Glenside Color Computer Club

From the President's Platen
by Tony Podraza

Where do I begin? How about with the announcement that you should set aside the 21st & 22nd of May, 1994 for your attendance to the THIRD ANNUAL "LAST" CHICAGOland CoCoFEST! to be held at the Holiday Inn of Elgin, Illinois. Same low prices (for a Holidome); Same great time. Maybe even better! There were so many positive comments about the gathering, this year, that we booked the room for next year, and locked in the rates and the dates. Now that the availability of a FEST! site is taken care of, and the date set, other areas of the country are free to set their dates for 1994 without being in a quandary as to what the "home" of the fests is going to do. I understand that there were questions raised at the Iowa fest regarding the TIMING of this year's Chicago-area fest. As I told Terry Simons during a phone conversation the Sunday before the Iowa gathering, the timing was predicated by the availability of a location that was:

A) Reasonably priced both for the hotel room rates and the rental on the Exhibition Hall area.
B) Reasonably close to a major airport
C) located in the greater Chicagoland area, and
D) had availability in the month of 1) June, 2) May, or 3) April.

By the time we had all the ducks in a row, the date ended up May 1st & 2nd. So, we took the dates and ran with them because by Jan 7, 1993, there were so many commitments by vendors who wanted to come to Chicago that we felt that we would be doing them a disservice if we didn't. So, we built it and they came! What a wonderful time, too!

Now, at this time, I'm opening myself for real trouble. The dreaded moments when I try to remember who all I need to thank. If you do not find yourself mentioned by name in the section following, please accept my apologies. Your efforts are no less appreciated than those of the people that my feeble memory can recall.

Preliminary Planning, vendor contacts, promotion, floor layout, tee-shirt production, show guide assembly and advertisement solicitation, and general behind-the-scenes stuff;
Carl Boll, Ed Kuns, Howard Luckey, Gene Brooks

Vendor's signs printing and paste-up
Tom Kowolski, Tom Schaefges, Craig Podraza, and Howard Luckey

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CoCo~1₂3 Information

The Glenside Color Computer Club of Illinois is a not-for-profit organization whose members share an interest in the Tandy Color Computer ®. The CoCo~1₂3 is the official newsletter of the Glenside Color Computer Club. The Glenside Color Computer Club of Illinois has no affiliation with Radio Shack ® and/or the Tandy Corporation ®. The opinions expressed by the authors of articles contained within this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Executive Officers or the actual Club membership.

We are committed to publishing a minimum of four issues and a maximum of twelve issues per calendar year. For an annual fee of $12.00 you can become a GCCC member with full membership privileges.   Send your dues to:

GEORGE SCHNEEWEISS
RR #2 Box 67
Forrest, IL 61741-9629

Here is the list of 1992 Executive Officers and how to contact them. The club has four strong SIGS, Tandy Color Computer 1, 2, 3 and OS-9. If you have questions concerning these computers or OS-9 call one of the officers. Area code C=312, S=708, F=815.

POSITION	NAME	PHONE	PRIMARY FUNCTION
President	Tony Podraza	S428-3576	The buck stops here...
Vice-President	Carl Boll	C735-6087	Meeting Planning, etc.
Vice-President	Gene Brooks	S897-9023	•
Secretary Reporting	Howard Luckey	S747-0117	Records and
Treasurer Purchasing	Geo Schneewiess	F832-5571	Dues and
Editor coordinator	David Barnes	S587-9820	Newsletter
VP Telecom	David Barnes	S587-9820	Club BBS SysOp
Printer	Dennis Devitt	S629-2016	Newsletter Exchange
Advertising	Bob Swoger	S576-8068	Newsletter Ads

CoCo~1₂3 CONTRIBUTIONS

If you would like to contribute an article to the newsletter, upload a file to the Glenside CoCoRama BBS with an extension of '.NEWS'. If you have an AD for the newsletter UPLOAD a file with the extension of '.ADS'. If you have NEWS to POST about your group, please use the message base. These files are gathered by the BBS computer and downloaded to the Editor. If you need help contact the SYSOP by E-MAIL, mail, in person, or by phone:

DAVE BARNES
P.O. Box 281
LAKE VILLA, IL 60046

It is preferred that you call: VOICE 708/587-9820 or BBS 708/587-9837
On DELPHI - DAVIDBARNES   On CIS - 73357,1324

Articles for the CoCo~1₂3 will also be accepted on diskette in ASCII form and UNFORMATTED only in the following formats:

RS-DOS 5 1/4"-35 SSDD/DSDD 5 1/4"-40 SSDD/DSDD
OS-9 5 1/4"-35 SSDD/DSDD 5 1/4"-40 SSDD/DSDD 3.5"-SSDD/DSDD
MS-DOS 5 1/4"-40 SSDD/DSDD 3.5"-SSDD/DSDD 5 1/4"-1.2 Meg

Submission deadline for the CoCo~1₂3 is the 20th of each month. Articles submitted after the deadline will appear in the next issue.

CoCo~1₂3 NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

The Glenside Color Computer Club of Illinois is pleased to exchange newsletters with other Color Computer user groups at no charge. Send your newsletter to:

DENNIS   DEVITT
21 W 144 CANARY ROAD
LOMBARD, IL 60148

If you desire to reprint any articles that appear here, please provide credit to the author and this newsletter.

We encourage your user group to copy this newsletter and distribute it at your regular meetings to your members free of any charge as we believe that this will encourage better meeting attendance. If you are a user group that feels as we do, please let us know in your newsletter so that we might do this for our members and keep our attendance up.

GLENSIDE CLUB MEETINGS
The Glenside Color Computer Club meets on the second Thursday of each month, from 7:30 - 9:30 PM, at the Glendale Heights Public Library. Further info can be obtained from Tony Podraza at home 708-428-3576.

FUTURE MEETING DATES:

July 8
August 12
A social get-together always occurs afterward at the Springdale Restaurant.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

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· Sheryl Edwards · Allen Huffman
· Andrew Kenny
· David Barnes

EDITOR: David Barnes

DESIGN, LAYOUT AND GRAPHICS:
BARSoft Publishing

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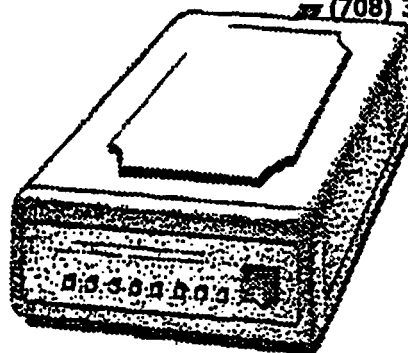Glenside CoCoRama BBS
(708) 587-9837
9600 BAUD

SandV BBS
(708) 352-0948
9600 BAUD

Glenside's Cup
of CoCo
2400 BAUD
(708) 428-0436

Chi-Coco BBS
(312) 735-3355
14,400 BAUD

These are YOUR club BBS's... Please support them !!!

Typesetting
David Barnes and Carl Boll

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Point of Sale programming for the Glenside booth
Joel Matthew Hegberg, et al.

Booth Staff
Bob "Gator" Swooger, Tom Scheafges, Carl Boll, Brian Schubring, Rob Gibons, Tom Wilson, a host of others, including my wife, Linda.

Official CoCoFEST! logo for badges (BADGES! We don' need no.....)
Ed Hathaway

Official CoCoFEST! badge COLOR printing
Dennis Devitt

Badge manufacturing and sales
Phyllis and John Chasteen

Official CoCoFEST! Tee-shirt and show guide artwork
Nancy Myers

Official CoCoFEST! mug manufacturing
Margie Boll

Ticket sales and registration
The Cook County Color Computer Club

Financial Solvency
George Schneeweiss

I sure hope that covers everybody; if not, well, I'm only human.

NEWLY AVAILABLE PUBLICATION

One of the items that made it to the FEST! from overseas was a book entitled "The OS-9 Guru". Written in 1992 by Paul Dayan, an OS-9 consultant in the United Kingdom. Admittedly written for the programmer/developer, the book also gives system insights for the user of OS-9 in particular and other operating systems in general. Glenside has been made the consignee of about 20 copies of this book, with all the proceeds going to the Overseas Consortium of OS-9 User Groups that attended the FEST! to help with their travel and lodging expenses. The price is $40.00 plus $3.00 UPS shipping charges. For a 400 page, 6" by 8.5" by 1" thick manual covering everything from pre-MS-DOS days to programming in "C", that's a pretty good deal. I hope to have a detailed report for you on the book from somebody who is currently reading it in depth for a future edition of the newsletter. OH, and by the way, it includes information, not only for the 68xx family, but also for the 68xxx family of CPUs. It promises to rival Paul Ward's "Start OS9" and Kevin Darling's "Inside OS9-Level Two".

If you have some comments about your experiences at the FEST!, or a review of a product that you picked up and would like to get it into the CoCo~123, read over page two for instructions regarding format and how to get it to the editor, Dave Barnes. If you write it and get it to him, it'll get printed, I GAR-ON-TEEEEEEE.

OOPS!!!!

A couple of months ago, we erroneously identified Betty Willis as the wife of Al Dages in the picture layout of the Atlanta CoCoFEST! We extend our heart-felt apologies to Ms. Willis, and wish we could reimburse Al for the resulting attorney fees..........JUST KIDDING! Really, "Babs" Dages was very understanding of our inept reporting.

Overstock Sale!

We still have about 20 large Tee-shirts left over from the Fest!. If you would like to purchase one, contact me at the address on the front of the newsletter, or by phone, and it's yours for only $5.00 plus $3.00 UPS charges. All proceeds go to the Glenside treasury. Make out your checks to Glenside and send them to George, the treasurer, NOT ME!

So much from me, this issue. If you think that I forgot something, well, you've got a keyboard, I can't think of everything! Remember, this isn't Tony's CoCo Club, it is your's! The whole of Glenside is comprised of the sum of its parts, and I want to know what YOU are doing, have done, have found out, etc.

GLENSIDE'S
PICNIC
ANNUAL

Saturday, August 14th
Rain Date
Sunday, August 15th

It's that time of year again for friends, fun and FOOD!!! So put down those pens, papers, keyboards and disks and hop, fly, jump, run, skip or just drive over to Bob Swoger's place in Streamwood.

Pull out your picnic gear and dust it off. Bring your lawnchairs, plates, silverware, drinks, a dish to pass and of course yourself, your family and don't forget that special friend. Glenside will provide meat and buns.

We're hoping for a good turnout so come and support YOUR CLUB! Mark it on your calendar today!!! Come early and lend a hand. (We need all the help we can get!)

There will be games and fun for kids of all ages!!
We will have the whole day to talk about computers......... NOT!!!!!!!
Good times will be had by all.... Guaranteed!

DIRECTIONS: Route 20 (Lake Street) - West past Barrington Road to Park Boulevard - North across Route 19 (Irving Park Road), take the first left which is Parkside Circle and go to 613. You can't miss it there's a big antenna tower in his yard!
For more information and inquires contact Tony at (708) 428-3576 or leave E-Mail on the Cup of COCO BBS at (708) 428-0436

Second Annual "Last" CoCoFest Report

by Allen Huffman

NOTE: As usual, many typos, mis-spellings, mistakes, etc., are to be found in this document. And, once again, please do not count off too much!

"Just when it looked like there would be no more 'Fests,'" started my 1992 "Last" Fest report...and here I am, several Fests later, writing "yet another" Fest report. I want everyone out there who is still a loyal CoCo user to take a moment and pat yourself on the back. Thanks to the support of OUR loving community, WE ARE STILL HERE... And thanks to this same @S#% support I drove over 2000 miles this past weekend. So...let's get on with this report, shall we?

BUT before starting, let me say THANKS CARL BOLL for all your help and support. Without you Sub-Etha Software would not have been able to be there.

We are grateful for you, and will do our best to repay your kindness. You're a great guy, Carl. Your help means a lot to me/ us and is greatly appreciated.

And now . . .

THE DRIVE

Last year Sub-Etha flew because we didn't feel like making an "800 mile" road trip. Hmmm... Due to lack of funds, myself and founding partner Terry Todd (back temporarily from installing satellite dishes) decided to give my Honda a workout on a drive that turned out to be OVER 1000 miles long. (Now you may understand what has taken me so long to get up to speed and get this thing typed up!)

Two hours sleep Wednesday, then a full day (10am-8pm) of work for me Thursday. I certainly wasn't rested. Home Thursday night I decided to pack all my clothes and gear. I certainly wasn't prepared. Terry would be coming back from somewhere-near-Dallas and I would be driving to his house (some 15 miles away) to pick him and his gear up. I certainly wasn't looking forward to all this driving.

I packed, and we embarked on our "leave at 10:30pm journey" at about 1:30am. No worries. Two gas cards and about

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$100 in cash and we were ready to go. Luckily, Terry had a map-atlas. (I had my official "Fest Map" with me, complete with routes to Atlanta and Des Moines highlighted...Chicago would be new and exciting since neither of us knew exactly how we would be getting there...)

And so we drove. Shreveport, Louisiana. Uneventful. Texarkana. Interesting. Once we entered Arkansas we were greeted by signs with large, friendly letters saying "Welcome to Arkansas - Home of President Bill Clinton". Didn't the move? Pity the roads were such a mess. Hope that's night a sign of what might happen to the rest of the highways. Of interest, when we stopped at gas stations (using one of the TWO gas cards I had available for this trip!) we saw many pictures, post cards, etc., of Clinton. It is a proud state indeed! (Heck, we even passed through Hope, Arkansas - "Birthplace of President Bill Clinton".) Gee...Texas never had any Bush signs. Sigh.

Anyway, back to driving... We drove, and drove, and drove, allowing sodas and Vivarin's to help us along the way. It was a long, uneventful night, and Jolt cola was nowhere to be found. A plethora of radio stations made the drive a bit more bearable. (We heard about 8 different Pink Floyd songs along the way...Classic Rock is much more abundant going to Chicago than it was going to Atlanta or Des Moines...) Sometime Friday afternoon we stopped for burgers somewhere, but I really don't know where. (Did I mention we were tired?) I even DID find some Jolt, though it turned out to be quite bad. (Yeck...)

So...more uneventful driving. EVENTUALLY we were in Illinois and got to

find Elgin. We wandered through Chicago (sorta lost) and were "pulled over" by a guy in a white van. "You guys lost?" he asked. He ended up being very nice and gave us instructions on how to get out of this "bad part of town" we were about to stop in. Thanks, whoever you were! Gosh! The people in Chicago are so nice!

Of course, that was before the tollways. From my experiences with tollways in Iowa (see IOWAFEST.TXT), I don't like them. For those who haven't had the pleasure of experiencing them, tollways are great ways to collect money from overtired travelers who didn't realize that once you got on one, you had to keep paying over and over and over. 40 cents here...25 cents there...large diesel there. Large diesel? We were driving and trying to get over to the lane we needed in. I harmlessly moved into a lane in front of a large (are there small

ones?) 18-wheeler. Traffic stopped, and so did I. We were amazed when a rather noticeable "bump" hit us from behind. The truck was pushing us. Bump, bump. "What the @$#% is he doing!?!?" I asked, calmly (Not!). Bump. Push. Whether he was having problems or not, I could not tell. The large grill that I saw through my little Honda's rear window was NOT a friendly sight! Bump. Suddenly we were being pushed into the car in front of us. I knew we were going to be CRUSHED by this truck. Wedged in, I did my best to get into the next lane and GET THE HECK OUT OF THERE! We got his license plate number but I was too terrified at this whole event to do anything about it. Gosh! These truck drivers in Chicago are go dangerous! (This was one of the most terrifying things I have ever had happen to me!) For the record, though, no damage was done. The truck had a large metal plate on front of it, almost as if he had it designed just to push little import cars around on the tollways. I hope I never "run into" him again. <sigh>

So...we were close! A few exits and we passed a carnival, Ramada Inn, and found ourselves at the Holiday Inn where the Fest was to be held. (Did anyone make it to the carnival?) Looking very rough and visibly shaken, I parked. We checked in then we went to look around.

THE ARRIVAL / PRE-SHOW

I don't remember the time, but I'm sure it was about 7pm or so. The hotel looked VERY nice. A large indoor pool, whirlpool, weight room, ping pong/pool/fooseball tables, and a small game room were in the center. Neat. Someone recognized us. I think it was Carl Boll whom we first spoke with but I was a bit incoherent after the 16 hour drive. We wandered and found our room (completely on the other side of the hotel, as usual...why do I bother to "call early to reserve rooms close to the Fest area"?). We unpacked, and I decided to bath and shave (both badly needed...ask anyone). Feeling much better, it was time to explore!

Joel Hegberg (Sub-Etha OSK Midwest Divisional Manager...whew!) and gang was there! Many familiar faces - Scott Griepentrog, Paul Jerkatis, Lee Veal, Carl Boll, Al Dadges, plus dozens of others I won't include at this time due to forgetting who all was there. A few Canadians (Brian White and Alan Dekok, among others) even found me, greeting me with my "anonymous" handle I have been using lately, but that's another story. Wow! Just look at who all is here, and the show is still a day away! Someone showed me to the convention room.... I was speechless. (Hard to believe, huh?)

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THE SHOW AREA

The room was so big and had so many vendors that even the map in the Fest guide was a pull out "centerfold" of two pages to get it all on. I will do my best, though.

There were no half-booths at this show! S-BUG, Disks 'n Dat, The International OS-9 Consortium, and Sub-Etha Software all held multiple-booth spaces. This was one big show, folks! Now, let me get on with the good stuff! The vendors were as follows:

Al Dadges - There to show support for this event, Al (Atlanta Computer Society) was present with "previously owned" hard/software, rom-paks, power supplies, etc. Al furthers attempts to keep hardware and software from passing out of existence. Thanks Al! (Note: Al was also there to see if there was enough interest to justify ACS sponsoring another Atlanta CoCoFest this year.)

Adventure Survivors - These shows just aren't as warm without this couple. For those who don't know, a monthly adventure newsletter is available with hints, tips, walk-throughs, solutions, maps, etc, for many CoCo adventure games. They also sell several classic adventures and sold graphic adventures based on the past (and current - how'd they manage that?) CoCo Fests. Neat stuff, and fun folks!

AniMajik Productions - Not present, but a letter from Alan Sheltra explaining what has been happening with The OS9 Underground Magazine was there. The letter basically sighted some financial problems, then stated that OS9UG WILL be publishing again VERY soon and that it IS NOT DEAD. Three cheers for Alan. Please keep things runnin', man. We need the support. [Note: I spoke with Alan the other day and OS9UG should be back on schedule anytime now!]

BARSoft - Ya know...this guy could probably sell even more if he threw his weight around <grin>. (Er, uh...just kiddin' man!) Dave Barnes was there with various software titles and bits of hardware. Yet another vendor helping take up the slack. (Plus someone had to buy the drinks!)

Burke & Burke - Okay...here we go. Chris Burke was there. Apparently Mrs. Burke was at home watching a pet (?). Her presence was missed. Also, the presence of Chris' CoCo w/ direct hookup hard drive was missed but he more than made up for it with goodies like: PowerBoost 2.0 which patches OS9 to run in NATIVE MODE on a 6309 chip. I picked up my copy and

let me say that from initial checking it's a VERY NOTICEABLE speed improvement! Well done, Chris! Also, the Thexder-OS9 converter was there (moves Thexder to OS9 and runs just like the rompak! Amazing. Conversion done by Alan Dekok <aka, Mr. Ball Demo> of Canada). Enhanced 512-byte SCSI drivers were available (I use the B&B interface so I didn't pay too much attention to these) and lotsa classic Burke goodies like Repack, XT-ROM, RSB, etc, etc. [Note: Spell checking with TSPellW under Booster is about DOUBLE what it used to be!] Of SPECIAL INTEREST was an amazing "new" (though designed long ago) product prototype called The Rocket. The Rocket is a small board containing a 68000-type CPU and memory which plugs into the CoCo where the 6809 goes and turns the CoCo into a true OSK machine using the CoCo's hardware and I/O. The unit is set to sell for just under $200 and will be made if enough interest is shown. Folks, this 14mhz "update" might be just the way for us to get into OSK without spending $1000. Needless to say, the Burke booth was one of the most talked about at the entire show. (Heh...he sold out of PowerBoost software again and had to buy disks and photocopy manuals at the show for the second day...!)

Chicago Area OS-9 Users Group - Promising "big plans" in the future, this club was there to show their support. It's this type of attitude that helps us survive!

ColorSystems - Solitaire for the MM/1, a word-processor shell for the CoCo and games. And, best of all, BUMPER STICKERS reading "I <Heart> my CoCo", "I <Heart> my MM/1", "OS-9 Users Group", etc. NEAT STUFF! "CoCo Classic" and "Friends Don't Let Friends Use MS-DOS" buttons were also there at great prices. I hope they return to future shows so I can pick one of each up!

CoNect - Hmmm...Rick Uland's RS-232 pak replacement was nice. Dual port version? Sure...but what was this other thing they were talking about??? Do my eyes deceive me when I see a 232 pak capable of over 5000 CPS under OS9? Say hello to the next generation of 232 paks coming "soon" from CoNect which will make 14.4 v.42bis modems an "easy reality" for the CoCo. Set to sell for about $130, I believe. This received much talk and attention as well! According to the specs sheet 5300cps on this new pak is only slightly more CPU intensive than 900cps using SACIA and a normal 232 pak. Amazing!

Cook County CoCo Club - Fest T-Shirts on blue (again) designed by Nancy Myers. Nice and only $8 ($5 near close of show). CCCC took care of ticket sales, etc, and worked closely with Glenside during this event. Thanks guys!

Dave & Nancy Myers - Ahem. While "CoCoPro!" is no more, Dave and Nancy were there to show support, have fun, and

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sell down (and in some cases give away!) old bits of software and hardware they still had. I was touched to see them there. Dave (in my opinion) is very much responsible for non-Rainbow supported Fests being possible. Thanks, man. It means a lot to us. (Side note: I ended up with one of the LAST pieces of CoCoPro software...snif...) Dave and Nancy are going to be moving, but it is rumored we shall see them again at future Fests. I sure hope so.

Delmar - Remember Ed? He had a PC running OS-9000, and his System IV VGA OSK machines running G-Windows. His red foam rubber hammers were ALL over the 'Fest show. (At one point, the Kala Soft guys performed a nice "drum solo" by beating on the Yamaha keyboard at their booth with Ed's mighty hammers.) Delmar, being one of the strong OSK hardware vendors, seemed to get a lot of attention. Ed mentioned that the user-base for G-Windows was around 1000 or so, which might make it a good platform to start developing on... (If we can get a system to Joel, he has expressed interest in porting some of our K-Windows products to G-Windows.)

Disk 'n Dat - A local vendor was there with EVERYTHING. Labels, disks, cases, ribbons, cables, etc, etc, etc. This was the NEATEST collection of goodies. They even had transfer paper for ironing on printouts to shirts. It was nice to see non-CoCo specific vendors interested in participating.

Disto - Tony Distefano was there with various working and non-working leftovers from the days of CRC/Disto products. Let's see...what else? Hmmm.

Oh yeah, there were 2 meg upgrade boards there. No big deal. Two small circuit boards. One plugs in on top or in place of the 6809, then the 6809 goes on it. Connect two wires and then plug the second board with the 2 meg SIMMS on it into where the 512K board goes, jumper across a resistor, install some software patches and 2 MEGS is yours. How can this man act so casual about something this NEAT???

Selling for less than $100 for the 0K board, Tony sold out the first day. He only brought 15 (he had at least double that back home) and he seemed to be kicking himself the entire show, amazed at response to his "no big deal" device. While "officially" Tony is out of the CoCo market, he apparently knew how to do this and decided to give our market another chance to make it worth his while. I hope it has been!

Also, his "Full Turn of the Screw" books were there including many of the hardware projects he designed over the years for the CoCo. It was very nice to FINALLY meet this legend in our community. (Hint: ORDER YOUR 2 MEG BOARD TODAY!!!)

Farna Systems - Officially there showing the Patch09 disk and OS-9 Quick Reference Guide, Frank Swygert sold copies of his newly complete "Tandy's Little Wonder" book which was PACKED with more complete information about the CoCo's history than I had ever seen compiled. It listed common hacks and upgrades, and Frank even got permission to include several schematics in the book! (He claims that feat was done simply by sending in a certified letter of request to the head-guy at Tandy...I was impressed!) Also, what is probably the world's only Tic-Tac-Toe game that requires 512K was shown. From Australia, it was an AMAZING looking game with FULL DIGITAL SOUND and SPEECH with great graphics. "Crossroads II" was, I think, $12. The computer didn't play that well, but it was nice to look at!

Of special importance is Frank's efforts to publish "The World of 68 Micros", a new publication designed to take up where Rainbow left off. Columnists like Marty Goodman, Joel Hegberg, and various others will be on-staff. Let's support this. It looks good, and Frank (being in the military) is pretty much locked into doing it...heh heh...). THREE CHEERS for Frank...even if he does have a silly Southern accent! <grin...not like I'm from Texas or anything...> (Frank...it's just a joke, okay? ;) Look for my series of articles on "CoCo Supporters and their Accents" in an upcoming issue...

Frank Hogg Laboratories - Frank didn't make it, but he sent a rep down with his Kix/20 (or was it a 30?) OSK "tower". It looked neat, but wasn't doing much other than running a terminal. The specs of this device sound amazing. Imagine a graphics card capable of displaying an 8-bit color image in 1/40ths of a second. FULL SPEED. Faster than what current CPUs are capable so it's graphics won't be a bottleneck like VGA cards are on the PCs. Of special interest was the Kix's capability to hook multiple graphics cards into it. Each one could have it's own monitor, mouse, and keyboard so you could run four dedicated graphics terminals off of one box. Hmmm...now THAT sounds interesting! Good luck, Frank. I hope you make it to Atlanta so we can see this amazing graphics card up close!

Glenside CoCo Club of Illinois - Mugs, buttons, and newsletters. This group made it all happen. They had lots of neat stuff...and their still-evolving OS9 based point of sale system (CoCo with terminals, of course) seemed to keep track of all their activity. Thanks, gang, for inviting us all back! (By the way...how many more of those CoCoFest mugs do you have?)

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Of special interest on Sunday (?) was Tony Podraza's PA announcement about Bob Rosen's original old CoCo 1. They had it. It was an old gray case CoCo 1 with a Model 3 keyboard (with numeric keypad) and a series of switches that controlled power, reset, and the cartridge interrupt (for inserting rom-paks with the power on to make them not autostart...). Inside was a 300 baud modem (Modem I it looked like) with the on/off and ans/org switches coming through. Also, a series of color LEDs indicated volume level of the cassette port. It was really neat! Built-in lowercase (with a switch) too. Tony talked about a possible auction and I suggested that Lee Veal outta buy it to go with his other prize CoCo. Seeing this machine "in person" made me realize just how big and great our community once was, and made me marvel at how well we have hung together over the years.

HawkSoft - Chris Hawks, designer of the SlotPak and various other gadgets, was there with his robe full o' name badges. (I didn't even try to compete with him this year!) A new version of IconBasic for OSK was there (program with pictures, basically - neat concept!) and a new SOUND editor for the MM/1. Keyboard extension cables, dual hi/low-res joystick adapters for the CoCo, and so much more. He's a fun guy, and I think there was pizza at his house after the Fest on Sunday evening... Rumors of the "next generation" Icon Basic program with a context-sensitive point-n-click interface were circulated.

Interactive Media Systems - Paul Ward was nowhere to be found, but a rep was there running MM/1 demos and handing out updates on IMS. IMS is not dead, they claim, and several new configurations of the MM/1 will be available soon. Good news to those still on the waiting list, and those like myself who want an MM/1 more badly now than ever.

One interesting demo was when Brian White from Canada showed off a networked game called Assassin. It put the player in a 3-D "real world" view of a dungeon as you walked around and battled other creatures. FULL STEREO SOUND! You would hear footsteps off in the distance, etc. The best thing was you could like multiple MM/1s (and even Amigas, and soon other computer platforms as well) together to play! 16 MM/1s could be linked all battling each other, or over modems or whatever! TRULY amazing and one of the most interesting things I have seen. I hope we hear more about this soon. (It is a pity we didn't get around to linking up all the MM/1s at the show, as was discussed...grin!)

Kala Software - MIDI MIDI MIDI! An upgrade to UltiMuse for CoCo OS9 was there, and LOTSA music files for both the CoCo and MM/1 version of this notation sequencer. They played tons of tunes through their keyboard setup and kept us entertained the entire show with Led Zeppelin, Beatles, and various other classics. BUY THIS if you love Midi! (Unfortunately, they STILL don't have Bohemian Rhapsody or any Monkees tunes done...blah!)

Dirt Cheap Computer Stuff Company - (?) Hmmm...some guy named Mark was there casually showing off various MM/1 goodies. If I owned an MM/1 I would have paid more attention. (Hmmm...was that a totally automated off-line reader for Delphi or Compuserve that ran on the MM/1 or CoCo??? HEY! If you are on Delphi or CIS, GET THIS NOW and save time and money. It is GREAT and will pay for itself and reduce connect hours! If Delphi is long distance, this program will help save your phone bill by allowing you to read and reply to mail and forum messages OFF-LINE then upload replies automatically later...gotta have it! Now if I can just talk him into doing a version for GEnie...) That was neat.

OS-9 Users Group, USA - Jim Destefano and others were on-hand with membership applications, sample MOTD newsletters, and library disks. I strongly urge any OS9 user to sign up. Some major things are in the works and we all need to help out.

Overseas OS-9 User Group Consortium - This was one of the most major events of ANY CoCoFest. Representatives from around the world were on-hand to talk about how they use OS9 and discuss how we may all benefit by getting together. Represented were:

- Australian National OS-9 User Group with Gordon Bentzen (g'day!)
- EFFO with Stephen Pashedag from Switzerland
- EUROS-9 with Peter Tutelaers (he got the ball rolling here. Thanks, Peter!)
- OS-9 User Group of Japan with Chikara Ymaguchi.

He had a neat dual-6309 based machine running OS9. VERY interesting and the dual processors gave this "old" machine much speed. Upgraded to 6309s much like we upgrade our CoCos.

The book, "The OS-9 Guru", was available. This is one thing you don't find sitting on bookshelves in the US. This was the highlight of attention. More on this later.

Microware - Officially there selling OS-9000 not for $995 but for the amazing show price of $350 to OS9 User Group members. OS-9000 allows a 386/486 to run OSK, basically. The

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MASSIVE package was very complete and they sold perhaps 20-30 units. Also on display were CD-I machines running full motion 24-bit video (VERY impressive) all running OSK <grin>. Of special interest was this tiny portable CD-I machine with small LCD color screen and controller. I have never seen anything like it. It was great. Seeing this really makes me believe we need to help support CD-I more and get OSK into the mainstream. CD-I players have potential to go where even PCs aren't...any comments?

Radical Electronics - From "nowhere", this first-time vendor had something truly amazing. A CoCo-3 Schematic Designer. It fully supported laser printers and postscript and the output was 100% PROFESSIONAL. Finding something like this at the Fest was amazing. Many other add-ons and upgrades are planned. If you build circuits, you gotta check this out! I would never have guessed our "lowly CoCos" could do something on this scale. (Well, okay, maybe I DID think they could.)

S-BUG - "CoCoPro West"? Perhaps. Andre Lavelle was here again driving those miles to sell lots of new/used items from disk drives to printers to CoCo goodies. The Bob Van der Poel software products were also on sale, and he had a nice printer with serial and parallel (CoCo & PC hookup) that oddly didn't get sold even at it's great show price.

StG Net - Scott Griepentrog sat around working on the StG V4 BBS system (which is nearing completion and has some stunning options) and also sold some neat micro-PC keyboards for $50 or so. Very slick. Scott also has a program called DFIX that will "seek out and restore" clobbered disk files, directories, etc. This product, currently available for OSK, will soon be out for CoCo OS9 as well. Price will be around $30 for the CoCo version, and a bit higher for the OSK version. Watch for more details. This is a serious MUST HAVE for any hard drive owner! (Price subject to change.)

StrongWare - John Strong and his Team OS9 crew was there will Soviet Bloc, Gems, Font Editor, and lots of OSK products. Of interest were some (John, can I tell people about this?) upcoming MM/1 items including some games (neat titles screens) and various routines which will end up being used in some PROFESSIONAL OSK stuff. Wow! By the way...John had the only Stereo CoCo games at the Fest, and his MM/1 "file requester" was great.

Sub-Etha Software - 1000 miles from home, Sub-Etha was back with "the same old stuff"...with one exception. Joel Hegberg's praised MM/1 word processor, Write-Right, turned heads with it's what-you-see-is-what-you-get screen supporting all printer options and colors. A true REAL word processor for the MM/1 with on-screen ruler and lotsa goodies to click on. [Demo now available!]

Also at the Sub-Etha booth, Brian White showed off his OSK "Speed Disk" program (under construction) which looked JUST LIKE Norton's utility for the PC. I can hardly wait! The software is just getting better and better all the time! (Brian? Care to tell us what else you have in the works? And can we please help market it when finished? ;)

Of odd interest was the announcement of the Sub-Etha sponsored programming contest in which programmers are challenged to create PONG games...awards to be given in Atlanta this October based on Memory Efficiency, Speed, Originality, Special Effects, and Playbility for RS-DOS, OS9, or OSK updates to this classic arcade game that started it all. Any takers? Watch for "press release" information on this contest, which claims

to offer the winners a $1 prize! (By the way, it was noted that Chris Burke might be able to write the most efficient pong game for the 6309 thanks to his knowledge of some undocumented 6309 commands...such as the PNG <pong> command which Chris described as "draw paddle and beep"...!)

Oh, just to get a fair plug in..."the same old stuff" includes MiniBanners, CheckBook+, Etha-GUI, and the recent InfoPatch which converts old CoCo 1/2 Infocom text adventures to run in 80 columns on a CoCo 3. We also had Carl England's disk utilities and some old N*Johnson software. We promise MORE NEW ITEMS for the next Fest!

Briefly shown was the demo RS-DOS player for the SES (Spasm Eyeball Software, Nick Johnson's new venture) EthaSampler. Some stereo samples were played via an Orchestra-90 pack. Hopefully the full package with hardware will be out (under $50???) "real soon now".

JWT's Optimize Utility Set was supposed to be available, but the package did not arrive in time - something that has been hitting CoCo vendors a lot lately. (This kept Sundog from having Contras for sale at the Iowa Fest...sigh...) I'd write more, but you could probably just read old Fest reports to hear more about what we offer. . . (Oh, gotta plug it...as the CoCo SysOp on GEnie, I had stacks of GEnie flyers to hand out as well! To prove a point, we unrolled a 27-foot listing of GEnie access numbers. It's great for those who don't have Delphi access numbers locally. . .)

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Sundog Systems - Unable to attend, they were represented well. Games like Contras (2 player action!) and Photon attracted quite a bit of attention. When it comes to CoCo games, it doesn't get much better than Sundog...even if Photon is a STUPID, FRUSTRATING, and IMPOSSIBLE game...to me, anyway. Everyone else seemed to get the hang of this truly unique puzzle game with great graphics and digital music. (Hint: Buy it if you like addiction.)

T&D Subscription Software - While in the process (apparently) of shutting things down, they made an appearance and sold of disks and disks and tapes of old Co-appearance. It was great to see them there and I hope they did well enough to consider future Fests.

Lee Veal - Another displaced Texan. Lee, proud owner of CoCo #1, sold Dave Wordel's video tapes (Learning OS9 and Installing the 6309) in addition to the STUNNING "Planet Engine" product. Kinda like a planetarium for the CoCo.

Rumors of an OSK port of this product were circulating. Lee, I'm glad you survived the long drive. Maybe next time we can carpool, eh?

This place was crowded. The unusual setup of the show made things quite exciting. The overall layout was my favorite of any Fest I have attended. Enthusiasm was VERY intense and overall people seemed stunned at all the amazing things that were being shown and sold at this show. It was detrimental to many vendors, though, since there were so many great pieces of hardware to be found that some of the non-earth-shattering items got overlooked. Still, I think we will all agree this was one of the BEST Fests in many many years.

THE PVC NIGHTMARE

I'm not sure just where to put this part, but I wanted to stick it in. On Friday night, Terry and myself loaded goodies from the car into the show room. One of the goodies was a plastic bag full of 4-foot PVC tubes and connectors. This has come to be known as the "PVC Nightmare" after the shaky start we got with our first impromptu design from the 1992 Atlanta CoCoFest (see COCOFEST3.TXT). Basically, it's just a simple frame from which we drape a backdrop. Easy to assemble...if you know how it goes.

Well, I decided to turn over assembly to Joel Hegberg and Terry. They are both super-hackers. Terry can figure out any formula and Joel can hack out any type of application...so, this "real world" test would be fun. Give 'em a bag of parts, and let them figure out how to put it all together. We watched as the struggled to figure out just how it all went. I informed onlookers such as James Jones (who works for Microware but speaks for himself) that there was an extra piece in the package...one extra 4' tube, and by the looks of what they were doing they were determined to use every piece.

After nearly a half hour of them putting it together and almost using it all we decided to give them a few hints and shortly they had the entire structure together firmly...with TWO pieces left over. Now, talk about optimizing! They also brought it to my attention that with the addition of one more tube the structure could be improved even more. Congratulations, Terry and Joel, for a job well done. (I hope they didn't mind me humming the theme from The Three Stooges as they fumbled with all the parts...!)

THE SEMINARS

I missed 'em all, but found out upon arrival that I was giving two of them myself. So...I'll reprint what the Fest guide said about them and interject my comments on the ones I was personally involved with.

Saturday:
09:00 - "Future Support of the CoCo"

Frank Swygert and Allen Huffman will speak on the future of the CoCo and some of the ways it can be supported in the future. Stop by and learn how you can make a difference. [Frank and I took turns talking about things we believe in. I discussed the importance of staying in touch, getting online, and supporting vendors, and Frank was able to talk about his efforts to link us together with his new CoCo publication, "The World of 68 Micros". Thanks to all those who attended and seem to care. You guys make it worthwhile!]

10:15 - "Telecommunications and Networks"
Eddie Kuns and Paul Jerkatis will speak on the telecommunications and networks, their uses and various means of support that are available. Eddie will talk about Delphi and terminal programs while Paul will explain StG-Net and BBSing.

11:30 - "Hardware Hacking"
Mark Griffith and Rick Uland will speak on hardware hacking and answer questions. If you wondered how to make a computer interface with the real world stop by and listen in. Learn what projects these two whizzes have in store for the future.

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12:45 - "Programming & Graphics"

John Strong and Joel Hegberg will speak on programming with a strong emphasis on Graphics and User Interfaces (GUI). Questions from the audience will be encouraged.

02:00 - "OS-9000"

Boisy Pitre and Mike Burgess will speak on and answer questions about OS-9000. This is an operating system that is designed much like OS-9 but runs on higher level platforms such as the Intel '386 or higher machines and the Motorola 68020 or higher machines.

08:00 - "International OS9 Consortium Discussion"

This really deserves it's own section, but I place it here to maintain consistency. (Consistency? What consistency?) A corner of the Fest area was turned into an enclosed meeting room and tables and chairs were brought in. At 8pm or so things got started as a table with reps from all around the world sat to introduce themselves and discuss the future of OS9.

This meeting was of staggering proportions and the amount accomplished was incredible. Basically, we got to learn about how OS9 is used around the world. Australian users are CoCo'ist more or less, while Japan users seem to use odd OS9/OSK machines we have never seen (like the system I saw at Microware last month - see IOWAFEST.TXT). The Japan users group seems to be around 400 members. In Europe OS9 and OSK are in use in homes an businesses, but in Switzerland the 6809-OS9 is nowhere to be found.

We learned so much in the hours that this meeting encompassed and here is what I would call the summary. They are working on a way to let us all share information, such as distributing articles from our various newsletters to each group. (The Australian newsletter will be made available through the USA UG on disk or by article reprints. The Japan newsletter would require translation.) Software/hardware information will be exchanged to allow us to write programs that will run on systems around the world. Any chance of graphics standards? Not yet, but MGR offers some chance of that. (MGR is a graphics system for OSK that was ported to the MM/1 in about 1.5 hours at the show!) Libraries will be shared and programming tips exchanged. The OS9 Users Group of USA will do it's best to fill us in on further developments amongst the groups.

Folks, someone could (and SHOULD - hint, hint) write a complete report on this meeting. This is VERY important and helped lay out guidelines for the future of OS9... Perhaps someone who video taped all of this can provide a transcript? Some good (and not-so-good) questions were asked by us in the audience and some very good answers were given. Even with the problems with languages (that is, many members there didn't speak English primarily) it was still a very well done communication experience.

Due to heat, we took a very long "10 minute" break and got to shake hands and speak with the members there. (Hey, did you know MS-DOS is NOT popular in Japan? Makes me want to move...) I spoke with Gordon from Australia for awhile. If he only realized how popular Australian accents are in the US! (Gordon, if you read this...how about letting me sample your voice for some products?) Anyway, the meeting was resumed and talk continued. Questions were asked about the users groups keeping lists of all shareware and maybe even commercial OS9 software, plus which machines they would run on. There was so much to talk about and it will take time for them to get things rolling, but at least it's started. Let's wait for more on this!

Sunday:
09:00 - "Glenside Meeting"

Tony Podraza and cast of ???? will hold a meeting (albeit a condensed version) of the Glenside CoCo Club complete with the official gavel. [it takes batteries and makes space noises...go figure] If you are a member who is not normally able to attend meetings or just plain interested in what goes on at these meetings, drop in. While you are at the meeting you can also join up if you are not a member already. You do not need to be a member to attend. [Guys, I'm sorry I overslept and missed the meeting. I'm a lousy club member. Please forgive me!]

10:15 - "Network Communications"

Scott Griepentrog and Paul Jerkatis will speak on network communications and BBSes. If you have never heard of LAN or WAN then you must attend this seminar. [Scott talked about a revolutionary change in phone systems coming soon that allows channels of digital data to be send with voice calls all real-time. It could literally allow BBS packages like StG net to become more like internet offering real-time links between all systems...it could happen within a few years... Scott used a variety of overhead transparencies, too, which he designed on Friday night.]

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11:30 - "Programming"

Okay, okay...this one was a mistake. This seminar was actually Joel Hegberg and Myself making an attempt to show off a new user-interface for the CoCo that works on a text screen offering pull-down menus, point and click via a text cursor, pop-up boxes, etc, etc, all high-speed and EASY TO USE and IMPLEMENT with hot keys, etc. An MM/1 port will also be done and ANYONE who wishes to develop with it can get the library once complete FREE without royalty fees. We are trying to get some more professional software and make programmers jobs easier. If interested, get in touch with Sub-Etha.

12:45 - "User Groups and the Future"

Peter Tutelears and Carl Boll will speak about future support for both OS-9 and the CoCo. Learn about user groups and the role they will play in he future by keeping users in contact with each other. [This is a *VERY* important issue. I hope someone will put together a report of this seminar for mass-distribution.]

02:00 - "OS-09000"

Boisy and Mike will again speak on and answer questions about OS-9000. Drop in and ask them about it.

Whew! Okay, that was that... So much to talk about, and so much I missed. Perhaps someone else will do a seminar review of this Fest? If so, let me know what I missed.

THE EVENINGS

This was one incredible experience. I am slowly learning to get up early enough to see things before the show, and I have enough Fest experience to not have to be stuck in my hotel room hackin' all night as was the routine at earlier Fests. Basically, this time I got to have some fun.

The first night (Friday), Carl Boll bought drinks. That was nice, and I'm sure I needed one after the drive. I also spent time watching StG Net develop with Scott. Paul's home-brew beer (in a container which made it basically a keg) was interesting. It seemed to be 99% foam but after some time settled down. I had a taste. It was interesting. I'm not much of a drinker, but after hearing so much about Paul's stuff I just had to try.

This was also where I ate lunch and dinner - chips. (Nacho, not computer ;) The rest of Friday night was spent in my room transferring a demo of a stereo sound player written by Nick

Johnson. Nick uploaded it to me via GEnie and I downloaded it the night I packed to go to the Fest. I had to transfer it to an RS-DOS disk and get it running in time to demo. What? Last minute? Never...

Saturday night, a group was supposed to meet at a steak house using coupons that came from somewhere (?). My Honda was full of Scott, Paul, Terry, and Allen-people as we aimlessly drove with two other vehicles following/leading us (Carl and some guy who raises birds?). We didn't find it, and lost our other two companions so we ended up at a "Chicken and Pasta" place (interesting combination).

A massive party that started out in the bar and moved to Carl's room was held that kept my partner out until early the next morning. This Saturday probably had some of the most interesting sub-stories of ANY CoCo gathering EVER. Most of which I cannot relay and keep a General Audience rating in this report <grin> but I think talking to Dave Barnes might be enlightening. (Hey Terry...where were you all night?)

Oddly, the regular "open door" gatherings didn't seem as apparent at this Fest, probably since the hotel had us spread out all around with some inside, some upstairs, and some on outside facing rooms. The '92 Chicago Fest had a similar "problem" since the hotel was separate from the Fest area.

SUMMARY

PHENOMENAL! Without a doubt the *BEST*, most-exciting CoCoFest I have ever gone to. There was so much to see that it was almost detrimental to vendors such as us with nothing totally new to offer. Sub-Etha only did good thanks to Joel Hegberg's new word processor for the MM/1. The rest of the money seemed to be spent on 2-meg upgrades, OS-9000, and other high-dollar items. I am sure that the overall dollar-per-ticket amount at this show was higher than many previous shows.

The show area itself was packed, though I am not sure how many actual tickets were sold. It sure seemed full and busy the entire time, but someone else would need to qualify this statement. ("Rumored" attendance was under 300.) I loved the layout of the booths. This was a very refreshing change, and probably necessary to fit everyone in. I loved the look of the Fest guide as well, but one complaint has to do with the badges. Normally small paper badges enclosed in plastic are worn with different colors to show who is a vendor, "staff", or attendee. At this Fest we used little buttons which was nice and made for a neat souvenir BUT you didn't get to read who people were and where they were from. This I sadly missed. (Besides, I am VERY bad with names and had to bluff my way through the entire show pretending to remember people's names.

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Future show planners: Please give us name badges. It adds an extra personal touch. (Though I would love to see buttons as well!!!) Also, please make sure you include address/phone number information of vendors in the guide books. That is most handy, and sadly missed in the book. Other than that, GREAT!

Things seemed VERY stable in the CoCo Community. It really feels as if we have control back of our declining group. Surprisingly, with the Rainbow "gone" it seems like support is now actually greater now than it was a year ago. New publications such as "'68 Micros", "UpTime", "No Name Magazine" along with the resurgence (cross fingers) of "OS-9 Underground" let us know there WILL be places to find information about upcoming CoCoFests. There WILL be places to find out about new products such as The Rocket and CoNect's super 232 pak. There WILL be support...as long as we support their efforts. There really was more neat stuff here than you could "shake a stick at" (Terry made me say this). Bumper stickers and buttons and lotsa great things to take home. I don't think I've ever had quite this much fun at a Fest (well, maybe I have...this Fest was so busy that I'm sure I missed a lot of great things). Did I mention the "breakout" type game for OS9 under works by an un-named Canadian that used a series of HIGH SPEED graphics routines? Did I talk about the point-and-shoot interface to play sound files? So much was being shown...I'd have to double this Fest report to put it all in. I hope someone else might write a "What Allen Left Out" report. (If you do, send me a copy!) I feel like I have left out more in this Fest report than I INCLUDED in many of my past reports...!

CHIPS AHOY!

Looking for those 2 chip 1M x 8-80ns CMOS SIMMS for the Disto 2-meg upgrade? Call **Ace Software & Computers**. Mention Dave Barnes or Tony Podraza and CoCo.

It won't get anybody any better deal, but it sure let's Ace know where you got their number. Latest price was $27.00 plus sales tax and shipping. I'm told that this is not a bad price, at all. OH, hehe, might help if you had the phone number, eh? 708-255-5565 or (FAX) 708-255-0002.

Glenside wishes to extend its thanks to Andy Taylor for his donation of Tandy items during the Second Annual "Last" Chicagoland CoCoFEST! Andy works at the Radio Shack Store at 322-10 Army Trail Road in Bloomingdale, Il. He can be reached via phone at 708-893-3480. Thanks, Andy.

For those of you who have an affinity for the "previously owned" equipment, May I suggest that you give a little store, that I ran into, a call. The name of the store is PC Products and Services. There exists a plethora of equipment there, and David Lavelle is always ready to serve you. In the past week, I spotted two "IBM" versions of the CGP220, a Magnavox 8CM515, and a four bay full-height hard drive power supply and case that was originally used as a file server for a very large system. With a set of power supply line 'y' cables, there's enough room and power for my four hard drives, the two 5.25" 40 trackers, the 3.5" 720K and the 5.25" 720K floppy. HURMPH! And that, as they say, will be that!

You can contact David at 708-307-1810 by voice, 708-307-8596 by modem, and 708-307-2386 by FAX.

From the Editor's Desk

Well.... Another combined issue of the CoCo~123. This issue is absolutely full of excellent reading. Thanks to all that have contributed!!!

I have many, many items of which I need to touch base on, however, due to the length of this issue, I will reserve my comments and stories 'til next month's issue. There is one thing I must do that simply cannot wait until next month. That being a great big "Thank You Glenside" for all of the efforts put forth by our GREAT membership. The Fest was a HUGE success!!! Everyone deserves a pat on the back for pulling this one off... especially our excellent President.

Oh well... time to run, you see it is Wednesday night at 10:13 P.M. (before the next meeting) and I must rush this issue out to the laser printer... but before I go, one other thing I must mention...

HEY CHARLIE.... JUST KIDDING!!!

CoCo III, Private Eye

By Andrew Kenny

Adam turned the corner, his monitor looking behind him over the keyboard. He could see no one following but the high pitched whine of electronic equipment filled his senses. Something was out there and echoing his every footstep. Pausing for a moment against a cold brick wall he reeled in a loose interface cable that had been dragging on the ground for at least a mile.'

'How could he of gotten himself involved in all this mess?

Adam after all was only a Coleco computer trying to serve his owner in his own way. All Adam wanted to do was find out why his master was considering scraping him and moving on to an IBM machine. Didn't Adam keep his chips cool, traces clean, memory intact and drives whirling? Granted the IBM was faster and sleeker but Adam could print documents, store phone numbers and all the numerous other mundane tasks that his master wanted.' 'It was this feeling of inadequacy that drove Adam to delve deeper into the mystery surrounding his User's sudden longing for a new machine. Adam realized he had dug too deep, too late.

Someone caught onto Adam's queries and wanted him unplugged. 'Adam's questions led up to his position now: back against the wall, being followed and trying desperately to reach OCL (Orphan Computer League).

'He snuck his monitor around the corner and scanned the darkened city streets. Quite still.'

'Wait, what was that?'

'A shadow moving off to his right, ducking behind a building. Was it someone following or just another machine on a late night quest for its master? Adam's circuits could not handle much more stress, already his power supply was white hot.'

'Turning, Adam began to move off in the opposite direction he had arrived there from. Quickening his pace he knew the OCL was only a little bit...'

'A shadow fell across his keyboard. Turning his monitor, he saw a figure moving towards him. He knew not who it was and did not want to find out anytime soon.'

'Pivoting, Adam turned to his right. Another machine was stepping out of the shadows. His monitor spun round and round like a top. Five machines slowly crept towards him, their nature blanketed by night. Adam was surrounded, no exit.'

"Please, please," Adam begged. "I don't want to be unplugged." The machines closed in. Every port on Adam's frame clicked rapidly. "Oh mainframe! Spare my CPU!"

'That was the last any heard of that Adam. Only a socket and a ribbon or two was left of him.'

I poured myself another shot of double blended PowerBoost.

Studying the glass before I downed it I saw the bits swirling around the eighty proof liquid electricity. Damn fine drink. "How do you know the story you just told me is true? Sounds like you were there watchin' the whole thing."

I studied the machine as it spoke. He was a Color Computer Two and an animated one at that. He waved his cables in the air as if each movement accented every word. I couldn't help notice his professional style replacement keyboard, 40 Meg hard drive or the four in one controller he wore like a User wears a pinky ring. His User had money and knowledge, that was evident.

Then why was he here in my office trying to hire a private investigator? I humbly admit I'm a crack gumshoe but if his User has bucks then why not hire one of the bigger guys? Most machines would get one of the Mac P.I.s, not a Color Computer III who is down and out of luck.

"I was not at the scene," Two said, "but an agent of mine saw the whole thing. He left to get help but when they got back Adam was missing."

"Whoa, hold your data stream a micro. Your agent? What does that mean?"

"Sorry I thought I mentioned that. I am head of OCL." Two's cables flapped violently.

"Whose dat?" I asked.

"OCL stands for the Orphan Computer League. We are a unified group standing fast against the powers of Apple, IBM, Compaq and the slew of others trying to tell us we are obsolete and should be traded in for one of their kind. The OCL accepts any orphan computer no matter the maker or era. We remind the Users that we still work and can get any job done."

Mainframe, what a speech! But I knew from that tirade against the big boys that Two was a machine of ROM not EPROM. His views weren't swayed by inflated claims. I could get to like this guy and his outfit. Might bring in business if I got friendly with him.

"Alright, so Adam gets crashed by a few thugs. It happens all the time in the big city. Could've been the Anti-tecs, they hate machines."

"No, no" Two pleaded. "Adam was on to something big. He phoned the league explaining he had important evidence against the big guys. He said it was confidential and did not want to risk it over the phone lines."

"Alright Two, I believe its important. I'll take the case."

"Thank you III. This case will help you out as it will help all orphan computers." Two extended a cable and I shook it. "I trust you will do an excellent job and I don't just say that because

CoCo III, Private Eye

we are related." "I'll do my best."

Two left the number and address for OCL. I still had the better part of the day to snoop around so I left my dilapidated office and struck out onto the streets.

My first stop was to get in touch with Adam's User. But that proved fruitless. The User had forgotten Adam and moved on to an IBM compatible. The clone wasn't talking. For every question I asked it sent out an escape character. Piece of high priced garbage. I called the clone's mother an alarm clock then hung up.

Afterwards I looked up a few of Adam's friends and relatives. I found them at a Salvation Army store sitting on a shelf collecting dust. There were two Adam machines and a Coleco game system. Depressing lot they were. The game system started out reminiscing about how he blew the doors off the Atari 2600 then spiraled into a pit of despair when talking about Genesis or Super Nintendo. The two Adams went on and on about bad quality inspection on the production line leading to an early doom. The only thing I could get out of the trio was blips and pips of sorrow. Pitiful.

Night was falling like a bad clear screen command and I had nothing. There was only one card left to play.

I hit the 'bad' side of town, the places good machines warn you to stay away from. Anything could be found there. From hacking machines to unlicensed ROM, 8" disks to secret passwords. I found what I sought in a grimy bar guzzling foul liquids and smoking unfiltered Ram Refreshers. There he was, half on a bar stool, head drunkenly lurching forward.

CoCo Cat.

Once a symbol for the COLOR Computer at its height, delighting children and adults, novices and hackers alike. Now smelling of badly mixed liquid electricity and belching out a pitiful few meows.

I slapped him on the back nearly toppling him from the stool. He turned to me, anger smoldering in his eyes.

"Oh, its you," CoCo Cat slurred.

"Let me get you a drink. I've got a few questions for you." I tossed a few credits on the counter. "Two of what he's having," I said to the bartender.

CoCo Cat's paws twitched as he watched the bartender pour two shots. "Alright, wadda want ta know?" He quickly downed one shot but when he reached for the second I smacked his hand.

"Lately a lot of Users have been dumping their orphans. Know anything about it?"

"Orphan computers get dumped all the time. What's the

big deal?" CoCo Cat glanced nervously at the drink in my hand. "Sure but recently the orphans have been dropping like a bad line connection. The other day an Adam was unplugged. Heard anything?" I handed CoCo Cat my drink. He spilled half of it moving it to his lips as quickly as possible.

"Yeah, I've heard talk. The big boys have been recruiting orphans a the I/O docks. Big boys offer two paths: leave your User and get a job with us or get unplugged. Either way the big boys get a new User for their machines. Users have no respect for the machines they were brought up on. Why I recall a time when the Users flocked to see me..."

I left CoCo Cat to his memories. This side of town was getting to me.

In the morning, after cooling down and a refresh, I headed to the I/O docks.

The docks are a point of arrival and departure for all hardware and software. From the big boys to the little fries, they all used the docks.

A matter of minutes was all it took to locate the dock I needed. A large advertisement was plastered on one side of a warehouse. It read: "Your User upgrading to a new machine? Do not want to end up on the scrap pile? Join us and we'll put you to good use. See inside."

This had to be the place hiring orphans. I entered the building.

My chips were immediately assaulted. This was a sweat shop! Hundreds of orphan computers; Ataris, Commodores, Heaths, Sinclairs, early Apples, Apple clones and Radio Shack models were on assembly lines helping the IBM cause. The orphans soldered, bound manuals, packed crates, and affixed stickers all while IBM foremen looked on.

What type of future was this? Enslavement to the IBM war. Giving up one's identity and heritage just to keep on working. How could so many machines do this.

I ran to the nearest point on the assembly line. A model four and an Atari 800 were shrink wrapping a catalog of IBM products to be sent to new Users. I looked into the dim light of their monitors, they could barely see me. Their voices quiet. "Talk to a foreman. He'll find a place for you on the line," they said in unison. "No need to worry about your User dumping you. Here we are all happy working for IBM."

A surge jolted my system. I couldn't bear to see the machines like this. Lunging out I pushed the two orphans away from the assembly line and started tearing at the catalogs. Screaming at the top of my speakers I called out to all on the assembly line. "Free yourselves! Have some dignity! Stand up and fight!" Pages of the catalog flew up into the air. The Atari

CoCo III, Private Eye

started grabbing at the pages. No one listened to me.

Suddenly my system went out. It was like my power switch was hit with a hammer.

I powered up in a plush neo-modern office overlooking the city. In the room with me were two thugs, old IBMs and their boss a 486 DX."

"Finally awake, Color Computer III?" the 486 said. "Normally I would of had your CPU pulled and your scrapped for pulling that stunt. But you interest me III."

"How so? Curious why my operating system is better than yours and costs hundreds less?"

A slight smile formed on the 486's 20" monitor. He clicked his keyboard. One of the thugs stepped up to me, produced a screwdriver, then pried six keys off my keyboard. Keeping my speaker off I tried not letting them see my pain.

"Any other remarks," the 486 asked.

"Yeah. I admit I'm an eight bit. Your machines here are sixteen bit posers." The thugs' monitors glared, they wanted to pound my case.

Flaring his hard drive the 486 circled around me as he spoke. "I admit I underestimated your powers. You don't even have a math coprocessor. But III I like your style. Your willing to hold on to the old days, when all machines were equal. But I have evolved. I am faster, smarter, brighter, more powerful, and capable of handling all tasks. The orphans cannot compete. That is why the Users are leaving behind the obsolete machines and joining with the powers of IBM. IBM is the one and only machine. Hail the 486, I spit at your 6809!"

I turned and faced him, he could gleam from my monitor that I was not beaten. "Granted you're faster. But what's important here is the User. The machine has to serve only the User, our master, not a false sense of progress. What matters power for the User who cannot use it? The number of colors to a blind User? Speed to someone who cares not? The Users of orphan computers were perfectly happy until you came along and put ideas into their heads. You said the machine they've been using for a decade is outdated. The operating system they know backwards and forward isn't good enough. The Users would've stood by their machines, they served well enough until you came along with all your promises."

The 486 executed a digital sampling of hands clapping, his monitor smiled. "Bravo. I was going to offer you a position in the company recruiting orphan machines but I see you are stubbornly loyal. You will be scrapped." He waved a cable to dismiss me. The thugs moved towards me.

One thing my User always told me, have a backup. I had mine hidden in my multi-pak interface disguised as a Predator cartridge. An electro-magnetic disruptor, this small black box weapon fired a pin point beam capable of frying any chip. Waving the weapon in the monitors of the thugs they stepped backwards. Even the 486 knew the damage the box I held could cause. No more smiles on his monitor.

"III, please put that down," he pleaded with me. "Perhaps we can work something out after all."

"You and me started out together. We were there for the User. Not everyone needs your speed and power." I considered just backing out of the office at that moment, hoping I would never encounter the 486 again. But the image of Adam filled my video memory.

I engaged the box. A white light shot out and just as quickly disappeared. The 486's cables wrapped tightly around his keyboard, his monitor dimmed and horrendous grinding noises erupted from his drives.

I had fried his guts.

Looking back I realize all I did was slow the exodus of Users from older machines by a few microns. Sitting back at my office drinking a shot or two I felt OK with myself. Users would naturally upgrade but they did not need the big boys making the decision for them. Maybe by doing what I did a few Users would quietly say to themselves: "I've been using this machine for years and it does everything I need it to do. I'll stick with it".

Next month, look for the conclusion of Tom Kowalski's program which first appeared in the April issue of the CoCo~123.

Also, we will be running the CoCo ads again, so if you have any items to sell, or if you just want to purchase some obscure parts... check us out!

July 1993
BARSoft Publishing

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 *Dominion Day (Canada)* *Dominion Day (Canada)*	**2**	**3**
4 *Independence Day* *Independence Day*	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8** *Glenside Color Computer Club Meeting*	**9**	**10**
11	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**
18	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22** *OS-9 Users Group Meeting*	**23**	**24**
25	**26**	**27**	**28** *Cook County Color Computer Club Meeting*	**29**	**30**	**31**

June						
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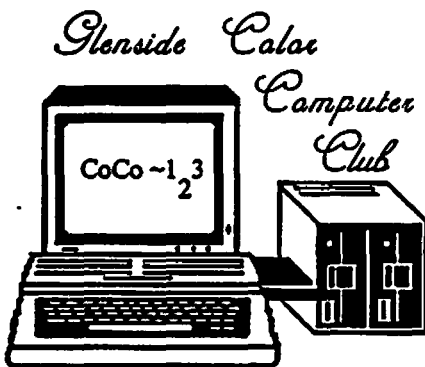| August						
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Location:

Glenside Public Library
25 W. Fullerton Avenue
Glendale Heights, IL. 60172

Directions:

Fullerton avenue is about 1 mile North of North Avenue (Route 64). The library is located West of Bloomindale Road in Glendale Heights. Bloomingdale Road is aproximately 2 miles West of Route 53 (or I-355).

Glenside Color Computer Club

Next Meeting Date...
July 8

Glenside Color Computer Club

CoCo ~1,2,3

**119 ADOBE CIRCLE
CARPENTERSVILLE, IL. 60110**