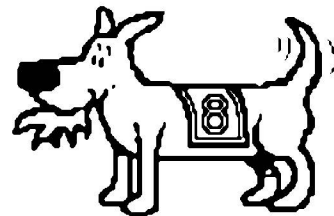# The Zero Page

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 33, July 1996

Rear View Mirror
by Moe Shouse

In my last "Rear View Mirror", my budget was off $31.80. Now it is off $30.00 and I am still in the same month. I don't think I'll ever learn how to get a budget right. So guess what I am going to do? That's right! Do another "Rear View Mirror".

This time I am looking at *RUN*'s premiere issue. The last time I asked if you knew what year and month it was. Did you know? Well it was January 1984. The cover has the word RUN on keyboard keys. The letters are red the keys are black. However they changed this from time to time. I think that one should stay with one format, so that your logo always looks the same. The words "premiere issue" are in the upper right of the cover in a red band, white letters. The words "Vol 1 No. 1" are not on the cover. They are on page 4 with a list of all the articles. It has 11 articles, one on math facts for kids, one on hooking up your C=64 to a printer, one on C=64 word processing, one on converting your VIC-20 programs to C=64. The part I like best about *RUN* is its column called MAGIC by Louis F. Sander. It is on page 10 in this issue. I think that you could not find a column that is more well known. It has something for everyone. I do not know how long Mr. Sander did this column, but it was most likely for most of *RUN*'s life. The first MAGIC has a drawing of a very ugly witch, the second MAGIC has a drawing of very good looking witch.

On page 18 is a pinball program review. DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC is given the highest rating, an "A". My son Jeff has this one. He says it is the best pinball game he has seen, and he has seen about 3 or 4. Seems like there aren't too many pinball games out there. This program was originally written for the Apple computer and converted to C=64. In fact, you can see a bright red apple on one of the bumpers.

On page 58 is an article about C=64 word processing. It looks at 16 word processors. Page 72 has a chart showing all the features of the 16 word processors. I do not think any of them are the level we are use to. There is no GEOS, TIMEWORKS, WRITE STUFF, or even JANE.

On page 103 is a VIC-20 disk utility program that adds 13 new disk commands. It must be used with an editor/assembler to run. It looks like a good program. It adds commands like CATALOG, DLOAD, DSAVE, and SCRATCH.

Over all it looks like there is more VIC-20 stuff than C=64 in this magazine issue. There is always a lot of good stuff in each magazine that I look at, so if I talk about a magazine issue that you have and miss something you think is the highlight of that issue, it's just that we don't see the same things.

Next CUW Meeting:
Saturday, July 13
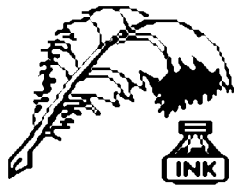## 1:00 - 5:00 pm
1411 South Oliver

Dale Lutes will demonstrate how the **Koala Pad** and **Koala Paint**. can be used to create full-color artwork on your C64 or C128.

July Meeting Agenda

Time	Activity
1:00 - 2:00	Equipment setup, informal meeting
2:00 - 2:45	Business meeting
2:45 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 4:00	Feature demo
4:00 - 5:00	Meeting over, informal gathering, equipment teardown

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

Don's Digest
by Don McManamey

Is it worth the effort?

On 4 July 1996 my boys and I took a trip which I had wanted to take for some time. There is a 13.2 mile stretch of road in extreme southeastern Kansas which was known from 1926 to 1984 as part of "America's Main Street, Route 66." Not much preparation had taken place for this trip, in fact almost none. It was quite "spur of the moment." We quickly guessed how long it would take to drive and how long to explore. We announced to those concerned that we would be gone about 6 hours (I had added an hour to what the boys thought it would take). We had a good time and enjoyed each others company as well as exploring and photographing Route 66 in Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. We arrived home some 5 hours later than planned. Was it worth it? Sure! I don't think I want to take that trip again though, despite the fact we didn't do everything we wanted.

On Wednesday, 10 July 1996, my wife and I will celebrate 25 years of marriage. I have several things planned. I have purchased some silver jewelry to commemorate our Silver Anniversary. My son has designed T-shirts which my wife has no knowledge of and we will probably go out for dinner. We will top off the celebration later this year by taking a cruise. I would not want to go through the last 25 years again. Even the best of marriages have their ups and downs. Not to say that we didn't get along well but there is more to love and life than just living together. There are the jobs or lack there of, financial problems, child problems, family illness and the like. So was it worth the effort? Yes! And I look forward to the next 25 years.

I have started collecting music from the "Golden Age of Rock'n Roll", 1955 - 1965. It became evident quite quickly that I would need to catalog my music to help eliminate duplication. This can't be done completely, but if you know what you have then you can make good decisions as to how to spend those hard-earned bucks. Some time after the song titles reached 500 in number, I realized that the word processor, while easy to use and familiar to me, was not the best way to go. Not having ever used *Flex-File*, I set out to convert my word processor file to a database file for I am not a great typist and didn't want to retype all that information. Since I started, my list has grown to over 800 titles. There have been many problems with the conversion. The instructions want you to waste time playing with an address book that I didn't want to mess with. I had trouble finding information on how to set up the database and to import files. I did, however, manage to make a database with the parameters I wanted and create a small file. This I converted to a word processor file and loaded into the word processor. Noting the format, I changed my word processor file to look like the sample. I then converted it and loaded it into the database, sort of. It seems that the transfer crashed every time I hit file #155. No explanation was given by the database except that "an error has occurred." It was for me to figure out where that was and why. Conversing with my computer friends was not much help. Someone remembered that there was some sort of problem

with 155 or 255 or something like that. Some thought the volume was too great for the database or the disk drive. My database has only 3 fields, so that is no problem. Each record is less than 100 characters long, so that is not a problem. I'm using a 1581 drive and allocating space for 2000 records, again, according to the instructions, no problem. The fact is that I could add to the file after the crash but would have to go into the file to be converted and separate the part already transfered from that which wasn't and try again. This was quite a hassle, jumping back and forth from database to word processor and back again. Finally, one night, I was determined to find the problem and get the job done. I broke the 500 records down into 6 files so as to help isolate the problem or if it was simply a size problem to eliminate it. The first file transfered completely with no problems as did the second. I was not so lucky with the third however. I studied the file closely checking every detail of the format. Nothing! Everything looked fine. Then it struck me like a lightning bolt! Could it be that there was some illegal character such as a dollar sign which it didn't like? Yes, there it was. Rinky Dink by Dave "Baby" Cortez. The word processor had no problem but the database did not like the quotation marks. Most people who use a computer call this a "double quote" while it is technically just a quote. The answer is to substitute the quote with an apostrophe or what is known by most computists as a "single quote." I wiped the slate clean once again and and try the transfer one more time. Success! All 6 files imported without a hitch. If all goes well, my son can scan the contents of the new CD's into his computer, use text recognition, convert to my format and save to an IBM disk. Next, I'll take it to the 128 and using the *Big Blue Reader,* convert to Commodore and load into *Flex-File.* Was it worth it? I don't know. We learn to crawl before we walk. I could have re-typed all the data in the time it took to figure out the problem but in the future, it should save much time. Even if it didn't, it is a whole lot more fun to sit and play than to just simply type in all that data. Or at least I'll keep telling myself that. Until next time, may your life see no data input errors.

Random Access
by Dale Lutes

Let me start this month's column with a couple of notes about GeoMille, which appeared on the June *Disk O'Quarter:*

✔ First, my thanks to Moe Shouse and his son Jeff for giving the program a workout and uncovering a couple of bugs that slipped by me. I'll have a new version ready for the next DOQ.

✔ The documentation file, GeoMille.doc, was formatted with University, one of the standard GEOS fonts. Make sure this font file is available on disk along with your copy of geoWrite before you view or print the file. Without it, several lines are dropped from the bottom of pages 3 and 5. Another option is to notch the GEOS side of your DOQ and put a copy of University right there with the docs. (If you choose to notch your disk, be careful, as these disks are rather brittle.)

As some of you are already aware, Nate Dannenberg has left the area and now lives in Dallas. Nate was a member of the C&AUGW 8-bit SIG and is one of the charter members of our club. He served on our steering committee from the very beginning and was always there to help answer questions about telecommunications, programming, and music. Here is Nate's new address:

Nate Dannenberg
9804 Northcliff DR
Dallas, TX 75218
phone: 214-320-1386

Thanks, Nate, for your special contributions to the CUW. Your friends in Wichita wish you all the best.

I want to call your attention to a new category on our Helping Hand page. Ron Shannon is offering to help members who are not only new to the club, but new to Commodore computing. If Ron can't answer your questions himself, I'm sure he'll get you pointed in the right direction. Thank you, Ron, for taking on what may be one of the most important jobs in our club!

I recently mailed a copy of *The Zero Page* to ten Commodore user groups in nearby states with an offer to exchange newsletters. The first reply came from the Western Colorado Commodore Users Group. Their newsletter is called the *Infinite Loop* - what a great name! It includes an article from their president, Jake Smith. Jake covers a number of topics including the premier issue of *RUN* magazine. Coincidentally, this is the focus of this month's "Rear View Mirror" column by Moe Shouse. Looks like Moe and Jake have some common interests. The *Infinite Loop* will be available for everyone to see at our next meeting along with the latest newsletters from Omaha and Tulsa, plus the newest *GEOS Publication.*

There is an error on the paper sleeve that came with *Disk O'Quarter* #13 (June 1996). **Gulper** was accidentally listed as a C-128, 80-column program. **Gulper** is really a 40-column program for the C-64 (or C-128 in 64 mode). We have delayed mailing the disk to our out-of-town members until we could get a corrected sleeve printed. Local members may pick up a replacement sleeve at the July meeting.
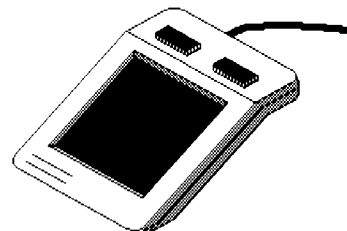
Koala Pad to be Feature Demo
by Dale Lutes

[This article is taken from a longer "Random Access" published in the May 1994 issue of The Zero Page. *--Ed.]*

I have a confession to make: I love my Koala Pad. It's definitely one of the neatest peripheral devices ever made for the Commodore computer. If you've never seen one, the Koala Pad is a touch-sensitive drawing tablet. It has a 4-1/4 inch square drawing surface, and a pair of buttons at the top. The pad plugs into joystick control port 1 on the computer. "Drawing" on the surface with a stylus or even a fingertip produces a corresponding motion in the pointer on the screen. The effect is much like "drawing" with a mouse.

The Koala Pad included a cartridge-based paint program called KoalaPainter. Very nice results can be achieved with KoalaPainter although it can be jittery and lacks some features found in newer paint software. Flexidraw is another popular paint program that supports the Koala Pad. GEOS fans can use the pad with one of the drivers available in our Public Domain library.
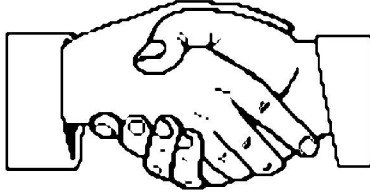
I was visiting Robert Bales the first time that I got to see and operate a Koala Pad. I was hooked immediately. Robert was nice enough to loan it to me and, after a marathon series of late-night drawing sessions, I produced the nine cartoons that appeared on the second Disk O'Quarter. I reluctantly returned Robert's pad, but purchased one of my own at the first opportunity.

I'm sorry to say that Koala Pads are no longer being manufactured. Koala Technologies went out of business after producing two first-class products for the Commodore market: The Koala Pad and the Muppet Learning Keys. So, you'll have to turn to the used equipment marketplace for either of these items. The Koala Pad will be our featured demo at this month's club meeting. I'll try to keep the demo short so that other club members can give the pad a try for themselves. If you have a Koala Pad, bring it along so that we can give everyone a chance to work with one.

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
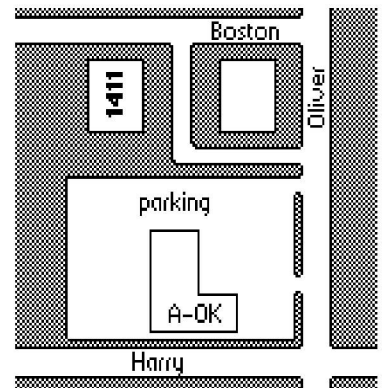Jerry Shook   776-2683
Maxine Ulrich   838-8606

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:

Marie Both
Commodore Users of Wichita
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) _____