your commercial endeavors or to make everyone else comply to your particular moral and religious standards. Broke the law? Just change the law!

TanLine Creates perfect horizontal, vertical and diagonal tan-colored lines instantly.

AssetASSESS Before you commit to a relationship, check out their assets first.

Top Ten Predicted Celebrity Deaths

10) Ellen DeGeneres - Suffocates in the closet

9) Susan Lucci-Trips and breaks her neck while running up steps to accept an Emmy

8) Jenny McCarthy - Struck by a random thought

7) Frank Sinatra - Killed by Strangers in the Night

6) RuPaul - Prostate Cancer

5) O.J. Simpson - Murdered by the "real Killer" in an apparent suicide

4) Madonna - Exposure

3) Unabomber - Mail bomb returned due to "insufficient postage"

2) Al Gore - Dutch Elm Disease

and the "Predicted" NUMBER ONE MOST IRONIC CELEBRITY DEATH

1) Bill Gates - Falls out of a Window

LOADSTAR LETTER #71

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