

The Return of the Commodore 64?

It holds the Guinness World record for best-selling single computer model of all time, so who had a Commodore 64?



My family had one when I was growing up, and I enjoyed playing hours of games on it. I remember how novel it was that we could create a sign, card, or banner on the computer and then print it out – complete with pixel-riddled graphics and what-do-you-call those side strips on the paper with the holes in them that you tear off and either discard or twist them together and make art out of them. My uncle had a subscription to Loadstar, which was a Commodore club of sorts – he would get magazines and new games monthly in the mail. I used to love some of those Loadstar games, unfortunately, I can't find them to play on emulators now. I really enjoyed an Activision game called Toy Bizarre, and my all time favorite game for the Commodore 64 was Maniac Mansion – I was addicted to it until I won it, and then I had to go back and win it with all the different character combinations. They did make a version of Maniac Mansion for the original Nintendo, but I was biased toward my Commodore version. I always thought that game would make a great movie (think Clue), and when I was younger, I tried to write the game into a novel but never finished it.

So what's got me thinking back to the 80's days of the Commodore today? I came across an article on cnn.com about how advance orders are being taken for the resurrection of the

Commodore here in 2011. It's being made to look just like the Commodores of the 80's, but it will have today's computer capacities since the '64' in Commodore 64 referred to the unit having 64 Kilobytes of memory – about the equivalent of one long email, according to the article. If you'd like to read the article, [click here](#).

Saturday In The Sticks

WOW! My first Saturday off in at least 2 months (I'm not counting the three weeks I was pretty well incapacitated... no fun!). Gloomy, wet, cold day that it was there were moments of enjoyment. Decided to tag along with Mom and my oldest niece to grocery shop and use my gift card to pick up a certain DVD that came out yesterday. As we parked at the grocery, I noticed a vehicle with a very recognizable license plate holder. I told Shelb "Guess who's here?" Always fun to run into your best friends (all 6 of them).

Tonight, Shelby and I went to see the musical version of the Adam Sandler/Drew Barrymore flick *The Wedding Singer*. Although the cast and crew were phenomenal, I would definitely not have taken any of my nieces and nephews under the age of 15. I'm sure that the innuendo would have flown over their head but some of the language would be cause for concern.

The show was great fun and a great transport back to the age of excess with catch phrases, pop culture references of 1985, and the CLAPPER!!! YOU HAVE TO LOVE THE CLAPPER! And who doesn't love seeing the fake Rainbow Brite (Played by another one of my nieces... Alyssa Davis... and I thought she was only 7), Joan Jett, Cyndi Lauper, Brooke Shields, Punky Brewster, and I

did spy a nerd who had the orange and black striped shirt and rainbow suspenders of a certain Orkan. Plus, a Princess Leia wannabe complete with a cinnabun hairdo. I wonder if the script called for the Princess Leia character; knowing the actress, she probably had some input.

The leads and ensemble were all wonderful but there were several standout scene-stealing cameos particularly the always engaging Tiff who brought the house down as Linda, Robbie's fiancée. Another pure delight was a fellow [tangenteer](#) who was ALMOST unrecognizable as Robbie's grandma. The rap she performed with the flamboyant George was a hoot! If I've said it one, I've said it a million times... lots of times a show is not all about the leads. Give a cameo or supporting role to the right thespian and they will steal the show. It just so happened that this show had more than one great cameo role ☐

I stopped at the entrance after the show long enough to congratulate Carol and say hi to Megan. My leg was getting tired and I did not want to fight the mob but the show was a TOTALLY TUBULAR!

As an added bonus, I even get NEXT Saturday off! Not going to complain since I will have a Saturday and Sunday off (provided that the store I work in continues to recognize the resurrection of our Savior).

Totally 80's!

I haven't done one of my board game reviews in awhile, so I thought I'd write about a little treasure we found at the Goodwill tonight and actually had time to play – Totally 80's Trivial Pursuit. Since my husband and I were both children in the 80's, we thought we'd enjoy this version of the popular

trivia game – even though I threatened to kick some butt since between the two of us, I’m the one who’s chosen to fill her head with useless knowledge (most of which I’ve forgotten over the years anyway!), but what I’m trying to say is that I usually win the trivia games in our family. So we start to play the game, and the pawns are in the shapes of various pop culture staples in the 80’s. There is a Care Bear, a computer, a Trapper Keeper, and a CD – cute! And I loved how the pie pieces are stored in the bases of the pawns when players earn them! My only complaint is that there definitely should have been more pawns – can’t believe there wasn’t even a Rubik’s Cube pawn?!? How about some Jelly Shoes? A banana clip? Cabbage Patch Kid? Atari console? The list could go on and on... Here are the ones they **did** include:



But anyway, my husband did end up beating me, but I have two excuses. 1. The kids came down in the middle of the game and kept trying to play with the pawns which was distracting and I lost my focus. 2. My husband is older than me, and therefore he remembers more of the '80's – haha! Ouch! Ok, so I’m a little bit of a sore loser – rematch tonight?

(I guess this didn't end up being much of a review. It's a Trivial Pursuit game, nothing new there. But if you were around during the 80's and enjoy getting quizzed about the decade of excess, you're in for some fun!)

Blast From The Past

Being a child of the '80's, I definitely remember the California Raisins – they were 3D-ish Claymation figures of singing and dancing raisins, mostly famous for their rendition of “I Heard It Through The Grapevine”. Thinking about this as an adult has me wondering if this was a successful ad campaign. I guess successful is not quite the word I'm looking for... I mean, of course it was ultra-successful in a sense; everyone in the '80's knew about the California Raisins, but did they really make kids want to eat more raisins? Later they began to do commercials for Post's Raisin Bran (Post only chooses the plumpest, juiciest raisins!), so maybe they helped to sell more boxes of cereal.

In the '80's, the California Raisins were celebrities and they had their own line of products that ran the marketing gamut: lunch boxes, stuffed toys, tv specials, t-shirts, Happy Meal toys, you name it. This is precisely the reason why I came across a California Raisin figure the other day at the thrift store. I had stopped in to get myself a few more little Halloween figurines for my front hall shelves (had an empty shelf after finally packing away the figurines of the bears playing baseball after the Chicago Cubs were eliminated from MLB's post-season – that is ALL I'm going to say about THAT!), and at this particular thrift store, you get a free Happy Meal-type toy with every \$2 spent. My husband and I did just spend 5 hours gutting out the girls' room and donating most of their toys last week, but I couldn't resist picking out a toy for my favorite little shopping companion – my 3-year-old daughter Disney. So anyway, we were pressed for time, and I found the California Raisin, so I grabbed him and gave him to Disney, promising her we would watch a movie of her raisin

dancing and singing on the computer when we got home. True to my word, I loaded up youtube and found some great clips of California Raisins, which went over really well with Disney. She giggled and covered her mouth, and then she put her raisin on the computer to "watch" the other dancing raisins. He's been a presence in our household since last week, and of course her little brother likes him too. He is small enough so that I can put him in our "emergency" car box (full of toys, snacks, band-aids, etc) when the kids tire of him in the house (the raisin, not the little brother!). He even makes a great bathtub toy! So anyway, while resurrecting the California Raisins last week, I came across this cute little commercial that I hadn't thought about in the 20 years since it was made. Enjoy this blast from the past!

This Gringo Needs Help

From dictionary.com:

gringo [gring-goh] –noun, plural -gos. Usually Disparaging. (in Latin America or Spain) a foreigner, esp. one of U.S. or British descent.

Sorry – didn't mean to be disparaging, but I am of U.S. descent and I need help.

This post is an appeal to country music fans to please help me figure out the details of a country song I want. I don't know the name of it or who sings it. It's an older song – maybe from the 1980's or '90's... I wouldn't even rule out the '70's. Just about the only lyrics I can remember are "...be your little gringo..." or something like that. The song is uptempo and sung by a male. If you can get me the name and artist of the song I'm looking for, you'll win a prize. Something tells me Carol might know this... or my dad... WHAT IS THIS SONG?

Wanna Feel Old?

Of course you do, who doesn't? Besides, it's Friday night, and you're at home reading my blog! ☐ I guess you could be reading this at a later time... But anyway, if you're around my age or older, then you remember [Molly Ringwald](#), a popular actress in the 1980's from many teen-themed movies such as [Pretty in Pink](#), [Sixteen Candles](#), and the iconic [The Breakfast](#)

[Club](#). If you were a fan of these movies as a teen or young adult yourself, you will probably feel old when I tell you that Molly Ringwald is playing a *grandmother* in her next role. That's right – grandma. A woman whose kid has a kid. Sigh. While we're on the subject of feeling old, I read an article the other day that had some interesting facts about the lives of students entering college this fall. Each August for the past 11 years, Beloit College in Beloit, Wis., has released the Beloit College Mindset List. It provides a look at the cultural touchstones that shape the lives of students entering college. For these students, Sammy Davis Jr., Jim Henson, Ryan White, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Freddy Krueger have always been dead. Here is some food for thought with the rest of the list:

1. Harry Potter could be a classmate, playing on their Quidditch team.
2. Since they were in diapers, karaoke machines have been annoying people at parties.
3. They have always been looking for Carmen Sandiego.
4. GPS satellite navigation systems have always been available.
5. Coke and Pepsi have always used recycled plastic bottles.
6. Shampoo and conditioner have always been available in the same bottle.
7. Gas stations have never fixed flats, but most serve cappuccino.
8. Their parents may have dropped them in shock when they heard George Bush announce "tax revenue increases."
9. Electronic filing of tax returns has always been an option.
10. Girls in head scarves have always been part of the school fashion scene.
11. All have had a relative—or known about a friend's relative—who died comfortably at home with Hospice.
12. As a precursor to "whatever," they have recognized that

some people “just don’t get it.”

13. Universal Studios has always offered an alternative to Mickey in Orlando.
14. Grandma has always had wheels on her walker.
15. *Martha Stewart Living* has always been setting the style.
16. Haagen-Dazs ice cream has always come in quarts.
17. Club Med resorts have always been places to take the whole family.
18. WWW has never stood for World Wide Wrestling.
19. Films have never been X rated, only NC-17.
20. The Warsaw Pact is as hazy for them as the League of Nations was for their parents.
21. Students have always been “Rocking the Vote.”
22. Clarence Thomas has always sat on the Supreme Court.
23. Schools have always been concerned about multiculturalism.
24. We have always known that *“All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.”*
25. There have always been gay rabbis.
26. Wayne Newton has never had a mustache.
27. College grads have always been able to Teach for America.
28. IBM has never made typewriters.
29. Roseanne Barr has never been invited to sing the National Anthem again.
30. McDonald’s and Burger King have always used vegetable oil for cooking french fries.
31. They have never been able to color a tree using a raw umber Crayola.
32. There has always been Pearl Jam.
33. The Tonight Show has always been hosted by Jay Leno and started at 11:35 EST.
34. Pee-Wee has never been in his playhouse during the day.
35. They never tasted Benefit Cereal with psyllium.
36. They may have been given a Nintendo Game Boy to play with in the crib.
37. Authorities have always been building a wall across the

Mexican border.

38. Lenin's name has never been on a major city in Russia.
39. Employers have always been able to do credit checks on employees.
40. Balsamic vinegar has always been available in the U.S.
41. Macaulay Culkin has always been *Home Alone*.
42. Their parents may have watched *The American Gladiators* on TV the day they were born.
43. Personal privacy has always been threatened.
44. Caller ID has always been available on phones.
45. Living wills have always been asked for at hospital check-ins.
46. The Green Bay Packers (almost) always had the same starting quarterback.
47. They never heard an attendant ask "Want me to check under the hood?"
48. Iced tea has always come in cans and bottles.
49. Soft drink refills have always been free.
50. They have never known life without Seinfeld references from a show about "nothing."
51. Windows 3.0 operating system made IBM PCs user-friendly the year they were born.
52. Muscovites have always been able to buy Big Macs.
53. The Royal New Zealand Navy has never been permitted a daily ration of rum.
54. The Hubble Space Telescope has always been eavesdropping on the heavens.
55. 98.6 F or otherwise has always been confirmed in the ear.
56. Michael Milken has always been a philanthropist promoting prostate cancer research.
57. Off-shore oil drilling in the United States has always been prohibited.
58. Radio stations have never been required to present both sides of public issues.
59. There have always been charter schools.
60. Students always had *Goosebumps*.

I hope I didn't depress you, but remember, it's not my list, so blame Beloit College and Molly Ringwald if you feel like an old geezer. Why don't we just forget about the list and toast our recycled bottles of Coke to life experience.

“New” Kids on the Block?

Does everyone remember this boy band from the 80's? I remember them well because being a young preteen girl at the height of their popularity meant that their marketing was pointed directly my way. I went to 3 of their concerts, had my bedroom wallpapered in New Kids posters, and had everything from tapes (for younger readers – that's what we played music on in those days), buttons, t-shirts, books, magazines, and stickers to trading cards, shoelaces, and even a Joey McIntire doll. Yes, it was ridiculous and more than a little embarrassing. But girls will be girls, and the group had a clean-cut, boy band image, so my parents willingly obliged my fanfare.

You may have heard that the band has reunited. Yes, I'm serious, and yes, I'm talking about now, in 2008, when the members of the group are over the age of 30 and some are pushing 40. Why now, you ask? Probably because pop culture has a way of recycling itself. They often resurrect fads decades later when people who were kids at the time of the fad can now enjoy them again as adults (now that they have their own money to spend) and share them with their own kids. They did this with a number of fads from the '80's – My Little Pony, Cabbage Patch Kids, Strawberry Shortcake, Transformers, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and now, The New Kids on the Block. What perplexes me most of all about this whole thing, is that they didn't change the group at all. They are out there,

singing the same songs they sang as teens and early twenty somethings, about dating girls and “Hangin’ Tough”. They are attempting to perform the same dance moves they made popular decades ago, and results are not pretty. I was one of the biggest fans of the group way back when, and now I say they’re terrible. I don’t like the music anymore (it was of a genre they used to call bubblegum pop – and it’s definitely the type of music you grow out of), they sound terrible singing it, the lyrics are ridiculous, if not downright creepy, coming from near-middle-aged men, and the dance moves are horrible. They are actually going to tour this (circus) act come fall.

So why now? Why do we need an updated version of New Kids on the Block? Actually that’s not even right. There’s nothing updated about this group except their ages. Everything else is EXACTLY the same! An updated version would be better musically and probably make a whole lot more sense. There’s what I talked about earlier – the fad revival tactic. I guess that’s why they did it. But I find it amazing that they found enough people who thought this was such a good idea that they made it happen – including the 5 original members of the group. Some have gone on to mildly successful movie or solo music careers. Some have raised families. But how someone got all 5 to agree to resurrect the New Kids on the Block circa 1991 is astounding.

If you don’t believe me about how terrible they are or if you just like to watch train wrecks in action, check this out. Help me figure out who looks more ridiculous – the group or the fans. This video is part one of three, but you’ll only want to see the first part, if that, trust me:

Game Days Past

For some reason, the old game show [“Sale of the Century”](#) from the 1980’s crossed my mind the other day. I enjoyed this show tremendously as a kid, so I looked on youtube to see if I could find any episodes because I don’t really remember what it was all about. They didn’t have any full episodes, but I did see enough bits and pieces to enjoy the nostalgia. And I came across this clip of Simon Cowell’s first tv appearance as a contestant on the British version of this show:

Watching vintage game shows on youtube got my husband thinking about the movie [Quiz Show](#), which is about the game show scandal of the late 1950's. It was a time when quiz shows were very popular, and one of the most popular shows of the time called ["Twenty-One"](#) was exposed for being rigged – in other words, the producers would tell the contestants the correct answers, and when to answer correctly or incorrectly to guarantee or fix the outcome of the show. On youtube, we were able to find the actual episode of "Twenty-One" that was chronicled in the movie and where the scandal broke. [Click here](#) to see it – it's in 3 parts, so you can find parts 2 and 3 off to the side where it says 'related videos'. We also watched a "Time and Again" documentary about the scandal, which included interviews with the contestants involved and was very interesting – [click here](#) to see part 1 of 5 of that show; again, the remaining parts can be linked from the right side of youtube. Surprisingly, the movie "Quiz Show" is very true to the real story of the scandal. When watching the episode of "Twenty-One" that started it all, my husband noted that it was very close to how the movie portrayed it. It's been awhile since I've seen the movie, so I will have to see it again because I didn't remember whether it was close or not.

After watching the interesting "Twenty-One" videos, we moved onto the game show ["Press Your Luck"](#) from the 1980's. It's the one where people get spins on a big game board, and they yell, "No Whammys, no whammys, STOP!" A whammy was like a 'lose-your-turn'. When a contestant spun one, a cartoon character (the whammy) would come out and do something different on the tv screen, like a dance or something silly, but it meant no money and the end of the contestant's turn. If you were like me and a kid watching the show when it was on, then you were waiting for people to get the whammys so you could see the little cartoons. For this reason, I would NOT have liked the episodes that aired with a contestant named Michael Larson, an unemployed ice cream truck driver who

memorized the pattern of the board, and spun a whopping 47 times! He won the following prizes:

1. \$104,950 in cash
2. 1 sailboat worth \$1015
3. 1 trip to Kauai worth \$1636
4. 1 trip to the Bahamas worth \$2636

This amount of cash was unheard of for this show, and the host kept making dumb jokes about how the contestant could now *buy* the Bahamas or CBS. After the show, they gave Michael Larson a hard time about collecting his winnings, but in the end, it was found that his memorizing the board's patterns was not cheating. They reconfigured the game show board, of course, but sadly, Michael Larson's story did not have a happy ending. He had some struggles over the years, and ended up dying of throat cancer in 1999. His life during and after the "Press Your Luck" appearances makes for a very interesting story though; perhaps they should make a movie about that – [read it here](#). They pulled those episodes of "Press Your Luck" in syndication, but they have shown them in multiple specials that aired on tv, most notably the game show network. They even invited Larson's brother to compete against the newly configured Press Your Luck whammy board to see if he could beat it, and he could not. Below are Larson's appearances on "Press Your Luck". Note the reactions of his fellow contestants as well as those of the host. A few interesting notes: While waiting to be on the show, Larson met Ed Long, a Baptist preacher booked for his fourth taping. They struck up a conversation. When it was Ed's turn to go on, Michael said to him, "I hope we don't have to face each other on the show." His wish wouldn't come true, as Ed had won his previous game with \$11,516. Watch for Ed on the clip. Also note the host of the show, Peter Tomarken, who was killed in a plane crash in 2006. He was a private pilot who volunteered for an organization that flew low-income patients for medical needs. His airplane had engine trouble, and he and his wife were killed when their plane crashed into the Santa Monica Bay.

Really Quacks Me Up

Well, I'm kinda thinking my blog will be a hodgepodge (?) of just about everything I enjoy. I enjoy a good movie (or even some bad movies). Speaking of bad movies, the guy who created Howard the Duck, Steve Gerber, just passed away. Apparently, the comic book from the 70s was a cult hit. Somehow, Mr. George Lucas came up with the brilliant idea that it would make a box-office hit. The movie came out in 1986. The only relatively recognizable actor in it is Lea Thompson (of Back to the Future fame). I believe ol' George was once again attempting to create a new money making franchise along with the then in-limbo Star Wars saga and the popular Indiana Jones series. Needless to say, Howard the Duck was a miserable flop. It is one of those movies which may be enjoyable with a group of friends who just want to sit around, waste a hour and a half, and laugh at the absurdity. It would also be a great way to relive the culture of the mid-1980s. Big hair, bubble gum pop music, and forgotten actors of the day (whatever became of Lea Thompson?). But, if you want to have a good laugh check out Howard the Duck just to see the duck from outer space rock and roll with Lea Thompson. I think the best part of the movie is the theme song and that is not that great. It sounds like a great movie to watch with your band of theatre chums. Thank you Bryan Times for publishing an article about an otherwise forgettable comic book writer who probably will go down in history for the creation of one of the biggest "Turkeys" or should I say "Ducks" in movie history. I also found out via IMDB.com that Tim Robbins (For comic relief?) also was in it and that no less than 8 actors are credited with playing the title role. Also, may be a good movie for children of all ages to enjoy. 