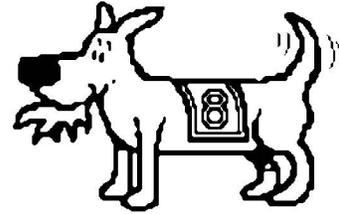


The Zero Page

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 61, November 1998



Moe's Soap Box

by Moe Shouse

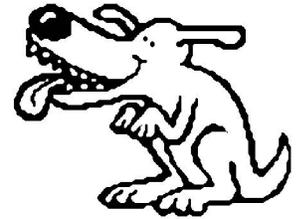
I have never before used this column to talk about club politics or the operation of our club. I feel we are at a point now where I must. This club was formed five years ago by a small group of 8 bit people who thought that a club should

do a better job of serving the 8 bit users than the club they were in. This small group has done an outstanding job in many different areas of club management. About 2 years ago we started to lose members, and some very key people. From the time I came to this club I saw the same thing I was seeing in church and other organizations. That is, you find 20% of the people doing 80% of the work. No wonder some got burned out. Now the *very* few key people we have left are about burned out too. And our total membership is now about 15 when we started out with about 35. In an attempt to try to keep the key people we have, the idea has been made to give free membership to all officers of the club. At our next meeting we will be voting on this issue. This was talked about at our October meeting, so now is the time to put it to a vote. Remember our bylaws do *not* require us to have a certain number of members at the meeting to vote on this. A simple majority of members present will carry or defeat a vote.

Our newsletter editor is burned out and if someone doesn't take over we will not have a newsletter. I think if we don't have a newsletter we are one step from not having a club. Also, our Disk O'Quarter editor is about to stop doing the DOQs. So if you think we must have a DOQ then help more or pick up where he stops. Most of all, we need more people at our regular and steering committee meetings. Remember *anyone* can come to a steering committee meeting. Most of the time it is held the week before the regular meeting.

WANTED: New Zero Page Editor

by Dale Lutes



After five years and 60-plus issues, I have decided to take some time off as editor of the club newsletter.

I have been kicking this thought around for quite a while and I discussed it briefly with Moe and Don at our last steering committee meeting. At that time, I indicated that December would probably be my final issue. In order to make the transition as

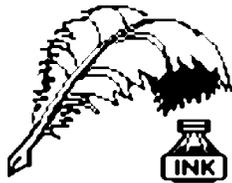
smooth as possible, we must have a new editor by the end of the December meeting. I promise to do all I can to help my replacement get up and running in time for the January newsletter. What we need now is a willing (make that enthusiastic) volunteer --- no experience necessary. If you are interested, please see me at the November or December meeting, or give me a call at 721-0835 and we'll discuss the responsibilities and the rewards.

**Next CUW Meeting:
Saturday, November 14
1:00pm
El Mexico Cafe**

Join your Commodore pals for a
"south of the border" lunch at
El Mexico, 2544 South Seneca

Your CUW Steering Committee members are:

Morris Shouse	Chairman
Robert Bales	Vice Chair
Bob Frisbie	Member at-large
Dale Lutes	Newsletter Editor
Don McManamey	Disk Editor
Jerry Shook	Member at-large
Mike Shook	Member at-large



Don's Digest

by Don McManamey

Why do you own and operate a Commodore computer? Why are you a member of the Commodore Users of Wichita? What would you like to see

more or less of in the club? These questions may sound simple but when you really think about it they are not. I would venture to guess that most of us bought our machines back when Commodore was in its heyday. The rest probably just recently bought their first computer thinking it was about time you learned something about those machines and the Commodore was cheap. Now most of us long-time Commodore users have another brand as well. So why do you have a Commodore? Well, you are probably attached to it in some sentimental way, besides, you couldn't sell it and get anywhere near what you paid for it. Some have a 128, Super CPU, RamLink, or a hard drive. That represents quite an investment. They were quite the machine in their day. Fact is they can still do more than most give them credit. If more people used them there would be more software written. If more software were written more people would use them. But the old catch twenty two is hard to overcome. Facts is facts, for all intents and purposes, support for our Commodores died many moons ago. Another reason we stick with them is that we may have some application that does a special job or that we are really comfortable with. Perhaps it's the games we play. Maybe we like to write our own programs and it is either too expensive or too difficult on the other machines.

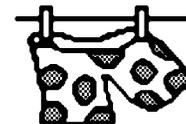
So why do we stay with the club? That is something each of us must ask himself for surely each has his own reasoning. Friendship is one. But do we need a club in order to have friends? Since most of us are not looking to expand our Commodore systems and very little is new in the way of software then friendship is the most likely reason.

Some have been batting around the idea of letting other platforms in the club. This might have value among friends but what if I like one brand and you like another? Would we simply agree not to knock the other guy's machine? That is simple enough but it was also proposed that showing off one machine is in effect putting down another and that should be off limits. This club had its roots with the Vic-20 and even then there were comparisons made. Some had the unexpanded Vic while some had an extra 3k of memory. Still others had 8k or more of extended memory. Each of these configurations had its own software and so one would show off what another couldn't do. It was this comparison that lead some to expand or buy this or that program. These comparisons caused some to buy the C64 and others to stay away. Some skipped the 64 and went from a Vic-20 to the 128. It was also this comparison that caused the club to split when the eight bitters felt they were being bullied by the Amiga group. What would be the point in allowing other platforms if we couldn't compare and what are the dangers if we do? There are PC clubs and Apple clubs we can join. Let us not forget that this club was formed five years ago with the expressed purpose of keeping all others out.

(Continued on page 3)

Newsletter Briefs

by Dale Lutes



GEOS Publication

Rev. Willis Patten, Louisville, KY

In the September issue, Willis Patten tells us about "moving up" from a dot-matrix to a laser printer. A letter from Dale Sidebottom discusses the use of CMD native partitions with *Wheels*.

geoNews

geoClub, United Kingdom/Australia

Frank Cassidy and Peter Hunt announce that the geoClub will pass into Commodore history at the end of the year. The Australian GeosGenie (Jane Voskamp-Jones) reviews three fine utilities: WrongIsWrite 8.1, Font Changer 1.0, and FontSwap. Don't miss the minutes of the geoPubSub committee or the excellent graphics from Gordon Turrall and Peter McGuinn.

The Infinite Loop

Western Colorado Commodore User Group, Mack, CO

Earl Williams tells how he solved his RamLink/SuperCPU problems with an Aprotek ribbon cable. Jake Smith describes some of the latest Commodore "goodies": GoDot, Wheels, and the SuperCPU-128. Brian Vaughan provides a more detailed look at the SCPU-128.

Bug Bytes

Treasure Valley/Boise User Group, Boise, ID

Bob Petersmark discusses partitions on the Commodore 1581 disk drive. There is a fine article from Martin Reber entitled, "Make your C64 Disks Fast Loading."

Computer Pioneer Quiz

by Dale Lutes

Everybody knows that Bill Gates is the chairman of Microsoft. Can you match these other well-known people in the computer field with their contributions to the industry? Answers on page 4.

1. Doug Engelbart
 2. Charles Babbage
 3. J. Presper Eckert & John Mauchly
 4. Steve Wozniak & Steve Jobs
 5. Paul Allen
 6. Ivan Sutherland
 7. Gary Kildall
 8. Grace Murray Hopper
-
- a. With Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft.
 - b. Adapted the punch card for computer applications.
 - c. Led the development of the COBOL, the first high-level programming language.
 - d. Developed the original Apple computer.
 - e. Invented the mouse and the graphical user interface.
 - f. Designed Sketchpad, the first interactive graphics program.
 - g. Author of the CP/M operating system.
 - h. Invented ENIAC the first digital electronic computer and UNIVAC, the first commercial computer.

Suppose Edgar Allen Poe had used a Computer

Author Unknown

*Once upon a midnight dreary,
fingers cramped and vision bleary,
systems manuals piled high and
wasted paper on the floor.
Longing for the warmth of bed sheets,
still I sat there, doing spreadsheets.
Having reached the bottom line,
I took a floppy from the drawer.
Typing with a steady hand,
I then invoked the SAVE command
and waited for the disk to store.
Only this and nothing more.*

*Deep into the monitor peering,
long I sat there, wond'ring, fearing,
doubting, while the disk kept churning,
turning yet to churn some more.
'Save!' I said, 'You cursed mother!
Save my data from before!'
One thing did the phosphors answer,
only this and nothing more.
Just, 'Abort, Retry, Ignore?'*

*Was this some occult illusion?
Some maniacal intrusion?
These were choices undesired,
ones I'd never faced before.
Carefully, I weighed the choices
as the disk made impish noises.
The cursor flashed insistent,
waiting, baiting me to type some more.*

*Clearly I must press a key,
choosing one and nothing more
from 'Abort, Retry, Ignore?'
With my fingers pale and trembling,
slowly toward the keyboard bending,
longing for a happy ending,
hoping all would be restored.
Praying for some guarantee,
Timidly I pressed a key.*

*But on the screen there still persisted
words appearing as before.
Ghastly grim they blinked and taunted,
haunted, as my patience wore,
saying, 'Abort, Retry, Ignore?'*

*I tried to catch the chips off-guard ---
I pressed again, but twice as hard.
I pleaded with the cursed machine:
I begged and cried
and then I swore.*

*Now in desperation,
trying random combinations,
still there came the incantation
just as senseless as before.*

*Cursor blinking, angrily winking,
blinking nonsense as before.
Reading, 'Abort, Retry, Ignore?'*

*There I sat, distraught, exhausted
by my own machine accosted.
Getting up I turned away
and paced across the floor.*

*And then I saw a dreadful sight:
A lightning bolt cut through the night.
A gasp of horror overtook me,
shocked me to the core.*

*The lightning zapped my previous data,
lost and gone forevermore.
Not even, 'Abort, Retry, Ignore?'
To this day I do not know
the place to which lost data go.*

*What demonic nether world is wrought
where data will be stored
beyond the reach of mortal souls,
beyond the ether, into black holes?*

*But sure as there's C, Pascal, Lotus,
Ashton-Tate and more,
You will one day be left to wander,
lost on some Plutonian shore,
Pleading, 'Abort, Retry, Ignore?'*



Don's Digest (continued from page 2)

Are you so insecure with your machine that you can't compare with mine? Do we have so little to talk about that we must bring in other machines? When I first started writing this article I thought it might be OK to include other machines but by the time I finished I realized that it is either Commodore or it's nothing. What do you think?



Random Access

by Dale Lutes

A near disaster for me happened while I was working on the October newsletter. There are a couple of lessons to be

learned from it, so permit me to relate the story:

I had been keeping several months worth of "Looking at GEOS" articles on hand in a RAMlink partition. Stored along with them were most of the other geoWrite documents I had written over several years (letters and such). While working on the newsletter, I realized that it was time to pull another group of "Looking at GEOS" articles from floppy and convert them from SEQ to geoWrite format. After copying the next six files into my RAMlink, I fired up WrongIsWrite v8 to do the conversion. I wasn't paying close enough attention to the free space, because the room available wasn't adequate to hold everything.

Now, this *shouldn't* have been a problem, except that WrongIsWrite (which does an *excellent* job of converting documents) doesn't seem to pay any attention to disk status. It completely ignored the fact that the partition had become full and continued merrily on its way, writing to bogus tracks and trashing other files in the process. When I realized what was happening, I immediately backed up the partition with MCOPY, a bit copier. A verify from the GEOS Desktop confirmed the bad news and I was forced to reformat the partition. By using a backup I had made prior to this incident, along with the new backup, I was able to recover all of the files that I needed. There were about two dozen files on the immediate backup that did not appear on the earlier backup.

My story has a happy ending. All that I lost was the time required to reconstruct my RAMlink partition. But it could have been much, much worse.

Lessons learned or reinforced:

1. Regularly make backup copies of your data.
2. Keep your original program disks and backup data disks in a safe place *away from your computer*.
3. As soon as you recognize a problem has occurred, don't panic. Make another backup. If you are lucky, you may be able to recover the changes made since your last regular backup.
4. Beware when using WrongIsWrite on a near-full disk.
5. When coding software that writes to disk, check the input/output status after every write operation.

I can't emphasize enough how important Lesson number 1 is. In these days of large-capacity hard drives, it is easy to say, "Backups take too much time and too many floppies. I can't be bothered." Take my word for it, losing an important document will bother you even more.

Quiz Answers

1. e; 2. b; 3. h; 4. d; 5. a; 6. e; 7. g; 8. c

Doctor 8 Bit

The Doctor is IN

[Dr. 8 Bit is sent to us as a trial. The good doctor may not be able to do a column every month. He is widely recognized as the foremost authority on Commodore 8 bit nonsense.]

Dear Dr. 8 Bit,

I have read about a Kernal that lives inside my Commodore 8 bit computer. His name is Rom. Is he in the military or is this just a title given to him? And what does he do inside my computer?

Chip the Curious
1541 Drive St.
Cabletown, PA

To: Chip

The Kernal's name is indeed Kernal Rom. He is an ex military man. He figured out how to make computer code permanent inside your computer. The Kernal served in the British Thermal Unit in WWII. They tested thermal underwear for the military. What he does inside your computer is to hold the operating system in a permanent place, so it is ready any time you turn on the computer. The Kernal's job is a tireless and thankless one. But he keeps on doing it over and over with out complaint. We need to be glad we have the Kernal. Some computer systems are not as lucky as ours. Some computer systems have to load software from a floppy or hard drive to have an operating system. So we all owe the Kernal a big thanks.



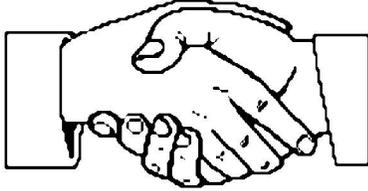
geoClub to Disband

by Dale Lutes

It is with much sadness that I report that geoClub (U.K./Australia) will be calling it quits after December. I have been corresponding for some time with geoClub members Dave Elliott and Peter Hunt. Thanks to Dave and Peter, the CUW has received many copies of geoNews (an excellent newsletter published by Frank Cassidy). I have greatly enjoyed the newsletters and the personal correspondence I have exchanged with these gentlemen. I know that geoClub has meant a lot to them. I can only guess how they feel right now.

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 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:

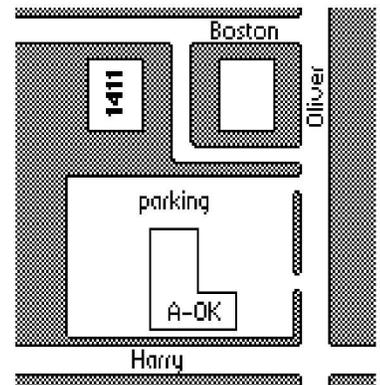
Commodore Users of Wichita
c/o Dale Lutes
11102 W. 17th Street
Wichita, KS 67212-1187

E-mail: lutes@feist.com

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) _____