

A Buyer's Guide To Modems

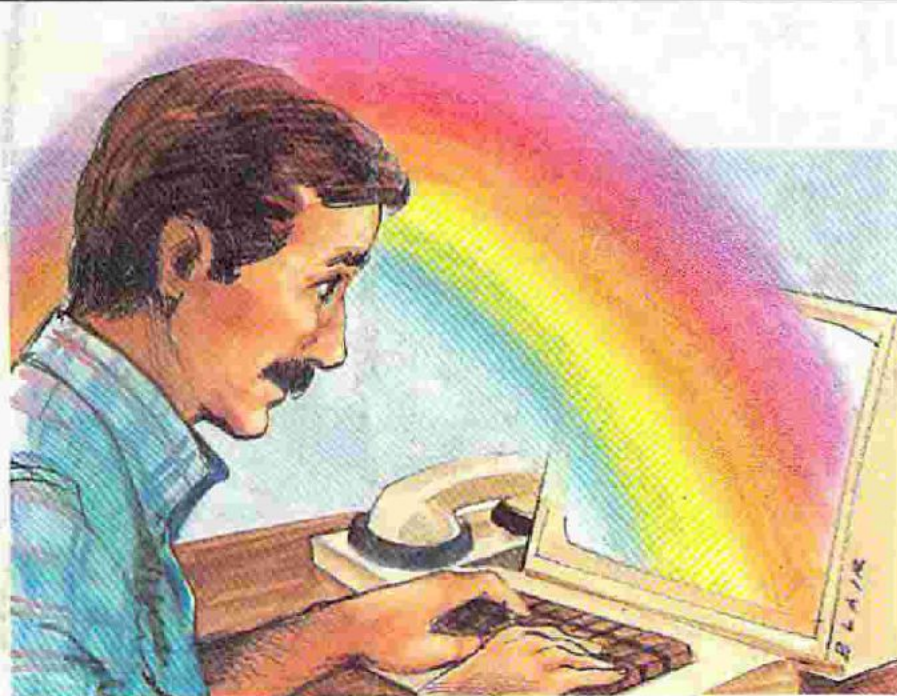
COMPUTE!'s GAZETTE™

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For Owners And Users Of **Commodore VIC-20™** And **64™** Personal Computers



C/G Term

Talk to other VIC and 64 users with the Color/Graphics Terminal program, the first in a series of integrated telecommunications software. Designed especially for ease of use.

Horizons:64

How does the new Plus/4 stand up to the 64? A revealing look at Commodore's new computer.



Also In This Issue:

Function Key

Machine Language
For Beginners:
A VIC/64 Assembler

Programming Sound
And Graphics With
The Super Expander 64

Plus an expanded
reviews column

Bulletin Board Fever

A look at the growth of telecommunications networks geared to Commodore owners.

Disk Auto Load For The 64

A handy utility that automatically loads and runs your BASIC or machine language programs.



Bagdad

Stay on your magic carpet and fend off the evil genies. Put them back in their bottles, but don't let them escape. A challenging arcade-style game for the VIC and 64.

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*=General, V=VIC-20, 64=Commodore 64.

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COMPUTING for families

A Look At New Books From "Reggie" D'Ignazio

Fred D'Ignazio, Associate Editor

A Peek In The Mirror

I'm a magazine columnist. That means that every month I get the opportunity to climb up a mountain, grab a bullhorn, and harangue thousands of GAZETTE readers.

Some months I take a look at new products that have caught my fancy. Other months I tell you about all the foolishness that goes on around my house, with our kids and computers. And some months I get philosophical, and spin off ideas and opinions I hope will stimulate and provoke you.

Until a couple weeks ago, when I got up and made my speech to you each month I never thought about how I must look to you. Then I got a letter from Dallas Denny of Nashville, Tennessee. Dallas enclosed the June 1984 issue of the *Nashville Commodore Users Group (NCUG) Magazine*. On page 5 was a piece by Dallas entitled, "On the Road with Reggie D'Ignazio." The title of the piece comes from my column in *COMPUTE!* magazine entitled, "On the Road with Fred D'Ignazio." And the piece parodies my columns in various *COMPUTE!* publications. I'd like to share it with you here:

On the Road with Reggie D'Ignazio

There is a place in my house where you or I can go zooming into the sky like a jet fighter pilot with a fine mustache, or feed peanuts to the elephants at the zoo, or figure out our budget for Christmas presents for Aunt Patsy and Uncle Roger, or play tic-tac-toe with someone who lives in a cloud. It is a magical, exciting place. It does not have fancy curtains or decorations, or even a rug on the floor, but in it my neighbor's children have killed nasty green aliens from space, and in it they have made friends with men in red-and-white-striped balloons. It is a place where there is a

television screen, but where television never comes. It is a place which is filled with wonderful sights and sounds.

The place that I am talking about has a lot of outlets to plug things into. You can plug things into slots in the floor or the wall, or dangle them from the lightbulbs on the ceilings. It has a desk with lots of interesting things: there are pencils without erasers and pens without caps, staples, rulers, ink, paper clips, rubber bands, razor blades, harmonicas, matchbooks from faraway places, batteries, note pads, stamps, out-of-date prescriptions, envelopes, guitar picks, pocketknives, screws, rolls of tape, and expired identification cards.

On the desk in my place sits a computer. It is not a particularly big computer, or a particularly tiny computer; it is just a computer. But my computer is a ticket on Lufthansa Airlines. It is a letter from my grandmother. It is a vacation trip to Disneyland. My computer is a lifetime subscription to National Geographic Magazine. It is a paper cup telephone that connects me with my friends. It is a notebook on which I can scribble my thoughts. It is dinner for two at Andre's. It is a reunion with an old friend, it is a coloring book, it is a safari to Africa.

There are places with computers like mine all over America, all over the world. Magic places. And ... who knows? Maybe there are similar places on Betelgeuse, Sirius, or Proxima Centauri. If there are, do you think we could arrange a software exchange?

When I read Reggie's "column," I laughed and winced—at the same time. Do I really sound like Reggie to you readers out there?

I would welcome hearing more from Reggie and from any other "Fred D'Ignazio" clones and lookalikes that you can invent. In the future, I

plan to publish the best "columns" I receive. Then I'll ask you if you can tell the difference between the real Fred D'Ignazio and his artful imposters. I have the embarrassing suspicion that separating Freddie and Reggie D'Ignazio will not be that easy.

A Potpourri Of Books

Every month I receive dozens of books about computers, robots, and high technology. I read through the ones that look like they would interest me. I'd like to share the best of these with you.

I've grouped the books by topic. First, *introductory books*. There are thousands of these on the market. One of the most current and most readable is George Beekman's *The Commodore 64 Home Companion* (Datamost, 1984, \$19.95, 359 pages, index, appendices).

Unlike many so-called "beginner's" manuals, Beekman's book is truly accessible, attractive, and *inviting*—for the entire family. It's a great alternative to a user's manual. It should appeal to both the young and old non-technical members of the family.

Also, the book is comprehensive. It begins by introducing you to the applications home computers can perform. Then it takes you, step by step, into buying software and hardware, setting up a system on your own, programming, and dealing with peripherals like modems and printers. The book ends up with a solid index, a list of user groups, and a handy pull-out summary card with BASIC commands, how to LOAD and RUN a program, how to SAVE a program, how to view the disk directory, how to format a disk, how to control the screen, and how to use a modem.

The second introductory book I'd like to recommend is *Computer FUNDamentals*, by Barbara Kurshan and Nancy Healy (Reston, 1984, \$16.95, 208 pages oversized).

Computer FUNDamentals is a big activity book, equally suitable for families and schools. Each chapter begins with a brief look at such topics as computer history, programming, and computer applications. Most of each chapter, however, consists of activities, and *many of the activities don't require a computer*. For example, you can assemble your own computer out of an egg carton and write programs for it. Or you can create a junk robot out of shoe boxes, bits of tin foil, and markers. There are dozens of activities. All are attractive and easy to do, and they all teach some aspect of using computers. At the end of the book is a "keys and answers" section that gives the solutions to computer problems in the book.

Computer FUNDamentals makes an excellent

introduction to the broader, more practical aspects of "computer literacy" for children ages 8 to 13.

As a companion to *FUNDamentals*, I would recommend *The Beginner's Computer Dictionary* by Elizabeth S. Wall and Alexander C. Wall (Avon/Camelot, 1984, \$2.25, 80 pages, paperback). This is a straightforward reference book and complete guide to computer terms for children grades 4 and up.

For younger children, I'd recommend *The Computer Alphabet Book* by Elizabeth S. Wall (Avon/Camelot, 1984, \$2.25, unpagged).

This is a sprightly little book designed to be used by beginning readers in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade, and to be read by parents to younger children. When you browse through the book, you see that on the left side you have a big letter of the alphabet, followed by a computer term and a brief explanation. On the right side (on the facing page) is a cartoon of a silly, Snoopy-like dog learning about computers.

This book has a laudable, secondary purpose. As parents read it to their children, they may also be acquiring a painless dose of computer literacy themselves, including information about the computer's memory, programming languages, computer parts, computer applications, and fundamentals about how people actually use computers. If you find other computer manuals too scary and technical, then this is the book for you.

A companion package to Wall's *Alphabet Book*, or a possible alternative, is a book/software package, *Qwerty's Alphabet Adventure* by Shadow Lawn Press (Hayden, 1984, \$19.95, 4-color unpagged book, Commodore 64 diskette).

Qwerty is a cute little caterpillar who takes your child on a journey through the letters of the alphabet. The pictures on the computer screen are extremely simple, but the Qwerty character and the illustrations in the Qwerty book compare favorably with other alphabet books for children.

I like Elizabeth Wall's *Alphabet Book* and *Qwerty's Adventure* because picturebooks, stories, and cartoon characters are a familiar and comfortable way for young children and their parents to begin learning about computers. In addition, the Qwerty package combines storytelling and books with a hands-on introduction to the computer keyboard.

Puzzles And Adventures

Computers can act like workhorses and number crunchers, but they can also stimulate our imagination, and help strengthen our thinking skills. I welcome any books and programs that open up this dimension of computers to new users—especially children.