

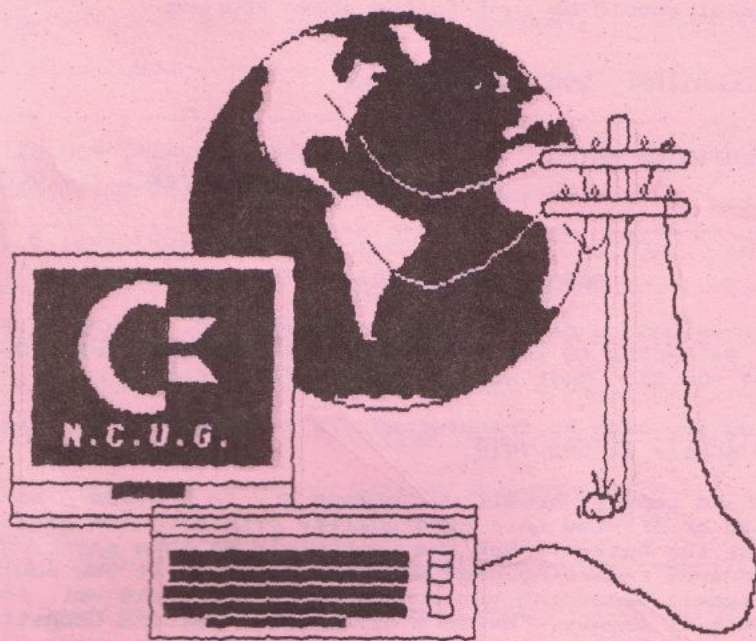
Volume 2

Number 4

SEPTEMBER 1984

# N.C.U.G. Magazine

Nashville Commodore Users Group



**We are Friendly People**

REGGIE RAMLOOSE

JETSONS-- HIGH TECH

FLINTSTONES-- HIGH TOUCH

All of us have seen the Hanna-Barbara cartoons "The Flintstones" and "The Jetsons". You remember them:

FADE IN: George Jetson is on his way home. He is flying his jet car in heavy traffic. Our boy succumbs to temptation and zips around a slow commuter. A traffic cop is parked behind a floating billboard and chases George down on his jetcycle. George gets ticket. He parks in the garage of his 200+ story building and rides the air tube up to his apartment. A moving sidewalk takes him to his door; a mechanical arm knocks for him. Astro, his dog, bounds up, knocks George over, and licks him in the face. Even though he is tired from his 3-day-a-week job at Spacely Sprockets, George takes Astro for a walk on an electric treadmill. Daughter Judy wants to go see the newest wigged-out rock group. Jane, George's wife, is talking on the videophone. She holds a mask up because she hasn't bothered to do her face. George's boy Elroy asks him what gasoline was. George tells Elroy it was used in the distant past, before nuclear power was invented. Jane presses some buttons on a console and, as dinner pops out of the chute, announces that supper is served. "Oh, no," moans George. "Not vegetable protein again!"

CUT TO: Fred Flintstone is at work in the Bedrock Gravel Works. The "whistle", a haggard-looking bird, screeches, and Fred yells "YABBA-DABBA-DOO!" Jumping into his sports car, he picks his friend Barney Rubble up. He propels the car home with his feet. Dino, his "dog", bounds up, knocks Fred over, and licks him in the face. Fred takes Dino for a walk amidst trees, grass, ferns, and flowers. He comes back into the house, kisses Wilma, chuckles Pebbles under the chin, and tosses her up in the air. Wilma sets Fred's dinner on the table. "Oh, no," groans Fred. "Not Brontosaurus burgers again!"

After dinner Wilma empties the plates into the "garbage disposal"-- a pig-like creature that lives under the sink. "I HATE brontosaurus burgers," it tells us in an aside. Barney Rubble comes over with his Lodge hat on. Tonight is the night of the big election. Betty is with him. She and Wilma warn the boys to behave. Fred assures them that they will be good. FADE OUT as Fred winks mischevously at Barney.

In his book, Megatrends, author John Nesbitt makes the distinction between HIGH TECH and HIGH TOUCH. High Tech is short for high technology-- microchips, hi-fi, Betacorders, Walkmans (Walkmen?). High Touch, on the other hand, is an acceleration or deepening of our humanity. Nesbitt feels that High Tech will lead to High Touch-- that is, that rather than alienate us, high technology will increase our human potential.

The Jetsons live in a High Tech society. But it is not a High Touch society. It is a society of anomie and alienation. The Jetsons have no neighbors. Their obtrusive technology is the end-all and be-all of their existence. But, if wondrous, it is also somehow very dehumanizing. The Flintstones, now-- should we call them "primitive"? Perhaps the technology is there, but in the background rather than the foreground. That crane that Fred operates, for instance. It's a dinosaur. Could it be bioengineered? Could that armadillo-like creature that serves as a bookend be specially bred for the purpose? Are Bedrock's gene-splicing machines hidden from view? Perhaps the technology is there, but is not obvious because it is not worshipped. Perhaps there is a lesson here.

Are Hanna and Barbara making a social statement? I think so. I think that the Flintstones are hundreds or thousands of years ahead of the Jetsons? And all this time you thought they were behind.