The Zero Page

The newsletter of the Commodore Users of Wichita

"For the sharing, learning, and love of Commodore computers"
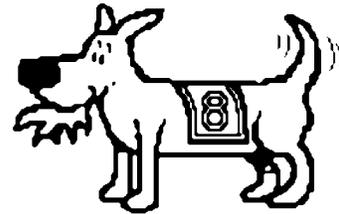
Number 43, May 1997

Random Access
by Dale Lutes

At our last meeting, I was working the PD Library when Carl Poston asked to have some copies made of our Plus/4 disks. He was supplying the disks: a set of new Fuji MD2HD, double-sided, high-density floppies.

I set to work armed with *Fast Hack-em,* a 1571 owned by the club, plus Moe Shouse's "mule" drive. After finishing the second disk, I decided I had better check my handiwork. For some reason, the disks weren't copied properly. I figured it could be my own lack of experience with *Fast Hack-em,* but the program is pretty straightforward. Another possibility was a malfunctioning drive. We swapped out the "mule" for another of Moe's drives. Still no luck. Moe thought it might have something to do with the printer. We eliminated that and tried again. Same result. We ruled out a couple of other possibilities. Now, feeling sure that the fault was in *Fast Hack-em,* I tried the copy again using an old tried-and-true single drive copier called *Di-Sector.* That copy was as useless as the rest.

By this time, it was getting late and we still hadn't produced a single working copy. I decided to bring the disks home with me and copy them with *Maverick* -- familiar software on a familiar computer. *Maverick's* dual-drive copier ran very slowly, taking almost 5 minutes per side (normally a 45 second operation) without producing a usable copy. Almost at wit's end and running out of options, I returned to *Fast Hack-em,* this time with the club's MSD SD-2. As I watched the drive activity lights, I noticed something I hadn't before: The light on the source disk winked on and off again quickly, but the light on the output disk came on and stayed on for a long time as if the drive was spending a lot of time trying to rewrite the data.

Now I was closing in. I set aside the copy programs and tried simply reformatting the disks using the MSD, a 1571, and a 1541. At first I used the *JiffyDOS* format command, then the 128 mode HEADER command without *JiffyDOS,* then again with my computer in 64 mode with and without *JiffyDOS.* Now I was certain: It was those darned Fuji disks and nothing was going to format them!

While working on this story, I started to get the feeling that I had heard this somewhere before. On a hunch, I compared one of the Fuji disks with another disk on hand and there it was (or there it wasn't!): *The Fuji disk had no hub reinforcing ring!* Now it all came back to me. At one of our meetings a year or two ago, some members were discussing the availability of some "bargain" disks when Robert Bales warned us of the potential for problems in using disks without hub rings.

So what do we learn from this incident? Well, the most obvious is don't buy Fuji MD2HDs or any other disk without a hub ring. It's been a while since I purchased disks retail, but I think that disks with reinforced hubs are marked as such on the package. Read the fine print! Another thing I would suggest is that if you find a brand of disks that work well, stick with them. Saving a few pennies could cost you more than a few hours and headaches. The CUW offers 5-1/4 and 3-1/2 inch disks purchased in bulk to club members. We have had good luck with these disks, and if you happen across a defective one, the club will make good on it. If you would like to buy some, see Jerry Shook at our next meeting. And remember: "Those who don't learn from the past are doomed to repeat it." I forget who said that, but it seems appropriate.

A quick reminder before I close: The River Festival begins next week, so keep that in mind if you usually come through the downtown area on your way to the meeting. Drive safely!
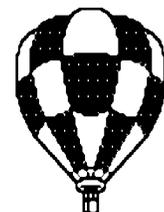
Next CUW Meeting:
Saturday, May 10
1:00 - 5:00 pm
1411 South Oliver

Are you confused by GEOS? Dale Lutes will try to clear up some of the mystery with a class for the beginning GEOS user.
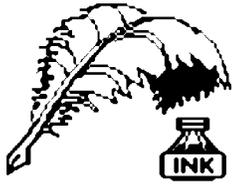
Don's Digest
by Don McManamey

Recently, I was going through the November 1981 issue of *Compute!* magazine. An article caught my eye which was entitiled "The PET Speaks" by Kenneth Finn of Bedford NY. I'd like to share a portion of that article with you and then I'd like to give some of my thoughts.

> The following article gives the Commodore PET (all ROMs) the ability to reproduce speech from audio cassette tapes. Even though the sound quality is very limited, the principle will allow intelligible speech and the program is by no means optimized -- much can be done with it.
>
> This program was taken originally from an idea of Robert Bishop in *Microcomputing.* He wrote about the idea for the APPLE computer. His original program was 18 bytes long. In order to adapt the principle for the PET many changes had to be made. This is evidenced by the present size of 81 bytes. Another problem was that the PET has no built-in speaker like the APPLE so I had to substitute the "CB2 sound" convention which many present PET users have.
> ...
> A big question is what to do with it? The answers are many. First it can be used to provide audio directions after a digital program load. Second it can become a speak and spell type of demonstrator. Third it can provide speech processing once limitations in the sample rate/memory requirements are solved. (Hal Chamberlin where are you?)
>
> I have just begun experimenting with this routine and I am looking forward to discovering both new uses and modifications to it. The routine also gives many clues on how to use the cassette IO and the CB2 line which are useful all by themself. Happy Experimenting.

One might wonder just exactly what this type of article has to do with what we're doing today, but I think that it has some very significant relevence, for you see, as I read this, a little light went on in my head. My son has a Mac with a CD ROM. If he has an audio CD in this CD ROM drive when he powers up, it begins playing music and this music continues to play either until he stops it or it reaches the end of the CD. It makes no difference what else he might be doing. He can be in a word processor composing a letter, or scanning in photographs, or doing any number of other chores that he does on his computer. But this just sits back there and plays the music of his choice as long as he likes. And I got to thinking, if we could play music through a datasette on a Commodore 64 which already has speakers included in it, we too could listen to our favorite music while we're computing.

Now, I don't know if this can actually be done or not. There are several questions which must be answered. The first is, can we have the music playing in the background while we're doing something else? This is something I don't know. I'd have to rely on some of our authorities in the club to answer this question. But it seems to me if we can have programmed music playing in the background while we are playing a game, then why can't we also have a datasette playing in the background while we are doing other things? The next question then is, what of the quality of the music? Certainly the datasette is capable. It becomes a matter of whether or not it can be translated through into the computer. At this point then, I suppose the biggest question is, do we have someone capable of writing the code necessary to do this? I suspect we do. And finally, will we be able to get him interested enough to explore this possibility? Only time will tell. Until next time, keep a song on your lips and a Commodore in your heart.

The Internet for Commodore Users
contributed by Robert Bales

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From: Gaelyne Gasson <gaelyne@hal9000.net.au>
Subject: The Internet For Commodore C64/128 Users
Date: Friday, March 28, 1997 11:04 AM

At Long last... I know you've been patiently
waiting for this news...

          For Immediate Release
              28 March 1997

     The Internet for Commodore Users
           by Gaelyne R. Gasson

The Internet is a big place and it's not
always easy to find all the in's and out's
about taking advantage of its features when
checking it out for the first time.  There's
a lot of Commodore specific information
available on the Internet, but you have to
know how to get the information an that can
be a Catch-22.

How do I get on the Internet?  What term
programs can I use?  What the heck is FTP?
Can I browse the World Wide Web with my C64?

Gaelyne Gasson (formerly Gaelyne Moranec),
former editor of CEE-64 Alive!,has been
writing about Commodore computers and
modeming for several years, with columns and
features in Commodore World, and BBS
Magazine.  She has also written about
Commodore computing for other publications
such as:  C=Hacking, Commodore Network, and
Loadstar.  After answering countless letters
helping others learn the ropes of
telecommunications, she's written a book
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The Internet for Commodore Users

specifically for Commodore Users who want to take advantage of the Internet.

The Internet for Commodore Users is to be packaged with a special version ofNovaterm v9.6 Lite by Nick Rossi.

The Internet for Commodore Users covers the following subjects:

* Hardware Basics
* Terminal and Modem Basics
* Finding an Internet Provider
* Getting Online and Signing Up
* UNIX Shell Account Basics
* Welcome to the Internet
* Email
* Text Editors
* Newsgroups
* Telnet, Rlogin and Other Utilities
* FTP and Archie
* World Wide Web
* Gopher
* Internet Relay Chat (IRC)
* Advanced Email Topics:
  o Offline Mail Reading
  o Sending and Receiving Files
  o Mail Lists
  o Using Email to Access FTP, WWW and Gopher
* Changing Your Online Environment
* Dealing With Files
* A comprehensive Glossary
* Commodore Term Program Key Equivalents
* Products Source List
* Internet Resource List

The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users has a PVC coated cover for durability and a plastic comb binding. The book is being published by VideoCam Services and should be ready for worldwide distribution by about the 11th of April.

VideoCam Services is a registered Australian business (0323082E) owned by Rod and Gaelyne Gasson.

Ordering Information:

(All prices given below are subject to change)

The Internet for Commodore C64/128 Users
ISBN: 0-646-31615-X
$36.95 Australian plus shipping

If ordering from Australia, the cost is $36.95 plus $5 shipping to anywhere in Australia.

If ordering from USA and paying by cheque, please make the cheque payable to "VideoCam Services" in the amount of $40.95US. ($29.95 plus $11.00 shipping).

We're sorry, but money orders of any kind can not be accepted.

Credit Card Orders:

VideoCam Services can accept most major credit cards including: MasterCard, Visa, Bankcard and American Express.

If ordering from outside Australia (USA, Canada, Germany etc.) and paying by credit card, your card will be billed in *Australian dollars* $36.95 plus $15.00 shipping. This is approximately $40.52US, but varies depending on the rate of exchange. For advance orders, your card will not be debited until The Internet for Commodore Users is dispatched.

Orders can be accepted through postal mail, Email, or from the World Wide Web at http://hal9000.net.au/~moranec/bookord.html. Phone orders will also be accepted.

The prices above are for single copy orders and subject to change. Please contact VideoCam Services for bulk pricing.

VideoCam Services
90 Hilliers Rd.
Reynella, SA 5161
Australia
+61 8 8322-2716
gaelyne@hal9000.net.au

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

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

Family Roots
Maxine Ulrich

GEOS
Fred Earley   Dale Lutes

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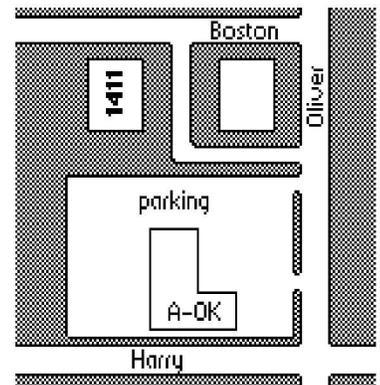
You may join or renew your membership by mail.
Complete this form and mail with a check payable to:

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) _____