A CURSORY GLANCE

Several CURSOR subscribers sent information about devices that may help our friend who had surgery for throat cancer. We have forwarded the information, and want to say "Thanks" to those of you who took time to dig out the information.

Commodore appears to be alive and well! The new PET with the "real" keyboard has been shipped over a month earlier than promised. The new keyboard has a fairly decent "feel", although it certainly doesn't compare with an IBM Selectric! The RETURN key seems small (it is not as big as the Shift keys), but overall I like the layout of the keyboard. The keycaps have molded-in letters, so that they wont wear off. On the model that I used, the graphic symbols are on the front of the keys. There will also be a business model that won't have the graphic symbols shown on the keys. The machine language monitor is now in ROM, so that you don't have to load it in from cassette. The new machines also have a new set of ROMs, and it looks like most of the "bugs" in Basic have been fixed.

And now for the bad news: Commodore decided to make a major change where you Poke the Pet into upper and lower case mode (POKE 59468,14): the new ROMs give you unshifted lower case and shifted upper case (as you know, with the older machines it works the opposite way). We haven't had enough time to find many other things, but we do know that some of the changes will affect at least some of our programs. By the next issue of CURSOR, we hope to have much more complete information for you. (Some of the changes will cause problems for all programs that do any fancy stuff with the Pet operating system.) Commodore plans to provide "retrofit" Roms sets for the old 8K Pets that will replace the Basic and operating system, but probably won't change the character generating chip.

The new Pet has a redesigned board inside, with a number of changes. For example, the memory expansion port no longer comes out to an edge connector. Instead, there is a different style of connector inside that looks similar to the connectors that Heath is using in their H8 computer. (With the new board, you can have 32K of memory onboard without a memory expansion board. If you buy a 16K version, you can't expand to 32K by just adding a few chips. Instead, you take out all the 8k chips used for the 16K machine, and replace them with 16K chips used in the 32K version!)

Maybe, just maybe, Commodore may still be able to capitalize on what is basically a very well-designed computer. There are two remaining pieces: disks and printers. The Commodore disk has very nice features, and stores about twice as much data as the Radio Shack disk. The latest word on printers is quite hopeful: Commodore is using a tried and true printer mechanism from Japan that will provide good quality print and will support the Commodore graphics! If they can get these products out the door in quantity, we will see some real competition between Commodore, Apple, and Radio Shack (although I certainly won't discount Atari and Texas Instruments...).

OSBORNE ASSOCIATES - "SOME COMMON BASIC PROGRAMS"

One of the best values in Pet software is the tape and book from Osborne called Some Common Basic Programs. There is not a single game or amusement on the tape, just nitty gritty useful programs that are well documented in the book. Each program name is the page number of the book where you will find a listing and an explanation of how the program works. The tape and books are available from your local dealer, or from Osborne Associates, Inc., 630 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94710 USA.

CURSOR 8 HAS THESE PROGRAMS: (Program names ending with "!" use CB2 sound)	
COVER	The Pet weaves patterns on the screen. By Glen Fisher.
REVERS!	The game of Reversi: you against the Pet, or another player. By Glen Fisher.
DBOOK	An easy-to-use date book for birthdays, etc. By Glen Fisher.
SPACE!	Fly your Pet into deep space as you pursue the enemy. By Greg Erker.
MAZE	You must find all the hidden gold in the maze. By Howard Arrington.
ADD	Great addition drill that makes the magic of "carrying" clear. By Donald Ross.
X	A "skeleton" of routines to use when you submit programs to Cursor.

MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS

Program names that end with the exclamation mark "!" use the Pet's CB2 sound on pins 12 and M of the user port. See CURSOR 3 for a diagram of how to hook up sound. (We like sound, and design many of our programs to use it. You won't get the full effect of our programs without sound!) If you somehow hit the [STOP] key when sound is generated, you can stop the sound by typing "POKE 59467,0".

REVERS!... Reversi is a board game that has been popular in recent years under the name of "Othello". For an excellent reference, see the Mathematical Games column by Martin Gardner in the April, 1960 Scientific American. In this version, you are able to play against the Pet, or another player. You are asked if you want sound. (If you want sound, you'll need to attach a small amplifier to your Pet. See the diagram in Notes for CURSOR 3. Reversi is a game that is quite easy to play, but is hard to describe! Each player gets to place one "counter" (as in checkers), on the board in turn. You move your piece by using the numeric pad (8 is up, 2 is down, 4 is left, and 6 is right). When you want to put the counter on the board, press [RETURN]. If you place it at an illegal position, the Pet will refuse the move. Basically, you have to put the counter beside one of the opposite color, where you also have a counter at the opposite end of the row. When you do so, you "capture" all of the intervening pieces (at least until the Pet decides to capture them back). If you can't make a legal move, then press [SHIFT] and [RETURN] at the same time. The Pet does not play a brilliant game, but it isn't all that easy to beat either!

DBOOK... This is a simple, special purpose database program that will help you create, sort, list and save a file of peoples names and important occasions, such as birthdays and anniversaries. There are 9 commands, most of which are self explanatory.

ADD   Used to enter or add information. You are prompted for each item. For the "OCCASION", there are three built-in options, which are displayed if you type a question mark at that prompt. If you enter the codes for birthday (1) or anniversary (2), the information is stored as a code, and uses very little space. However, you can also enter some other occassion with the code of (3), and then you will be prompted for a description of that event. To return to the Command level, type a [RETURN] to the "NAME:" prompt.

CLEAR Does just that: it clears all names from memory.

DUMP   Shows you all the information, in the actual order that they are stored in the Pet. Also tells you the id number for each name, which can be helpful when editing.

EDIT   Slightly misleading, since what you can do is replace an entry, or delete it. Edit will ask "CHANGE?", at which time you should type a question mark to learn the options available. ([Y]=yes, edit this person; [N]=no, go on to next person; [Q]=quit editing; [D]=discard this entry; entering a number will take you to that persons entry for editing).

LIST   After you have sorted the list, you can list it. Note that in the sort you can be selective about which entries you want to see.

LOAD   Once you have saved a file (see SAVE below), you can bring it back into the Pet with the LOAD command. If you can't remember the filename, then type a question mark when asked for the name. If you don't want to load a file after all, press [RETURN] when asked for the filename.

QUIT   Guess what, this command says "I want to quit". If you have entered names, but haven't yet saved them, you will get one warning.

SAVE   This command saves the data that you have entered with the add command onto tape.

SORT   You can sort by date or by name. In both cases you are asked for beginning and ending ranges. If you press [RETURN], it defaults to everything. However, if you only want dates in March and April, you can indicate that! Note that the LIST command only displays the results of a SORT. So, if you sort on names from A to G, list will not show you anyone whose name starts with H or beyond in the alphabet.

SPACE!... You pilot a space ship, using the numeric pad. Pressing the [SHIFT] key fires the laser. For the sound effects, you'll need to use a small amplifier as described in CURSOR 3 (Ground is pin 12, sound is pin M).

MAZE... The Pet draws a maze, then hides gold. You have to find the gold. (There is just one small difficulty: after the gold is hidden, the maze disappears from view. You have to feel your way around the screen...)

ADD... This program takes the mystery out of the "carry" problem in addition. If you teach, or have young childern, this will be a useful addition (no pun intended) to your program library.

X.... This is what we use when we start to write a program for CURSOR. It includes the "standard" stuff that we always want to have in a program. If you are submitting programs to us, we'd like to encourage you to use this skeleton". Note that "X" is not a program, so don't try to Run it. It is just an easy way to start a program with the "CURSOR stuff" already in it.