



COMMODORE USERS GROUP OF ATLANTA

Volume 9, Issue 11

November-December 1991

Executive Board Officers

President: Mark Thomas (717-9866)
Vice President: Bob Padgett (938-2413)
Vice President: Gene Smith (636-8598)
Sec./Treas.: Dallas Denny (939-2128)

Next Meeting

Thursday, January 23, 1992
Tucker Christian Church
4291 Lynburn Dr. Tucker, Ga.
Meeting: 7:30 pm

Happy Thanksgiving - Merry Christmas

All members and guests of the big three CUGA, MACK and SMUG

Come to our **Big Christmas Party**

Thursday Night, Dec. 12th, 1991.

The Club Room at Papa's Country Buffet, 5601 Buford Hwy, Doraville
Dinner 6:30 pm Party at 7:30 pm - Cost Dinner \$5.79, over 65 10% off.
Vegetable - Salad only \$3.95.

Bring a gift - take a gift. Can be Christmas ornament or Software.

This will be our second gathering as a group, our first as the new alliance or association. Hope you will try to be there! By the party time the new group will have had its second meeting and perhaps a name. So far the only name presented has been ARCA, Atlanta Recreational Computer Alliance (or Association). Each club is retaining its own identity and meetings but hopes to have joint ventures for newsletters, conventions, etc. Let's make it work. It was suggested the motto for 1992 should be Participate!!!

For information on any of our three participating clubs contact:

C.U.G.A.	M.A.C.K.	S.M.U.G. 64/128
P. O. Box 2031	P. O. Box 813481	P. O. Box 1762
Tucker, Ga. 30085-2031	Smyrna, Ga. 30081	Lilburn, Ga. 30226

A season greeting from your editor:

I have thoroughly enjoyed being your newsletter editor these past several months. We now plan to combine the three newsletters into one, which really doesn't make our work any easier, just better. For all the clubs let me urge you to contribute material. We'll have enough hassle just getting meeting dates and subjects correct let alone creating good material. YOU are that good material. How are you doing with your computer, your software, your printer, your programming. Articles, or just pieces of articles, can be mailed to any of the above clubs. Or they can be turned in at meetings.

I wish to personally thank Babbage's Software at Market Square, Games and Gadgets at Northlake Mall, Electronic's Boutique at Lenox Square, and Ampex Systems at 5344 Jimmy Carter Blvd in Norcross for distributing our newsletters these past several months - I sincerely hope they will continue to help with distribution of our new combined newsletters in the future - thank you!

We will also continue to share newsletters with our many friends in user groups throughout the United States. We have much to learn from them and we in Atlanta have much to share with them.

REMEMBER - the key word for 1992 and the future of us all is PARTICIPATE.

- Gene Smith

My Last Commodore Column

by Dallas Benny

I'm lying on the floor in my living room, writing this, my last Commodore column, on an acquaintance's IBM Model 25. On my right are 8088 parts which I've been trying to assemble into a working semi-computer (sorry-- it doesn't make the grade as a real computer. Never did) The Model 25 barely qualifies, handicapped as it is by lack of a hard drive and floppies that hold only 720K. In front of me is my friend Margaux's Mac Plus, another obsolete model. In the corner is a Toshiba MS-DOS laptop with a bad battery, which belongs to the same person who owns the Model 25. In my bedroom is my Tandy Model 100 laptop, my SX-64, and my desk model C-64.

I live in a house full of obsolete computers.

In 1986 or so I was on the cusp, ready to buy a new computer, but undecided whether to go IBM, Macintosh, Amiga, or C-128. I had more ideas for articles about home computing than I could fit in any five newsletters, and I was publishing prolifically. Five years later, I'm still trying to decide on a computer, although I have managed to drop the C-128 from consideration, and (reluctantly) the Amiga as well. That leaves Apple and PC. I teeter on the brink, unable to bring myself to decide on a machine and a standard. I like the idea of the Macintosh, but using one makes me crazy. I want to stomp the mouse and banish the user interface to some distant Lovecraftian dimension. I like using the IBM, but the thought of caving in to the Big Blue standard makes me quite literally ill. And all my ideas for articles have dried up.

I'm not sure what computer I'll end up with. Probably, eventually, both a Macintosh and a PC. I will make that decision with regret, for the computer that intrigued me was the Amiga, and at some level, I still want one. It will compute circles around a 486, and probably a 986, should one ever come along. But few people in the business community are using Amigas. The world has gone MS-DOS, with the Macintosh a distant second; Apple and IBM are working towards a new operating system which will make the PC and the Mac essentially one machine.

And so I find myself slouching inexorably toward the future.

Computing used to be fun, damn it. In 1981, when I bought my VIC-20, Jack Tramiel seemed committed to putting a computer into every household, and likely to manage it. Machines for recreational computing were as powerful (and sometimes more powerful) than business machines, and had the advantages of graphics and sound capabilities that the business models lacked. As computers-- as all-purpose machines, which is what computers should be-- the home models actually surpassed the business machines. The future of computing promised wonderful all-around machines-- powerful machines.

But sometime around 1983 or 1984, the computing world went Jobs instead of Wozniak. IBM announced its kludge, a computer that was deliberately crippled, a computer that shot computing in the foot, and other computer companies abandoned the hobbyists and rushed to kiss up to the business world. Apple debuted the stillborn Lisa, and then the Macintosh, and Commodore, split between the Tramiel loyalists and those who would make business computers, hesitated, finally introducing the Amiga and the C-128 and a host of IBM kludge clones almost simultaneously.

Computing has failed to materialize into what it should have been, and I grieve for what might have been. If Commodore had released the C-128 and waited a year before introducing the Amiga, I would have both machines today, or, more likely, an even more powerful machine that would have replaced the computer. Their simultaneous release effectively paralyzed me-- and I wonder how many other hobbyists.

Something exciting, a revolution of promise, died in the mid 1980s. And so I sit here, writing, on an obsolete computer, my last Commodore column.