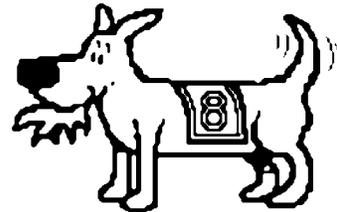


# The Zero Page

*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 25, November 1995

**Next CUW Meeting:**  
**\*\* November 4 \*\***  
**1:00 - 5:00 pm**  
**1411 South Oliver**

This month we feature two disks  
from our Public Domain Library:

Jerry Shook will take us on a tour  
of *Just For Fun* and Marie Both will  
demonstrate *Micro Astrologer*.

## geoSIG News

by Dwayne Howard

Hello, SIG people. We had six people show up at the October SIG meeting. I'll try to tell you in my words just what we did. For starters, Marie had to get me in line. I don't know GEOS too well and I had a cold, so things were slow for me (Ha, Ha! Good excuse). In our meetings so far, we've covered the book from page 1 to page 178. This month, we:

- ✓ reviewed some of the dos and don'ts on page 49 in the GEOS book.
- ✓ reviewed which files should be present on our system disk, work disk, and data disk.
- ✓ reviewed how to change disk drives and to use CONFIGURE (pp 78-83).
- ✓ reviewed how to create a new geoWrite document (pp 146-148).
- ✓ learned how to change text fonts and styles (pp 169).
- ✓ learned how to set margins and justification (pp 164-165, 167-168).
- ✓ learned how to cut and paste text (pp 158-163).
- ✓ learned how to set tab stops (pp 165-166).
- ✓ began working with decimal tab stops (pp 166-167).

I will sign off with that.  
Yours truly, Dwayne

## Random Access

by Dale Lutes

I've been thinking a lot about disks lately. I can't help it, really. I deal with them on a daily basis at work, I boot GEOS on my C-128 from disk, and my Mac has this silly, off-center mouth that is eager to swallow up any 3-1/2 inch disk that I offer.

It occurred to me while driving to work the other morning (I do my best thinking in the car and while I am shaving) that many new users are mystified by computer disks. The Commodore 1541 and 1571 manuals don't help much. They are rather technical and it's often hard to find what you want even if you know what it is you are looking for. What I want to try to do in this month's column is to clarify some of the concepts for you.

For the purposes of this discussion, let's ignore Compact Discs or CDs. Our machines can't use them at this time (and besides, they're spelled funny). Now that we're talking about magnetic disks, we can make a broad statement: Disks are disks. Today's disks are essentially the same as the washing-machine sized units of the early 1960's: They have one or more "platters" coated with magnetic material (like audio cassettes) and they spin really fast. Information is stored on them in concentric ring patterns like the circles around the bulls-eye on a target. *Heads* move in and out across the rotating disk to read and write the rings (called *tracks*) of data.

(continued on page 2)

## Special Notice:

Due to a scheduling conflict at our meeting place, both our November and December meetings have been moved up a week to the **first** Saturday of the month. The dates for our next two meetings are:

**Saturday, November 4**  
**Saturday, December 2**

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## Random Access (continued from page 1)

A disk fresh out of the box isn't quite ready to use. It's something like a completely blank piece of paper. You can try to write on it, but your sentences are going to slant up and down the page, some close together, some far apart, but rarely right where you want them. The first thing you need to do with a disk is to *format* it. Think of a formatted disk as a sheet out of a Big Chief writing tablet. Ahhhh, now we have some lines to help us keep our sentences (or data) lined up just right where the heads can read them.

To carry our analogy a little farther, a 1541 is that page out of our Big Chief, but you aren't allowed to use the back side. If you have a 1571, you are now allowed to write on both sides of the paper - in fact, you don't even have to flip it over! You have a good friend (a second head, actually) that is able to lie underneath the table and write on the back side while you are writing on the front! If you are lucky enough to own a 1581, what you have is a sheet of paper, front and back, college-ruled! You can write a heck of a lot on these babies!

The main difference when we go from a 1571 to a 1581 is the spacing between the lines, or the *density*. This lets us get more onto a sheet of paper that is physically smaller. Remember when I said that today's disks were essentially the same as those washing-machines? Once again, the real difference is the density. Drive manufacturers have continued to find ways to "squeeze those lines" closer and closer together right down to the microscopic level.

Another way to store more information is to simply use more paper. Instead of that single sheet, lets write on that whole Big Chief tablet. Cut open a 5-1/4 inch or 3-1/2 inch floppy disk and you'll see a single disk, our one sheet of paper. The way to get a whole tablet is to use a hard disk (like one of Creative Micro Design's HD drives). If you were to cut one of these open (although I **strongly** suggest that you don't!) you would find several disks stacked one above the other all spinning together. Gaps in between allow the heads to move in and access both sides of each platter.

A common misconception is that a 3-1/2 inch floppy is a "hard" disk. People are fooled by the inflexible plastic covering. What really counts is the material that the disk inside is made from. A 3-1/2 inch disk is just as "floppy" inside as a 5-1/4 inch disk. In a real hard disk, the platters are made out of metal. Using precisely machined, inflexible material is one of the ways the manufacturers get those "lines" closer together.

This looks like a good place to stop for now. Next month, we'll **discover** how to care for and use floppies on our Commodore systems.



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## November Meeting Agenda



|             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1:00 - 2:00 | Equipment setup, informal meeting |
| 2:00 - 2:45 | Business meeting                  |
| 2:45 - 3:00 | Break                             |
| 3:00 - 4:00 | Feature demonstration             |
| 4:00 - 5:00 | Meeting over, informal gathering, |



The October meeting announcement stated that the feature demonstration would be on **Partner 128**, a set of utilities package for the C-64. Of course, **Partner 128** will work on the C-128 *only*.

### Your CUW Steering Committee members are:

|                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Arlen Gould</b>     | Chair                   |
| <b>Marie Both</b>      | Vice-Chair              |
| <b>Robert Bales</b>    | BBS Representative      |
| <b>Francis Catudal</b> | Public Domain Librarian |
| <b>Nate Dannenberg</b> | BBS Representative      |
| <b>Shaun Halstead</b>  | Internet Representative |
| <b>Dwayne Howard</b>   | geoSIG Chairman         |
| <b>Dale Lutes</b>      | Newsletter Editor       |
| <b>Don McManamey</b>   | Disk Editor             |
| <b>Jerry Shook</b>     | Quartermaster           |

*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 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. 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

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.



## Don's Digest

by Don McManamey

Recently I helped a young lady get a printer for her Commodore 64 so she could do word processing. This might not sound like such a big deal to you but

for some it can be quite a nightmare. If you've never purchased the wrong printer then perhaps you don't know the problems you can have. In this case it was a used printer just like mine, a Star NX1020 Rainbow. Since I use *The Write Stuff* and have a 128 version ready to go I figured it would be a snap, it wasn't. I didn't remember that I hadn't customized a 64 version. The 64 not having as much memory doesn't have as many user definable macros either. I also like to modify the help screens to reflect the level of customization. Needless to say I spent a good 2 evenings making the adjustments. Just think if I hadn't known the printer or printer codes.

There was a time when you could hook up nearly any printer to the 64 and get good results. All you needed was an interface. Not true any more. The main reason is that many printers have printer drivers supplied on disk rather than a book giving all the codes. This is fine if you have the computer the driver is made for but they are not making printer drivers for the 8 bit Commodore machines. I know one fellow who took back a printer because the only instructions were very general and a disk with printer drivers did the rest... if you have an IBM.

The other major concern is graphics. If you don't want graphics then your options are much greater. One of our members bought a 24 pin printer to replace his Commodore printer. Talk about great print quality. We did run into 2 problems. First, we never learned how to get scalable fonts. For those of you who don't know, fonts are the characters. There are literally hundreds of fonts and for some of the powerful machines a single font can cost over one hundred dollars. We did get one extra large font but no more. The other problem was his graphics. Thanks to another member who showed me an article from *Commodore World* we learned that his printer will not do graphics as we would like. The key is that a normal 24 pin printer stretches graphics from top to bottom. Here we need to emulate an eight pin printer. This is done by putting the printer in IBM Proprinter mode with AGM off. Most Epson printers do not have this capability. Guess what? You got it. His printer is an Epson.

Oh well. Is there a point to all this? Yes. Before you buy, talk to others. Try to buy what has already been proven. Used printers become much more attractive if they are what others have, especially if they used it with the same software you plan to use. Beware of Commodore and Commodore ready printers. These may be lacking in versatility. Finally, it helps to have a friend who can decipher the printer manual.

Now, I would like to depart from my usual format and voice an opinion on a matter of club policy. Recently there has been considerable talk about the formation of SIGs and whether or not the club should give financial support and if so in what way and

how much. I have heard a lot of opinions and want my 2 cents worth to be heard.

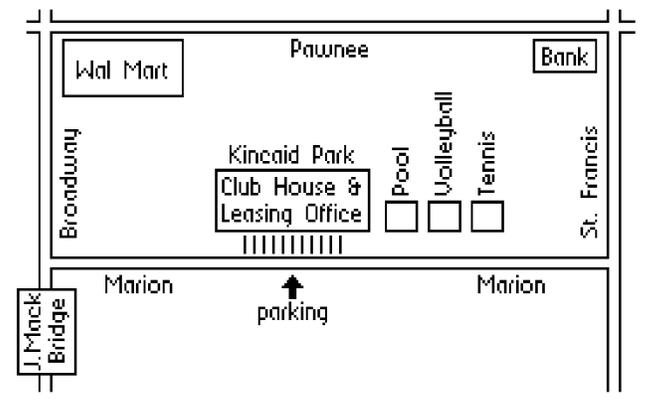
I have always been some what cautious about spending money when we never know where the money will come from. Just because we have money now doesn't mean we will have it in the future. What if the rent goes up or we must move to a place which costs considerably more? We could quickly find ourselves in hot water. That is why we had some of our fund raisers in the early days of the club. However, we do have plenty of money at this time and we are a non-profit organization.

Up 'til now the GEOS SIG has been self supporting. That is good. In the past, the meeting place cost just \$10 a month and a dollar per person per meeting seemed reasonable. Consider this. Not everyone who went to a SIG meeting was going to learn. Some went to teach and others went to help while others went simply to support and see what was going on. Should I *pay* for the privilege to teach? Should I pay for the privilege to help? How many volunteers do you think we would have to give a demo at the regular club meetings if they had to pay to do it? Would Dale pay to be newsletter editor? Would I pay to be DOQ editor? How much would you pay to be club Chairman?

I think we should look at each SIG as to general appeal and then determine how much *specific* help we are willing to give. It is my understanding that the GEOS SIG has found a free meeting place for the time being, but, I think we should be willing to underwrite them to the tune of \$10 a month for rent only. Anything above that should be considered on an individual basis. Let's not give birth to an *us* and *them* attitude like we left behind. I have not been a big user of GEOS over the years, but I do think it deserves our support. When ten dollars a month becomes burdensome then we can rethink our position. Until then, let's loosen up on the purse strings a little.

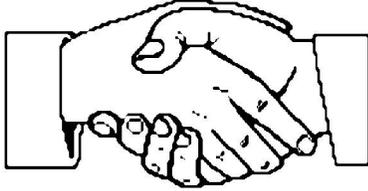
### Join Eight-Bit and Tidbit for the next GEOS Special Interest Group meeting

Thursday, November 16  
Kincaid Park Club House, 410 Marion  
Setup at 6:30, Meeting starts at 7:00



## The Helping Hand

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



### Music

Robert Bales                      Nate Dannenberg

### Telecommunications

Robert Bales                      Nate Dannenberg

### Programming

Nate Dannenberg                Dale Lutes

### Astrology, Biorhythm

Marie Both

### Printing in Color

Don McManamey                Jerry Shook

### Labels

Jerry Shook

### Titling Home Videos

Sue Harber

### Cards, Posters & Signs

Fred Earley

### Word Processing & Desktop Publishing

Fred Earley                      Don McManamey  
Jerry Shook                      Dale Lutes

### GEOS

Nate Dannenberg                Fred Earley  
Dale Lutes

### Family Roots

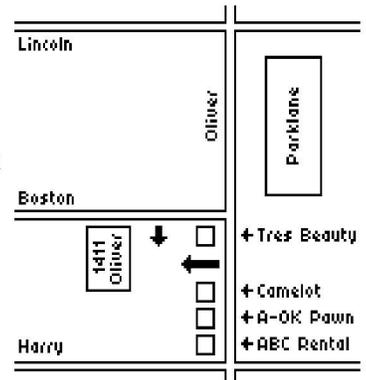
Maxine Ulrich

### Helping Hand Volunteers

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Robert Bales    | 744-2580 |
| Marie Both      | 262-2338 |
| Nate Dannenberg | 777-0363 |
| Fred Earley     | 722-4044 |
| Sue Harber      | 942-4884 |
| Dale Lutes      | 721-0835 |
| Don McManamey   | 265-2560 |
| Jerry Shook     | 776-2683 |
| Maxine Ulrich   | 838-8606 |

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 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. 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. A newsletter-only membership is available for \$5 per year. 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:

Marie Both  
Commodore Users of Wichita  
351 E Marion CT, #2  
Wichita, KS 67216

What Commodore systems do you use? (please check all that apply)  
 VIC-20    C-64    C-128    C-16    Plus/4    Other

Type of membership:    Family (\$15)    Newsletter-only (\$5)

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

List additional family members who are interested in participating:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_