

# Creative Writer

from Creative Software

Word processor  
for the Commodore 64

## Review by Michael Quigley

Although it's a bit high-priced at \$49.95, **Creative Writer** is an easy-to-use word processor well suited to novices.

It allows full-screen editing with true word wrap, as well as features like 'search' (with or without 'replace'), deletion and copying of any amount of text, and previewing of text before printing. Copy can be flush left, centred or justified, and there are the usual options to control the four margins of the printed page, line spacing, heads, footers and page numbering. Documents can be linked together, and the program can be integrated with two other programs from the same company, **Creative Filer** and **Creative Calc**.

On the negative side, the program is not easily made compatible with other word processors. When formatting disks,

it does not allow input for disk name or ID. The screen colours (black letters on a grey background) can't be changed. Also, you can't make use of any unusual printer features, like expanded or condensed print, as well as underlines, superscripts or subscripts, and double-striking.

In addition to the above faults, **Creative Writer** has two more problems of a somewhat more serious nature. The first is that my printer (a Gemini 10 with Cardco A interface) will not put spaces between paragraphs in the text, nor will it do double, triple, or any other multiple spacing — despite the fact that the preview screen shows the document as it should be printed correctly. After experimenting with a wide variety of inputs and printer dipswitch settings, I wrote to the manufacturer, pointing out that I had never had this problem with several other word processors, including **Speedscript**, **Write Now!**, **Quick Brown Fox** and **Heswriter**.

A second problem relates to the disk's anti-copy protection, in the form of an error on track 2. My copy of the disk also had an error on track 3, which was unfortunate, since four of the program's 'help' files happen to begin on that track!

Some time after I wrote complaining about these two problems, I received a new disk from the manufacturer, with a letter claiming: "The problems you discovered are caused by a disk duplication error. I am sending you a new . . . disk with the error corrected." The new disk proved to have exactly the same faults as the old one. As well, the new one would not load in, after running the one-line program found in several users' group magazines designed to keep the head from knocking during the error.

In light of these problems, about the only recommendation I can make for **Creative Writer** is "try it before you buy it". □

### Assembly Language For Beginners by William B. Sanders from Microcomscribe

#### Review by Michael Quigley

Are you bewitched, bothered and bewildered by assembly language? Possessing knowledge about this subject is much like belonging to some kind of secret society where you need passwords to enter, and where you dabble in a lot of an arcane mumbo-jumbo, once admitted.

There are numerous books designed to initiate novices into these mystical rites, but most of them have one thing in common: they are written for people who already know assembly language. Fortunately, there are a few books recently available written for the average person. One of these is *Assembly Language for Kids: Commodore 64*, by William B. Sanders.

Its title is deceptive, since the book is not really designed for kids, but rather for people who want to have "a good time learning assembly language". It's written in a chatty, easy-to-understand style, as opposed to the advanced scientific jargon adopted by many other books on 6502 and 6510 programming.

The number of examples in the book is one of its major strengths. These examples range from a short subroutine that clears the screen to the design of a "noisy space sprite". In order to enter the examples, a simple 'Kids' Assembler' is included in the book, which you can either type in or obtain on disk with other utilities from Microcomscribe, at an additional cost of ten dollars. This assembler has a minimal editor, uses non-standard op-codes, and is somewhat slow, since it's written in BASIC. The examples can also be entered with the **Merlin 64** assembler, which author Sanders describes as "the best available for the 64", or the **Macro Assembler Development System** from Commodore.

For the most part, Sanders proceeds from Point A to Point B, telling the reader that everything will eventually fall into place, even if some matter is not fully understood at the moment. He occasionally drags in an op-code or procedure that is not afterwards explored in sufficient detail, which might be a red herring to some readers.

It should be emphasized that this book doesn't deal with all the assembly language op-codes. It tries to teach the reader "how to learn to use the fundamental operations well and understand their use clearly *rather* than try and learn everything at once and not understand what you're doing." At its conclusion, Sanders gives some suggestions for books and magazines that might help with further study.

The only negative feature of this book is an annoying number of typographical errors; surprising, because Microcomscribe's motto is "literate microcomputer documentation". Some of these occur in the programs, which may cause confusion for novices. Hopefully, these errors will be corrected in subsequent editions of this otherwise excellent book. □