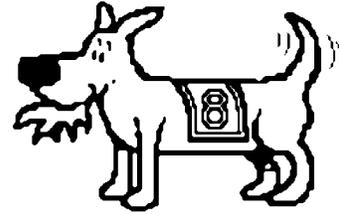


# The Zero Page

*The newsletter of the Commodore Users of Wichita  
For the sharing, learning, and love of Commodore computers"*



Eight-bit keeps takin' a byte  
out of Commodore computing

Number 60, October 1998



## Don's Digest

by Don McManamey

I had planned to write with great skill and wit on the Y2K bug. Some of you may not understand what Y2K is. Y stands for year, K stands for thousand, and thus

Y2K is year 2000. Now if you read Dale's article from last month you know his claim that Y2K is not a bug, but I say it is. You see, when I call it a bug, it bugs Dale.

Anyway, a funny thing happened on the way to the Digest. I looked high and low and could not find a major resource for my article. I planned to quote it liberally but could not find it. I did however find a 1981 issue of *Compute!* magazine. Dated November, I thought it might be nice if it were held for a month so we could look back exactly 17 years but then Dale would not have an article for October. A little more thought and I realized that if this were sent in the mail for a subscription it would surely have arrived in October! Close examination of the magazine showed no signs of having gone through the mail and so we simply forget the whole significance of 17 years exactly and press on with this rambling nonsense.

Trying desperately for an idea for the article we thumbed through the pages of this saddle stitched issue and found the following. A small company called Microsoft was advertising a Z80 card for the Apple II. This would turn the Apple II into 2 computers! There was an ad for A B Computers on pages 46 & 47. At first look it appeared that someone had written in that they had ordered an Apple II+ on 11-24-81, but when I looked closer I could see that the had actually ordered a Vic 1515 graphic printer for \$315. The list price was \$395. Looking just above I saw the Vic - 20 for only \$269 and a C2N External Cassette Deck for only \$65. Need some 8" disks? They were only \$2.80 each in lots of ten. There was an article on the "Japanese Micros" which included the NEC, Sharp and Casio computers. On page 51 was an ad for drive systems for AIM, KIM and SYM computers. The

picture show a fellow sitting in front of a computer that had no cabinet. The name Rockwell was on the keyboard. It all looked very impressive... NOT.

The magazine is divided into Gazettes and one was the Pet Gazette. Here, a 35 year old man is interviewed about his new job as US Marketing Director for CBM. Little did he or anyone else know at that time just how many people would pass through the corporate offices at Commodore in the next few years. In case you are unaware, there were so many that Commodore installed a revolving door on the offices.

**Next CUW Meeting:  
Saturday, October 10  
1:00 - 4:00 pm  
1411 South Oliver**

**Moe Shouse will show what it takes  
to transfer text files between our  
Commodores and PCs**

Elsewhere I found a picture of something that looked like the latest Pentium chip but was actually a 128K ramdisk for the Atari. No price was given but it was probably about the same price as the Pentium chip. I did find it interesting that about the only names I saw which are still around were Atari, Microsoft, and Apple. Nearly everyone else is either non-existent or out of the home computer market.

Finally there was an article by Isaac Asimov on the three laws of robotics. You know the three laws don't you? A robot cannot injure a human (or through inaction, allow a human to be harmed), a robot must obey orders given by a human as long as they don't conflict with the

first law, and a robot must protect itself as long as it doesn't conflict with the first two laws.

Well I hope this was enjoyable for you to take the walk down memory lane. We have come a long way since then.

"There is nothing a mere scientist can say that will stand against the flood of a hundred million dollars. But there is one quality that cannot be purchased this way -- and that is reliability. The price of reliability is the pursuit of the utmost simplicity. It is a price which the very rich find most hard to pay."

C. A. R. Hoare (ACM Turing Award Lecture, 1980)



## Random Access

by Dale Lutes

Friends, we have reached another important milestone in the history of the Commodore Users of Wichita. This

month we celebrate five years since the founding of our little club! Five years since that first meeting at the Wichita Water Department. Five years of the *Disk O'Quarter*. Five years of the "sharing, learning, and love of Commodore computers." And of course five years of *The Zero Page*. Those 60 issues of our newsletter represent hundreds of man-hours of work, not only by myself, but also by the authors who have contributed their articles over the years. It is not as lengthy as some newsletters, but the majority of *Zero Page* articles are contributed by CUW members. It is that feature (in my admittedly biased opinion) that makes this newsletter one of the best. Join me now for a look back into our club's history as we review five years of The Zero Page.

**COMMODORE USERS OF WICHITA**  
*"for the sharing, learning, and love of Commodore computers"*  
 Number 1, November 1993

**From the Editor**  
by Dale Lutes

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Commodore Users of Wichita. The CUW is a new club, but many of you will recognize old, familiar faces. This newsletter is going out to all of our new members plus a few who have expressed a past interest in Commodore computing. The CUW is dedicated to those users of "pre-Amiga" Commodore systems, namely the C64, C128, VIC, C16 and Plus/4. We want to provide meetings with a friendly, family atmosphere where new users and long-timers can shake hands, swap ideas, and have some fun while learning more about their machines.

Club offices have not yet been defined and first elections are tentatively scheduled for February. In the meantime, these members have volunteered to provide essential club services:

Jerry Shook,	Chairman & meeting facilitator
Robert Bales,	Bulletin board representative
Marie Both,	Treasurer & membership officer
Don McManamey,	Disk editor & guiding light
Judy Matthews,	Commercial lending librarian
Dale Lutes,	Newsletter editor & PD librarian

These folks are covering most of the bases, but we are still looking for someone who is willing to act as club Secretary and/or someone who can help coordinate activities at the monthly club meetings. It is important to note that these people do NOT constitute a ruling body as in some other clubs. We feel it is important for ALL club members to be informed and to have a vote in club policy decisions.

Whether or not you have ever belonged to a computer users group, we hope you will give us a try. We are looking forward to meeting you this Saturday afternoon.

**A NEW CLUB IS BORN**  
by Fred Bailey

On Friday, October 8, 1993 twenty users of the C64 and C128 met and formed a new club, *The Commodore Users of Wichita*. This club will meet the second Saturday of each month at the Wichita Water Department (see the map elsewhere in this issue). Dues have been initially set at \$10 per year for a family membership. Organizers of the effort were Don McManamey, Jerry Shook, Marie Both and other volunteers.

Another meeting was scheduled for Saturday, October 16th. On that day, six Commodores were operating at the same time, and fifteen users came and went between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m.

**Get Yourself Digitized!**  
by Fred Bailey

At the November meeting Nate Dannenberg will bring his set up for displaying pictures taken with a camcorder and will bring his improved version of Battleship which can be played by two people via modem.

### 1993

November - Issue 1 recaps our first two meetings independent of the old C&AUGW. Club-owned equipment and dues are hot topics. "Don's Digest" appears in that very first issue and remains a regular *Zero Page* feature.

December - Another long-time feature, "Random Access" makes its first appearance in this issue.

### 1994

January - "Jerry's Corner" debuts. It remains a regular feature for the next two years.

February - The Zero Page banner is redesigned with a new font and the addition of our new club mascot, Eight-Bit.

June - This issue sees the publication of our club telephone list. This would become a regular mid-summer feature of our newsletter.

October - I had fun spoofing the front page banner for Halloween. Look for it on page 3.

November - Robert Bales provides a valuable list of all Commodore related titles available from the Wichita Public Library.

### 1995

February - The formation of the new GEOS Special Interest Group is announced. The geoSIG met monthly through November of 1995.

April - This is my personal favorite issue of the last 5 years. Don, Jerry, and I all wrote articles with a Commodore "Dream Machine" theme.

October - The CUW catalog of products is mailed out along with the newsletter for the first time.

### 1996

February - A new monthly feature, "Rear View Mirror" makes its first appearance. This column is known today as "Moe's Soap Box."

October - This issue announces our special Open House meeting to be held at Z-Software.

### 1997

March - My "Random Access" column announces three CUW exclusives on the new *Disk O'Quarter*: ScoreUP, GeoMines v1.1, and the Tablature Font Collection.

June - This month features an excellent article from Hawaii "On-Line" that describes how to build your own monitor cables.

September - Page 2 features a GIF image from the Mars Pathfinder converted to geoPaint format and imported into geoPublish.

November - Two new regular columns appear in this issue for the first time: "Looking at GEOS" and "Newsletter Briefs."

### 1998

January - The CUW says farewell to long-time member and financial officer, Marie Both.

(Continued on page 3)



## Looking at GEOS

by Mark McGuinnis

*[This article was first published in October 1993.  
It comes to us courtesy of Peter Hunt, geoClub OZ]*

Well boys and girls we will try to lighten up this month. I seem to have been getting too detailed

here of late. But before we go light, let's finish up something from last month. Selecting files across disk note pad pages. To do this, on the current disk note pad page, select the file icons that you need. Go to the destination disk note pad by entering its page number (1-9), clicking on the dog ear corner or pressing the up/down CRSR (cursor) key. Hold down the Commodore key and select the additional file icons you need. To select all the files on the border, select border files from the select menu (or press the Commodore key and Y). To select all the files on every page of the disk note pad, select all pages from the select menu (or press the Commodore key and W). To stop this selection process, press RUN/STOP. Enough of TCOOB (taking care of old business). Let's move on. Opening a file is next on the agenda, but I think all of us can handle this by now.

The next stop is file info and write protect status. And you thought it was going to be the Twilight Zone. In this menu item you can find various tidbits about the file that you have selected, such as the file size in kilobytes and the date and time of day you modified or messed up your file. Then there is the write protect box. Click on this box and it becomes filled or un-filled and your file has become write protected or un-write protected. If the file is write protected it cannot be deleted.

One of the best ways to learn is by doing. However, be extremely careful of what you do as some files or programs cannot be replaced. Any modifications should be done only on back-up programs or files. To duplicate a file, select duplicate from the file menu (or press the Commodore key and H). Duplicate files on the same disk must have different names so that GEOS can distinguish between the two. Yes, I know its the same file times two, but you will get a prompt asking you to "Please enter a new file name." Sixteen characters max.

Well we have come to moving file icons again. I think those guys at Berkeley Softworks get off on spaced repetition as a learning tool. Have you ever wondered why you have 50 fonts on a disk and can only access 8? GEOS will only access the first eight fonts. Fonts 9 through 50 will have to be moved to the 1-8 slots. To move a file, its ghost icon can be placed over another icon and when you click on the destination, the files swap places. Files can be moved to another page on the desk top by dragging the ghost icon to the border, select the destination page and move the border files onto the desk top. Looks like its a space thing again. Manana mi amigo.

## Moe's Soap Box

by Moe Shouse



Well, I have had a lot of trouble with my SuperCPU-128. I have tried it on three different computers, and it will not work right. So I called CMD. I talked to Doug Cotton and learned a lot. The error code 06 that I was getting before I

bumped up the voltage, was caused by low voltage. How it works is like this. The SCPU operating system is downloaded to its RAM on start up. But if the voltage is low the RAM will not take the OS. Also they test each unit to 4.7 volts. Why my unit failed at 4.8, I don't know. Doug also said that the RAM in an SCPU will hold its last state for as much as 6 minutes with the power off. So if you are in the habit of turning it off then right back on, you may have trouble. He also said that if the SCPU bus has a lot of noise, when it tries to write to the computer's RAM, the computer's ram will overdrive the SCPU. I hope I got that part right. My notes are not very good. So after we talked a while he said I should send it in. I haven't done that yet.

I have been playing around with some 7406 chips. What I have found is that I can change the power light on a flat 128 to a data light. The power light is really two LEDs, not one. On a flat 128 the power LEDs are run from 5 volts. But I think that a disk drive or a 128D might use 12 volts. My research is not complete, so don't try this modification on a 128D or a disk drive. I found that one can hook the data line to one gate of a hex inverter to drive one side of the power light and two gates to drive the other side. This will cause the two LEDs to flash back and forth when the disk drive is loading data or the computer is sending data. Not only does it look cool, but one can tell if data has stopped moving. How many times have you thought the drive was loading a program when in fact it was sitting there hung up? And with this modification, it still shows that the power is on. At our next meeting, I will be glad to show it to everyone and I will try to have a diagram to hand out. I will also show how one can move a CBM text file to a 720K IBM-formatted disk. It is a little tricky. I did this the other day then had my son send it E-Mail from a PC system and it worked!

### Random Access (continued from page 2)

May - Elections are cancelled and the club considers several proposed by-laws changes

July - This issue announces the first of our new luncheon meetings.

August - "Moe's Soap Box" and "Random Access" both take note of the closing of Wichita's last Commodore outlet, *Z-Software*.

October - "Random Access" features a look back at five years of the Commodore Users of Wichita as reported in *The Zero Page*.

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## The GEOS Stories: Manly Work

Originally published in the *DECUS RSX/IAS Multi-Tasker*, December 1990, as "Interludes - RSX Programming as a Worthy Thing to Do" by Bruce R. Mitchell. Revised for The Zero Page by Dale Lutes.

The boy and I sat at the edge of the computer room floor and watched the animals travel to and from the coffee hole. We talked of many things. He asked again about GEOS programming.

"Tell me about GEOS programming again," he said.

"It is well to be a GEOS programmer," I told him. "It is an honorable and worthy thing to do to earn a living."

"And there is danger, too, and excitement, is there not?" he asked.

"Yes, there is sometimes danger," I said. "There is danger that lurks in the shadows waiting for the unwary programmer. You must code well and honorably and avoid those dangers, for they can be dangerous. There are traps set for the unwary."

He sat and thought his private thoughts for a while. I did not interrupt him. His brow wrinkled as he thought. Finally, he spoke.

"This satire is a crock, and will probably never get to a usable state," he said. "And Hemingway did not actually write much like this at all."

"Yes, you are probably right," I agreed. "And you have not even seen the parts with the ersatz Zen philosophy yet. But it is better for me to have written a little and made an attempt than not to have done anything at all. This has been itching at me for some time. It is like crotch crickets. I must do something to address it."

He frowned at me. "That is like saying that it is better for a pregnant woman to get the baby's head out and then give up, than to do nothing. Or that it is better to have a disk half formatted than not at all. I think that you are replete with digested food. I do not agree with you."

I watched the secretaries walk proudly by in the hall. Their handsome noses were lifted high in the air like the smell downwind of the trash compactor. I thought my private thoughts for a while. Then I looked down at the printout in my hand. I found that I had finished mixing my metaphor. I drank from it while I thought on what he said. He was young and did not know any better. He would learn with time.

"You are young yet," I told him. "There are many things you do not know. I am older, and there are many things I still do not know. Let us not speak of this any more. It has nothing to do with our original conversation. Let us speak further of GEOS programming."

"OK, bwana," he said. "Tell me more about how it is to be a GEOS programmer. Tell me about the easy work and the short hours and the groupies. Tell me about the babes."

"You are confused," I said. "That is understandable. You are confusing the worthy profession of GEOS programming with things done by 9-to-5 weenies who run application generators producing 5GL object-oriented SQL database code for the clustered PC network environment. Many people make this mistake today, though it was not so in the old days. But GEOS programming is not like that. It is gut-busting work. It is hard work, manly work for men. It is not for sissies. GEOS programming," I told him, "is a dark land where a man must face his own fears. He must have confidence in himself and in his ability to face the unexpected."

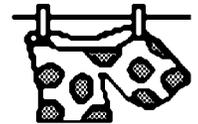
"That is not the way that it is here," said the boy. He flicked another goober across the hall. It stuck.

"You whine too much," I replied. "Do not carp on little things. Carp on big things. Get that 782 moved out of the computer room. This is an opportunity to learn." So saying, I left him to meditate on the wisdom I had imparted.

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## Newsletter Briefs

by Dale Lutes



### The Infinite Loop

Western Colorado Commodore User

#### Group, Mack, CO

In his editorial, Jake Smith reflects on the problems "new" Commodore users experience in finding support for their machines. Jake also does a fine job in summarizing the newsletters his club receives.

#### GEOS Publication

##### Rev. Willis Patten, Louisville, KY

The August issue features a reprint of an article by Maurice Randall on loading your RAM disk after booting. There is an update to the biographies in Dick Estel's "GEOS Hall of Fame." An article by Joel Shore discusses choosing the proper paper to make the most of your inkjet printer. A letter from Dave Elliott tells how to add another drive to your CMD hard drive's SCSI chain.

#### GOCUG Newsletter

##### Greater Omaha Commodore User's Group, Omaha, NE

This month we received an August newsletter after not getting one at all in July.

#### geoNews

##### geoClub, United Kingdom/Australia

An article by Paul Hughes compares geoPublish with PaperClip Publisher. There is more on the GEOS clock from Jane Voskamp-Jones. Ray Calsen tells how to install a fan in a 128D. Dave Elliott supplies yet another article on SCSI devices.

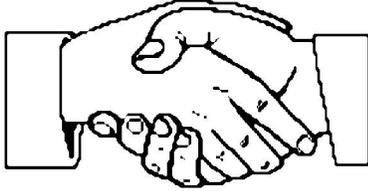
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"The most likely way for the world to be destroyed, most experts agree, is by accident. That's where we come in; we're computer professionals. We cause accidents."

Nathaniel Borenstein

## The Helping Hand

This column lists those users willing to share their experiences and knowledge with other club members.



Robert Bales                      831-0008  
trebor@southwind.net  
Telecommunications, Internet, CMD HD and FD drives

Dale Lutes                          721-0835  
lutes@feist.com  
GEOS, Programming, Word Processing, Desktop Publishing,  
CMD FD drives and RAMLink

Don McManamey                  265-2560  
dmcmanamey@geocities.com  
Word Processing, Print Shop, Printing

Jerry Shook                        776-2683  
jls695@gte.net  
Databases, Label Making, Word Processing, Printing

Let us know if we may include your name in future Helping Hand listings. If we don't have a category for you already, we'll add one!

*The Zero Page* is a monthly publication of the Commodore Users of Wichita. The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CUW. Unless otherwise stated, articles in this newsletter may be reprinted by other Commodore user groups without permission provided that the author and the CUW are given proper credit.

Meetings of the CUW are scheduled for the second Saturday of each month. The deadline for articles is 14 days prior to the meeting day. Submissions are accepted on 1541, 1571, or 1581 formatted floppy disks. geoWrite, ASCII, or PETASCII files are preferred. Microsoft Word documents (Mac or IBM compatible) on 1.44MB floppies are also accepted. In a pinch, paper hard copy will work. Call Dale at 721-0835 or mail your articles to:

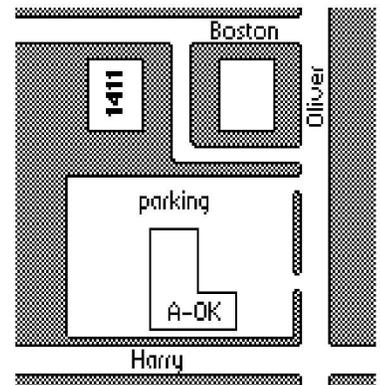
Commodore Users of Wichita  
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In case you are interested, *The Zero Page* is produced using a Commodore 128 and geoPublish. geoPubLaser is used to print the final copy on a PostScript laser printer.

The Commodore Users of Wichita is a club dedicated to "the sharing, learning, and love of Commodore computers." Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month from 1-5pm at 1411 S. Oliver, one block north of the corner of Harry & Oliver. Anyone who owns or uses a Commodore computer system is welcome to attend.

Family memberships cost \$15 per year. Members receive a monthly newsletter, a quarterly disk publication, access to an extensive library of public-domain software, and the right to vote on matters of club policy. Other membership options are also available. Contact any of the officers (listed elsewhere in this newsletter) for more information. We are looking forward to seeing **you** at our next meeting!



You may join or renew your membership by mail.  
Complete this form and mail with a check payable to:

Commodore Users of Wichita  
c/o Dale Lutes  
11102 W. 17th Street N.  
Wichita, KS 67212-1187

Type of membership:

- Family - includes Newsletter & Disk O'Quarter (\$15 per year)
- Newsletter-only (\$5 for 12 issues)
- Disk O'Quarter by mail (\$12 for 4 issues)
- Disk O'Quarter by mail plus Newsletter (\$15)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

List additional family members who are interested in participating:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What Commodore systems do you use? (please check all that apply)

- C-128    C-64    SX-64    VIC-20    C-16    Plus/4
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_