

## Wrong Number ][ BBS History – The Complete History

This file was originally written over a 6-year period while I was running the BBS back in the 80's and early 90's. It has been updated cleaned up and now put on the website for posterity. This IS the true story of The Wrong Number ][ BBS and subsequently the rest of the family of BBS'!!

To understand the background of The Wrong Number Family Of BBS', you need to go back to the start in August of 1986.

I was calling CompuServe and spending \$6/hr. for 300baud access, and spending I might add about 3 or 4 hours online every night. I then joined PLink (PeopleLink) and the same hours every night. I found a BBS ad one night and called it. It was free, the BBS name was Indian Point BBS, it was a part time BBS running on weekends by a really nice guy and it was local to me, it was run on a Commodore 64 like I was running. I enjoyed it and decided I wanted to run my own BBS. I called PLink and downloaded a couple of BBS programs. AABBS v6.7, Ribit BBS 7.6 and a very early release of a C-Net named BBS v3.6 I couldn't get Ribit to work with my Mighty Mo Modem, so that one was crossed off the list. I liked AABBS because of its ease of use. I set that software up and put it online in October for a trial run to see if I enjoyed being a SysOp (Mind you I still didn't have a name for the BBS). In the following 2 weeks I got 1 call! I was sold on SysOping. On November 15th I worked a trade for a pirated C-Net 10.0 I also got a name for the BBS when I was talking with the person who I got the C-Net from, he suggested Bucko's Den, and it stuck! I put up the BBS on November 22nd. The BBS was being run part time BBS Friday through Sunday from 6pm to 2am (Yes, pretty sad hours!) I loved the software and got my first real call on November 23rd, a 10-year-old kid from Chicago who didn't even know he was calling Long Distance. The system consisted of the following hardware:

1 - Commodore 64 Computer

1 - Commodore 1541 Disk Drive

1 - Mighty Mo 300baud Modem

Pretty small from what I was running at the time of the original writing of this file or for that matter what my BBS' run on today. I was amazed at the ease of use and sheer power the 10.0 had and decided to keep it up for good. After about 20 users logged on, I got worried about running a pirated copy of the software, I contacted Perspective Software to order a 10.0 and FINALLY be legal! I ordered it and was shocked when instead of receiving 10.0 I received 11.1a! For me that program was unbelievable at first, it ran flawlessly and my users loved the new system which no one else around here had running at the time. At this time, I added a second 1541 disk drive and dedicated the second drive to the file libraries. After about a week of running the system I decided I wanted a "modified" BBS, I had a friend come over and we ripped the CN (the main program of C-Net) apart and started modifying it to fit my theme of the BBS. My users went crazy over the changes to the BBS as the only other Commodore BBS in the area modified like mine was "Don't Call Us BBS". I finally got tired of hearing the alarm clock go off at 2am

and changed the hours to 6pm to 6am still only weekends. With that, the system started to take off! I was getting on average 10 calls a day now and people were going nuts! THEN the online game Empire came into existence being the only BBS in my area to have it, calls went from 10 a day to 20-30 a day. This is how addicting that game was back then! This was when the trouble began. The BBS was getting so much use I thought it was my hardware causing the many blue screens of death that I was getting, so I went out and bought a SFD-1001 Disk Drive (The SFD held a full meg of storage), Now we were the largest part time BBS in Westchester NY!! It now had 1.5 megs of storage online! The calls continued coming in, but the Blue Screens of death didn't stop. At that time Don Gladden started writing C-Net 12.0 and of course I upgraded when it was released.

When I received 12.0, I decided to splurge and buy a new 1200baud modem the Commodore 1670 modem cost \$139 back in August of 1987. At this time I made a name change, I changed to name to The Wrong Number ][ BBS, (the original Wrong Number BBS was run by a good friend of mine who had no problem with my using The Wrong Number ][ BBS Name. I also advertised the name change with the saying "The New Wrong Number ][ now 12 and 12". "1200baud and 12.0" after a few months of running 12.0 and the BBS growing I bought another SFD-1001 and the SysOp of The Wrong Number gave me 2 of his since his board was down and not sure when it would be back up. That gave us 4.5 megs of storage! The BBS really cooked! At the time the BBS was a major Warez player in the area, this was the main reason the BBS was put up in the first place in addition to saving me money from CompuServe and PLink, I wanted free software! After running the BBS with a ton of warez, I was starting to get bored with the warez side of the BBS but I kept them around for the users who wanted them. At this time, I was starting to find myself more into just the telecom side of things, teaching myself the ins and outs of modems, terminal programs and breaking out my programming books from my college days started writing p-files and modifying the code of the main BBS to suit my needs. A friend and I then formed a BBS SysOp group and started releasing mods packs for everything from C-Net 10.0 to 12.0, ESA (Elite SysOp's Association) was designed to help other SysOp's with their systems. The Wrong Number ][ became the headquarters of the group. At that time, I finally got another phone line in the house and changed the hours to 6pm to 6am 7 days a week.

In July of 1988 the long-awaited upgrade of the version 12.0 was supposed to be released. 12.1 was available on Port Commodore BBS in Utah for those who paid the \$7.95 upgrade fee. I downloaded the software before it was pulled off the market because of the many bugs it had. I ran the 12.1 until it trashed my user list and I went back to 12.0. In August of 1988 I was devastated to hear the news that Don Gladden had left Perspective Software with his program. I tried to call Perspective to find out what was up with my order for 12.1 (The working version) only to get the usual answering machine of death! I tried calling Don Gladden but couldn't get in touch with him. In my calling around trying to find out what was going on, I did get in touch with Jim Selleck who told me he was releasing his update to 11.1a which was supposed to be the 12.0 originally in a few months once it was running well. I had a bad taste in my mouth over 11.1a so I went looking for more info and finally called into Fred Dart who told me if I wanted to follow Don Gladden to his new Company, they would honor the \$7.95 upgrade I already paid for. In October of 1988 I received my Image BBS v1.0 first one too E0001. The BBS was in great shape the users liked the new system and calls started to increase again. In November of 1989 I suffered a major problem with the BBS, one of my SFD's died and my friend who loaned me his 2 SFD's needed them back because he was selling them. We were down to only 1 SFD and 2 1541 drives now. At this point I

decided instead of spending \$150 per SFD drive I would go all out and spend the \$900 for the Lt Kernal 20 Meg HD. The BBS went from the Largest Part Time Commodore BBS to the Largest Commodore BBS in Westchester County! The User Base was hovering around 200 users... Around this time my SysOp group ESA was disbanding so I decided to join the next best thing NISSA (New Image SysOp Support Association). The BBS was now involved with a national support organization, things were looking a lot better. When joining NISSA one of the membership rules was no illegal software, so the Warez were removed from the BBS. 1.1 was released and it was a great enhancement to the BBS. The users once again loved the changes made 1.1 was removed due to some bugs, luckily for me, they did not affect my BBS. When 1.2 was finally released I took a hard-long look at what my system could do if it were 24 hours a day and changed to that, The BBS was FINALLY 24 hours/day 7 days a week. The calls went up tremendously. In the coming months to years, I took over that group NISSA with 2 other "leaders" and turned my BBS into a full-fledged support BBS. I was also SysOping on Quantum Link (The Precursor to AOL) at night in the Telecom Support Area.

In the coming years, I joined the Image Network, formed with Doc Shade and Fred Dart All Tec Software, which specialized in P-File, and Graphic disks. The biggest addition came right after that, the BBS went 2400baud and I swapped out the 20meg HD in the Lt Kernal for a 85meg HD. Once again, we made history as being the largest Commodore BBS in Westchester County... Approximately, 1991 I took over the fledging Image Network which was broken in 3 different places and reformed what was left into the NISSA Network. As Node Administrator I instituted a rule which if you wanted to join you had to take on at least 1 Long Distance connection, the other SysOp's accepted this rule and the NISSA Network was formed and ran flawlessly till it was finally dissolved many years later.

The rest as they say is history. Every November 22nd I would put up the original Bucko's Den for all to see the many changes that took place over the years. To me it was a look back at the history of the BBS, the users liked it and to me it was fun to do.

### **The Final Chapter – Written May 1993**

As all good stories must have, this is the Final Chapter of The Wrong Number ][ BBS as it was known. Over the past year many changes have come about. Commodore BBS' in the 914-area code died. There were approximately 3 running. Commodore usership declined also. In essence, Commodore died in 914! Over the past year I saw a user base which was predominantly Local Commodore users decline from well over 250 users down to a mere 50 or so. There were only 7 diehard Wrong Number callers. I saw a userbase of 360 users down as low as 170 on a 6-month weed basis and back up to 200. The current user base consisted of 75% Image SysOp's, and 25% consisted of predominately IBM users, approximately 5% of the 25% were Commodore users. It just wasn't worth it anymore, 99% of the email I received was from Image Owners asking questions, the other 1% was complaints. This was a sad ending, I had never wished to go out this way, I had given the BBS all the chances possible, I polled users about donations to help with the financial aspect of the BBS and got "Sure, I'll send one in, but what's in it for me?" I polled users about a donation run Network System, and I got in response back was questions on how I could charge if the Network wasn't used by the users all the time. This to me was the final insult, after 5.5 years of supporting the Commodore user, giving people a place to air their thoughts, play games, download files, and just chat with me if I was around, I got that in return! At that

point I decided that instead of supporting the local user I would turn my efforts 100% to my fellow Image SysOp's . I decided that on May 1st 1992 the BBS would turn from a free public system to a private BBS catering to the needs of the Image BBS owners. This was not taken well by the users who would be leaving the BBS, I was called a traitor, a person "who couldn't be reasoned with any longer", false things were said that I supposedly said, in other words the Commodore user lived up to what the IBM people called them, CHILDREN! That's not saying much for myself either as I was a Commodore user also but that is how things go...

In retrospect over the 5.5 years of running a Commodore BBS, I met a lot of great people, and have had some really great friendships with a lot of people. What started out as a money saving proposition back in 1986 turned out to be much more than that. I had ended up spending in excess of \$3000 to \$4000 in hardware, and software, etc. I saw the best BBS' come and go, the hardest one for me was "Don't Call Us", that BBS went through a lot and was and always will be the #1 Commodore BBS that ever was in the 914-area code. My system never could compare to it. Many said I took over for where =Herbo'! left off. I don't think I did, I feel I just tried to carry on the torch that Herb lit. I saw users come and go, many of which would still be around today if it weren't for the reputation of Commodore BBS'. I saw a time when EVERYONE was fighting, ESA, Xavian, CPI. Xavian trying to hack and crash all the ESA Affiliate boards, CPI of all groups banding together with ESA to try to stop it, 2 groups with different morals, out of that I became good friends with the "leader" of CPI and many of its members.

I've seen users log on my BBS tell me I run a great BBS, only to log on other BBS' to see them posting in the message bases that The Wrong Number sucks don't call it! I've seen a lot more than a lot of people know about, but why divulge all of my secrets. I guess what I am saying here is good bye. This was truly a sad moment in the history of the BBS. After over 21,000 calls it was time for the closet.

As the old saying goes:

*" It was the best of times and it was the worst of times"*

### **The Wrong Number ] [ BBS History - Act 2 Amiga/PC Style**

I couldn't stay away from BBS'n long, I took a 6-month rest and put up an Excelsior! BBS on my Amiga 3000, joined FidoNet, and a few other Networks. Excelsior! was a C-Net Amiga clone, it was a lot of fun to run as it offered so much more then what I was used to running. After running the Amiga BBS for a couple of years, with Commodore out of business and my seeing no future for the Commodore 64 or the Amiga, I sold the Amiga 3000 but kept the Amiga A500 around running the BBS on it. I bought a 486DLC40 with 1 meg of RAM and a 40 meg Hard Drive. When Windows 95 was about to be released I received an offer in the mail to purchase a new version of WildCat! BBS. I purchased it and ran WinServer on the PC for about a year. At some point in 1996 Fred Dart of New Image Software contacted me and asked if I wanted to help finish the much talked about and maligned v2.0, I agreed with him I think more because I wanted a copy of it, but I took the WinServer down and broke out of the closet my Commodore stuff. I started re-writing the subsystems, one subsystem at a time. After about 6 months of this, the 85 Meg Lt Kernal died, I put the 20 meg HD back in the case, it lasted about 3 months

and died also. It was truly the end at that point. I was burnt once again and couldn't finish the software. This really bothered me as I

was really using my programming skills for something that could have made me some money. The end was here. Everything I owned Commodore wise was put in the garage and it sat there for another 19 years never being touched. I decided since I was moving, I didn't want to pack up all of the Commodore stuff and take it with me, I gave it all away to a guy who lived near by who said he would take care of the stuff and use it in good faith. He has!

### **The Wrong Number Family Of BBS' Are Born!!**

In April of 2018, I got the bug to run a BBS again because there were groups all over Facebook promoting BBS'. I was driving down the road and saw a computer on the side of the road being thrown out, I took a chance that it wasn't bad and picked it up. That computer was perfect, when I took it apart and cleaned it and checked for water damage it had everything inside still. I plugged it in and it booted. It took about 10 minutes for it to boot, there was so much malware and just plain garbage running on it that the Windows XP had so many issues it needed to be redone. After it was booted, I found out it had 1 gig of Ram, and a 50gig Hard Drive, in my closet I had 8 gigs of memory to put in it, and I had a 500gig Hard Drive. I installed a copy of Windows 7 I had purchased that I had not used yet and had a running computer which although not the fastest and most up to date ran well! History was about to repeat itself, I installed SynchroNet BBS, WWIV, and Mystic BBS. I picked Mystic BBS because of a couple of reasons, I was not familiar anymore with the BBS world and the software used and it didn't need anything to get it going other than installing, and it was really easy! I picked up a free dns server to allow users to dial in via Telnet. I created a few basic ANSI screens for the BBS and on May 8<sup>th</sup> The Wrong Number ][ BBS was reborn. I posted a message on a Facebook Group about my new BBS and was immediately met with the snobbish attitude of me being a fly by night Mystic SysOp and since I didn't have any Networks or Doors why was I wasting my time and theirs! Nothing changed in 22 years with PC/Linux SysOp's who thought they were better than everyone else. Were they right? To an extent yes, but I didn't care. My BBS was back!! I joined another group on Facebook which housed all of the outcasts of that other Group and they welcomed me with open arms and helped me get started the right way. It reminded me of my days running NISSA, helping the new SysOp and the seasoned pro.

In July of 2018 I put up a SynchroNet BBS in addition to the Mystic BBS, The Wrong Number IV BBS was born. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, The Wrong Number ][ BBS was born running C-Net Amiga software in an emulator on a PC. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, after reading post after post on Internet Forums how Image BBS could not run in a emulator I decided to give it a try myself. How hard could it be? I was a programmer for Image BBS for many years! I created the disks all CMD FD4000 floppy disks, I copied the software to the disks installed the Super CPU emulation so the BBS would run at 20mhz. I was ready it was 5pm and I booted the Image v2.0! I Telnetted in and it connected, and immediately disconnected. If you go back to the late 80's I was very heavily involved with the Telecom world, so I thought a bit about it and tried to reverse DTR which in turn would reverse Carrier Detect. Rebooted and tried to log on once more. I connected but it didn't disconnect and I was at the Enter you User ID prompt!! I did it!! I got Image BBS to answer and connect and stay connected!! I got to the main prompt and hit O to log off. Here was the other issue people had, it wouldn't drop carrier it just kept sending modem strings to the screen. I knew it was trying to drop carrier via the DTR pin. I thought what would happen if I dropped carrier the

oldfashioned way by escape codes? I set the BBS up to drop carrier that way. I rebooted and logged back on and hit O to leave and I saw the ]]] come across the screen and DISCONNECTED popped up on the screen. It worked!! I couldn't believe it, for weeks I read posts all over the Internet that Image BBS could not be run inside WinVice because it would not connect and if it did it wouldn't drop carrier! I logged on and off numerous times over the next hour and at approximately 8pm I posted on the Facebook Image BBS group that I had The Wrong Number V BBS running Image BBS v2.0 running inside WinVice and it was running perfect! Immediately the messages started coming in how did I do it, etc. Other SysOp's were logging in all night long because they couldn't believe it. At this point, there were 4 Wrong Number BBS' running and I decided to call them The Wrong Number Family Of BBS'.

Following my triumph with WinVice and Image BBS, I looked at my SynchroNet board The Wrong Number IV BBS and saw it hadn't had a call in 3 months! I took it down because as much as I enjoyed running it, it just wasn't getting the calls needed for me to keep up with it.

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018, I put up a new BBS once again, it was Bucko's Den running Image BBS v1.2b at 19.2k inside WinVice and running at 20mhz. It was REALLY fast! Both Bucko's Den and Wrong Number V were running inside WinVice on 1 PC. Around April of 2019 I moved The Wrong Number V BBS to my new hardware addition The Ultimate 64 FPGA computer, I added a uIEC/SD and a Turbo232 "modem" to it and moved it off emulation and put it on real hardware. A side deal I had was programming a new version of Image BBS v3.0 it was going to be called, that was running in WinVice along with the other 2 Image boards at one point. After the Wrong Number V was put on the U64, I put The Wrong Number IV which the Image 3.0 was named on a Hyper Drive and a real C64c.

Update: 07/04/2020

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 Bucko's Den II came to life running Enigma ½ BBS on a Linux Ubuntu Based Virtual machine. It is a BBS program currently being written and being updated frequently. It is my first Linux based BBS and it runs really nicely.

Update: 01/29/2021

Over the past 6 months since this file was updated. A lot has changed in the Wrong Number Family World.. Bucko's Den Image 2.0 was taken down due to lack of use, and Wrong Number V Image 1.2b which was a dupe of my original Wrong Number ][ BBS was taken down. The reason this one was taken down was not for lack of use, but when you run the amount of BBS' I run some of the boards get left behind the rest and don't get the TLC they deserve. So it was taken down so I could concentrate on the other boards I run. Namely Wrong Number IV (Image 3.0) That BBS is going through a metamorphosis as of the time of this writing.

In the coming months, I intend to expand the Door Server to other BBS' while also updating and adding in more PFiles to the Image BBS.

That is where we stand today. 4 BBS' all part of one family, and now a website!

That's all folks!!

In Memoriam:

Fred Dart

Don Gladden

John Moore

The 3 guys who made Image what it was and what it still is today.