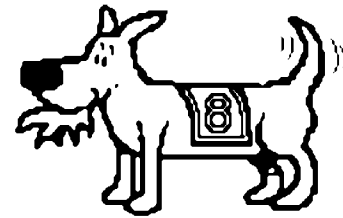


The Zero Page

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

Number 9, July 1994



Eight-Bit keeps takin' a byte
out of Commodore Computing



Jerry's Corner

by Jerry Shook

Those of you that were at our last meeting know that I was charged with working out a set of bylaws to present to the membership this coming meeting. At the meeting I asked for some volunteers help to me with them, and three brave souls did volunteer: Marie Both, Dwayne Howard and Bob Frisbie. The first thing I want to do is thank them for taking time of their schedules to help. Next is to let our members know that we have worked out some bylaws to present for your approval at the July meeting.

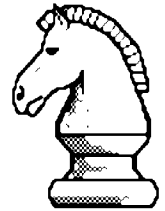
Also at our last meeting, we talked about the club ordering bulk 5-1/4 inch disks and reselling them to our members for 25 cents a disk in groups of 25 disks (that is the way they come packed). I have ordered 1000 of the disks and they should here by meeting time. So bring lots of money 'cause we really don't need that many disks for the public domain library. If this goes over well we can do it again later.

Hey I was busy last meeting! I was assisting members with setting up my favorite Data Base program, Flex File. I wasn't able to spread myself around to very many people at the meeting but I have been helping over the phone with three of our members. At this time I am not real sure how much good I have done for two of the people I was trying to help, but the third one wanted to do something that I hadn't tried to yet myself. We did get it working I believe pretty much the way he wanted and we both learned more about the program. I will leave the rest of the story to him to write so keep an eye out. I am in hopes we will have a new byline soon. You to can tell us about the things you are doing and discovering about your computer, be it games, utilities or productive ware. Share with us what you are doing. You don't have to be a writer, just put down your thoughts and give them to Dale Lutes.

Game Play

This is an article from QUESTBUSTERS
donated by Marie Both.

Hints for Bards Tale:



- 1) Hang on to dead characters and pay to have them revived instead of using back-ups. Then they get to keep all the experience points earned in the session in which they died. You can use two teams: If one gets killed, send out the second team to earn enough \$ to revive the first one.
- 2) The name of the Mad God is found in the sewers.
- 3) You can speed up/down combat reports by pressing right/left cursor keys.
- 4) If you've just found a lot of magic items or earned mucho experience & a character dies, go to an Inn & remove all the other characters. Exit, then reboot: The other characters keep all the items and experience & the dead one is still alive.
- 5) After finding Mad Gods name in the sewers, tell it to the temple priest & he'll let you enter the catacombs.
- 6) Mangar's Tower can be entered from the sewers if you have the onyx key from Kyleam's Amber Tower, which is entered Harkyn's Castle.
- 7) When advancing a character, save him first. Reboot, go to review board - if you don't like the number of spell/hit points he gets, reboot and try again: The amount of points is random.

**Next CUW Meeting:
Saturday, July 9
1:00 - 5:00 pm
1411 South Oliver**

**What is GEOS? How does it work?
What can GEOS do for me?
Dale Lutes will be giving an
introduction to this advanced
operating system for the C64 & C128.**

WANTED!

Wanted: Articles, Demos, Tutorials, Software

by Dale Lutes

Folks, here is a friendly reminder that the club can use **your** help in three big areas:

Providing written articles for The Zero Page: Just jot down your ideas on paper or, better yet, with your favorite word processor. If you feel that your spelling or grammar are not up to par, don't worry -- that's what editors are for. Your article can be about **anything** Commodore or club-related. Check past issues of *The Zero Page* for ideas.

Giving Demos/Tutorials at the monthly meetings:

This could be a little tougher if public speaking makes you nervous. Just keep these things in mind when you prepare a presentation: Tell **why** and **how** you use a particular piece of software. Using an outline helps. Don't worry if you are unsure of the technical "stuff". Most of us are not that technically-oriented. **Do** be prepared to answer a few questions. **Don't** be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I can look it up and call you later."

Providing software for the Disk O'Quarter: This is very easy! Most of us have found a neat Public Domain or shareware program that makes computing easier. Get a copy to Don McManamey and he'll take care of the rest. If you've developed a program, music, or artwork on your system, please share it with your friends!

Your CUW Steering Committee members are:

Dale Lutes, Chair & Newsletter Editor

Marie Both, Vice-Chair

Robert Bales, BBS Representative

Francis Catudal, Public Domain Librarian

Nate Dannenberg, Q-Link Representative

Arlen Gould, Commercial Librarian

Don McManamey, Disk Editor

Jerry Shook, Quartermaster

July 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, equipment teardown

Lock-Up Tips

by Fred Earley



Have you ever reached the point where nothing in your computer system is moving no matter what keys you punch? If you have, that's lock-up. When this happened to me -- several times, in fact -- I decided to get to the bottom of it.

My programming buddies explained that there must be a two-way communication between the computer and the disk drive and between the computer and the printer. Before a program can go on to the next step after a command has been sent, it's often necessary to know that the present command has been followed. We don't want to send more commands to the disk drive if it hasn't moved since the last command. And we don't want to send more commands to the printer if it's not turned on, for example.

So we find that quite frequently during the running of a program the computer waits for a feed-back signal. If no signal comes back, the computer just sits there -- right through Christmas if necessary.

What can we do about this lock-up?

In some cases the answer is quite simple as with geoWrite if we're using single sheets of paper. The system locks up if we come to the end of the sheet of paper before the page has quite finished printing. We simply put another sheet of paper in the printer.

Not all cases are this simple, unfortunately. At one time I had an integrated circuit chip that opened up one circuit after the computer got hot enough. Sometimes a cable may not be quite making contact with all pins. There are times when some pins make contact but others do not. In this case pushing all connectors together more firmly often helps.

In one case a disk drive had lost proper alignment. In another, the disk drive did not quite read the complete command. In these last two cases it sometimes helps if we turn off all power, wait a few minutes, and then start all over again.

Even the interface to the printer may cause lock-up if it has not been set properly. My Epson will lock up if has not been set for line feed when line feed is needed. The printer prints two lines of type on one line of paper and then stops dead.

Editors note: Computers systems of all kinds will lock-up for all kinds of reasons. Fred's article just scratches the surface. If you are aware of a set of circumstances that locks up your system or if you have a tip for beating a lock-up problem, please share it with the club!

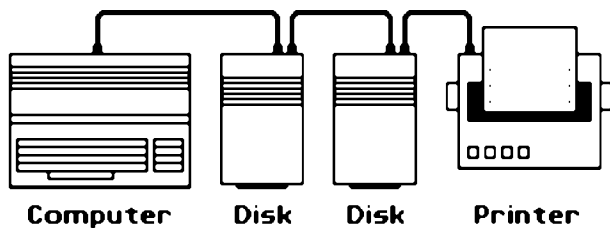
Random Access

by Dale Lutes



The serial bus. No, this article has nothing to do with public transportation that serves corn flakes. The serial bus is a communications pathway that is built into every Commodore 8-bit system from the VIC-20 to the C128-D. If you have a disk drive or printer attached to your system, then it is most likely connected to the serial bus. Lindon Sharp got me thinking about the serial bus during a phone conversation a few days ago. Not content to confuse or enlighten just one person, I decided to share this with you. I only hope that it enlightens more than it confuses...

In computer jargon, a bus is an electrical system to which many devices can be attached. Some computer systems provide a series of slots that various cards plug into. If you've ever looked inside an IBM PC or a PC clone, you know what I mean. Other systems use a series of cables to connect devices. The Small Computer Systems Interconnect (SCSI) bus is an example of this and so is the Commodore serial bus. Our serial cables have round connectors on both ends, each with six pins that make the electrical connections. All of our disk drives (and some printers) have two matching sockets (or ports), so that more than one device can be attached to the bus in a scheme known as daisy-chaining (see the diagram below).



The word "serial" refers to the fact that each data bit must be sent out one-at-a-time, i.e. in series. In contrast, a parallel bus is designed to send many bits at once (typically 8, 16, 32, or 64). Using an analogy, serial is something like Morse code: You must hear the dot-dot-dot in sequence to recognize the letter S. The Braille alphabet, on the other hand, is a parallel system: The presence and absence of dots in the six-position pattern must be felt together in order to recognize the letters.

The Braille S:

Now, even though the serial bus may pass through a device the device doesn't "intercept" the data, then send it back out. The two ports are connected directly to each other within the device enclosure. This explains why one isn't labelled "IN" and the other "OUT". It also explains why you can power off the device closest to your computer, and other devices further down the bus will continue to operate. When your computer "shouts" a command down the bus, all of the devices "hear" the command at exactly the same time.

With all of these disks and printers listening to the bus, how do they know if a command was meant for them? Each device is assigned a unique number. Printers are usually set to number 4 or 5. Disk drives are usually set to 8 or 9 (although Commodore disks **can** be set to 8, 9, 10 or 11). Changing device numbers may be difficult (old-style 1541s for instance), but usually the manufacturer provides a set of switches to make device selection easy. Now instead of shouting, "Load this program" the computer says, "Hey, **Number 8!** Load this program". This is exactly why we load programs on the C64 with the command:

```
LOAD "THIS PROGRAM", 8
```

What happens if we accidentally have two drives set to device number 8? As you might expect, confusion breaks out. Have you ever been in a department store when a kid cries "Mommy!?" Every mother in the place reacts. It would be like having two brothers, both named Darrell. What happens is both drives reply, usually with conflicting stories, and the computer is listening to them both jabber at the same time. Yeah, confusion.

If you are new at this computing stuff, you may be wondering why you would want a second disk drive when you haven't yet got the hang of the first one. Trust me on this: You **will** want a second drive. There are programs that require you to save data on a disk other than the program disk. A second drive will allow you to keep both disks on line without swapping. You will appreciate having a two-drive system for backups. If you use GEOS, you'll want a second drive if only to have your system disk available with the DeskTop. Ditto if you use your C128 in CP/M mode.

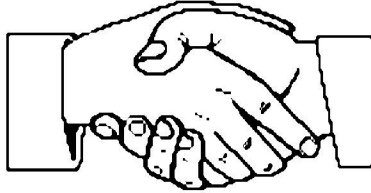
The Zero Page is a monthly publication of the Commodore Users of Wichita. The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CUW. Unless otherwise stated, articles in this newsletter may be reprinted without permission.

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. If you have a modem, you may submit articles by logging on to the CUW's official bulletin board, Sherer-N-Place (529-2213), and mailing them to our newsletter editor, Dale Lutes. Submissions are also 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.

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 Justin Riddiough
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

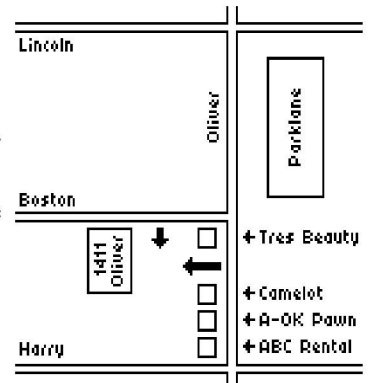
Helping Hand Volunteers

Robert Bales 744-2580
Marie Both 652-7783
Nate Dannenberg 689-0883
Fred Earley 722-4044
Sue Harber 942-4884
Dale Lutes 721-0835
Don McManamey 265-2560
Justin Riddiough 522-5277
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!

If you own an Amiga computer system, be sure to visit our sister club, the C&AUGW. Contact President Hal Wigley at 776-9529 for information regarding their meeting time and location.



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
6606 Cottonwood
Wichita, KS 67207

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:

