

# Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

This year the Topeka PC Users Club is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Back in 1987, Steve Seawall was deeply involved with the new technology involving computers. He wanted to know more about computers and he wanted to meet other people who were using computers. For a very long time, Steve had envisioned a club with members sharing the same interest in computers coming together to share and exchange information. He posted notices on bulletin boards around the city of Topeka asking for anyone interested in forming a computer club to come to a meeting on September 10, 1987. He had no idea how many people (if any) would show up and was very surprised and pleased when 70 persons showed up.

Everyone in attendance that night was given a questionnaire to obtain information about their background and expertise with computers. Out of that crowd nearly 20 indicated on their questionnaires a willingness to assist in any capacity.

One of the items discussed at the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was the Club's organization. It was decided that the officers would be as follows: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Activities Director, Editorial Director, Meetings Director, Librarian and Refreshments Coordinator. (Yes, at one time refreshments were served at the monthly club meetings.)

The Topeka PC Users Club held their first official Membership Meeting on Thursday, October 15, 1987. It was decided at that meeting that the club would meet on the second Thursday of each month. The dues were set at \$12.00 per family per year.

At that first meeting, the following officers were elected: President, Steve Seawall; Secretary, Diane Burlak; Treasurer, Bill Pipkin; Activities Director, Bill Ervin; Publicity, Paul Allen; Librarian, Bob Bowser; Directors-at-large, Larry Reynolds, Ed Mailen, Vicki Lignitz and Richard Daily. Currently, the Directors-at-Large are referred to as Board Members.

The duty of the Club Librarian was to maintain a diskette library of public domain and shareware software. Members would submit copies of shareware on diskettes to be checked out to members who would then copy them on several computers that would be available at the meetings.

It was agreed that at each monthly meeting there would be a technical session during which time members would discuss new developments and discuss specific problems they are having with their computers.

In October 1987, the first issue of the Club Newsletter was published and was entitled: Topeka PC News. As a matter of information, in 1988 the Newsletter was published using WordPerfect.

Of course, you can imagine with such a large group there was a wide diversity in expertise which provided a challenge to provide programs of diverse interest to keep all the members interested and at the same time answer all their questions. This led to the formation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

- EGA Systems – Steve Seawall
- Telecommunications - Paul Allen
- Word Processing – Dr. Maurice Levy
- Turbo Pascal Management – Vicki Lignitz
- Special Machine Issues – Larry Caldwell
- Spreadsheets – Bob Bowser
- New Users Group – Moe Norris
- Hard Drive Management – Max Wichman
- Hardware Installation – Wes Duncan

In 1988, the Club boasted 80 paid members and printed their first Membership Directory. Paul Allen became the second president of the TPCUC.

In 1989, Bob Bowser was elected President and served two terms. Our first annual Christmas party was held.

By 1990, Club membership was up to 117 and we had \$813.44 in the bank. The first format change in the Topeka PC News was made when they began using 8.5x14 size paper instead of three pages of 8.5x11.

In 1991, a recommendation was made to increase dues to \$15.00 a year. Membership reached 165 paid members and Mary Grossenkemper became the first female president. Jay Stevenson formed a Windows 3.0 SIG group. Monthly meetings were moved to Washburn University where we now meet in Petro Building.

By 1992, membership had increased to 187. Chet Evans formed a Word Processing SIG.

In 1993, Dean Jennings was elected President and club membership rose to 215.

In 1994, two new SIGs are formed:

- Internet SIG – Wes Duncan
- Desktop Publishing SIG – Phil Menninger

In 1995, Phil Menninger was elected President and served three terms. Nick Cole assumed the duty of Newsletter Editor.

In 1996, dues were raised to \$18.00 per year per family.

In 1997, two new SIGs were formed:

Corel Draw SIG – Nick Cole

HTML SIG – Rick Mahany

Rick Mahany also served as club Webmaster until September 2004.

In 1998, Maurice Bergeron was elected president. The first meeting of the After Lunch Bunch with Jim Dungan as leader was held at the Central Congregational Church. A photographer from the Capital Journal was there to document the event. This SIG referred to as the ALB still meets twice a month at the Classic Bean in Fairlawn Plaza with Larry Henderson as SIG Leader and continues to be one of our most popular SIGs.

In 1999, Joe Moreland was elected president.

In 2000, Verla Herschell was elected president and served three terms.

In 2001, the Genealogy SIG was started by Tom Wright and Larry Henderson.

In 2003, Phil Menninger was elected president and served three terms.

In February 2004, Nick Cole resigned as Newsletter Editor. Nick worked with Phil Menninger until July 2004 when Phil assumed the duty of Editor.

In September 2004, Viola Dreyer assumes duties as Club Webmaster after Rick Mahany resigns.

In June 2006, Viola Dreyer was elected president. Mike Mitchell was appointed Newsletter Editor with Nels Anderson as Graphic Designer.

2007 was a groundbreaking year for the club. For the first time, we began distributing our monthly newsletter via the Internet.

In April 2007, a new Website Committee was formed with Ann Moore as Chairperson. Ali Setayesh volunteered to be the Webmaster.

In June 2007, Larry Henderson was elected president. In addition to his duties as president, Larry hosts the After Lunch Bunch SIG and the Genealogy SIG.

In July 2007, our new website debuted at: [www.topekpcusersclub.org](http://www.topekpcusersclub.org)

In August 2007, for the first time the Club began offering free online courses for its members.

The Club has come a long way since the IBM PC with its 5.25 floppy disk. We have seen the advent of the 1.44 floppy, zip drives, CD ROM, DVD, CD burners and many other innovations. We now have our choice of many graphic programs, a vast array of Word Processing programs and a host of software too numerous to mention.

By far, the biggest impact on computer users in the last 20 years has been the Internet. By using the World Wide Web it is possible to obtain vast amounts of information with one click on the keyboard. We can make contact with people in foreign countries in a matter of minutes. We no longer hesitate to shop on the Internet. Wes Duncan was a very able leader of the Internet SIG and he helped many of our members learn how to use the Internet and enjoy all its possibilities.

The Club has had its ups and downs over the years with a fluctuating membership of 70 in 1987 to 215 in 1993 and presently at 81.

We have seen an array of members come and go and we are happy to have three current members who were there at the Club's beginning - Bob Bowser, Moe Norris, and Jim Thissen. We wish to thank all the members who have contributed so much to keep this club alive. Without the time and energy expended by the Club officers, the SIG Leaders and the host of volunteers, the Club could not survive. We thank all the loyal members who have remained with us over the years.

Ann Moore  
Board Member  
**Chairperson, Website Committee**  
October 2007