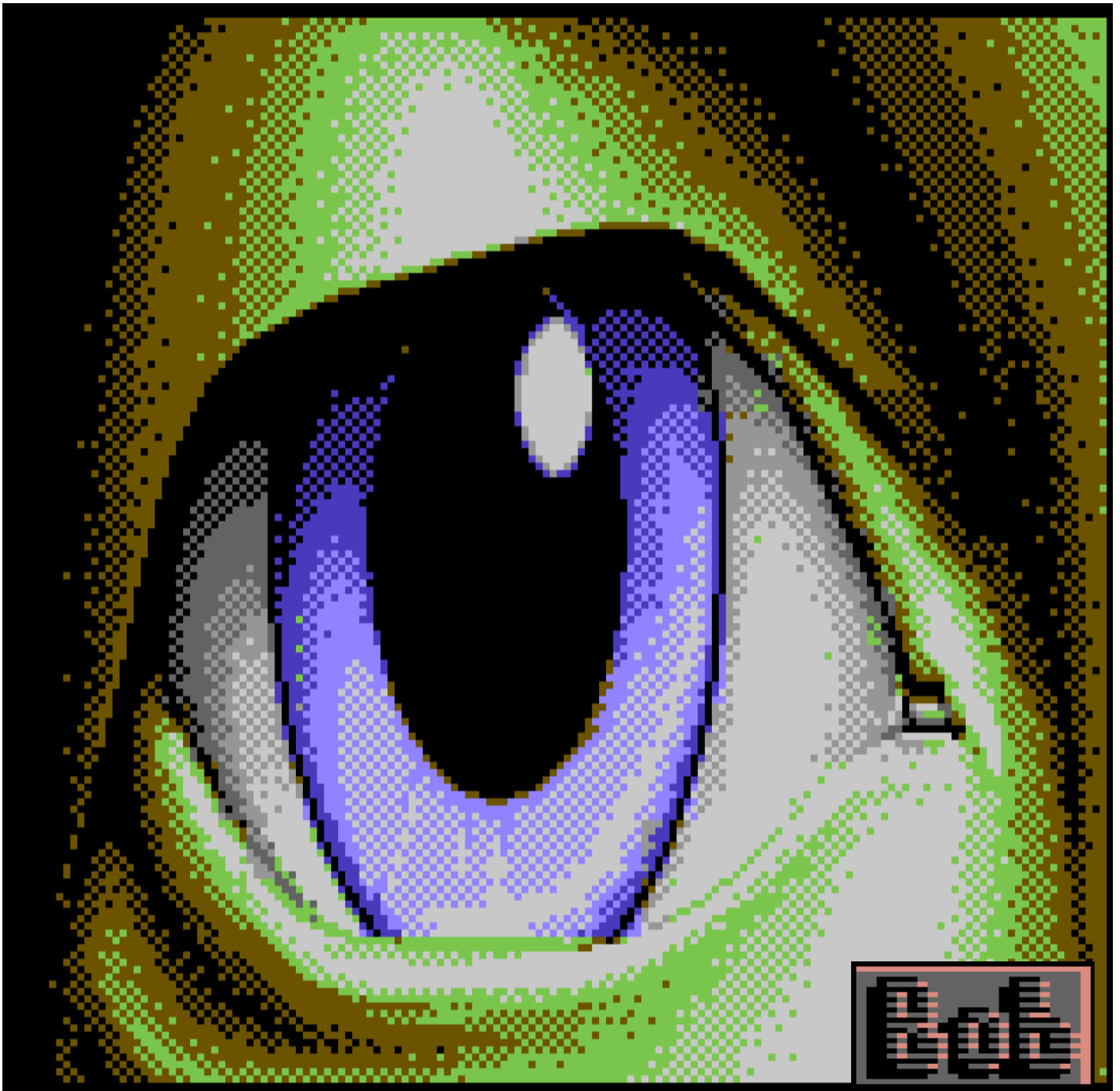


COMMODORE FREE

Commodore Free Magazine
<http://www.commodorefree.com/>

Issue 98

Free to download magazine
dedicated to Commodore computers Available as PDF, ePUB, MOBI, HTML,



Editorial

We have some more of the same for this issue, with a review of the 1541 Ultimate Mark 2 I just purchased for myself. A look at the game commando on Commodore formats to see which version came out the better-looking and more importantly, the most playable version.

No one mentioned the trimmed-down news section, so I am hoping this is a better way forward for the magazine. News is all over the internet about Commodore and it did fill out the magazine somewhat; it was turning into just Commodore news magazine.

It was mentioned I should go with a vblog or Youtube channel as they are monetised but there are so many good blogs out there -- adding another isn't something I had thought about doing. Anyway, I don't want to embarrass the competition with my stunning looks and youthful complexion and send them into some sort of inferiority complex.

Still, enough about the options. I am not taking and let's look at what we are doing. So it's the usual news sections, reviews, and other juicy gossip.

As usual help is always needed. Creating the text versions and Html versions isn't hard but time-consuming so too, is the disk version, so if you can spare any time to help out I would be more than grateful, as I am getting comments now about when these versions will be released.

Many of you may have more time, but I seem to have less and less spare time with looking after loved ones and just getting daily life chores is taking all my time away. Still hope you are looking forward to another issue. Again, any comments are welcome even the anonymous user who emailed me to just say "Commodore Free your crap" its all nice to hear (I think constructive comments are more welcome, though.)

If you're reading this and think, "Why haven't you mentioned about XYZ?", maybe I don't know about it, you're welcome to write something about a game or machine that you think needs more coverage or exposures. If you are creating hardware and software I would like to promote that to our readers, so drop me a line. The website was hit yet again with a malicious attack and email is still down. You can get me on the Lemon format via an instant message until we resolve these attacks. I just wonder why would you bother attacking a Commodore website about news. Still

Moving on then...

Thanks for reading and I hope you like this issue .

C=FREE is and will always be FREE !

Regards,
Nigel
www.commodorefree.com

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HELP NEEDED

D64 Disk Image

Help needed

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Articles are always wanted for the magazine. Contact us for details. We can't pay you for your efforts but you are safe in the knowledge that you have passed on details that will interest other Commodore enthusiasts.

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Quick Review of the 1541 Ultimate MK2

The 1541 Ultimate Mk 2 is a cartridge for the Commodore 64 range of computers that can emulate various other cartridges and the Commodore floppy disk drives. It also has features such as USB and an Ethernet port in the form of an RJ45 connector, the device has the ability to load TAP files via its tape emulation, and includes a real-time clock. The 1541 Ultimate is based on an FPGA (Field Programmable Gate Array) meaning that code can be rewritten to the chip, think firmware updates,

Here is a brief review and history of the product: The 1541 Ultimate Mk 2 was developed by Gideon Zweijtzter and released in 2010 as an improved version of the original 1541 Ultimate, which came out in 2008. People praise the 1541 Ultimate Mk 2 for its professional build quality, sleek design, and wide range of functions.

It can load and run games and programs from USB devices with SD card readers or USB thumb sticks, using .D64, .G64, or .PRG files with cycle-accurate 1541 support and as mentioned can load tap files or tape files. It can also therefore copy and archive floppy disks, and run CP/M and GEOS. The device can emulate other cartridges such as the Commodore REU, Action Replay, The Final Cartridge III, Super Snapshot V5, Retro Replay, or TurboAss with Codenet support. on-board Ethernet, can be used for Telnet or FTP and has a USB host controller, which can connect to external CD/DVD drives, keyboards etc.

As mentioned, it has a tape adapter that can emulate a cassette player, and a battery-backed up real-time clock that can keep track of file date and time compatible with the C64, C64c, SX-64, C128, and C128D, although some features may not work with the latter two models. Features a microSD card slot for program saving. IT also emulates 2 SID chips and can with the right software use them simultaneously for playback.

So not only can you mount disc images you can also load CRT or cartridge files and run or flash the device from these. One example of maybe some useful software would be the Commodore diagnostic software downloadable as a disc image from here

<https://c64os.com/buyersguide/1541-diagnostic>

When we get to telnet and FTP things become less crystalised as these allow the device to ftp or telnet into the cartridge so it can't be used as an ethernet port to access the internet directly like some of the other cartridges out there. Example: retro replay net or rnet cards on the client that telnets into the 1541, you can change settings and mount discs etc. FTP has the ability to upload files to the 1541 remotely from a pc or mac,

The 1541 Ultimate supports standardised file systems like ISO9660/Joliet (think CD ROMS) and support for FAT16 and FAT32 devices, these are the formats of many USB thumb drives so you could copy files to and from your PC Mac, etc. using the thumb drive

Overall, the 1541 Ultimate Mk 2 is a highly recommended product for anyone who owns a C64 and wants to enjoy the best of both worlds: the nostalgia of the original hardware and the convenience of modern technology. It is a well-designed, well-made, and well-supported device that can enhance the C64 experience in many ways. It is not cheap, but it is worth every penny

Ultimate64 - Product Page

https://ultimate64.com/U2P_Cartridge_Black

...a more in-depth review

<https://c64os.com/post/1541Ultplusreview>

1541 Ultimate - Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1541_Ultimate

When I have had time to play fully with my device (I have only just purchased it) I will write a full user review. Thanks C=FREE



A Pioneer of the Home Computer Industry



While I am breaking no new boundaries here and not intending to cover every option available (others do that more professionally than I) or if you want a full history then look no further than these two extensive books cover Commodore better than I ever could -- I was asked recently to give a brief history – anyway, I'm going off track...

If you're new to Commodore then this text will give you a brief history for a more in-depth guide buy the two books listed here:

On the Edge: The Spectacular Rise & Fall of Commodore

Commodore: A Company on the Edge

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Brian-Bagnall/e/B001IXNYBA?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_2&qid=1705410300&sr=1-2

Commodore Business Machines (CBM) was a subsidiary of Commodore International, an American company that played a major role in the development of the home computer industry during the the 1970s and 1980s. CBM was founded in 1954 by Jack Tramiel, who was a Polish immigrant and Auschwitz survivor, he started the company as a typewriter and adding machine business in Toronto, Canada.

In the 1960s, CBM expanded its operations to Europe and Asia, and diversified its products to include office furniture, radio and stereo equipment, and calculators. However, the company faced financial difficulties due to the price war in the calculator market, and Tramiel decided to enter the emerging field of personal computers.

In 1977, CBM introduced the Commodore PET, one of the first all-in-one home computers, which featured a keyboard, a monitor, a cassette drive, and a built-in BASIC interpreter. The PET was very popular in the education market, and established CBM as a leader in the personal computer industry.



In 1982, CBM launched the Commodore 64, which became the best-selling computer of all time, with over 17 million units sold. The Commodore 64 was a powerful and affordable machine, with 64 KB of RAM, a 16-color graphics chip, a 3-channel sound chip. The Commodore 64 dominated the home computer market in the early to mid-1980s, and created a loyal fan base of users and developers.



The Commodore EMAX

Based on the same hardware as the Commodore 64, using the same 6510 processor, the VIC-II graphics chip, and the SID sound chip. However, the EMAX did not have a built-in BASIC interpreter, and required a cartridge to run BASIC programs. The cartridges were compatible with the Commodore 64. The EMAX had only one joystick port on each side, and no serial or user ports. It also had no AV output, and used an RF modulator for video and a 3.5 mm jack for audio.

The EMAX was intended to be a cheaper alternative to the Commodore 64 and the VIC-20, and was planned to be released worldwide. However, it faced strong competition from other consoles and computers, and was not well received by the Japanese market. It was also overshadowed by the success of the Commodore 64, which offered much more features and capabilities. The EMAX was soon discontinued, and only a few thousand units were produced.



The Commodore SX-64

The SX64 was a portable version of the Commodore 64, released in 1983. It was the first full-color portable computer, featuring a built-in five-inch monitor and a 1541 floppy drive, and aimed at business users, but it was not very successful due to its high price, heavy weight, and compatibility issues with some C64 software and hardware.

The SX-64 had a different default screen color and device number than the C64, which could cause problems with programs that assumed the C64's settings. It also lacked a cassette port and an RF port, so couldn't use tape or a TV as an output device.

The SX-64 was discontinued in 1986, after selling only about 10,000 units. The SX-64 was also known as the Executive 64 or the VIP-64 in Europe. It had a few variants, such as the DX-64, which had two

floppy drives, and the Commodore LCD, which was a prototype laptop with a monochrome LCD screen.



The Commodore 128

The last 8-bit home computer released by Commodore in 1985. It was a successor to the Commodore 64, with improved features and some compatibility. The machine had two CPUs: a MOS 8502 (a slightly improved version of the 6510) for running Commodore software, and a Zilog Z80 for running CP/M software. It also had two video chips: a VIC-IIe for 40-column mode, and a MOS 8563 for 80-column mode. It had 128 KB of RAM, expandable to 640 KB with a RAM expansion unit.

The main hardware designer was Bil Herd, who had also worked on the Commodore Plus/4. Other hardware engineers were Dave Haynie and Frank Palaia, while the IC design work was done by Dave DiOrio. The main Commodore system software was developed by Fred Bowen and Terry Ryan, while the CP/M subsystem was developed by Von Ertwine.

The machine sold about 2.5 million units worldwide, making it less successful than the Commodore 64, which sold over 17 million units. The Commodore 128 was discontinued in 1989, as Commodore shifted its focus to the 16-bit Amiga line.

Four main versions of the Commodore 128 were manufactured:

- The ****C128****, which was the standard model with a redesigned case and keyboard, 128 KB of RAM, two CPUs (8502 and Z80), two video chips (VIC-IIe and VDC), and a built-in 3.5-inch floppy disk drive. It could run Commodore 64, C128, and CP/M software.



- The **C128D**, which was a desktop version with a separate keyboard and a built-in 1571 disk drive. It also had an internal cooling fan, a reset button, and a 6502 processor in the disk drive for faster access. It was compatible with the C128 software and hardware.
- The **C128DCR**, which was a cost-reduced version of the C128D, with a smaller case and a 1571CR disk drive. It also had a different motherboard layout, with some chips replaced by ASICs. It was compatible with the C128 software and hardware, except for some minor differences in the disk drive.



- The **C128CR**, which was a cost-reduced version of the C128, with a smaller case and a different motherboard layout. It also had some chips replaced by ASICs, and a different power supply. It was compatible with the C128 software and hardware, except for some minor differences in the video output and the disk drive.

Commodore 65

The Commodore 65 was a prototype computer created by Commodore in 1990-1991. It was supposed to be an improved version of the Commodore 64, and it was also meant to be backwards-compatible with the c64, while still providing some advanced features. However, the project was cancelled by Commodore's chairman in 1991, and only a few prototypes were known to be made.

Some of the features of the Commodore 65 were:

- A CSG 4510 processor, which was a 16-bit version of the 6502 chip, running at 3.54 MHz.
- 128 KB of RAM, expandable to 8 MB.
- A built-in 3.5-inch floppy disk drive.
- A VIC-III graphics chip, which supported 256 colors and resolutions up to 1280x400 pixels.
- Two SID sound chips, which provided stereo output and 6 sound channels.
- A Commodore BASIC 10.0 operating system, which had some enhancements over the C64's BASIC.

The Commodore PET Educator

Also known as the PET 64 or the Model 4064, was a released in 1983 and sold to schools as a replacement for ageing Commodore PET systems. The Educator



64 was based on the same hardware as the Commodore 64, having a MOS 6510 processor, 64 KB of RAM, a SID sound chip, and a VIC-II graphics chip. However, it used a monochrome monitor and a PET-style keyboard, which made it look like a PET. It also had a built-in Datasette (tape deck).

The Educator 64 was intended to be compatible with both the PET and the C64 software, but it had some limitations. For example, it could not display color graphics or use sprites, and had no joystick ports or user ports. It also had a different ROM, which included a modified version of Commodore BASIC 4.0 and a PET emulator. The Educator 64 was not very successful, as it was more expensive and less capable than the C64. It was also soon replaced by the Commodore 128, which offered more features and modes.



Commodore 16/plus 4

The Commodore Plus/4 and the Commodore 16 were released in 1984 forming part of the 264 family, along with the Commodore 116, which was only available in Europe. based on two new MOS chips: a 6502 compatible 8501 CPU and TED, an all-in-one sound, video and input/output chip. Both had superior BASIC than previous Commodore models. The Plus/4 had 64 KB of RAM and a built-in office suite with a word processor, a spreadsheet, a database, and a graphing program. The C16 had only 16 KB of RAM without built-in software. They were incompatible with the Vic 20 and 64's software and hardware, lacked sprites and high-quality sound. intended to replace the VIC-20 and competing with other low-cost home computers, both were discontinued in 1985

Commodore CDTV

Called a multimedia device that combined a Commo-



dore Amiga 500 computer with a CD-ROM drive and a remote control. It launched in March 1991. The CDTV was intended to be an all-in-one home entertainment system that could play games, music, videos, and educational software. However, it faced several challenges that led to its commercial failure.

- A high price of \$999 in the US and £499 in the UK, which made it too expensive for most consumers and gamers.
- A lack of software support, as only about 100 titles were released for the CDTV, many of which were ports of existing Amiga games or CD-ROM versions of books and encyclopedias
- A poor marketing strategy, as Commodore did not emphasize the Amiga brand name or the computer capabilities of the CDTV, and instead focused on the multimedia aspects that were not very appealing or innovative at the time
- A strong competition from other CD-based consoles, such as the Philips CD-i and the Sega Mega-CD, as

well as from the PC market, which offered more powerful and versatile machines with CD-ROM drives. The CDTV was discontinued in 1993, after selling less than 60,000 units worldwide while considered a flop, it was a very ahead of its time as a concept.



Amiga

Commodore bought the rights from the designer Jay Miner, a revolutionary computer that featured a 32-bit processor, a multi-tasking operating system, a graphical user interface, and advanced graphics and sound capabilities. The Amiga was ahead of its time, and was widely used for video production, animation, music, gaming, and desktop publishing. The Amiga line of computers included models such as the Amiga 500, the Amiga 1000, the Amiga 2000, and the Amiga 1200. Despite the success of the Commodore 64 and the



Amiga, CBM faced several challenges in the late 1980s and early 1990s, such as the rise of IBM-compatible PCs, the internal conflicts between Tramiel and his main investor Irving Gould, the lack of marketing and innovation, and the poor management of the company. In 1994, CBM declared bankruptcy, and its assets were sold to various companies, including Escom, Gateway, and Cloanto.

There were several models and variants of the Amiga, each with different hardware specifications and capabilities.

Amiga 1000: The first Amiga model, released in 1985. It had a Motorola 68000 CPU at 7.16 MHz, 256 KB of RAM (later 512 KB), and the Original Chipset (OCS) for graphics and sound. It used a 3.5-inch floppy disk drive and an external keyboard. It supported AmigaOS versions 1.0 to 3.11.

Amiga 500: The best-selling Amiga model, released in 1987. It had the same CPU, RAM, and chipset as the Amiga 1000, but in a smaller case with an integrated keyboard. It also had a built-in RF modulator for connecting to a TV. It supported AmigaOS versions 1.2 to 3.11.

Amiga 2000: A more expandable Amiga model, released in 1987. It had the same CPU, RAM, and chipset as the Amiga 500, but in a larger case with five Zorro II expansion slots, two 16-bit ISA slots, and a video slot. It also had a 5.25-inch floppy disk drive and a hard disk drive. It supported AmigaOS versions 1.2 to 3.91.

Amiga 3000: A high-end Amiga model, released in 1990. It had a Motorola 68030 CPU at 16 or 25 MHz, 1 MB of Chip RAM and 1 to 4 MB of Fast RAM, and the Enhanced Chipset (ECS) for improved graphics and sound. It also had a SCSI controller, a flicker fixer, and a battery-backed clock. It supported AmigaOS versions 1.3 to 4.11.

Amiga 500+: An upgraded Amiga 500, released in 1991. It had 1 MB of RAM and the ECS chipset. It also had a new ROM chip with AmigaOS 2.04 and a battery-backed clock. It supported AmigaOS versions 2.04 to 3.11.

Amiga 600: A compact Amiga model, released in 1992. It had the same CPU and chipset as the Amiga 500+, but in a smaller case with an integrated numeric keypad. It also had a built-in IDE controller, a PCMCIA slot, and a hard disk drive. It supported AmigaOS versions 2.05 to 3.91.

Amiga 1200: A low-end Amiga model, released in 1992. It had a Motorola 68EC020 CPU at 14.32 MHz, 2 MB of RAM, and the Advanced Graphics Architecture (AGA) chipset for enhanced graphics and sound. It also had a built-in IDE controller, a PCMCIA slot, and a hard disk drive. It supported AmigaOS versions 3.0 to 4.11.

Amiga 4000: A high-end Amiga model, released in 1992. It had a Motorola 68EC030 or 68040 CPU at 25 MHz, 2 MB of Chip RAM and 2 to 4 MB of Fast RAM, and the AGA chipset. It also had a SCSI controller, a flicker fixer, and a battery-backed clock. It supported AmigaOS versions 3.0 to 4.11.

Amiga CD32: A CD-ROM based game console, released in 1993. It had the same CPU, RAM, and chipset as the Amiga 1200, but in a console case with a CD-ROM drive and a gamepad. It also had a built-in MPEG decoder and a digital signal processor. It supported AmigaOS 3.12.

There were also some other Amiga models and variants, such as the Amiga 1500, the Amiga 2500, the Amiga 3000T, the Amiga 3000UX,

CD32

The CD32 was a CD-ROM based game console developed by Commodore and released in 1993. It was based on the Amiga 1200 computer and used the Advanced Graphics Architecture (AGA) chipset for enhanced graphics and sound. It was the first 32-bit CD-ROM console in Europe and Canada, but it was never officially sold in the US due to a patent dispute

. One add-on was the fmv cartridge; this allowed the CD32 to play full-motion video (FMV) discs, such as movies and interactive games. It was a cartridge that plugged into the expansion slot of the CD32 and contained a MPEG-1 decoder chip and 1 MB of RAM. It was released in 1994 and cost £199 in the UK. The FMV module was compatible

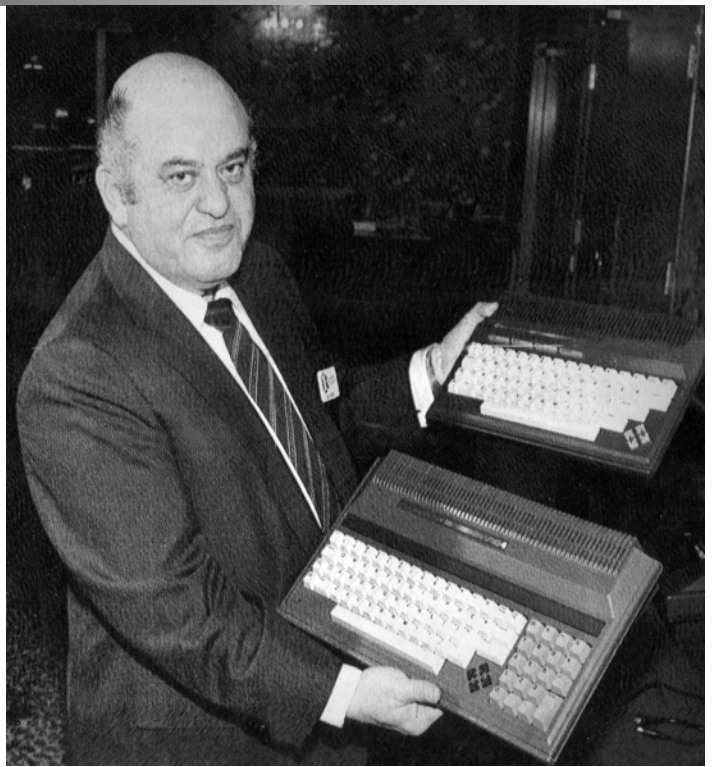
with some CD-i titles, such as *The 7th Guest* and *Voyeur*, as well as some CD32-specific titles, such as *Chaos in Andromeda* and *The Guinness Disc of Records*. However, the FMV module was not very popular, as it was expensive, had limited software support, and suffered from poor video quality and synchronization issues.



The legacy of CBM lives on, as many of its products and technologies are still used and appreciated by enthusiasts, hobbyists, and retro-computing fans. There have been several attempts to revive the Commodore and Amiga brands, such as the Commodore PET and Commodore LEO smartphones, the Commodore 64 Mini and Maxi consoles, and the AmigaOS and AROS operating systems.

CBM was a pioneer of the home computer industry, and its products influenced generations of computer users and creators.

Not just business machines, Commodore was a cultural phenomenon. Did Commodore change the world as we knew it (probably)? One thing is for sure: many people working in the Information Technology business today are in that job as a direct result of owning some form of Commodore computer and that includes yours truly.



AMIGA FOREVER AND COMMODORE 64 FOREVER

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<http://www.retroplatform.com>

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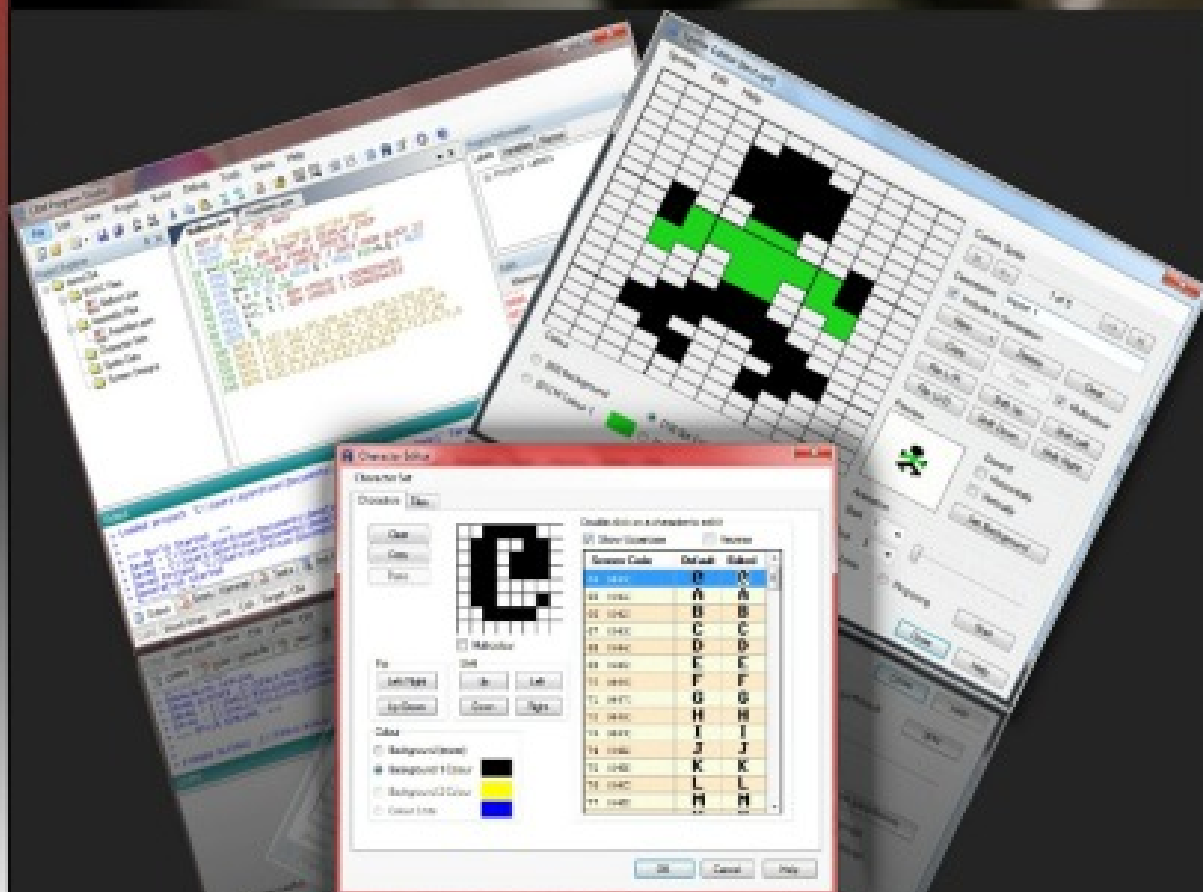
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WWW.REVIVAL-STUDIOS.COM

CBM PET - VIC-20 - COMMODORE 16 - COMMODORE 64

CBM .prg Studio

A handy Commodore 8-bit program development utility for Windows



CBM .prg Studio is a Windows IDE which allows you to type a BASIC or machine code program and convert it to a '.prg' file, which you can run on an emulator or the real hardware. It also includes character, sprite and screen editors and a fully featured 6510/65816 debugger.

The following machines can be developed for:

- Commodore 64 (and SuperCPU)
- Commodore 128
- Commodore VIC 20
- Commodore 16
- Commodore Plus/4
- Commodore PET BASIC 2 machines, e.g. PET 2001
- Commodore PET BASIC 4 machines, e.g. PET 4000/5000

<http://www.ajordison.co.uk>

News

Ever tried to build something and it's all gone wrong?

Well, this poor chap tried to build an Atari 2600 cartridge, but the chain of misfortune that presented itself has to be watched to be believed. He laughs about it all the way through but you can just feel his frustration mounting especially when he applies the stickers he created and they just fall off, although he does follow through and finally create a working cartridge.

<https://youtu.be/ILj-FL0MLtE?si=LfLX9CUwcf8VU2Gw>



Retro gaming really was better

Now, for me the slow loading times of cassette never reduced my enthusiasm. As the game's title screen slowly appeared on my TV the excitement mounted, then the music kicked in, and finally after about 2 minutes (on a turbo load) the game was ready to play (after you had rebooted, re-aligned the tape head and started again). Now games seem to be all the same, running around in a 3D environment collecting ammo and shooting people seems to be the most released game ever.

What happened to the game play, where is the product I bought, Retro games had us buying physical tapes with beautifully designed inlay covers, now the games are just downloaded from a server but you never actually own anything. Here the metro news paper talks to some games for their opinion about games .

But, however you read it and however long you debate about it; there is only one conclusion and that is that Retro games really are just better!

I think the main problem with new games is that they seem to demand so much effort, reading about control systems, who you can and cant talk to or interact with, what you need to collect and where to place it to trade up etc.

So, OK now and again I just want to load up, grab a controller, and play with out using any brain power at all and kill off a few hours and aliens. I wonder if aliens play games where humans invade there world and they have to destroy them ?

<https://metro.co.uk/2024/01/20/weekend-hot-topic-enjoy-retro-gaming-20144882/>



Plus 4 Outrun conversion

Many arcade conversions came to 8-bit machines but maybe not as eagerly awaited as Outrun, while the arcade machines had more processing power some of the 8-bit home computers and programmers somehow managed to cram the main details and gameplay into our beloved 8-bit machines. TCFS has now released the highly anticipated conversion of the classic arcade game "Turbo Outrun" on the Commodore Plus/4!

Announcement direct from the Plus/4 World Facebook page.

"And so, almost quietly, in mid -January, here is the new incredible pseudo-conversion from the increasingly incredible Sasvári Tamás aka TCFS! It is no coincidence that it is recognized as "Maestro" between two distant golden eras of the Plus/4, and it's no coincidence even the release day: 14 January 2024, happy 40th anniversary to the Commodore Plus/4!!"

"To celebrate this happy anniversary, the Maestro, with the help of Csaba Unreal Kemerli (Unreal/MX) for the graphics and the extraordinary contribution of Csabo/LOD, which has rewritten the entire soundtrack to let it literally shine on TED, here comes Turbo Outrun!"

"Now this has been a very hard task to achieve, the author had to change, adjust, renounce, move and re-code from scratch tons of the features which de-

creed the success of the original for C64. All in all, this IS Turbo Outrun, but this IS NOT Turbo Outrun, but this IS it anyway! There's a completely innovative way to manage with the turbo, there's no need to worry about great impacts or road bumps or adverse meteorology, but there's also a new logic for the opponents, a new scoring system and even a challenge for you to have your best score into the hall of fame."

Download:

http://plus4world.powweb.com/software/Turbo_Outrun
https://youtu.be/qgwiIEfPi3s?si=Xgi_1pNzXz_iF0w4



Upgrading a C64 to HDMI

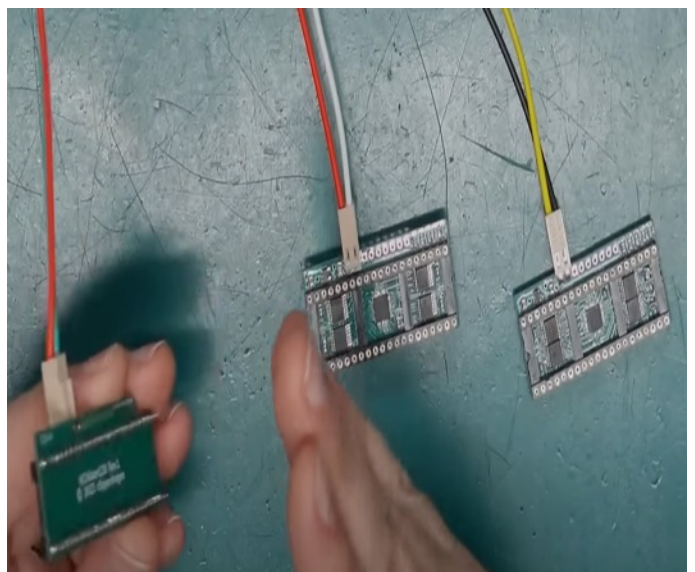
No soldering and no case modifications, an easy way to upgrade to HDMI output from your Commodore computer? With so many newer TV's and monitors removing analogue style connectors how do we connect our machines to newer devices who seem to have finalised on HDMI interfaces? Well, this video will show you how you can upgrade without too much fuss.

<https://youtu.be/eSGsCfHwHCA?si=vBsvpi-Bh24oTVu>

<https://github.com/c0pperdragon/LumaCode>

<https://github.com/hoglet67/RGBtoHDMI>

<https://www.tindie.com/stores/c0pperdragon/>



Commodore 128 80-column Digital output in mono

Did you know that the Commodore 128 supports the output of a digital signal that you can use to connect to newer display devices and is cheap to make or buy. I have one of these cables and plugged it in purely by chance to my 128 and yes it does actually work, although we shouldn't be surprised as the video shows the output of the c128 did support this feature. Here you can find a Commodore monitor but even back then these things were expensive, now they're like gold. Sure, there are adaptors available for full-colour (although not cheap) but you could make this yourself or buy it for £12 and use GEOS or Wheels in 80-column mode on an old TV.

80 Columns on the Commodore 128 without RGB or an adaptor?

Connect your Commodore 128 and 128D computers via RGBi output to 80-column monochrome goodness to any composite input source. This cable connects the 9-pin Dsub connector on the Commodore computer to composite monitors in monochrome only. This cable does not provide audio. You will need to use or purchase a 5-Pin Composite AV cable or 8-Pin S-Video AV cable for audio when using this cable.

Compatibility:

Commodore 128/128D (9-Pin Dsub)

Any composite compatible monitor (Yellow RCA)

Please verify your monitor has the proper connection. 3 Feet in length (0.9 Meters) with an option to be longer.

Buy the cable here:

<https://www.8bitclassics.com/product/Commodore-128-monochrome-rca-video-cable/>

Watch a video explaining the cable here:

https://youtu.be/EtfCxej4OWM?si=qZzpbOk_8gk7QvjL

Lemon has a topic on this here:

<https://www.lemon64.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=70044>



Untold DigiMuz Story. A Commodore TED (Plus/4, C16/ C116) Upgrade

Uncover the hidden gem of Commodore Plus/4, C16, and C116 history, the DigiMuz, a sound expansion cartridge that breathes new life into the Commodore Plus/4 and C16. Join us as we explore the origins of this forgotten prototype, its features, and the community's efforts to revive it. Witness the DigiMuz's capabilities through demos, games, and even BASIC programming. Don't miss this rare opportunity to learn about this unique piece of Commodore hist

Video here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AXHNlpyo-M>

Blog file here

<https://retrocombs.com/digimuz>



Mario hits the Commodore Pet

Looking really nice

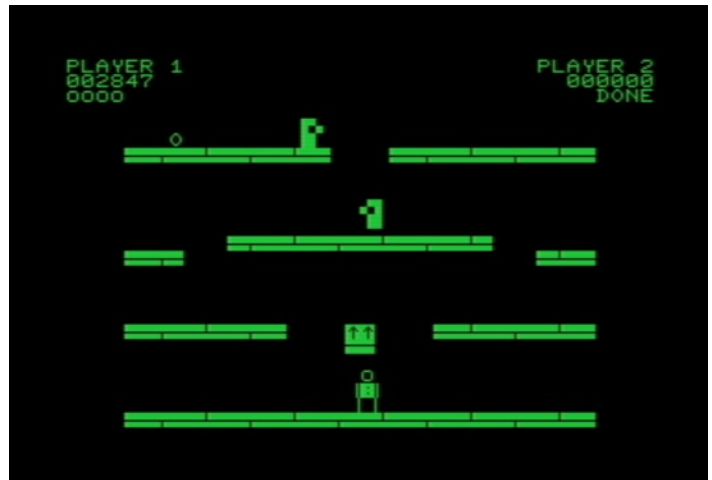
This Commodore PET version of the game has similar game mechanics to the original Mario Bros arcade game. Hit the floor under the turtles to flip them, and jump up to kick them. A one or two player action game made for the TOJam 2023 Game Jam

Youtube video with gameplay:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/EyajXdpNxoQ?si=XrjPXlXmhSw-4kIB>

Download:

<https://jimbo.itch.io/petscii-bros>

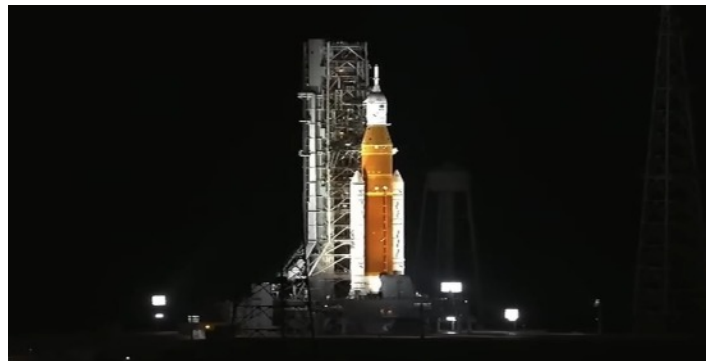


Amiga raydar

Decoding a moon message

Moonbouncing with the Amiga: - a method for sending signals from one point on Earth to another, but can we harness it to receive a message from the Moon then decode it on a Commodore A3000 with #Linux

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=caZtHdNe0Ag>



Amiga hero-inspired game

A game inspired by Activision's game H.E.R.O. from Atari 2600/XL, C64, and Collecovision.

Original Games history

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H.E.R.O._\(video_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H.E.R.O._(video_game))

Paweł 'tukinem' Tukatsch's latest game is an Amiga conversion of the game Helicopter Emergency Rescue Operation (H.E.R.O.) from the US games company Activision that was released in 1984, and originally programmed for the Atari 2600. The aim of the game is to fly into the depths of an underground cave with the character, who has a helicopter backpack, in order to rescue lost miners and avoid various dangers. The music and sounds were created by Marcin 'Eightbm' Białobrzewski,

Minimum requirements:

Amiga 500 with 0,5MB chip RAM + 0,5MB slow RAM

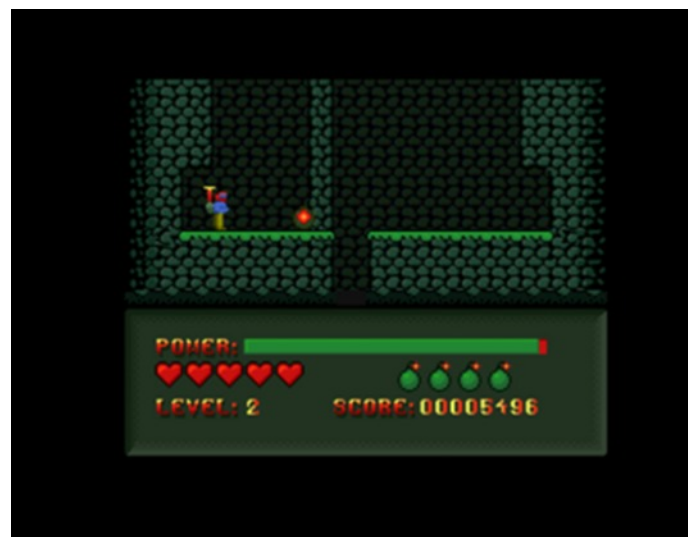
Controls: joystick or keyboard

Download here:

<https://tukinem.itch.io/ami-hero>

Read more about the release here:

<https://www.indieretronews.com/2024/01/ami-hero-amiga-game-inspired-by.html>



The best retro games of all time as selected by staff at Sheffield national video game museum

Not sure I would agree...

What do you think? Are these the best 11 retro games of all time? (I thought Doom would be in the top 10)

- 1 Space Invaders
- 2 Pokémon Snap
3. Time Crisis
4. Sonic the Hedgehog
5. Micro Machines (1997, PlayStation)
6. Super Smash Bros. Brawl (2008, Nintendo Wii)
7. Ms. Pac-Man (1982, arcade)
8. Horace Goes Skiing (1983 ZX, Spectrum)
9. 1942 (1984, arcade)
10. Paperboy
11. TOEM: A Picture Adventure (2021, PC)

National Video Game Museum, at Castle House, on Angel Street, in Sheffield City Centre
Pick the greatest games of all time

The National Video Game Museum has users playing nearly all of their selections at the popular visitor at-

traction, which is the UK's only museum dedicated solely to video games, celebrating and interrogating their history and culture over the last 50 years, and featuring over 100 playable exhibits, from retro arcade machines to modern games consoles, alongside unique exhibitions which are carefully curated by its team of experts.

The museum preserves 5,000 objects of video game heritage for future generations through its collection. The primary focus of the British Games Institute (BGI), our governing charity, is to educate the public on the art, science, and technology of video games.

Open Thursdays and Fridays, from 1pm-4pm; Saturdays and Sundays, from 10am-1pm and then 2pm-5pm; and every day during the school holidays, from 10am.

visit: <https://thenvm.org/about/>

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/the-11-best-retro-video-games-of-all-time-as-selected-by-staff-at-sheffields-national-video-game-museum-4445854?page=1>



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<https://www.oscillating-electric-fish.com/>

A Rough and Ready Guide to Command on the Commodore range of machines

Here is some basic history and information about the arcade game and a look at some of the Commodore conversions.

Commando was released by Capcom for the arcades in 1985. It was designed by Tokuro Fujiwara, who also created Ghosts 'n Goblins and Mega Man. At the time these one-man-army-style films were becoming very popular in the cinemas, starring the likes of Chuck Norris, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and of course, Sylvester Stallone, with each tying to out-do one another for the top ratings spot.

The game was originally titled Senjō no Ōkami (Japanese: 戦狼, or converted to English as “Wolf of the Battlefield”), and was, at the time, distributed in North America by Data East, and in Europe by several companies, including Capcom, Deith, Leisure, and Sega, S.A. SONIC.

The game is a vertically-scrolling, run-and-gun video game where the player controls a one-man army soldier who goes by the name of Super Joe, and has to fight his way through a jungle full of enemy soldiers. Super Joe is armed with an assault rifle only and has a limited supply of hand grenades; however, he can steal supplies as the game progresses.

At the time the game was both a critical *and* commercial success, becoming one of the highest-grossing arcade video games of 1985, and also one of the best-selling home video games of 1986. It was also highly influential, spawning numerous clones and sequels and popularizing the run-and-gun shooter genre. Its legacy can be seen in many later shooter

games, especially those released during the late 1980s to early 1990s.

The game was at the time ported to various home computers and video game consoles, such as the Nintendo Entertainment System, Atari 2600, Intellivision, Atari 7800, BBC Micro, Acorn Electron, Amiga, Atari ST, ZX Spectrum, MSX, Amstrad CPC, Commodore 64, Virtual Console, PlayStation 3, and Xbox 360 1. Some of these ports include hidden underground shelters, items, and extra levels not seen in the arcade version. Some are unrecognisable to the original, bearing only the name.

The game also spawned a sequel, Mercs, which was released in 1989. Mercs introduced not only a three-player mode, but added more weapons and a health bar.

C= Free Arcade version review

I only played the arcade version after playing the c64 version. My friend and I went to an arcade and I saw the machine, we ran over, inserted our money, and stood beholding the superior graphics, sound and hardware the arcade version supplied. While the game felt frustrating we were still eager to enter our money and try to get on the high-score screen to show off our efforts. At the time I felt the music didn't really match the c64 version as it felt weedy -- almost a disco version. This was, after all: war, blood 'n' guts, and death. I still look out for the machine, and from time to time see it in the arcades. When I do and if it's working, then my money is all but gone!

Watch the arcade ROM Running under MAME emulation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmIM1KS7txE&t=9s>



AMIGA CONVERSION

Ported to the Amiga in 1989 by Elite Systems. The game puts you in the role of a lone soldier who must infiltrate enemy bases and destroy their forces. You can use a machine gun and grenades to fight your way through eight levels of increasing difficulty, each with a boss at the end. The game features smooth scrolling, colorful graphics, and catchy music that creates an immersive atmosphere. The game is very challenging as you have to dodge bullets, bombs, and traps -- while facing hordes of enemies.

The game is faithful to the original arcade version, but it also adds some extra features, such as a two-player mode, a level editor, and a cheat mode. It is considered by many as one of the best shooters on the Amiga and a must-play for fans of the genre



C= FREE AMIGA RE-VIEW

The game feels very slick, the music is great although it feels too smooth for the game, lacking the Commodore 64's hard-hitting relentless drive, but, however, sounds close to the arcade version. Sound effects and sprites look and feel again genuine to the arcade version.

The main gameplay scrolls through nicely and even when you have an army of bullets and enemies the gameplay doesn't slow down at all. Side by side with the Atari ST version they look similar but the Atari version seems to have larger sprites. Both, however, look and feel close to the original arcade machine. Not a bad conversion.



Watch the Amiga full gameplay version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWc3wNTDm&t=14s>

Sound	4/5	Too smooth and nice, but genuine
Gameplay	4/5	As good as the arcade
Graphics	5/5	Looks like the arcade
Overall	4/5	Not much wrong

Commodore 64 version

The Commodore 64 version of Commando was developed and published by Elite Systems in 1985. The game features three levels of intense action, where the player controls a commando who must shoot his way through enemy soldiers, tanks, helicopters, and fortifications. The game is praised for its fast-paced gameplay, smooth scrolling, and catchy music. However, the game also has some flaws, such as disappearing sprites, slowdowns, and glitches. The game was considered to be too easy and short for experienced players.

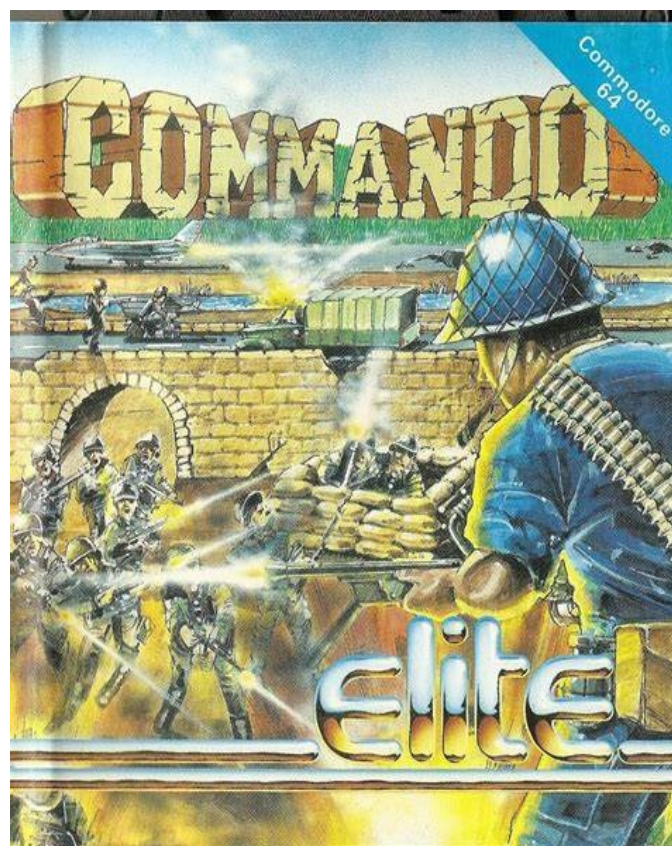


Overall, Commando is a fun and addictive game that showcases the capabilities of the Commodore 64. It is one of the best arcade conversions on the system, and a must-play for fans of the genre. The game has a score of 4.2 out of 5 on Lemon64,

C= FREE REVIEW COMMANDO C64

Well as stated before, this was actually the first version I played before seeing it on an arcade machine, I bought the game from a local chemist store (yes they really did sell computer cassettes) it just looked cool on the cover. For me it's the Rob Hubbard music that lifts the game into something else. The music perfectly fits the action with its pounding bass and relentless driving, and the squawking nature seems to make it really fit a blood and guts arcade adventure. Of course, with the limitations of the SID sound chip it was possibly the only route he could take.

Fairly faithful to the original arcade version, it does feel like the game was rushed. The music is cut out by the sounds of gun shot and firing, but with only three sound channels it is always a trade off. The graphics, although looking good, it's the sprite multiplexor (more than one sprite make up a graphical character) that fails in this version where half a car drives past! It gets confusing, to say the least. The gameplay slows down with too much on-screen action and even the music begins to take on a more relaxed vibe



Sound	5/5	Nailed it
Gameplay	4/5	slowdowns and multiplex issues
Graphics	3/5	
Overall	4/5	Feels Rushed

Commodore 16 version

The Commodore 16 version is very different from the arcade original, as it only features small sections from the first level, split into five single screens. The graphics are also very basic, and the sound is limited to beeps and explosions. The game is very challenging, as the enemies are relentless and the player has only three lives. The game received mixed reviews from critics, who praised the gameplay but criticized the graphics and sound. Some reviewers also noted that the game was too difficult and frustrating for casual players.

Commodore 16 version is a huge disappointment. The game is reduced to a series of static screens, with poor graphics and sound, and a difficulty level that is almost impossible to beat. The game loses all the charm and excitement of the original, and becomes a tedious and frustrating exercise in trial and error. The only positive aspect of the game is that it is faithful to the arcade gameplay, but that is not enough to save it from being a waste of time and money. Commando on the Commodore 16 is a game that should be avoided by all means, unless you are a masochist or a collector.

C= FREE review C16/+4 commando

Well, it went a *little* downhill here for the c16 version of the game. Not only are they static screens, but we seem to have lost the gameplay plot altogether. The c16 and plus 4 deserve so much more from this game. How the publishers at the time had the nerve to release such an effort and then ask for money for the game, let alone command the name is just beyond my belief.

Long play on youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAKmhqOEfgA&t=16s>



Plus/4 recreation of Commando TED rendition of Rob Hubbard's song. Coded by TCFS design in 1992. This version is what should have been released, it's quite faithful to the original and of course has the TED playing Rob Hubbard's rendition of the tune. How the original official version was released is beyond my comprehension, when the machine is capable of so much more as can be seen from this version featuring scrolling and better graphics, and is just worlds apart from the original.



Unofficial version score

Sound	4/5	Rob on TED
Gameplay	4/5	Faithful
Graphics	4/5	Scrolling
Overall	4/5	Deserved

Various computer format versions of the game can be watched here including some unofficial versions for the c16 and c64 with bug fixes and enhancements, and some other info like typos and changed versions in Germany.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nrPyEyOW5E>

Some extra information about Rob Hubbard and the C64 sound track:

Rob wrote the c64 version after hearing the arcade version. That night he set about creating a SID rendition that turned the soundtrack into a classic. He said he took the motif or melodies he heard and just included them, just enough to make it recognisable from the arcade. Then added his SID wizardry and the rest was history.

Rob Hubbard interviews:

<https://youtu.be/EDhCQKOQLpo?si=CVJai6VsBJh0ynOM>

<https://youtu.be/0OxRyOSTHDM?si=Mluiavra6zq3juox>

8-Bit Symphony and Rob Hubbard - The One Show 11 September 2019:

<https://youtu.be/INaU2F57ptE?si=G5uDys3XKy7f3DCh>



C=free Sonic the Hedgehog c64 review

Sonic first appeared in 1991 game Sonic the Hedgehog for the Sega Genesis console. Since then, Sonic has starred in many games, spin-offs, comics, cartoons, and movies.

Sonic was created by a small team of developers at Sega, led by programmer Yuji Naka and artist Naoto Oshima, who wanted to make a game that would rival Nintendo's popular Super Mario Bros. Series. Sonic was an influential and iconic video game franchise, and has sold over 140 million units and grossed over \$5 billion as of 2014.

Now, in an intriguing turn of events that sees the iconic blue blur, Sonic the Hedgehog, making a surprising appearance on the Commodore 64. This adaptation, a technical feat in itself, brings Sega's flagship character into the realm of 8-bit computing. When the news broke that Sonic the Hedgehog, Sega's speedster and gaming icon, would grace the Commodore 64, it sent waves of excitement through the Commodore retro gaming community.

Graphics and Sound: Pushing the C64 to Its Limits

The first aspect that strikes you in this C64 version of Sonic is the visual presentation. With the VIC-II graphics chip pushed to its limits, rendering Sonic's vibrant world in a dazzling array of colors, the game maintains a recognizable and charming aesthetic true to its source material. The sprite work, especially Sonic's animations, is commendable, capturing the essence of his speed and agility.

Sonic's animations, from his iconic running loop to his impatient foot-tapping when idle, and wagging finger on the title screen, are meticulously recreated. The fluidity of these animations is a marvel, especially

considering the hardware the limitations. Backgrounds, though less detailed than the Genesis version, are layered and scroll smoothly, creating a sense of depth and motion.

A SID Chip Symphony

The SID chip, a cornerstone of the C64's appeal, is employed masterfully in this game. The iconic tracks of Green Hill Zone and others are adapted with a clear understanding of the SID's capabilities, resulting in a soundtrack that is both familiar and refreshingly new. The sound effects, from the collection of rings to Sonic's jump, are crisp and instantly recognizable. The music is not just a background element but an integral part of the Sonic experience, adding an energetic rhythm to the gameplay pushing the player along. The iconic tunes of the original Sonic are reproduced with the distinct, rich synth sounds characteristic of the C64, and the music and sound effects in this version have a nostalgic charm that Commodore enthusiasts will surely appreciate.

Gameplay: A Speedy Challenge

Sonic's hallmark is speed, and this C64 port does an admirable job of replicating this. The frame rate is understandably lower than its 16-bit counterpart, but the gameplay remains surprisingly fluid. Although precision platforming is a bit more challenging due to the limited resolution on the conversion, yet it adds an extra layer of player skill to the game.

The joystick controls are responsive, but players will need to adapt to the C64's input style, which can be less forgiving when it comes to quick, reactive movements. Replicating Sonic's blistering speed on the C64 was no small feat. The game maintains a respectable frame rate, crucial for the fast-paced gameplay Sonic is known for, and the essence of speed and momentum is effectively captured.



Level Design: A Compact Adventure

However, the essence of Sonic's explorative and fast-paced levels is retained. The developers have cleverly used the C64's capabilities to create engaging, albeit more compact, stages. Each level in this C64 adaptation is a condensed version of the original so levels are shorter and less complex than in the original game. The developers have smartly designed the game levels to fit within the memory constraints while maintaining the explorative nature of Sonic's world. Although the levels are shorter and less complex, they retain key elements like loop-de-loops, ramps, and secret areas, ensuring the gameplay feels authentic.

Technical Achievements: A Testament to C64's Capabilities

What stands out most is the technical wizardry involved in bringing Sonic to the C64. The smooth scrolling, multi-layered backgrounds, and sprite handling are exceptional, considering the hardware limitations. It's a showcase of what skilled programmers can achieve on the Commodore 64.

Final Verdict: A Must-Play for C64 Enthusiasts

Sonic on the Commodore 64 is an impressive feat that blends nostalgia with technical prowess and offers a unique and enjoyable experience. It's a testament to the C64's enduring legacy and a must-play for fans both of the c64 and Sonic.

Rating: 10/10

Pros:

- Impressive graphical and sound adaptation
- Fluid gameplay and faithful recreation of Sonic's speed
- Technical achievements showcase C64's capabilities

Cons:

- Limited resolution affects precision platforming
- Shorter, less complex levels due to memory constraints

Overall Experience:

A Sonic Adventure Reimagined
Playing Sonic on the Commodore 64 is a unique experience that blends nostalgia with

technical innovation. In conclusion, Sonic the Hedgehog on the Commodore 64 is a remarkable accomplishment. It's a must-play for anyone interested in the intersection of retro gaming and technical wizardry, offering a fresh perspective on a classic. This game is not just a nostalgic trip; it's a showcase of what passionate developers can achieve with beloved, albeit older, technology.

Sonic requires

C64 or C128 (in C64 mode), + compatible REU of at least 256 KB, a disk drive (.d64 and .d81) and joystick an NTSC machine, or a C128 or other CPU accelerator is highly recommended.

Credits :

Code Mr. SID of HVSC Crew, Megadesigns Incorporated
Music Encore of Kollektivet, Undone
Graphics Veto of Oxyron, PriorArt, Tristar & Red Sector Inc.

Download :

https://csdb.dk/getinternalfile.php/222919/Sonic_the_Hedgehog_d64.zip

https://csdb.dk/getinternalfile.php/222920/Sonic_the_Hedgehog_d81.zip

https://csdb.dk/getinternalfile.php/223156/Sonic_the_Hedgehog.sid

Want to just watch a video with some history and the game running ?!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRnDbxvxi-o>



C=free review the sentinel c64

The Sentinel, released as The Sentry in the United States, was created by Geoff Crammond and published by Firebird in 1986 for the BBC Micro, then converted to the Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC, ZX Spectrum, Atari ST, Amiga, and IBM PC. Used solid-filled 3D graphics environment, something relatively new and groundbreaking at the time. This experimental approach led to a game that was unlike most other games on the market. The Amiga conversion also has a sampled soundtrack by David Whittaker.

Gameplay Mechanics and Objective

The core of Sentinel's gameplay is both innovative and cerebral. The player takes on the role of a 'Synthoid' placed in a surreal, solid filled 3D landscape. The primary objective is to absorb energy and ultimately defeat the Sentinel, a formidable entity that looms over the landscape.

Players must absorb trees for energy, which can then be used to create 'Roboids' (robot-like entities) or boulders. Strategic placement of these elements is crucial, as the player must continually move upwards in the landscape to avoid the gaze of the Sentinel, who drains the player's energy if caught in its view.

One of the game's most unique mechanics is the ability to 'teleport' by transferring consciousness from one Roboid to another. This adds a layer of strategic depth, requiring careful planning and foresight on the side of the player.

Comparisons and Legacy

At its time of release, there weren't many games like Sentinel. Its unique use of 3D graphics and its strategic, almost puzzle-like gameplay set it apart from more action-oriented titles of the era. The game's emphasis on observation, energy management, and strategic movement was pioneering at the time.

In terms of legacy, while not many games have directly copied the Sentinel's format, its influence can be seen in various strategy and puzzle games that emphasize environmental manipulation and strategic positioning.

Player Perspective

From a player's perspective, Sentinel offers a blend of tense survival and strategic planning. The game's pacing is methodical, requiring patience and careful thought. The eerie, minimalist sound design and the stark, surreal landscapes contribute to an atmosphere of isolation and urgency. The challenge lies in mastering the environment and understanding the best ways

to move and manipulate objects to stay out of the Sentinel's sight.

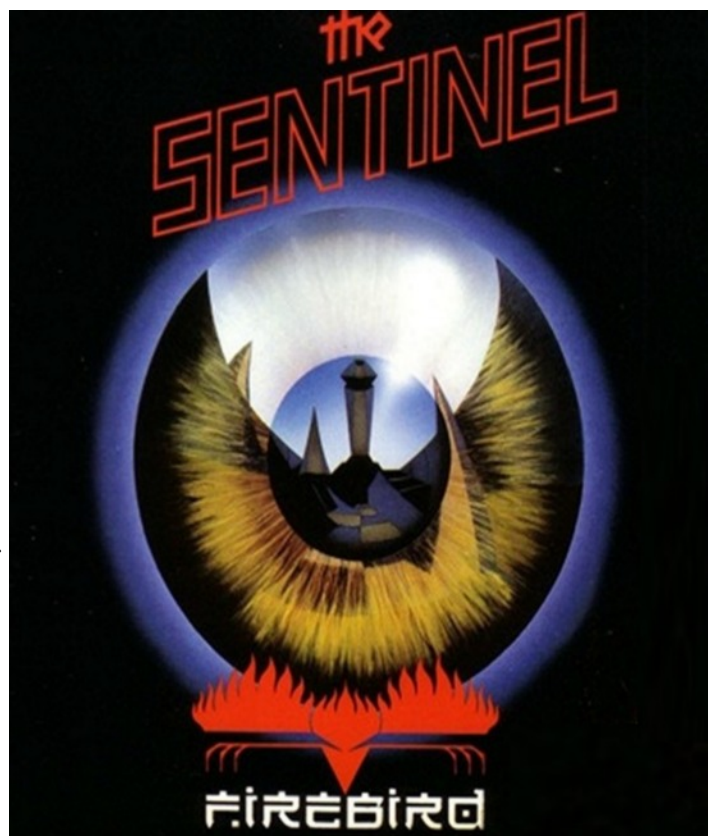
Graphics

The graphics of Sentinel were a significant achievement, especially considering the limitations of hardware at the time. On the Commodore 64, the game utilized the machine's ability to handle detailed graphics to create an immersive 3D environment..

On the Commodore Amiga, these graphical capabilities were enhanced further. The Amiga's advanced graphics chipset, with its higher resolution and greater color depth, allowed for more detailed and smoother landscapes. The game's environment consisted of a checkerboard landscape, scattered with objects like trees, boulders, and the Sentinel itself. The use of perspective and shading gave a sense of depth and height, crucial for a game where vertical movement and line-of-sight played key roles.

Sound

Sound in Sentinel was minimalistic but effectively used to create an atmosphere of isolation and tension. The Commodore 64's SID (Sound Interface Device) chip was adept at creating distinctive sound effects and ambient tracks. The game didn't have a continuous soundtrack; instead, it used sparse sound effects to emphasize actions like the absorption of energy, the creation of Roboids, and the menacing presence of the Sentinel. This minimalistic approach to sound design was deliberate, aiming to keep the player focused on the strategic elements of the game without distraction.



Gameplay and Its Uniqueness

The gameplay

Sentinel was unique for several reasons:

Strategic Movement: Unlike many games of its time, which focused on fast-paced action or linear progression, Sentinel required careful and strategic movement. Players needed to constantly assess the landscape, plan their next move, and position themselves out of the Sentinel's view.

Energy Management: The game introduced a complex energy management system. Players had to absorb energy from the environment (trees) and use it judiciously to create boulders and Roboids. This resource management aspect added a layer of strategy not commonly seen in games of that period.

Teleportation Mechanic: The ability to teleport by transferring consciousness to a newly created Roboid was innovative. It required players to think several steps ahead and consider their position relative to the Sentinel and the landscape.

Environmental Manipulation: The player's ability to alter the environment by creating and absorbing objects was a novel concept. It required a combination of spatial awareness and strategic planning, as the landscape itself was a tool for progression and survival.

Atmospheric Tension: The game's design created a palpable sense of tension. The silent, watchful presence of the Sentinel, combined with the sparse sound effects and the vast, open landscape, created a unique atmosphere that was both eerie and captivating.

First Impressions and Graphics

As a player booting up Sentinel on my Commodore 64 for the first time, I'm immediately struck by the unique visual style. The 3D landscape is unlike anything I've seen on the system before. The checkerboard ground stretches out in all directions, with geometric boulders and tree-like structures dotting the landscape. The way the Sentinel stands motion-

less, surveying its domain, creates a sense of foreboding right from the start.

Conclusion

In summary, Sentinel was a groundbreaking game on Commodore platforms, leveraging the hardware's capabilities to deliver an experience that was both technically impressive and conceptually innovative. Its unique approach to 3D graphics, sound design, and gameplay mechanics made it stand out in the gaming landscape. The game challenged players not just with reflexes or pattern memorization, but with strategic thinking, resource management, and an understanding of a complex,

three-dimensional environment. This combination of factors is what made Sentinel a memorable and influential title in the history of video games.

Game playthrough:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KW1GLtwtlI0>

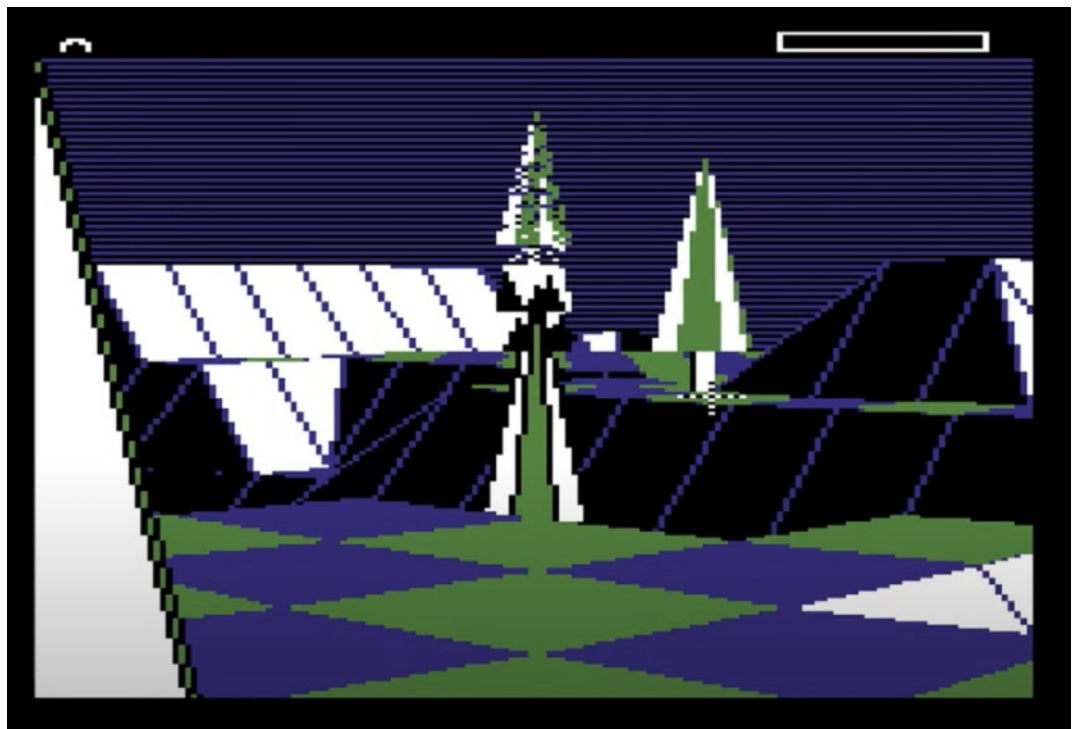
Rating: 10/10

Pros:

Impressive graphical and use of sound
Fluid gameplay but slow paced for many
Tense and thoughtful gameplay

Cons:

Many will find the game too slow
Of course now graphically it looks dated



A DARK START TO "RUN/STOP-RESTORE"

-by Lenard R. Roach

(The story you are about to read is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent as well as the guilty.)

She sat on the edge of the sofa in our Corona Avenue home doing no more than staring at the living room floor, trying to find the words to tell me about the dark secret that she was harboring in her soul. She has held this secret in for months. Now she was caught. Caught by her son while visiting his home in Gardner, Kansas no more than a few hours ago. He told her that if she didn't tell Dad what she was doing then he would tell Dad himself. She backed herself into a corner. She knew that only the truth was the way out of the tangled web that she weaved. After dropping off her traveling companion at his home, she reluctantly drove here knowing she would have to face the music of what she had done no matter how sour the notes are. She looked up at me with sorrow in her eyes but no tears.

"Honey," she began, "I've been having an affair with Mark from church."

I stood there. I didn't know at the moment whether to cry or get mad. I let her tell her story about how, starting with a church function, they developed a friendship. That friendship slowly started to become more affectionate, then it became a full blown affair with this Mark, a poor young man who himself was having problems in his own marriage. They confided in each other their marital issues, then they comforted each other, then they fell in love with each other and started an affair behind the backs of both Mark's wife as well as me. The affair has been going on for about a year. She finished her story.

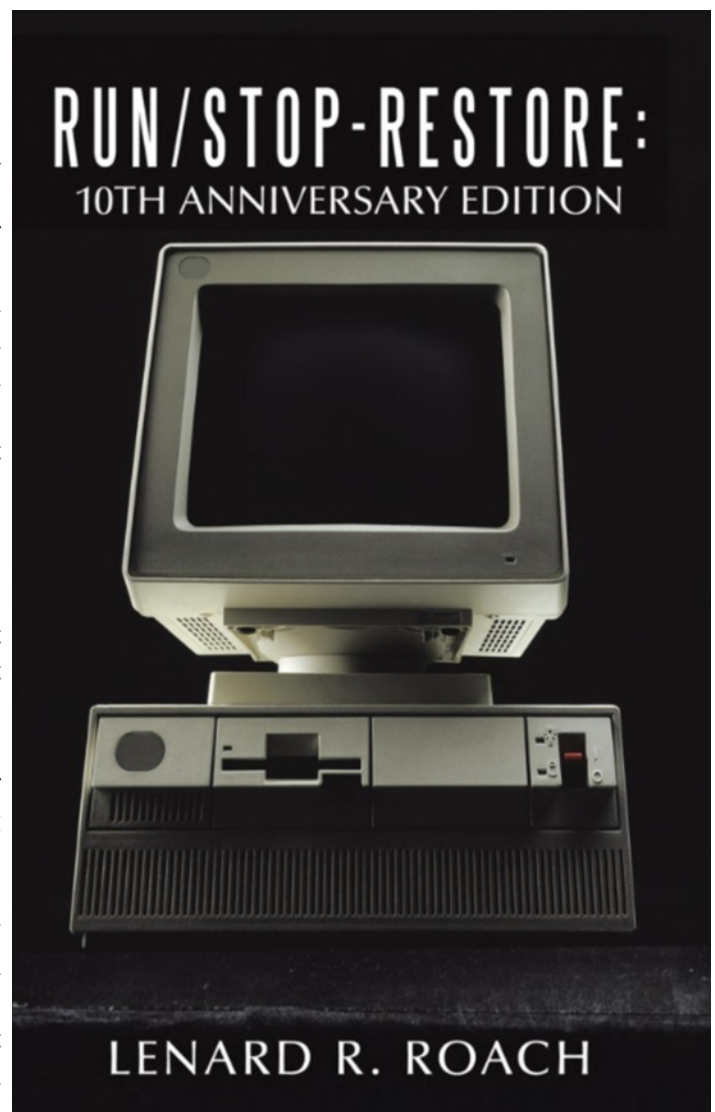
"I didn't mean to, dear. It just ... happened."

I've been told many times by psychiatrist friends that infatuation, especially the daring infatuation like that of a hidden love affair, is an emotion that sometimes is stronger than cocaine. The thrill of secrecy, the sneaking around to meet each other, to be together despite the odds of getting caught, plus for how long the affair can go on before they are finally busted, was a drawing force that is next to impossible to resist. Even I have been caught in that web on occasion by women who came onto me, but before anything could develop informed the potential external female love interest that I was a "happily" married man. I was not looking for an extracurricular romance. The spurned

woman would find a way to get back at me; to make me suffer for my decision by either spreading rumors on me at my job or among the few friends I had. The next thing I knew I was dismissed from my job or ostracized by my friends. I held my ground with such women choosing my wife each and every time. That ring I wore on the fourth finger of my left hand was not there because I like flashy jewelry. It meant I was betrothed to another "til death do us part." But what if that death was emotional and not physical? I was at a loss. In the middle of my shock to her confession of betrayal I asked a stupid question:

"You gotta choose. It's either him or me. Now which is it?"

She looked up at me with still no tears in her eyes. "There is no choice," she said. She rose from the sofa and walked slowly to the bedroom. Out of the closet she pulled out a large suitcase and threw it on the bed. After opening it, she went to the dresser and started putting her clothes into it. She also took down some clothes from the closet and put them into the suitcase as well. I stood there with no emotion at the moment



as I watched 26 years of marriage get packed into a large piece of luggage. She closed the lid and latched the bag. She then turned to face me.

“I've dropped off Mark at his place. He's telling his wife the same thing I told you. I'm tired of your crap the same as Mark is tired of her's. We've both rented an apartment around the college area and we are going to move in together. I'm going to go pick him up and we are going to start a new life together free from the both of you. Goodbye, you bipolar gremlin!”

She picked up her suitcase, walked around me and headed out the front door. I watched from the front door as she put her suitcase in the back of her car, got in, and backed out the driveway. I stared in disbelief as she drove west on Corona Avenue to the end of the street. She made a left turn onto 61st Terrace and was out of my sight. Gone forever.

I stood at the door for what seemed like hours allowing the heat from the hot July day rush into the house making the air conditioner start to work overtime. I finally had a little common sense to come back to me and shut the door before the cats tried to get out. I turned to look at the living room. The entire house began to feel like something from The Amityville Horror. Nothing was right. Nothing felt right. The heartbeat of the house was gone. The house was in cardiac arrest and there wasn't a cussing thing I could do about it.

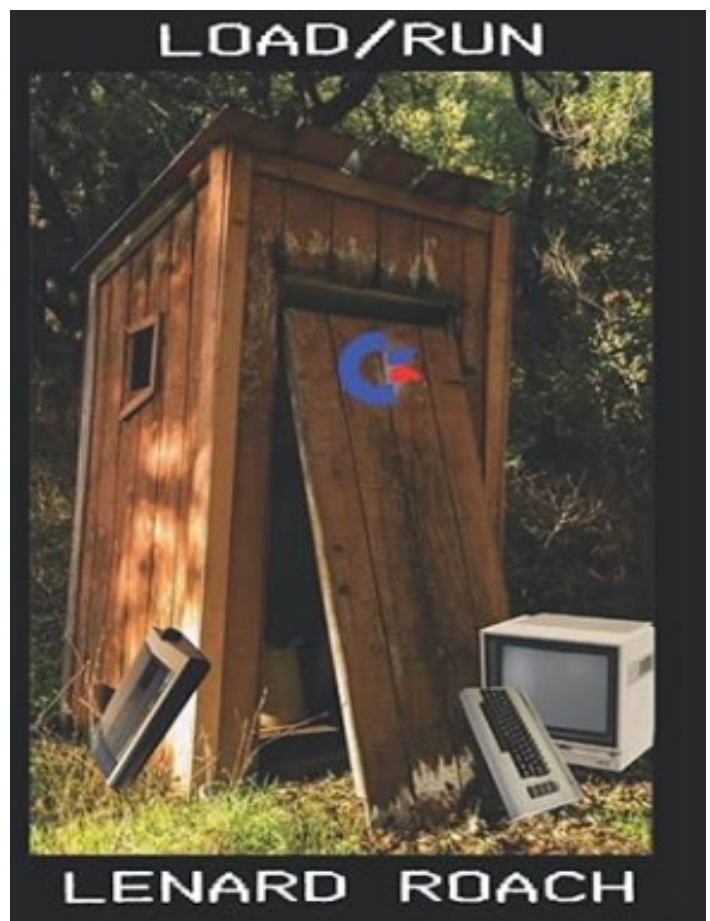
I took a step towards the bedroom only to be stopped by three cats who were staring up at me. They knew something was terribly wrong. They sat there with a blank look on their faces. Their tails didn't wag. They didn't even blink as they looked long and hard at me, wondering what I was going to do next. I stepped over them and into the bedroom. I stared at the bed where all that love was made. I fell face forward into the mattress and started crying uncontrollably. The reality of my situation finally caught up with me. The three cats each jumped onto the bed one at a time and rubbed their heads against me as I let out heaving sobs. The cats tried to comfort me the best they could at what was my worst hour.

Soon even they laid down on the bed and watched me closely like a momma cat watches her kittens knowing that there wasn't a cussing thing they could do to help me no matter how bad they wanted to. They had to allow my emotions to run their course. All they could do was lay down close to me and be on standby for whatever may happen next.

That was July 2010. For the next two months I played scramble as I tried my best to handle things on my own without help from a life partner. During this time we got the divorce settled and signed by a judge. My ex-wife and her new lover immediately started to make wedding plans for June of the following year. I also worked out a system to get my life back in some sort of financial balance by using my Five Program Bonus Disk that I wrote on my Commodore for use to balance a person's personal economy.

I was moving at the speed of evolution in getting some footing under me but my heart was heavy. The scars that the ex-wife left on my soul were still fresh and tender. Little things were getting me mad as a hornet. It got to a point where my situation started to affect my job performance. Work had to let me go for bad customer relations as well as customer complaints. Now I was freshly divorced and out of a job. I didn't know what to do. Why was all of this happening to me? I felt like God Himself was mad as sin at me for something that I did and I had no idea what that was.

I sat at home the day after I was fired. I was on the divan pondering what I should do for work. I knew I shouldn't think about working right away. I had way too much to process in my life at the moment to really be of any use to any employer. My rule of thumb has always been that, if you are fired, laid off from your



job, or some other personal disaster, to take three days to decompress so you can be the best you can be for yourself and those around you. When you can get a good grip on yourself then go look for a job. Today was different for me. I've always been Mister "Go go go!" and now my steam engine has run out of fire in the fire box. I went to my room where the five drawer filing cabinet was stored. In all five drawers were hundreds of manilla folders. Each folder contained one of my stories, skits, plays, articles, or a newsletter of a Commodore club where I made a story contribution.

I opened the top drawer where all my Commodore work was stored. In the front was a copy of my 100% self published book, "Run/Stop-Restore". I pulled it out and went to the front page. On that page was written the following:

TO MY DARLING WIFE ---
THANKS FOR MAKING ME A SUCCESS! YOUR
LOVING HUSBAND, LENARD

I whispered a vile word under my breath and was about to throw the book into the trash. I didn't need to have any reminders of my exwife in my house. As I was heading to the big trash can in the kitchen I stopped short. I looked at the book again, then opened it and started flipping through the pages. I would stop at a story and read a few lines. I smiled as I remembered the circumstances and situations that brought that story to mind. I looked at a few more selections, each time remembering where I was and what I was doing that prompted me to put the story on paper. I left the kitchen and walked to the living room still flipping pages. I sat down in my armchair and started reading what I have compiled back in 2000. Those were some great times back when I working on making the book possible.

Then a thought hit me. Did I still have to original hardcopies of these stories that I put in this compilation book in my files? I rose from my chair and, with book in hand, went back to my bedroom and the file cabinet. I started thumbing through the book. As I came across a story in the book, I would look for the original copy that I had filed away. As I found each story folder I threw the file on the bed then looked for more. In the matter of an hour I found a good portion of what went into the "Run/Stop-Restore" compilation.

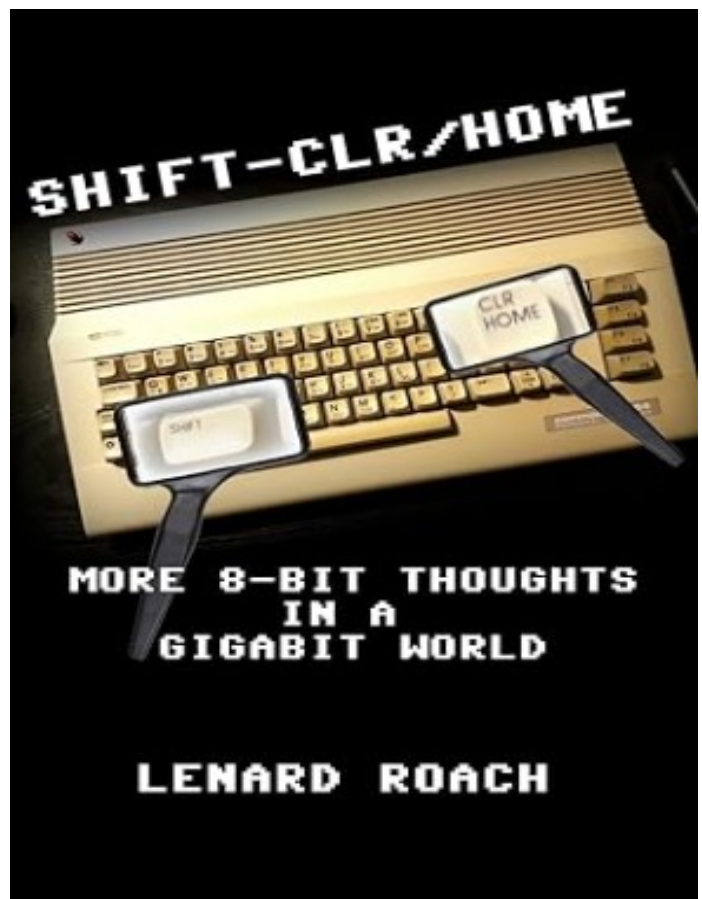
For some unknown reason I also pulled a few files out of the cabinet that were Commodore related but not in the book and put them on the bed as well. Why? I

didn't know ... yet. I closed the drawers in the file cabinet then turned to face the mess that I created with the folders that were strewn on the bed. There was no rhyme or reason for what I was doing. Then a voice like a whispering echo resonated in my head that said the following:

"START OVER."

I looked at the mess again and immediately knew what I needed to do. I was to re-create "Run/Stop-Restore" and republish it using a brick and mortar publishing company instead of the copier in the Commodore computer room. That seemed impossible. Nobody in their right mind would buy a book about stories of a bygone computer that was only a vapor in the whisps of time, but the thought still hounded me. Is it really possible?

I knew that if I wanted to get the book published at a real book publisher I would have to convert all the GeoWrite text into a format manageable by a PC. Enter The Big Blue Reader. The Fresno (California) Commodore User Group, of whom I was a long distance member, was nice enough to send me copies of the Big Blue Reader program. The function of the program was to take selected files from a Commodore word processing format and make those documents into something readable by a PC. With a stack of folders to guide me, I sat down at my Commodore



computer desk and started looking through what seemed like a myriad of 5.25" disks containing everything that I had written using both Speedscript as well as GeoWrite.

As I found the needed file on a Commodore disk I would transfer that file onto a single 5.25" disk so I could have everything in the same place. Then, using Big Blue Reader, I allowed the Commodore to transpose the contents of those files onto a 3.5" disk that was formatted to 720K, readable by a PC that still used either the .TXT or .RTF format. I worked feverishly on the project. My mood improved as I went along. I had both my Commodore as well as my PC working as I began the chore of creating a real book suitable for publishing. During the morning I worked on finding a job via the Internet. In the afternoon I would take a few hours to rest and play with the cats and decompress my mind. In the evening I would work on the book, sometimes going well into early next morning before I realized that I had to get some kind of sleep. My adrenaline was high. My cats, who were there as I went through the emotional crash of my wife leaving me for another man, were next to ignored when it came to maintenance for them like feeding, watering, and sanitation. However, they were not going to let me forget them in this whirlwind of excitement that now gripped me. When the time came for eating, they would jump on top of the Commodore computer stand and be sure to block my view of the monitor by lying down in front of it. When the cats learned that this action got my attention, they started doing for everything like getting petted or to get me to play with them. I didn't mean to start ignoring my little companions but I felt like I was onto something big and I didn't want to stop in fear of losing momentum. For about two weeks I worked this way until all the needed word processing files were converted to PC and uploaded to my laptop.

Next was organizing the stories into a readable and flowing format. This was hard for me because I had no sense of organization. I did my best, moving one story to another section of the book, and then back again. I was no good at this but I worked at it anyway. Before long I had compiled a sizeable book that was clean cut and put in a proper order. To add some flair, I made my own personal comments about each story that I called "facades." It was a short history of where the story idea came from and how I developed the idea into the spiel that the reader was reading. Next came the chore of looking for a publisher.

Hitting the Internet again, I started looking for book publishers. Here is where naivete sadly kicked in. I

read many blurbs about this publisher and that publisher promising success and the moon. Everything sounded good on about all of them. Now was the problem of choosing one of them. By the quirk of a whim, I fell on Titanic Books out of Springfield, Illinois. I contacted the sales agent department via email and told them that I had written a book and was in the market for a publishing firm to take on the project. They were more than eager to see my work and give me their opinion if it was a fit in their style of books. I transposed my composition into a .PDF format and sent it on. It didn't take long for them to respond saying that they would be glad to take on the project. I was elated. On the first throw of the dart I hit the bullseye. Later on I would learn that what I did was really hit the eye of a bull which would later gourd me in the butt.

Between the contract department and myself we worked out a deal where I would pay them \$3,000 and they would publish the book. Wait a minute! Even in my elation I knew that something didn't jive. Why should I have to pay them \$3,000 if they wanted to publish my book? I thought that when a publishing company made a contract with an author it was because the publisher believed in the work and felt that it would make a good sales and profits for both parties. Maybe things have changed in the book publishing field that I once read about when I was younger? I didn't know. Nonetheless, I gave Titanic Books my Discover Card number and they took their \$3,000. I was on my way, but to where?

Time passed. I finally found a job with Flash Delivery, a contract courier in Kansas City, Missouri, located in the East Bottoms near the Missouri River. They were happy to have me on board. I quickly showed enthusiasm, was always cheerful, and clients swiftly took a liking to me. Some of the people I delivered to enjoyed some of my jokes; others were crabby people who made sucking lemons a past time they indulged in during off hours didn't care for my humor. They wanted me to take the package they needed delivered and get out. The job was a great deal. It was a "work when you want; don't work when you don't want" situation. I could continue working on the book at my own leisure and not worry about hitting a time clock. I quickly found out, however, that when you "don't work when you don't want" means that you also don't get paid. The small settlement checks I got at the beginning of the job became a motivator for me to back off the book for a time and focus on getting money for food in the fridge as well as food for the cats. I slowed down on the book while I focused on financial survival.

Titanic Books was calling me at all hours asking if I saw their latest proposal and does that meet with my approval? Between working and Titanic Books I was getting worn out and fast. The emotional rollercoaster I was on in July quickly melted away during this time while working on the book, but at what cost? When I got home from work at very late hours, I would sit down in my armchair with my laptop in hand and go over the day's emails. Practically every email was from Titanic Books needing approval for something. Being weary from work does not make one apt with the capacity of making good decisions. "Can't you just publish the book?" I would shout out loud to the empty house. Those outbursts brought the cats in from wherever they were hiding to check on me. Because Titanic Books was trying to "catch the market on this genre" the pressure kept on. It was to a point that I was up until 01:30 every night going over emails giving my opinion on what they were asking of me at that moment.

Later I found out that, while I was in a sleep deprived state of mind, I signed a contract that gave me only a 2% royalty foreach book sold. I also agreed to having an old IBM PC2 on the cover instead of a Commodore 64 computer. This whole thing was getting out of hand. I needed to fall back and regroup. I contacted Titanic Books and asked them, "What was the deal with the PC2 on the front cover? This is not a Commodore computer of any kind." They responded. "We don't know what a Commodore is except that is a computer so we found the oldest computer picture in our files and put it on the cover." I emailed again. "I can send you a picture of a Commodore computer if you need one."

They responded with a bunch of gobbledegook about legal rights and only being allowed to use pictures that they copyrighted themselves. It was a bunch of malarkey and I knew it. I sent a final email. "If you didn't know what a Commodore computer was then why did you take on the project?" No reply. In the meantime and behind the scenes, my great friend The Vector was letting his fingers do the walking with research of his own on Google. He texted me via Messenger one day with the following item of interest:

"LENARD, DID SOME RESEARCH ON TITANIC BOOKS. CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO SEE WHAT I FOUND. VECTOR."

I immediately clicked on the link. Upon my screen came the complaints from other would be authors who published with Titanic Books and their reviews were't

good. Many objected to the fact that Titanic Books took their money and produced little if any results.

Others said that the royalty checks they mailed out to authors once every quarter were so worthless that even the payday loan companies would not cash them. The objections scrolled on for quite a while. I leaned back and started rocking in my armchair. All my effort, all my work, was now in the hands of what reviewers called, "charlatans who preyed on the ambitious writer, promising much and delivering little." I was crushed. I was thinking about pulling my book off of their presses and get my money back ... all \$3,000 of it, but research on this avenue showed that I signed an iron clad contract for publication with Titanic Books and there was no way out. I sat there wondering what to do next. I messaged Vector:

"CRAP!" Nuff said.

During the next couple of months Titanic Books still kept contacting me asking if things were right or if I wanted to change anything. Finally, on December 29th, 2010, five months after my divorce from my wife was final, the book went into preliminary printing. Choosing a title for my book seemed to be the last piece of the puzzle before going full force on the presses. Not thinking twice, I chose the same title for the book as I did its predecessor but with a subtitle to go along with it: "Run/Stop-Restore: 10th Anniversary Edition." After all, it was almost ten years to the day that "Run/Stop-Restore" came off my copier and was bound into book form by a local bindery. This was a bittersweet moment. I became an actual published author but I had no one to share the triumph with except three overweight and lazy cats. I went to the pantry and pulled down a bottle of Pounce cat treats. The cats came running in and started jumping all over the counters as well as myself wanting the treats they so well deserved after staying with me for the last six months and not to try to bolt out the door and run out into the yard to escape the turmoil I made for myself with my out of control emotions. Dover, Wellington, and Austin each enjoyed an abundance of cat treats that day, so much so that after a short while of their mewling and purring, I dumped the remaining contents of the cat treats into the feed dish and let them go crazy like piranhas in a meat market.

On March 13th, 2011, a big box was left on my doorstep when I came home from another long day of delivering packages for Flash Delivery. I unlocked the door and hoisted the box into the house. Man, it was heavy! I put it down on the sofa and quickly tore off the sealing tape. Inside was fifty copies of "Run/Stop-

Restore: 10th Anniversary Edition” – 25 softbound and 25 hardbound. The book was thin. At first I thought that Titanic Books had edited out many of my stories to shrink the size of the book. What I originally sent them was 200 pages of text; what came in the box were books that were close to 118 pages. I flipped through the pages of one of the copies. What Titanic Books did was change the font to something much smaller so as to not waste space on a page and thus put all my content into a more compact format. It was straightforward and done very professionally. Perhaps the Internet flammers were wrong about Titanic Books.

I discovered that my book was being carried by all the major books venues including Books-A-Million, Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and even Walmart. This was very impressive to a struggling author like myself. I got onto Messenger and told The Vector that I got samples of the book in and if he wanted a copy. Of course the answer was, “Yes!” Going to family and close friends I began to hand out copies of the book. Some were willing to pay for it but I insisted that no money needed to exchange hands -- just go on the various book websites and give their honest review of my book. If they like it, say so; if they hate it, say so; if they burn it, beware of the fire marshall. As for myself I put one copy of each, hardbound and softbound, into my bookshelf at the house.

However, what the Internet said about the royalty checks that came from Titanic Books was spot on. In May 2011, I went to my bank to deposit my first royalty check (a whole \$16+) and the bank rejected the check almost immediately repeating what was said on the website Vector directed me – Titanic Books has a tendency to pass bad checks to their authors. I went down to my local payday loan company and tried cashing the check and got the same results. Now I was stuck with a supposedly bogus check and no where to cash it. A little touring of town finally produced the fruit of a financial institution that would cash the check (for a 3% fee). Yet, despite the evidence that Titanic Books came through on most of its promises, I decided that I would never go through them again. I was already working on my second Commodore themed book. The search for a new publisher was on.

Over the short span of a few months I picked up another job to help with my bills that were piling up because I spent \$3,000 of money I didn't have to become the first member of my family to get into print on something other than a rap sheet. I was working the evening shift at the Chat N' Scat convenience store located on 75th and State Line Road just on the west side of the Missouri state line. I was so close to the

Kansas/Missouri border at this store that all I had to do was walk west across the street and I was in eastern Kansas. “Run/Stop-Restore: 10th Anniversary Edition” was done and now in the capable(?) hands of Titanic Books. There was nothing more on my end to do but wait and see how things were going to develop over the next couple of months. Still, I was burning up the Internet looking for a new lead for a different publisher.

“Have you tried publishing on Terra?” the British gentlemen asked me. The person who was addressing me as I helped him with his purchase of Marlboro Lights was white haired, stood about six feet tall, and possessed a perfectly curled white handlebar moustache. I learned over time that his name was Powell and he worked at the local hospital as a night guard. He was on his second marriage to an American nurse who worked at the same hospital and had about three grandchildren back home in England. He knew all about my publishing experience. Mr. Powell had a soothing voice and was easy to talk to. Over a few short months I told him all about what I went through with Titanic Books.

“Sorry you went through all that, old chap, but you should have done a more extensive research over the Internet than barking at the first tree in the forest,” he gently chided.

“The deed is done, Mr. Powell,” I answered. I looked up at him.

“What was this about a publishing company called Terra?”

Mr. Powell gave me the Reader's Digest version of Terra Publications, a self publishing business that does its work over the Internet and publishes “on demand.” All the books they receive from authors are stored in a massive database and are only called off for printing when someone orders a copy. You can set your own royalty percentage, where you want to be published around the world (provided you have obtained the copyright in that part of the world), and you can do as much or as little marketing that you want. It sounded like the same thing I experienced with Titanic Publications at the end of 2010. “How much does all this cost?” I asked Mr. Powell as he was heading out the door with his purchase. He turned back and gave me a quick glance.

“It's free,” he said as he walked out the door.

“WHAT THE BLAZES!?!” I said in thought. “Why did I waste my hard earned money on Titanic Books when there were free resources on the Internet that offered a similar deal at the prefect price — FREE! I was excited. My heart pounded hard in my chest. I couldn't wait to get off work and research Terra Publications on my own. When I finally got off work I practically flew home, bursted through the door, stepped around the cats who sat near the door to to welcome me, grabbed my laptop and was soon exploring the Internet for all the information I could find on Terra Publications. In short, they did everything Mr. Powell said they did. All they asked for in exchange was 40% of the total royalties gathered by the author in payment and Mr. Powell was right, it was free. I couldn't believe it.

I sent Vector a message and asked him to explore Terra Publications on his end and see if he could find anything in the way of negative reviews. He was more proficient on the computer than me and knew exactly where to look for the proper information. The only thing he could come up with is that an author who uses Terra Publications had to do EVERYTHING from cover design to content to marketing. All Terra did was print the book and put a blurb about it on their website's bookshelf. “Nothing too strange about them,” Vector messaged back. “I think we may have a winner here. I can even design the covers for you as long as you can come of with a blurb forthe back.”

My second Commodore book was close to done by this time. Thanks to ameeeting with a customer in my

convenience store who came from across the Atlantic, I finally found a publishing home. I owned all the United States copyrights and eveything this time was under MY control. The second Commodore book, “Shift-Clr/Home: More 8-Bit Thoughts In A Gigabit World” definitely would have a Commodore 64 on the front. Vector saw to that. Things were starting to head my way after such a devastating end of 2010. But before any other books on the Commodore computer would be published with my name on the front cover I had one more piece of business to do involving the first book. I grabbed a copy of “Run/Stop-Restore: 10th Anniversary Edition” and put it into a mailing envelope then addressed it. Inside the book on a blank page I wrote the following message to its recipient:

“TO MY EX-WIFE KAREN,
TAKE A LOOK AT ME NOW! NOW THAT I'M ON MY WAY! THANKS FOR LEAVING ME. THIS BOOK WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN POSSIBLE IF IT WASN'T FOR YOUR BETRAYAL. BEST OF LUCK IN YOUR FUTURE.

LENARD R. ROACH
MAY 2011.”

In the end, the final counterstroke was mine. The battle was over. Thanks be to God and Commodore computers I was on my way to recovery in all departments – mental, emotional, and physical.



**** COMMODORE FREE ****

64K RAM SYSTEM 38911 BASIC BYTES FREE

READY.
LOAD

PRESS PLAY ON TAPE
LOADING...
READY.
RUN