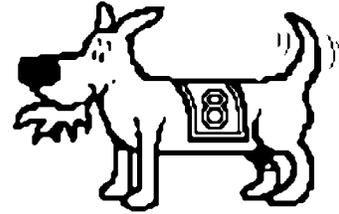# The Zero Page

The newsletter of the Commodore Users of Wichita

"For the sharing, learning, and love of Commodore computers"

Number 36, October 1996

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

CUW Open House
Saturday, October 5
10:00am - 5:00 pm
Z-Software
1003 South Vine

The CUW will hold its first open house this Saturday, October 5. David Zimmerman of *Z-Software* has offered to allow us to use his store for this special event. We will have ongoing demonstrations of GEOS, word processing, music and more! Be on hand for the special telecommunications and geoPublish demos. Door prizes will be awarded and we will hold a raffle for a complete C-64 system (computer, monitor, and disk drive) donated by *Z-Software*.

Z-Software is located at the corner of McCormick and Vine, just south of Kellogg, between Seneca and Meridian.

Next CUW Meeting:
Saturday, October 12
1:00 - 5:00 pm
1411 South Oliver

Our next regular club meeting will be held as usual on the second Saturday of the month. Mike Shook has offered to give us a demonstration of some educational software for C-64 and C-128 systems.

Jerry's Corner
by Jerry Shook

Just in case there are some of our members that missed it, your steering committee has been working on a Commodore users day or computer show or what ever you want to call it. What it is, is a get together that the public is invited to, so we can show off our computers and maybe get a few new members to share our love of the Commodore 8 bit machines.

I have been asked to share my memories of earlier computer meets. To start with, my memory is far from good at best, but I will try. The first all-city computer user day was actually pushed into being by one of the other clubs, but the Commodore club, which was then the Commodore Users Group of Wichita, jumped in with both feet. And being the largest of the clubs, we had the most machines present at the meeting. The wisdom of the time was that it probably would not amount to much, so a building not much bigger than the one that we meet in now was rented. Boy were they wrong! We were packed in shoulder to shoulder, and not just from the clubs either. We had a lot of people that were interested in computers and even the TV news crews got wind of it and showed up. I got to see myself on TV playing on a C=64.

After it was over, we had had so much fun that most of the clubs decided to make it an annual affair. For the next few years, we got together and each time we would get a larger meeting place and it would still be crowded. Other than the first meeting, the one that sticks in my memory best is the time that we took over the Indian Center and filled it with so many computers that we kept blowing the breakers and shutting down all but the C=64 line of computers. We actually had more machines on our circuit but the C=64 doesn't draw the power that the larger machines do and so while they were busy rebooting and restarting their machines, we were busy playing games, drawing pictures, and doing music demos. I have a picture of me talking to a gentleman while his son and another boy are playing on my system. I was told the other day that the boy is now out school and the gentleman has finally bought his first C=64. Now ain't that neat?

I think one of the reasons that the all-city computer users day broke up was that the other clubs didn't have the turn out that we were able to get, and so we lost the main driving force outside of our club. We hated to just stop, so we decided to have a Commodore users day and to make things more interesting we invited some vendors in to show their wares. It worked great. We had fun, got lots of new members, and the following year we were being asked when we would have the next one. As time went on, the club changed, we added other computers and one by one we lost our support with the vendors. But some things stayed the same: We still had fun, we drew people in from outside the club, and our membership always grew from having the get together.

We are about to have the first computer day since we reformed our club. We will be having it in a small area and with only one vendor. But I really think that if we support it and let others know about it, they will come. And we will have fun again...

Rear View Mirror
by Moe Shouse

This time I'll do something a lot different. Dale said he needed an article sooner than normal and that he will get it out before our open house. What's this you say? An open house? Well yes. Some people call it "Users Day." Well, I won't go on much about the open house, just be there Saturday, October 5 at Z-Software from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dale also said it would nice if the article was related to the open house. I was able to find (it wasn't hard) an article in *Commodore World* about a Commodore Expo!

In issue 15 (May/June/July) is an article about the Lansing Area Commodore Club Expo. The article & photos are by Max Cottrel. He says there were about 50 people, a bunch of 64s & 128s, software and a race car! With Commodore guru's like Jim Brain, Maurice Randall, Raymond Day, and Eric Kudzin, it was a big success. Mr. Randall owns the #93 ARCA stock car, look for it on ESPN. Mr. Randall is the author of geoFAX, and other good software. There is photo of Mr. Randall's geoFAX running on a 64 with more stuff hanging out of the cartridge port than you can guess.

Eric Kudzin showed a video tour of Creative Micro Designs, Inc. It shows an assembly line for hard drives, a room full of 1571 drives, a ton of one of a kind Commodore computers, and some unreleased computers (CBM of course) including a **gold** plated C=64! Eric is well known for his audio CD software.

Raymond Day is a 2 meg REU expert, and is doing work on 64K video C=128 upgrades. He also has a VIC 20 font burned in ROM in his C=128, it looks Sans Serif. He also does a lot of one of a kind software, like one that keeps track of how much memory is left in your REU.

They had some people from the Muskegon Commodore Users Group come by which included some teachers, and a judge! The Honorable Richard Pasarela is an admitted Commodore junkie. Also the Karnkee Commodore Users Group drove all the way in from Chicago. Now that tells a lot about how much they like Commodores!

Well I hope our Open House will be a good event too! Now I have to go. I need to do some things to get ready for our Open House. Don't forget we are raffling off a C=64 system. Tickets are 50 cents each. Be there or be square!
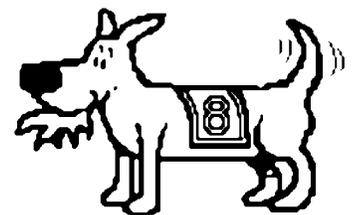
Don's Digest
by Don McManamey

I send my apologies to each member who was looking for the Disk O'Quarter last month. I very nearly had it ready for distribution, but you know what they say about close. Sometimes one just doesn't do all the things one would like to.

My employer has been working me 6 and 7 days a week, which cuts into my time and keeps me from coming to the meetings. Next, my youngest son has a car which is not working currently and we have been trying to get it back together, but he is in school in Oklahoma City. You might think the car could sit but for a variety of reasons it cannot. On top of that, he has been mowing lawns through the summer and does not want to lose any accounts and so he must come home on the weekends to mow grass and work on his car. So what does this have to do with the Disk O'Quarter? Well, when I get off work on Friday, I go to Oklahoma City and pick him up and bring him home. This will take a bare minimum of 5 hours. Then on Saturday after I get off work, I help him mow. On Sunday there is either work or church. Then work on the car and/or mowing. If I missed church in the morning then church in the evening is a must. This is followed by another 5 hour round trip to and from Oklahoma City. Then there are always the other things of life which must be tended to. The week before the September meeting I was up until 1 am working on the Disk O'Quarter but just ran out of time. As I sit and word process, it is past my bed time but Dale is looking for this by Saturday and that will be a work day. I still don't know about my trip on Friday; there is the promise of hitching a ride back to Wichita but we don't know for sure. Thursday is spoken for and this is Wednesday so here I sit. Now I know some of you have been there and done that. Some of you are doing as much or more now but you are you and I am me and well, if you want the job just holler. This brings me to the following:

How many times has this happened to you? You have a document you are working on when suddenly the computer locks up and you lose everything.

Well, just the other night I was working on something in the *Write Stuff*. Time was short. The phone rings and it is my sister from Georgia. I can't tell her I can't talk so we do. Now I'm running later. I can't afford for anything to slow me down. The document is ready but my spelling is terrible so I hit the shifted up arrow (spell checker). Sure enough I find the first misspelled word. No problem finding the correct word. I just cursor down to it and press RETURN. Oops! One problem. My fast load is in place and it does not like to spell check. The computer is now throwing a temper tantrum and is locked up. With great sweat pouring forth, I press the RUN/STOP key and the RESTORE key. What a brat. The computer continues to pout and will not break free from the lock-up. Again and again I try to no avail. I turn off various accessories. Still no luck. Then I regain my composure. The *Write Stuff* has the answer. I dig for the Reference Manual and find the information I need. It is SYS7250. Taking just a little extra time to make sure I do it right I remember. Turn off the drives, especially the one with the boot disk. Now press the reset button. The screen clears and for all intents and purposes it would appear we have just powered up, but not so. Entering the SYS and pressing RETURN I get what looks like my file. Now, turn on the "save to" drive and save the file, list the load directory and verify that the file was saved. Eureka!! Now turn off the machine, remove the fast load cartridge and re-boot TWS. Load the file and spell check. Only two errors. Save the corrections and print out the results.

But you say "I have a 64 and it does not have a reset button." First, if you have a fast load cartridge it may have a reset button. If you don't have one then not all is lost yet. If you can get to the back or the computer and the expansion slot is open, you can reset the computer with a small piece of wire. Carefully touch one end to the top or bottom pin to the extreme right. They are known as pins "1" and "A" respectively. Touch the other to the third one from the right on the bottom row. The end ones are a ground and the 3rd one in on the bottom is the reset. You could prepare for such an event by installing a reset button ahead of time for just such an occasion. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, there is probably someone at the club that will do it for you. In fact we may very well be able to offer this as a service as we did the device number switches. Until next time, don't let anyone push your buttons!

Tips and Bits
by Dwayne Howard
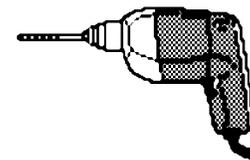
This time we're going to learn a little about the disk and drives. Commodore manufactured three different models:

✔ The 1541, when formatted, gives you 664 blocks per side. By cutting an extra write-protect notch into double sided (DS) disks, you can flip the disk over and write to the other side.

✔ The 1571 reads and writes to both sides of double sided disks without flipping and without cutting the extra notch. It is also faster than the 1541.

✔ The 1581 uses a 3-1/2 inch disk that holds 3160 blocks. I use this one a lot and many of our other club members own 1581 drives.

I didn't know that the double sided/double density (DS/DD) had a ring in the middle and the high density/double sided have no ring. This is how you can tell right away if you have the right disk.

Just a reminder to any member that is having trouble out there: Call one of the members listed in the Helping Hand section that we list in every newsletter.

Random Access
by Dale Lutes

I have a few random thoughts to share with you this month. Hey, I gave my column its name just so I could get away with stuff like this ;-).

First of all, my football schedule prevented me from making the September meeting. Well, not entirely --- I showed up just as the last few members were packing up their cars. I will also miss our regular meeting on October 12 (I know, that's 3 in a row!) but I **will** be at the Open House on October 5. I am looking forward to seeing all of you again.

Second, I noticed something interesting as I read the comics in today's newspaper: Several of the artists are listing World Wide Web addresses in or between the panels of their strips. I started thinking about how computer humor has made its way into the lives of ordinary people. It's not uncommon to see strips like Shoe, Dave, Foxtrot, Dilbert, and others poking fun at the machines we love and at the culture that has grown up around them. Yet, as little as ten years ago, the vast majority of the readers would have not understood the joke we all chuckle over today. I have a feeling that back then, most cartoonists wouldn't have attempted these kinds of strips or else their editors would have rejected them.

Now on to my final topic: My daughter came to me a few nights ago and asked me to help her study for her first computer exam of the semester. She knows better than to ask Mom when computers are involved! Among the questions we reviewed were the definition of *boot* and the keystrokes used to *scroll* forward and backward in the word processor they use at school. Not content to simply give the answers, I went on to explain the origin of these ''computer'' terms in hopes that this trivia might help her remember better for the test. With a deadline for *The Zero Page* fast approaching, I wasn't about to let a topic like this fall into my lap and then go to waste.

Scroll and *scrolling* have their roots in a much earlier word processor: Pen and paper. Before the invention of bound books, long documents were written on long scrolls of paper. The book would be unwound from one spool and onto another as it was being read. The space in between gave the reader a ''window'' into the document. In the same way, you can imagine spools above and below your word processing screen, electronically winding and unwinding as you scroll up and down through your own documents.

Booting is a shortened form of the term *bootstrapping*. Today, we often use the term boot anytime we load a program into our computers from disk or other external storage. But to be precise, bootstrapping refers only to the process of loading the initial program or operating system into the computer's memory from a cold start. In order to get a computer to do *anything*, even to load a program, it must already have a program loaded. Do you see the Catch-22? Today, modern computers contain a small loader program in ROM that is just enough to find the operating system on a boot disk and load it into memory. The operating system in our Commodores is small enough that the whole thing can be stored in ROM and we can forget about boot disks. Way back in the early days, there was simply no such thing as a loader in ROM. The use would input the loader by hand, usually via toggle switches on the front of the computer. This would bring in a more complex loader from cards or paper tape, which in turn would bring in more and more until finally the whole operating system was up and running. Early computer pioneers likened the whole process to a man hoisting himself up into the air by pulling on his own bootstraps, thus the origin of the term bootstrapping.

I hope you've enjoyed these little stories. I don't know yet if they helped my daughter's test score any. Oh, did I mention that there was going to be a quiz at the next meeting?...

DOQ #14 Now Available

Disk O'Quarter #14 will be available for our members to pick up at the October 12 meeting. Here is a list of the contents:

Star Trek 128	128 (80 col)
Space Caverns	64
Bagdad	64
Therapy	64
Math Attack	64
Spelling Critter	64
Ball Clock	64
Iridis	64
Slide Show Pictures (viewer on DOQ#2)	64 / 128 (40 col)

The geoSide:

GeoMille v1.1	Scrap Can
Flag Setter	FPattern Editor
Font Dump	8 new fonts
Canon bubble jet BJ-200e printer drivers	

Your CUW Steering Committee members are:

Dale Lutes	Chair, Newsletter Editor
Jerry Shook	Vice-Chair
Marie Both	Financial Officer
Robert Bales	BBS Representative
Francis Catudal	Public Domain Librarian
Arlen Gould	Member at-large
Shaun Halstead	Internet Representative
Dwayne Howard	Member at-large
Don McManamey	Disk Editor
Morris Shouse	Member at-large

The Helping Hand

This column lists those users willing to share their experiences and knowledge with other club members.
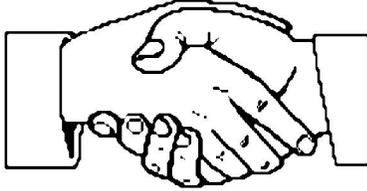
Astrology, Biorhythm
Marie Both

Cards, Posters & Signs
Fred Earley   Ron Shannon

Family Roots
Maxine Ulrich

GEOS
Fred Earley   Dale Lutes

Getting Started
Ron Shannon

Internet Access
Shaun Halstead

Labels
Jerry Shook

Telecommunications
Robert Bales

Printing in Color
Don McManamey   Jerry Shook

Programming
Dale Lutes

Word Processing & Desktop Publishing
Fred Earley   Don McManamey
Jerry Shook   Dale Lutes

Helping Hand Volunteers
Robert Bales   744-2580
Marie Both   262-2338
Fred Earley   722-4044
Shaun Halstead   942-5809
Dale Lutes   721-0835
Don McManamey   265-2560
Ron Shannon   263-6390
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 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!
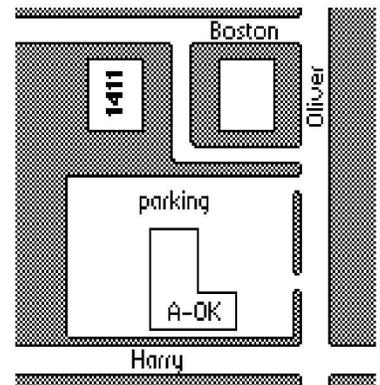
You may join or renew your membership by mail.
Complete this form and mail with a check payable to:

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

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) _____