A CURSORY GLANCE

Here is the second issue of CURSOR(tm) – the cassette magazine of programs for your Commodore PET. We are a little late with CURSOR #2, mainly due to logistical problems and the normal growing pains of a new enterprise. The response to CURSOR #1 has been great! We know that there is plenty of room left for improvement, especially in terms of getting a wider range of programs published. But people are pleased with the value we provide and the good service we give. Yes, we have had a few tapes returned, (which we have promptly replaced in each case). But after quite a bit of work with our consultants, we have developed a very reliable mass duplication facility. We have also switched to a very high quality tape. (After running drop-out tests on several brands, I can assure you that there is a big difference).

We've said it before, and we will say it again: CURSOR(tm) is not affiliated in any way with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. They manufacture the fine PET computer, and PET is their trademark. We publish software for you to enjoy with your PET, and distribute it as a monthly cassette magazine. We are specialized, high-volume and low-markup. We don't think you will find a better value for your software dollar anywhere else! Incidentally, if you have written PET programs that you'd like to sell on a "first publication" basis, please drop us a note. We promise to review your programs promptly, we pay well, and we won't rip you off. We will require that you sign a statement that the work is original, since there is no way that we can review all of the programs that are sold by others, and we do not want to publish anything that belongs to some other publisher.

HACKER HINTS

If you type something that you want the PET to ignore, press [SHIFT], hold it down, and then press [RETURN]. The effect: the last line you typed is "thrown on the floor". This is useful when you are editing something and things get messed-up (such as inside quote marks...).

If you type the first letter of most PET commands, then the second letter shifted, then [RETURN], it acts as though you had typed the entire comamnd. I like to use this "shorthand" for LIST since that is a command that is so frequently used.During program development, I always like to save two (or even three) copies of a program. There are two tricks and only your own taste will determine which you prefer.

The first trick is to type multiple commands on the same line, with a colon between them, e.g. SAVE "AZ.1":SAVE"AZ.1" [RETURN]. Now, go get a beer (or a cup of herb tea) and watch the evening news while your PET faithfully records two copies of your program, one after the other.

The other way is slightly more complicated: type SAVE "AZ.1", then [RETURN]. After it records the first copy, it will say READY. Now, use the cursor control keys to move the cursor up four lines to where your original command still appears on the screen. Press [RETURN], and bingo! the PET goes off and does what you told it to do.

CURSOR 2 HAS THESE PROGRAMS	
COVER	Our "Front Cover". After you have enjoyed looking at the graphic design on the cover, press the [SPACE] key to read the Table of Contents.
RACE	A 1 or 2 person auto race game that will keep you busy for a while. You can control the number of players, the number of obstacles or "pylons" that will appear in the track, and the speed of your car.
ZAP	You control a rather strange missile, and try to hit targets that appear on the screen. Addictive.
EST	The program presents various lengths of bars and sizes of rectangles so you can estimate length and area in metric units. It's harder than you might think...
GUESS	A number guessing game where you try to trap a number the computer selects.
MAD	You supply the words to "fill in the blanks" to one of five crazy stories.

MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS

COVER... You can change the characters that are displayed by modifying the DATA statement at line 7, which is the list of graphic characters from which it selects to produce the next block. These blocks will be reverse video half of the time (see line 2150). You may also want to tinker with line 2200, which sets the limits on how long the programs waits before displaying the next block of characters. The variable ZZ controls the delay, which currently ranges from 20 to 170.

RACE... You will probably want to use a speed of 100 unless your reflexes are _really_ slow. About 8 pylons makes for a fun game. There is a clock for each player, the one on the right is for the player who uses the numeric pad. Beside each clock is the symbol for that players auto. Note that your clock keeps on ticking when you stop your car. Authors: Glen Fisher and Ken Kasmar.

ZAP... You control a missile, and try to hit targets. Each one you hit makes your missile get bigger. After you've been able to hit a few, it gets to be difficult to just avoid crashing into your own tail. After six crashes, you start a new game, and get a report on how well you performed. Author: Tom Marazita.

EST... EST is an estimation excercise that will make you flex your metric muscles a little bit. You get to guess the length of line segments, or the area of rectangles. Since it is a game of estimation, you are allowed plus or minus 1.25 cm. for length, and plus or minus 1.0 cm. one each side of a rectangle. If you are a purist, you can calibrate the program for the characteristics of your PET's video. Measure the length of 39 horizontal shaded squares, then modify line 470. Measure the length of 23 vertical squares, then modify the correction factor in line 475. For example, on our PET, 39 horizontal squares measured 15.8 cm. Don't bother with calibration unless you really, really care whether the program lies a little, such as claiming a line segment is 12.8 cm. when it is really 12.1 cm. Author: Glen Fisher.

GUESS... This is really the game sometimes called "Trap", where you try to trap the secret number that the program selects. Hint: try to eliminate as many numbers as possible at each guess. If you guess the number in five tries, you are good! Author: Glen Fisher

MAD... You fill in the blanks for one of five stories or other weird text items. You are asked for "parts of speech". Here is a quick refresher if you have forgotten...VERB - an action word (HIT, CARESS, RUN); NOUN - name of a person, place or thing (COMPUTER, SKY, ROCK, WOMAN); ADJECTIVE - modifies (get this) verbs, adjectives, adverbs, a preposition, phrases, clauses or even a sentence (QUICKLY, HORRIBLY, VERY, UNUSUALLY, SLOWLY). I've used a similar program to demonstrate large timesharing computers to school children and found that they loved it. Author: Glen Fisher.

It's easy to add your own stories or to change ours. The variable NS is the number of stories (see line 150). The stories are stored in DATA statements at line 10065. Each story begins with the graphic character "Q" (a shifted Q). This character must also be at the end of the last story. A backslash "\" means "go to the next line on the screen". Two backslashes will give you a blank line. The dictionary of substitution words begins at line 10,000. For example, when MAD finds a %A in the text of a story, it has you provide an adverb. Here is the dictionary.

%A ADVERB	%E EXCLAMATION	%%U NUMBER
%B PART OF YOUR BODY	%J ADJECTIVE	%V VERB
%C DISASTER	%N NOUN	%Y ANIMAL
%D DISEASE	%P PLURAL NOUN	%Z A PERSON'S NAME

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

We want to provide you with high quality, but inexpensive software for your PET. We think that when software is priced right, people won't rip it off by making copies for other folks. I don't expect to become a millionaire from CURSOR, but I am not doing it for my health or as a hobby either. So, please let your friends know about the magazine, show it off at your club, meetings, etc., etc., but please don't make copies for other people! You are the ones that will lose in the long run if software publishers, such as CURSOR, are not able to continue to produce programs at a reasonable cost.

ABOUT YOUR CURSOR CASSETTE TAPE

Please clean the head of your PET tape recorder, and demagnetize it, if you haven't done so in the last month or so of use. Next, put our tape in, and "exercise the tape by using fast forward" to go clear to the other end of the tape, then "rewind" it back to the beginning. (Tapes can bind slightly after being mailed). If you do get a "load error", or get strange results when running the program, (such as "syntax error"), first, try loading the tape a second or third time. Should it still not work, please mail us the cassette with a note telling what problems you had and we will promptly replace your cassette.