

The Zero Page

The newsletter of the Commodore Users of Wichita
For the sharing, learning and love of Commodore computer



Number 65 March 1999

Next club meeting will be March 13 at Spears, 4323 West Maple. Meeting starts at 1:00 pm.

Spell Checker
author unknown

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Weather eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My chequer tolled me sew.

Editor's Note: Dis hear ain't my spell checker!!



Hey! That doesn't look like a Commodore, but it sure ran Commodore programs nicely. A big thanks to

Floyd Harper for his demonstration on Commodore emulation programs for the PC.

By Nate Dannenberg

One of the things I've always thought about the Internet is that it can be a very useful tool to find that little something you've been needing to get. It might be a hard-to-find piece of hardware or software for your computer, or maybe you need something to complete your collection of World War II memorabilia.

Well, I've been using the Internet for longer than I can remember, and have seen a lot of good deals pass by. But, like many of us, good deals often don't coincide with a thick wallet. "Oh, wow! There's a 1964 Mustang in mint shape, for \$1000!" I might say to a car ad on eBay [<http://www.ebay.com>], but then two seconds later, I would put the idea out of my mind; "I can't afford that, forget it."

Well recently I ran across something on the net which I couldn't pass up - a free CD. OK, sure we've all seen the junk mail ads from Columbia House and other CD/music clubs. What's so different about this one?

It's a CD of C64 music. I don't mean a CD of music being played from a C64 and burned by some music freak that wants to take their SID music with them. I'm talking about a full blown, etched aluminum, professionally orchestrated and produced synth music CD full of studio remixes of some of the most wonderful music ever produced for a computer. The name of the CD is "Back in Time," [www.c64audio.com] which you may or may not have heard about.

The CD was put together by Chris Abbott [chris@c64audio.com], and features 15 tracks of music from popular titles such as Sanxion, The Great

Giana Sisters, and Parallax. Artists include Rob Hubbard, Martin Galway, and Chris Huelsbeck, as well as a couple more. The CD runs for 69 minutes, making it the longest running CD in my minuscule collection.

OK, before I start to sound like a commercial or another piece of junk mail, I should tell you how I got the CD. It started by browsing the Back in Time website, at <http://www.c64audio.com>. A few screens down, there is an option, "Free CD's to C64 Internet Sites". I thought for a moment and then figured, "Why Not?". I went ahead and selected that link, and filled out the form, directing it and it's readers to my C64 Website [<http://www2.southwind.net/~natedac>].

A few weeks later, without any Email reply, I received a package in the mail from England. At first I thought it was from one of my friends overseas. I looked the package over carefully and judged it's weight. Then suddenly, there was only one thought as to what it could possibly be. I tore the package open and found the C64 Back in Time CD, along with a disc of PC-oriented files containing dozens of hours of additional music.

Included was a piece of paper, which was a bill. The cost? Exactly 0.00 British pounds. In other words, it was free. Also on the note, near the bottom, was a line that read "Terms", and stated that I need to mention the CD on my Website, which I immediately did.

The moral of this whole story is that you don't have to spend money to get good things over the Internet. Sometimes, all it takes is time, and knowing exactly what you're doing. Putting together a point of interest on the Internet, that is to say, a good Website, is a step in the right direction. That's exactly what I did, and the only thing it cost me was the time to fill out the online application form.

So, got an idea for something on the Internet? Well then, by all means put it online! You never know where it might lead! A CD might seem like a small item to some readers, but for most people, even something as simple as a photograph is worth more than some arbitrary amount of money. In my case, that CD means a lot to me, enough so that I immediately asked Shaun Halstead [member of our club, tesla@southwind.net] to make me a backup copy so that I'd never risk damaging the original CD. Thankfully, making backups of your own discs for personal use is well within the usual copyright guidelines.



This is a picture of Nate's 128 tower. I swiped it off his Website.



Jerry's Corner

By Jerold Shook

What did I ever do before I got a word processor? Every time I have to deal with text of some sort I just fall in love with my word processor all over again. I don't think that any other program has had such profound effect on me.

Whenever I write an article or edit someone else's text file I give thanks for my computer and it's ability to work with text as well as check errors. I am not good at spelling, and never have been, but with my computer and its word processor I can be a writer with little fear of looking like a complete dummy.

Often when I get an article from one of our club members or off the Internet I have to do some editing usually because of the format and less often spelling. Everyone will misspell a word now and then if for no other reason than hitting the wrong key. Formatting is due to the different machines we are using and the different programs we use on our machines. Most of the time the formatting shows up with broken sentences and empty lines, but my word processor makes short work of these problems without having to retype the thing.

I guess what I am trying to get across here is that writing story or an article, regardless if it is for our club paper or some other paper or magazine or even if it is for yourself, there is no reason worry about what you put on paper as long as you have this nonjudgmental friend watching over and is ready to help when you need or want it.

When I was (a veryyyy long time ago) we were told to make up an outline then write the story. I never did well working that way. For me I have found that

if I just set down and start typing as if I were talking to someone the words flow out better. I don't know if this will work for everyone or if it is the best way to write, but for me it has worked well and I don't think that I could do it another way.

There are some of you out there that have never written an article for our news letter, maybe if you would try my method, even if you don't come up with something that you think will work in our paper. I grantee you will gain a better appreciation of you computer and of your word processor.



Summated By Don McManamey

Progress Report

"Our staff has completed the 18 months of work on time and on budget. We have gone through every line of code in every program in every system. We have analyzed all databases, all data files, including backups and historic archives, and modified all data to reflect the change. We are proud to report that we have completed the "Y-to-K" date change mission, and have now implemented all changes to all programs and all data to reflect your new standards: Januark, Februark, March, April, Mak, June, Julk, August, September, October, November, December. As well as: Sundak, Mondak, Tuesdak, Wednesdak, Thursdak, Fridak, Saturdak I trust that this is satisfactory, because to be honest, none of this Yto K problem has made any sense to me. But I understand it is a global problem, and our team is glad to help in any way possible. And what does the year 2000 have to do with it? Speaking of which, what do you think we ought to do next year when the two-digit year rolls over from 99 to 00? We'll await your direction."



Random Access By Dale Lutes

I'd like to start this month by acknowledging Jerry Shook for the nice work he did on last month's edition of *The Zero Page*. The color photo and graphics were terrific! I know that Jerry is still just getting used to his publishing software, but he has already made a great start.

But do you know what can make *The Zero Page* even better? A contribution from each of us. I know it's a little late for New Year's resolutions, but if we can all get Jerry one item for publication in the next year it will make his job so much easier. How about it? One tidbit downloaded from the Internet, one original article, one cartoon not bound by copyright law, one short demo program,... One contribution from each of us.

It's no secret that we rely more and more on computers. Hey, I earn a living programming these crazy things so I would be the last person on earth to advocate getting rid of them. Still, sometimes it seems we rely on them a little **too** much and forget the old-fashioned ways that got us to where we are today. Spelling checkers are my latest pet peeve. OK, I admit that as soon as I am finished writing this article, the first thing I'll do is fire up geoSpell to check my work. For some reason (old age setting in?) I seem to double-strike certain characters more and more often than I did in the past. It is important to remember, though, that spell checkers are a tool meant to aid, **but not replace**, a thorough proofreading.

It became clear to me recently that even some "professional" publishers don't understand this concept. I just finished reading a collection of short stories and I found six errors in a 110-page story. One was due to an omitted word. The other five were valid English words, but were used in the wrong context: "religious" instead of "religions"; "though" instead of "thought"; "does" instead of "dose" - you get the picture. None of the errors could have been caught by a spelling checker. All could have been caught by a proofreader with a good command of the language. It's easy to guess what happened: The writer or the publisher spell-checked the story. Nobody proofread it. So instead of enjoying what was in all other respects a fine story, I was distracted into looking for the next error. Just after Jerry put the last newsletter to bed, I e-mailed him a little poem that pokes fun at the spelling checker problem. Look for it elsewhere in this issue.

I think I will wrap up my column now so I can write a letter of complaint to the publisher of that short story collection. Hmm, I better run it through geoSpell before I send it off...





MOES SOAP BOX

By Morris Shouse

The other day I was talking with a friend. And he asks, "Why do you use those old Commodores?" Well I had just handed him the latest copy of Creative Micro Designs catalog. Just as I started to say something dumb like "I am cheap" he read the add on the back for Commodore World magazine. "No matter who you are or what you do, as a Commodore 64 or 128 computer user there's just no better way of keeping informed than Commodore World magazine. With the rapid changes that the computer industry is constantly going through, we often find comfort in the fact that our trusty old Commodore continues to be useful." The ad went on saying that the articles in C.W. enhance your knowledge and abilities.

The people at Commodore World said it best, he didn't have much to say about having comfort in the general computer world. Many times in the past I have tried to say what that Commodore World ad said. Maybe I should just quote Commodore World.

Well on to another subject. Modifying your Commodore computer system. There are a number of ways and reasons to modify. One of first things done to a Commodore system was a fast load cartridge. You are now saying that, that isn't a modification. Well it isn't changing the outside but sure changes the inside, it changes the operating system to load and save faster. Most of them were good, and most also had a utility package built in, it would format disks ect. Another very common mod, is adding a device switch to the disk drive. This is something that our club has done. The way this is done is to cut a trace on the circuit board. And solder two wires to a switch. Then you have a switch on the outside that will change the device number. Most likely the best thing to happen to Commodore computers is Jiffy Dos. J-Dos is like a fast load cartridge in that it loads and saves faster, and has a great utility package built in. But what really makes J-Dos great is that it replaces the old stock Commodore O.S. That is you remove the stock ROM O.S. and put in the J-Dos ROM. Now some may not like taking apart their computer. But it is NOT hard, and well worth the time. And it doesn't tie up the cartridge port. Now how fast is it? You ask. Here are a few numbers. For a 64 with a stock 1541 drive, loads a 154 block PRG file=95 seconds. With J-Dos = 9 seconds. Now a 128

with a 1571 drive loads a 154block PRG file = 11 seconds. With J-Dos = 7 seconds, about 40% better.

Have you ever told your computer to load something and then it just sat there and sat there. Then you ask yourself "Is it loading data or is it locked up?" Well I have found a way to put data lights on a Commodore 128. It's not hard to do. What you do is change the power light to two data lights. I used a 7406 chip it is a hex inverter. You will NOT find it Radio Shack; you will have to get it at an electronics shop. In Wichita, LLOYDS has them for about \$.90 ea.

I used a small circuit board from Radio Shack to mount it on. But I did not mount it like normal; I flattened out the pins of the chip, and mounted the chip flat on the foil side. This way there are no bare wires on the bottom to short out.

This is so you can put sticky tape on the back to hold it down on the main 128 board. After the pins are flattened out. Solder all the pins to the small board; be sure there are no solder bridges across any two pins. Now solder a .1uf cap across the power in and the ground pins of the chip. Now cut 5 small gauge wires 8 inches long each; remove insulation from each end. And cut one wire 3 to 4 inches long. Get out your volt meter find +5 volts on the 128 board, solder one 8in wire from that to power in on the 7406. Be sure you get +5 volts, there also is +12 on the 128 board. Find a good ground; solder one 8 in wire from that to ground pin on the 7406. Solder the output of one gate of the 7406 to the input of the next gate. This gate set will have the same signal as the data line. Now solder the input to this gate set to the data in on the main 128 board. Data comes into the 128 on FB8, near the serial port. Solder the output of this gate set to the end of R42 that goes to the power LED, with an 8-inch wire. Now solder one end of the short wire to a different gate input, and the other end to the input of gate set you just finished. Solder the output of this gate to the end of R32 that goes to the power LED, with an 8-inch wire. Get out your hot glue gun and glue down the wires to the small board. Now get some thick doubleback and tape the small board to the main 128 board.

Put the 128 back together. And turn it on. You should have just one side of the power LED on. If you have no LED's on or if smoke rolls out turn it off fast. And recheck your work. When data is going back and forth the two LED's will blink back and forth. One side is the same level as the data line, the other is opposite. Good luck. The other project I am working on now is a device changer that is just one button. And steps the device number from 8 to 9 to 10 to 11 to 8. It almost works I still need to work out some small things to finish.

Happy 8 byteing.



The Helping Hand

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

Robert Bales 831-0008
Telecommunications, Internet, CMD HD and FD drives

Dale Lutes 721-0835
GEOS, Programming, Word Processing, Desktop Publishing,
CMD FD drives and RAMLink

Don McManamey 265-2560
Word Processing, Print Shop, Printing

Jerry Shook 776-2683
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. Call Jerry at 776-2683 or mail your articles to:

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c/o Jerold Shook
412 N. Morris
Rose Hill, Kansas 67133

