

KODIAK64

NEWSLETTER

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1. HEALTH UPDATE

In my previous newsletter (15 Aug 2020), I mentioned that I was very ill.

Thankfully, since that time I have improved considerably and have, in the past few weeks, been able to resume coding again (more on this below).

So, a very special thank you to everyone who sent me public and private messages of support - it gave my flagging morale a boost for sure.

2. WILD WOOD PREVIEW



Before I fell ill, I took a break from *Parallaxian* to help out my good friend, John Henderson, with the chase levels for his C64 game in development, *The Wild Wood*.

The original coder who was working on it said he was unable to continue and since I struggle to read anyone else's code (it's a strange mental block I have), I decided to just write the whole chase level from scratch and plug in the interrupt and scrolling tech developed for *Parallaxian* and *Deep Winter*.

You can watch the result of that work in this preview video on **John's YouTube channel** (which I would ask you to kindly consider subscribing to): <https://youtu.be/qvGwKeH4a7k>

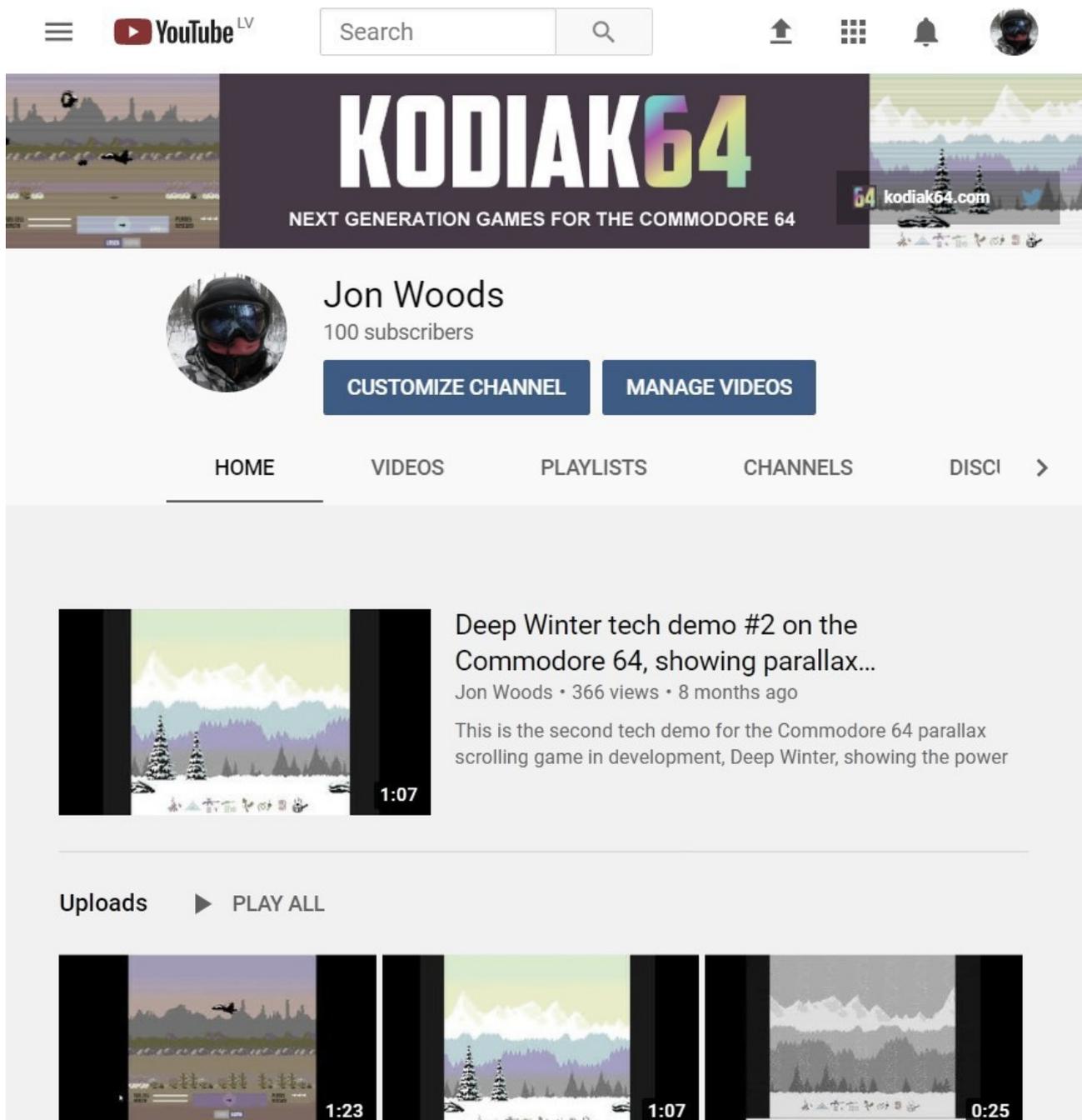
(That's the game being played by me in that clip, rather badly I might add, probably because I was concentrating too much on getting the video recorded!)

To coincide with that video, I wrote a **new blog article on my website**, which you can view here: <https://kodiak64.com/blog/wild-wood-deconstructed>

Incidentally, **John has his very own newsletter** now, available through his contact page on his website, for everyone wishing to be kept up-to-date on the development of *The Wild Wood*, with **an exclusive Wild Wood C64 bitmap image to everyone who subscribes**: <https://www.wildwoodgame.co.uk/contact-us>

3. SOCIAL MEDIA REVAMP

I gave my YouTube channel a facelift last week, leading me to ponder much concerning the value of a social media presence in what are, by any metric, increasingly uncertain times.



Accordingly, I am considering starting a Bitchute channel to pretty much mirror my YT

channel, but I also hope to also have a video section on my website soon as well as I push for greater online autonomy.

I'm also alarmed at Twitter's increasingly censorious stance and although I have not yet fallen afoul of that, prudence might suggest a pre-emptive presence - for what that's worth - on a freer alternative platform as well.

Despite my concerns about the direction social media is moving in, I would nonetheless request that you subscribe to my YouTube channel and follow me on Twitter, if you are not already doing so.

Link to subscribe to my YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwuCcAyP-A2jryd-FoCVgTQ?sub_confirmation=1

Link to my Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/Kodiak64>

And when / if you do that, please, as much as you're able to, like, comment and retweet to really get the word spread wider about *Parallaxian*.

4. BRANDING

I've been thinking about "developer branding" for my games more and more.

The Rowlands brothers developed *Mayhem in Monsterland*, *Creatures*, etc., under the moniker of "Apex Productions", and Chester Kollschen's team behind *Sam's Journey* go by "Knights of Bytes", so I feel I need something like that too.

Sure, I have "Kodiak" as my scene handle and it's part of the name of my website, but I think a unique, separate branding identity is called for.

For well over a year, I had toyed with "Pixel Perfect Productions" but it's a bit of a mouthful and met with a muted response to the few I revealed it too, so that's one for the bin.

Another rejected option was "Catharsis"... it has the dreaded "th" in it, which might reduce its euphonic appeal among non-native English speakers.

As a kind of wink at my tiny coterie of detractors in the scene who lied through their teeth to try to convince anyone who would listen that *Parallaxian* features "nothing new", I was also warming to the name "Closed Canon Productions" (as someone from the American scene once said on Reddit that these guys regard the C64 scene as a "closed canon", with no new techniques possible).

However, none of the above were chosen and instead, I have settled on a simple but memorable brand name that will hopefully be made public very soon.

5. A FEW COOL PROJECTS BY OTHER DEVELOPERS

In the spirit of togetherness and trying to promote not just my own projects, but also the ambitious efforts of others in the C64 community, I would like to give a "shout out" to a few of what I consider to be some of the best things happening in the scene that I am aware of

at present.

* **Planet X2.1**, the European PAL upgraded version of **8-Bit Guy's** original best seller, *Planet X2*, with new graphics by, again, *The Wild Wood* gfx designer, John Henderson and a revamped codebase and music: <https://youtu.be/SiBTAgZ4N6o>



* This very technically proficient racing / dodging game:
<https://twitter.com/cobbpg/status/1319933754136268801>

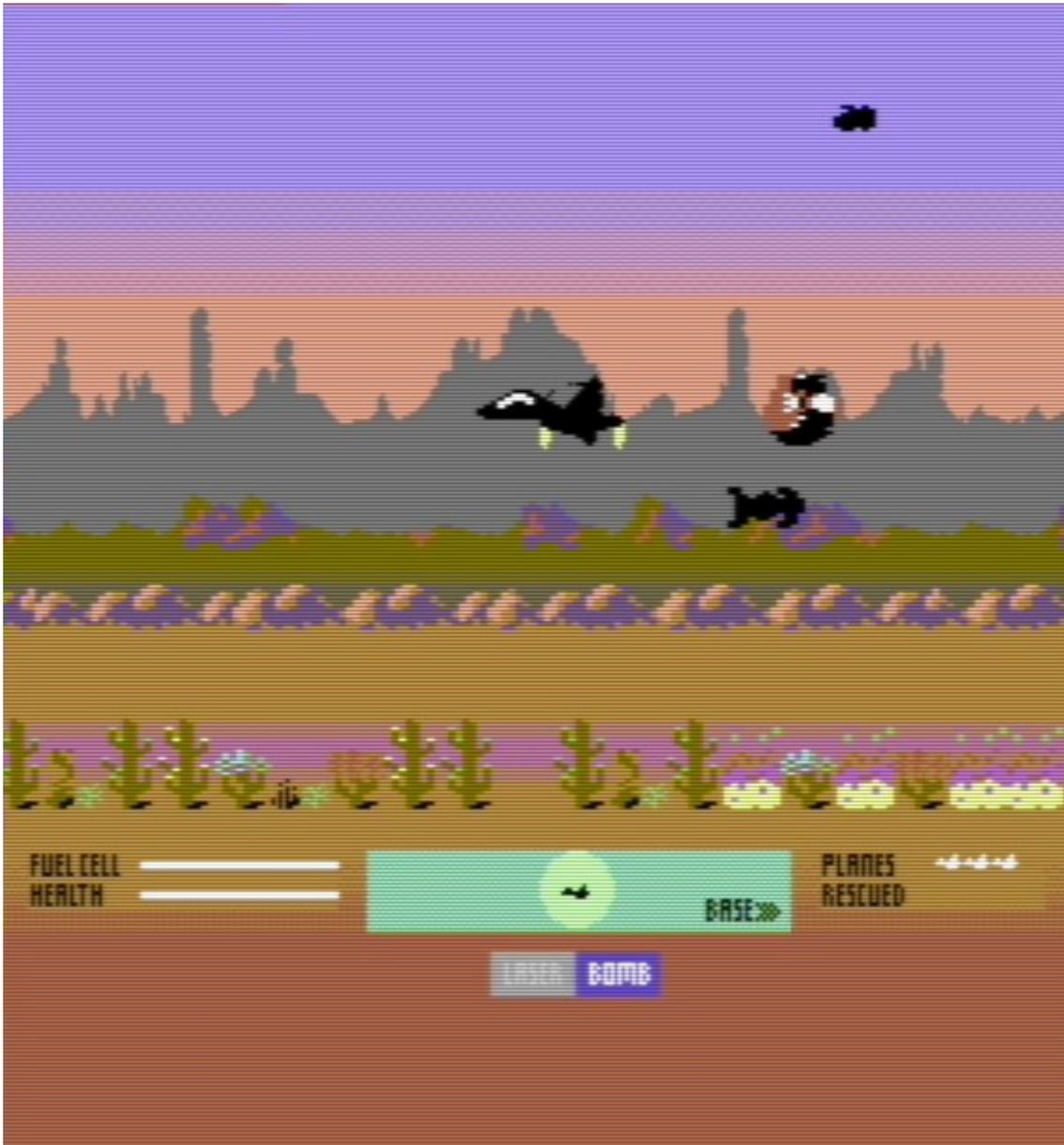
* Chris Stanley's **Empire Strikes Back** game, which bears an uncanny resemblance to Parallaxian's Level 4: <https://twitter.com/ScubaChris72/status/1308803328508387331>

* Rhys Clatworthy's **Stoker** game:
<https://twitter.com/RhysClatworthy/status/1230475958668447746>

(This one is very ambitious from a technical perspective, so let's hope he gets it all working without artefacts on the large plexed main character).

I would like to think that, with the scene close to 40 years old, there is now a wide enough dissemination of coding knowledge online to enable much more technically proficient game design than ever before, so perhaps this will increasingly translate into many more bar-raising game projects.

6. PARALLAXIAN - "THE BIG PUSH"



I'm very much thrilled to be back working on *Parallaxian* with renewed vigour, keen to get the project finished and everyone playing what is shaping up to be a truly spectacular game.

Levels 3 and 4 have been designed to what I would describe as advanced prototype standard, the former being a tropical "water world" and the latter a frozen wasteland.

Also, since this is the *Parallaxian* section, I just wanted to reiterate the point that if the game is as successful as anticipated, I am very keen to make a limited edition, pre-order-only tangible version that runs natively on the **Commodore 128** (the same comment applies to *Deep Winter*).

The C128 has far too few native games and - to me at least - deserves its own high-end game release in cartridge and / or disk format.

The big issue there would be the variant: PAL or NTSC? Or both?

PAL would be much less technically challenging to produce than NTSC, given that the game is being developed for the C64 in PAL and thus raster time issues are already settled.

But there is also the issue of NTSC having less raster time available per screen frame, thus presenting a new challenge to fit all the raster-sensitive game code in.

At this stage, the C128 port is all a bit academic, but any feedback on that subject would be welcome!

7. PARALLAXIAN - A REQUEST

Much as I would prefer it were otherwise, I am at the point where I feel compelled to ask for a little more help in getting this game over the line, so to speak, by which I mean I intend to launch a Patreon.

Already I can hear people saying, "Not another C64 scener starting a Patreon!"

Yes, I understand, but *Parallaxian* is not just another game and besides, to me it seems a good thing that developers get some benefit from Patreon rather than just those who comment on the creative output of developers.

Before I take this step, however, ***I would like to ask you, my subscribers, what you think I should put in the Patreon*** (or even if I should use SubscribeStar instead)!

My initial feeling is that I want to feature a **micro blog** that is updated 2-3 times per week, with exclusive screen shots (such as sneak previews of the new levels) and other stuff that I don't intend to make public via the existing means (social media, my blog, etc.).

I had also thought of including downloadable source code for various effects or more detailed technical commentaries than that provided in my blog, assuming that holds appeal for any coders among my "tribe".

Those are just some idea snippets at that stage, but as I said, I would really love to hear your thought on this.

In closing, thanks for reading this far and once again, for being a subscriber to my newsletter!

And please, feel free to get in touch; it always makes my day more interesting!

Kind regards as always,

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