The Zero Page

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

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Commodore Users of Wichita will meet on January 8th At our regular meeting place starting 1:00 p.m.

Random Access
By Dale Lutes

I am writing this article on Tuesday, December 28, just a few days away from January 1, 2000 and a full year from the start of the new millennium. That's right. In spite of what you've probably heard, the next millennium starts on January 1, 2001. Consider: There was no year zero, The first millennium ran from year1 through 1000, and the second from 1001 through 2000. Thus, the next begins in the year 2001. It's just one of those things about all this millennium talk that "bugs" me.

Regardless of what we call it, the year 2000 is a significant one for computers. By the time you read this we will know how it all turned out. Was there total chaos? Widespread power outages? Serious water and food shortages? In spite of all the hype, my prediction is the year rollover turns out to be a pretty ho-hum event. Yeah, there will be a few incidents for the press to play up, but I figure life for the vast majority of us will go on as if nothing happened.

Now if I may look back for a bit... I hope you made it to the December meeting. I got there just a little late, but I made it just the same and am I ever glad I did. The turnout was not as large as years past, but remember, neither is our membership role. What made this meeting great for me was the significant number of former members who returned to celebrate with us: Marie Both, Fred Earley, Gene Engel, and Dwayne Howard were all there. These are the people who helped shape the CUW early on and whom I will always remember when I think of our club. We had some other visitors as well. I know I missed seeing Virginia Benoit and I'm sure there are others I've forgotten to mention here, plus most of our current active members. It was great to see all of you.

We had a couple of neat demos going on at the meeting (between trips to the snack table!). Nate's C128 tower continues to evolve. It's always fun to check out the latest modifications he's made. I thought the JPEG viewer that he ran is one of the best programs I've seen for our machines lately. Just across the room, Don and Matt McManamey demonstrated a couple of C64 emulators running on Don's Macintosh G4. What was really cool about this demo was that the software ran from copies of our club's *Disk O'Quarter*. Don announced our plans to compile all issues of the DOQ plus all of *The Zero Page* to date on CD. The disk will be compatible with PCs and Macs both and will include the best emulators we can find. Much of the work has already been done and I am continuing to work on the DOQ conversions. I think this is a real exciting project for our club!

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the January meeting. Until then, keep that Commodore spirit alive!

"Notes from a Big Country"

For a long time it puzzled me how something so expensive, so leading edge, could be so useless, and then it occurred to me that a computer is a stupid machine with the ability to do incredibly smart things, while computer programmers are smart people with the ability to do incredibly stupid things. They are, in short, a perfect match.

Bill Bryson,

Don's Digest
By Don McManamey

Here I sit thinking about the coming new year and what it might bring. The year 2000! The end of the 20th century! Let me wish you a happy New Year and say that this last year of the 20th century will bring something new for the club. Now I won't go into the bit about when the century ends. Either you understand or you don't. Any way you look at it though, the year 2000 is something special. One might think the club is about to end and not much new will come from it but that is not true. Those of you who were at the Christmas party know that I brought my Mac and showed 2 emulators of the Commodore 64. Most of us have moved on to some other computer but are drawn together by this old machine. I recall reading in Compute!'s Gazette what the problem with emulators is. Most of it boiled down to speed and memory. Computers have gained so much speed and memory since then that it is not near the barrier it used to be.

When you compare a 1mhz Commodore to a 350mhz machine of any brand, the problem is obviously not speed and we how have memory to burn. These emulators have been evolving at a steady rate. Admittedly there is no one emulator for the Mac that does it all. We have however found two that appear to cover the entire basis. The one we like the best does not do the slide show pictures at all but does gaming quite well. Our biggest problem was finding all our favorite programs on the net. If only we could just convert all those old programs we loved. After all, isn't that why the converters were made in the first place? People just love the old Commodore games. So where is this all leading and what does this have to do with something new from the club?

Dale Lutes and I have argued about whose idea it was and finally agreed that our conversation might be called "brain storming." As such it is the brainchild of both of us. So what is this idea? What if we put all the Disks O'Quarter on CD? We could include the emulators for the Mac, PC and perhaps even a UNIX machine. Not just the DOQ but the Zero Page too! Well we have good news and bad news to report. At this juncture Dale has converted all the Zero Page issues when he was Editor into a PDF format. No, that does not stand for Pretty Darn Fine. PDF files are Portable Document Files and are read using the Adobe Acrobat reader, which is free to distribute. More good news is that he has converted all of the DOQs and getting ready to give it to me for burning to CD. Now whether this is in the category of good or bad I will leave up to you. Jerry Shook has all the issues of the Zero Page for which he was Editor ready to transport for conversion to PDF. Now the bad news is that we don't have an emulator for the PC. We could just download one from the net but we would not have any way to know if it is a good one or not. Here is the deal. We need one of you PC people to provide us with a good emulator or two if as in the case of the Mac two are called for.

Now there is one more thing. If anyone has any PD software that they think should be added to our

collection, now is the time to dust it off. One thing to keep in mind, we do need some instructions so people will know how to use it. If all goes well, we will have a CD that will be useable on three different platforms and ready for distribution in the spring. I think that is truly something to look forward to. Most of us are running our Commodores on borrowed time or have them packed away. We will be able to have the best of both worlds on one desk and on one machine!

Now for a personal note. As we carried our Mac in and placed it on the table, someone said, "Macs should be burned." One of our young men who had been vocal in the past along the same lines spoke up and said, "we don't talk like that here." It is nice to see people grow up in the club and mature. I find it interesting that the negative comment was later replaced with something more positive. We are not sure just what inspired the change. It might have been how we emulated the Commodore or when we opened the machine and show the inside or just maybe it was when we ran an emulator of his game machine. We put his CD into our machine and played his game. Whatever the reason, it does show one thing. When we keep our minds open we are able to learn new things and just maybe we will enjoy what we find.

Here is hoping that your New Year is everything you hope it will be. I know it holds a great deal of promise for me.

Don ☺

MOES SOAP BOX
By Morris Shouse

Year 2000. January 1st. Saturday morning 10:am. Its here and the world did NOT end! Some how I knew it would not end. Why? Because God will not let man tell Him what timetable to use. OK! OK! Back to computers. My commodore seems to work fine. But I haven't tried my son's brand XXX yet. Also I haven't checked the RTC on the 4 CMD devices. The one that Wheels uses is set to the right date. But I can't find a way inside Wheels to see the others. Now I know this is where Nate would say just use the DOS commands. Well that's fine for Nate, but I can't remember all that. Maybe we'll just have Nate demo that at the next meeting. Well my organation. Wheels disk still will not make a bootable disk. Mr. Randell says I can move the boot sector over and it should work. And he is no doubt right. But I think I would like to my Wheels on a 3.5 disk. Why in the world I ordered a 5.25 inch disk in the first place ill never know. So I'll be sending my organation. Wheels disk to Mr. Randell, I think he is doing a good job of supporting his product. If you get a chance go to Nate's web site. He has the new pictures of his tower. Jerry took them at the Xmas meeting. Nate's web site:

www2.southwind/~natedac/

WOW! I almost forgot, the GO64 #9 has an article about a program called Find. If you'll remember this magazine now has Commodore World folded in now. So it is really two magazine in one. Well this new program finds things DUH! But the best part is that it works in Wheels. And it lets you use wild cards just like JDOS. The (?) is for a single letter, the * can be used in the middle or the end of a word. You can select. File types, drives, or by date. You can rename files, copy, delete or out to geowrite. One draw beck is that it will not work in a 1571 or 1541 partition. It works well with a SUPER CPU. Well you have no doubt guessed by now Mr. Maurice Randell codes it. I think when I send in my Wheels to get it upgraded I will ask about getting it. It is suppose to be free.

HAPPY Y2K

Moe ☺

The Helping Hand

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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

Carl Poston   776-0735
Commodore Plus 4

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!