The Zero Page

The newsletter of the Commodore Users of Wichita

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

Number 53, March 1998
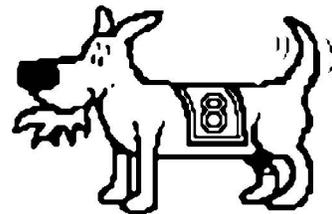
Eight-bit keeps takin' a byte
out of Commodore computing
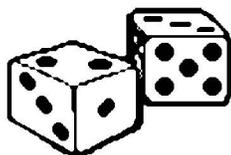
Random Access
by Dale Lutes

It occurred to me recently that election time for our club is drawing near once again. In fact, nominations for Chair and Vice Chair open this month. According to our bylaws, Jerry Shook and I cannot run for re-election this year as we have each held our respective positions for two consecutive terms. Here is a good chance for YOU to get involved and help shape the future of the CUW. If you are curious about that it takes to run our organization and what you can do to help, please see Jerry or myself some time in the next four to six weeks.

In January, I demonstrated a desktop environment for GEOS users called **GeoDOS** that was developed by a couple of Commodore programmers in Germany. I've been reading lately about a GEOS upgrade named **Mega Patch 3** that sounded very similar to GeoDOS. Sure enough, after some checking, I learned that the authors of GeoDOS and Mega Patch are one and the same. This is just a guess, but it looks to me as if Mega Patch is an updated version of the program that I demonstrated.

Speaking of GeoDOS, this program has become an important part of how I put this newsletter together. Here's how: For some time now, Don McManamey has been submitting his monthly article to me in Macintosh format. Since I also own a Mac, I have no problem in reading the document and converting it into ASCII for import into geoWrite. After converting, I would transfer the file from the Mac to my computer at work via modem, then dial in from my Commodore and download the file. Not the simplest procedure, but it worked well. In January, I upgraded my Mac and its operating system to a version that supported 3.5-inch IBM-formatted disks. I discovered GeoDOS at about the same time which, with my FD-2000 disk drive from CMD, can read and write the same IBM-formatted disks. This works great! The only thing that could be better would be to have a direct network connection between the two machines.

I am also using the Mac/GeoDOS combination to serve as my Commodore's connection to the internet. You are probably aware that Commodore computers can be used for internet access. But there can be no denying that a graphical interface is much more user-friendly. So I use my Mac to access the internet. When I come across a program for the *Disk O'Quarter* or a news story for *The Zero Page,* I turn to GeoDOS once again to get the file to my C-128.

Next CUW Meeting:
Saturday, March 14
1:00 - 4:00 pm
1411 South Oliver

subLogic's *Flight Simulator II* remains one of the most sophisticated programs ever written for the C64. Take off with Dale Lutes at our next meeting.

Your CUW Steering Committee members are:

Dale Lutes	Chair, Newsletter Editor
Jerry Shook	Vice-Chair
Marie Both	Financial Officer
Robert Bales	BBS Representative
Bob Frisbie	Member at-large
Arlen Gould	Member at-large
Don McManamey	Disk Editor
Morris Shouse	Member at-large

Rear View Mirror
by Moe Shouse

This month we will look at a *Compute!* magazine, April 1985. That is not a *Compute!'s Gazette*. What is the difference you may ask? Well the straight *Compute!* magazine does stuff about all brands of computers. *Compute!'s Gazette* is only about Commodores. But *Compute!* still has articles about Commodores. So it is one source you should not overlook. In case you did not know, some your favorite Commodore writers are in *Compute!*. Mr. Butterfield, Larry Cotton, Richard Mansfield. But there is one writer that is in *Compute!* that you may not recognize the name, but has had a bigger impact on computers than anyone! His name is David D. Thornburg. He worked at Xerox PARC in the 70's, invented the Koala Pad, and has written a dozen or more books on computing (some about Macs, one is an intro to artificial intelligence). He has been with *Compute!* from the first issue. This list is as of April 1985. I am sure he has done a lot more by 1998. Mr. Thornburg is an associate editor. His regular column is called "Computers And Society." He is the most qualified person to write on this subject. His April 1985 column is "Visual Computing, Part 1." He talks about user interfaces, keyboards, icons and so on. He says that in the late 1970s video games outsold computers not because of price but because the purchaser knows what to do once he got the game home. At the end of the article he says that visual interfaces are opening computer access to many thousands of people who would never have otherwise been interested in using this technology. I think that when one looks back from this point in time one can see that his words are very profound.

On page 25 is an article on the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. At this point in time, Jack Tramiel and his two sons have been at Atari for awhile. At this show they got all the attention. Why you ask? Well, they introduced a lot of new computers. The most notable is the ST. The Atari 520ST uses the Motorola 68000 microprocessor, the same CPU as the Apple Macintosh. In the ST it runs at 8 megahertz. It looks a little like a Commodore 128. The 520 ST was nicknamed the "Jackintosh." Its operating system is called TOS for Tramiel Operating System on ROM and Graphics Environment Manager, GEM. GEM is the Macintosh-like operating system interface originally developed for MS-DOS computers and licensed to Atari by Digital Research. The new Atari 520 ST has too many high level features to list here, but the neatest one must be the Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI). It is used to hook up an external synthesizer. The GEM interface looks a little like GEOS, but more like a Mac OS, but in color. It also has a hard drive interface built in! I don't know why the new Atari line didn't do a lot better. This is the same show at which Commodore showed its new Commodore 128 computer, just a prototype but scheduled for introduction in April or May. This show must have been in January or February. The photo of the 128 looks a little strange, it looks like the side next to the key pad flares out sideways. But it really does not, it is just the angle the photo is taken at. The text about the Commodore 128 says that after Tramiel left a lot of executives and engineers went to Atari also. So many in fact that some call it "the new

Commodore." Now I ask the question: Is our loyalty to the name Commodore or is it to something deeper? A loyalty to a man and his ideas? For me it is to the name Commodore. I will not rule out a brand like Atari, but I will never get rid of or stop using my Commodores.

Newsletter Briefs
by Dale Lutes

Geos Publication
Rev. Willis Patten, Louisville, KY

A letter from Irvin Cobb compares several GEOS desktops plus GeoSHELL. Dave Elliott relates some of his experiences with geoProgrammer. There is also a report on Wolfgang Grimm & Markus Kanet's **MegaPatch**, which has been designed as an upgrade to GEOS (like Maurice Randall's **Wheels** which was described in last month's *Zero Page*).

Disklosure
Salt City Commodore Club, Hutchinson, KS
I am very sorry to announce that the SCCC has disbanded.

geoNEWS
geoClub, United Kingdom/Australia
The February issue includes:
date-stamping your geoWrite documents by Sharon Chambers.
favorite tips (not all GEOS-related) from Colin Thomson.
an article that relates camels and disk backups (no kidding!)
tips on buying a scaner from Peter Hunt.
installing 1570 (yes, 1570) device switches by Dave Elliott.

GOCUG Newsletter
Greater Omaha Commodore Users Group, Omaha, NE
The February issue gives us a great preview of **Wheels 64** by Maurice Randall. The screen snapshots printed here are the next best thing to a live demo. Jim Brain gives us some food for thought on operating system debates. Jim Harvey describes how to wire an 8/9 device selector switch into your 1541 *without an external switch!*

The Infinite Loop
Western Colorado Commodore User Group, Mack, CO
This issue includes some remarks made by Doug Cotton during a GEnie online conference with regards to a new computer design being considered by Creative Micro Designs. There are also a number of messages reprinted from the TIFCU (The Internet for Commodore Users) mailing list.

Nominations for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair will open at the start of the March club meeting. Nominations close at the end of the April meeting and elections will be held in May.

Looking at GEOS
by Mark McGuinnis

[This article was first published in April 1993.
It comes to us courtesy of Peter Hunt, geoClub OZ]

Let's cover a few more common features and maybe before the space runs out we may touch on a tutorial involving Geopaint. Next on the agenda is the keyboard cursor keys. Everyone should be familiar with how you move the cursor via the keyboard by this stage of the game. One big feature of GEOS is its "Menu", often referred to as pull down menus. The menu is a list of items used to list commands, disk accessories, or fonts. The command menu of some sort is almost always present on your GEOS screen. By clicking on one of the items in the command menu, you should get a drop down menu with additional choices. Sometimes you will get a sub menu that cascades down for even more choices.

The commodore key, that strange looking little key in the lower left corner of the keyboard, can be used in conjunction with other keys to perform special keyboard commands. The drop down menus most always lists the menu options and keyboard shortcuts. This writer uses a mouse and feels that this is the best input device to use with GEOS. A lot of other GEOS users swear by the "Suncom Icontroller" which is a small joystick device that attaches to the side of your keyboard.

Dialogue boxes are small windows that appear over the current feature on the screen. These boxes give you special instructions or information.

Windows are the framed rectangular regions on the screen. In some cases the window is a view port into a larger area. For instance Geopaint provides a "drawing window" into an 8 X 10 1/2 inch document. You view roughly 1/12 of the entire page at any one time.

A font is simply typeface or in other words what a letter looks like. Fonts are measured in points and there are 72 points to an inch. An interesting feature of GEOS when it comes to printing is proportional spaced printing. Next time you look at a typewritten page you will notice that the space between the letters is fixed. In proportional spaced printing the space between letters depends on the shape of the letter. The end result is a more professional looking printed page.

When you fire GEOS up, the first screen you will see is the desktop. Files that you find on the desktop are going to require a few more definitions.

System files are necessary for the operation of GEOS and include GEOS kernal, desktop V2.0 and GEOS boot.

Interface driver files are programs which are used to control certain parts of your hardware such as your printer and input device.

Applications are computer programs that operate in GEOS. Examples are geowrite, geopaint, geospell, geomerge, textgrabber,

geolaser and paint drivers.

Application data files are created by you when you use an application.

Desk accessory files are small utility programs such as the calculator desk accessory.

Assembly language files which are programs and data files in assembly language or basic formats.

Non GEOS files which are non GEOS documents not yet converted to the GEOS format.

SuperCPU-128 Update
downloaded from Creative Micro Designs web page
www.cmdweb.com

SuperCPU-128 Status 2/23/98

The SuperCPU-128 production has been a slow and tedious process. Even though the hardware itself has been ready for several weeks, the custom chip set has needed to be tested and re-tested to insure the unit's performance and reliability. As of Friday, February 20, 1998, the first dozen or so units were shipped. These units were full production units that were sent out to key individuals who have been requested to report back on its operation in the field. Although there have been a few units in use for several months, we see the need for testing on a wider sampling of machines. We expect that the units being tested will perform as designed and any problems will be minor and can be corrected in production. We anticipate having the green light for final assembly and shipping of production units by the end of this week (week of 2/23/98). As for a time frame on deliveries, we have over 200 units for advanced depositors with deliveries ranging from 1 week to 6 weeks depending on when your original deposit was made. We wish to thank all of those individuals that remained confident in our ability to complete this new technology and hope that the unit will live up to your expectations. For anyone interested in placing new orders for a SuperCPU-128, we anticipate a 4 to 6 week lead time. New orders are being accepted, to order call 800-638-3263 (9-5:30, M-F).

## The Smoke Theory Revisited

Editor's Note:
Last July, I ran an article entitled, "The Smoke Theory" which was reprinted in the January edition of geoNEWS, *the geoClub newsletter. The following appeared in the February* geoNEWS.

This is a follow up to the amusing "The Smoke Theory" article.

I would like to say that I cannot agree completely with this article. As a non smoker, I have to say that "I do not leak" except on the odd occasions after a night out in the pub and even then it's more like a controlled discharge of my Biosyte tank (plumbers will know) to enable me to continue my intake of bitter, so in this case, the theory "smoke causes leaks" doesn't quite hold true :-).

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 and FD 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
jos695@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 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!
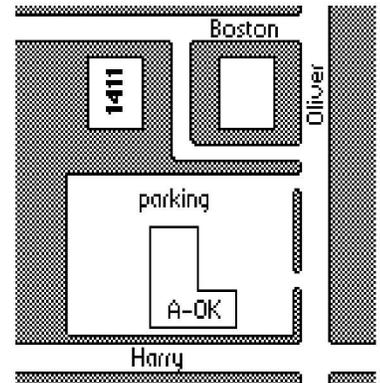
You may join or renew your membership by mail.
Complete this form and mail with a check payable to:

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) _____