

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Alex Forrest, one of the few remaining CoCo-only hackers I know, and a friend who will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

**In Memory Of
Alex Forrest
May 1, 1966 - July 19, 1997**

“Leaving Friend”

(by Jenna Brackmann)

*When they leave it hurts,
but what they left stands fast.*

The way they talk

Their warming touch

Every little thing will last.

*For when they left
they lost in you
a memory that runs deep.
A memory of only them
that's simple and unique.*

*So when that friend
moves on in life
don't be devastated and grey.
For when they leave
they touch your heart
with a memory that will stay.*

Acknowledgments

While I do claim to be the original author of the original CoCoFest reports (not counting the other original ones contributed by others for this original book), please pay special attention to the “Special Thanks” section of each report for additional credit where credit is or was due. Certainly, this book could not have been written without the assistance and support from the dozens and dozens (possibly more) of people whom I consider friends within this Community. I cannot possibly thank you all here, though at first I did try and realized how bad it would look for me to leave out people who were also instrumental in all of this. So, hopefully you know who you are. And if you don’t, please check your wallet for proper identification.

Thanks.

And I really, really mean that.

SOME WHO ASSISTED

Carl Boll provided some outside opinions on yours truly, as well as more favors to me over the years than I could ever repay.

Jenna Brackmann provided the dedication poem as well as endless moral support.

Brother Jeremy provided a letter to the Community which has been included.

Ron Bull provided commentary on his independent Pennsylvania Fest.

Ken Fish provided his thoughts on the Atlanta Fests and their real meanings.

Tim Johns allowed me to publish his entire report of the Iowa Fest, and further add to the credibility of “IT.”

James Jones provided proofreading, editing, his Fest reports, the use of his laser printer, and immense support for this project. Without him this book probably would have been made anyway, but it certainly it would not have been nearly as good as it is.

Mike Knudsen provided hundreds of K of archived messages about the Fests, as well as his history of music on the CoCo.

John Kowalski provided use of his hand drawn CoCo 3 graphic for the cover.

Dave Myers provided his discussion on how the post-RAINBOWfests even began to happen.

Tony Podraza provided a look into the Glenside Chicago Fests.

Terry Simons provided insight on the one and only Iowa Fest.

Terry Todd provided another view of the Fests.

The **Members of Delphi** and the **Internet CoCo mailing list** posted many comments of which portions have been included here to show the before and after effects of the various Fests.

Introduction

A FEW WORDS FROM THE AUTHOR

I have been a loyal Color Computer enthusiast since 1982. I was in the market for a new machine and discovered a grey case CoCo 1 at a local Radio Shack. My grandmother used to drop me off on Saturdays, and while she shopped next door I'd spend my time learning about this amazing machine. Since I was used to non-Microsoft BASIC, I found the simple commands such as SOUND, SET, and even CLS to be incredible. I can still remember the day the Pasadena, Texas salesman, Don, called to tell me about the new Extended Color BASIC.

Much has changed since then with the industry and our Community. We've gone from a little-known machine with a small supply of Tandy ROM-paks, to having many magazines and outside vendors, back down to a small circle of developers and users. To anyone who may frown upon our current humble existence we can simply say “been there, seen that, done it.”

ORIGINS OF AN IDEA

In 1990 I was a student at a Junior College in Lufkin, Texas. I was also a die-hard CoCo user spending all my free time calling the four local bulletin boards in this small East Texas town. When they were busy, I'd be programming. A good friend of mine, Terry Todd, had been talked into buying a CoCo soon after I met him. (He was a classic Tandy 1000 user, though his roots went back to a 128K multitasking computer which his dad used to sell, made by the long-defunct Monroe company.) We actually had a small CoCo club at that time with about a dozen members. Terry had been working on a BBS program originally known as SMORBBBS (Shadow Magic's Original Room Based BBS), named in protest of all the “clone” CoCo systems that looked like the COBBS package published in *Rainbow*. (Terry originally joked about calling his package NOTCOBBS). The system was good and getting better all the time. Soon he ran out of BASIC memory so he started writing series of patches (originally called “MODULE-DOS”) to give him more memory. This package was about to be uploaded to the U.S. Hayes BBS (which had a CoCo section and a toll free 800 number for a while) when I got a call from Terry. He had bigger plans. As fate would have it, these events would lead us into deciding to form “Forty-Two Technology,” the original name for our company (which was never used, but the prototype business card sized ad still sits in front of me even today).

History was made when Shadow BBS, MultiBASIC, and Sub-Etha Software became a reality. Dave Myers of CoCoPro! was a great guy to know. He had just began planning to hold a CoCoFest “down South” in Atlanta. During a phone conversation a month before our first ad would be printed in *The Rainbow*, Dave invited us to attend the Fest. It sounded like a wonderful idea so we came up with the money for a half-booth and Dave arranged for us to catch a ride with a couple who would be coming up from Houston. We literally rode in the back of a covered pickup all the way to Georgia — it was a great trip.

The show was also a great trip as we finally got to come face to face with “legends” in the CoCo Community such as Steve Bjork and many others we'd only previously read about within the pages of *The Rainbow* magazine. Sadly, I know of no written report of this gathering and my memory of the

event is limited to foggy recollections and a small roll of film taken at this historic show. Other Fests happened, of course, and I have done my best to attend every one of them.

Through the years everything has changed. The CoCo was discontinued and soon the concept of a cheap, affordable home computer was no more. Now the entry level system is well over one thousand dollars, and even then you cannot run everything that exists. Time has changed us as well. When this first Fest happened, we were fresh out of high school. Today it seems like ages ago that all of this happened, quite possibly because it was — especially in computer years.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

What follows are versions of the reports I originally wrote for uploading to various bulletin board systems. I had been used to reading items from Marty Goodman or Kevin Darling from the RAINBOWfests, but when it looked like no one was doing that for these non-Rainbow events, I took it upon myself to share my thoughts on the shows. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I have enjoyed putting them all together.

Proofreading services have been provided by my friend James Jones, however additional typesetting and editing was done after the fact, so any errors you notice are were most likely introduced by myself. I need to point out that James provided assistance above and beyond the call of friendship. He has probably read these reports now more times than I have, offering corrections and just generally pointing out embarrassing grammatical mistakes I made years ago. (*Why didn't any of you guys ever tell me about them???*) I sincerely believe the reports are now better than ever before and one might even consider this the “Special Edition” of these reports (with apologies to George Lucas). However, in order to preserve some of the original “feel” of these reports, revisions have been kept to a minimum (usually just to fix spelling or grammar). The writing style is informal, with many inside jokes and typographical “emoticons.” Much of the information is now outdated (such as addresses, phone numbers, and online service signup information) but is presented here for completeness. Trademarks belong to those who own them. As I have said in the past, please don’t stress the details. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy. After all, it’s only a book, right?

Allen C. Huffman, cofounder of Sub-Etha Software and Loyal CoCoist...

Carl Boll

A FEW WORDS *ABOUT* THE AUTHOR

(From an all around great guy.)

What would any Fest be without a chronicler? That is where Allen Huffman steps in. Allen has been a stoic attendee of Fests for as long as I can remember and that goes way back! He and pal Terry Todd used to come from Texas on gas fumes and Jolt Cola, pray that they would sell enough software for gas back and just have a blast all weekend long. How would I know? Heck, I bought the software, hung around with them and partied all night long with them. Sleep? We don't need no stinkini' sleep!

Terry hasn't made the last couple of Fests — he is no longer really able to get away for a whole weekend — but Allen is still going strong. He works for an employer that most of us know, Microware, and has an interest in the OS-9 community as well as the CoCo community.

If the day ever comes when Allen doesn't make a Fest we can all begin to wonder if it truly is the Last Fest ever. Right now in 1998 we don't have to worry that the Chicago Fest will be the last one. We know there will be a Fest in Pennsylvania.

Until that day we can look to Allen to give us the Fest reports and the Fest behind the Fest reports too.

Allen, we love ya guy!

Carl Boll, April 1998

James Jones

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE PROOFREADER

Not quite twenty years ago, James Jones, during breaks from working on a small piece of a small piece of #5 ESS, did three things that at the time didn't *seem* portentous:

- * He read ads in *BYTE* and *68 Micro Journal* about a multitasking operating system for what was the very best microprocessor at the time, the Motorola 6809. The operating system was called OS-9.
- * He saw a curious little computer in a silvery case hooked up to a color TV at the Radio Shack at Ogden Mall in Naperville, Illinois. It had 4K of RAM and overheated a lot. The computer was called the Color Computer.
- * Occasionally instead of eating lunch, he sang madrigals with, and at times listened to ragtime piano played by, one of the many people who also worked at the then-Bell Laboratories Indian Hill works. The person was named Mike Knudsen. (Mr. Knudsen is also quite respectable on brass.)

Later on, while finding out the hard way that he wasn't going to get a doctorate, he went to work for a fellow who ran an analytical laboratory so he could use the computer there. It was a Smoke Signal Broadcasting Chieftain with a then-amazing 512K of RAM and a ten-megabyte hard drive, running OS-9/6809 Level II. This and other work led to consulting work for Microware Systems Corporation, which afterward decided to hire him as an employee. To his pleasure and relief, so far the condition has proved permanent.

Twenty-seven years of programming, including such depravity as JCL, have led to the anal retentive personality required for proofreading. Throughout life, he has displayed that independent spirit that causes his opinions to be his and not necessarily those of any organization.

1990 CoCoFest

(October 6-7, Atlanta, Georgia)

by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software

NOTE: No report was done for this event, but here are some tidbits that may be of interest.

At this time, Falsoft was still sponsoring RAINBOWfests. The last RAINBOWfest was held at the Hyatt Regency Woodfield in Schaumburg, Illinois on the weekend of April 26-28th, 1991. Even during the heyday of Fests, the closest show “down South” was in Ft. Worth, Texas, and those had long stopped.

Dave Myers of CoCoPro! got together with the Glenside Color Computer Club to sponsor the first “CoCoFest” in Atlanta, Georgia. It was a bold experiment, and one that went quite nicely.

I had no plans to attend a Fest. In fact, Sub-Etha Software was brand new. We had submitted a 1/4 page ad to *The Rainbow* magazine for two products, Shadow BBS and MultiBASIC. Our ads would appear later, but during a phone conversation with Dave Myers he suggested introducing ourselves at the upcoming Fest he was sponsoring. It sounded like a great idea, so we signed up.

THE DRIVE

Terry Todd and I were committed to attending, but had no transportation. Luckily, Dave made arrangements for us to get a ride with a couple coming up from Houston. All four of us made the journey, with Terry and I riding - literally - in the back of the camper-covered pickup truck. This was a fun trip, highlighted by the inflating gas prices of the season. “A dollar forty-two a gallon?”

During the trip, we amused ourselves to no end by playing with a Casio sampling keyboard, watching the scenery change, and just generally being excited kids on a massive road trip. We asked “How far is it?” at one point and were told that we were very close to Atlanta. This was untrue. Many hours later we finally made our way in. “Stupid Texans,” was probably the thought of the distance giver as we rode off believing them.

THE ARRIVAL

We checked into the Holiday Inn Northlake, taking in the scenery. We had no idea what to expect. Terry and I had a room, while our transportation was going to sleep in their truck. There was just so much excitement as we roamed the hotel checking things out. We saw the room that would hold the CoCoFest with much activity as it was being set up.

THE PRE-SHOW

One memory I have is that, during setting up our half booth, I heard a gentleman with an audience around him (seated near the door) telling stories about some kind of audio sampling for a new game. People chuckled at some of the comments he was making about the things the game did and was about. I listened in as he told of various tricks used to program. I asked if he’d seen the demo of Steve Bjork’s bouncing head. He replied “Yes, and I wasn’t very happy about that.”

I looked close to find that the man in question was indeed Steve Bjork. Our first brush with a famous CoCo celebrity. So much for a graceful introduction to the community.

THE SHOW AREA

No details available.

25 booths and 23 companies. In alphabetical order, here are the vendors:

Alpha Software Technologies — from Louisiana, Keith Alphonso showed off his OS-9 L2 BBS package, Data Windows, Presto Partner, and other nifty OS-9 utilities. His CoCo sported two monitors and two keyboards, enabling onlookers to login to his BBS while he acted as tour guide.

Atlanta Computer Society — the host group. Their mascot, Goober, made the rounds with straw hat and overalls handing out peanuts.

Burke & Burke — QuarterMeg memory boards (remember that RAM prices were at an all-time high during this time), hard drive interfaces, and many OS-9 utilities.

CoCo Corner — Lyra, CoCo MIDI, and other music-related items in a massive wall of hardware.

CoCoPro! — Dave Myers and an assortment of everything. Monitors and CoCos surrounded his tables running demos and games of all kinds. It was a first-class hands-on interactive display.

ColorSystems — Zack Sessions' OS-9 games and utilities.

Danosoft — from Canada, they offered BIG BASIC, Simply Better word processor (which I purchased), and other Disk BASIC utilities. They had a very large background poster setup promoting their items. Very professional.

Delmar/Peripheral Technologies/Sculptor — our first look at G-Windows and the PT68K OS-9 computer system.

Carl England — sharing a booth with us, Carl offered his Disk BASIC file utilities including Super Boot, 512K Copy, Super Backup. His CoCo was hooked into an old greenscreen Apple monitor.

Granite Computer Systems — Zoom modems and file transfer utilities.

Frank Hogg Laboratories — the “long awaited” Tomcat was shown in prototype form. Much attention surrounded this corner booth. Tomcat T-shirts were sold with “some days I’m a tomcat and others I’m a tiger” on them.

Interactive Media Systems — an early glance at the yet-to-ship MM/1 multimedia OS-9 computer. Even more attention surrounded this booth.

KB Enterprises — their first (and only?) show offering a Disk BASIC multi-tasking program and CEBBS BBS. Both were fine products, but where are they now? Another great talent in the community gone elsewhere.

Microcom Software — from New York, these guys had all kinds of Disk BASIC

software. They would later stop attending due to self-proclaimed “conflict of interest” with CoCoPro! (Not justified, in this author’s opinion.)

Robert Offerman — 512K graphic adventure and a great Disk BASIC enhancement called Revolution. Robert was an amazing programmer with vast potential, hampered probably by less than successful marketing efforts which included dot-matrix print ads.

Second City Software — KBCom, Shellmate, UltiMusE III and others.

Specialty Projects — Art Deli and various other goodies, including the “power gauntlet” controller that hooked to the joystick port.

SpectroSystems — A-DOS! Art Flexser was nice enough to let us test MultiBASIC on his A-DOS system. We found they didn’t like each other much.

Sub-Etha Software — MultiBASIC, ShadowBBS (which wasn’t ready to sell) and a surprise hit, MiniBanners, which got a quick upgrade the night before the show when a surprise bug appeared. This was our groundbreaking introduction to the community, even though we were directly across from a booth selling the premier banner printing utility, CoCo Graphics Designer.

Supersoft, Inc. — Graphic screen dumps and Joel Hegberg’s Sprite-BASIC. This was our first meeting with Joel and it would lead to many great things, as future Fest reports would tell.

T&D Subscription Software — tons of shareware and original CoCo software for Disk BASIC, as well as most of the old Tom Mix line of games.

Three C’s Projects — The Power Stones of Ard graphic adventures.

Zebra Systems — A graphical banner/sign/greetings card printing utility and picture disks for it. This was possibly one of the best packaged CoCo products ever — in a large custom printed box, just like the items you’d see sitting on shelves in computer stores.

Marty’s Nightmare — This was a special booth setup by the Atlanta Computer Society to promote Steve Bjork’s latest game, Marty’s Nightmare. This item was especially produced for this computer show. Graphically, the game resembled a Pac-Man style adventure with a vertically scrolling maze that was about three times taller than would fit on the screen at one time. You moved Marty Goodman (another legend) around the screen picking up dots. You only had so much time before a voice would announce “Hurry, your seminar is about to begin.” At any time, a walking CoCo or Mouse might catch you and say “I have a hardware question” or “I have a software question.” Marty then had to run through the maze searching for the answer, which was either a Disk or a Chip icon, depending on the type of question. When found, you heard Marty say “Oh, really?” It was great.

The game moved at a steady pace, but things could be picked up by grabbing a coffee cup (apparently from 7-11) to which Marty would say “That really helped pick me up” and the game would go double time for a short while. The digital sound was very clear (sampled on an Amiga) and played during the game — something that hadn’t ever been done on a CoCo game up to this point. It was a nice success and almost everyone — myself

included — picked up a copy. This game would later resurface in small quantities at later Fests from Steve directly, but to the best of my knowledge these shows were the only place it was ever made officially available.

THE SEMINARS

Phil Anzalone — Programming the 68070 (the CPU in the MM/1, as I'd later discover)

Joe Walker (Supersoft) — CoCo 3 Graphics & Color

Steve Bjork — 10 Years of the CoCo

Art Flexser (SpectroSystems) — Extending the Capabilities of BASIC

Cray Augsburg/Greg Law — What the future holds in the Pages of *Rainbow*

Chris Burke — Programming in 'C'

Mike Knudsen — CoCo MIDI

Kevin Darling — OS-9/OSK

Ed Hathaway — Desktop publishing and the CoCo

Dan Robins — Writing for Publication

SURPRISE!!! — I do not remember what the surprise was

Steve Bjork — Games Programming on the CoCo

THE EVENINGS

Many unofficial vendors were there soliciting business in their hotel rooms. Fortunately, as Fests became more and more affordable, this became less and less common. One such person was soliciting his/her CoCo repack device, on display in their hotel room. It made me wonder how many other unofficial vendors were at this show.

The highlight of the evening was meeting up in the lobby and joining in a discussion with Steve Bjork as he chatted about programming games and other interesting subjects. This was our first meeting with this "legend" and he turned out to be a really nice guy, and never once held a grudge against my opening greeting to him earlier.

SUMMARY

The first of many great shows, with more to come. Most vendors made out quite well financially, as far as we could tell. Indeed, Sub-Etha did well enough for us to decide to join in the fun of as many future Fests as we could.

THE RETURN

It was a long drive back in the pickup.

DISCLAIMER

My memory is foggy as this happened in 1990. Sorry.

THANKS

Thanks, Dave, for getting us there. Thanks Nancy for the ride. And thanks, Terry, for being around to make all of this work out. I miss these days terribly. It was so long ago we weren't even old enough to go into the bar and visit with everyone else. My, how time flies when you are having the best days of your life.

1991 CoCoFest Report

(October 5-6, Atlanta, Georgia)

by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software

10/07/91 (Revised)

NOTE: Many typos, misspellings, mistakes, etc., are to be found in this document. Please do not count off too much! <grin>

[NOTE: go ahead and count off for misspellings; as proofreader, I have no excuse for mistakes. JEJ]

This year Dave Myers of CoCoPRO once again sponsored the CoCoFest held in the Northlake Holiday Inn in Atlanta, Georgia. The host club was the Atlanta Computer Society. Before I go any further with my description of what all went on, let me thank both Dave and Nancy Myers and their staff as well as all the officers and members of the ACS for a job well done! This is truly what supporting the CoCo is all about.

THE DRIVE

My new Sub-Etha programmer/hacker, Mark Page, and I departed from Lufkin, Texas at about 2:00 a.m. early Friday. By car we spent the day driving happily to our destination — Atlanta, Georgia. Along the way we amused ourselves to no end at the scenery, such as the absurd number of “CAUTION — BRIDGE MAY ICE IN COLD WEATHER” signs we spotted in Mississippi. (The count on the way back was OVER 100 of these nice yellow signs which seemed so out of place in the warm temperatures we were experiencing.) Ironically, the bridge across the Mississippi River contained no such sign...go figure!

THE ARRIVAL

We arrived in Atlanta and checked in to our room, hauling hardware and software up to our third floor room. The Holiday Inn was then nice enough to allow us to switch to a first floor room (which contained double beds) conveniently near the Fest room and the parking lot. It was looking like a great time was about to begin.

Since my associate Joel Hegberg had not checked in yet, Mark and I set off to explore. A few familiar faces greeted me. Amazing how the friendship shown to me last year was repeating itself! A quick ‘hello’ to Dave and Nancy and then I decided to explore the show area. Sneaking in, the room was barren. “We are really early,” I commented. (Last year we arrived in the evening when things were already being set up.) At the other end of the hotel was a room used last year for seminars with a “COCOFEST” sign outside. I was then a bit concerned that the show had been moved into that smaller room. No problem, though, it would still be fun.

As we roamed the halls, we found an open door down from our own room. Inside two people obviously with the Fest sat in front of a large machine running some sort of music program. We were invited in and Scott Griepentrog (of StG) showed us his MM/1 <gasp!> and a prototype of UltiMusE

running in a window. It looked VERY nice. Scott was also kind enough to share a rather nice amount of great programming tips and routines (Thanks, Scott!). This was starting out to be an interesting show. Soon, the room was filled with various CoCo members and we decided to move on and allow someone else in our place.

Back at the main show area we were greeted by Alan Dages of the Atlanta Computer Society and we also picked up our show guide and name badges. At this point something was going on in the previously empty room. Walls were being set up and tables put in place. We were informed that we could start setting up around 6:30. It was still a few hours away so we decided to explore our surroundings.

A nice salesman at a sandwich shop talked us into some great food which we happily consumed (and played a few video games while waiting). This was a great change from bologna. We also explored the shopping plaza across the street then wandered back to our rooms. A change of clothes later and we were ready to set up and socialize.

THE PRE-SHOW

Though some may comment that this year's show was smaller than last year, there really was not room for any more booths. The inside area was completely full. This was one advantage of being a vendor. Mark and I were able to meet other CoCo support companies as they setup, and we got to sneak preview new products before they were unveiled the next day at the show.

The Glenside CoCo Club booth was still empty. I was beginning to wonder if something had happened to Joel and company during their long trip from Illinois.

THE SHOW AREA

The room was set up as follows:

This made 14 booths of 13 companies. While last year's CoCoFest had about 25 vendors present, this year contained most of the same products. (CoCoPRO sold Alpha Software and Danosoft, for example, so while they did not attend this year their products were available.) In alphabetical order, here are the vendors:

1991 Atlanta:

+-----+			
Frank Hogg	Kalasoftware	N*Johnson	Glenside
		/HawkSoft	CoCo Club
+-----+			
	+-----+		
	Burke &	Delmar/PT	
	Burke		
	+-----		
	Atlanta		
	Comp Soc.		
	+-----		
	CoCoPro!		
	+-----+		
+-----+			
Adv.Surv./	Eversoft	Interactive Media	
Sub-Etha	Games	Systems	
+-----+			

Adventure Survivors — pretty much a gamer’s newsletter for CoCo adventures. A small subscription buys you a newsletter and discount back issues. They have compiled game hints, maps, complete solutions, and reviews of plenty of Color Computer games. (I even noticed level maps to Dungeons of Daggorath!) Their half booth contained sample newsletters and a CoCo 3 setup running Carmen San Diego (complete hints available) and other goodies.

Atlanta Computer Society — here they sold official T-Shirts for the Fest with the USA map logo and ACS club “mascot” on the back. (That was who that peanut character is, right?) They sold tickets for \$1 for hourly drawings. They gave away TONS of free products.

Burke & Burke — the Burke couple was on-hand with plenty of product flyers and their complete line of OS-9 software. Their booth had a CoCo 3 setup with the hard drive (B&B interface, of course) plugged directly into the CoCo! Chris explained to me that a small 5V to 12V converter chip could make this possible. (Imagine booting direct from hard drive! No multi-pak, etc...)

He was also showing the World Class Chess conversion of the old Cyrus II ROM-paks. It as a very clever hack indeed — it showed the chess screen and all other status displays at the same time. It was very fast and did not seem to monopolize the system when running other tasks.

Also appearing at the booth was a fully functional Tomcat TC-9 and an MM/1. Some OSK software was demonstrated but I missed seeing it. If all existing B&B software is any indication, I am sure the OSK products will be fantastic!

CoCoPRO! — anything and EVERYTHING. Period. 1 meg upgrades. IBM keyboard interfaces. Games from Oblique Triad. OS-9 software from Alpha. Simply Better and all the Danosoft line. TONS of copies of Flight Sim II and Carmen San Diego — CHEAP! Just about EVERY Radio Shack program ever available was being sold at highly reduced prices. You name it and they had it. A chest of “gently used” software was also there to go through. Joysticks, mice, disk cleaners, the “power gauntlet” controller (like a glove), etc., etc., etc.! As you can tell, Dave took up representation of many of last year’s vendors that just could not make it this year. If you were to split all of his products to individual companies, there would most likely have needed to be several dozen more booths at this show.

For OS-9/68000, a program called “TASCOMM” (?) was sold. I am not sure what the details are, but apparently it is a commercial release of Vaughn Cato’s OSTerm for the MM/1! FINALLY a real terminal program! I am quite sure other goodies were there that I overlooked, but as stated before there was too much going on.

Delmar/PT — the “new” guys in the CoCo OSK market showed a few things that just completely blew me away! Their System IV caught my attention when I noticed it was running a graphical interface similar to Amiga’s Workbench 2.0 and Microsoft Windows 3.0 — except it was BETTER!

G-Windows, an existing OS-9 graphical interface, was ported to the System IV in two

days and even though this was an early prototype it was AMAZING. (Frank Hogg also had a port for his TC-70, though the one day port didn't quite work with a mouse...) It allowed you to create a large number of windows on the main screen, move them around, rescale them, scroll them, hide them in the background, shrink them down to a "button," put them to sleep, etc. Each window contained a virtual screen of whatever size the program needed. You could literally load up an 80 column text editor and scale the window to a small 10x10 screen and it would function...you would use the mouse to scroll the window's display.

Windows all ran at the same time. Even windows partially hidden in the background still showed activity. Best of all, it LOOKED GOOD. Windows had a 3-D appearance with rounded edges and even the trash can icon was a highly detailed 3-D bucket with a small "shovel" attached. The RAM disk was represented by a memory chip, too. The system worked great and I am sure complete G-Windows information is available elsewhere. It looks GREAT.

Also shown was the PC Soundblaster card under OS-9 playing samples from MC Hammer's "Can't Touch This" and other tunes. Delmar sold foam rubber hammers, too.

Eversoft Games — Judy, Ken, and John showed off all their products. I was quite impressed with Crystal City which had the most colorful and FAST FAST FAST side scrolling action. It was a bit like "Defender." Shoot at things, catch "Energy" parachutes, etc. I was not fast enough to get too far. Let me just say that when I looked at this game it looked BETTER than Nintendo. I recommend it to ALL game enthusiasts.

Also shown for the FIRST TIME was a great conversion of the "Columns" game, called GEMS. Easier than Tetris, though still as challenging, you simply line up vertical bars and rotate their color blocks to get a 3x3 row of the same color. Both Gems and Soviet Bloc (great Tetris clone) support the Orchestra-90 pack and were playing in STEREO! If you have not already seen the Soviet Bloc demo, download it! It is available on GENIE and Delphi.

Judy's gang sold great looking T-shirts, hip bags (?), and handed out little yellow phone books. Even though I was situated right next to their booth I still think I missed things.

Frank Hogg — Fully functional TC-70s and a TC-9 in a tower case! The TC-9 ran great and seemed to run OS-9 fine. They even ran animated demos and To Be Ninja on it (OS-9 versions). I also examined the Tiger 68000 board. Very small and it looked very well designed. For those not familiar with it, you plug it in to the TC-9 using a K-Bus backplane and then software patches allow the TC-9 to use the 68000 for high speed operation. This is by far the most inexpensive way to move up to the OSK series — while still maintaining CoCo compatibility.

Frank also told me someone at the Fest (I forget who) had a TC-9 that booted Disk Extended Color BASIC from ROM and ran normal RS-DOS programs. I did not get to see this, but it is definitely a great plus for the TC-9

Other items of interest were various OS-9 software products and a really nice looking FHL T-shirt which stated on front "Sometimes I am a Tomcat" and on the rear "And other

times I am a tiger” (not verbatim). A demo video tape on G-Windows also ran. The demo was high-quality and professionally made, so whoever is behind this G-Windows seems to know what they are doing.

Glenside CoCo Club — all the way from Illinois, this booth had much activity. CoCoFest mugs (even personalized) and plates were sold. Buttons reading “CoCo Classic” (a la CoCa-Cola logo) and “Just say NO to MS-DOS” were available cheap as were memberships to their club and newsletter.

A Tandy 2000 case contained a working CoCo 3 and a CoCo-run Point of Sale system (by Joel Hegberg) handled all transactions. Carl Boll even had a large cash drawer hooked to the machine which was automated through the cassette relay.

Tons of books and ROM paks were also sold at bargain prices. Many copies of *The BASIC09 Tour Guide* changed hands that night. Much more happened there, but, once again, I missed much of it.

HawkSoft — Chris Hawks, designer of the Slot-Pak III, was there showing and selling it as well as something called Icon BASIC09. This clever program allowed you to “point and click” BASIC09 code, more or less. It used special icons for commands such as PRINT. The code displayed in the bottom half of the screen was very interesting looking. Also, his hi-res joystick adapters were being sold. They work as both Tandy/ColorWare hi-res interfaces and one switch disables them to allow normal joystick programs to work without unplugging the gadget. Very nice!

Chris was in good spirits the entire show with his lab coat full of name badges from previous CoCo shows. It was a VERY large collection.

Interactive Media Systems — what can I say? Production MM/1s were on display running completely animated demos (ported from PCs and Amigas, no less!) while digital sampled sound tracks played. There was NO pause in either animation or music as they played. One particular interesting one showed a Grand Canyon like background while boxes of text spun onto the screen plugging a BBS somewhere. The text read something like “Home of Amiga, PC, and Atari files...and lawn furniture” at which point a computer drawn lawn chair flew onto the screen, unfolded, then drifted gracefully across the sky. All the time the 2001 theme song played in the background.

The IMS booth had a crowd at all times. A large Roland keyboard was also shown, apparently to demonstrate MIDI on the MM/1, though when I was able to see it they were simply showing what its built in sequencer would do. If IMS has any goals to port such applications to the MM/1 then it stands a great chance at competing with the Atari ST and Macintosh MIDI market.

N*Johnson Software — new to the market, Nick Johnson was there with three programs. N*Banners is a banner program that was completely mouse driven, printed multiple lines, and had a higher resolution font package with graphics. His two other programs, HideScreen and something I forget at the moment, were also offered at special show prices.

KalaSoft — formerly Second City Software, UltiMusE and all the great music files

(including great sounding Beatles and Led Zeppelin) were being shown at all times. Music filled the showroom constantly from the small Yamaha keyboard. Thanks to KalaSoft, it really takes very little to do MIDI under OS-9. Other products such as utilities and Mike Guzzi's APBBS for OS-9 were sold.

Being introduced jointly with CoCoPRO was Newspaper09, a complete desktop publishing package under OS-9. Many other products were shown, too, such as a TTL converter that lets the CoCo 3 hook up to an inexpensive IBM monochrome monitor for displays much better than composite monitors. Very nice, and only \$19.95!

Sub-Etha Software — we showed off for the first time MiniBanners for OS-9, as well as CheckBook+09. The RS-DOS versions were also available, but throughout the show the OS-9 versions outsold them easily. A true sign of the times about the continuing direction of the CoCo community.

All of Carl England's utilities (Super Boot, 512K Copy, Super Backup, MAC to DMP dump) were sold at special show prices, too.

By far, the most interesting product shown at the booth was a prototype for a full-page scanner! The device clipped on to the print head of a standard printer (shown on a DMP 105) then you ran an image (picture, text, drawing) through the printer as it scanned onto the screen. The software showed a five level image but the hardware is capable of 64 grey scales. The device was shown so Carl England and John Campbell (the designers) could see if there was an interest in such a project. As we found out, there was. At all times when the scanner was running at least two or three people were watching it. (More details on the scanner will be revealed in a special press release.)

What I have written in this section is just a FRACTION of what all the vendors had to offer. I was so busy with my booth that I really did not get to see too much of the show, but what I saw was a great sign of support and enthusiasm from CoCo users from around the world!

THE SEMINARS

I missed all the seminars except for part of Frank Hogg's, but here is the list:

Cray Augsburg (of *Rainbow*) — OS-9 for the absolute beginner

Ed Gresick (Delmar) — Q&A on the PT68K

Paul Ward (IMS) — Q&A on the MM/1

Frank Hogg (FHL) — Q&A on the Tomcat series

Kevin Darling — OS-9 Open Forum (this one went on for HOURS!)

Mike Knudsen — MIDI for OS-9 (6809 and 68000)

Keith Alphonso (Alpha Software) — Programming in C

Chris Burke (B&B) — An intro to the 68000

Ed Hathaway — Desktop Publishing Techniques

I apologize to those I didn't acknowledge. I am still not sure were everyone was from and who they represented.

Those I spoke with who attended the seminars say information was abundant and interest intense. The Q&A sessions were the most popular as they gave Fest visitors a chance to directly interact with the “gurus” in the fields.

THE LUNCH

They sold us hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and sodas. <grin>

THE EVENINGS

One amazing thing that happens after the show closes each night is the gathering in the lobby of the hotel. After getting lost trying to find the local mall (“right around the corner” — yeah, right) we found a small group in the lobby sitting and talking. Last year, it was Steve Bjork. This year, Frank Hogg slumped in the comfy chair while we continuously bombarded him with questions about his hardware and the new G-Windows. (Which, he noted, he was able to open 120 windows in just a few megs of memory before the system ran out of RAM!) Throughout all of this Frank was very nice and patient with us.

After this, it was up to briefly check on Joel and his new MM/1 he picked up only hours before at the IMS booth. Then to the room I went with John Strong (author of Soviet Bloc and Gems), Mark Page and Nick Johnson. John showed me some patches for EDTasm and we just generally had a good time exchanging ideas.

(The night before this the designers of the full page scanner and I spoke about pricing and production of the unit.) Very informative. Apparently, dozens of little groups like ours had gathered in various rooms to hold these private mini-seminars.

SUMMARY

Great show! I am VERY happy I went. Sub-Etha’s personal sales were up 15% over last year and we saw many more people at our booth than before. The people attending were more enthusiastic but seemed a bit more cautious with spending — probably a reflection on the overall economic situation.

We still missed some big names, such as Steve Bjork (unable to attend due to other cross-country business) and Marty Goodman, but the list of CoCo celebrities that did attend was astounding! Greg Law was also seen puttering around with shorter hair than last year...same thing for Cray Augsburg. Did *Rainbow* add a new dress code? <grin>

There were more new products to see this year as well. Last year there really wasn’t anything “new” released worth too much commenting, but this year the OS-9/OSK development was going full speed. Vendors such as Nick Johnson and Eversoft Games also showed that support for the RS-DOS community was not dead by any means! It looks like life is still ahead for our little machine.

THE RETURN

As we all packed up and prepared to return home, the emotion felt was quite strong. Last minute good-byes and handshakes, as well as last minute discussions of a possible central-USA CoCo gathering, make me wish the show could have gone on much longer.

At any rate, we drove back to Texas, counting “ice on bridge” signs and pondering the meaning of

“Krispy Kreme” shops. It was a short/long great show.

DISCLAIMER

I apologize for not mentioning those I should. I apologize for getting products wrong when I did. I apologize for not having the accuracy I need. And I apologize for any misspellings of names, products, etc. I wanted to rush this file out as soon as possible so here it is.

I realize this is not very well organized or written, but I just wanted to make this just my hurried views of the show typed only hours after I returned home.

THANKS

Thank you, Dave and Nancy Myers. Thank you Atlanta Computer Society. Thanks to Mark Page for providing transportation. Thanks to Joel Hegberg for bringing the blank disks and latest Check-Book+09 master. Thanks to Judy for the T-shirt Thanks to Frank for the T-shirt “deal.” Thanks to the great couple at Adventure Survivors for the great fun. Thanks to Carl for arranging all the rolls of “banner paper” we gave away. Thanks to Al for being so nice, and thanks to the CCOG for being so supportive of vendors. Thanks to YOU for reading all of this. Thanks to everyone I left out of this list for not griping too much! Thank you vendors, and thank you to everyone who attended the show and spent money to help support us. (And, in my case, gave me gas money back home!) This was a fantastic experience for me and I hope to see it all again in the near future!

(And there are still so many people to thank and acknowledge that I really don’t know what to do...but, at least I try and that’s what it takes!)

Allen C. Huffman, Owner — Sub-Etha Software

SUBETHA on Delphi

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

(409) XXX-ETHA [3842]

P.S. GENie is also offering support for the CoCo in their Tandy area. Type “TANDY” to access, or “M635”. See you there!

BEHIND THE SCENES

What is the significance of “Krispy Kreme?” While Mark and I made our way into the Atlanta area, we heard a radio commercial giving the location of a business as “right down the road from the Krispy Kreme” and just thought the name was hysterical. This is, apparently, a donut shop of some kind (and we even passed one on our drive back but my memory fails me as to whether or not we stopped in).

Also note the mention of a Central-USA Fest gathering which, of course, never happened. You will see this mentioned again and again as the idea evolved through the years.

There really were over one hundred “Caution. Bridge May Ice in Cold Weather” signs. Honest.

Tony Podraza

COUNTDOWN TO THE GLENSIDE CHICAGO COCOFESTS

(As told by one of Glenside's most active members.)

Allen, you asked me to write up Glenside's perspective on the CoCoFEST!s. I can't do it for Glenside as a whole, but I can from my perspective. Perhaps the two are close.

April 1991

This year's RAINBOWfest is over. The attendance was good for the times, but you could tell that the show was smaller, again, this year. I'm sure that the report in the magazine will say that thousands were there, though. And maybe there was a thousand or so in attendance. Funny, though, Lonnie didn't say that he'd see us all again, next year.

August 1991

Dave and Nancy Myers are sponsoring, in conjunction with the Atlanta Computer Society, a CoCoFEST! in Atlanta. Sounds like fun...wish I could go. Schedule just won't permit it. Still no word from Lonnie about the RAINBOWfest in Chicago, next year.

November 1991

The show in Atlanta was a huge success. People from all over the southeast and elsewhere came out in high hundreds, maybe even eleven hundred. No word from Lonnie. Carl Boll has been trying to get a commitment so Glenside can help to promote the show.

January 1992

Still no word from *The Rainbow* about a RAINBOWfest this year, Carl suggested that perhaps Glenside should plan on sponsoring a show, ourselves, and has started looking for a place to hold a show. He has also been talking to Dave Myers about sponsoring a show if the Rainbow will not be putting on a RAINBOWfest.

Late January 1992

It's official! There will be no RAINBOWfest this year. Man, either we have to have a show of some kind or we're gonna start to hear the death knell of the CoCo. Carl has persuaded Dave Myers to look at the Inland Center as a possibility of a show location.

Late January 1992

Dave had targeted May 30 & 31, 1992 as the dates for the First Chicago CoCoFEST! Now the fun begins in earnest, I guess. Glenside will be handling some of the local promotion and liaison, meaning, making sure that people know how to get to the hotel, arranging transportation for the special guest, arranging for security, etc. Dave will handle the financial end, paid promotions and advertising, costs for special guests and/or rentals. Only four months to do a year's preparation. Have we bitten off more than we can chew?

June 1992

WHAT A SHOW! With all the familiar faces around, it's starting to be more like a family reunion than a commercial venture. In fact, I said exactly that to Trish Burke. What a great time. Had a chance to spend a couple of hours with Marty Goodman when I picked him up at O'Hare and drove him to the hotel. Really a neat guy. Had quite an interesting conversation. I hope D&M Enterprises will put on a second CoCoFEST!

November 1992

Dave Myers will not be able to do another FEST! Carl keeps trying to get Glenside to commit to sponsoring a FEST! in 1993. I don't know. There's a lot to do and for a volunteer organization with little to no experience in that type of activity.... I mean, we're computer users and programmers and hackers; what do we know about planning a FEST!?

May 1, 1993 — Holiday Inn, Elgin, IL

“Welcome to the Second Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFEST! Why the word “last?” For no other reason than to impress on people that we don't really know if there will be another Chicago CoCoFEST! You see, 1991 was the year of the final sponsorship of a “fest in Chicago by the people we were used to having “carry the ball” for us, as it were.

In 1992, a member of Glenside was so determined to have a fest in Chicago that he took it upon himself to start looking for a place to have it, and in the meantime, began a campaign to find a sponsor. From these actions, the First Chicago CoCoFEST! was spawned, and thanks to Dave and Nancy Myers for accepting the challenge to sponsor that event.

That event became known as the first “Last” etc. for the same reason that we have adopted the word “last” this year. It takes a lot of behind-the-scenes support to put this together. We no longer have the manufacturer's support, we no longer have the publication's support, indeed, we no longer have the publication, and there currently does not exist a vendor who can financially sponsor this type of event. The people like you and me, the owners and users of the Color Computer, are going to be the real movers and shakers in the community from here on out, as we have been from day one, actually, when we discovered that the salesperson from whom we bought our first CoCo couldn't help us beyond “plug it in, turn it on.”

That discovery was the cause of the birth of the Color Computer user groups all over the world. It was, and IS, from these groups that we, as users, received the “real” support. Even the printed pages that we all subscribed to were ancillary to the user groups. Without YOU, the members of those local user groups, and those of you who have joined the Glenside user group, this ‘fest would not be possible.

These groups continue to be the nucleus of the sense of “family” that we all share; and the fests will continue to be, I hope, the reunion of that ‘family’ no matter where they are held. The Chicagoland area was the home of the first ‘fest ever, ten years ago, on April 22, 23, & 24, 1983. So with that in mind, WELCOME HOME!”

— from the Second Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFEST! show guide

April 5, 1998

I think I said it all in the opening statement of the showguide in 1993, Allen, and I can't think of any other way to add to or improve the sentiments and driving forces that have caused the CoCoFEST!s to continue to this day, six years later, whether in California, Washington, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, or Pennsylvania. We've transcended the user groups, the users, the programmers, the hardware hackers and we have become...we *are*...family. Perhaps that is why I continue to allow myself to be persuaded by Glenside to coordinate the Chicago-area FEST!s for these past six years. It has been fun; everybody connected with the show has had a good time; some, my friend, more than they should have; and the feeling that we all come away from the FEST! with, is worth all the work that goes into it. "Every FEST! I've been to has been filled with discoveries, new friends, and good memories." I wrote that in 1992, too. It still holds true, today.

Until our next 'reunion,' I bid you Peace.

Tony Podraza, April 1998

1992 First Annual “Last” CoCoFest Report

(May 30-31, Chicago, Illinois)

by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software

06/05/92

NOTE: Many typos, misspellings, mistakes, etc., are to be found in this document. Once again, please do not count off too much! <grin>

Just when it looked like there would be no more Fests, Dave Myers of CoCoPro decided to sponsor a Chicago CoCoFest. Billed as “The First Annual Last CoCoFest,” we at least had one more shot at a grand scale gathering of CoCo supporters. The host club was the Glenside CoCo Club. As in my last Atlanta report, I must stop at this time and issue a very large THANKS to Dave and Nancy Myers and their staff as well as all of the officers and members of the Glenside CoCo Club for a job well done. Once again, this is what supporting the CoCo is all about!

THE TRIP

This year we flew. An 800 mile journey by car was just not feasible since myself and Mark Page (Sub-Etha hacker/programmer) are both involved in running two sister music stores in Texas. Time off was just not available.

At any rate, early Friday morning I awoke in Lufkin, Texas and drove to Longview, Texas (two hour drive), where our commuter flight would be. I was early so I went in to visit the local Mall (where Mark’s store was located) and phoned Mark. He met me there and we drove to the airport...and almost missed our flight at 12:30 p.m. (Our baggage had to be carried to the plane — a small two engine prop machine that sounded much like an old bomber from some war movie...) The short flight to Tyler and then Ft. Worth was...well...interesting. Let me just say it was comforting knowing air sickness bags were close by if needed. (They weren’t needed, BTW...)

Once in Ft. Worth we boarded a rather nicely sized craft which was much quieter. Our journey to Chicago was uneventful. (But can anyone tell me what happened to peanuts? All they offered us on the planes were pretzels...)

THE ARRIVAL

We landed in Chicago at around 5 p.m. We found our baggage and spent some time trying to figure out how to get to our hotel. Eventually we gave in and spent \$36 (!!!) on a taxi. The cab driver was nice enough, though he drove most of the way on the SHOULDER of the highway to get around all the traffic...! It was long distance to the hotel, a mere 16 miles down the road, and we went through TWO toll booths. Geezzzz... Once at the Northlake Inn we were greeted by members of Glenside who told us they could have helped get us to the hotel if we had called...(Now they tell me!)

We checked in and, as last time (in Atlanta), they assigned us to a single bed room. The hotel was booked and no other rooms were available so Mark and I swapped out taking nights on the couch. (Why does this always happen?) A few phone calls to locate other friends (Joel Hegberg, our midwest divisional manager, John Strong, and a few others) then we decided to check things out.

We found several familiar faces and then walked the three blocks down the street to the meeting center where the Fest would actually be held. There, already in progress (it was about 7:30 p.m.), the "Party with Marty" was going on. We found Joel inside so we joined in the festivities... (What festivities? Just a bunch of tables, junk food, and CoCo users...) To liven things up, a MIDI rig was hooked up playing UltiMusE tunes for us. Overall, nothing too exciting though I did get to meet back up with Steve Bjork whom I first met at the 1990 CoCoFest in Atlanta.

We found Joel and all ended up back at the hotel. Joel had brought along his MM/1 and CoCo which we would setup the next morning. It was going to be rough getting everything together in time for the Fest to begin.

THE PRE-SHOW

There was not too much going on in the show area at this time. Booths were set up and that was about it. Most of the activity was back at the hotel and at the Party. (Though I did purchase a clock/printer board for my Disto SCII from BARSoft. It's great having a vendor pass!)

THE SHOW AREA

The room was set up as follows: (More or less)

This made 10 booths of 16 companies. (The last Atlanta Fest had 13 companies present, so this was actually a larger show though booth sizes were smaller and the room was also.) In alphabetical order, here are the vendors:

ACBBS — The CoCo bulletin

1992 Chicago:

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+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| SuperSoft/ | | Glenside | | Sub-Etha/ |
| MV Systems | | CoCo Club| | StrongWare |
|-----+ +-----+ +-----+
| Burke & | | | | IMS |
| Burke | | | | |
|-----+ +-----+
| HawkSoft/ | | | | BARSoft |
| Adv. Surv. | | | | |
|-----+ +-----+
| CoCoPro! | | | | ACBBS |
| | | | | |
| | | | | +-----+
| | | | | | Sundog |
| | | | | | Systems |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+

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Outside showroom:

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+-----+-----+-----+
| Cook County| OS-9 Users | --> To seminars/
| CoCo Club | Group | | hospitality/
+-----+-----+-----+
| | | | S-BUG "warehouse"
+-----+-----+-----+

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board package was demonstrated and nicely colored ACBBS shirts were available. I am really not sure what else was at this booth since I was so busy I didn't get to chat much. (Plus, I run StG Net so other software doesn't really interest me at this point...grin!)

Adventure Survivors — the CoCo gamer's newsletter continues. They had old text adventures, newsletter back issues, and Eversoft games for sale. Membership was only \$6, so I signed up and received a tip sheet for Rogue which I also picked up at the Fest. (For any CoCo gamer, sign up with these nice folks! Their map and tip sheets are great!)

BARSoft — I don't know where this guy came from, but he had some GREAT deals. I picked up a clock for my Disto Super Controller II for just \$20! (Parallel port, too!) They had older Disto stuff, ADOS, EPROM burners, and gobs o' other goodies on their pegboard. Great deals. I hope I encounter them again 'cause there was still more I wanted! <grin>

Burke & Burke — Mr. and Mrs. Burke were back again! They were proudly showing off their Power Boost 6309 CoCo upgrade. The chip, along with some OS-9 patches, souped up the CoCo. A sample memory dump which output in over nine seconds normally took around five with the 6309 installed. Amazing. They had 50 units on hand and sold out so if you want to soup up your CoCo — ORDER ONE TODAY! They are selling FAST! (Of interest, once again, was Chris' CoCo with the B&B interface plugged directly into the machine...no floppy at all. This is done with a 5V to 12V converter chip placed inside his CoCo. What an amazing guy!) I picked up the upgrade for File System Repack, with its new CBM (Compress Bit Map) utility that has a graphics display which looks very nice and runs quite fast. (Hours instead of days to repack a badly fragmented hard drive!)

Also, Alan DeKok (remember the bouncing ball demo with the Axel-F music under it from this Canadian programmer?) showed how he ported THEXDER to OS-9! Apparently it was originally written under OS-9 (from Alan's dissection of the source code). The port ran FAST FAST FAST! It seemed to run as fast as the ROM-pak version and it DID multitask with the basic sounds. B&B is taking advanced orders for this product at, I believe, \$29.95. So far this will be the fastest action OS-9 game around.

CoCoPro! — More of the same. Basically, EVERYTHING! Atari joystick adapters, hard drives, various other hardware items, gobs o' software, and new products like a great looking card game for OS-9. They were carrying Danosoft, Bob Van der Poel (OSK too!), Zebra Systems, Frank Hogg Labs (taking orders for TC-70s), and much, much more! (Mark picked up VED which he says is very nice...) Cook County CoCo Club — This is where the souvenir T-Shirts were! Nice blue ones with Dave's "Chicago COCOFEST" logo on them. No back print this time, but the colored shirt made up for that. You could buy tickets for the drawings held hourly, too.

Glenside CoCo Club — these guys had one of the most impressive looking booths with a large wall-sized COLOR enlargement of their CoCo 1-2-3 newsletter behind them. An OS-9 based point of sale system complete with cash drawer and remote terminal took membership information and handled sales transactions. Join the club and receive a club pack with several disks of software then choose three more from their table of Tandy goodies. Needless to say (so why say it?), I joined up for \$18. (I now have Microscopic

Mission and Rogue...grin!) They also had CoCoFest cups and a small supply of Atlanta show goodies, too. Nice guys — all of them. Even with their helium balloons (which migrated into the lungs of announcers at the Fest...I don't think I have ever heard so many Mickey Mouse impressions...grin!)

HawkSoft — the designer of the Slot Pak was back with Icon BASIC for OSK this time. His hi-res switchable joystick interfaces were also there, as were a few more goodies. (Blank disks, too!) Chris Hawks once again had his full doctor's "robe" on with an assortment of previous Fest name tags that would astound you. He is truly one of the long-time CoCo supporters. (This may seem like a silly question, but is he really a doctor of some sort? grin)

Interactive Media Systems — in a much smaller booth, IMS had a few MM/1s set up running demos. On display continuously was UltiMusE for OSK playing great MIDI files through several keyboards. They sold out of MIDI kits, too, and new windowing drivers for the MM/1 were displayed allowing great 3-D looking moveable windows. Can you say "Amiga?" Or "G-Windows?" I thought you could. Watch out, world! The MM/1 is starting to have some really impressive "glitz!"

MV Systems — I didn't even get a chance to see them, but basically even more OS-9 stuff, including GuiB for BASIC09...a graphics library system.

OS-9 Users Group — the new OS-9 "club" was there taking memberships. Response was overwhelming and they ran out of the diskettes they had planned to give out to new members! This group, along with the new *OS-9 Underground* "magazine" proved once again that OS-9 is growing.

S-BUG of Los Angeles — out in a room by itself was a literal Tandy warehouse of ROM paks, disk software, etc., etc., etc. MASSIVE mountains of goodies hauled then in a trailer. Now I know why no Radio Shacks have any more CoCo stuff. It's all HERE!

Strongware — John Strong, who programmed Soviet Bloc and Gems for Eversoft Games, was here with many new OSK products for the MM/1 including graphics routines and very useful commands. A font disk and font editor for the CoCo (which are compatible with MiniBanners, my program) were also there. It was a crowded booth back in the corner but the new useful OS-9 "tools" sold by John and his "Team OS-9" crew were impressive. (The great looking Team OS-9 shirts were being worn by a handful of vendors. Watch for more Team OS-9 news in the future!)

Sub-Etha Software — sharing a booth with Strongware, we had a total of two MM/1s and one CoCo. Our CoCo ran MiniBanners and CheckBook+ along with the "almost ready" Worlds at War graphic war game designer by Trevor Milne of Canada. Free rolls of paper were offered with each MiniBanners purchase. (The latest MiniBanners was displayed, too, with output to any device or file.) For OSK, MiniBanners and CheckBook+ were offered as well as the NEWEST creation by Joel Mathew Hegberg — Etha-GUI. A 3-D "point and click" program launcher for the MM/1 with great icons and hysterical screen savers as well as some useful desktop accessories. Upon seeing this program, one OS-9 guru (who will be left unnamed but he lives in Canada...grin) purchased it on the spot. A complete text file describing the GUI will be posted later.

Also worth mentioning was the selection of Carl England's software (Super Boot!), N*Johnson (N*Banners) and AniMajik's OS-9 selection: TShell (an awesome text-based MultiVue replacement), OSK Tool Kit, and Cloud09 — a graphics/animation kit for OS-9 (which, due to one small problem with the distribution disks, we were unable to sell...sigh...) A new OS-9 educational music game by Andy Depue was showed off briefly. Called "Take Note," it had some great graphics while teaching how to read the music staff. Subscriptions were also taken for the *OS-9 Underground*. Dozens signed up, and you should too before the rates increase! (And they will — the magazine is already larger than planned — first issue is 32 pages or so!)

Sundog Systems — Glen and his partner and various others were there with several CoCos running the most impressive assortment of games you could imagine. PHOTON was awesome — fast puzzle action, multi-voice music and digital sound! Can we say "Nintendo?" Also, GrafExpress 2.0 ran a demo playing music while multiple overlay "windows" ran different animations...AT THE SAME TIME! Anyone interested in creating graphic displays GET THIS! Even some "big guys" boggled at it. (Plus their demo had a nice bouncing ball...)

Supersoft — Joe Walker was back with a new CoCo 3 jigsaw game in addition to his many other CoCo screen dumps, the UltraEd+ EDTasm patch, Sprite-BASIC (by Joel Mathew Hegberg), and Australian Tandy games. Oddly enough, one thing his signs were showing was his new MS-DOS screen print software. (Maybe that's why we didn't seem him at the last Atlanta show...grin!) [Ed Note: No offense meant, Joe!]

Of course, I always leave things out. The show area was so small that for the first few hours of opening day it was a standing room only crowd packed like sardines. Enthusiasm seemed less but still pretty intense. I was blocked in at my booth for most of the show.

THE SEMINARS

I only got to listen to part of Kevin Darling's CD-i seminar, but here is what all was offered:

Friday:

John Strong (Strongware) — OS-9 Graphics Programming

Jeff Steidl (GrafExpress 2.0) — CoCo Graphics Programming

Frank Hogg (FHL) — The Future of CD-i and OSK

Marty Goodman (!) — Hardware Forum

Steve Bjork (Game Great) — 12 Years of the CoCo — a Walkthrough History

Kevin Darling (OS-9 Great) — OS-9 Open Forum

Saturday:

Paul Ward (IMS) — Taking the MM/1 into the Future

Chris Burke (B&B) — Exploring the 6309 Enhanced Processor

Glen Dahlgren (Sundog Systems) — Game Programming

Marty Goodman (still!) — Hardware Forum

Also held was an impromptu StG Net seminar by **Scott Griepentrog**, the creator of the network (currently working on an upgrade and OSK port of the system).

I wish I could have participated in Kevin Darling's marathon OS-9 lecture. It started as the show closed at 5:00 p.m. Saturday and we left to have a long lunch. Hours later we returned and it was still going on. Poor Kevin...he just can't turn down a question! (Maybe Steve Bjork needs to write a "Kevin's Nightmare" game under OS-9?)

FOOD

Glenside had a hospitality room with chips and soda as well as a selection of "Regular Coffee, Decaf Coffee, and Hot Water." I personally had several cups of "Hot Water"....! The hotel offered free breakfast buffet and evening drinks.

THE EVENINGS

Since this show was not at the hotel we stayed in, lobby action was less than it was at Atlanta. Still, we had a good time. Free breakfast and evening cocktails! Mark and I went out to dinner with Steve Bjork, Marty Goodman, and Eddie Kuns. It was a fun evening.

We also managed to catch a ride with Scott (StG) and Paul Jerkatis (SysOp of SandV, the StG "root" system). Don't do that. True, Mark and I were cramped in the hatchback of his Honda CRC...(we can't be picky when begging for rides)...but Scott's driving is just...well...don't take any rides from him. <grins, Scott!>

What else...hmmm...we ate with Joel and Dave. \$6 hamburgers! Eck. And NO DR. PEPPER! Why can't you get Dr. Pepper in Chicago???

SUMMARY

Good show. I was glad to be there and Sub-Etha took in about DOUBLE what we did at either Atlanta show...BUT...the show area was too small, we were in a less than desirable corner, and the intensity of the visitors just wasn't up to what I would expect. The most fun was meeting back up with Steve and finally getting to meet and talk with Marty Goodman and Kevin Darling.

It was great to have Steve Bjork there (in town for the CES show and fully willing to make an appearance at the CoCo event). He spoke with Chris Burke and now there are rumors of a game under OS-9 with multi-tasking sound. Note I said this is a rumor...but after hearing some of the talk it looks like Steve might be interested in doing some 6309 game programming...get your upgrade today! There may be some neat stuff on the horizon! [Steve, I apologize if this was not meant to get out!]

And if you didn't have OS-9, you were pretty much bored. Virtually everything there was OS-9 or OSK. OS-9 will continue to keep the CoCo alive. (And rumors of the OS-9 L2 "upgrade" to be released as patch files continue to circulate. I hope we see that!)

THE RETURN

Before we left the show area, good-byes were said. Knowing this may have been the last time I would

get to see many of these friends was sad.

We were able to hitch a ride to the airport with the Burkes. It was fun and Chris shared some information on the 6309 and how Repack works. They are really nice people. At the airport we found another \$6 burger at a neat fifties-looking cafe. Dr. Pepper, too! (Though watered down...)

We boarded our plane and proceeded to wait. There was a hydraulic problem, said the loudspeaker. After half an hour Mark got off the plane to walk around. The air unit had also gone out so they had to fix that, too. To make a long story short we sat there for TWO HOURS until they had the air unit going again (we could have been in Ft. Worth by that time!). Mark reports the “problem” was a very large puddle of fluid under the plane. And with the sound of metal scraping brakes it’s a wonder we made it safely <grin>.

This caused us to miss our connecting flight so they put us up in a very fancy hotel in Ft. Worth but wouldn’t let us get our baggage. Sigh... Another grungy morning later and we were back home safe and sound...only a day late.

DISCLAIMER

I apologize for not mentioning those I should. I apologize for getting products wrong when I did. I apologize for not having the accuracy I need. And I apologize for any misspellings of names, products, etc. I wanted to rush this file out as soon as possible so here it is. I wish there was more to write but... [Disclaimer Two — this would have been out sooner but I had to find my Fest flyer which made it back to Longview with Mark...sigh...]

THANKS

Thank you, Dave and Nancy Myers (again — thanks for taking such a great risk and I hope it worked out). Thanks to Glenside, CCCC, Joel for the use of his CoCo, John Strong for his font editor, to the Burkes for the ride to the airport, to Scott and Paul for the “ride” back to the motel, to Joel and Dave for the ride for FOOD and to/from the show, and to anyone else who gave us transportation (like Steve Bjork...not nearly as bad a driver as Scott...grin), to Kevin and Marty for sharing information, to the various other friends I made (hey Mr. Knudsen! Still want a boot disk? Write me and I’ll fix ya up!), to Alan for showing me Thexder and bringing tears to my eyes (it’s OS-9?), to Paul (again) for bringing all of AniMajik’s stuff to the show (including our nice sign), which means I have to thank Alan Sheltra for making the great sign, too, and anyone else I have left out and didn’t gripe about it.

Most importantly...thanks to all who attended and spent money helping supports us. As long as we can continue to “break even” from our products we will be around. Support us and we’ll support you. Long live the CoCo! (Again, there are still so many people to thank and acknowledge that I really don’t know what to do...but, at least I try and that’s what it takes!)

Allen C. Huffman, Owner — Sub-Etha Software

SUBETHA on Delphi

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

SYSOP@DELTA on StG Net

(409) XXX-ETHA [3842]

(815) XXX-XXXX (OSK Midwest Division — Joel's number!)

P.S. GENie is also offering support for the CoCo in their Tandy area. Type "TANDY" to access, or "M635". See you there!

BEHIND THE SCENES

The flights Mark and I took really were *that* bad. To this day I have a fear of prop powered aircraft. Who would have imagined me at a job doing these kinds of flights regularly years later!

At the "Party with Marty," Dave Myers just let us in for free (we were late anyway) saying that he'd already lost enough money on the event so a little more didn't hurt.

Chris Hawks' doctor's robe, according to Mrs. Hawks, came from Howard Medical when he worked there. Howard Medical did file folders and items for medical use before the computer items, and used the robes as a theme. Chris kept his around, and now has a larger assortment of Fest admission badges than anyone cares to count — though I may attempt to count them someday for Volume 2.

At the time, I honestly had no idea what the large containers of *hot water* were for! (If you never got it, think "Arthur Dent.")

The dinner I mention was a truly great experience. I even got to snag a cookie from the desert bar and drop crumbs into Steve's rental. The ride in Scott's car was actually worse than it sounds.

The expensive hamburger place was *Baker's Square*.

The Mr. Knudsen I mention in the THANKS section is not Mike Knudsen. Instead, it was someone with a similar list name which I probably just misspelled. I never did get him a boot disk.

This was the first show where I met Alan DeKok. At the time I had no idea how significant he would become to our Community.

Mike Knudsen

MORE VIEWS ON THE 1992 CHICAGO COCOFEST

Well, the May 29-31 '92 CoCoFest is over, and it left many of us with a good feeling, whether or not there's ever another one.

There were fewer vendors in a smaller hall, but the crowd was big and busy (for the space), lots of merchandise moved, and we got to see our old friends and make some new ones. **CoCoPro!** and the **Glenside CoCo Club** did their usual terrific job of setting up and running the show. (Once I found the full-page ad in an older *Rainbow*, it was easy to find.)

Glenside Club had a separate cozy room set up as a hospitality suite where you could pour a soda, munch some snacks and ogle some of the Club members' ingenious CoCo repackaging jobs, including a Multi-Pak with a 512K CoCo 3 built into its base.

Vendors present included **CoCoPro**, **Sundog**, **Sub-Etha**, **HawkSoft**, **Burke & Burke**, **Glenside Club**, **BARSoft**, **IMS**, **Kala Software** (new Second City), **Color Systems** (Zack Sessions), and new **Strongware**. The reborn **OS-9 User Group** and **Cook County (Chicago) CoCo Club** ran booths outside the main hall. **Carl Kreider** and wife Debbie ran the OS-9 UG booth, and I got to meet **Boisy**; this new UG is for real — support it!

Absent were Howard Medical (of course, sold out), Frank Hogg Labs (!!), DelMar (!!) and anyone at all from The Rainbow (!!!). We also missed Mark Griffith. Really.

There was plenty of hard and software for the CoCos, both RS-DOS and OS-9, but someone's joke last week that this might turn into an "MM/1 Fest" were more prophetic than humorous (well, *I* think it's worth a grin :-). The IMS booth was mobbed most of the time, both by customers and various OSK hackers swapping hints and looking for software upgrades and parts. Sharing that booth were both Kala Soft selling UltiMusE-K for MM/1 and other stuff, and **Kev Pease** selling MM/1 MIDI port adaptors (\$50) and the 8-Meg backplane cards for about \$100. Pease sold out of both (10 units each), Kala sold about 8 OSK UME's, and more than a couple new MM/1 systems were ordered.

Chris Hawk and Zack were pretty pleased with the results, and the Burkes seemed happy, though I didn't ask how they made out at the cashbox.

Strongware is a new face on the block, selling some OS-9 and OSK utilities and programming tools — a sign of the new market opened up by the OSK machine(s). CoCoPro was selling just about everything, including CoCo UltiMusE-III, leaving Ed Hathaway free to give out free upgrades and sell the new OSK version while Mike Knudsen played Ed's latest classic rock scores and showed off the MM/1's speed.

Seminars were well attended. Speakers included **Steve Bjork**, **Marty Goodman**, **Mr. Strong**, **Kev Darling**, **Paul Ward**, and **Frank Hogg**. Yes, he showed up to give a truly inspiring talk on CD-i and its implications for those of us into OSK who want to get into a potentially explosive market on the

CoCoFest Chronicles

ground floor. When asked about a certain CoCo magazine editor who'd publicly given up on OSK, he said "I'd just tell him to have fun with his PCs :-)"

CoCoPro! was officially selling Hogg's TC-70, though I don't know whether they got any orders. A TC-70 owner talked to me at some length about the lack of software support for the Tomcat, and lamented that there *still* is no mouse adapter card nor driver/descriptor for one! Word is that Frank has re-directed the TC-70 at his time-honored small business market.

Not clear why Ed Gresick and Delmar weren't there, given the recent good vibes going around about G-Windows.

(BTW, K-Windows is up to WindIO #41 and supports moving, resizing, and overlay windows. Not *entirely* bug-free but good stuff. Mr. Darling hand-carried the latest version to the IMS booth.)

Mike Knudsen

Ken Fish

WHAT THE ATLANTA FESTS MEAN TO HIM

(From a guy who did much for the ACS and Atlanta CoCoFests.)

When I was asked by Allen to write this foreword, I wasn't too sure I was the right man for the job. I didn't become a member of the Atlanta Computer Society until after they had already staged two previous fests. I was a newbie... both to the CoCo and to the club. But I found that due to my involvement with the later fests and their success, I seem to be a figure that stands out in people's memories of those fun times. Of course that isn't too unusual...someone like me tends to stand out in people's memories anyway! For those unfortunates who never went to an AtlantaFest or met me. I'll endeavor to explain.

I'm about 5'11". 200+ lbs...hair in a ponytail...ear ring...and a tattoo... Your average biker personality and appearance. So how did I become known for something like the AtlantaFests? It's simple. I got involved with a group of people called The Atlanta Computer Society. A group that cared less about my appearance than they did my "new blood and new ideas." I was elected as vice president of the club, before my first year was over! And I decided then to work for the club to the best of my abilities. This led to being elected to two terms as president and another as vice president. I brought in a lot of new ideas, helped revive a flagging newsletter, added posts to the club officers, and most importantly, became very involved with the fests.

I also blew people's minds that first fest I attended. I showed up in a suit and tie the first day of the fest. Little did I realize that that was going to be remembered the way it was!

And the fests themselves? I hadn't enjoyed myself like that for a long time! The idea of meeting people from all over the country and beyond, who shared my interest in this marvelous little computer. I met Allen Huffman at that time, and remember being amazed at his knowledge both about the CoCo and about programming... I would find out later he had a love of amusement parks and waffle house restaurants that rivaled mine! I met Frank Swygert, who authored a book about our beloved CoCo, Tony Podraza from another CoCo club, Chris Hawks, the Strong brothers, Andre LaVelle, and of course, the master of OS-9, Kevin Darling...the list goes on. All of these people who had such a devotion to a machine that the manufacturers gave up on! And all of them dedicated to having fun while supporting the CoCo community. I met people who traveled great distances not to sell items, but to check out the vendors and buy from them. This was an exciting time. and I wanted MORE!!!! The second fest I went to was my first being truly in charge, not only was it more fun for me, but in all modesty, we had our highest attendance of both vendors and guests at that one.

Allen told me to write anything I wanted here: stories about the fests, about the people, what happened and so forth. I hope you aren't disappointed Allen, but this is really what the fests meant to me. A worldwide group. The excitement of meeting new people. Making friends that would last

CoCoFest Chronicles

over the years and the miles, because of that common interest. The idea of people coming together to support the machine. The fun! Oh, I could talk about trips to Stone Mountain for the laser show, the dinners, and the sight-seeing downtown where we went to the Hard Rock Cafe and Planet Hollywood. But what stands out most? The people, the vendors and the computer. And the reason behind it all.

But what reason was that? If you read my ramblings closely you will see the real reason. It's the same reason Allen is writing all this down. You see the real reason was YOU. Those of you who had and hopefully still have an interest in this computer. To get together and share stories and ideas. So enjoy the machine, don't let the love for it die. And above all Keep on CoCoing!

Ken Fish, April 1998

1992 CoCoFest Report

(October 3-4, Atlanta, Georgia)

by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software

10/6/92, Revised 10/8/92

NOTE: Many typos, misspellings, mistakes, etc., are to be found in this document. Yet again, please do not count off too much! <grin>

Okay...I give up. For two years now we have been saying that there may only be “one more Fest.” Well, once again, we have had our potentially “last” CoCoFest. Fortunately, at this Fest we hear about a Chicago CoCoFest (if someone else doesn’t do it, apparently Dave Myers of CoCoPro! will step in and help out) as well as an Australia CoCoFest (with Burke & Burke rumored to attend) and one in Iowa, home of Microware. What about the Ft. Worth CoCoFest? And...well, you get the idea. It seems the more our machine “dies” the more we start kicking in the support. So on that note, allow me to get on with my slightly delayed CoCoFest report...

Where? Once again, at the Holiday Inn Northlake in Atlanta, Georgia. Who? Thanks to the Atlanta Computer Society. How? Like a glorified “swap meet.” Vendors could get a table for a mere \$25. Admission for both days was another mere \$5. What was different from previous Fests? Not much! All the elements were there: Seminars, vendors, name badges, door prizes, T-shirts, etc., etc.! What was missing? Custom-made booth signs and the fancy backdrops and booth separators. Other than that, it was “business as usual” for Fest vendors and attendees.

Regressing...

THE DRIVE

Things were different this year. Mark Page, who was with me on the last two Fests (2nd Atlanta and “Last” Chicago), was unable to attend. By some strange twist of fate, my original founding partner, Terry Todd, was back on the scene after about a year of being out of the CoCo community. He was back, writing new software, and ready to rejoin Sub-Etha Software.

We departed in my new ‘92 Honda Civic (not American, I admit, but great gas milage) at about 6:00 a.m. (after both oversleeping) from the Piney Woods of Lufkin, Texas. We drove and drove and drove and drove attempting to reach Atlanta, Georgia. Those happy “BRIDGE MAY ICE IN COLD WEATHER” signs haunted us again as we entered Mississippi, but they didn’t seem as amusing as they did last year (see the *1991 CoCoFest Report*).

Nothing too amusing this drive, though we did get hungry and decided to stop at a grocery store for food. Where to stop...coming along “EXIT 42” (what better number! see “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy” by Douglas Adams) we ended right up at a MASSIVE “Sack and Save” food store. It was BIG, and it had the life-giving sodas and luncheon meat we desired.

Back on our journey. We were on a very tight budget. I had a small \$27 in cash and a Phillips 66 gas card. You have no idea how difficult it is to find a Phillips 66 station on I-20...fortunately, my car

runs on fumes so about 780 miles later we were there.

THE ARRIVAL / PRE-SHOW

We would be staying at a different hotel for financial reasons with Scott Griepentrog, Joel Hegberg, Carl Boll, and Paul Jerkatis. We first made an appearance at the Holiday Inn to see how things were looking. We paid for our booth and admission badges and checked out the Fest area. It looked nice. No fancy backdrops but table cloths were there and skirts on the tables inside the main room. Vendors were slowly setting up. We had work to do so we couldn't stay. We needed materials. Supplies. PVC pipe.

Some of the locals directed us towards the nearest hardware store (Home Depot). It was as MASSIVE as the grocery store we attended earlier in the day. Once there we sought out PVC tubing necessary to build our own backdrop. We found it, and purchased supplies to build a monitor stand (Terry's would not fit inside my car). The salesman there was most helpful (and even had a letter of thanks from Jimmy Carter for his help finding a sander belt for him...wow!). At about 9:30 p.m. we were outside in the parking lot cutting the tubing down (once again, so it would fit in the car).

We then went to find Castlegate (I think I have this all in the right order) which is where we stayed. It was about eight miles away but took quite a while to locate. We roamed there briefly and since our associates were not there yet we went back to the Holiday Inn. We "hung out" there getting reacquainted with old friends. Inside the pub, we discovered a small celebration. Dave and Nancy Myers were there along with the Adventure Survivors. It was a celebration of Nancy's "22nd" birthday, and a nice cake was prepared which I was graciously offered a piece of. We chatted and then went to call and see if our pals were in town yet.

To make a long story short (TOO LATE!) we eventually ended up at our rooms at Castlegate, hauled everything upstairs and spent that evening eating and programming a few "final touches" into our warez.

THE SHOW AREA

The room was setup as follows: (More or less)

(See map on the following page.)

This made 25 vendors, the largest show in several years! More vendors were there "in spirit" as their products were carried by others. Here are the vendors, in no particular order:

Adventure Survivors — THE CoCo gamer's newsletter. Maps, hints, tips, and a monthly newsletter for all your favorite CoCo adventure games. Terry and I are both members.

Interactive Media Systems — The MM/1 guys back again with even more new software, technical manuals, and balloons. MM/1s on sale for special Fest prices.

Kala Software — UltiMusE for OS-9 and OSK, a great music notation sequencer (plays inputted sheet music to Midi device) along with a nice library of music disks.

HawkSoft — In his doctor's robe once again, the very tall Chris Hawks was there with

1992 Atlanta:

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+-----+
|XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX| CoCoPro          |OS-9 User| Color Systems |
| Glenside             |              | Group   |              |
| CoCo Club           |-----+-----+-----|
|-----=
==
|              +-----+          +-----+          | FARNA |
==
| BARSofT | R.C      |      | MidIowa |      | Systems |
|          | Smith   |      | CoCoClub| +-----|
==
|          +-----+-----+          +-----+          | David  | | | | | |
| Rick's  | ACS,Inc |      | E.Adams |      | Wordell |
|-----+ | CompEnt.| UsedEqp |      | F.Hogg  | +-----|
| Sub-Etha | +-----+-----+          +-----+          | SBUG   |
| Software | | Strong- | ACS,Inc |      |OS-9 Com |      |
|-----+ | Ware  | ClubSls |      | Network | +-----|
| OS-9 Un- | +-----=-----+          +-----+          |
| derground|
|-----+          +-----+-----+-----+-----+-----|
| Hyper-   |          | Adventr | Interactive   | Kala   | Hawk-   |
|   Tech  |          | Surviv. | Media Systems | Software |   Soft |
+-----+---\ /--+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
=
|          |
|          | Note: This is ***NOT*** to scale by any
=
|          | means. With this many vendors it
|-----+ +-----|
| Ticket  | | Ticket|          | is difficult to try to put it all
| Signing | | Sales |          | into a text file screen...
|-----+ +-----|
|          |

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Slot-Pak, the dual joystick interface, Icon-BASIC, and various other goodies. On display was his prototype for the Slot-Pak...a frightening looking gadget of wires.

S-BUG — Andre LaVelle was there with massive amounts of old Radio Shack software. He had small portable letter openers/paper shredders for sale (very odd, and many people bought 'em) as well as the ONLY 512K boards at the Fest (hand soldered with gold connectors on PBJ boards, \$55 loaded and \$28 for 0K). Thanks to Andre, Terry now has 512K!

David Wordell — All the way from Ft. Worth, Texas (Howdy, neighbor!), he was there with an OS-9 tutorial video tape that takes you step by step from generic Tandy OS-9 disks to customized 40 track/double sided 80 column boot disks all with standard OS-9 commands and utilities. \$14.95, for those interested. Call him at 214-264-3610 for more information.

FARNA Systems — Lotsa goodies. (Okay, so I didn't pay too much attention!) They had a disk of all the common "must-have" OS-9 patches. Gotta have it!

ColorSystems — Zack Sessions offered his assortment of software items.

OS-9 Users Group — Takin' names and kickin' butt! Membership grew to this newly reformed OS-9 group, and their great T-shirts (OS-9: Kick Butt in Real Time) sold out. I picked up my OS-9 Library Disk...thanks, Boisy!

CoCoPro! — Dave and Nancy Myers and their whole game were here with lotsa goodies. This time, Dave seemed a bit more relaxed without all the stress of running the whole show.

On display was a new graphics utility for OS-9, Pixel Blaster. It hooks into OS-9 offering new DIRECT screen control for HIGH SPEED OS-9 games (1200 times faster than normal unpatched OS-9 get/put calls) all available through DISPLAY codes or via a gfx4 module for BASIC09 or a library for 'C'. GREAT. I have the package and will soon be developing some games for it. This is a MUST-HAVE for anyone wanting to write quality high speed games under OS-9.

R.C. Smith — Various used CoCo 1s, 2s, etc., for sale along with older Radio Shack software.

ACS, Inc. Used Equipment — Yep, you guessed it.

ACS, Inc. Club Sales — Sign up for the club here, and buy T-shirts, etc...

Mid Iowa & County CoCo Club — Takin' names and talkin' about the OS-9 Fest to possibly be held in the future.

Eugene Adams — More misc. items.

Frank Hogg Labs — Frank was unable to make it. His booth had a letter explaining and some literature on his latest developments. We missed you, Frank! (Where's my TC-9? I still want one!)

OS-9 Community Network — I didn't actually see anyone by this booth, either, but registration questionnaires were available.

Glenside CoCo Club — Hey hey, the Chicago Fest sponsors made that LONG trip down South and took membership applications and sold goodies.

BARSoft — The very large, intimidating BARSoft guy (hey, what's your name, anyway? I never seem to remember!) sold his supply of older software (including Tom Mix games) and hardware (ala Disto products). Unfortunately, he sold the Disto EPROM burner before I had a chance to take it off his hands. Also at this booth were some simple CoCo 3 graphic adventures based on the Chicago CoCoFest and a new one one based on the

current show (how'd he manage that? grin).

Rick's Computer Enterprises — Neat stuff for RS-DOS like the complete *Rainbow Index* on disk among other fine, affordable products. His magazine on disk is well worth a look!

Strongware — John Strong and his Team OS-9 crew (including brother Charles) was back offering his DICE “Deluxe Icon Editor” for the MM/1, a beta-test version of a new graphics program, his HFE CoCo 3 font editor, and GEMS. Other goodies were there to aid OS-9/OSK programmers. Fine software with a fine future.

Sub-Etha Software — (Ahem...) Our “classics” were back: MiniBanners and Check-Book+ for RS-DOS, OS-9, and OSK. The “new” OSK Etha-GUI and a beta-test “really neat” word processor was demonstrated (with true italics, bold, underline, etc., on-screen). Carl England Utilities, and Nick Johnson Software (4-D Checkers for OS-9 demoed).

A patch for Infocom disks by Terry was there which will take an old CoCo 1/2 game like Hitchhiker's Guide and make it boot up to 80 columns, upper lowercase with 6ms disk access. Works and looks great, and a mere \$9.95. (Hey, instant value to those old Infocom games you may have collecting dust.) Rumors of an OS-9 port of Infocom circulate, too!

As a special surprise, we sold the all new 512K Pac-Dude 3-D, by Brian O'Neill (author of the PD Pac Dude). It was an AMAZING game with massive 3-D scrolling screens, multi-voice background music, and the smoothest animation and scrolling I have seen EVER on the CoCo. Even people who were totally pro-OS-9 and swore they would NEVER buy another RS-DOS program were buying this game. HONESTLY, run SCREAMING from the room and contact Eversoft Games about this program...or call us and if we take enough orders maybe we can become a distributor... (Sub-Etha Software — 409-XXX-3842)

The International OS-9 Underground — Promoting the fine new OS-9 publication as well as other AniMajik software goodies, Scott and Dave Proctor were there with CoCo and System IV and lots of quality stuff like the new Take-Note music learning “game” for OS-9 and the text-based TShell MultiVue replacement.

Hyper-Tech — Mike Haaland was showing off his MM/1 GUI and other goodies. Kevin Darling hung out with him for awhile.

THE SEMINARS

Other than my own seminar, I didn't see any of 'em but here is what they were supposed to be about:

Saturday:

11 a.m. — “The Future of the CoCo”

Allen Huffman / Sub-Etha Software

1 p.m. — “Glenside General Meeting and Bull Session”

3 p.m. — “MM/1 Hardware and Software”

Paul Ward / IMS

5 p.m. — “OS-9 Open Forum”

Kevin Darling (another marathon Q&A session!)

Sunday:

11 a.m. — “Programming in OS-9/OSK”

John Strong / Strongware

1 p.m. — “StG Net (OS-9/OSK)”

Scott Griepentrog

(The only bidirectional CoCo based BBS network...)

One other impromptu seminar was added to this list, though I cannot recall what it was — sorry!

FOOD

There wasn't even free coffee from the Hotel this time. What gives, guys? Good thing I had my lunch meat and Jolt Cola (three six-packs brought down thanks to Nick Johnson!)

THE EVENINGS

More of the same familiar faces. Scott G. bought us dinner at Fudrucker's down the street on Saturday night. We enjoyed casual company with pals like Nick Johnson (thanks for loaning us your newly purchased CM-8 monitor!). This time, due to staying at a different hotel, I really missed a lot of late-evening hotel fun. From now on I will stay at the Fest hotels. I just missed too much of the “show” by not being there.

SUMMARY

Great show, vendor wise, but attendance was small. They had a shirt signing contest (everywhere you turned someone wanted you to sign their CoCoFest shirt) and the winner found over 125 names so I guess we had at least that many people there. There wasn't really too much new (Pixel Blaster, Pac Dude 3-D, various patches and items available for the first time at a Fest) but the spirit was high. For a relatively unpublicized event I feel it was an amazing success.

Money wise, this was our highest grossing Atlanta CoCoFest yet, and second only to the Chicago show in May '92. Even if we didn't make a cent it would have been worth it just to re-meet all my old friends who now recognize me by name. It's just such a great brotherly feeling when that happens that it almost brings tears to my eyes when I have to leave.

If you missed this Fest, you missed a great relaxed show without all the crowding of the Chicago show and with all the comfort and “down South” fun you could stand.

RUMORS

In the works, through the grapevine:

MM/1 Word Processor, Infocom for OS-9, Full Page Scanner (yep, Carl England showed up and the

project may not be dead after all), 6309 Stuff Galore, Gin Rummy, OS-9 Games, a Graphic Adventure based on the CoCoFest, plus more CoCoFests worldwide!

THE RETURN

Alas, parting is such sweet sorrow. Good-byes were said after we had the official farewell dinner at the oriental restaurant across the hall. Hands were shaken, arms were waved, and we packed ourselves into the Honda and headed back. (Ed. Note: Terry wishes me to mention I drove the entire 780 miles by myself.) The Jolt Cola helped the trip quite a bit but now that I am home I really feel empty, as if a part of me is gone. But there is hope, for I am committed to being at EVERY CoCoFest I can afford to attend from now on out. What about YOU?

DISCLAIMER

I apologize for not mentioning those I should. I apologize for getting products wrong when I did. I apologize for not having the accuracy I need. And I apologize for any misspellings of names, products, etc. I wanted to rush this file out as soon as possible so here it is. The omissions in this report are NOT intentional. I simply do not remember all that I took in and I apologize for that.

THANKS

THANKS Al Dages and Ken Fish and the other members of the ACS for making this all possible and loaning us the paper clips and tape and... Thanks to Dave for use of his joystick and power strip. Thanks to Boisy for the OS-9 disk. Thanks to Andre for the great deal on the memory board.

Thanks to Joel Hegberg and Scott Griepentrog for the rolls of film to aid me in obtaining pictures for my upcoming game. Thanks to Kevin Darling for patience in my picture taking. Thanks to all those who posed for me in various other pictures (I took about 80 of 'em!) Thanks to Venus for complimenting my hair. Thanks to the Adventure Survivors for being so nice to everyone. Thanks to Nick Johnson for the use of his monitor and for bringing me the Jolt Cola (get 4-D Checkers OS-9 finished, eh?) Thanks to Paul Jerkatis for allowing us such affordable passage <grin> in your hotel. Thanks to Scott again for the free food and great company and information. Thanks to all who filled out our software drawing forms. Thanks to Judy at Eversoft and Brian O'Neill for such a great game. Thanks to Rick for allowing the rest of us to use your table on Sunday when you were gone. Thanks to John Strong for the use of the Icon Editor for MiniBanners. Thanks to all those who picked on us when our backdrop was falling apart. Thanks to Chris Hawks and all the other vendors who bought stuff from us. Thanks to EVERYONE out there who came to the show, signed up to clubs, and supported us by purchasing software. MOST OF ALL, thanks to everyone I have left off from this list. I know I have left out quite a bit of important information. If so, please send me a message and I will update this file with it. Thanks for reading all of this, and see you at the next show!

Allen C. Huffman, Owner — Sub-Etha Software

SUBETHA on Delphi

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

SYSOP@DELTA on StG Net

(409) XXX-ETHA [3842]

(815) XXX-XXXX (OSK Midwest Division — Joel's number!)

P.S. GENie is also offering support for the CoCo in their Tandy area. Type "TANDY" to access, or "M635". See you there! (CoCo Conference every Tuesday night!)

[Ed. Note: Whew...this is by far not my best Fest report but please bear with me.]

In closing...what can YOU do to insure these Fests continue? If you cannot attend, at least support those who support the Fests. Become a member of as many CoCo groups as you can. Glenside and ACS are excellent choices as is the OS-9 User's Group. Sign up with publications such as the *OS-9 Underground*. Get on the mailing lists. Get online. Keep in touch so we have a way to tell you about new developments within the community.

It's easy. Watch for a letter of "support" coming soon for more details.

Sub-Etha Software now operates a BBS on a part-time basis. The DeltaBoard, running StG Network software, operates from 9:30 p.m. — 9:30 a.m. Central time at 409-XXX-3842. It is not always up, but my answering machine is so do not hesitate to call. Support for Sub-Etha products and downloadable demos will be available online soon.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Note the immediate mention of a Central USA Fest, this time planned for Ft. Worth, Texas. It made sense due to a very active CoCo group in the area, and also a large convention area known as the *InfoMart* which hosted monthly club gatherings (cheaply) of which once I attended. At that show I would meet Lee Veal for the first time, not realizing this until years later (at a Fest).

The "Piney Woods of East Texas" are known as such due to the large amount of pine trees in the area.

The design of the *PVC Nightmare* was actually planned and drawn out by Terry Todd before the show but, as usual, we didn't have any time to purchase supplies and build it until the night before the show in Atlanta.

At the Castlegate hotel, Paul and Scott roamed with walkie talkies which apparently were on the same channels as some of the large amount of high-school aged kids in the building whom, strangely enough, believe our threats of being security on "secured frequencies."

Note my acknowledgment of Boisy Pitre whom years later would go on to assist in my hiring at Microware, a deed which I will thank him again for here. Thanks, Boisy!

The OS-9 port of Infocom eventually happened — just not by Sub-Etha. While Terry had an almost complete disassembly of the Infocom game parser, the port to OS-9 was never done. Years later a parser (rewritten in C) was ported to OS-9/68K for the MM/1.

Paul Jerkatis apparently got his hotel room for free due to some arrangement, which is why I never felt all that bad for not being able to properly pay for my portion of it.

Terry Simons

MID AMERICA FEST 1993

(Some behind the scenes information and Fest planning advice.)

Though once having one of the more active groups and publishing a leading magazine on disk, *The UPGRADE*, like some others I have moved to other grounds. Yet my love for CoCo friends always remains, and at Al's request I have put together an overview of our "Mid America Fest," and what goes into putting on a Fest.

From the earliest days of CoCo there emerged one magazine which would dominate the market. Consequently the center for CoCoists for a good many years was *Rainbow Magazine* by Falsoft Corp. On the CoCo if you wanted to sell or buy anything it was *Rainbow Magazine* ads. If you wanted to know what was going on it was *Rainbow* articles. With *Rainbow* dominating the market place, they held CoCo Fests in three different parts of the country. These were all first class affairs, and costly from a vendor's standpoint. As a vendor with a booth in '89, I skimmed by at around a thousand dollars. Many vendors would double or triple that. But the audience was there and good products would pay the freight. As the audience waned, Falsoft could no longer justify the expense. So CoCo Fests were at an end.

Dave Myers a leading vendor with the aid of the Glenside club, a Chicago based CoCo group, tried a Fest naming it the "First 'Last' CoCo Fest." The success was tremendous. But many forget that *Rainbow* (i.e. Falsoft Corp.) was a big company with a large overhead of staff, etc. And without the big budget overhead, Dave and Glenside proved a CoCo Fest could be held, and did so quite successfully. Atlanta (The Atlanta Computer Society) followed and CoCo Fests were alive and well once again.

HOLDING A FEST: WHY? WHAT'S INVOLVED?

In the meanwhile we had a thriving group, "Mid Iowa & Country CoCo" (MI&CC) which published a disk magazine *The UPGRADE* nationally — actually reaching from Australia to England. As a magazine our goal was always supporting the CoCo Community. As such we subscribed to the smaller mags, and paid dues to a variety of other CoCo groups. This already had me in contact with many leaders in the CoCo Community, and I thought with Microware here in Des Moines, why not try a Fest here?

To research the idea, I have to thank Tony Podraza (then president of Glenside), Al Dages and Newton White in Atlanta, Dave Myers and others all of whom were helpful with how-to ideas. Our group officers (including myself) were totally voluntary or without pay, and as a result of a few meager products, we had a healthy treasury, though the bulk of it was *UPGRADE* subscriptions. Still, a Fest is a costly undertaking and if it turned out to be a bust, our treasury would be nearly depleted. My thinking was this: I wasn't about to take a chance on writing to people who had faithfully paid for subscriptions to *The UPGRADE* and say sorry but we're outta money, so go fish. No way! So I presented it to the group this way: "I will personally cosponsor this Fest." That is, if it made money,

I'd take half the profit; if it lost money to a detrimental amount, I would personally bear the brunt of the loss. They said "fair enough" and the race was on.

I say "race" because that was about what it felt like from that point to the opening of the show room doors. Many vendors and club leaders I knew on a first name basis. But that wasn't enough. This had to be talked up and promoted to every nook and cranny of the CoCo Community. Signing onto Delphi was a boost but only part of the effort. My phone bill which previously had its share of LD calls to CoCo friends grew even larger. Lonnie Falk was thankfully quite generous in helping us with a hefty discount on several ads placed in *Rainbow*. Actually the most expensive item was advertising. You see, I don't know if there is a way to have a halfway Fest. For people to travel, you must have vendors and they must travel. One will not come unless the other is there. To gather people from all over the US, it takes money, it takes time, it takes effort. My business, "Terry's Quality Concrete," being seasonal, gives me time in the winter months. So the effort began about September to culminate in early spring with a Fest date of April 30th. This date was chosen because it would be out of the snow storm threat area, and Glenside was (at that time) was planning on having theirs in mid summer.

PREPARING FOR A FEST

Our group meanwhile was busy checking and suggesting a variety of necessities. The hotel and show room, where and how much? Our Chamber of Commerce provided us with a list of suitable accommodations. Show rooms (Fest floor) range from \$500 to about a thousand dollars a day. Plus seminar rooms are another extra. But this can be offset by the hotel offering a discount that can range to zero cost if some number (usually about fifty) of rooms are taken by Fest attendees. Also on my mind was food. I remember paying ten bucks for breakfast (that or starve) at a Rainbow Fest. I wanted people to be able to eat at reasonable prices. We were settling on a very nice in town hotel with a thirty room (taken by attendees) requirement. If the thirty rooms weren't taken the floor would cost \$700.00. Still there were booth set ups. These would be another few hundred by a separate local vendor.

Then we were offered a deal few are aware of. A hotel called and said "bring your Fest here" and the floor was free with no minimum room requirement. The hotel owned the booth setups, and would provide those free as well. These turned out to be full skirted with curtains, as nice as any RAINBOWfest. Their situation was the hotel, while only about ten years old, had been built prior to the days of indoor pool, mini golf, etc. amenities built into later hotels, and across the street was a new Holiday Inn, which severely cramped their trade. Yet being located at the edge of town on a major highway interchange, it was perfect for all attending. We had many remark how pleased they were that it was easy to get to without maneuvering in city traffic. While you couldn't go swimming, all the normal modern hotel accommodations were there. The rooms were very nice, and only \$45 a day. I've suggested looking for fringe area easy to get to, and more striving (less costly) hotels to other Fest holders, but it always fell on deaf ears. Oh, well...

VENDORS

Rounding up vendors was tough. They all wanted to wait until they saw who else was there. Chris Burke (of Burke & Burke) signing up was the shot in the arm we needed. Then came the bad news: Glenside was going to hold their Fest the following month, a date they felt pressed into because of

hotel availability. And I do believe it was in no way purposeful to hurt our Fest because in fact Glenside was at our Fest in full force support. Carl Boll was also a joint guest speaker at our breakfast. But still many vendors couldn't swing both Fests, and who could blame them for choosing the Glenside, which had already proved successful.

SPEAKERS AND SEMINARS

Speakers and seminars are another big item. Separate rooms must be acquired (ours were thrown in) with PA and chair set up. Here the membership was helpful, as we already had a diversity of avid CoCoists within our group. The seminars were held by top names, many of whom were from our own group. One was held on the subject preying on many minds with the closing of *Rainbow*: a "Town Hall meet" on "where do we go from here?"

A FEST "T" SHIRT: WHO WOULD DO IT AT A REASONABLE COST?

I wanted something more than the typical cheap thin cotton with a monochrome print. Also how many (taking a chance on running short or getting stuck with extras) do you have printed? Our answer was to choose a vendor who would do a professional "iron on type," which allowed both color and a quality shirt at a modest cost. These were done from a booth at the Fest, eliminating any waste or shortage. It was hailed as one of the nicer Fest shirts.

A COCO BREAKFAST WITH GUEST SPEAKER

This figures into the room cost as the breakfast with a good head count will lower show or seminar room costs. We chose the subject "CoCo clubs, and what makes them work," with Carl Boll of Glenside co-speaking with myself. Carl's main emphasis was on rules and bylaws, whereas I tried to emphasize the idea of preserving diversity, from basic key tapping BASIC user to the avid OS-9er. I had seen too many groups shrink nearly out of existence, humoring only the fancy of the leadership.

PLUS PLANNING AND WORKERS

Here the group pitched in, as booths had to be manned full time which means you can't wander the Fest floor as we all like, the same for ticket folks, etc. But our people jumped in filling all the gaps, yet allowing all to catch the Fest itself, with top names from our own group like James Jones setting up his own OS-9 / OSK booth, a top attraction in itself. We had a top notch, and well organized P.D. disk library, which would have to have a deep inventory of backups available at the Fest. Also *The UPGRADE* and back issues another job and booth to be manned. Sundog agreed to send his wares and split profit, if we manned the booth. This was a generous and welcome gesture, but another booth to set up and man. Remember, each of these booths meant a member would have to disassemble his system and bring it from home.

THE FEST PROGRAM

A Fest program, attractive with pertinent information had to be designed, laid out, and made up. The design and layout. And again another search. Who would do it at reasonable cost?

In the end we had several actual vendors, a few booths rented to OS-9 guys like Scott Griepentrog, Joel Hegberg, etc. who weren't so much selling as wanting to have a booth and see friends, and some

like Rick Cooper (*CFDM*) and Frank Swygert were there in spirit with a paid ad in the program. It was a nice, good sized show room but was looking sparse. So we just widened out our own (MI&CC) booths, having a separate club, library, and other booths. But due to the close Fest dates there wasn't what we like to call a full floor of vendors.

And all the above being prepped simultaneously, while talking, modeming (at a then speedy 1200 baud) on about four nets, some long distant. And more talking getting the Fest promoted in a fashion that would bring people from California to Florida. As the doors opened, the race went into high gear (like it wasn't before?) as we closed in for the final two day lap. If this sounds like someone's head is whirring, you got it right. Being "head honcho" means hearing all problems that arise, while answering the many questions here and there while trying to say hello to your many CoCo friends. One of our members had set us up with walkie talkies, so I could (smile) hear all the problems at once.

On the other hand it's so much fun, you never stop to realize it's hard work. Fortunately we didn't have a room minimum to fill, because truthfully due to the close dates attendance was light. The hotel's graciousness kept it from being a financial disaster. All told we, under the circumstances, fortunately lost of only about a hundred dollars. But Chicago was there in full force, with an Omaha group, and we did get visitors from California and Florida, as well as some in between.

While some were leery seeing the low room prices, all were pleasantly surprised to find the rooms were nice as any, the location was easy for all, with a variety of reasonable eating places nearby. The "T" shirts were quality with multicolor prints, the booth set ups top of the line, with activities and seminars that pleased all.

But the bottom line is, "whenever a bunch of CoCo friends get together you're gonna have fun!" And have fun we did!

A final note: on the results of "The town hall meet," "where do we go from here?" Many were calling for a centralization of mags, etc. Or all go together to become one. As I said then, "each gives a different perspective which serves the individual interests." That should and will remain (and does to this day). To keep the community alive, subscribe and put a few bucks where your interest is. The subscriptions are cheap, and both Rick (*CFDM*) and Frank (*80 micros*) are operating on more of a love of it, then real profit making motive. If you can get to a Fest, I guarantee, large or small you will have fun.

Terry Simons, (past) Treasurer MI&CC and Editor of The UPGRADE, April 1998

Middle America Fest '93

Report

(March 27-28, Des Moines, Iowa)
 by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software
 03/29/93

NOTE: Many typos, misspellings, mistakes, etc., are to be found in this document. If you've read my previous Fest reports, you realize you should not count off too much! <grin>

Hmmm...there seems to be a trend here. The less perceived support for our beloved computer, the more festivals we have. This festival was first offered as a rumor at the '92 CoCoFest 3 in Atlanta and it must be said that the Mid Iowa & Country CoCo Club did a great job into turning this rumor into a reality. So...let me get on with it!

Where? The Travelodge Inn in Des Moines, Iowa (a few blocks away from the offices of Microware, creators of OS-9). Why? Because the good members of the Mid Iowa & Country CoCo Club thought it would be a good idea! How? In full Fest flair with complete booths with backdrops in a nice hotel with VERY affordable rates. About the only thing lacking were "real" name badges and booth signs. (At this Fest a printed square safety-pinned to your shirt served as entry badge...) But we had to get there first.

THE DRIVE

Every Fest seems a little bit different for Sub-Etha Software. With Terry Todd, my partner, "stuck" in Corpus Christi over spring break installing satellite dishes it ended up working out pretty well that a good friend of mine, Tim Johns, was interested in attending this Fest. Tim was one of the first CoCo users I met when I moved to East Texas...his household had at least FIVE Color Computers in it, and he ran a BBS using the name "CoCo Kid." Financially, things were tough but Tim had a free three-day car rental (thanks to thousands of dollars of Sprint phone usage) so all we had to do was get to Dallas to pick up the car. Fortunately, a nice relative of mine was able to help us do that.

My grandmother and I left from Lufkin, Texas at 3:30 a.m. on Friday morning. 30 minutes later, we picked up Tim in Nacogdoches and headed to Dallas. We made decent time and had to wait for the rental place to open. We were amused to no end at the giant "IT" we saw on a nearby building. Two massive letters, all by themselves, atop an old Dallas skyscraper kept us busily pointing saying "Hey, look at IT! Have you seen IT? What's IT doing up there?" IT seemed incredibly funny at the time, though some of our Fest friends didn't seem to understand...

We departed from Dallas at 8:20 a.m. in a Subaru Legacy (don't buy one — when you put down the cup-holder you cannot access the radio or climate controls...) and drove...and drove...and drove...stopping quite regularly for bathroom breaks for Tim <grin>. About twelve hours later we arrived in Des Moines. It should be noted that this was one of the most uneventful Fest drives ever, partially due to

the awful tollway we spent hours on...but it only cost us \$4.25.

THE ARRIVAL / PRE-SHOW

We pulled up, and went inside to check in. There was a message from Joel Hegberg, my Sub-Etha Midwest partner (head of our OSK development). We got our keys then went to our room to unload. A few familiar faces greeted us. Apparently we have established a die-hard gang of Fest attendees including Lee Veal and David Wordell from Dallas, Scott Griepentrog, Paul Jerkatis and Eddie Kuns from “parts unknown” (hey, I want some of that home-brew next time, Paul), Al Dages and R.C. Smith from Atlanta, and, of course, the familiar vendors.

There wasn't much to do this first night. I was a bit upset to find this Fest area providing backdrops after I spent so much time creating the “Mach II” version of our “PVC Nightmare” backdrop we used at the CoCoFest 3. (Basically, a PVC frame with black cloth for which we could suspend banners and signs...) We set this up and wandered around chatting. Not really much to say here...I spent most of the night printing out banners for the Saturday show and chatting with various Fest people (like the HAM guys next door).

THE SHOW AREA

The room was setup as follows: (More or less)

(See map on the following page.)

[Note: To be honest, I really don't remember how the room was set up. There was no map in the Fest guide for me to look at “after the fact” so this may not be too accurate...]

This made 12 vendors scheduled, but only 10 were manned. Without CoCoPro, many classic “expected” items were not there. Without Burke and Burke, Zebra, and Sundog, many other items were sadly missed... Anyway, here were the vendors:

ACS, Inc. Used Equipment — The Atlanta Computer Society came down to check things out and see if interest would remain this year for a 4th CoCoFest in Atlanta. They sold various pieces of hardware and software including an American made CoCo (?) and cases, etc.

Mid Iowa & Country CoCo — Taking memberships and showing off their Upgrade National Diskmagazine, a real NICE looking disk-based newsletter with plenty of graphics and humor.

Sub-Etha Software — There we were with our normal line of software including MiniBanners, CheckBook+, InfoPatch, N*Johnson Software, Carl England Utilities, and the new OSK products such as Etha-GUI and the new Write-Right “what you see is what you get” word processor which was the big hit for us. (Joel, you did a great job on this and I think you left many people quite impressed!)

Burke & Burke — They didn't make it. I heard it was due to a canceled flight. It was said, though, that PowerBoost 2.0 is out that patches OS-9 to run in NATIVE mode on the 6309 and is also more “stable.” Pity, as I want something to take advantage of the 6309 I have in my machine.

1993 Iowa :

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+-----+
| DS-69B Digitizer | Sundog          |          | StG          |
| Photo Booth      |                  |          |              |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|
|-----+          Most booths were at least one          +-----|
| SBUG/          |          table in size.  Several no-          | Glenside| |
| Andy          |          shows left a few empty...          | Chicago |
| LaVelle       |          |          | Fest       |
+-----+          Seminar area was around the          +-----|
| Sub-Etha      |          corner...          | David   | |
| Software      |          |          | Wordell  |
|                |          I apologize for those I have          |          |
+-----+          left out of this map! Please          +-----|
| Mid Iowa      |          send corrections.          | T-Shirt | |
| Library       |          |          |           |
|                |          |          |           |
+-----+          +-----+          +-----|
| James'        |          | Atlanta Computer Society |          | Check  |
| Ultimuse      |          |          |          |          | In    |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+

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Andy LaVelle — S-BUG was there with new/used disk drives, Radio Shack software, carrying cases, mini-paper shredders, disks, etc., etc., etc... He will probably be selling the Sub-Etha products at the Seattle mini-Fest planned later this year. (I bought a 3.5" drive w/adapter for less than \$40...) He also had some modified 12V CoCo disk controllers modified to handle the 1.44 meg floppy drives. HEY! How come no one told me we could use these high density floppy drives with only minor modifications to our controllers?

DS-69B Digitizer Booth — A Microworks digitizer was hooked up to a laser printer and snap-shots were taken. (Apparently the old HP inkjet printer driver works fine on this laser printer). Later, Mark Hawkins and Todd Earles made an appearance. (They were two of the guys who worked on Super Extended Color BASIC.) You could have your picture taken with them and a disk would be sent later for \$3 with the file on it. This basically let you be the "third" mugateer (from the Ctrl-Alt-Reset picture hidden inside the CoCo 3...)

Glenside Club & Chicago Fest — Glenside was there with Carl Boll and his hacked CoCo in tower case and a terminal feeding off of Scott Griepentrog's MM/1 around the

room. They were talking up the Chicago Fest, which promises to be one heckova show.

Mid Iowa & Country CoCo Library Booth — Hundreds of club disks for sale at \$3/each including interesting “Orphanware” items... I had no idea they had that much RS-DOS software!

Sportswear, Inc. — T.J. Clemmens was there making custom Fest T-shirts on the spot. Instead of printing up hundreds of single color white shirts, Mid Iowa had a nice four color transfer made which was pressed onto the shirts as you requested. Kinda neat and a NICE looking shirt for \$12! They were heavy duty grey shirts, and possibly the best shirts at any Fest in recent years.

StG Net — Scott Griepentrog and Paul Jerkatis hung around running two extra terminals from Scott’s MM/1 as they worked on code for the StG BBS package version 4 to be released within the next few months. Some of the beta modules looked truly incredible. Is it just me or were there a lot of MM/1s at this show?

Sundog Systems — The remaining premier game company for the CoCo’s software didn’t arrive in time, so all that was running was a demo of the much-awaited Contris game...it looked very nice. If you have seen the Nintendo version I think you would find the CoCo version quite acceptable. Two player mode and everything. Like two-player games? Well...what are you waiting for? (Side note: the day after the end of the Fest all of their software arrived in Iowa...sigh.)

Dave Wordell — Along with Lee Veal (proud owner of the original CoCo 1) was there with two tutorial video tapes — one on getting started with OS-9 (and customizing a new booth disk) and the other on installing a 6309. This new tape was very well put together and showed up-close how to remove the 6809 and install the new chip. Also of interest was the Planet Engine for OS-9. It is a CoCo planetarium with AMAZINGLY nice graphics. If you are a star buff, BUY THIS NOW! Very professional and pretty fast, too!

Zebra Systems — Also didn’t make it...

THE SEMINARS

I didn’t get to see any of them (I was too worried about my crashed 80 meg hard drive) but here is what the show guide reported:

Saturday:

11 a.m. — “OS-9 & OSK Portability”

James Jones, Microware.

1 p.m. — “RS-DOS Assembly”

Gene Lund, Sec. of MI&CC

3 p.m. — “HAM Radio”

Ed Bassick and a friend. This seminar was rescheduled until the next day due to their equipment not being here yet. I wish I could remember the name of “a friend.” Sorry ‘bout that, man!

6 p.m. — “Town Meet”

After the shut down of the Fest, we all gathered in the seminar room to talk about what we were going to do with ourselves. The major discussion was about all the people who got burned by past attempts at publishing CoCo magazines. A new magazine, *the world of 68 micros*, is due out soon to take up the slack that *Rainbow* is leaving. Let’s give this one a shot as it TRULY sounds like it has much potential. Other subjects discussed dealt with keeping CoCo clubs in touch with each other.

Sunday:

11 a.m. — “OS-9 C Assembly”

Boisy G. Pitre, Microware.

2 p.m. — “CoCoMax Graphics”

Terry Simons, MI&CC

FOOD

Ah! My free coffee! Coffee machines in every room (I didn’t try ours) and a free hotel breakfast each morning consisting of pastries, cereal, coffee, milk, tea, oatmeal, etc... Nice. I basically dined on food brought to me by the likes of Tim Johns and Scott G.

THE EVENINGS

Read past Fest events. This time we kept the Sub-Etha door open and had several Microware types in the room (thanks, James, for the ‘C’ program to handle my hard drive scan. “You awesome!”...) as well as newfound friends (Hi Art!) and old-time pals.

SUMMARY

A good show. Small vendor participation and a basically pathetic turnout, but somehow it was still very very fun. Nothing new was shown off except seeing Planet Engine for the first time, seeing the new “Installing the 6309” video tape tutorial, Joel’s MM/1 Write-Right program, and getting to see, feel, and touch a “Floptical” 21 megabyte 3.5” diskette! (YES, it looks JUST like a regular disk. Amazing...apparently they coat the backside with a pattern that a laser reads to track it...wow!)

Money wise, we had the very best first day at any Fest we have attended (this made #5) thanks to sale of Joel’s OSK MM/1 word processor. Amazing that OSK carried the show for us. One thing, though, is that this Fest felt good, relaxed, friendly and inviting. Unfortunately, this was the first Fest that didn’t pay for being there (except for Joel who did quite nicely!!!). BUT, if I had to do it all over again I would, but I’d not have brought my 80 meg drive!

RUMORS

In the works, through the grapevine:

Write-Right add-ons with names like “Spell-Well” and “Grammar-Hammer.” A potential CoCoFest 4 in Atlanta (October) IF turnout is decent at Chicago, which I am sure it will. EthaSampler, the STEREO sampler for the CoCo (RS-DOS and OS-9) playing back via the Orch-90 pak (hmmmm) supporting sound sequencing plus lots more... A new “pull-down” text-based interface for OS-9 (‘C’

developers — contact me ASAP for FREE development stuff for this!). And, well, a few other things that cannot be mentioned. Hint: Join the OS-9 User's Group before Chicago... (It is nice to see at least one rumor from the last Fest become a "reality"...)

THE RETURN

To say goodbye...we packed up, said our final farewells, and made plans to meet in Chicago. Before leaving, Scott McGee (with James Jones in tow) allowed us to have a quick tour of Microware. We saw powerful workstations, "next generation" CD-i machines (with 3.5" floppy drives built in???), a Japanese "m68000" machine with OS-9 in JAPANESE and some neat games, plus their box o' CoCos that they used to develop CoCo OS-9 on... Of interest, we saw Hawkins' and Earles' offices and one programmer had a CoCo 1 motherboard attached to his doorway...some kind of silent tribute to the past? It was monumental. This alone was almost worth the 16 hours of driving...though I don't think I'd come back just for another tour...<grin> Well...maybe I would.

So we drove...and drove...and drove...and drove...we were running out of gas and found ourselves stuck on the turnpike toll-thing again and had to turn around to find a Phillips 66 gas station (see: gas cards, CoCoFest 3 report). Well, the turnaround cost us many miles, fifteen minutes, and thirty-five cents then the station had closed...SIGH. We eventually got fueled and drove...and drove...and, well, you get the idea. We were "soon" home, saw "IT," and made our ways back to East Texas.

We will return! Look for myself, Terry Todd, and Tim Johns to all make it to the Chicago show. Please...let's see you there, too, okay?

DISCLAIMER

I apologize for not mentioning those I should. I apologize for getting products wrong when I did. I apologize for not having the accuracy I need. And I apologize for any misspellings of names, products, etc. I wanted to rush this file out as soon as possible so here it is. The omissions in this report are NOT intentional. I simply do not remember all that I took in and I apologize for that. (Ed: Hey, what a cheap shot! This is the same one from the last Fest report!!!)

THANKS

Thanks, Terry Simons, for letting us "pay late" for the show. Thanks Art for the company. Thanks Scott for the free food. Thanks Paul for bugging me about the hotel fee from Atlanta. Thanks Al and RC for the use of the cart. Thanks Carl for spending money to help me get home. Thanks Scott and James for the tour. Thanks Todd and Mark for showing up — that was a truly historic moment. Thanks "Andy" for the use of the extension cord. Thanks to all those who attended and spent money with us especially. And last of all, thanks to everyone at the MI&CC for giving us yet another chance to "support the CoCo." I wish everyone good luck in any future events.

Allen C. Huffman, Owner — Sub-Etha Software
SUBETHA on Delphi (not currently active, sorry)
COCO-SYSOP on GENie
SYSOP@DELTA on StG Net
COCO-SYSOP@GENIE.GEIS.COM on Internet

(409) XXX-ETHA [3842] (as of 4/1, not in service...sigh)

(815) XXX-XXXX (OSK Midwest Division — Joel's number!)

P.S. GENIE is still offering support for the CoCo in their Tandy area. Type "TANDY" to access, or "M635". See you there! (CoCo Conference every Sunday night!)

[Ed. Note: Whew...this is by far not my best Fest report but please bear with me. For questions or comments, or a free catalog of our software, just write!]

In closing...what can YOU do to insure these Fests continue? If you cannot attend, at least support those who support the Fests. Become a member of as many CoCo groups as you can. MI&CC, Glenside and ACS are excellent choices as is the OS-9 User's Group. Sign up with publications such as *68 micros*. Get on the mailing lists. Get online. Keep in touch so we have a way to tell you about new developments within the community. It's easy. Watch for a letter of "support" coming soon for more details.

The Sub-Etha Software BBS, The DeltaBoard, is temporarily offline until I get the phone turned back on. (Yes, times are tough but getting better...bear with us...) Check the nets for information of its return.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Tim Johns later went on to be interviewed by Microware, though declined the job offer and now works in Seattle.

IT really was that funny.

The "Mach II" version of our *PVC Nightmare* consisted of a middle support pole as well as more support on the legs. It was only marginally more stable.

This was the first Fest I attended with a hard drive attached to my CoCo and the first, of many, at which it crashed.

Anyone actually *remember* the "floptical" drives? Let alone actually *have* one? (James does!)

"Grammar-Hammer" was misspelled in my original Fest reports. Life can be so ironic.

Mark Hawkins and Todd Earles *still* work for Microware, though the CoCo 1 motherboard is gone.

Tim Johns

MORE VIEWS ON THE 1993 MID AMERICA FEST

(From a guy who made the long trek with me.)

This report is an informal report of my experiences at the fest. This report is NOT designed to be a comprehensive report! I just wanted to let everyone know how much fun I personally had...

It all started at about 3:30 a.m. Friday morning when Al Huffman (Sub-Etha) called me...

“Hey Tim, you up yet?”

“Yeah, Yeah, I’m ready...”

Then I got dressed and packed up all of my stuff for the fest, including a loaf of bread and a jar each of peanut butter and jelly. (This is important later...)

Al’s Grandmother took us to Dallas, where we rented a car with a free three-day rental that I had gotten from U.S. Sprint for making 7 billion dollars worth of long-distance phone calls or something like that... That’s when Al noticed ‘IT’.

For those of you that made it to the fest, you may have already heard about ‘IT’. ‘IT’ is on top of a building in Dallas, and ‘IT’s just two big, giant, huge letters that spell ‘IT’. We still don’t know what ‘IT’ is, but ‘IT’ made for some pretty corny jokes at the fest... “Have you seen ‘IT’? We saw ‘IT’ on the way up here...”

This was my first fest, and Al and I had driven for 14 hrs straight through, so the set up was actually pretty fun. I finally got to meet some of the people I had talked to on the nets for so long: James Jones, Boisy Pitre, Eddie Kuns, Paul Jerkatis, Scott Griepentrog, and many others. The next day I met even more, including Scott McGee and Al Dages, and a few others I can’t remember right now, I’m sure. I also met Joel Hegberg, who introduced me to his MM/1. I’m gonna get one ASAP... I know Joel was probably wondering if I was going to let him take it home after the Fest. Etha-GUI and Write-Right looked darn good!

After viewing Write-Right, Eddie Kuns had the brilliant idea of naming a spell checker “Spell-Well” and suddenly the “Grammar-Hammer” and “Sprint-Print” jokes erupted. Look for the new line of Homophonic Software from Joel Mathew Hegberg Productions and Sub-Etha, coming soon... Just kidding... (Maybe?)

I found a lot of hard-to-get items at the fest, including the Tandy Development Pack and several multi-paks, and other “valuable” items. I kind of expected some \$40.00 price tags after all of the collectors items jokes on the list, but the prices were all really good. I picked up a Development Pack from Al Dages for \$25 and a 3.5 inch Drive from S-BUG for \$35. Not too bad at all, even considering that I never intended to spend any money there.

Things got a little strange Saturday night, when someone (who will remain anonymous) shined a laser

pointer onto the forehead of a passing pedestrian from the window of the hotel at 2:00 a.m. Needless to say, this individual was a great deal disturbed that someone was “scanning” him and came to the room to express his feelings. Everything was diplomatically handled and the individual went on his way. I knew I left those guys’ room too early...

There were also a couple of guys from Connecticut who were showing off the CoCo’s abilities to do Amateur radio stuff. Pretty cool stuff! They also had an interesting episode involving a dipole antenna, a parking lot, and one of the hotel’s housekeeping staff who didn’t feel that they should be stretching wires from the second story balcony to the trees, but that was also diplomatically resolved...

Just before leaving for home, Scott McGee and James Jones treated a few of us to a tour of Microware, which was less than a mile from the fest site. Pretty cool place! We saw all kinds of neat stuff, including a Japanese game machine made by Sharp that runs OS-9. We couldn’t read the Japanese text, but we figured it out anyway... The coolest thing was this shell that was more like a video game. The user pilots the ship through the disk structure, shooting at programs (and hitting them, if he/she is good enough...) to run them... It was quite humorous...

The drive home was boring, except when the previously mentioned jar of grape jelly nearly cost us our lives. Don’t eat and drive... Also, Kansas has this really annoying road that they call the turnpike, where they charge you to drive on it and you can go about 4,000 miles out of the way just to turn around to go to a Phillips 66 or something. Al and I almost ran out of gas looking for a Phillips 66 that was open after 11:00 p.m. because of that road... Moral — bring multiple gas cards so you can get gas anywhere, or don’t take the toll road.

The fest was, in all, a severe blast! I loved it! There were some incredibly cool rumors that I cannot repeat, but there is some serious coolness in the very near future! Keep your eyes open, and I will see you all in Chicago!

Timothy A. Johns

1993 2nd Annual “Last” CoCoFest Report

(May 1-2, Chicago, Illinois)

by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software

05/05-05/09/93

(Four days of typing!)

*NOTE: As usual, many typos, misspellings, mistakes, etc., are to be found in this document.
And, once again, please do not count off too much! <grin again>*

“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 @\$#% 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 (10:00 a.m. — 8:00 p.m.) 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 fifteen 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 10:30 p.m. journey” at about 1:30 a.m. No worries. Two gas cards and about \$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 he move? Pity the roads were such a mess. Hope that’s not a sign of what might happen to the rest of the highways <g>. 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 Vivarins 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 eight 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 sooo nice!

Of course, that was before the tollways. From my experiences with tollways in Iowa (see the *1993 Mid America Fest* report), 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 travellers 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 grille 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 sooo 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 7:00 p.m. or so. The hotel looked VERY nice. A

large indoor pool, whirlpool, weight room, ping pong/pool/foosball 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 sixteen-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 bathe 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 Dages, 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?)

THE SHOW AREA

The room was set up as follows...well, actually this is going to be tough. 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.

(See map on the following page.)

Ack! Sorry, that's the best I can do to make it fit and keep the proportions as least close to how they really were. Note that there are some differences between my map and the show guide since some booths ended up a little different than the guide. (XXXX's mark tables. Skirted, but no backdrops.)

Anyway, 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 that I've spent an hour typing in the map, let me get on with the good stuff! The vendors were as follows:

Al Dages — 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, walkthroughs, 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?) CoCoFests. Neat stuff, and fun folks!

AniMajik Productions — Not present, but a letter from Alan Sheltra explaining what has been happening with *The OS-9 Underground Magazine* was there. The letter basically cited 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

1993 Chicago:

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| Chicago                               XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
| OS-9 UG                               Al Dages X   Disks 'd Dat   X       X |
|                               Intn'l.           X                               X       X |
| Strong XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX OS-9 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX SBUG X |
| Ware X           X Consorti X                               X       X |
| X           X           X                               X       X |
| Disto X           XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX                               X       X |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX                               X       X |
|                               XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
|                               X BARSoft X   X           |
|                               X           X   X IMS       |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX                               X T&D   X   X       |
| Radical Adventure           X           X           X   X       |
| Elect. Survivors           X           X Burke   Dave & X       |
|                               X           X & Burke Nancy X   X       |
|                               Glenside X           X           Myers X   X Hawk- |
|                               CoCo Club X           X Dirt           X   X Soft |
| OS-9 UG           X           X Cheap           X   X       |
| of USA Microware!X           X           X           X   X       |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX                               X ColorSys FHL X   X Kala |
| X                               XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX X   Soft |
| Delmar X                               X           X       |
| X                               X           X       |
| X                               X           X       |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX                               XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX X Lee |
| Sundog AniMajik X           X Sub-   X           X   Veal |
|                               X           X Etha X   XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
|                               StG Net X           X           X CoNect |
|                               X           X           X Farna |
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X
X Cook County
X CoCo Club
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on schedule any time 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 OS-9 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/OS-9 converter was there (moves Thexder to OS-9 and runs just like the ROM-pak! 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 TWICE as fast as 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 14 MHz "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 — Hmm...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 OS-9? 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 spec 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 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 KalaSoft 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.)

Dirt Cheap Computer Stuff Company — (?) Hmm...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. (Hmm...was that a totally automated offline 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 OFFLINE then upload replies automatically later...gotta have it! Now if I can just talk him into doing a version for GENie...) That was neat.

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? Hmm.

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 OK 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 Swygart sold copies of his newly completed *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 its 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 its own monitor, mouse, and keyboard so you could run four dedicated graphics terminals off of one box. Hmmmm...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 OS-9 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?)

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 grey 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 Slot-Pak 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 Icon-BASIC 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 OS-9 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!)

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 OS-9 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 OS-9 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 Paschedag from Switzerland
- EUROS-9 with Peter Tutelears (he got the ball rolling here. Thanks, Peter!)

- OS-9 User Group of Japan with Chikara Yamaguchi. He had a neat dual-6309 based machine running OS-9. 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 OS-9 User Group members. OS-9000 allows a 386/486 to run OSK, basically. The 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 its 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 OS-9 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 OS-9 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 its 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 Playability for RS-DOS, OS-9, 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! <g> (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. . .)

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 CoCo software. 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 Wordell’s video tapes (Learning OS-9 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 in 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 four-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 the *1992 CoCoFest* report). 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 they 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 further. 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 wizzes have in store for the future.

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 Burgher** 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 OS-9 Consortium Discussion”

This really deserves its 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 8:00 p.m. or so things got started as a table with reps from all around the world sat to introduce themselves and discuss the future of OS-9.

This meeting was of staggering proportions and the amount accomplished was incredible. Basically, we got to learn about how OS-9 is used around the world. Australian users are CoCoist more or less, while Japan users seem to use odd OS-9/OSK machines we have never seen (like the system I saw at Microware last month — see the *1993 Mid America Fest* report). The Japan users group seems to be around 400 members. In Europe OS-9 and OSK are in use in homes and businesses, but in Switzerland the OS-9/6809 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 OS-9 Users Group of USA will do its 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 OS-9... 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 "ten 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 OS-9 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.]

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 the 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-9000”

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... Soooo much to talk about, and soooo 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 hacking 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 BARSoft'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 the BARSoft guy 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. Pity. 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...I hate that part.)

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 soooo busy that I'm sure I missed a lot of great things). Did I mention the "breakout" type game for OS-9 under works by an unnamed 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...!

THE END

As the meeting room was emptied, I made short work of "stealing" several other vendor signs that were left behind. (Heh heh...I have Frank Hogg's, Delmar's, IMS's, and The OS-9 Consortium's cardboard name signs...perhaps they will be collectors items someday!) Hands were shaken, and somehow I now knew that there would be more and that this was not "good-bye," but "until we meet again." For the first time I didn't feel the despair felt at the end of previous Fests when we were uncertain of future gatherings. This was a very nice feeling.

Sunday the show proceeded and closed as we all gathered and discussed future plans. The feeling here

was immense as we wished fellow vendors good luck on their return journeys. Keeping with “tradition,” it was time for Scott Griepentrog to take us (Carl Boll, Paul Jerkatis, and myself) out to dinner. I packed with the help of Dave Pellerito (thanks, man!). If you are wondering where Terry went, he elected to stay an extra day in Chicago. He would return with Lee Veal. (As of this writing, I’m not sure where he is. I heard from him a day later when he called me from a hotel in Dallas...!)

Anyway, we drove (via TOLLWAYS...blah) to SomeNameIforget Mongolian Barbecue. I had no idea how a “Mongolian” would barbecue, but I never turn down free dinner, especially when today’s lunch consisted of half a candy bar offered to me by Joel. (Thanks, Joel!) The place turned out to be a Chinese-type restaurant that I was quite unfamiliar with. Basically, you picked out bits of meat, vegetables, toppings, and oils and gave your bowl to these cooks who instantly fixed it over a large round frying surface heated by an open fire. VERY interesting completely customizing your meal, and it was great. We ate, talked, ate, and talked some more. At this meeting Carl gave us some insights on the potential of another Chicago Fest next year. With luck and support of vendors, it should be no problem. Let’s keep our fingers crossed.

We finished our meal and analyzed our fortune cookies. Scott really knows how to pick a restaurant! They even kept my tea glass full...! Dinner was great, and at about 9:30 p.m. I followed Scott through the tollways where he got me headed in the right direction for “home.” (Thanks, Scott...)

THE RETURN

The Vivarin was ready to help me begin my 1000+ mile journey back to the Lone Star state...this time, hoping NOT to encounter any evil diesels. The long uneventful journey was going smooth. I was trying to use my gas cards as much as possible and at about 4:00 a.m. I took an exit for a Conoco station and filled up at the most unusual place. The place was called Boomtown (in Missouri) and putting it simply it is a massive 24 hour fireworks/gift shop. In a daze I wandered around looking at caps, T-shirts, and the largest assortment of fireworks I have ever seen at “low wholesale prices.” Truly an odd thing to encounter in the state (of mind) I was in.

[Proofreader’s note: if that’s the place I think it is, it’s just past the Missouri-Iowa border. You see, most fireworks are illegal in Iowa, and...]

Anyway, I left (getting a soda for five cents thanks to a vending machine error) and drove and drove and drove, listening to many classic rock stations and stopping briefly in Arkansas for a 45 minute nap at 8:00 a.m., then again for a quick drive-through breakfast as McDonald’s. I could go on and talk about being “lost” in some unknown small town and then talk about my one-hour detour through Shreveport...but I’d hate to embarrass myself. To sum it up, 19 hours later I was home...more or less...and I spent the next several days recovering from all of this... It’s nice to be home.

DISCLAIMER

I apologize for not mentioning those I should. I apologize for getting products wrong when I did. I apologize for not having the accuracy I need. I apologize for any misspellings of names, products, etc. I wanted to get this report out as soon as possible (which I almost did) but things always seem to get left out. (Of course, I did change this part up a bit for variety from previous reports...)

THANKS

Thank you, Glenside, for putting this all together. The backbone of the CoCo Community is remaining strong thanks to your efforts. Carl, thank you so much for saving Sub-Etha and helping us get it all worked out. Thanks, Joel, for your financial support these last two Fests. Thanks Dave and Nancy Myers for showing up and letting us know we haven't lost two very important friends. Thanks Chris Burke for helping recover that lost directory. Thanks CCCC and the Chicago OS-9 groups as well as many others who made a showing there to offer support. Thanks, Scott, for the sandwich and dinner and for showing me how DFIX doesn't quite work on the CoCo <grin>—YET... Thanks Paul for the home-brew sample. Thanks, Eddie, for discussing "business" with me. Thanks, Tony P., for letting me use the mike to announce our Pong contest. Thanks to all the vendors who showed up and helped keep things going. Thanks VERY MUCH to those who travelled so far to spend money and let us know you care. Thanks to Frank Swygert for a great book and upcoming magazine and for coffee on Saturday. Thanks, Disto, for being there. Thanks for the candy bar, Joel. Thanks to *YOU* for taking the time to read all of these ramblings. Thanks to Alan DeKok and Brian White for showing me some truly impressive coding (ready for PONG?). Thanks to Al Dages for showing up and letting us have hope for a closer-to-home <ahem> CoCoFest in October. Thanks to John Strong for more information than I would have thought to ask for. Thanks to all my friends who helped us out but I still didn't mention them here (no name badges, remember?). Thanks to the only Monk I have ever seen at a CoCoFest <grin>. (I'd mention your name, but I don't know if I remember it at the moment...sigh...) Thanks to all the worldwide members of the OS-9 Consortium for going so far to accomplish so much. And thanks so much, Tandy, for giving us one of the greatest, funnest, computer systems ever. Long live the CoCo and OS-9.

Allen C. Huffman, Owner — Sub-Etha Software

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(409) XXX-9696 (Temp. day number, old # temporarily disconnected...)

(815) XXX-XXXX (OSK Midwest Division — Joel's number!)

SOAPBOX

Sure! 50K later you THOUGHT it was over, but it's not over yet. We have much work to do. The CoCo Community seems to be much stronger now than it has been in past years, but is it really? We MUST stand together and STAY IN TOUCH. Subscribe to one of the publications such as *UpTime* or *68 micros*. Join the OS-9 Users Group and clubs such as Glenside. Get online to Delphi, and if you cannot access Delphi, check out GENie as an alternative. As long as we have an easy way to stay in touch we can continue to survive. Let's hang in there and this upwards curve of support can continue as long as we want it to. Just like we said a few years ago, "here we are." And with support, it is "here" we can be next year...and the year after that...and the year after that.

YOU can make it happen. YOU have that power. Signup for support and we all benefit. WE are in control. Let's have more fun and I'll see you at the next CoCoFest!!! (AtlantaFest '93 is in planning stages scheduled for October this year in Georgia. Please try to attend.) Thanks.

GENIE PLUG

To find a local GENie access number you can call GENie Client Services at 1-800-638-XXXX. Or, to sign up have checking account or credit card information handy and dial 1-800-638-XXXX. Once CONNECTed, type “HHH”. (Be in HALF DUPLEX/Self Echo mode.) At the “U#=” prompt, type “XTX99188,TANDY” then follow the prompts from there.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Yes, there really is such a thing as *bad* Jolt Cola.

The “nice guy” who helped us out in downtown Chicago remains the only nice person from that area I know of other than the fine folks at the Fest who were locals :) The diesel incident *really* happened.

BARSoft’s owner, Dave Barnes, truly resembled of a football player. This would have bothered me if he hadn’t turned out to be so nice.

Chris Burke's *Rocket* CoCo add-on sadly was never produced, which, looking back, is quite a pity since it would have made an amazingly affordable OS-9/68K machine.

Tony DiStefano made his return to the CoCo community more out of commercial gain than anything else. Yes, in those days you *could* make a profit selling CoCo items. Some say that is still possible. Let’s hope this book proves that issue.

the world of 68 micros originally started out as an attempt to purchase *The Rainbow* from Falsoft. They wanted way too much for it or even just the mailing list so Frank decided to try things on his own. It is a pity that enough funds were not available to purchase the then-small (but still in the thousands) *Rainbow* mailing list. Think about how many CoCo folks just gave up once *Rainbow* ceased to exist.

Years later, I was actually interviewed by one of the booth workers from Microware when I applied for a job with them. At that time, though, I had no idea he had been at this CoCoFest else I would have mentioned it. Perhaps it is best that I didn’t...

Andre LaVelle actually did start out as a warehouse of sorts for Dave Myers CoCoPro!

One of the “not-so-good” questions asked at the International OS-9 Consortium Discussion was “how many OS-9 users are there that you *don't* know about?” which confused the panel to no end.

For the life of me, I cannot remember the BARSoft hotel room story. I really wish I could as I have a feeling it would be more interesting than this paragraph.

Terry didn't really make me say “shake a stick at” — he just found that saying funny and so I mentioned it.

I know Scott's *DFIX* doesn't work on the CoCo. I tried it. It trashed my hard drive.

1993 4th Annual Atlanta CoCoFest Report

(October 2-3, Atlanta, Georgia)
by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software
10/05/93

NOTE: See previous reports for the disclaimer that normally goes here. If you don't have a previous report, they are available for the '91 and '92 Atlanta Fests, the '92 and '93 Chicago Fests, and the '93 Middle America Fest. This makes my sixth Fest report and I still make no claims to have anything correctly spelled or accurate.

It seems like I could replicate this opening paragraph by simply cutting and pasting key sentences from my previous Fest reports. After all, the same general things remain true: support for our beloved computer system, the CoCo, continues years after it was discontinued from Radio Shack and even some time after its "last" publication, *The Rainbow*, ceased to exist. We are still seeing new products, we are still seeing new mini-publications, we are still seeing CoCoFests, and we (Sub-Etha) are still driving hundreds of miles to attend them...and the drives are not getting any shorter as the years go by.

But instead of stating the now hopefully obvious (which, it seems, I just did), I'll use a bit of this space to comment on this year overall. This year I went by car to Des Moines, Chicago and now Atlanta all for gatherings. I hate to repeat myself, but all of this "lack" of support sure is taking its toll on my gas card bills. It has been a good year...for credit.

THE DRIVE

Terry Todd (cofounding Sub-Etha partner) and I were going to try something different this time: we were going to try to arrive early. With this in mind, we planned to leave on Thursday afternoon instead of early Friday morning. I had to work that morning and wait for my paycheck to hit the bank. At noon I departed to load up the Honda for its 750+ mile journey to Atlanta, Georgia.

Terry would meet me at my apartment where his incredibly well-packed "chest" of computer gear and a small bag of clothes would be loaded into my car. This was the first time anything that ever went to a Fest with me was so well packed. My gear, on the other hand, included "the box" which made up Sub-Etha Software, a box of all my CoCo equipment, monitor, case of disks, the PVC nightmare, a suitcase, laptop computer, camcorder, ice chest, and, well, you get the idea. It could be done. No problem.

And it wasn't. Really. Sure, I couldn't see out the back window and sure, the car rode a bit lower to the ground, but hey, we had everything in it (except for our friend Tim Johns who was going to have to find his own way to Atlanta if he wanted to attend). So, at about 1:00 p.m. we headed out from Lufkin, Texas on our all-day journey...needing to turn around only once to go back to the bank to pick

up money for the trip.

There was nothing very eventful this time. After four such roadtrips along I-20, even all the “Bridge May Ice in Cold Weather” signs don’t seem to catch any attention. About the only thing that did catch attention along the way was when we passed up a truck pulling a trailer which apparently contained “The World’s Only Flying Car: It Drives, It Tows, It Flies”...and it was “Made in the U.S.A.” With a flying car, you’d think they’d fly rather than drive.

I suppose I should mention that, while I did see a number of diesels this time, none of them tried to make my sub-compact car more compact. Also, while there were no evil toll roads on I-20, traffic did come to a halt in Louisiana for awhile for what I thought was a make-shift toll collection, but it turned out to be a mere mail-in “Monroe Metropolitan Area Transportation Study Travel Survey” survey about the roads and travel and stuff like that.

Anyway, at about 3:00 a.m.-ish early Friday morning we arrived at the Holiday Inn Northlake where this year’s event would once again be held. Their sign said “WELCOME COCOFEST”.

THE ARRIVAL

It was early. Too early. The hotel’s computer was “down” doing audits so they had no record of our reservations which, we were told, wouldn’t appear until later in the day anyway. We just wanted a room. After some negotiations, we were able to get the clerk to tell us which rooms on the first floor we could get. We had the choice of three, and found one reasonable near the outside door and Fest area — a first for us. I guess it DOES make a difference when you gripe a bit. (We’ll try that next year for Chicago so we don’t end up lugging computer equipment three miles back and forth between show area and room...) Of course, if we hadn’t have griped, we’d have ended up paying \$57 for a room we didn’t have a key to and that we would only get for about six hours before checkout.

We loaded everything into the room and set up our systems to make the usual last minute changes to our new software that would debut the next day. After everything was unpacked and plugged up, we received a phone call saying that someone else had that room reserved and that we might have to leave it later on in the day. We didn’t take this well, especially after being told numerous times that there was “no way” to reserve a certain room in this hotel. It did all end up okay, and we later found out the person who had been scheduled to have our room was with the Fest and had requested two rooms side-by-side. Hopefully he’s not upset at us for ruining his plans.

At about 6:30 a.m. Terry and I decided to get some sleep and, a few hours after snoozing, we were woken up by a 9:25 a.m. phone call and then Tim Johns was pounding at our door. Tim had managed to rent a car and made the way to the hotel. It was great to see him, but he refused to let us get back to sleep. Our day began earlier than planned. (Thanks a lot, Tim...) At least breakfast at the IHOP was enjoyable...even though I had to pay for Tim.

THE PRE-SHOW

Our main goal was to get rested up and then be wide awake when people came dragging into the hotel tired (like we usually are each year) and laugh at them. And, sure enough, later on that evening people did begin to arrive. The first person we saw was Al Dages. Since no one else was around, we helped him unload all of his gear. Maybe there are some advantages of not to being early after all? With that

done, it was time to “hang out” in the lobby.

At about 4:30 p.m. I saw Frank Swygert, Boisy Pitre and James Jones mulling around. Scott Griepentrog and Eddie Kuns made it and had a nice story to tell about Eddie’s MM/1 “dying” during the trip — while Eddie was using a terminal to program on it in the dark by using an AC dimmer and an auto-light. I even noticed that Joel Hegberg (Sub-Etha OSK division) and Carl Boll (who is a great guy) from Chicago pull up, then drive off... It turned out they would be back after they picked up Tony DiStefano from the airport. Knowing that Tony would be at this show was a very positive sign of an interesting time — this would be his first Fest “down South.” Things were falling into place.

Since we were so early, the show area was not even open for vendor setup yet. All we could do was go have some fun and food...so we did. A group of us headed across the street to the traditional gyro sandwich shop for, you guessed it, gyros and sandwiches. Then it was back to the hotel, where people were continuing to arrive. Nick Johnson arrived which further made our day.

THE SHOW AREA

Later in the evening the show area was opened for vendor setup. The location was the same as all previous Atlanta Fests, and it was set up as follows:

(See map on the following page.)

This gave us 23 booths, a few less than last year but several vendors were there representing those who could not make it such as Strongware, Sundog, etc. The vendors (in no particular order) were:

ACS Club Sales — More hardware/software offerings from the host club of this event.

Al Dages — “Guaranteed” used CoCos, Cases, and drives galore. And peanuts. His goal was to “make everybody happy”...! I think he succeeds.

Adventure Survivors — All the way from Peachtree City, Georgia, this couple once again “survived” the long trip. Terry and I both renewed our subscriptions to their gaming newsletter. For six bucks a year, why not? (Hello there, L.E. Padgett! Did I spell it right? No wonder I can’t remember his name...I don’t know it! Just some initials I learned at this show...)

BlackHawk Enterprises — Bill Wittman (an IMS rep) was manning this booth representing IMS and showing off his new GCal graphical calendar for the MM/1 (which looked neat!). MM/1 accelerator boards were being hand delivered by Kevin Pease (designer) and deposits were being taken for the new memory boards.

Eugene Adams — More good deals on good hardware.

Color Systems — Zack Sessions showed off OS-9 games such as battleship and various card game paks for CoCo 3 and MM/1. WPSshell (word processor oriented shell) and some MM/1 future products. The “I <heart> My CoCo” bumper stickers were also available.

Neil Brookings — Neil and Dave Halko showed off a “hyper-text” type utility which was currently geared for searching various full-text bibles on disk. The program would find (on his MM/1) nearly 6000 occurrences of a word in a split second. When demonstrated

1993 Atlanta:

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+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Ken-Ton |           | Dirt Cheap   | R.C.   | Glenside CoCo |
|           |           | Computer Stuff | Smith  | Club           |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|           |           | =             |         |                 |
|           |           | =             |         |                 |
==          +-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|           | Neil    | Daltrug/|         | Delmar  |         | FARNA  |
==          |Brookings| DAW     |         |         |         | Systems|
|           | +-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
==          | Al      |         | Eugene | Disto  |         | David  |
|           | Dages  |         | Adams  |         |         | Wordell|
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Sub-Etha |         | ACS Club|         | Rick's  |         | SBUG   |
| Software |         | Sales  |         | Comp.   |         |         |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| OS9 Un-  |         | =         |         |         |         |         |
| derground|         | =         |         |         |         |         |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Roy      |         | Adventr | Color- | Nrthern | Black- | Hawk-  |
| Shoaf   |         | Surviv. | Systems| Xposure | hawk Ent| Soft  |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
=          |
|           |         | Note: Not to scale. Really.
=          |
|           | +-----+-----+
|           | Ticket |
|           | Sales  |
|           | +-----+-----+
|           |

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off of floppy the program was almost as fast! Any type of text could be made searchable through his program and a CoCo OS-9 version is coming up "real soon now." The system could be used to search encyclopedia text, or even made to use information on CD-ROMs. The system will evolve depending on user response. If you would like to see advanced text searching software, you might want to invest the \$20 for this program and show the author that we could use something like this!

DALTRUG & DAW Training — David Wordell and Lee Veal (from Texas) were there as well. David had his “Installing the 6309” and “Beginning OS-9” video tapes (a great way to learn) and Lee had the Planet Engine OS-9 planetarium and also some Planet Engine jewelry in the shape of stars, the moon, Earth, etc. A CoCo 3 CAD package is in the works.

Delmar — Ed demonstrated the new G-Windows based System V, which had very high-speed VGA graphics. This system runs a 68020 at 25 MHz or 33 MHz and soars. Also shown briefly was G-Windows fax software (under development) with a full screen viewer for incoming faxes. MM/1 version in the works, too, seeing that the G-Windows was a port done from that code. Unfortunately, those red foam rubber hammers made the show again causing many attendees to get “hammer happy.”

Dirt Cheap Computer Stuff Company — Mark Griffith and Bill Dickhaus made the scene again. Mark was taking subscriptions for his *Metamorphosis* magazine (yes, that’s the new name for *No Name*) as well as selling 14.4 Class 2 external fax modems for \$139 (!) and external CD-ROM drives for the MM/1 for just \$199. Really “dirt cheap” deals. Bill had his IX offline readers for CIS and Delphi, and there was a gadget designer (buttons, sliders, knobs, etc.) for the MM/1 (by Paul Fitch) that helped create control screens on the MM/1. Also on display was Brian White’s SpeedDisk optimizer for OSK which, on the MM/1, had a moving screen that looked just like Norton’s SD on the PCs.

Disto — Tony DiStefano made his first Fest “down South” with 2 meg upgrade boards, Super Controller IIs, and 4-n-1 boards. Tony seemed very happy to be with us and we were all happy to have someone who has made such an impact with our history. Most of his Disto line was available in working and non-working form and he has made new runs of several items.

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygert was another Georgian who showed up. He represented C. Dekker’s fine OS-9 products such as the easy-to-use CoCoTop, a graphical desktop file manager/utility, and also some Australian warez such as the Rascan digitizer (the “Digiscan,” a much smaller than the version previously sold by Game Point) and a new audio sampler with great graphics. Of course, subscriptions were taken for *268’m (the world of 68 micros)* and back issues (both of them) were available. The most interesting offering would have to be *Tandy’s Little Wonder*, a complete book on CoCo history including schematics, hacks, and lore. FARNA was also representing Spectro Systems’ ADOS. Plus more, like a new audio sampler.

Fat Cat Publishers — The International OS-9 Underground was represented by Scott Griepentrog (Steve Secord was unable to attend) selling back issues and taking subscriptions.

Glenside CoCo Club — A lot of free software was to be had with membership to this Chicago area club (which sponsors the CoCoFests there each year). A supply of shirts from the previous Chicago Fest were also available. Their point-of-sale system ran two terminals from the master CoCo. Glenside remains the national support group for CoCo users after going national three years back. Their CoCo 1-2-3 newsletter is a great source of information, and you get four great RS-DOS and OS-9 disks free when joining. Being a

member also gives you Sam's Club access.

HawkSoft — Chris Hawks and his wife, Nancy, made their 20th Fest appearance at this show. His latest creation was GNOP, a pong(tm)-type game for the MM/1. You'd have to see it to believe it — the ball stays perfectly still while a small screen with paddle bounces around. Very bizarre, and it won him the \$1 grand prize in the contest. Other MM/1 goodies of interest were his Sound editor and Digital Clock. Chris and Nancy spent much of the show time in *Star Trek:TNG* uniforms. They looked very good and it turns out Nancy made them.

Ken-Ton — Not listed in the Fest booklet, this was apparently a late entry. Joe Scinta showed up with the Ken-Ton SCSI hard drive interface and RGB-DOS. Folks, this is the BEST hard drive setup I have ever seen for the CoCo. You could link up to eight SCSI devices together using his \$89 interface. It allows RS-DOS and OS-9 to exist on the same drive with great compatibility, and even supports floptical drives! He had an all-in-one drive which was in a slick small case and looked fantastic. Unfortunately, the complete 80 meg setup was \$499 (on sale until December 31) and I didn't have any money.

During the show Joe showed off the tons of RS-DOS software he had running on his drive including applications, old games, you name it! All running with NO compatibility problems. Truly amazing. He also had a MIDI equipped guitar out for awhile and it turns out he's quite a good guitarist. (He knows many Beatles songs, which is a "good thing"!) Joe wants to point out that they are still in business, and will continue to be so as long as things sell. He is committed to attending the next Chicago show and will be bringing along some goodies we have never seen. Rumors of his voice-mail prototypes and other really high-end devices which never made it to production circulated during the show. Joe, we'll see you there! (Can you believe no one knew how to get in touch with this guy? I had no idea! By next Fest I plan to have a Ken-Ton SCSI drive setup...)

Northern eXposure — A collection of Canadian vendors were represented such as Gale Force Enterprises, Bob Van der Poel Software, Vulcan Alumni Software, Radical Electronics (circuit board CAD w/postscript output), Oblique Triad, Canaware, Hartsoft (?), Monarch Software, and Intelligent Algorithms. Of special interest was Alan DeKok's latest creation: Smash! This was a breakout-type game with 30+ levels (you can make your own), multiple balls, and HIGH SPEED action with sound. It ran smoothly under OS-9 and had to be one of the best OS-9 games I've ever seen. (Fully commented source code is available which includes his sprite library!) Colin McCay seemed to be "in charge" here <g>, and did a great job with the Canadian map on the back with markers representing where all the companies were from. He mentioned wanting to bring a world map down and let people put pins in where they were from. This seems like a good idea and I hope Colin brings a map with him to Chicago (if they make it, eh?).

OS-9 User's Group — Carl Boll took memberships and handed out MOTDs for the newly reformed group. Carl is now the president of the group. More on this later.

R.C. Smith — R.C. is always around with "gently used" goodies.

Rick's Computer Enterprises — Rick had his normal selection of disk magazines and goodies, as well as representing Sundog Systems' great games — selling for the

amazingly low price of \$18 (and even discounts for multiple purchases)!

Roy Shoaf — Roy had a table of various goodies he has collected including disk drives, cases, printers, etc., collected from various sources. I almost picked up a color plotter for \$5.

S-BUG — Andre LaVelle once again had gobs of goodies, including 85 meg SCSI Quantum drives, tons of cables, good ROM-paks, etc.

Sub-Etha Software — Ah, now I get biased. This year we actually had new CoCo products! Imagine that. First was a graphics adventure of last year's Atlanta Fest with 60+ rooms with digitized 16-level images. Next was Towel, an OS-9 disk utility which runs under the new EthaWin interface with pull-down menus and mouse support all on a high-speed text screen. MultiBoot (up to 16 bootfiles on one startup disk) was also available and Terry's latest creation, the OS-9 Terminal Emulator, made an appearance. Using the emulator, we had Terry's RS-DOS based CoCo hooked to mine using his 4-pin serial port and we were able to run applications such as EthaDemo, MiniBanners, etc., over the serial cable with overlay windows, screen codes, etc., all intact. Joel Hegberg had Write-Right and Etha-GUI for the MM/1 with a free "disktop" calculator (on disk, of course) to give away. We also represented JWT (UpTime back issues and subscriptions) and Strongware (GEMS, Soviet Bloc, MM/1 tools).

THE SEMINARS

Once again, I missed all the seminars. There just aren't enough hours in the day for all of this free information I guess.

Saturday:

11:00 a.m. — "Putting a Disk Magazine Together"

Rick Cooper

1:00 p.m. — "Tandy's Little Wonder"

Frank Swygert/FARNA Systems

2:00 p.m. — "C Programming"

Bob Van der Poel

3:00 p.m. — "OS-9, etc."

Alan DeKok

4:00 p.m. — "G-Windows, OSK"

Ed Gresick

6:00 p.m. — "OS-9 User's Group Meeting" — discussed later.

Sunday:

10:00 a.m. — "OS-9, etc."

Allen Huffman (I overslept and missed this one. . .)

11:00 a.m. — “to be announced”

Tony Podraza (Glenside CoCo Club president)

1:00 p.m. — “How to move OS-9 from hackers to users”

Mark Griffith

FOOD

On Sunday, ACS provided us with muffins and hot coffee! Ah, this is what makes these trips all worth it! Many had the breakfast bar in the hotel, and others went to local restaurants. There are many food places around the Fest area ranging from McDonald’s to Red Lobster.

THE EVENINGS

The key to being popular at a Fest is to keep your door open. Terry suggested this last year and it has been working for us. At one point on Friday we had about 20 people in our room including Boisy Pitre, James Jones, and Bob Van der Poel. Just about everyone stopped by as we gathered around computers, kicked back and discussed David Letterman, and even drank some of Paul Jerkatis’ home-brew. There was something for everyone, and the information and friendship shared after-hours was amazing.

TONY GOES TO THE MOUNTAIN

The plan this year was to make sure we got to see the Stone Mountain laser show. Period. Word was spread that we would be getting a group together to trek out and see it. Tony DiStefano found me in the hall and asked about the show. Since he had flown in and been picked up at the airport, we eagerly offered him a ride. So, this in mind, after 7:00 p.m. Saturday several vehicles headed out to the show, about 15 minutes away.

It was \$5 to get in and Tony paid our way. Gee, what a nice guy! We parked and found us a spot on the mountain and waited. Hundreds of people lines the massive hill facing a giant mountain side which had several figures on horseback carved into it. It was an awesome sight. Before the show would begin, I made a trek down the mountain to the control room to ask the guy some questions about their equipment. He didn’t have much time to talk but said I could invite the group down after the show.

So, we watched the 1994 laser show. It was amazing. Full color lasers and fireworks were used to enhance the 40 minute presentation. It was like watching a giant psychedelic cartoon with great music. All during the show, the coldness in the air made us comment about it while all Tony could say was that it was “beach weather.” After show show, everyone left going up the mountain and we made our way down through the crowd. The operator, Shane, let us in on the “secrets” of the show. For instance, it is run by dedicated Z-80 (chip in the TRS-80 Model I/III/4 computers) boards with each show taking up nearly 9 megs of ROM code. The entire show was made from only a few lasers (85 watts of power) and they had ways to shift the phase (or something) to change the color of the beams. Truly amazing. He showed us the power of the lasers by burning the end of a wooden stick in the 900 degree beam. Next year ACS may plan to have a bus to take people to the laser show, and perhaps we can even arrange some inside tours of the control room. (Go for it, Ken and Al!)

After this, we went back to the hotel, couldn't find anyone, and decided to go eat. At Pizza Hut, we sat around with Tony and had a wonderful time. Tony has a great sense of humor (for a Canadian) and only got slightly annoyed by Nick Johnson using the word "spatula" over and over again.

SUMMARY

Fest comments ranged from "good" to "amazing." This show had a good vendor turnout but attendance was small (under 100). The show was still exciting since there was so much new stuff to see and many people who had never been to an Atlanta show made it. The lack of attendance was probably more from the fact that show publicity started only two months before the show rather than six or more.

As it was our seventh show, we had finally gotten things down and got to spend more time socializing than hacking in our hotel rooms. There was so much going on after hours that it would take another report to cover that — and I encourage others to write their own reports since I'd love to know what was going on down the hall on Saturday night!

RUMORS

More OS-9 graphical adventures and EthaWin products from Sub-Etha Software (including MM/1 ports). There will be a Chicago Fest in May of '94, and someone even said there was going to be another Iowa Fest. Any confirmation on this? Of course, ACS will probably be inviting us all back again next year.

THE RETURN

We packed up and headed across the street to the Lucky Key Chinese restaurant. This was a tradition started a few years ago, and this year was the largest one yet. Over 20 people ended up there including: Allen Huffman (Lufkin, TX), Terry Todd (Hudson, TX), Dave Proctor (not Barnes, not Myers, the HAM guy), Dave Halko (pipe dreams), Neil Brookins (with Neil Brookins), Ken Scales (Coneta Ontario? who footed the hotel bill for Northern eXposure), Brian White (somewhere else in Canada but originally an American), Vaughn Cato (from 20 minutes away), Frank Swygert (also "local"), Scott Proctor (from Florida at his fourth AtlantaFest), Alan DeKok (looking forward to his 21 hour drive back to Canada), Tim Johns (Nacogdoches, TX), Colin McCay (tape shy), Eddie Kuns (dead MM/1 owner), Scott Griepentrog (Indiana, StG-Net — "founder" of this dinner event?), Paul Jerkatis (broke home-brew man from Le Grange Park, IL), Tony Podraza (pres of Glenside), Brian Schubring (sorry, bad at spelling, but he's from Chicago), Andre LaVelle (Los Angeles, CA — S-BUG), Chris and Nancy Hawks (from Starbase 102 representing the International Intergalactic Corporation of HawkSoft), Carl Sefcik (whose name I KNOW I spelled wrong — CCOG club member from Chicago), and maybe some others who didn't make it on my "notes." Now, to dinner...

It started out as one long table of people and two "dinner for eight" meals...it soon grew as several more tables of people came. We ended up with a meal costing well over \$200 to feed us all (and a \$42 tip!) which was charge to Dave Halko's credit card and Dave went home with the largest cash advance he has probably ever seen on his card. Thanks, Dave!

Many humorous things happened at this dinner. At one point, it was so noisy that Dave Proctor (sitting at one end) used his handi-talkie to contact Scott Proctor at the other end of the table! After

dinner, the “party” continued in the parking lot where we found out just how many digits of PI we all knew (?)...Vaughn Cato started it when he recited fifty digits into my tape recorder. Do we computer people know how to party or what?

DISCLAIMER

If I got anything wrong, or misspelled anything <g>, tough. Everyone should be used to it by now. Since I took notes, I can now misspell names much more accurately than I have in the past.

THANKS

Thanks, Al Dages and everyone at the Atlanta Computer Society (like Ken Fish) for inviting us out. Thanks to Paul Jerkatis for STILL bugging me about the hotel fee from last year’s Fest. Thanks, Tony D., for coming down to be with us...I hope your spatula made the flight okay. Thanks to Alan DeKok for the “trade” (hey, I’m still trying to find that “special thanks” screen in your game!). Thanks to Carl England for dropping by and hanging out, and to Vaughn Cato for acting as roving reporter with my tape deck. Thanks for the peanuts, Goober Dean, thanks for being there and I await the tape of the laser show you are making for Terry! Thanks to everyone there who gave us money to make this trip less of a burden. And a very special thanks to all those I forgot to thank for not bugging me about it.

Allen C. Huffman, Co-owner — Sub-Etha Software

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

COCO-SYSOP@genie.geis.com on the Internet

(815) XXX-XXXX (Joel’s voice mail number)

GENIE PLUG

To find a local GENie access number you can call GENie Client Services at 1-800-638-XXXX. Or, to signup have checking account or credit card information handy and dial 1-800-638-XXXX. Once CONNECTed, type “HHH”. (Be in HALF DUPLEX/Self Echo mode.) At the “U#=” prompt, type “XTX99188,TANDY” then follow the prompts from there.

GENie rates are currently \$8.95 a month which includes four hours of non-prime connect time. Additional hours are \$3 each.

FUTURE FESTS

If you have never attended a Fest, try to do so this next year. If cost is a problem, there are always people needing someone to split room costs and cheaper hotels are always nearby (though you miss the fun that happens after the show). If transportation is a factor, check around and see if you can find someone going. People come from all over America and often are eager to share gas bills with someone else.

At these shows you not only get great deals of software, but there is a never-ending supply of FREE information. Sure, much of it does happen during the show hours, but the really good times happen after hours. Whether you like hanging out in the bar and socializing, getting together in a hotel room to work on code with someone you just met, or going to see laser shows, there’s something for everyone. Plus, there are always things to do and see nearby. It’s much more than just a computer

show.

Now...a note to Fest planners. We are still missing some things from past Fests. It would be nice to include the address and phone number (if available) for attending companies in the Fest booklet. Not only does this give a way for attendees to contact the vendors after the show, it lets people who write Fest reports have an easier job. Also, the name of the main people at the booth would be nice so you can put a name with the face later on and, if it's not asking too much, how about when receiving Fest fees taking down a few lines from the vendor so we end up with something like:

Sub-Etha Software (Allen Huffman and Terry Todd)

P.O. Box XXXXXX

Lufkin, TX 75915

Their fourth Atlanta Fest, selling CoCo, OS-9 and MM/1 products and showing off their new Towel disk utility, Fest adventure, and OS-9 Terminal Emulator.

I'm sure some nice formatting could be done without taking up too much extra space. Any takers?

QUOTES

"It was a good show. We needed more people." — Ken Scales

"I thought the show was great." — Frank Swygert

"Could have been bigger, but it was all right." — Alan DeKok

"Could have been bigger, but it was good." — Chris Hawks

"I loved it. I really enjoyed being an official vendor." — Neil Brookings

"It was all worth it during the first hour when I saw a ... roommate from 21 years ago from college. Aside from that, there was a lot of interest going on. I think alot of positive stuff came out of it." — Tony Podraza

"It was great. Amazing. Absolutely Amazing." — Vaughn Cato

"The laser show was really cool!" — Terry Todd

THE END

Watch for the upcoming CoCoFest Chronicles, a new book scheduled to be published by Fat Cat Publications which will contain revised versions of all my Fest reports including pictures and more recollections of past Fests.

OR IS IT?

A graphical adventure/simulation based on the 1992 Atlanta CoCoFest including over 60 locations with digitized images is available from Sub-Etha Software. The game requires 490K of disk space for full installation (but you may run it on less if you leave out some pictures) and comes on a 360K floppy in "ar" compressed format. If interested, send \$9.95 + \$2.50 S&H to Sub-Etha Software at the address given earlier in this report.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 and upgraded it to 64K with lower case board and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research's K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha's own MiniBanners. He has attended the last seven CoCoFests and written reports on all but the initial Atlanta show.

Allen has contributed to UpTime, *OS-9 Underground*, the *world of '68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on GENie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

BEHIND THE SCENES

I cannot remember if we originally *planned* to take Tim Johns with us in the Civic or not. If so, I have no idea what we were on when we planned that.

We only ate at *IHOP* that morning because we were afraid of *Waffle House*, which was next door.

Joe Scinta (of Ken-Ton) is still in business. Visit his web site: www.ken-ton.com

Nick Johnson to this day maintains that *spatula* is one of the truly funny words. If you ever find his web site, you will find a shrine to the spatula still there.

Alan DeKok's *SMASH* game does have a secret title screen that has my name listed. And to this day I have *never* gotten to see it other than at this show when he showed it to me.

Notice my first intention to create *CoCoFest Chronicles* in the THE END section. Better late than never?

James Jones

1993 ATLANTA COCOFEST REPORT

[Proofreader's Note: this is the only Fest report of mine that I've been able to dig up on my MM/1. It describes the 1993 Atlanta CoCoFest, and in passing also describes some of the symptoms of sleep apnea that I turned out to have. If you find yourself nodding off during the day and waking frequently at night, I urge you to get tested.]

Boisy Pitre and I arrived in Atlanta on a gorgeous Friday afternoon. We found fellow CoCo users Carl Boll and Joel Hegberg more easily than I would have thought given the sheer size of Atlanta's airport, and were soon on our way to the Northlake Holiday Inn in a rented car. We explored the Northlake region for a few minutes :-), but were soon at the now-familiar hotel.

(Advice for Travelers: watch out for bottles in non-rigid luggage! By the time such a suitcase was completely aired out after having half a bottle of cologne emptied within, our room was undoubtedly the most rugged and manly smelling in the whole hotel.)

After meeting familiar faces in the lobby, a bunch of us headed out for a late lunch. We were introduced to the canonical nearby sandwich place and made up for the 1.5" diameter sandwiches on the plane.

Despite the great company and conversation underway in the Sub-Etha room (interspersed with dinner at a very pleasant restaurant—the waitress had a wonderful accent), I fizzled out early and went to sleep...and woke up ridiculously early. Downstairs vegetating in a chair, I had Standard Iowa Person Experience #1:

Me: *"I came down from Iowa."*

Other Guy: *"Oh, yeah, I was in Dayton once."*

After the canonical breakfast (second exposure to grits, the southern equivalent of Cream of Wheat) and some more waiting... Fest Time!

It was pretty amazing—more vendors than last year, and that was counting **Northern eXposure**, who represented something like half a dozen Canadian folks, as one vendor.

The Great White North was copiously represented. **Alan DeKok** was there showing off Smash!, a fine "Breakout"-style game for the CoCo 3 under OS-9. It was running on a CoCo using NitROS9, and I was promptly slaughtered when I gave it a try. **Bob van der Poel** was there, showing off not just VED, but KVED, a mouse-oriented wrapper around VED for K-Windows that impressed me sufficiently that I bought it for my MM/1. The Northern eXposure folks were selling a wide variety of software.

Speaking of mouse-oriented layers around things—OSTerm/68K 2.0 wasn't quite ready for prime time as the folks doing the revision (also Canadians! Are these guys motivated or what?) had hoped to have it for the Fest, but they were showing it off. Looks nice, especially with the wrapper, ost.

Andre LaVelle was there with his wide variety of useful stuff. What I should have bought, but was too slow on the uptake for, was one of the printer buffers he had for sale. The price of a Blue Streak, but with 128K of buffer, serial/parallel conversion, and many options.

Chris Hawks doffed his white coat and stethoscope and had on a ST:TNG style uniform, perhaps to accompany the sounds he was playing back with his sound program for the MM/1. He also was showing off his entry in the Great “Pong”-like Game Contest, GNOP. From one frame of reference, just an ordinary “Pong”-like game...beautifully executed.

FARNA Systems was there, showing off a nice user interface for the CoCo 3 under OS-9. I made sure I extended my subscription to *The World of 68 Micros*.

The Glenside CoCo Club was there in force, with a highly impressive booth. Someone there was alternating between using SuperComm to talk to a TNC and do packet radio and playing some of **Tom Kocourek**'s (If I didn't spell your name right, Tom, I apologize) fine arrangements on UltiMusE.

I'm not familiar enough with the **Peripheral Technology** computers to say whether **Ed Gresick** was showing System IVs or System Vs, but they looked very good. I understand that he was showing off a fax program.

Mark Griffith was there selling CD-ROM drives—despite the low price, it was a good thing for my bank balance, in enough trouble as it is, that I held off on buying one. Nearby, **Bill Dickhaus** was showing off InfoXpress 1.1, and next to him, SpeedDisk was defragmenting a disk.

Ack! I'm maybe a third of the way through the vendors. **ACS** and **Al Dages** were there, of course, and it wouldn't be a Fest without the **Adventure Survivors**.

Rick's Computer Enterprises had a huge setup and lots of software for sale. **DALTRUG** and **DAW Training** were there, showing off Planet Engine and **Dave Wordell**'s videos that take you step-by-step through basic OS-9 or installing a 6309. (Lee Veal didn't have CoCo #1 this time around, but somebody had a truly amazingly modified CoCo 1 on display. It belonged to an early CoCo software person, but I forget who.) **Scott Griepentrog** and folks from **AniMajik** were there, selling magazines, nice small keyboards, and other things.

Sub-Etha was there, though since I wasn't a (pseudo-)vendor this time, I didn't get to see the installation of the PVC construct. They were selling not only Sub-Etha software, but also **Strongware** as well; John Strong, alas, couldn't make it to Atlanta.

Neil Brookings was demoing his Bible concordance program, which is even more impressive now than it was in Chicago. CoCo users: a CoCo OS-9 version is coming.

BlackHawk Enterprises was selling MM/1 hardware; I snarfed two serial “paddleboards” (needed two because the 68340 accelerator has an extra serial port on it). They sold out of those and the 68340 accelerators, though I expect their plans are, like Frito-Lay with Doritos, to “make more.” Kevin Pease was there, doing the CPU transplants for those who had bought accelerators and had their MM/1s there, and Scott McGee's MM/1, with accelerator, was running out in the open. I brought it back with

me, and fortunately...

You know, perhaps I shouldn't have said anything about the way that last year, I managed to leave all the software I bought in a men's room at O'Hare International Airport on the way back. More than once in Atlanta I would buy software and the seller would say "Thank you, and don't leave this in the men's room at O'Hare." Hmmm....

More Canadians! **Tony DiStefano** was there selling hardware and books.

I'm embarrassed to say that I didn't take notes, and evidently the vendor was a late addition to the list, so he didn't make it into the program, but there was a fellow there showing off a really slick CoCo in a mini-tower and selling SCSI interfaces. **Ken-Ton**, I believe, but I hope you'll forgive my forgetfulness, and ditto for other vendors I've overlooked.

I was too busy spending money :-)) and talking to folks to attend many of the seminars, but here's the list:

Rick Cooper — Putting a Disk Magazine Together

Frank Swygert — Tandy's Little Wonder

Bob van der Poel — C programming

Alan DeKok — OS-9, etc.

Ed Gresick — G-Windows, OSK

Allen Huffman — OS-9, etc.

Tony Podraza — to be announced

Mark Griffith — How to Move OS-9 from Hackers to Users

I did attend the **OS-9 Users Group** meeting Saturday evening. It was very good; I think that many things were clarified, and the new Board of Directors and officers are good folks.

ENTER EDITORIAL MODE

No matter how good they are, if you want to see the Users Group thrive, it's up to you. These guys deserve your enthusiastic support.

EXIT EDITORIAL MODE

It's hard to compete with Alan Huffman's great description of the horde (I guess seventeen people constitute a horde) of us headed down the street and settled on a Chinese restaurant, so I'll just leave it at that. Good food, followed up with conversation in the bar back at the hotel.

Sunday was like Saturday, but shorter (and with the canonical deals toward the end of the Fest). After many good-byes, a bunch of us piled back in the rental car to head back to the airport. For assorted reasons, I wound up on a later flight back than Boisy, so we hung out at a restaurant in the airport for supper and conversation until the flight back.

GENERIC COMMENTS

Holy cow, I was amazed at the number of vendors there. Again, that's not even counting those who were there in spirit and had people selling their stuff on their behalf. (Aside to vendors and Fest people: this is a way you can have stuff on sale at all the Fests, and perhaps it will be less important that every vendor can't always make it to every Fest.)

What surprised me, though, was that while there were more vendors, there seemed to be fewer people. Those who were there, though, seemed to be serious about buying stuff. (I know I was.)

Despite that, at the end of Sunday, the announcement was—see you next year. The Fifth Atlanta CoCo Fest is on. Also, flyers were out announcing next year's Chicago Fest, in May 1994.

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed herein are those of the author, and not necessarily those of any organization. I am writing about my experiences, which reflect my interests and my inability to be in more than one place at a time.

James Jones

1994 3rd Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest

(May 21-22, Chicago, Illinois)
by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software
(With additions/corrections by Colin McKay)
(5/29/94-6/12/94, REVISED 6/30/94)

NOTE: Any discrepancies between what is contained in this report and what is real is merely coincidental. This includes, but is not limited to, names, locations, events, and inside jokes (like klystrons).

It seems like only three years ago Dave Myers of CoCoPro! stepped in to hold the First Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest. At least we knew we had one more show after Rainbow ceased sponsoring RAINBOWfests.

The “First Annual Last” comment was both a joke and something serious. While the Fest booklet stated that we might see a second such gathering, Dave Myers had concerns that, if all didn’t go well, this would be it. Many of us felt that way as well. Fortunately, as all great stories go, there is a happy ending.

While Dave Myers wasn’t able to continue sponsoring Fests under the CoCoPro! name, the Glenside Color Computer Club did and, thanks to the efforts of many dedicated people, the THIRD Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest was a great success. The best part is, a fourth one is already scheduled for April 29 and 30th, 1995.

THE DRIVE

Those of you who have followed my previous reports will know that it is tradition for Terry Todd (or a suitable substitute) and myself to head off in an overstuffed Honda Civic with nothing more than some pocket change and a gas card. After the drive last year (and the infamous diesel incident) I was pretty much certain that I didn’t really want to do that again.

Thanks to good friend Tim Johns (who attended Des Moines and Atlanta in ‘93), this year would be different. Since we knew at least three of us who wanted to go, we checked in to the possibility of renting a van. Word went out over the Internet and soon we found ourselves with a vanful of passengers. Unfortunately, two of the original passengers weren’t able to attend but others were recruited.

The crew would consist of myself, Terry Todd, Tim Johns and his girlfriend Katy, and Danny Johns (his little brother). We would load up and depart from Lufkin, Texas at about 9:00 a.m. on Thursday morning. We drove into Dallas to pick up Scott Unziker, a friend of Tim’s who didn’t actually have a CoCo but was interested in acquiring OS-9000 for his PC. Tim did an excellent job of getting lost in

Dallas, but that only set us back by an hour. Then the journey would take us a bit out of the way to Oklahoma City to pick up David Graham of BlackHawk Enterprises. We were honored to help get the MM/1s officially represented at the show.

The rest of the trip was really uneventful except when we heard some reports on the CB of a car on fire. Tim played hero and stopped to help by using the fire extinguisher he had packed. You just never know what you might need to bring to a CoCoFest, I suppose!

To me, the highlight of the trip was finding a very nice rest area in Funks Grove which features vending machines full of sunflower seeds, sodas, and even hot chocolate, coffee and chicken broth. Ah, the luxuries one finds on the road.

THE ARRIVAL

It was about 6:00 a.m. on Friday as we drove into Elgin. The Holiday Inn greeted us as it did the previous year, but the people inside were not as happy to see us.

Rooms would not be available until noon “at the earliest” so we found our way to the Cracker Barrel for breakfast. After about an hour we returned to the hotel to wander around. Terry and I took it upon ourselves to explore, while Tim came in handy helping a couple change a flat tire in the parking lot. (Once again, another brownie point for Tim.) Nothing was open yet. No rooms, no video games, and no bar. Terry and I decided to lounge around in the whirlpool for awhile while the others slept it off in the van. The whirlpool was VERY relaxing.

After a bit, I went to check on the room status and found Frank Swygert (FARNA Systems, 268’ m) attempting to check in. He was also not able to do so, but was able to enjoy the whirlpool with us. Frank had arrived the previous night and stayed in a nearby motel that wasn’t booked solid.

(More boring early morning details omitted...)

Eventually we were able to get into our rooms and settle down.

THE PRE-SHOW

Due to some seminars being held in the meeting area (involving many people carrying guns — hopefully of the law-enforcement type), we were unable to set up our booth until early Saturday morning so there wasn’t much “business” we had to take care of. Slowly familiar faces started pouring in. We began to keep a list of vendors and their room numbers (which we posted in our room window for others to find) and tried to act as a check in point. This seemed to be a splendid idea as it let us all find each other outside of show time (a “Fest after the Fest,” we called it).

That evening, a group of us loaded up for dinner at Ponderosa, a local steak place (and the chain a certain MM/1 hacker works for in the real world). Some of the characters who were present were Scott Griepentrog, Paul Jerkatis, Carl Boll, Joel Hegberg, David Graham, Frank Swygert, and many others. Dinner was “okay” (I really wish we woulda gone for Chicago Pizza like some others did) and the hour long drive “lost” trying to find the hotel afterwards was a great time for me to take a much needed nap...

Scott Griepentrog and Paul Jerkatis seemed to have brought the “biggest” computer with them as they

hauled a very large SUN workstation into their room. Hmph. Show off.

THE SHOW AREA

The large convention area was setup as follows (more or less):

Or at least something like that. There were 27 vendors scheduled to appear, but a few were not able to make it. The vendors, in no particular order (except alphabetical) were as follows:

		1994 Chicago:			
		Registration			
		:-----:	:-----:	:-----:	:-----:
	Northern	X	XGlenside	X	
	Xposure	X	X CoCo	X	XHawkSoft
	X	XXXXXXXXXX	X Club	X	Fat Cat
	DALTRUG	X	XXXXXXXXXX		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
	X				X Frank
	Adv.	X	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		X Hogg
	Survivor	X	XStrong	Sub- X	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
	X		X Ware	Etha X	X OS-9 Chicago
			X	X	X U.G. OS-9 Group
	X			JoTa X	X
	Farna	X	X	Prod.X	XBlackhawk
	X		X Digi-	X	X Budgetware
	CoNect	X	X Grade		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
	X		X	Color-X	X
			X Barsoft	Sys.X	X
	X		X	Delmar X	
	X		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		X JWT
	X				X Ent.
			XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	
	S-BUG		Crystal Neil	Al Dages	Klystronics
			Palace Brookins	RC Smith	

Al Dages & R.C. Smith — From Atlanta, these two seem to appear at all the Fests. A plethora of “previously owned” hardware and software was available. With each purchase you received a free ni-cad battery, too.

Adventure Survivors — The “friendliest faces at the Fest” were here once again with their adventure oriented newsletter. They also offer a line of classic CoCo adventure games.

BARSoft — The awesome Dave Barnes was offering Eddie Kuns’ KB-COM for OS-9 as

well as other goodies (with 20% off to Glenside members). At this booth I picked up two hardware terminals for an amazing price.

BlackHawk Enterprises, Inc. — David Graham made his first “CoCoFest” and was offering SCSI hard drives and other MM/1 add-ons (including an “anthology” disk of some of Joel Hegberg’s MM/1 goodies). There was also a system software upgrade disk for the MM/1 with the latest editions of all the modules, including WindIO 52, for \$15.

Also at this booth we got to take a look at a Point of Sale (POS) system running on an MM/1 complete with “laser gun” barcode scanner and a magnetic strip credit card reader. The software, which is actually in use at a hardware store in Missouri (see THE RETURN, below), offered an extensive amount of power for inventory, ordering, and sales. It even kept detailed information on product history and could help estimate the quantity of a particular item you might need to have in stock. Software designer Stanley Scott should get a large round of applause for his achievement in bringing such powerful software to the OS-9 platform.

Budgetware — A new group from Nebraska was offering some great prices on great software. Most notable was an update of the classic Star Trek computer game (the old text game from the days of “real” computers). This one was all flashy and glitzy with digitized sound effects! Available for the MM/1 and CoCo OS-9, it was a really slick game. A Shanghai-type Tiles game for the MM/1 was also available, and Brian Kitt was showing off his work on a 3-D texture mapped “maze” engine similar to Wolfenstein 3-D or Doom on the PCs. This was an amazing thing to see on the MM/1. While the frame rate of this initial version was slow, there is vast potential in the “roots” of the program itself. (I am told that the program was actually quite fast considering it was running on a 15 MHz machine, which is probably quite true when considering how slow similar programs run on “faster” IBMs.)

Chicago Area OS-9 Users Group — The local Chicago OS-9 group was out in full force making their presence known.

ColorSystems — Zack Sessions had his graphical front end to Gnu-Chess for the MM/1 and his X-10 (“plug n’ power”) controller software. The OS-9 game pack featuring Battleship and Mine Field caught my eye. The classic CoCo related bumper stickers were also available. Anyone out there have an “I <heart> My CoCo” sticker on their car?

CoNect — Rick Uland was there, but without his Xpander prototype (which seems to have a few more rough spots remaining). He did have his CoCo in a special-built case which he hopes to offer for sale soon. This case was rugged and designed specifically for the CoCo’s motherboard and accessories. When in production, it will be the easiest CoCo re-pack available. His well designed mini-232 paks were also available. Of interest was the news that a new FastIO 232 pack capable of 14.4 Kbaud would soon be available, and the CoCoIO project is back in the works after Rick found a replacement for the never produced chips he used in the prototype.

Special thanks should go to Rick for doing the “interrupt” modification on my multipak, as well as making me a new hard drive cable. Where would the world be without hackers?

Crystal Palace BBS — The new support team of ACBBS was there showing off their OS-9 BBS software which offers PC RIP graphics. (I didn't get a chance to see this, but it is a VERY interesting thing to have! Does anyone have a RIP-Terminal for OS-9 yet?)

DALTRUG — The Dallas Tandy Users Group was once again represented by Lee Veal and David Wordell. Planet Engine, the CoCo OS-9 planetarium package, was being offered along with galactic jewelry. David's instructional video tapes were not available this time around, though.

Delmar — Ed Gresick was unable to attend, but there were a few Delmar G-Windows computers around and literature was available. Tim Johns was acting as representative at this show.

Digigrade Productions — First time vendor Dave Pellerito whom we have seen at many of these shows was there with a new video newsletter full of reviews and other things. A great way to "see" software before buying it. Also available was a compilation video of last year's massive Chicago CoCoFest including much footage from the "legendary" worldwide meeting of OS-9 enthusiasts.

Dirt Cheap Computer Stuff Company — While listed in the Fest booklet, Mark Griffith was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. His great prices were missed.

Disto — Tony DiStefano was held up at customs and was not allowed to bring his hardware over the border this time. This kept him from attending. I am sure his 2-meg CoCo memory boards were missed as well. (This was the first time in ten years he was refused entrance. So much for NAFTA...)

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygart was on hand with his version of the PVC Nightmare backdrop, but with a classy *world of 68' micros* logo on it. The Patch OS-9 disk was there (I bought one) which features all the common OS-9 patches on one disk (easy to install, too, thanks to Rick Uland's install routine). C. Dekker was also hanging out showing off his graphics tools and point-n-click desktop file/program manager. Ken-Ton SCSI hard drive systems were also represented since, unfortunately, Joe Scinta was unable to attend.

Fat Cat Publications — Alan Sheltra had a booth, but wasn't able to attend. Rumor has it that two representatives were on hand taking pictures for inclusion in an upcoming issue of the *International OS-9 Underground* magazine.

Frank Hogg Laboratories — I would have loved to have seen a Kix/30 with the G-Windows graphics card, but Frank wasn't able to attend. Still, his support at this show is greatly appreciated.

Glenside Color Computer Club — The host club took memberships to their group (giving members discounts at most of these vendors) and sold commemorative mugs and buttons. This year's Fest shirt, designed by Nancy Myers, was very nice. Yellow, grey and blue shirts were available with a slick multi-color front print. A CoCo based OS-9 point of sale system kept things running smoothly...most of the time.

HawkSoft — The towering Chris Hawks (with wife, Nancy) showed off their warez along with KalaSoft's UltiMusE which had new LOWER prices. An interesting MM/1 clock program was available that had the interesting ability to "cuckoo" at the top of the

hour. Chris has too much time on his hands, I think. The Fest booklet also sounded like it was hinting at a CoCo 3 software package for the Tandy plug-n-power controllers, but I didn't get to see it if it existed.

JoTA Productions — Tim and Danny Johns made a splash showing off some upcoming G-Windows products, like JoTA Magnamaterm. Tim spent much time showing off the capabilities of the Delmar System V.

JWT Enterprises — Jordan Tsvetkoff (pronounced “zvet-koff”) was at his first post-RAINBOWfest. He had back issues of UpTime and the Nine-Times OS-9 disk newsletter. His great Optimize Utility Set was also available. Jordan, for those of you who don't remember, was the one who brought us the Pyramix CoCo 3 game (like Q-Bert). He was in 8th grade when he programmed it, and it was also one of the first 3rd party CoCo 3 games available.

Ken-Ton Electronics — See FARNA Systems.

Klystronics — Another new vendor. This group was offering a large supply of “gently used” klystrons, complete with manuals. The minimal water damage their inventory had didn't seem to effect operation, though the yellow discoloration made them no longer match the CoCo's case.

Neil G. Brookins & Co. — Neil and Dave Halko offered various goodies from a number of versions of a high-speed Bible concordance (for OS-9, OSK, etc.) to cheap full size industrial hard drives and even tape backup drives.

Northern eXposure — How's it goin", eh? Once again, Colin McKay rounded up a variety of Canadian software producers, and brought their warez to the Fest (along with a total of FIVE computers). Bill Nobel and Curtis Boyle were onhand to offer support and sales for NitrOS9 (which I picked up). Also, the Shanghai ROM-pak port to OS-9 was shown running quite well (including new tiles for the game). Older ports such as Thexder were also available, as was Alan DeKok's SMASH breakout game for OS-9. Bob van der Poel's line of software was also represented. All in all, some of the slickest CoCo OS-9 software was at this booth.

OS-9 Users Group, Inc. — \$25 signs you up for a year of great OS-9 support, including the MOTD newsletter (special Fest issue was available at the show which included an article on the history of Microware).

S-BUG of Los Angeles — Andre LaVelle had, once again, tons of CoCo items and other non-specific add-ons such as hard drives, disks, etc.

Strongware — John Strong and his crew were sporting new airbrushed “Team OS-9” shirts that looked fantastic. His new Copy Cat program (previously available for CoCo RS-DOS) was now running on the MM/1. It's much like the old Simon game. RS-DOS classics like Soviet Bloc and GEMS which play in stereo through an Orch-90 pak, were also available.

Sub-Etha Software — While the PVC Nightmare backdrop was accidentally left in Texas, we still attempted to have a normal show (even though I also forgot my bathrobe and my towel was being used to protect a hard drive). The new Towel! point-n-click disk

utility (which runs under the EthaWin interface) was available as well as MultiBoot, which allows you to have up to 16 different bootfiles on one disk. Joel Hegberg's MM/1 software such as Write-Right and Etha-GUI were also available.

It was a great setup and seemed just as full as last year (due to the organization of the tables). We also had the BEST CoCoFest vendor signs I have ever seen. Glenside had vinyl signs made up which were hung from the ceiling above each vendor. This made it easy to locate vendors across the room and will also cut down on future costs since they are re-usable, unlike the cardboard signs of past events. Whoever had this idea needs a great pat on the back. Ditto for whoever thought to put the sign out on the highway that pointed the way to the CoCoFest location.

THE SEMINARS

The amount of free information available at the Fests is always impressive, and this time was no exception. Topics were discussed as follows:

Saturday:

09:15 — "Future Support of the CoCo"

Basically, this was a pep-talk given by **myself** to a small group of early risers. The two main topics of discussion centered on getting authors to release old (or even new) source code to routines in efforts to help programmers create new items, and also the possibility of having a P.R. department for the CoCo clubs. This would consist of someone organizing free classified ads about meetings, as well as attempts to contact other smaller clubs and exchange information.

10:15 — "Networking, BBSing and telecommunications"

Scott Griepentrog and **Paul Jerkatis** gave a talk on telecom including LANs and WANs.

11:15 — "OSK V3 and Ultra C"

Boisy Pitre and **James Jones** discussed the new updates with Microware's OS-9/68K V3 and the new Ultra C compiler.

12:45 — "NitrOS9"

Bill Nobel and **Curtis Boyle** demonstrated how to install NitrOS9 along with a Q&A period in which they received a lot of valuable feedback from NitrOS9 users.

02:15 — "ACBBS"

Nelson Howard discusses and demonstrates the ACBBS software.

03:15 — "OS-9 Forum"

John Strong offers his insight into the OS-9 operating system in an open forum.

Sunday:

08:00 — "CoCo Community Sunday Service"

Brother Jeremy leads the now-traditional non-denominational prayer service.

10:15 — “GCCC General Meeting”

The Glenside CoCo Club has a meeting for all those who normally can't attend. Even non-members are invited to attend.

12:00 — “Introduction to Games Programming”

John Strong, as author of Soviet Bloc and GEMS for the CoCo, describes techniques to create games from the title screen on up.

01:00 — “NitrOS9”

Another Q&A session on NitrOS9.

02:00 — “Allen Huffman Uncensored”

This time slot was given up to allow the minimum bid auction on Sunday to be held at an earlier time.

THE EVENINGS

This year a bit more organization went into the evening gatherings which the Fests have become so famous for. The massive list of vendors and “important people” we compiled allowed us to phone up others and share our plans. The Friday night steak dinner was only topped by a rather unusual event which I still do not clearly remember.

At midnight, I went to sleep. I was very tired and wanted to get up early enough Saturday to set our booth up. For some reason, at 1:30 a.m. or so Terry insisted I wake up, taunting me for going to sleep so early. He's famous for doing things like this, and after the first few times he attempted to wake me up with things like “come here, let me show you something really cool,” I gave in. In a very aggravated and sleepy state I wandered over to the bathroom where he was only to find lights come on and a rather large number of people yelling at me, who then proceeded to pile out of the room. This was followed by Dave Halko having a brief discussion with me about hard drives.

It's really not all that clear, but I do remember the faces of Carl Boll, Scott Griepentrog, and, apparently, Dave being there. To the rest of you ... I will find out who all was there. Trust me. Paybacks always come.

Saturday was highlighted by a sudden urge to go to Planet Hollywood in downtown Chicago. Originally I just wanted to pick up a T-shirt at the Hard Rock Cafe for my collection, but a call to Jordan Tsvetkoff and his friends gave us a better objective. So, the crew of FARNA Systems, Sub-Etha (less Terry, who chose to go to a honky tonk and learn to two-step), JoTA and JWT all headed out in two vehicles for an evening of fine food, drinks, and movie paraphernalia. It was a great evening and a very interesting place. Unfortunately, it took about an hour to get there, and even longer to get a seat and eat. By the time we got back things had pretty much settled down.

Many of the less adventurous souls stayed at the hotel Saturday night to attend the general meeting of the OS-9 Users Group. Carl Boll (President) gave a great presentation on the state of the group and elections were held. The main thrust of the meeting was that the Executive needs feedback from its members.

One thing of interest we did see on Saturday night was Brother Jeremy with a rather large binder of

CoCo assembly source code. It turns out he acquired the source to Max-10. Interested parties were given copies of it for a potential (hopeful!) port to OS-9. I spoke with Alan DeKok, and if the code is straight forward, it seems like we may actually see the classic David Stampe word processor alive and well under OS-9. If this happens, it will end up being one of the most significant accomplishments for OS-9 Level 2. Good luck to all those involved, and I encourage anyone interested in an OS-9 version of Max-10 to make your desires known. (Of course, as much faith as I have in Alan's abilities, we all know such a task is impossible. Ah, nothing like a good challenge!)

I have no idea when things calmed down this night, but I do know many people didn't get much sleep (as seen by the tired looks and late awakenings the next morning). I have been told by a reliable source that some people were still wandering the halls of the hotel at 3:30 a.m.!

SUMMARY

A great show indeed. One of the "gripes" last year was that we didn't have name badges. (Pre-made buttons were used instead). Well, this year we did indeed have badges but, for some reason, there was not a place to write in a name/city on them. They simply had all the date and price information on them. I'm not quite sure what happened here, but at least it is a move in the right direction.

The Fest booklet was setup very well and every vendor description contained contact information (phone # and/or address) which will make it very easy to find people after the event. This is a great thing and must be recognized. Knowing that the Fest guide was *42* pages long just made my day. It was also great to see so many first time attendees such as JWT, JoTA, Budgetware, and Digigrade. Hopefully these vendors saw enough response to justify their presence at future shows.

Everything else went quite smoothly. The lack of a Friday evening setup didn't seem to be much of a problem, surprisingly, and the overall interest in products was very strong. Some great ideas were tossed around for making next year's show even better. Yes, that's right. A FOURTH "last" Fest was informally "voted" on during the final hour of the show. Glenside sure keeps busy!

RUMORS

Dave Halko did his best to get tape drive units in the hands of potential programmers in hopes that we might see tape backup for OS-9 (finally). The units he had plugged up like a normal floppy drive, so he feels certain such a task is achievable.

Brother Jeremy is leading the way to get Max-10 in the hands of coders in efforts to have it brought to life under OS-9 (and maybe OSK considering some MM/1 owners expressed interest in the code as well).

THE RETURN

If there is one thing that Scott Griepentrog knows how to do, it's build traditions. One such tradition is the "meal" held after the closing of Sunday's show. In Atlanta, it's a small quaint Chinese restaurant across from the Fest area... In Chicago, it's the Ghengis Khan Mongolian Barbecue which last year fed a table of us. This year it would beat all previous attendance records, just as the Lucky Key did in Atlanta in '93. Unfortunately, my vanload decided to head out on its own instead of following the other cars which got us lost for a half hour... Arriving late wasn't that bad, although we

did have to sit by ourselves in booths.

Twenty seven of us crowded in to experience the meal. Those present included Carl Boll, Sheryl Edwards, Neil Brookins, Dave Barnes, Dave Halko, Terry Todd, Joel Hegberg, Keith Kounsky, Dave Pellerito, Brother Jeremy, Rick Uland, Colin McKay, Curtis Boyle, Bill Nobel, Alan DeKok, Frank Swygert, Paul Jerkatis (happy now, Paul?), Scott Griepentrog, Brian Schubring, Ken Scales, Tim Johns and Katy, Scott Unziker, Danny Johns, David Graham, Allen Huffman and Brian Goers. The food was good and the \$447 total made us hope we'd gotten enough to eat (we had!). After this, the normal parking lot good-byes were said and we all headed our own ways with "see you in Atlanta" being heard.

Our crew headed South and stopped overnight to get rested. (A new concept to us — usually used to driving straight home after virtually no sleep for two days.) We made a quick detour in St. James, Missouri to find Scott's True Value & V&S Variety Store. We piled out of the van and went inside to find the OS-9 POS we had seen demonstrated at the show. We found terminals up front with cash drawers, and one down the aisle where it was being used for inventory. We were given a complete demonstration of it's many features. The staff there backs up the claim that it is really easy to use and learn, which is always a good thing. My only gripe was that the output on the terminals was in all uppercase with virtually no text formatting used. Well, it may not look pretty but it sure does work great!

From there we went on our way, dropping David Graham off in Oklahoma, Scott in Dallas, and the rest of us in Nacogdoches and Lufkin. I suppose it was nearly 5:00 a.m. when I got everything unpacked and was able to get some sleep.

It felt good to be home...

DISCLAIMER

I didn't do it.

THANKS

My, the list of people to thank has really gotten out of hand so let's just do it this way: Thanks, Glenside, for making this possible! Thanks, vendors, for showing up. Thanks, loyal CoCo/OS-9 hobbyists for supporting us and making it all worthwhile.

Personal thanks goes to Rick Uland (for hardware hacking), Jordan Tsvetkoff (for the excellent Planet Hollywood idea), Carl Boll (for just about everything), Frank Swygert (for providing in-town transportation and navigation), John & Charles Strong (for all the abuse), Paul for nitpicking about what I thought would be a joke <grin>, and to Tim Johns for taking care of getting us all there (and not bringing a map). Special editorial thanks goes to Colin McKay for helping me realize that I've been mis-typing "where" and "were" for who knows how long and for providing additional information and corrections to this report.

By the way ... if you didn't see your name up in ASCII and feel like it should have been, you are probably right. See DISCLAIMER, above.

CoCoFest Chronicles

Allen C. Huffman, Co-owner — Sub-Etha Software

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

coco-sysop@genie.geis.com on the Internet

(815) XXX-XXXX (Joel's voice number)

GENIE PLUG

NOTE: I am *NOT* a representative of GENie. This information is provided for informational purposes only...

Call 1-800-638-XXXX (voice) for information on signup numbers, or call 1-800-638-XXXX (modem) and type "HHH" when you CONNECT. Be sure you are in H DUPLEX/SELF-ECHO mode on your terminal program. At the "U#=" prompt, type "XTX99188,TANDY" and follow the instructions for signing up with a checking account or credit card.

Current GENie rates are \$8.95 a month which includes four hours of online time (6:00 p.m. — 8:00 a.m. local time). Additional hours are \$3 each. Special surcharges apply when using the 1-800 access number, 9600 baud, or some remote-access phone lines. Call the customer service number for more details.

FUTURE FESTS

Two more Fests are scheduled for this year, and the 1995 Chicago show has also been announced:

June, 1994 — Pacific Northwest CoCoFest

October 1-2, 1994 — Fifth Annual Atlanta CoCoFest

April 29-30, 1995 — Fourth Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest

Tim's idea of renting the van worked out great for us this year — allowing several people who had never been to such a gathering to actually attend. I encourage others to work on carpools like this for future shows. The more, the merrier, right?

Even though we seem to be in control of our community's future, we still need all the support we can get. Please make efforts to attend upcoming Fests. Every little bit helps.

And now ... some things we'd like to see in Atlanta (and Chicago, next year). Name badges that contain the following:

NAME: Allen C. Huffman

COMPANY: Sub-Etha Software

FROM: Lufkin, Texas

I.D.: coco-sysop@genie.geis.com (or a HAM callsign)

What better way to place faces with "handles?" Having separate colored badges for vendors and attendees is also a good idea. David Graham and I discussed some other things we'd like to see, such as a "colored dot" system for identifying interests. For instance, when you buy your ticket, you get a name badge and on that you put a red sticker dot instance into CoCo OS-9, blue for RS-DOS, green

for MM/1, etc. These could be overlapped down the side and it would let everyone find others with similar backgrounds. (This way, if a vendor has a new RS-DOS program and sees someone with an RS-DOS dot, they could make sure to mention it...) Also, it might be nice to have a way to distinguish members of various clubs so we know who to offer discounts to. Any thoughts?

Also, the Fest booklet should continue to have address/phone # for the vendors, and should also list the primary people working each booth. This information, along with a brief description about the vendor, could be collected with the contract vendors send in when registering for the show. Once again, any thoughts?

At any rate, I know the shows will continue to be great experiences for all of us who make the effort to attend.

THE END

Thank you for your time. I hope to see you in Atlanta!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research's K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha's own MiniBanners and Towel disk utility. He has attended the last eight CoCoFests and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show.

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of '68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on GENie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Tim Johns would later marry his girlfriend, Katy, who attended this show with us.

The "certain MM/1 hacker" who worked for Ponderosa was Joel Hegberg, who now works for Microware as a Field Application Engineer, which is basically the same job only different.

I believe it was this Fest when one of David Graham's SCSI hard drives was *stolen* from his booth! Glenside, acting promptly, discovered this and caught the *alleged* thieves before they made their way from the hotel. At the time, it was considered a good idea to not publicize this.

MORE BEHIND THE SCENES

The Story About Klystronics

One of the more interesting tales I get to tale is that of the “mysterious” vendor, Klystronics. They were listed in the Fest booklet, and even had a table which was empty except for some flyers and an empty business card holder. To the casual observer (i.e. someone who fell for it) it would appear they just didn't make it to the show. To the less casual observer, one might have found some of the information on the flyer a bit curious.

Klystronics was a practical joke played for the benefit of one individual, Nick Johnson. At the time, Nick was hanging out on the GENie online service (thanks to its then-outstanding Star*Services which offered unlimited non-prime access for about five dollars per month). Nick had a macro he would use far too often while in chat sessions which said “PLEASE DO NOT URINATE ON THE KLYSTRON.” Terry Todd and myself found this quite annoying.

At some point, our friend Bob Rutherford got together with us and we came up with the idea of Klystronics. Once the name was created, the joke fell into place. We acquired a booth, printed flyers (using a font I had *never* used for any Sub-Etha literature), and purchased a business card holder.

At the show, Nick wandered over and said “hey, did you guys know there is a company here called Klystronics?” or something to that effect. We held in laughter. He most likely was suspicious but if so he played along pretty well. The flyer had some meaningless babble about CoCo compatible Klystrons, but embedded in the words were numbers enclosed in brackets. If you put the letter next to the numbers together in numerical order you would decode the hidden message which basically clued one in to the fact that this was just a joke. At first Nick suspected something far more clever for the origin of the numbers, but towards the end of the show I do believe he figured it out. I am not quite sure if we ever told him officially that it really was us.

A few others were in on this joke, most notable Colin McKay. After the Fest, Colin played up the existence of Klystronics on the internet CoCo mailing list after someone wondered just *who* they were. Even Mike Knudsen chimed in observing that certainly they had nothing to do with the “klystron” tubes he was familiar with! He certainly was right. I have in my possession (thanks to Mike's archives) a copy of the Klystronics message thread and I must say — it really makes me proud seeing how well this went over.

The following Fest, we planned to do more including having Bob Rutherford build a rather amazing device to attach to a CoCo. We never quire followed through, but Klystronics lived on in my Fest report — even though there was no booth nor mention of them in the official Fest booklet.

And now you know ... the rest of the story. Maybe the comment about “water damage” will make a bit more sense.

Or, more likely, it will not.

James Jones

1994 CHICAGOFEST REPORT

(Originally posted to the Delphi online service.)

I figured I should post a message thanking all the folks who made the Third Annual Last CoCoFest possible, and hitting the highlights (as I saw them, and purely IMHO, of course—your mileage may vary, and I'm liable to forget about stuff and people, for which omission I ask your indulgence).

No way can I match the Sub-Etha folks at turning the story of the trip into a true saga, so I'll just say that the trip to Elgin was so darned nice that I figured that back in Des Moines my place was burning down, just to even things out. :-) (Since I'm typing this, of course, my domicile is intact.) The weather was about as perfect as it could be, my wraparound yellow sunglasses (from Wal-Mart—nothing but the best for *my* dog) made the grass look even greener than it really was, and traffic was no problem.

Many familiar faces were there (sad to say, some weren't—I'd have liked to see Frank Hogg, Ed Gresick, Tony DiStefano, and Mark Griffith again), and new ones: I finally got to meet **David Graham** and **Chris Dekker**.

I wasn't able to attend all the seminars, but **Allen Huffman** (gee, no bathrobe or modern PVC sculpture!) gave an inspirational talk about the CoCo, **Boisy Pitre** gave a good overview of OS-9/68000 3.0, and some guy talked about the Ultra C compiler.

Speaking of inspirational, **Carl Boll** was just that at the OS-9 UG meeting. His main point merits repetition here: let the Board of Directors know what you think.

I can't talk inspiration without mentioning **Brother Jeremy**. Over and above the religious aspect (his non-denominational prayer service is becoming a tradition), he carried with him something that surprised me: source code for Max-10. Brother Jeremy contacted Max-10's author, and has permission from him to do a port to OS-9. By evening's end, some very good people (*sigh* I don't count myself among good 6809 people in that regard) were discussing how to go about it.

ENTER EDITORIAL MODE

(do note the disclaimer at the bottom of the message)

IMHO Brother Jeremy's getting that permission is a considerable achievement for the CoCo community. If, as I hope, Max-10 becomes a successful example of software being updated and improved by the community itself, perhaps authors of other CoCo packages will be willing to enter similar arrangements. If the community had taken the position that Max-10, as software no longer being sold, was fair game for theft as so-called "orphanware," I seriously doubt that Max-10's author would have been anywhere near as amenable.

EXIT EDITORIAL MODE

I spent too much money, of course/as usual. Many programs are much improved, not that they were

any slouches before: **Chris Hawk**'s Sound, **Mike Knudsen**'s UltiMusE, **Neil Brookins**'s Bible concordance and search program, and OSTerm/68K are the ones that come to mind and that I am familiar with; I'm sure there were others I overlooked. (A particularly striking demonstration was a bouncing ball demo running on a stock CoCo and on a CoCo with 6309 under NitrOS9. NitrOS9 makes a HUGE difference.)

Then there's the new stuff: I'm going to spend way too much time playing **Zack Sessions**'s K-Windows Chess, darn it—I already spend too much time playing Tiles. Ditto for **Budgetware** Trek 1.5, which updates the old style Trek games. I'm not in the market for a point of sale system, but **Wittman Computer Products** had a fine looking one on display. **Chris Dekker** was at a table with **FARNA Systems**, showing off, among other things, some neat graphics and a port of **Terry Simons**'s "HomePac" package to OS-9/6809 (Chris added some features while he was at it, and it certainly looked fast).

This is purely from the top of my head—as the famous guy whose name I don't remember said, I lack the time to make it short, and moreover I'm leaving out a lot, like the expedition in search of the nation's best pizza :-). If you were at the Fest, it was good to see you. If you weren't, try to attend next year, and try to make it to Atlanta—it's on for October 1-2.

DISCLAIMER

Opinions herein are solely those of their respective authors.

James Jones

ALLEN HUFFMAN'S 1994 CHICAGO SEMINAR OUTLINE

Provided strictly for the amusement of the readers I would like to include the original seminar outline which became my early morning lecture at the 1994 Chicago Fest. Since I can't include the *original* I will instead include a remarkable reproduction of it. This is included not because it is a particularly impressive outline (which it isn't) but as some sort of proof that not *all* of the seminars I have given over the year were just made up off the top of my head. (Oddly enough, this turns out to be the *only* proof I have to offer that I ever planned for any of my seminars...)

Supporting the CoCo: The Next Step

A seminar by Allen C. Huffman of Sub-Etha Software to be presented at the 1994 Atlanta CoCoFest.

I. Background

1. The end of Rainbow and the RAINBOWfests
2. Radio Shack discontinues the CoCo
3. Vendors leave the market

II. What We Have Done

1. CoCoPro! takes over
 - a. Product line (from "used" items on BBSs, to big time vendor)
 - b. 1990 Atlanta CoCoFest
 - c. First Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest
2. Clubs take control (hosting Fests)
 - a. Glenside of Chicago
 - b. Atlanta Computer Society
 - c. Mid Iowa & County CoCo Club
3. Publications start again
 - a. UpTime (venture between Dave Myers and Jordan Tsvetkoff)
 - b. The International OS-9 Underground
 - c. the world of 68' micros (attempt to buy Rainbow)
 - d. No Name/Metamorphosis, MOTD, Newsletters, etc.
4. New vendors - hardware and software

CoCoFest Chronicles

- a. SIMM upgrades, 6309s, return of SCSI (Ken-Ton), high-speed RS-232 paks, custom cases

III. Where Do We Go Next?

1. S.O.S. - Same old stuff
 - a. Join clubs
 - b. Subscribe to magazines
 - c. Get online (Fido, Delphi, Internet, GENie)
2. Interact!!!
 - a. CoCo Registry - DO IT!
 - b. Write magazines, vendors, etc., with comments/desires.
 - c. CONTRIBUTE
1. articles - any topic ("what do you use your CoCo for?")
2. program submissions
3. upload! share! enjoy!
 - d. "if you don't see it, ask"

IV. Summary

1. Where we have been:

the "glory days". we can never return, and there will never be anything like them again
2. Where we are now?

stability, group of die-hard supporters
3. Where can we go?
 - a. S.O.S. as long as we want
 - b. New related machines (OSK, MM/1, G-Windows)
 - c. Bold NEW horizons - Power PC / Motorola

1994 5th Annual Atlanta CoCoFest

(October 1-2, Atlanta, Georgia)
by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software
(10/4/94)

NOTE: There are no misspelled names or words. Only mis-typed ones. Any factual errors, however, are completely my fault. Read at your own risk.

In 1990 the question was asked “What if we held a Fest down South?” This was answered by Dave Myers of CoCoPro! and the Atlanta Computer Society. Thus, the first annual Atlanta CoCoFest was held. Four years later, ACS brings us more fun, excitement, and a reason for me to write another report.

TIMELINE

The Haiti “Invasion” and the O.J. Simpson trial are current news events. Disney’s America in Virginia has been cancelled. Jurassic Park is due on video two days after this Fest. (This section included for future reference.)

THE DRIVE

The plan: Recreate the 1994 Chicago CoCoFest trip with a rental van full of CoCoists. The reality? Terry Todd wanted to drive his newly acquired used car. The one or two people from Dallas turned into four and before we knew it, the plan was not to be. The van was downsized to a four door mid-size vehicle, David Graham (BlackHawk) would ride along with the Dallas group in their own van, and we’d have to change plans yet again.

At any rate, my father called two days before we were scheduled to drive to the airport in Houston (2 hours south) to pick up the rental. Discovering our plans, he suggested we take his full-size van which turned out to be a pretty good idea. Not only did it offer us plenty of room, it also sported CB, scanners, a public address system, and enough power jacks and antennas to keep even the most die-hard gadget freak happy. I drove down to pick the van up Thursday night and the trip began the following morning. At about 9:00 a.m. Terry arrived. He was sent down the road a bit to pick up one of the few other local CoCo people — Alex Forrest. As soon as I got things loaded, they returned and we set off to pick up Bob Rutherford who was the leader of the Lufkin Area CoCo Club from about ‘87 or so. He had expressed an interest in getting back into OS-9 and we were happy to drag him along.

Next stop was Nacogdoches, about 25 miles North, where we picked up Tim Johns (JoTA) and his Delmar system. Tim and Terry rode in the Escort while the rest of us got to ride in the fun-mobile. By 10:30 a.m. we were on our way.

The trip itself was rather uneventful, possibly due to us all having so much to talk about. We took a detour (following Terry and Tim) to find a seemingly non-existent Taco Bell in Louisiana. We made our now-traditional stop at exit 42 in Mississippi to find the Sak N Save and load up on food. We, of course, visited the first rest area in Alabama (rivalled only by the Funk's Grove one we stopped at during the Chicago trip) to visit the "sewage lagoon" and eat. I'd write more but I figure just these highlights should suffice.

THE ARRIVAL

Around 11:00 p.m. we pulled into Atlanta after a 12 hour, 742 mile journey. We checked out the hotel and I think we may have even visited the bar. Events later in the weekend make my memory unclear on this matter.

Our plan was originally to rent a cheap motel for Thursday night but instead we decided to sleep in our vehicles in the parking lot and wait for check-in the next morning. When we awoke around eight-ish, Bob and I had an idea. The van was equipped with a rather loud public address system, so I pulled the van around to face the side of the Escort which was home of sleeping Terry and Tim. With a tap of the alarm siren we announced "This is your eight o'clock wake up call." We were quite amused. They were not. At this point, I knew it would be a good show.

We had breakfast at the IHOP around the corner (same place as last year, and we even got the same waitress) then wandered around until they would let us into our rooms. A shower or five later and we were alive again.

THE PRE-SHOW

We had plans to do quite a bit during our full Friday in Atlanta, but that was not to be. People started showing up quite early. We saw Andre LaVelle, Al Dages, Frank Swygert, and a plethora of other regulars as they slowly checked in.

Soon our group was ready for the "traditional" gyro sandwiches across the street, but Boisy Pitre decided that it wasn't a tradition since his crew had only done it once — last year. Instead, we agreed to walk the half mile to the mall nearby where a food court could serve all our needs. Frank and I had hot dogs. At this point, I knew it would be a good show.

Vendors were allowed to setup that evening, something we hadn't been able to do at Fests in years past for some reason. This was a good deal. Also, the tables were skirted rather than having generic white cloths over them. Another nice touch, thanks to ACS. About the only thing we had to do was assemble the PVC nightmare and display our new eight-foot banner with our logo on it. The rest of the evening was spent roaming around, chatting with old friends, and seeing how many free drinks we could get in the bar. (Special thanks to Al Dages for buying me my first of many free drinks. Net cash spent on drinks for myself this trip: \$0.) At this point, I knew it would be a good show.

THE SHOW AREA

The regular show area was setup as follows:

(See map on the following page.)

1994 Atlanta:

```

+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Color   |           | FARNA   | CoNect  |           | Glenside CoCo   |
| Systems |           | Systems |         |           | Club            |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|         |           |         |         |         |                 |
|         |           |         |         |         |                 |
==          +-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|         | JoTA    | R.C.    |         | Wittman | Daltrug        |
==          | Prod.   | Smith   |         | Products|                |
|         |         |         |         |         |                |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
==          | Klystr- | Al      |         | Eugene  | MI&CC         | OS-9          |
|         | onics   | Dages   |         | Adams   | Club          | User's        |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Sub-Etha | Strong- | ACS Club|         | Rick's  | SBUG           |
| Software | Ware    | Sales   |         | Comp.   |                |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Black    |         |         |         |         |                 |
| -Hawk    |         |         |         |         |                 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Roy      |         | Adventr | Digital | Delmar  | Northern| Hawk-        |
| Shoaf    |         | Surviv. | Frontier| Company | Xposure | Soft         |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
=          |         |         |         |         |                 |
|         |         |         |         |         | Note: Not to scale this year either.
=          |         |         |         |         |
|         |         |         |         |         |
|         | Ticket |         |         |         |
|         | Sales  |         |         |         |
+-----+-----+
|         |         |         |         |         |

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This made 27 vendors scheduled to attend with only a few not showing up. Yes, folks, that means it's the largest show in years. '93 had 23 booths, and about that many in '92. If you do your research you'll find that we only had nine in 1991. So, all in all, a successful turnout vendor-wise!

And now ... the vendors:

ACS Club Sales — T-shirts, etc., could be purchased from this booth. This year the shirt design was a re-run based on the popular “Goober” character seen on the 1990 and 1992 shirts. Unfortunately, I already have a shirt with that design on it so I didn’t pick one up. (I missed getting the most-cool “don’t give up the ghost” one last year but that was entirely my fault!)

Adventure Survivors — Nan and L.E. Padgett took subscriptions to their newsletter and displayed (and played!) various CoCo adventure games, including some formerly selling for much more than their \$10 asking prices! I renewed at the special \$5 Fest price.

AI Dages — There weren’t enough sticks to be shaken here either. [*Ed: See R.C. Smith, below.*]

BlackHawk Enterprises — David Graham represented the MM/1 and discussed the future of OSK. During Saturday an overnight package arrived apparently containing a new 8-meg backplane board for the MM/1 systems. David spoke of the upcoming MM/2 system which will not necessarily be compatible with the MM/1 (unless K-Windows is written for it) but it will offer a low-cost way to get into OSK.

ColorSystems — A last minute entry, Zack Sessions arrived with his normal line of fine software including the OS-9 game packs. He also had a full page scanner available for turning pictures into computer images. I didn’t know this until later, unfortunately, or I could have had Zack help me scan the pictures for the Chicago game and we could have offered it at this show. Zack deserves a round of applause for showing up to yet another Fest. We should all buy something from him.

CoNect — Rick Uland was going to ride down with Paul Jerkatis, but he was unable to make it to Paul’s and thus was unable to attend. A pity, since he was supposed to be bringing me my new CUBE CoCo.

DALTRUG — Lee Veal and David Wordell made the Texas trek again with Planet Engine and another vast assortment of space jewelry. DALTRUG is currently being targeted as a possible group to help a Texas-based OS-9 convention be put together.

Digital Frontier Productions — A group of hackers, formerly of Hyper Tech (but without Mike Haaland), displayed a brand new graphic game for the MM/1 called Gold Runner 2000. It was a scrolling platform game (like Super Pitfall, for instance) based on the classic Lode Runner game from days past. Full color graphics and awesome looped digital samples played making this the best bet for MM/1 game lovers! The main programmer, Eric Crichlow, was on hand along with Chet Simpson (who wrote Digger, a CoCo 3 Lode Runner clone, on sale for \$7). Chet has moved on to the PC platform but is waiting for the CoCo 3 emulator to be finished since he has a few more projects he wants to do for the CoCo. I can hardly wait!

Delmar Company — Ed was unable to attend (again). What gives, Ed?

Eugene Adams — This man was literally giving away CoCo 2 educational systems. I believe a CoCo 2 with composite video output which Bob Rutherford owns might have originated from this booth.

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygert showed off his various software goodies and the

Ken-Ton hard drive interface. I was able to pick up an EPROM burner for my Disto Super Controller from him — something I didn't do a few years earlier from BARSoft and have been kicking myself over ever since.

Glenside CoCo Club — A dual membership let you sign up for both Glenside and Atlanta Computer Society. Free CoCo 1-2-3 newsletters and disks were there for new members including the CoCo version of Forth.

HawkSoft — Chris and Nancy Hawks once again showed up in full Star Trek uniforms. And yes, my friends, it is true — CoCo 3 software for the Plug 'N Power interface! Now all those cassette port gadgets can be put to use once again. As soon as I find my PNP interface I'll be back on the automation trail.

Northern eXposure — Colin McKay, Ken Fish, and some other Canadians roamed around offering the new 1.20 version of NitROS9 as well as Bob van der Poel's software and other NX goodies. Alan DeKok was unable to attend this time and he was missed (though we'll be sure to take real good aim the next time we get him in our sites).

OS-9 User's Group — Carl Boll and membership applications. 'Nuf said.

R.C. Smith — More pre-owned CoCo hardware than you could shake a stick at.

Roy Shoaf — Roy's table of hardware once again impressed.

S-BUG — Andre LaVelle had his usual assortment of goodies, including some SCSI hard drives, high-quality blank disks, and even a rare Adaptec 4000a controller which lets a SCSI interface run MFM/RLL drives.

JoTA Productions — Tim Johns offered his new digital sound drivers for the Delmar System 5. At this show he also was given a Sound Blaster card in hopes of writing a driver for that. His "STerm with Windows" Magnamaterm program is still unfinished, and his Ethernet drivers are still under construction.

Klystronics — Another no-show. Flyers were on the table and they ran out of business cards fast. They are expected to attend the Chicago show next year though.

Mid Iowa & County CoCo Club — Terry Simons made the trek to Atlanta to sign people up to the Upgrade diskletter (I did) as well as back issues and copies of the infamous "Sounds of the Hounds" adventure. It was nice to see Terry again (without the bullhorn!) and I only regret not getting to spend time with him over dinner. He even fixed me up with a demo-disk of some great CoCo 3 graphics!

Rick's Computer Enterprises — Well, I was too busy on Saturday to check things out and Rick didn't stay for Sunday so I'll do the best I can here. Rick sold the CoCo Registry disks (a complete database of CoCo owners who have filled out their questionnaires) as well as Sundog products. I strongly encourage EVERYONE to fill out and send in your information for this product!

Strongware — John Strong (alone this time) had Copy Cat, MM/1 utilities, GEMS and Soviet Bloc. In his room I also saw a light gun he had hooked to his CoCo along with a special version of Copy Cat where you would "shoot" at the screen to enter the pattern sequence. I was also able to take a look at his MM/1 port of my adventure game engine —

his version with a different main screen and done entirely in assembly language. Also, his SPaint program shows that it is nearly complete — and it has a lot to offer!

Sub-Etha Software — Upgrades galore as we bring Towel to 1.02, MultiBoot to 1.05, and the adventure game to 1.03. Also, the all-new high-speed arcade game, Invaders, was for sale. It is written in 100% machine language and brings us all back to the classic “space invaders” days. Nothing much else was new (the Chicago ‘94 adventure game is done, waiting only for the images to be scanned) except our eight foot logo banner hanging on the backdrop.

We were also proud to have Mike Shell standing by with his patches to eliminate the Boot List Order Bug (BLOB) problems CoCo OS-9 is plagued with, as well as his \$20 ready-to-install Speech Sound Pak auto-speed sensing upgrades with software drivers. Carl England even showed up with a new archiving utility allowing you to make personal backups of copy-protected software and Nick Johnson showed off his EthaSampler which records in stereo and plays samples back via the Orchestra-90 pak. (It was our only defense against our neighbor, David Graham, and his bombardment of MM/1 sound samples...)

Wittman Computer Products — Bill Wittman made his suited presence known by offering Bill Dickhaus’ [GENie Support] Information eXchange program, an offline reader for [GENie Support] Delphi and CompuServe. Also on display were various MM/1 software items and a flyer describing the upcoming WCP306 OSK machine which will be a 16 MHz 68000 compatible with IBM-AT expansion slots, dual serial ports, clock, IDE hard drive interface, parallel port (bidirectional) and gobs of included software (Microware stuff, PD commands, MGR graphical interface, etc.) and more. No prototype was available, but the board system is claimed to sell for \$400 when available (add case, power, drives, and go from there!).

About the only thing we missed this time was signs at the tables. It was difficult to determine who was who at the show, and with some locations being moved the Fest map didn’t always help. However, it was a nicer looking show setup than the past year or so due to the table drapes.

THE SEMINARS

Here is a list of all the seminars I missed at this show:

Saturday:

12:00 — “The Future of OS-9” by **Ed Gresick** (no show).

1:00 — “Supporting the CoCo: The Next Step” by **Allen Huffman**

Okay, so I didn’t miss this one. Summary: Everyone should fill out Rick Cooper’s questionnaire. Everyone should also submit an article or something to one of the magazines/newsletters. Even if it’s a “here is how I use my CoCo” letter — the magazines can only grow if they have more to print.

2:00 — “CoCo Hard Drives” by **Frank Swygart**

Frank gave a talk on CoCo Hard Drives.

3:00 — “Open OS-9 Forum” by **Kevin Darling**.

Did I mention that Kevin Darling made this show? This was a typical marathon event, with a break between sessions. Some of the topics discussed were the use of OS-9 in traffic lights as well as other places it may be turning up in the near future.

Sunday:

10:00 — “The Future of Desktop OS-9” by **David Graham**

Where do personal OSK users go from here? Ways of gaining new users and supporting the ones we have were discussed.

11:00 — “Graphics and Game Programming Forum” by **John Strong**

A traditional seminar was given on graphics techniques on the CoCo as well as general purpose OS-9 question and answers.

12:00 — “Inside CD-i” by **Boisy Pitre**

This was arguably one of the most significant seminars we have ever had at a CoCoFest. Boisy has placed a SHELL on a CD-i disc. With a terminal hooked to the serial port on the unit he was able to load up and fork a shell to the terminal. Then he demonstrated running a game while being able to MDIR, PROCS, etc., on the terminal. One time he set the game’s priority down to slow it.

The significance here is hopefully obvious. The CD-i machine represents the only consumer OS-9 machine since the CoCo (from Boisy). All that would be needed would be a way to hook up a keyboard and disk drive to turn it into the equivalent of an MM/1 or similar computer. It is rumored that an add-on is in the works to do just this. Currently I know of two groups seriously discussing these plans. Although Boisy hasn’t fully explored the possibilities, he has opened the door wide open to a significant OS-9 future. Although the CD-i player does not represent “state of the art” any more, it certainly represents OS-9 for the masses and has an installed use base of many thousand.

By the way, if you haven’t checked out the Video-CDs yet, do so. I was surprised that most of the attendees hadn’t seen the amazing features they offer — like great image quality, perfect freeze-frames, and the ability for the player to remember exactly where you were when you last stopped the movie. (“Cool” is an understatement...even laserdisc players don’t do all this.)

THE EVENINGS

I saw a different version of the Fest from what I normally see. This year I spent most of my extra time with the groups in the bar rather than in hotel rooms. I am generally a non-drinker but I must say listening to ways to do a DOOM-style 3-D game engine on a CoCo by Scott Griepentrog and Vaughn Cato was rather interesting — even under the influence. Dart games were played, restaurants were visited, and the general festivities continued.

I wish I had more to report, but it seems we all had fun no matter what details I cannot remember. We did pile into the van and other cars to see this year’s Stone Mountain laser show (filled with lotsa oldies rock and roll). We got to talk to the operator, Armon, after the show but no internal tour of the

control room was allowed. Having a PA system in the van was useful for getting through the traffic on the way out.

There was a walk to the Waffle House at 3:00 a.m. Saturday for burgers, and Scott Griepentrog had a new “flat-top” laptop (with a pen you write with that it uses for handwriting recognition) which came in quite handy. Not only did it earn us stares when we went somewhere, it was also a great way to get the attention of others. (Try holding up a glowing etch-a-sketch that says “HEY YOU” sometime...)

When I did try to retire early on Saturday I was surprised at how easily Terry cleared out the room so “Allen can go to sleep.” Only after plopping down to my bed did I discover the painful reality — they had flipped the bed over so the hard bottom was now neatly concealed by perfectly made up sheets. The only thing I could do to this was approach the room were they were and tell Carl Boll “you win.” (There was a lot of “competition” at this Fest for me. Sub-Etha won the cool backdrop category, Scott G. won the cool gadget category with his laptop and his 10 meg/second ethernet wireless transmitter thingies, and Carl won the coolest prank...this year.)

Overall I got much too little sleep on Saturday making the drive back home Sunday evening less than enjoyable...

SUMMARY

A good, fun show. Saturday was so hectic that I couldn't leave the booth. Sunday was very slow, maybe due to the rain. Overall our sales were up by about 40% over last year, though 80% of sales made were on Saturday. I didn't get to see nearly as much as I wanted to — possibly the least amount of Fest exposure I have ever had at one of these shows — which is a personal letdown for myself. However, Ken Fish and the Atlanta Computer Society did a great job.

I was fortunate enough to receive a rather interesting gift. Two cases of generic, unlabeled bottles of dark colored liquid were delivered to me from a source who will remain anonymous. The bottles came with verbal warnings which I heeded carefully. Many may recall that we often are seen with Jolt Cola — the high-caffeine, real sugar soda. Well, these bottles of unstated origin contained something even better — something that made those who knew what was in them give me rather odd looks before I popped one open. Let's just say that this soda made Jolt look tame... All I can say is thanks. It is honestly one of the most special things anyone has ever done for me. I'd like to know how long they keep, though, so I can know whether or not they will save until the Chicago show. I'll need something to keep me awake for that drive for sure! (Of course, maybe I'll wimp out and fly like Carl and Joel did to get to this show...)

By the way, the name badges were almost perfect this year. The only thing missing were the vendor names, which we just easily wrote in at the top of the badge. Several colors were used to represent club members, attendees, and vendors. It worked out nicely. ACS was also collecting information on where attendees were staying. Perhaps as a reference to see how many Fest goers were actually staying at the Northlake? The booklet, though small and lacking any advertisements, contained descriptions of excellent quality and vendor contact information (name, address, phone number). [At this time I'd like to state that the phone number listed for Sub-Etha is *NOT* a business line and I would personally prefer no phone calls to it unless it's important since that number belongs to my grandmother and I am sure she wouldn't be too thrilled to offer tech support. Instead, we encourage Internet mail or

messages left on Joel's voice mailbox system in Illinois.]

RUMORS

CD-i New OSK machine. One or the same? Or two different? A serial mouse interface that plugs into a joystick port. IDE hard drive interface (with possible serial/parallel onboard). And more...

THE RETURN

The traditional Lucky Key after-Fest dinner was held but I was really too tired to get into it like previous years. The food was good, and thanks to Frank Swygert Terry and I got a "free meal" which we plan to fully repay in Chicago. How many were there I don't recall — but it was more than last year — and they kept on coming! Our long table was full and spilled over to some single tables nearby. The Northern eXposure group expressed concern since they already had an intolerably long drive back home in close quarters and had to eat by themselves <grins>.

Finally it was time for good-byes and departure as Bob and Terry elected to stay an extra night while Tim, Alex and myself made our way back to Texas. Rain followed us the entire way. One short nap in Louisiana later and we were home ready to unpack and collapse. (I still had to take the van back to Houston and get enough sleep for jury duty the next morning so I am still very tired as of this writing.)

DISCLAIMER

I didn't take notes, but Colin did — watch for his Fest report for hopefully more information!

THANKS

Thanks Atlanta Computer Society (especially Ken Fish and Newton White, both for different reasons!) for bringing us back to our home away from home. Thanks to all those who bought me drinks and food and whom without their assistance I might not have experienced so many new (and green) things.

We hope to do it again next year!

Allen C. Huffman, Co-owner — Sub-Etha Software

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

coco-sysop@genie.geis.com on the Internet

(815) XXX-XXXX (Joel's voice number)

GENIE PLUG

NOTE: I am *NOT* a representative of GENie. This information is provided for informational purposes only...

Call 1-800-638-XXXX (voice) for information on signup numbers, or call 1-800-638-XXXX (modem) and type "HHH" when you CONNECT. Be sure you are in H DUPLEX/SELF-ECHO mode on your terminal program. At the "U#=" prompt, type "XTX99188,TANDY" and follow the instructions for signing up with a checking account or credit card.

Current GENie rates are \$8.95 a month which includes four hours of online time (6:00 p.m. — 8:00 a.m. local time). Additional hours are \$3 each. Special surcharges apply when using the 1-800 access number, 9600 baud, or some remote-access phone lines. Call the customer service number for more details.

As of this writing, GENie SprintNet 9600 baud access is about to be drastically lowered, so check it out!

FUTURE FESTS

The next gathering will be in Chicago, with tentative plans for an OS-9 real-time gathering (not a CoCoFest) sometime in 1995 in Dallas, Texas.

April 29-30, 1995 — Fourth Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest

From my last report, I asked to see some things in future Fests. I still think name badges should have a place for company name and e-mail I.D. as well as other items. Glenside, it’s your turn! Check my previous report out and make it all happen.

THE END

We will meet again. I know it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research’s K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha’s own MiniBanners and MultiBoot. He has attended the last nine CoCoFests and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show.

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of ‘68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on GENie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

BEHIND THE SCENES

If you have never seen “Sounds of the Hounds” by Terry Simons, find it! It remains a larger hoax than last Fest’s Klystronics Kaper.

A 3-D maze engine *was* done by Vaughn Cato for OS-9 after the bar discussion. It is entitled “Toast.” I have no idea why.

Because of this trip, I now love *Waffle House* and eat there anytime I am near one.

The generic sodas I were given were a souped up version of *the real thing* and remain one of my all-time favorite Fest memories. Someone, somewhere, still has a few unopened ones I think.

1995 4th Annual “Last”

Chicago CoCoFest

(May 29-30, Chicago, Illinois)
by Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software
(5/3/95)

NOTE: Any discrepancies between what is contained in this report and what is real is merely coincidental. This includes, but is not limited to, names, locations, events, and 20 ounce bottles of JOLT(tm) cola. Any jokes you don't get are probably inside ones.

CoCoFests are now becoming as increasingly inaccurately named as Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker's "trilogy" which, in itself, is clocking in at five books in the series. This "yet another" event proves once and for all (again) that "last" is certainly not "final."

TIMELINE

Hollywood masterpiece Forrest Gump walks away with more Oscars than would fill a box of chocolates, and the movie arrives on home video just one day before the Fest. Tragedy rocks the U.S. as the bombing of an Oklahoma City federal building shakes the nation. The O.J. Simpson trial lingers on, losing yet another juror and spending an increasing amount of time discussing bloody socks.

THE DRIVE

Since the "mega trips" of the past year have been so successful, the Sub-Etha gang decided to try it once more, recruiting Tim Johns (JoTA), Alex Forrest (local hacker), Terry Todd (partner in crime), Bob Rutherford (former CoCo club president) and anyone else we could convince to journey with us in the "fun-van" borrowed, nicely enough, from my dad. Unfortunately, Bob couldn't go. Then he could. Tim was, then wasn't, due to a work conflict which "forced" him to fly to Chicago (lucky bum) and Terry stood fast with plans to rent a convertible and drive himself in luxury, free to travel as he choose during the trip. It certainly was shaping up to be an interesting pre-Fest plan.

All during this, David Graham (of BlackHawk) was supposed to be onboard as well, yet his own travel capabilities didn't get him nearly close enough to a rendezvous point as we would have liked but, when all is said and done, die-hard CoCoists will do just about anything to help one another out.

The day before we would depart (Wednesday, the 26th) I took a two hour trip to Houston to trade my hatchback Honda Civic in for my dad's full-size, scanner-equipped mega-van. Very nice trade if you ask me, in spite of the gas mileage. By Thursday (I, sadly, had to work that morning after little sleep from the trip the night before) we were ready to get our act together. Packing the van took longer than planned (as usual), Bob had to work late, and Terry had his own things to deal with. By 5:00 p.m.-ish, several hours after our original departure time, we headed out on our newly configured route which would take us into Tulsa, Oklahoma to pick up David. (Our first stop, though, was in nearby Nacogdoches to pick up Tim's Delmar machine as well as a nice supply of JOLT(tm) cola from a

Kwik-E-Mart there.) Terry also made a stop at the car rental place to get something out of his own car, then locked the keys in it and was a bit delayed. (We, of course, like to mention this vaguely so one is left to wonder how he could lock keys in a convertible with the top down...)

During this trip, we kept in touch with Terry via CB radio. We had the radar detector, so an occasional “radar detected” into the handset activated Terry’s remote controlled tail lights.

Usually we notice things during a drive like this, and this time it was the amazing amount of SONIC eating places we saw during the start of the journey, yet they seemed oddly missing in the Northern part of the U.S. Is America’s drive-in really that much more apparent Down South? Some other interesting things we noticed where “Pansy Kidd Middle School” (any bets that students there get beat up a lot once they enter High School?) and the “Fag Bearings” company with a massive name-sign on a hillside.

We hit our first toll road in Oklahoma, and then made it to a Motel 6 in Tulsa at about 2:00 a.m. where David would be waiting on us. We loaded up after convincing the all-night security guard who kept driving around and around that we were only going to be parked there for a few minutes. Other highlights (when we weren’t too busy discussing the OSK desktop future) included two rather nice ladies, Crystal and Linda, at a Texaco in someplace called Poteau. We even found a great radio station along the way and a “Tom Geronimo” played an Offspring song for Terry. (I phoned it in via cellular).

Sometime after daybreak we decided to make a food detour. Terry wanted to pull in for a burger but we saw a “Steak and Shake” nearby and decided to give it a shot. Well, we’ve all heard about “greasy spoons” in referring to eating places, but this time I encountered the “filthy fork” which made me decide to pay for my coffee (which they actually let me have for free) and leave, not wanting to find any other unappetizing goodies when breakfast arrived. David and Bob, however, ate just fine.

Somewhere near St. Louis we got separated from Terry and drove nearly half an hour (he went one way, we went the other) before mysteriously meeting back up via the CB. This CB was turning into a VERY useful device to have along and no doubt saved us much time. At any rate, we drove and drove and drove and finally made our way to Elgin after racking up \$6.45 in tolls (double that to account for Terry’s share).

THE ARRIVAL

We attempted to check in but, finding that Carl Boll hadn’t made it, thought we couldn’t. After all, the rooms were reserved in his name, we thought. We found Andre (S-BUG) whom shared camcorder information with me, Ron Bull, and Frank Swygert (FARNA Systems) who let us borrow his shower (ah, such a generous guy) and the day was ready to begin...

Many familiar faces were noticed and the hotel was packed, but not from CoCoFest attendees. A large group of teenagers were out having a good time, and there was a rather nice amount of swimsuits to see. The same situation with ladies six years older would have been very nice. But enough of that... (Any chance of the cheerleading convention hitting Atlanta during Fest time this October?)

THE PRE-SHOW

Friday wasn't quite the same. We had gear belonging to five people in our room so there really wasn't space to setup any systems (though I did manage to find a bit of desk space for the MM/1). Walking around we found many others. John Donaldson let us know about the new MM/1 RiBBS port (\$5/disk) and we found a Wizard (pocket organizer) hooked to David Wordell's OSK machine as a terminal. Wow! Alan DeKok managed to make a tall appearance as well. Even Rainbow (the person, not the magazine) managed to say hi. Hey, Microware employees carrying cargo and Lee Veal picking on us for "late arrivals." Scott Griepentrog even recruited us into helping him unload his nice new minivan with Paul Jerkatis (whom made a 75 mile journey to attend — what dedication!). We were impressed. They had SUN systems (though later we saw Carl Boll's CoCo repacked in a SUN case...) Brother Jeremy, Joel Hegberg (whom told me a story about Boisy Pitre using a GOTO in 'C' once), Dave "Digigrade" P. (I never can spell his last name right) wandered around, and we found Tony Podraza trying to figure out how the room would be laid out (based on the booklet map). Oh yes, we cannot forget the Adventure Survivors and others making the first social appearance in the bar. Oddly enough, I didn't get to have one drink in the bar this time. Ah, so many other faces. Perhaps watching the video to take notes is a bad idea. Skipping on...

Terry would be leaving to get Tim that night from the airport so he took a nap while the rest of us decided to get something to eat. The van, filled with the likes of new Fest attendee Paul Zibaila as well as Rick Uland (who found my acoustic guitar and demonstrated another one of his talents — no stairway, dude), made its way down the road. Joel Hegberg had my second walkie talkie, and John Strong gave us the frequency of his communicator so we could at least listen to him on the scanner. We drove, tossing out suggestions, with "sure, anything" in response. We say Olive Garden. "Aha!" we seemed to agree, but it was packed. Next door was T.G.I. Fridays, which seemed even better, so we made out way in to find a 45 minute wait. Next door was a promising looking steak place where we ended up eating.

This place was a bit fancier than we expected, and the look on all of our faces as we mumbled through the menu was precious. \$11 and up, it seemed, but we bit the bullet, tightened our wallets, and ate some very good food at a very nice place with very marginal service. Sorry guys, don't blame me for that one. I sure hope I wasn't the one who actually said we should go there... Oh well, the pork chops were nice. (The place is Lloyd's. The food was good, the service was fair mainly due to some young kids "working" there.)

The rest of the night was pretty plain. I ran around shooting video (tape copies available on request, you pay tape cost and shipping) and stumbled across two interesting open windows. In Rick's room he had a dozen or so boards laid out as he soldered away, apparently MAKING the Fast232 paks he would be debuting at the show the next morning. Why wait until the last minute, I always say. We also found a rather odd "see-through" SCSI hard drive that the folks at Budgetware had in their room...actually running, platters and all. Wild stuff indeed. The rest is a bit hazy, since I was lacking in sleep.

THE SHOW AREA

The regular show area was setup as follows:

1995 Chicago:

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+-----+
|                               Disto DigiGrade JWT Ent.                               |
| Monk Corner (originally                                             |
| reserved for Marty Goodman XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX S-BUG |
| who wasn't able to attend)                                         X |
| with Brother Jeremy and                                           X |
| lotsa interesting goodies                                         X |
|                               XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
|                               X Conect Sub-Etha X X |
|                               X Software X X |
|                               XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
|                               X FARNA X X CoCo |
| HawkSoft Al Dages X X BlackHawk X X Cellar |
| and X X X X |
| RC Smith X X X X |
| X X X Strong |
| X X JoTA X X Ware |
| Budget- X X Prod. X X |
| Ware OS9 U.G. X X X X |
| XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX X Wittman Computer X X Adv. |
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| Animajik ChiCoCo X X GlensideX X Northern |
| Prod. X X CoCo X X XPosure |
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Some details may have been left out due to late-showers (in fact, BlackHawk wasn't even listed in the Fest book due to showing up and actually arranging booth payment at the show! Sounds like a

Sub-Etha routine!)

I counted 24 vendors at this show but more may have actually been there. I admit I didn't take very good notes. Okay, I didn't take any...

And now ... the vendors:

AniMajik Productions — Alan Sheltra didn't show, but Scott Griepentrog helped mind the booth. Clearance software was seen with plenty of wonderfully printed signs (hey Alan, how 'bout another issue of the magazine?). An odd "mouse" cover was also seen which I just couldn't get the 'breast' of...

Al Dages/RC Smith — From Atlanta with TONS of hardware including Burke & Burke hard drive setups and interesting cases. Al and R.C. are members of the Atlanta Computer Society which will be holding another CoCoFest this October. The ACS desperately needs your support to ensure that such events continue in the future.

Adventure Survivors — The adventure gaming newsletter. Also a very good source for upcoming CoCoFest details and information, all very affordable.

BlackHawk Ent. — David Graham makes a showing with some SCSI hard drives and other goodies for the MM/1. Big plans are in the works from BlackHawk. CDL BASIC — a true compiled OSK BASIC — was available. This language lets you embed 68K assembly and even use it to write device drivers. The upcoming MM/1b was also discussed, which is based on the same hardware as the WCP306 but with a different software bundle, compliments of BlackHawk.

Budgetware — Okay, I owe these guys a bit for helping me out with my hard drive. They had plenty of OSK and OS-9 utilities and tools, as well as a "live" demo of a see-through hard drive. They had a plexi-glass case containing a functioning 40 meg SCSI drive. Is that what they look like inside? Very neat, and Scott G. wrote a randomizer program to make it read. Interesting OS-9/OSK goodies included the sound-full Trek game (BlackHawk picked up a copy of this) as well as a new database for OSK which was available at a special show price with the upgrade to sell for significantly more later on. These guys are now on the "ones to watch" list.

ChiCoCo BBS — Carl Boll's BBS system, complete with tons of storage space and a repacked CoCo in a SUN case.

CoCo Cellar — Tons and tons of CoCo hardware and software items. A newsletter is also published which I have seen. Very good source for used hardware.

CoNect — Rick Uland had his new Fast232 high-speed RS-232 paks available which streamed data at over 5300 characters per second under OS-9. Yes, two years in the works and they now exist. I hear he sold out too, so order now to get a first shot at a second run of boards! The ever-evolving CUBE case was shown, this time with nice metal doors. Rick is taking steps to fix up Ron Bull's Cube which was damaged in shipment as well as upgrading my early model Cube.

DALTRUG — Lee Veal and Dave Wordell from Dallas with Planet Engine. I wasn't

able to establish if the MM/1 version was still in the works.

Digigrade Productions — Dave Pellerito had a CD-i development system to show off (but no operating system software) and had his Mac ready to do real-time frame grabbing. You know, if I didn't love my CoCo so much I'd buy an A/V equipped Mac and be quite happy. Dave talked of putting out more issues of his video newsletter in the near future.

Disto — Tony DiStefano makes another show with great deals on his hardware, bare board sets, 2-meg upgrades, schematic booklets, etc. Sadly, he wasn't able to bring his spatula across the border. A deal has apparently been worked out to let another CoCo vendor do the "hands-on" work stuffing Disto boards which may very well insure their availability for some time to come. If anyone is interested in getting IDE hard drives working on the CoCo, it might be a good idea to throw some money Tony's way to see if he can be financially persuaded to design such a creature.

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygert showed off alot of new software by Chris Dekker, including a patch to CoCo GRFDRV that was faster and had moveable, resizable windows! Updates to BASIC09 (6309 native mode, about 15% faster) as well as a high-speed RBF network driver for the CoCo via the bitbanger port, believe it or not. This allowed the CoCo to access a virtual hard drive from another system. Watch out, this stuff is hot.

One other thing worth attention was "THE Catalog," a compilation of CoCo and OSK vendors in booklet form. The first version was 27 pages thick and contained ads from 10 companies. Those listed displayed pretty much their complete line of software and hardware, something you'd never see in published ads due to space and cost limitations. The catalog will be regularly updated and made available for a small fee. Vendors interested in advertising should contact FARNA.

Glenside CoCo Club — Our host club, who we owe this all, had mugs and new blue Fest shirts (selling for as low as \$6 on the first day).

HawkSoft — Chris and Nancy Hawks showed off a new CDF file manager for OSK which let you actually USE a CD-ROM drive like it was meant to be used. Copy a file from the CD, or CHD around it. Very nice, and very worthwhile for any CD-ROM owner. I decided to pick up "GNOP", the award winning Pong(tm)-like game for the MM/1. One OS-9 programmer is already working on routines to access the CD-i multimedia encyclopedia from the MM/1.

JoTA Productions — Tim Johns had, reportedly, working Soundblaster drivers for ISA-bus based OSK machines. Tim spent much of the Fest compiling and porting software to and from his Delmar System 5. Watch for very exciting drivers coming from JoTA in the near future. Tim is also rumored to have gone to a job interview of an interesting nature right before the Fest.

JWT Enterprises — Jordan Tsvetkoff returns this time with his legendary CoCo 3 game, Pyramix, which he wrote when he was in the eighth grade (he's 21 now). The final allotment of *UpTime* and *Nine-Times* back issues were also made available, with very limited quantities. Jordan indeed put much effort in supporting the CoCo during the final

days of Rainbow (started with efforts from CoCoPro! legend Dave Myers) and while *UpTime* is now gone (taken up by 68' *micros*), the legacy lives on. It might also be noted that Jordan enjoys the Chicago show due to its having a Planet Hollywood within reasonable driving distance.

Northern eXposure — CoCo AT keyboard adapters for \$50 (taking orders, not ready to ship), NitrOS9 1.21, SCSISYS 2 and other goodies. Alan DeKok stood tall over the event with handouts for tons of new OS-9 L2 add-ons. Colin McKay did a great job filling orders by duplicating disks on the spot! (Another trait usually associated with Sub-Etha!) Rumor has it that many features of the “lost” Level 2 upgrade will soon be making their way into NitrOS9, including named pipes, resizable windows, and much more. The TuneUp package for stock 6809 was/is/should be available which will do many of Alan’s internal speedups and possibly allow a non-modified CoCo 3 to run 14.4 with no hardware modifications.

One surprising item on display was a small circuit board which could be used to interface a standard IBM-AT style keyboard to a CoCo. The design by Dana Paterson has been modified to use a slightly different controller chip and will be made available for a mere \$50. Other existing keyboard adapters worked only on harder-to-find old XT keyboards.

OS-9 Users Group, Inc. — Offering memberships and support, with a vengeance.

SandV BBS — Paul Jerkatis and a nice power hungry SUN workstation showing off the “other side” of his CoCo/OS-9 support-filled BBS. At one point, all the computer power went off (probably not Paul’s fault this year) and the beep of an UPS, suspiciously coming from Paul and Scott’s direction, could easily be heard.

S-BUG of Los Angeles — Andre LaVelle sold out of 128K serial/parallel switchboxes/converter/buffers. This amazing deal that went right past me. Large SCSI hard drives were also available along with the usual assortment of “interesting” items he is always eager to tell you about. Andre, put me down for two of those converters!

Strongware — John Strong brings SPaint one step closer to perfection and sported new air-brushed (by John himself) TEAM OS-9 shirts. Some MM/1 game development is also in the works and those interested are encouraged to drop John a letter and express your desires.

Sub-Etha Software — A new high-speed action game for the MM/1, Wormhole, was shown but not quite ready. Also available were updates to older CoCo programs as well as a new disk utility and banner program for the MM/1. MegaBanners uses Max-10 fonts for really nice looking banners. Also, a “rare” black CoCo 3 was shown, part of a final production run from Tandy. The story goes that Tandy was moving its computer colors again. Recall they went from silver to white, and moved home stereos from wood grain and silver to black. The same was going to be done for their PCs. Unfortunately, there was a fire at the plant which made the pigment for the plastics and that prevented more than a handful of prototypes to be made. Most people won’t remember this fire since a bigger one at a RAM chip producer happened at the same time, stealing all the media attention. Ah, another lost legacy, just like the rumored CoCo compatible Klystrons in Atlanta.

Wittman Computer Products — Recently acquiring Zack Sessions' ColorSystems line of products, Bill was there with plenty of information. A sneak peak at the new WCP306 (also to be known as the MM/1b from BlackHawk) was shown running blazingly fast on a VGA text screen. A full color photograph ("actual size") of the mother board was also on display.

Brother Jeremy's "Monk Corner" was a rather interesting site (sic). He had boxes of various CoCo hardware, including some odd machines taken from Microware which had socketed BASIC ROMs and odd header connectors on the inside for the monitor outputs. We expect to get a full report of these machines in the near future. Also worth noting was Brother Jeremy's attempt to circumvent his occasional "typelexia" problem. He typed in "FOMRAT" and the screen flickered to life as the "Color Computer Disk Fomratter" forked into action, sending onlookers into laughter land. Also, news is that Brother Jeremy will make his first appearance with a booth at next year's Chicago show, sporting a vast collection of goodies he has acquired in past years.

Nice vinyl vendor signs were hung from the ceiling with care, as last year, and tables were, for the most part, nicely skirted. Another fine effort from Glenside. I would gripe about not getting a name badge this year (they did hand up buttons) but when I returned to Lufkin and checked the Sub-Etha box there they were. I suppose I should check mail more often.

THE SEMINARS

Here is a list of all the seminars I missed at yet another show:

Saturday:

10:15 — "Searching for the Lost" by **Brother Jeremy**

The missing OS-9 L2 V3.0 upgrade is finally floating around.

11:15 — "Glenside Presents Marty"

Marty could not attend, so I'm not sure what this time was used for.

01:00 — "History of MIDI on the CoCo" by **Mike Carey**

02:00 — "Glenside No Minimum Bid Auction" by **Mike Knudsen**

This is becoming a new tradition. Many very interesting items were sold at very reasonable prices. Perhaps next year we'll get people actually bidding close to what the items are worth. <grins>

03:00 — "Compact Disk Interactive" by **Boisy Pitre**

This time dealing mainly with Forrest Gump for CDV, apparently, though rumors still circulate about a CD-i add-on board to turn it into an OSK box. Did you know that the ROM operating system in the CD-i player even contains a keyboard driver of some form?

04:00 — "Sculptor" by **Kurt Johnson (KD Consulting)**

NASA uses it, and he told us about it.

05:00 — "OS-9 Users Group Meeting"

The officer's election was held and, as far as I can tell, **David Graham** was chosen to fill one of the positions.

Sunday:

08:00 — “CoCo Community Sunday Service” by **Brother Jeremy**

Our own monk, Brother Jeremy, held a non-denominational prayer service for those who wish to join and worship.

09:00 — “Glenside and Goodman”

Once again, no **Marty**.

10:00 — “NitrOS9” by **Curtis Boyle** and **Alan DeKok**

Q&A and new updates about the most amazing piece of OS-9 software ever. The most significant patches involved Alan's attempts to optimize the interrupt servicing routine to actually allow 19.2 Kbaud under OS-9 on a CoCo with a stock RS-232 pak. Very impressive indeed (and it works — I run my 14.4 modem all the time under NitrOS9).

11:00 — “Open OS-9 Forum” by **John Strong**

Got a question? John Strong has all the answers.

01:00 — “The Future of our Community” by **Allen Huffman** and **Frank Swygert**

Topics included upgrading to the new affordable OSK machines and surviving with existing CoCo equipment. Don't move on, move up.

02:00 — “Glenside No Minimum Bid Auction”

Part 2...

THE EVENINGS

Unfortunately, the “Fest after the Fest” this year was not so hot for me. I went to bed early on Friday (after conferencing with John Strong shortly) so I am not qualified to talk about that evening.

Saturday, however, we got a group together to go play Q-ZAR (laser tag) at a nearby gaming center. About 20 of us checked it out. This “family amusement center” was located directly across the street from an “adult” book store. Interesting. They had a nice setup with some advances over the classic Photon centers, and some non-advances, but it was much fun.

Two 15-minute game rounds were played for a discount and, as they told us, it was the longest 15 minutes! (During the Saturday show, two uniform equipped workers came and demonstrated the equipment at the CoCoFest.) A red and green team was chosen and we blasted it out in the fog filled maze with visible lasers and sound effects galore. Though my team lost the first round, I clocked in with top points. The second round our team won and I made second highest. Ah, those old laser skills never die. Like many things, I wasn't entirely too impressed with it until we cornered a worker who explained how it all worked.

Glenside, THANKS for this great time! I really, really enjoyed it and hope we can do it again next year. I honestly thought Atlanta was the only place we'd have “lasers” at a Fest.

The rest of the evening was supposed to be fun, too, as Frank Swygert, Linda Podraza (yes, Tony's wife) and myself got into Frank's rebuilt 1963 Nash Rambler to go downtown to Hard Rock Cafe for a T-shirt. We were involved in a fender bender which messed up his car a bit and broke the radiator. We finally limped our way back home (after missing our "help" trying to find us) at 4:30 by refilling the radiator at every exit. It was a nightmare being stuck downtown at this hour, but we did quite well and video tape exists of much of the evening... Chicago is not a good place for vehicles. Five dollars for water at a "full service" gas station? Well, to each their own. At least Elgin is nice.

My partner, Terry, did his best to stay up all Saturday night and was still going strong (?) Sunday when we left (and the bar cut him off). At least he had some fun...

SUMMARY

Attendance seemed quite down at this show, and so were profits for the most part (for us — your mileage may vary). However, many new items were shown. Several vendors seemed to be hampered mainly by lack of preparation time (Rick making boards the night before, our booth not having signage, NX making disks, etc.). If everything had worked out, I am sure it would have been even better.

Overall, we'd certainly do it again since we always at least break even, but next time Hard Rock won't be in the plans. (Q-ZAR, I hope, will.)

RUMORS

Ask Mark Marlette what he is working on and maybe he will tell you. He sure won't tell me. BlackHawk is gearing up with some new MM/1 items on the horizon, and at least one incredibly cool platform game for the MM/1 was shown behind closed doors. Joel Hegberg's contributions to the Community may be his last as news is he will be joining the forces of Microware in the very near future. Congratulations, Joel.

THE RETURN

We weren't rushed out of the show area this year, which made things much more comfortable. Oddly, everything got packed much better for the trip back home than they did when carefully organized in the first place. Due to time commitments, we were not able to attend the traditional Mongolian Barbecue with Scott Griepentrog. I am sad to miss out on this, but even with leaving early there was barely enough time to get things taken care of when we returned to East Texas.

Terry stayed behind, leaving the next afternoon. Interestingly enough, Terry set a speed record during the return trip making the rather long 20+ hour trip in fifteen hours and, according to calculations, AVERAGING 76 miles per hour. He seems quite fond of CBs now, taking them over a radar detector any day. Of course, if anyone with any department of motor vehicles is reading this report, I made that all up.

DISCLAIMER

While I had planned to take good notes this time (via a tape recorder), I neglected to bring the recorder. I do have a nice blank tape, though. So, anything I have gotten completely wrong is just something you will have to deal with.

THANKS

Thanks, Glenside, for inviting us back again, and letting us know we'll be doing it again NEXT YEAR! To those Budgetware dudes (and Paul Jerkatis), thanks for diddling with my new hard drive. To Chris Podraza, whom made an interesting appearance during the Fest in a bath robe, I send you greetings from the Sub-Etha. Now there's a hoopy frood who really knew where his towel was, even if it was the wrong color. And to all those who helped us lug equipment, and Bob Rutherford for manning the booth, and Frank and Linda for making time pass by better, Ron Bull for giving me that case, and everyone else, THANKS so much. It was truly an event. (Paul Z., glad you could make it!)

Allen C. Huffman, Co-owner — Sub-Etha Software

COCO-SYSOP on GENie

coco-sysop@genie.geis.com on the Internet

(815) XXX-XXXX (Joel's voice mail number, going away soon, though)

GENIE PLUG — * FREE TIME! *****

NOTE: I am *NOT* a representative of GENie. This information is provided for informational purposes only...

Call 1-800-638-XXXX (voice) for information on signup numbers, or call 1-800-638-XXXX (modem) and type "HHH" when you CONNECT. Be sure you are in H DUPLEX/SELF-ECHO mode on your terminal program. At the "U#=" prompt, type "MSC524" and follow the instructions for signing up with a checking account or credit card. This access number will give you FIFTY DOLLARS (\$50) of free time during your first month!

Current GENie rates are \$8.95 a month which includes four hours of online time (6:00 p.m. — 8:00 a.m. local time). Additional hours are \$3 each. Special surcharges apply when using the 1-800 access number, 9600 baud, or some remote-access phone lines. Call the customer service number for more details.

9600 baud and prime time surcharges have been lowered, and full Internet access is underway with many services already "live." Check it out.

FUTURE FESTS

The next gathering will be in Atlanta, with plans for a Dallas based OS-9 convention still being discussed.

Sep 30 & Oct 1 — 6th Annual Atlanta CoCoFest

May 18 - 19 — Fifth Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest

Now, Fest planners, let's get some more information going in the booklets. How about listing the names of people manning the booths so we can have names to associate with companies? And perhaps let vendors solicit information on their booth so they can let attendees know about what they will be showing at the Fest... Just some thoughts.

THE END

See you in Atlanta!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research's K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha's own MiniBanners and MultiBoot. He has attended the last nine CoCoFests and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show.

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of '68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on GENie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

Allen lives in Lufkin, Texas with his CoCo and newly purchased MM/1.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Terry Todd's rented convertible really didn't have "remote controlled tail lights." I just said that 'cause he would hit them every time I mentioned radar. Even when there was no radar :)

AniMajik's mouse was in the shape of a breast. The nipple was the mouse button.

While CoNect is credited with bringing a 16550 to the CoCo, Mark Marlette actually demonstrated a high-speed CoCo serial pak based on this chip years previously.

The rare CoCo 3 prototype which was shown at the Sub-Etha table was yet another hoax perpetrated by Bob Rutherford and our crew. Note the reference to the "CoCo compatible Klystrons" as well. Bob actually just painted his CoCo case — and it looked great!

The "fender bender" we had with Frank Swygert was actually quite a nightmare for me. We had rear ended a taxi sliding through a slick intersection (the cab driver finally decided *not* to run the yellow light) and were stranded for some time. We eventually walked (while waiting for help) to the Hard Rock only to find it closed. Eventually we limped out way back to the hotel and not only do I have footage of the accident mere seconds after it occurred, but after the event as well when, to make matters worse, Frank opens his radiator at the hotel and drops the cap, watching it bounce happily to the ground and down a water drain. This scene is priceless, and some of the words those southern boys know are pretty interesting!

Chris Podraza's bathrobe also has gotten him into trouble. Some people are just un-froody.

James Jones

1995 CHICAGOFEST REPORT

(Originally posted to the Delphi online service.)

First, a disclaimer—I didn't take notes, and what I noticed is a function of my personal interests and erratic-at-best observational abilities. The following is going to reflect that, and if I've left anything or anyone out, it's due to my lapses, not by intent. OK?

That said, here's my Fourth Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest saga. It started long ago in a state far, far away, with two young men amazed that they'd rented such an atrocious video: *Luther the Geek*.

Some years later, one of the two, Boisy Pitre, came to work for Microware and found (1) a fan of bad movies among his new coworkers and (2) *mirabile dictu*, a copy of *Luther the Geek* for rent at a Hy-Vee store. He and the coworker—me—watched the movie and somehow managed to see through tears of laughter as the debits rolled by that (1) the movie is an example of Your Tax Dollars at Work, being a result of the University of Iowa Film Production Project, and (2) the movie was filmed in Sterling and Rock Falls, Illinois. Boisy realized that Sterling was on the scenic route that we took to the Third "Last" CoCoFest in 1994...and it was clear that this year would be a Pilgrimage of sorts.

The weather started out gray, but cleared as we entered Illinois, and not long afterward we stopped at the Casey's near the edge of Sterling. I'm constitutionally incapable of keeping a straight face, so I let Boisy ask the lady at the counter. She seemed reluctant to admit that Sterling was the home of *Luther the Geek*—but admitted it, and explained to her younger coworker*. For a second she was incredulous that we'd come to Sterling because of the movie, but we assured her this was the path we'd taken for other purposes, and that *Luther* was just icing on the cake, or perhaps I should say the batter on the chicken.

*(* "Oh, you know, that's that damned movie they made in town.")*

We asked her what store a certain scene was filmed in, and she told us Kroger's. That was our next stop, and with a little additional help on the way, we found it. An employee there knew about the movie, but didn't seem terribly enthusiastic. We visited the dairy case, and then went on our way.

The best thing about the Fest—meeting friends—started upon our arrival. (I had my first view of Frank Swygert's 1963 Rambler, a beautifully-maintained car.) The Hawkses kindly helped us get into our room, and after dinner, I gave an impromptu demonstration of recursive descent parsing. I was anxious to buy a CD-ROM drive, but Boisy was more so, and he had his installed Friday night! More familiar faces appeared as the evening went on.

Mostly technical things that stick out in my mind:

1. The **68306**-based computer, running and on display.
2. The **HawkSoft** CD-ROM file manager—they sold out of drives in short order. There

are LOTS of CD-ROMs containing source code that is begging to be ported out there...

3. **Planet Engine** running on the MM/1.
4. **LA-Term.** (*Very nice looking terminal program.*)
5. Ongoing optimizations in **NitrOS9**.
6. **Brother Jeremy**'s ongoing work to revive abandoned software...and his musical plea to Kevin Darling (not to be confused with a certain Conway Twitty song, despite having the same first two words). This and the Planet Engine port clearly display that talking to the author and/or vendor of software no longer sold is not only preferable to rationalizing the piracy of so-called "orphanware," it has better results.
7. **Chris Dekker**'s very neat graphics displays (and his setup that uses a serial link to a PClone to let the CoCo use the PClone's hard drive).
8. The continued efforts of vendors and the **OS-9 Users Group**—they deserve your support.
9. The Iomega Zip drive that **Dave Pellerito** had hooked up to his MM/1. \$200 for an outboard SCSI drive that takes removable media about the size of a 3.5" floppy but holding 100 Mbytes. About 30 ms access time, and the medium is about \$20 a shot. (Maybe it's time to sell my floptical...)
10. **Frank Swygert**'s edited and updated printing of Paul Ward's *Start OS-9* under the title *Mastering OS-9 on the Tandy Color Computer 3*. It's a book well worth having, and the only thing I wish were different is the binding—like the Tandy OS-9 manuals, it's a bit too small for the amount of paper therein.

This is far from a complete list of all the cool stuff that was there to be had—heck, it doesn't even list all the things I bought (though I didn't buy everything listed; if nothing else, the Zip drive wasn't for sale). I'll have to leave it to others to do a more complete report. In any case, it seemed to me that there were as many people and vendors as last year, and I hope to be in Elgin once again next year. (I know I'll be in Atlanta this October.)

Also omitted above is a lot of pleasant conversation and dining with old friends—all of whom I know better than I know the people who live in the condos next to mine. Thanks, and I hope to see you regularly.

Opinions herein are solely those of their respective authors.

James Jones

Brother Jeremy

ANOTHER VIEW ON CHICAGOFEST 95

(Originally posted to the Color Computer internet mailing list.)

My dear friends:

Once again another Fest has come to a close. It was a wonderful time, and while I am certain that Allen Huffman will once again post his Fest review, I would just like to comment that, from my humble perspective, it was a success. There was new hardware and software. Rick Uland of CoNect debuted the Fast232 serial port, and Northern Exposure had an AT Keyboard Adapter. NitrOS9 1.21 was available. And Chris Dekker, an extremely talented programmer, who does a lot of work in BASIC09 had several excellent pieces of software, including BASICBoost, which speeds up BASIC09/RUNB and ScreenBoost. ScreenBoost, is a "monk-must.". It greatly speeds up GRFDRV and does such neat things as horizontal scrolling on type 2 text screens. There were lots of other new things for both OS-9 and OSK. Please forgive me for not mentioning all of you by name, but it is somewhat late for me as I am writing this.

On a more personal note, it was certainly a great joy for me to be able to attend. It is always so wonderful to see so many old friends again, and get to put names and faces together of new ones.

I would be remiss if I did not publicly offer my heartfelt thanks to all who put in so much time and effort to make this fest possible. Glenside, and in particular, Tony Podraza, did an outstanding job.

Finally, thank you to all of you for the many acts of kindness which you showed me once again. The warmth of your greetings, the conversations, and the special times we had together are a blessing to me. Your friendships are very precious to me. Thank you for allowing me to be with you and for sharing a part of your life with me.

With all best wishes,

Brother Jeremy

1995 6th Annual Atlanta CoCoFest

(Sep 30-Oct 1, Atlanta, Georgia)
by Allen Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software
(10/3/95, 4/6/96)

NOTE: Any discrepancies between what is contained in this report and what is real are very likely unintentional. This includes, but is not limited to, names, locations, events, waffles, and monks. Any jokes you don't get are probably ones that wouldn't be funny to you anyway.

*"We are a community that survives in spite of itself" — paraphrased quote from
Fest attendee*

TIMELINE

Just a week before the verdict in the O.J. Simpson trial.

INTRODUCTION

Most eyes reading this will know me best as Allen Huffman of Sub-Etha Software. This is no longer an accurate official title. The month of July, 1995 was an interesting one for me and led up to my employment with Microware Systems Corporation in Des Moines, Iowa. I vanished from the scene during the hectic move as I attempted to start a new life. This life, as it is, brings many new opportunities, but removes some older fun ones, such as being able to run an independent company offering OS-9 software. With this writing I say good-bye to Sub-Etha, turning it over (hopefully) to my friends I left behind in Lufkin, Texas, hoping it will continue to survive. Terry, Alex, and Bob, good luck and have fun with it! I sure have. [Ed note: Well, since I wrote this I found that Terry isn't interested, Bob isn't doing CoCo work currently, and Alex is still undecided.]

THE DRIVE

My new job has me flying around to teach week-long classes in OS-9/68K at various locations. I have been learning the ropes, so to speak, by travelling with Boisy Pitre (a man to whom I owe much of my recent success) and, oddly enough, we were scheduled to be in Atlanta, Georgia the week preceding the Fest on business. Luckily we were able to stay the extra weekend in order to attend the CoCoFest.

There was no massive drive this year but, rather, a short and simple set of flights taking us from Des Moines, IA to St. Louis, MO and then into Atlanta, Georgia. About the only eventful thing I can mention was how cool the train/tram/thingie system at the Atlanta airport is. The "monitor screens" posted at various terminals use the same video chip that the old Commodore VIC-20 used. Sadly, the synthesized "voice" in the trains isn't even as intelligible as the old CoCo speech/sound pak. . .

THE ARRIVAL

Our arrival was well before the Fest would begin, and our work had us at a hotel near the airport (and across town from the Holiday Inn we've grown to know and love over the years). We made efforts to contact Al Dages our first evening in. Boisy had brought along his AT306 prototype (the wonderful new OSK machine that everyone needs to own) and wanted to borrow a VGA monitor. Being such a great person, Al and his group came by to visit us with monitor in tow. We spent that evening riddling Boisy with CD-i questions and eating at the nearby Waffle House, a fact that would later become one of the largest running gags at any Fest.

Tuesday night was a planned Atlanta Computer Society meeting, to get final Fest plans established. I contacted Ken Fish, former ACS club president (and continuing editor of the newsletter which is, by the way, done entirely on a CoCo setup). Ken picked me up and away we went, across town, to the Shoney's eatin' place. Many were (not surprisingly) surprised to see me in attendance. I supposed the best part was when club vice president Carl England stepped in, didn't notice me, and sat across the room only to turn around several minutes later and realize I was actually there! (Carl was our boothmate at the first Atlanta CoCoFest five years ago...)

The meeting was fun and informative as final work schedules were worked out and final plans made. The new Fest shirts were shown (white with a full-color print of the Atlanta skyline on them) and offered for pre-sale, and Al handed out packs of peanuts. A local computer magazine even had a small write up about the club and the Fest. Our waitress, a pretty little Georgia gal named Maggie (or was it "Lisa?" :), did a wonderful job and my only regret is that I wasn't able to take her back to Iowa with me. (Someone from ACS feel free to pass along this information, and my phone number . . . <g>)

Of interest was an interesting "mistake" the copying company made. Instead of the request 150 copies of the Fest booklet cover, 750 were printed. ACS is offering the extra copies for use in fireplaces, packing boxes, or anything else you might need. Oh, the copy company didn't charge for their mistake.

After food was consumed (I had chicken fried steak — a concept foreign to Iowa) and the meeting had ended, Ken Fish gave me a lift back home. Sorta. Asking if I was in a hurry, which I wasn't, he decided to take me on a quick tour of downtown Atlanta. We saw the FOX theater (a classic theater from way back, now filled with tons of neon and lights looking probably fancier than it ever did), various city landmarks, and even stopped in at Planet Hollywood for a drink and souvenir T-shirt. A quick walk across the street to Hard Rock to round off my shirt buying and we were back on the road.

It seems at every Fest I learn something new about someone, and this one was no different. Our good friend Ken, whom often appears in some form of "biker persona" before the Fest, then blending in with his suit the next day, turns out to be one of those people who has just done a lot. Many know of his photography business and obvious interest in computers, but how many people know he once had a steady gig for many years doing professional magic? Or travelling with a carnival? (Hmmm, that one I can see :) Or even taking time out to get some form of fancy electrical engineering kinda degree thing, allowing him to explain hardware easier than software? Makes ya wonder just what all kind of diversity we have in our group, doesn't it? Next time, though, I'll make him do a card trick... (or at least build me a PPC daughterboard for my CoCo.)

THE PRE-SHOW

Finally Friday arrived. We packed up at the first hotel, picked up James Jones and Joel Hegberg from the airport, and headed — through traffic — to Northlake. Everything seemed different this year. Whether it was that I hadn't just driven 12 hours or the fact that Atlanta was becoming "Olympic City" was unclear.

We checked in, saw no one around (not even in the bar) and decided to explore. Our "traditional" gyro place across the way was gone! The supermarket was now a Best Buy! The hotel had slightly remodeled, and even the elevators were no longer the same... Something was very wrong here.

It seems that everything I examined was different. Details that had remained the same for the past five years were no longer present. They were improvements, I am sure, but why this year? Oh yes, Olympic City. Now I remember. (Congrats, Atlanta, by the way!)

As the evening drew closer, people did start arriving. I saw my friend George from New York, and Brother Jeremy made an appearance. Soon others would follow as they began allowing vendors access to the convention room. Joel, myself, and Chris Podraza (you know, the one who wears the bathrobe) took an outing at — you guessed it — Waffle House for dinner. Vanilla Cokes are simply wonderful, and our server even had one of those PDA kinda pocket PCs on his belt, including a neat PCMCIA modem slot thingie which let him send and receive faxes... You just never know what you'll find at a Waffle House.

Returning to the hotel, Joel and I set up the booth. No backdrop, and no one there to run it. Joel had shipped our warez to the Fest via Federal Express. (Did I mention that Joel Hegberg also started working for Microware several months or so before I?) We then proceeded to the local meeting place — the bar (yes, I know, I know...the same place I wouldn't even set foot in five years ago) to hang with our peers and play darts and just generally relax.

Later on, we got another gang together at — you guessed it — Waffle House for a late night dinner. In attendance was the lovely Mrs. Podraza (by making it formal I don't sound like I'm flirting), her friend from "30 years ago" whose name I forget (but there's a rather interesting story involving seeing a family name somewhere and writing a letter and reuniting them all these years down the line), Scott Griepentrog, Brother Jeremy, Joel Hegberg, Paul Jerkatis, and Carl Boll. We all ate for twenty dollars, thanks to the wonderful prices at — you guessed it — Waffle House. Our waitress, Skylar (?), seemed very excited over the tip we left her.

The night rolled to a close, finally, after Linda Podraza and her friend awoke a sleeping fifth floor guest thinking she was knocking on our room <heh>. What's a Fest without disturbing the neighbors? (The real question is how did she manage to get up to the fifth in the first place, since it requires a special elevator access card :) It's amazing the things people take me seriously about.

THE SHOW AREA

Due to a lack of vendor attendance, only the inside main room was used for the Fest this year (with the exception being the photo opportunities and MIDI demos in the entrance hallway). Briefly it looked somewhat like this:

1995 Atlanta:

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+-----+
|-----+ | | Farna | | Krash | | Glenside | | |
| MIDI | | | Systems | | Zone | | CoCoClub | |
| Demos | | +-----+ +-----+ +-----+ |
|-----+ = |
| = |-----+ |
== +-----+ | |
| | R.C. | | |
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As usual, I may have omitted someone. Actually, this report has been delayed many months since I couldn't find a Fest booklet to prod my memory and tell me who was there, so now I only have the book to go by since most of my memory is gone... :)

And now ... the vendors:

Adventure Survivors — Surprise! Here they are... again! Their newsletter, by the way, keeps in touch with most community happenings. Fest announcements, CoCoers getting

new jobs, and other important details go hand in hand with all their detailed maps and solutions to classic CoCo adventure games. Side note: how many know of their attempts to contact Activision about getting distribution rights to the old CoCo Infocom text adventures? (Activision had no clue, however, to the fate of the old CoCo version.)

Alan R. Dages — Al. What else needs to be said. Taking the torch for the new year of ACS, the club Prez offered many CoCo items as well as friendship, as usual. Special thanks to Al for always making things enjoyable.

Atlanta Computer Society — T-shirts. Memberships. Peanuts. Life is good. It's very important to contact them with any ideas you have that would help them make a bigger show happen in 1996. They are sending out questionnaires for this cause as well.

Eugene (Gene Adams) — The “philanthropic member of the ACS” was GIVING AWAY various CoCo items he has collected.

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygert and his bride to be (they are married now :) had fun having fun, and signing people up to *the world of 68' micros*. Rumor was that the KenTon SCSI controllers may see yet another run.

Glenside CoCo Club — Showing their support year after year for the CoCo, and getting people signed up for the upcoming Chicago CoCoFest in 1996.

HawkSoft — Chris and Nancy Hawks beamed in again with classic CoCo and MM/1 items. Chris is the one to talk to for CD-ROM drivers for the MM/1 or the new AT306 system.

Krash Zone — Brian and Shirley Smith offered various CoCo items.

MIDI Demonstration — Outside the main exhibition area, Tom Kocourek and Mike Carey pumped an assortment of MIDI tunes through a nicely amplified sound system and racks of MIDI gear, mainly controlled by UltiMusE under CoCo OS-9. The CoCo MIDI Paks are said to be back in production “soon” by Glenside, and UltiMusE continues to be updated to take advantage of NitrOS9 6309 enhancements.

OS-9 Users Group — Still recruiting members to this dual 6809 and 68K users group. Their *MOTD* newsletter is a fine beast indeed.

Perfect Images Photography — Ken Fish, last year's club president, took Fest photos for inclusion on calendars, key chains, and other items. His rather attractive daughter even made an appearance (this item included just for the amusement of Ken :). Unfortunately, enough photos were not collected for the 12-month “CoCoFest Calendar” Ken planned to do, but it was fun having a chance to get professional pictures taken at a show. (I did receive a nice 1996 calendar of myself — very well done, Ken.)

R.C. Smith — Another “used equipment re-manufacturer” with a surprising assortment of CoCo items, including some I hadn't seen before.

Rick's Computer Enterprises — CoCo Friends Disk newsletter as well as the new PC Friends Disk newsletter were on display as well as INCREDIBLE offerings on classic Sundog games. [Ed note: Rick recently began a new printed mini newsletter for \$7/year. Well worth checking into.]

Sub-Etha Software — Here more in spirit than anything else. No backdrop, no computers, just a table of software occasionally manned by whoever would do it. Due to my new job at Microware, I have had to give up my interests in Sub-Etha, and Terry Todd is busy running a bookshop in Texas... Carl England's Defeater (which hasn't met a CoCo disk yet that it cannot copy) was also offered.

Wittman Computer Products — Bill Wittman showed of the WCP306, a great new OSK computer that sits in an AT size case and takes PC expansion devices, such as VGA cards. The unit retails for just under \$400 and comes with OS-9 2.4 and 3.0 (a subset with various replacement modules and utilities) and lets you piece together a very powerful OSK box for a small amount. This is *the* item of the Fest, offering speed close to that of an accelerated MM/1, with SVGA graphics and future support for Soundblaster and other PC hardware. (Note: this is the same hardware that is also sold by BlackHawk Enterprises as the MM/1b) Stan Scott's POS system was also shown.

THE SEMINARS

Here is a list of all the seminars that were scheduled:

Saturday:

11:00 — "LINUX — The FREE Operating System" by **Tom Kocourek**

Linux, a UNIX clone for x86 Intel based machines, was discussed in detail as an alternative to buying a PC and running DOS or Windows.

2:00 — "CoCo Disk Structure" by **Carl England**

Carl, who is famous for his various CoCo disk utilities (including The Defeater, a utility that will make a personal backup of, so far, ANY CoCo disk) discussed various aspects of RS-DOS and its disk format.

4:00 — "CoCo, MIDI, and Electronic Music" by **Mike Carey**

Topics covering the Stereo Composer, Orchestra-90, Musica, CoCo MIDI Pro, UltiMusE, and other items were discussed.

Sunday:

11:00 — "WCP306 (80306) and OSK / OS-9 v3.01" by **Bill Wittman**

Wittman Computer's head man opened the floor to discuss the WCP306 computer and some of the features of 3.0 OS-9. Please contact Bill Wittman for details (or David Graham at BlackHawk).

THE EVENINGS

I wish I had more to report about this year, but most of it consisted of walking across the street to eat at Waffle House with various friends. I suppose something that certainly should be mentioned involved comedy magicians Penn and Teller. From scanning a web site (yes, Microware finally gave me access to the internet!) I found that they would be performing in Atlanta the Fest weekend. So, instead of hitting the traditional laser show at Stone Mountain, a group of us decided to go see Penn and Teller perform.

Two vehicles — a rental driven by Dean Holder and his better half (who seems to be by his side at every Fest) along with Scott Griepentrog's minivan containing Carl Boll, myself, Joel Hegberg, and Paul Jerkatis. It seems (memory failing) that Dean also had another friend of theirs along. As with all Fest trips, there always has to be some kind of accident. This time, it was nearly missing a cutoff and both vehicles running *over* a lane divider, stalling out and — for a moment — really scaring us. Everything was okay, and we even made it to the show on time. (When am I going to learn not to ride with Scott?)

The performance was fantastic, featuring many items we'd seen on television specials as well as some classic and new material. Overall, we enjoyed the show very much and even got to meet and talk with the guy after the show. (Yes, Teller really does talk!) We got autographs and pictures taken, and Scott Griepentrog even got his pen-pad computer autographed. (Funny moment: Penn saw it. Penn is a computer enthusiast, famous for his former computer columns. He sees the thing and was immediately interested. He signed his name on the screen. "Ah, kinda slow" he commented as it didn't keep up with handwriting speeds :) It was a great thing indeed.

Joel and I have photos of ourselves with Penn and Teller to back this story up, also...

Anyway, other than this the rest of the evenings had more to do with drinking, playing darts, and generally having fun bounding from room to room checking out everyone's great new toys. No pranks were played on me this year — possibly since Terry Todd didn't make it to organize them.

SUMMARY

Attendance from vendors and members was very down, as it was in Chicago earlier this year. Unless we do something to restructure, it looks like we may finally be coming to the end of our legacy. At least the show was still more fun than any other way I'd rather spend a weekend!

RUMORS

None at this time. Actually, I'm sure there were some but I have since forgotten. Next time I won't lose my Fest booklet so I'll be better prepared for my Fest report.

THE RETURN

Boisy and I flew back to Iowa, making it the easiest "drive" home from any Fest I have attended (28 miles from the airport to where we live). Unfortunately, this leaves little room for stories about the return trip.

DISCLAIMER

I took no notes and lost my Fest booklet until March 1996. So, use any information in here at your own risk. Accuracy not even implied.

THANKS

Atlanta, Glenside, friends, partners, and Waffle House servers, I thank you greatly.

Allen C. Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software
COCO-SYSOP on GENie

coco-sysop@genie.geis.com on the Internet
www.pobox.com/~allenh on the World Wide Web
(515) XXX-XXXX (BBS, sometimes online)

GENIE INFO

General Electric sold GENie, which is now known as Genie. Rates have changed, but the Tandy/TRS-80 area still exists (for now). Until we find out exactly what is going to happen with it, I will not plug it in this report. You can thank me later :)...

FUTURE FESTS

Coming soon:

April 13 - 14 — Sixth Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest

ACS did good this year, putting in addresses, names, and (when possible) e-mail addresses for the vendors. Keep up the good work, and may Glenside do the same. I look forward to seeing everyone in Chicago.

THE END

Later...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research's K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha's own MiniBanners and MultiBoot. He has attended the last nine CoCoFests and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show.

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of '68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on GENie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

Allen took a position with Microware Systems Corporation in mid 1995 and now resides just outside of Des Moines, Iowa. His main computer continues to be his souped-up CoCo 3, with an MM/1 at its side, though an AT306 system is in the near future.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Well, darnit, Sub-Etha never did quite get turned over to anyone, though John Strong has the rights to sell my stuff.

It really is easy to drive someone nuts by talking about *Waffle House*. Turn someone like this loose in Atlanta and let them notice one at each and *every* highway exit and you'll have no problem seeing the symptoms.

It is strange re-reading this report and noticing the observations I made about how things had changed. This did indeed become the true "last" Atlanta Fest.

Even *I* am amazed at how many times I ate at *Waffle House* this year.

The meeting with Penn and Teller was a good one, and the first of a small line of famous folks I have now met, including Peter Tork (The Monkees), Riders in the Sky, Pinkard and Bowden, and Gallagher. And to think, this all started with a CoCoFest! (Interestingly enough, Peter Tork was actually *in* Atlanta within a week of this Fest and I had hoped to catch his show as well...)

1996 5th Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest

(April 13-14, Chicago, Illinois)
by Allen Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software
(4/17/96)

NOTE: Any discrepancies between what is contained in this report and what is real is not a first. This includes, but is not limited to, names, locations, events (and semaphores), and yellow crayons.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Fool me five times and, well, I don't really know what to do except, perhaps, go to another “last” CoCoFest. (Where's truth in advertising?)

TIMELINE

A suspect is in custody. They think he is the Unabomber. Meanwhile, Q makes an appearance on *Star Trek: Voyager*, and Microware stock goes public. Life, as they say, is good.

THE DRIVE

My journey to this year's Chicago CoCoFest was by aircraft. Not from Texas, though, nor even from Des Moines. I was working in San Jose, California for the week and my return flight on Saturday was scheduled to take me back to Iowa. Fortunately I was able to pay the difference (about one hundred dollars) and have it redeposit me at O'Hare where I would only have to find a ride to Elgin, location of this year's show (again).

Brother Jeremy was kind enough to meet me at the airport. Upon exiting the plane, I didn't spot the monk, though I suspected if he were around he would most certainly be easy to locate. I made a short walk down towards baggage claim and heard “Allen Huffman, please meet your party at baggage claim five”. This worked out nicely. I didn't even have to find out which one my luggage would be at. And, it also let me know where to meet the monk.

Timing was perfect all ways around. Even my luggage was already circulating around the loading platform. After a quick greeting, we headed down to the parking garage to locate the new monk-mobile (the previous station wagon was finally traded in). A slight trip out of the way trying to find the right road going West (you have to take East to find it apparently) and we were soon driving up to the Holiday Inn Elgin.

We hit two toll booths. No diesels hit us (see the *1993 Chicago CoCoFest* report).

THE ARRIVAL

I had no reservation but already had invitations to split rooms with John Strong or Brother Jeremy.

Since it was about 2:00 p.m. Saturday and the Fest was well underway, I left my gear in the car and we headed into the Fest area. This was the first time I ever had to pay at the door, so to speak, to get in. (Well, this isn't quite true. Sub-Etha was famous for showing up and paying for our booths at or during the show...) Familiar faces — and some not so familiar — were all around as the show immediately looked more busy than the Fests of 95.

I was swamped by about a dozen people greeting me and pulling me (almost literally) in various directions to see this, answer that, or hear the other. It was a great feeling being around my friends once more. Since I wasn't here for the Friday evening pre-show, I'll leave those details to someone else to submit. (hint, hint, hint...)

THE PRE-SHOW

I believe I just stated I'd leave these details to someone else. Read further, thank you.

THE SHOW AREA

The regular show area was setup as follows:

(See map on the following page.)

There was no map in this year's Fest booklet, so I hastily scribbled on the back of some printer paper and drew the basic room layout. So, any errors are certainly my fault.

There were about nineteen vendors to my count, though it looks like a few others were actually there mixed in (such as ChiCoCo BBS and the Chicago Area OS-9 Users Group).

And now ... the vendors:

Alan Dages — Our representative from the Atlanta Computer Society was there with various recycled CoCo items. There was no word as to if there would be an Atlanta CoCoFest this year. Those interested in visiting Atlanta during this Olympic year, please drop a note to the club.

Adventure Survivors — L.E. and Nan were there with a sign asking for help in solving Castle of Tharrogad (the CoCo 3 sequel to Dungeons of Daggorath). They have most everything mapped out, but still have a few parts of the maze to solve. Anyone who's done it, please contact them. And while you are at it, subscribe to their newsletter, which is full of adventure tips as well as general CoCo Community information. During the show, classic games such as Koronis Rift played on their setup, and I finally got to see just what happens when you win that game.

Chicago OS-9 Users Group — The localized OS-9 support group had their host BBS system on display.

ChiCoCo BBS — This was the host BBS. It was in a miniserver tower and is owned by Carl "What a Guy" Boll. The system runs a 6309 with NitrOS9, has dual high speed serial ports (16550), four hard drives, parallel port, PC keyboard, and more wires than one could comfortable count. It weighs in at a reported 150 pounds and is on wheels. Anyone want to challenge Carl for most powerful CoCo? I thought not...

1996 Chicago:

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CoCo Cellar — See Al Dages or R.C. Smith. More CoCo recyclables.

Digigrade Productions — Dave Pellerito was unable to get a ride to the show, so his table was empty. I did get to see his point and click MM/1 adventure game. For those familiar with the game *Myst* (on CD-i, PC, Jaguar, or other platforms), it's full screen digitized color pictures. Clicking on certain items leads you to other rooms, close-ups of objects, etc. It's a work in progress and there are plans to put it on a CD-ROM, making it the first MM/1 CD game.

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygert and his recent bride Tiffany were around offering the new *Mastering OS-9* book (the update of Paul Ward's *Start OS-9*) as well as rare (new)

KenTon RS-232 paks. The magazine has shrunk in size recently and needs your support. If you don't already subscribe, do so today. The publication will soon feature support for some mini controller boards like the HC11s in an effort to expand the reader base.

Glenside CoCo Club — The host club with two color T-shirts (which Sub-Etha was honored to be one of the four vendors listed in the artwork. The others included HawkSoft, Strongware, and FARNA). Many colors of Fest buttons were also available.

Of particular interest was Glenside's attempt to bring MIDI back to the CoCo. Rights have been established to produce the old CoCo MIDI hardware pak (sold by Speech Systems and Rulaford Research, among others). The paks were offered for \$20 and include MIDI IN, OUT, and through in a full size drive controller sized case. Stacks of these paks were sold at this amazing price, and I will most likely donate my old MIDI software (sold through Rulaford Research back in the 80's) to them.

HawkSoft — Chris and Nancy showed up again with CD-ROM drivers for OSK machines, sound editors, keyboard cables for the CoCo, and even an early peek at an MGR desktop manager item for the AT306 machines. If more of the classic OSK vendors jump onboard with MGR we may very well finally see the windowing applications we've been trying to pull out of K-Windows and MultiVue for years.

John Brown — Hazelwood Computer Systems were on hand with hardware and software, including some items not commonly seen at the CoCoFest. Originating from Texas, it figures we have someone else from down South attending when I'm no longer organizing the big vanloads of Fest travellers for the mega-trips.

Justin Time — Justin Wagner and more recycled CoCo items. (I should make a macro for this.)

Monk-O-Ware — Brother Jeremy made his first official Fest appearance, showing the old CoCo prototypes he has collected, and something very few have ever heard of — an ETHERNET ADAPTER for the CoCo 3, complete with ROM that powered up wanting to connect with a network. What was this device for? Who made it? Why? There and many other questions can only be answered by those who aren't telling.

Also on display was a very interesting version of OS-9, featuring RESIZABLE windows that could be moved anywhere on the screen or shrunken down to icons. Several graphical demos ran at the same time, all on a stock 6809 system. Hopefully some of the items shown here will inspire the NitROS9 authors to move towards adding this kind of functionality to it.

MIDI Demonstration Corner — Loud, powerful and impressive. And that's all I have to say about that.

Northern eXposure — Ken Scales and Colin McKay made the trek downwards, but Alan DeKok was unable to join. He was left at the airport when he couldn't prove he was born (no birth certificate on him, nor a passport). It's a pity we aren't more open with our northern neighbors.

NX was taking orders for the AT keyboard adapter — if enough are requested, they will make another batch. The latest version of NitROS9 was also available, and the patches that

have been done in the last month or so are staggering. Text and graphics screens are greatly accelerated (faster than stock MM/1 screens). In fact, the CoCo at 1.83 MHz scrolls text under NitrOS9 now much faster than a 386/16 MHz under MS-DOS that I saw just the other evening. Intel inside. Heh.

OS-9 Users Group — This organization publishes the MOTD newsletter and is currently developing a master library of all the OS9UG software as well at the Fidonet hosted OS-9 Community Network (OCN) libraries. It's a wealth of information for OS-9 users, both hobby and industrial. I rejoined.

R.C. Smith — Another Georgian offering recycled computer items. 'nuf said. I don't often pay much attention at the hardware tables, so there are probably some interesting items I missed noticing.

Ron Bull — Representing Rick Cooper (and would have been offering Sub-Etha Software had I made the masters in time), Ron Bull was on hand often assisted by Paul Zimalla...Zimbila...Zomballa...(something like that). Ron and Paul both have interesting new CoCo repacks, and Paul is offering his repack service and other upgrades to those interested.

S-BUG of Los Angeles — Another fixture of the Fests, Andre LaVelle was around with hard drives, floppies, books, ROM-paks, and other gadgets. I picked up another floppy drive from him, and also have my eye on some printer buffers (128K) he has. Of interest, Andre has a stack of the old CoCo protoboards for the expansion port — ready to be stuffed and wire wrapped for the CoCo hacker wanting to build custom circuits. It's been quite a while since I have seen these. For old times' sake, I picked up a 3.5" floppy drive with mounting kit for my CoCo (deja vu from the 1993 Mid America Iowa Fest).

Strongware — John Strong, Charlie, Don Adams and, well, the entire Team OS-9 crew were around to show CoCo games and MM/1 drawing programs. SPaint has been updated recently in it's continuing evolution towards completion. CoCo HPrint font editors, and puzzler games such as GEMS (Columns) and Soviet Bloc (Tetris) are still available.

Wittman Computer Products — Bill Wittman was showing off his collection of OSK software as well at the WCP306, a 16 MHz OS-9 computer that accepts PC hardware such as VGA and Soundblaster cards. A demo was shown of MGR, a public domain windowing system that is being ported to the 306 machines. It's very slow at this point, but shows much promise, including great font support. You could create multiple shell boxes on the screen, and change the fonts on the fly with sizes from tiny to jumbo. Also seen briefly was an HTML (you know, the stuff WEBS are made of) viewer on the MM/1, and fax software.

LaFax lets you send or receive high resolution faxes and print or display them using Ghostscript. I saw a sample that was transmitted from a PostScript file via the MM/1 to a fax machine and the resolution was incredible — much better than what you can do with a dedicated entry level fax machine.

Bill Wittman is also carrying Zack Session's card games and other goodies, so look him up for a catalog. WCP continues to be the leader of professional presentations at the Fests,

including complete point of sale systems running under OSK with barcode readers and receipt printers.

Other Fest mentionables included nice vinyl vendor signs which were hung from the ceiling with care, as last year, and the year before. Tables were clothed with white coverings. Vendors and attendees sported different colored name badges, and shopping bags with multicolored Fest booklets were handed out at admissions.

SOMETHING WORTH MENTIONING

Something worth mentioning was “WANTED” posters made up and displayed in various locations around (and even outside of) the Fest location. A digitized picture of Terry Simons (of the Mid Iowa & Country CoCo Club) was posted for the “orphanware” items his club distributes. While most people (including Terry) will acknowledge the legal issues of copying software (whether it be 15 years old and no longer available anywhere else, or otherwise), some are going further to make statements about this (which has, reportedly, brought enough attention to the act to actually increase activity. Bad publicity seems to have that side effect most of the time. Ban a book because it’s improper, and see if it goes to the best sellers list.)

Also published in the Fest booklets was a two page letter from Eric Crichlow entitled “Our Community Is In Danger.” I would include the entire text here if I felt like typing it all in, but instead I’ll just quote some of the lines. Basically, the message said that Terry and Eric had met face to face and, according to Eric, Terry said that if a copyright holder wanted his software removed from their “orphanware” library that the club might or might not do so depending upon how important they thought the software was. I spoke with Terry about these comments and he tells a different version of what he actually said, so feel free to do your own research, claiming it was a hypothetical situation not based on anything that might actually happen. Terry points out that he can’t see any CoCo software so irreplaceable to be worthy of these actions, though he admits ColorWare’s Max items come close (and the club still has many *original* copies to sell used). I don’t have any reason to believe either party would lie, so I suspect some miscommunication has happened here. Since this is my report <g> I’ll just say I have no personal fears of Terry ever adding any of my software to his library against my will (and I’m not even a member of the club, though I was up until a year ago or so).

Other comments mentioned that the activities of the club were “driving more software authors away than any other event in this community’s history.” While perhaps some have indeed left due to “orphanware” (I cannot say either way), I would personally like to muse that Tandy discontinuing the CoCo several years ago probably had a slightly greater impact in making authors leave our market. But then, I think like that sometimes :)

The letter ended with a plea for members and supporters of this club to “distance themselves away [sic?] from the MI&CC, the Upgrade magazine and Terry Simons, and to shift their support to the more reputable national Color Computer organizations, such as the fine groups which continue to make Chicago and Atlanta Fests possible.”

While no specific clubs were mentioned, I’ll add that the Atlanta Computer Society and Glenside Color Computer Club are great ones to belong to. While I don’t believe any other existing CoCo group offers as much for Disk BASIC members of our community as MI&CC (since the fact is that

the other clubs are primarily OS-9 related), there are other RS-DOS items out there such as Rick Cooper's CoCo Friends disk collection and his new CoCo Report printed newsletter. If you are unhappy with the practice of a club you belong to, just remember that there are other options for support. Don't give up!

The letter concluded "Long live our community. Eric Crichlow, CoCo/OS-9/OSK programmer, supporter and enthusiast". This was followed by a one-paragraph disclaimer from Glenside, stating that "This was an article paid for by Eric Crichlow himself. It is the policy of the Glenside Color Computer Club to prohibit any type of software piracy as noted elsewhere in this Fest Guide. The Publisher and Editors of the Fest Guide felt that this article was in keeping with the club's policies and is solely responsible for the article's being published."

Food for thought. However, no matter how "bad" things are in our community, I still feel we have the best group of people to be found. Even during the days of The Inner Circle and other mass pirate groups, I suspect our percentage of piracy versus sold products was still small compared to many other platforms. And, indeed, we have survived longer than these other platforms. I think that says a lot for the type of people we attract and keep, so many years after the end of our "TV set computer" era.

THE SEMINARS

Seminars were not listed in the booklet, but here is what we came up with from memory. Question marks indicate memory failures, possibly due to bad parity bits.

Saturday:

?:?: — "MIDI on the CoCo"

This seminar was apparently about MIDI on the CoCo.

?:?: — "No Minimum Bid Auction"

What do you expect for a buck? (or less)

?:?: — "Frank Swygert on the CoCo Community"

FARNA speaks out on where we are headed.

?:?: — "Open OS-9 Forum moderated by **John Strong**"

Items such as a web page containing links to all OS-9 sites as well as other future projects were put into motion.

?:?: — "OS-9 Users Group Fest Meeting"

Discussions of plans to compile a master library of all known OS-9 shareware from the U.S. and overseas, as well as putting the OS-9 Users Group scholarship program into motion.

Sunday:

08:45 — "**Brother Jeremy**'s Sunday Service"

Our own monk, Brother Jeremy, held a non-denominational prayer service for those who

wish to join and worship. It was later than previous years and I was able to attend without being too late. A first for me, and a very nice experience.

?:?? — “MIDI on the CoCo”

Not sure what this one was about.

?:?? — “No Minimum Bid Auction”

It was a little yellow, but it was free.

THE EVENINGS

After shutting down on Saturday, I spent the evening talking with friends in the bar and playing darts (unlike past years, I actually won a game or two). Though not as packed as previous years there was still enough people to keep things interesting. There were also dinner plans at a local brewpub/restaurant which was costly and only marginally enjoyable for myself. Their brew was nice, though, and the atmosphere was great. We had 28 people at the main table (with a few other tables around us with friends of the organizer, Paul Jerkatis) and the total bill was just under \$700. Due to not taking into consideration Illinois taxes, it looks like Paul paid more than his fair share. I suppose that's okay. He makes good money somehow linked to cardboard...er, corrugated boxes.

Later that night a group of us were able to call Scott Griepentrog (Mr. StG-Net) in Australia where he was stuck working and making incredible amounts of money. This was one of the first Fests he has missed, and it was sad not having him around to amaze us with his toys. I was able to find out about his latest gadget — a video still camera. Later, in Paul's room, we saw some pictures taken by Scott and uploaded to Paul via the internet. Ah, technology.

Sunday evening was a split between the traditional Mongolian Barbecue and some form of country buffet. Since Mongolian was a drive away, and since Scott Griepentrog (its founder) wasn't here, many of us went instead to the buffet to eat all we could. Dinner was typical of Fest gatherings, though tables keep getting longer and longer each time to hold even more people than the year before. After this, farewells were said and we parted company one more time. Shows get smaller, the dinners get larger. The logic here amazes me.

SUMMARY

It looked like more people were here than the shows of 1995 which is a good sign. A few less vendors than last year, which is a bad sign. How well the vendors did I do not know since, for once, I wasn't one of them. However, things were good enough for Glenside to announce a show NEXT YEAR, April 5-6th I believe. Indeed. Will this ever end?

It was fun, and probably better than the last two shows. Still, some people were missed. I personally missed Budgetware since I still have money to spend with them when they finally show back up...

RUMORS

MM/1 HTML. A GUI for the 306. EthaWin library for termcap (yes, pulldown menus and stuff for non MM/1 OSK boxes). File managers for writable CD-ROMs. CoCo IDE. 1-800 CoCo information hotline. OS-9000 for the masses. And more...

THE RETURN

After Sunday dinner, I caught a ride with Joel Hegberg. The five hour drive home took us through Dekalb to visit with Dave Pellerito and find out why he didn't get to attend. The rest of the trip was uneventful, sparked only by hearing a few new remakes of the famous Saturday morning Schoolhouse Rock songs (Conjunction Junction, and the adverbs song). Ah, life is good.

We arrived back in Waukee (a little town right outside of Des Moines) around 2:00 a.m. with enough time to sleep a few hours before reporting to work the next morning.

DISCLAIMER

I sorta took notes, but that doesn't mean anything. Let me insert a generic disclaimer here instead:

I know nothing.

THANKS

Thanks, Glenside, for continuing support where others have stopped. Thanks John Strong for allowing me to split the room with you. Thanks Adventure Survivors for the wine. Thanks Colin McKay for the "extended credit" offer. Thanks Brother Jeremy for the friendship and the ride. Thanks to those taking a stand against software piracy. And thanks to everyone else who I've not included here for not griping about it.

Allen C. Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software

COCO-SYSOP on Genie

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FUTURE FESTS

The only scheduled Fest is Chicago 1997, though there was talk of a possible summerfest in PA or maybe some kind of Georgia based microfest.

Summer 1996 — ??? ??? ???

April 5-6, 1997 — 7th Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest!

Fest planners, contact me. We need to talk.

SPECIAL OFFER

I will help raise funds to get a "name brand" CoCo guru to the next Fest. Someone such as Kevin Darling, Marty Goodman, Steve Bjork or the like would certainly be a nice addition and potential traffic draw. Any club want to get in touch with me about this?

THE END

Until we meet again...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research's K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha's own MiniBanners and Towel. He has attended ever CoCoFest since 1990 and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show.

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of '68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on Genie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

Allen now works for Microware as a technical training engineer teaching OS-9 classes and lives just outside of Des Moines, Iowa with his CoCos (1, 2 and 3), MM/1 (now with I/O Board), and OS-9000 Toshiba laptop. And a small pet rock.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In my opening disclaimer, the comment about "events (and semaphores)" is in reference to OS-9 system events and semaphores which I was then teaching in classes for Microware. OS-9 V2.4 for the MM/1 was before semaphores (by name) were added, so I suspect few would have gotten the reference so now I wonder why I bothered to put it in.

The yellow crayon is credited to Joel Hegberg, who presented on to Boisy Pitre later in the show. Read on to find out *why* he did such a thing.

Brother Jeremy had wanted O'Hare to page me with "please meet your monk" but, even in Chicago, they wouldn't do it! And he was in his "work outfit" at the time which should have indicated that he was either 1) very odd or 2) a monk.

The whole Terry Simons / Orphanware thing was beaten to death on the internet CoCo mailing list, but I would like to add that Mid Iowa and Country CoCo Club ceased its operations a year or so ago and poses no more threats to those who feared them. End of story. While Terry Simons can be a hard guy to get along with if you use OS-9, he's still a very interesting individual and quite fun. He also knows quite a bit about CoCo history and helped contribute to this book, even providing me with a CD of Fest photos he has taken.

In the "No Minimum Bid Auction" section is the comment "It was a little yellow, but it was free" which must be credited to Boisy Pitre upon his acquisition of a MultiPak interface. For some reason it just seemed funny at the time. Actually, it still seems a bit funny *at this time!*

1997 6th Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest

(April 26-27, Chicago, Illinois)
by Allen Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software
(05/01/97)

NOTE: Any discrepancies between what is contained in this report and what actually happened, especially on Sunday, is probably due to a drink known as the Yukon Snake Bite. (See also: Paul Jerkatis, Carl Boll)

Sometimes I think I must feel the same frustrations science fiction comedy author Douglas Adams does. For those not hoopy enough to know, Adams is responsible for the *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, which began as a BBC radio programme in England back in the very late 70's and then evolved into books, a record set, comic books, trading cards, made-for-TV mini-series (also on BBC, and as cheesy as *Dr. Who* but with better jokes), computer game, and so on. Adams, you see, is always being asked to write special “introductions” to his various works when they get republished. For the 10th anniversary of the *Original Radio Scripts* he was asked, again, to write (another) introduction, which seemed odd since he’d already written an introduction when they were originally published a decade ago.

My point? Well, perhaps there isn’t one, but I do have a profound feeling of *deja vu* all over again when I find it’s time to write yet another “last” Fest report. And, frankly, I really thought this would be the last time I would get to sit down on my CoCo, fire up NitrOS9, load up Ved, and begin typing. But, again, it seems I am wrong. Apparently the good guys at the Glenside Color Computer Club don’t understand the rather unique nature of the word “last” which, according to my Webster pocket dictionary (modern revision), is defined as follows:

last — *adv.* final, latest

Part of this, taken literally, might work since this was the “latest” CoCoFest. But we still have a problem with “final.”

last — *n.* block for molding shoes

Though this offers me a chance to make reference to a scene from the Hitchhiker trilogy (now up to five books) concerning the Shoe Event Horizon (which explains why there are so many shoe stores), I won’t. Instead, I’ll refer to the use of the word as in “Last Annual Chicago CoCoFest” as to not being a noun and therefore not really having anything to do with shoes whatsoever.

last — *vi.* endure, continue

Ah, now we are getting somewhere. Certainly, the Color Computer seems to “endure” (*vi.* & *vt.* last, which always bothers me when one word uses another word to define it whose own definition uses

the original word) the tests of time (lost yet?), and they certainly do seem to have a way to “continue” (remain, prolong, persist in) to happen again, and again, and again. Thus, by this definition, I can finally rest at ease and feel comfortable with using the term “last” in regards to a Glenside sponsored CoCoFest. Regardless of the outcome, whether there is another or is not, “last” does, now, seem appropriate. I would therefore like to apologize for my very brief introduction to my last 1996 “Last” Chicago CoCoFest report in which I made the remark “Where’s truth in advertising?” partially because I hadn’t, at that point, unpacked my dictionary and partially for the fact that I was just plain incorrect.

For those of you still with me, I thank you. Now, sit back, and enjoy what may come to be known as my “last” annual Chicago CoCoFest report.

TIMELINE

The trial for the Oklahoma bombing is underway. O.J. wants another trial himself. Microsoft (pardon me) celebrates amazing profits, while Apple continues to lose money. Microware pushes forward its digital television standard and the new OS-9 based Uniden “Axis” e-mail telephone is about to be released.

Unfortunately, “surfing the web” continues to be a rather over-used buzzword and Beanie Babies are yet another unexplained craze.

THE DRIVE

Unlike the past two Fests I attended (1995 Atlanta and 1996 Chicago), I didn’t make this one by way of aircraft. I managed to be “home” here in Des Moines, Iowa and seeing that Elgin, Illinois was just a mere 300 or so miles away I chose to load up my trusty Honda Civic (in spite of my better judgement due to past encounters with toll roads and diesels in Chicago) and make the trek on my own.

Boisy Pitre, along with James Jones, had annually made this journey, though this year it didn’t look as if Boisy would be in town (he now lives back home in Louisiana). So, I made tentative plans to make the journey with James. In the final week before the Fest, Boisy was brought into Des Moines for work, so together they could make their pilgrimage eastward and pay homage to the film entity known as *Luther the Geek* which, for the life of me, I couldn’t explain if I had to. At some point I suppose I will actually go see if I can find this movie and rent it.

I took Friday off, and packed all of my goodies up on Thursday night. I took virtually everything I could, including my full CoCo system (with SyQuest EZ135 removable hard drives) and MM/1, as well as various odds and ends I wanted to get rid of at the Fest (such as my no longer needed SCSI drives and several new in-the-box Plug-N-Power interfaces which I thought Chris Hawks might enjoy). I even managed to locate the former Sub-Etha Software vinyl banner and roll it up for the journey. It should be noted that for this trip I did *not* forget my bathrobe, something which, due to doing that a few times, has made me lose considerable froodness with fellow Hitchhikers.

On Friday morning I awoke very, very early so I could promptly return to sleep. (This, of course, meant I didn’t get to caravan with Boisy and James, but that’s a small price to pay for a few extra hours of sleep.) A few extra hours of sleep later I awoke and hastily started loading up my Civic

hatchback. There was a time in my life when I could do this with such precision that I even amazed myself, but due to making the past few years worth of trips in vans, rental cars, and aircraft, I seemed to have lost my touch. Through some odd effect of quantum storage physics, I managed to load the poor little import down, complete with a full case of Jolt Cola(tm) and a bag of assorted caffeinated water products (See also: Krank2O, Aqua Java, and Water Joe).

For a little over a year I have owned a Toshiba laptop (which does run OS-9000, but also that rather popular, bulky, and slow GUI from two years ago), and I was bringing it along for the trip complete with a DeLorme “Tripmate” global satellite positioning system sitting on the dashboard and plugged into the serial port. This enabled me to do something I don’t often get to do: make a trip and NOT get lost. During my five hour drive, the little arrow tracked my position and speed direct to the parking lot of the hotel (which I found simply by entering the address into the computer). I don’t think K.I.T.T. (See also: *Knight Rider*) could have done it any better.

The drive itself was totally uneventful. No jokes, no running gags, no really cool rest areas. It’s just not the same making the journey without Sub-Etha founding partner Terry Todd (or Mark Page, or Tim Johns, or a vanload of CoCo pals), which helped to further depress me about the impending “last” Fest I was approaching. Due to the nature of the route, I wouldn’t even get to stop at the Funk’s Grove rest area and buy some chicken soup-like drinks from the vending machine. Sigh.

At around 6:00 p.m. (and several toll booths) I gracefully missed the exit directly in front of the hotel, and decided to let my computer map guide me there using an alternate route. As I drove down a side street, a rental car pulls up beside me and honks. By an odd chance, it happened to contain Boisy and James! It’s a small world after all (See also: Disneyland). They informed me they had already been to the Red Roof Inn (where everyone was staying due to the Holiday Inn not having any rooms) and were on their way back to the Fest site. Since they had a map, I followed. A few blocks later, my computer indicated they weren’t actually going in a direction which would take them to the Fest site, so I headed out on my own, crossed a river, and twisted my way back into the parking lot that I had originally missed the exit to originally. To their credit, their paper map returned them safely as well, just a bit later.

THE ARRIVAL

As with many Fests, I had no idea what I would do when I arrived. Walking through the hotel, it was obvious that Holiday Inn thought more of the “toy show” convention they were hosting than us even after four years of returning to them. All the inside rooms had windows open with, oddly, old collectable toys in them. Usually at this time they would have CoCos and MM/1s on display. The show area was open, and I was able to meet and greet the Fest regulars. Inside the show area, the full location wasn’t being used. Instead of the regular floor area, about 1/4 of it was walled out. This portion was accessible from the outside and became the seminar room, which actually worked out quite nicely.

It was interesting to finally meet Markus Blumrich, a Canadian who seemed to pop up out of nowhere this past year with his TRS-80 CoCo page on the internet. His page contains more CoCo information, links, and screen shots than any other attempt so far. Markus made the trip down and was seen roaming the show with a backpack over one shoulder and a camcorder in his hand, capturing images

from the Fest, many of which were placed on his web site just days after the show ended. Markus' CoCo page has had over eleven THOUSAND hits, which is quite a bit for a page devoted to a "useless and obsolete" home computer, don't you think? Meanwhile, back to the report...

I had no idea where I would end up staying, but fellow OS-9 Monk, Brother Jeremy, had offered me part of his room, as did John Strong. I'm always glad that the CoCo has made me as many friends as it has.

To make a long story a bit longer, I unloaded all of my gear into the Strongware booth (since they are now dealing the Sub-Etha CoCo software), and roamed around looking for others. After helping Scott Griepentrog unload a bit from his van, a group of us headed out for dinner at T.G.I. Fridays (which another group headed back over to the Red Roof Inn for pizza).

*I would like to point out that my friend from Lufkin, Texas, **Alex Forrest**, was able to make this trip! His folks and he made the long, long drive from East Texas to Elgin, so at least, to some extent, the tradition lived on. (Alex had previously made the van journey to Atlanta in, I believe, 1994). It was great having Alex around, especially since he was one of the only remaining CoCo users in East Texas and I hadn't seen him since I moved to Iowa in 1995.*

THE PRE-SHOW

Due to "situations beyond their control," Holiday Inn didn't have rooms for us (construction, they claimed, but I saw very little proof of that other than a drained pool), the pre-show didn't happen. People we staying at various different hotels (the Adventure Survivors at another Holiday Inn, many of us at Red Roof, and still others at the Budgetel), which meant for the first time ever at a Fest, the bar was empty of CoCo people on Friday night! So, after dinner, small groups met in hotel rooms at the Red Roof (which didn't even have a lobby or restaurant or bar or...) to chat and goof off.

Brother Jeremy had bought his electric guitar, and I had my acoustic, so we jammed through all hours of the night singing and playing everything from gospel to classic rock of the 50's and 60's. And, surprisingly, none of the neighbors complained! (For the record, Brother Jeremy turns out to be a very capable guitarist, harmonica player, and vocalist, holding back to his band-days before he dropped that habit for another one...) I hadn't had that much fun with music in many, many years. My thanks to Brother J., and my apologies to John Strong for us never making it back up to his room (though, with the volume of things considered, perhaps that wasn't such a bad thing after all).

THE SHOW AREA

The regular show area was setup as follows:

(See map on the following page.)

The Fest booklet wasn't in booklet form this year, and no map was included (again), and, alas, I forgot to make my own so it is very likely that I may have put some of the vendors in the wrong locations. However, if you are reading this and were not at this Fest, it seems very likely that you won't be able to tell so I'll just move along...

Fourteen official vendors were there, but several others were represented (such as FARNA Systems vending the CoCo 3 emulator for Rick Cooper who is in turn vending it for the author Jeff Vavasour),

and

1997 Chicago:

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+-----+
|                                     |StrongWare   Q-Box                                     | |
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|                                     |             XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX S-Bug         |
|                                     |             X                                           X           |
| Seminar Room                       |Cloud-9 X                                           X           |
|                                     |             X                                           X R.C.      |
|                                     |             X                                           X Smith     |
|                                     |             X                                           X           |
|                                     |             X                                           X           |
|                                     |             X                                           X Justin    |
|-----+                               X                                           X Time      |
| Luckey Corner                       FARNA         MIDI X                                           X           |
|                                     Systems       Men X                                           X           |
|                                     XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX           X           |
| Al X                                           X           |
| Dages X                                           X           |
| X                                           X           |
|                                     XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX           XXXXXXXXXXXX |
| Monk-O-Ware Adventure Survivors HawkSoft X           X Glenside |
|                                     (Beenie Babies) X           X CoCo   |
|                                     X                                           X Club (Burke&Burke) |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
|                                     |-----|-----|.....|-----+
|                                     X                                     |
|                                     X Registration                       |
|                                     X & Ron Bull                           |
|                                     XXXXXXXXXXXX                               |

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Glenside having the Burke and Burke goodies (which haven't been seen in "new" form at a Fest in years).

While last year's show has 19 vendors setup, this show "felt" like it had as many if not more.

And now ... the vendors:

Alan Dages — From the land of the Waffle House (that's Georgia, though he's actually in Stone Mountain), Al and his better looking half made the journey with a table of odds and ends, including Al's own accelerated MM/1 which he is letting go for a very good

price.

Adventure Survivors — L.E. and Nan from Peachtree, Georgia, also made the trip with their adventure-related newsletter. Of bizarre interest this year was Nan's collection of Beanie Babies (those cute critters found in small versions at McDonald's currently, if you can find a store with any left). Much to my amazement, she sold all but, I believe, two of the fifty or so she brought along. This has got to take the prize in the category of "Most Unlikely Item to be Sold (to Great Success) at a CoCoFest." By the end of Sunday, it seemed that everyone had one in their pocket, purse, or sitting on their shoulder.

Cloud-9 — Mark Marlette, hacker extreme (Turbo 2000 Deluxe Edition :) was showing of some surprising new CoCo hardware prototypes. There was an all-in-one 2 meg upgrade (which plugs into the 512K RAM expansion plugs and the CPU socket), and a new SCSI interface which correctly supports hardware parity, which is needed for devices such as the Iomega ZIP drive, which he had running on the CoCo! The software also supported the full set of SCSI IDs. I really hope these items can be put into production, since I want one of each.

FARNA Systems — Frank Swygert and his lovely (but don't tell her I said this) wife Tiffany were there taking subscriptions to *the world of 68' micros* as well as offering some of Alan DeKok's products including: the NEW NitrOS9 version 2.0, TuneUp (patches for stock OS-9 on a 6809), Thexder/OS-9, Shanghai/OS-9, Rusty (launch disk basic programs from an OS-9 hard drive), among others. The latest version of NitrOS9 offers even more tweaks and enhancements over the former 1.22 releases. Please note that since it is a major release, no upgrade path is available. However, I think all of us using NitrOS9 should not hesitate to reimburse Alan for his amazing efforts these past few years with this product. (Oh, I should also point out that Curtis Boyle, one of the original NitrOS9 developers, was also seen roaming this show as well!)

Frank was also selling and registering copies of the CoCo 3 emulator, which is now being handled by Rick's Computer Enterprises. Both the shareware CoCo 2 emulator and "commercial" CoCo 3 emulator have been recently updated. The CoCo 3 version now emulates a two meg CoCo and also supports a virtual hard drive under OS-9 (up to four gigabytes in size, the max OS-9 Level 2 can address). There is also support for writing native x86 assembly "drivers" from the emulator. What a world of possibilities we now have! I personally picked up three copies — one for myself, one for a former CoCo-er friend of mine, Tika (who was the original emulator OS-9 beta-tester for Jeff), and one for a legendary CoCo game program who I won't name since I want it to be a surprise when I send it to him. Heh, maybe I can coax him into writing another CoCo game "for old time's sake"...

Glenside Color Computer Club — The host club had buttons reading "Just Say NO to MS-DOS," "OS-9 Forever," among others, in all kinds of colors. Great multi-color T-shirts were there with the "Music, MIDI, and Mayhem" logo on it, and Burke and Burke items were available, complete with docs and even schematics for the old B&B hard drive interface! Now is the chance to pick up some of the Burke and Burke utilities you may have missed out on (such as File System Repack or the EXCELLENT EZgen)

since they are shareware. If you do obtain a copy, PLEASE send Chris Burke a donation and let him know that we are still here appreciating his past efforts!

HawkSoft — Chris and Nancy Hawks showed up again with a new surprise — a PPP package for OSK! It allowed you to dial into an internet provider (supporting PPP), then do things such as telnet and FTP. Since this code was basically engineered from the KA9Q package, Chris didn't feel he could charge for it. The disks were available for \$3 each and he sold out. With that many copies out there, maybe we'll finally see an MM/1 surf the web... (On a side note, I have now personally surfed the web on two different OS-9 platforms using two different browsers — it can be done!)

Justin Time — Justin Wagner had tons of spare hardware items to sale. What else can I say?

Luckey Corner — Howard Luckey and Carl Boll had a table and were showing off some neat new CoCo items, including Roger Taylor's new Projector 3 (P-3) image viewing program. Demos of it were available in nice envelope packages for only \$1. This program does AMAZING dithering on the CoCo and produces very high quality (surprisingly high quality is another way to word that) displays on a standard CoCo color display! Even with a limited on-screen palette of 16 colors, I was amazed at how great the pictures looked from across the room. Only when you got close could you realize how much amazing dithering was going on. This item is for RS-DOS and is a MUST HAVE for anyone who wants to view images. It even displays ANIMATED GIF images (very popular on the internet these days). (On a side note, Curtis Boyle mentioned he had a version of “view” for OS-9 that also handled animated GIFs...)

Also at this booth was the new up-and-coming CoCo-IDE interface, shown in various stages from early prototype wire wrap to a near complete demo version. The interface is long and plugs into the side of the CoCo. There is a connector for plugging a standard floppy controller into it, as well as an “expansion bus” which could be used to add an RS-232 port of some kind, for instance. The interface is going to be made (possibly only ONE run of boards) by Glenside and due to the non-profit nature of the club, the selling price will be around \$30—\$40. It will come with drivers for 6809 and 6309 written by Alan DeKok, and will be made available in kit form and completed form. Finally! Special thanks to Jim Hathaway for designing this creature.

Monk-O-Ware — Brother Jeremy was basically there to show off his prototype CoCo 3 collection, CoCo ethernet card (which may or may not have ever been officially manufactured), and the “rumored” OS-9 Level 2 upgrade (with moveable, resizable windows). At his booth was Rick Uland of CoNect, with his Fast232 packs for sale. I wonder if he sold out AGAIN?

Music Men — Brian Schubring had several thousand watts of audio power and more MIDI sound modules than one could comfortably tolerate cranking out tunes all weekend. Mike Knudsen was on hand with his latest version of UltiMusE, which is now shareware. UltiMusE has evolved so much over the past years and I was VERY impressed to see what it's capable of from the sheet-music side of things! Output to standard MIDI, notes that are tied together (unlike the Musica days), and many more professional features made

me, once again, exclaim “that’s being done on a CoCo/MM/1?” The sound system at this table was also used for the impromptu CoCoFest Jam Session held Saturday night.

Q-Box — Another group of “orphaned” computer users, this time showing off very interesting Sinclair products of the past. Very interesting. It seems the CoCo isn’t the only loved system of the past with a following in this modern world of WinTel.

R.C. Smith — R.C. had tons of CoCo goodies, and was offering complete used CoCo systems for \$200, including CoCo, multipak, monitor, etc. I should have picked one up since it appears my CoCo suffered some damage during the past few days and is now acting up. Hindsight is 20/20 I suppose.

S-BUG of Los Angeles — Andre LaVelle made it here again with harder to find 720K and 360K floppies and drives. His new gadget this year were printer buffer/extenders, which let you hook a computer to a printer in one room, then run a small telephone cable across your building to where the printer actually was. I picked up one of these and a serial to parallel converter (and blank disks, and a floppy drive, and...).

Strongware — John Strong and his crew were on hand and, oddly, Charlie didn’t pick on me hardly at all this Fest. Many copies of Soviet Block and GEMS were sold at this year’s show, as well as a few copies of Sub-Etha items which they were vending. A sneak preview of “projects to come” was briefly shown including title screens and layouts for an upcoming adventure game project being done in conjunction with Strongware and myself.

A free Jolt Cola(tm) was given away with any purchase, and they sold out of custom-made “Team OS-9” mouse pads.

Ron Bull was on hand outside the Fest area taking vendor applications for the Pennsylvania CoCoFest which happens in early August of 1997. Several vendors committed to attending, as well as many Fest goers. He also had on display my Fest Photo Album featuring pictures from many of the CoCoFests from 1990 onwards. “Confirmed” rumor has it that, as of this writing, more vendors are signed up for the PA show than made it to Chicago.

THE SEMINARS

A very healthy assortment of seminars this year!

Saturday:

11:00 — “CoCo Peripherals” — **Rick Uland**

Rick arrived late and, I believe, missed this :)

1:00 — “The New IDE Hard Drive: Why and How to Use It” — **Carl Boll**

I think this title is self-explanatory. The prototype display drew quite a bit of attention.

2:00 — “Professional Shareware, and New Hardware” — **Karl Sefcik**

3:00 — “Keynote Address” — **Dennis Bathory-Kitsz**

This was a rare page in CoCo history — the return of a historic figure in the CoCo’s past. Dennis ran Green Mountain Micro, which advertised in Rainbow back in the early 80’s, promoting things such as 6809 tutorials, EPROM burners and lower case boards. Dennis

gave a VERY energetic talk dealing with the historical days of his former company, and also explaining some of the tragedies that befell it. It seems that he resurfaced in our Community and discovered the CoCo emulators (the first command he tried, after the excitement of seeing the old flashing cursor, was, of course “PRINT MEM”) and someone asked him nicely if he’d be interested in attending and the rest is yet another page in CoCo history. (I seem to be having this feeling of *deja vu* again.)

Quite a bit of his speech involved some of the more unusual projects he used the CoCo in. He is a performer with over 500 compositions to his credit. Before the advent of home computers, he envisioned using computers for music and even designed a piece with the intention of having electronic music play a part in it. It was years later before technology allowed him to experiment in these fields. The easy sound of the Color Computer made in an attractive machine to pursue. CoCos were used in various performance projects including a kinetic room (with custom ROMed, networked CoCos) which had computers triggering sounds based on the presence of people in the room, simulating the interaction of, to the best of my ability to express it, natural surroundings. (He used the example of crickets and how they quiet when you get nearby, but begin again when you get away, and other animals that “growl” or warn you when you get too close.) This was but one of the MANY CoCo related projects he discussed, including a never—performed (with the computer, anyway) piece involving computer generated poetry.

Dennis had many historical pieces of information with him, such as lists of the assembly code for his old projects (which he wanted to bring but the EPROMS seem to have gone bad), lowerkit board prototypes, and a few remaining copies of a book he co-wrote, which I now have in autographed form.

He also offered much insight into the former days of *Color Computer Magazine*, and what happened to it when Ziff-Davis “purchased” it and shut it down. He also discussed his involvement with the follow-up, *Undercolor*, and its fate as well. The current status of many of his former CoCo-mates was also discussed, including his board solderer (whose name I forget) who now is a carpenter.

It’s very difficult to even touch on how much he covered. He was VERY funny, very energetic, and full of concepts and ideas for all the CoCos that we still have lying around, such as: HTML server (why use a massive desktop, he says), an amusing “pet door” controller which opens the doggy door only when your dog (with its sensor collar) comes near it, and many, many others.

Copies of his *Learning the 6809* were sold at the Glenside booth as well, further bringing back some items from the past. It seems that Dennis is yet another great individual who will forever have a place for the CoCo in his heart.

I would VERY, VERY much like for someone who took notes at this seminar to write a full review of the topics he discussed. I feel I have only marginally done justice to it, and hope I don’t offend Dennis or anyone else with my oversights. A very, very special thank you to all those involved with getting him out there, and to Dennis Bathory-Kitsz for attending.

4:00 — “No Minimum Bid Auction, Day #1” — **Mike Knudsen**

It's amazing what you can get for a few dollars.

Though not an official "Fest event," it should be pointed out that Al Dages celebrated a birthday during the show. A large cake was brought out (a very nice bonus — free food!) which contained the numbers "7" and "1". Perhaps those digits, if reversed, would more accurately reflect some of the energy that he has. I think it's neat that he would choose to spend his birthday with us, but considering that quite a few of the Atlanta Computer Society gang were present, maybe it wasn't so far from home after all.

At 5:00 p.m. the exhibit hall officially closed, but many people hung around long after that up until Brother Jeremy hosted a Holy Communion Service in the seminar room. This service was small (due to many leaving for dinner, but it was deemed better to try it Saturday night than to get people up early from the other hotels on the more traditional Sunday morning), but did feature live music by our favorite Monk, who even amused us afterwards by demonstration how things might be if Bob Dylan performed those sorts of songs...

Sunday:

10:00 — "Design the CoCo 4: Free-4-All" — **Rick Uland** and YOU

A rather lively audience attended and threw around tons of ideas of next generation CoCo hardware, from adding an extra 6x09 based machine to handle I/O and graphics, to complete motherboard updates. One interesting proposal is that of adding intelligent add-ons to do in hardware the same type of optimizations that NitrOS9 gives in software. As usual, many great ideas surfaced. As not-usual, it looks like some of them may get acted upon.

Scott Griepentrog has created an internet e-mail list for those interested in this discussion. To subscribe, send a human-readable request to Scott at "stg@stg.net".

1:00 — "MIDI Music Mania: What's New" — **The MIDI Men**

Boys and their toys... And speakers...

3:00 — "No Minimum Bid Auction, Day #2" — **Mike Knudsen**

And now for something completely different... Old CoCo hardware, dirt cheap. (Insert *deja vu* statement once more.) Some of the more unusual items that turned up during the week included a copy of CoCo OS-9 Sculptor (the deluxe database which is still available), and an ancient video digitizer from the early CoCo days. A large portion of the items auctioned away came from a closed Radio Shack store. One has to wonder, though, how they managed to get a hold of several TRS-80 Model I systems.

THE EVENINGS

On Friday evening, groups split off to do various things. Back over at the Red Roof Inn (about ten minutes away from the Holidome), a group was going to order pizza and, apparently, watch the *Dukes of Hazzard* reunion on television. Others congregated for as long as possible at the show area trying to answer the most-asked question: "Where shall we have dinner?"

As mentioned earlier, a group of about a dozen of us (including Paul Jerkatis, John Strong, Alex

Forrest, and Scott Griepentrog) went out to T.G.I. Fridays to sit and wait for a seat. This was at the same location where we dined last year at another nearby eating place (a “restaurant row,” it would appear).

Saturday night, however, was a bit more interesting. After the show closed, the regular dinner question once again surfaced causing much more confusion than it should have. One eating establishment was suggested, but after finding out it would take nearly two hours to seat us, other plans were made. Unfortunately, most of these plans weren’t jointly made, and soon we found most had headed off on their own in search for sustenance. The now-traditional religious services hosted by Brother Jeremy on Sunday mornings were moved to Saturday night, and after that a small table of us gave in and actually ate at the hotel restaurant, as did Scott’s group. Next year, I think we simply must find some sort of restaurant guide to help us avoid the Italian Buffet special which, when combined with various drink mixtures in the pub, seems to produce some rather undesirable effects.

A short break was taken in the bar as Carl Boll and others bought and were bought drinks. Joel Hegberg even helped me recall some odd chocolate mixture we had served to us the previous year, which we ordered again.

Afterwards, music was played in the seminar room by myself, Brother Jeremy, and, in honor of my lack of name recollection, a great guy named Bob (who works for Motorola). A small audience (including Tony Podraza’s wife, Linda), fed us the encouragement that kept it going. Soon, Brian Schubring mentioned he could run home and bring a keyboard, which turned into us simply moving the mobile guitars into the Fest room where Brian’s massive MIDI setup (including keyboard) was already installed. As the evening rolled on, James Jones joined in on vocal harmonies as well as a rather large wind recorder type instrument thingie*, and Mike Knudsen took over on keyboards, often adding the bass part. Since the “set list” included primarily famous “oldies,” many were able to join in and sing along. Bob, who claims to have not picked up a guitar in over a year, kept the acoustic rhythm track going through the entire event. *[Ed. Note: I have been asked to mention the truly triumphant “air trumpet” backing which was performed on “Come A Little Bit Closer.” I think you really had to be there...]*

(That’s a tenor recorder, says James)*

Of special interest were several live encore performances of Brother Jeremy’s original composition dealing with the attempts to contact Kevin Darling about releasing the OS-9 Level 2 Version 3 upgrade. If all goes as planned, a future Fest may be the scene for a live session recording of this song. Any musicians planning on driving to an upcoming show, drop some e-mail to “**revwcp@delphi.com**” and let him know you’d like to sit in on the jam session.

At this point the story gets rather Allen Huffman focused, so those not interested please skip down below. Carl Boll, I believe it was, brought me a drink known as a “Yukon Snake Bite,” which is something the cane-enabled limping Paul Jerkatis had mentioned earlier in the evening. (The limping had nothing to do with mentioning the drink of course but, rather, had something to do with an injury.) This drink tasted like lemons gone bad. Very awful and very bitter. I suspected this was a joke being played on me, so I set out to prove “them” wrong by drinking it fully, then ordering a second one.

The fun continued, and eventually I found myself hanging out with Brother Jeremy and we spoke of many things non-Fest related. I don't know if I'll ever be able to truly express the thanks I have for many of the things he has done for me. I most certainly wasn't able to express it that night as, not surprisingly, my complete lack of tolerance for all things alcohol decided to kick in and make me very, very, very ill. All I have to say is thank God (and I suppose this usage fits in very nicely in this context) for Brother Jeremy being around to see that I survived this ordeal. I do remember finally making it to bed (in a hotel room shared by the Monk, Rick Uland, Keith from New York, and myself), then waking up the next morning just before show start time and deciding I was really in no condition to be social. (Upon re-reading this, I've managed to completely trivialize how awful of an experience this was for me, and I'm quite happy about that :)

As I slept through the Sunday show (in, as I told others, a tribute to my original Sub-Etha partner Terry Todd), I was checked on during the day by Alex and Brother Jeremy. By show closing at 3:30 p.m. I finally felt stable enough to rejoin the activities, and I grabbed my bath robe and wandered wearily down to the show area, where Scott Griepentrog bought me some fruit juice, and Carl advised me that the easiest way to avoid a hangover was to simply not sober up.

I don't think I'll do that again.

By the time I managed to find the first floor, things had already started winding down. Dave Pellerito sold me a copy of his video tape magazine which I have been wanting to get my hands on since 1993, and I even managed to find my guitar which I had to abandon the previous night. (The video magazine, by the way, was a rather interesting venture which I would have subscribed to earlier if I realized it contained a closing segment demonstrating a use for an MS-DOS manual by setting it on fire...)

SUMMARY

Neato!

Somehow I think I can't get by with a one word summary after writing so many pages of text for everything else.

But I'll try...

Okay, I admit defeat. To summarize, re-read the previous pages and skip every other line. If that doesn't help, try this:

This was a high energy show that provided some of the "classic" Fest elements we often don't get to see: 1) a "legendary" keynote speaker from the classic past of CoCo history, 2) new hardware and software items (and by "new" I mean "haven't existed for the CoCo before", 3) a full line of seminars on different topics, and 4) some new faces!

Now if I only knew what happened on Sunday. . .

RUMORS

Most of the new "rumors" are becoming reality: CoCo IDE, CoCo SCSI with parity, a new two meg upgrade, shareware internet support for OSK, JPEG for the CoCo, etc. However, some of the "real"

rumors include the CoCo4X, a hardware RAM disk that never forgets, a graphics/SVGA hardware add-on that frees up the CoCo from doing all the work itself, and yet another Fest graphical adventure game (which might explain why I was using my digital camera to take dozens of color images of the show location).

THE RETURN

We all packed up then, as usual, split up into different groups. I do miss not getting to go to the Mongolian Bar-B-Que this year, but a lower budget trip to Old Country Buffet made more financial sense to many of us. The Team OS-9 Crew (and Chris Podraza!) dined there which gave John and I a much needed chance to discuss some rather interesting future projects which we *hope* to have ready by the Pennsylvania Fest.

After this, and spending a half hour in the parking lot jabbering, I booted up my laptop and the GPS receiver and drove myself back home, stopping at an unknown rest area in search of some chicken soup-like drinks from the vending machine. At a little after 2:00 a.m. made it home, unpacked, then collapsed from exhaustion only to wake up several hours later to my talking alarm clock reminding me that, of course, I had to get back up and go to work.

DISCLAIMER

I'm actually quite proud of this Fest report partially because I think it's one I should be proud of, but mostly because I had a lot of fun writing it. However, I do not make any claims to having anything remotely resembling reality in it.

If you suspect reality does exist in this report, please send me a message saying so. If you find something you feel needs to be corrected, please let me know about that as well, since revised versions of these reports will hopefully be made available to all those who sign up for the Pennsylvania Fest, though don't quote me on that...

THANKS

Thanks, Glenside for EVERYTHING! Thanks, Dennis Bathory-Kitsz for a GREAT seminar. Thanks, Brother Jeremy for the use of the bed, the serious talks, and the music and fun. Thanks, Don Adams for the dinner (uh, you were the one who paid, right?). Thanks, John Strong for the interest in the adventure game project (and the sympathy for the loss of my mother this past year). Thanks, Linda for the quickie (shoulder rub, that is). Thanks, Chris Podraza for making it out and remembering your towel. Thanks, Alex Forrest, for being there. Thanks, Charlie and John for the cookies. Thanks, Andre, for the deals. Thanks, Scott Griepentrog, for the lemonade on Sunday. May you rot in Iowa, Carl Boll and Paul Jerkatis, for the Yukon Snake Bite (blech...), and the same goes for the Holiday Inn for not having enough rooms for us <grins>. Thanks, Mark M., Jim H., and Rick U. for all your work on new CoCo hardware. Thanks, Alan D., Roger T., and many others for all the new CoCo software. Thanks Jeff V. for the emulator, which is bringing back more resurged interest in the CoCo. Thanks to Ron Bull for attempting a summerfest in Pennsylvania in a few months! And, last but certainly not least, thanks to everyone that attended either as a vendor or otherwise, and thanks for showing enough interest to allow Glenside to hold the 7th Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest in 1998!

Allen C. Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software

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FUTURE FESTS

Chicago will happen YET AGAIN, and Ron Bull's PA Fest is just around the corner. Someone even mentioned about attempting the return of a southern AtlantaFest, which would be nice. I really miss the Stone Mountain laser show.

Pennsylvania

August 2-3, 1997 — PA CoCo/OS-9 Fest/Show/Sale

Elgin, Illinois

April, 1998 — 7th Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest

SPECIAL OFFER

I am willing to help finance new CoCo hardware as well as keynote speakers for upcoming Fests. People like Jeff Vavasour, Marty Goodman, Steve Bjork, Kevin Darling, and tons of others would be a welcome addition to any upcoming Fest. After all, they might not have too many more chances to be idolized by a group such as ourselves... :)

THE END

...Not!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulaford Research's K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha's own MiniBanners and Towel. He has attended ever CoCoFest since 1990 and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show, and even that has been done in retrospective format for an upcoming CoCoFest Chronicles "book."

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of '68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on Genie and has been mentioned in *The Computer Shopper* for this position.

Allen now works for Microware as a technical training engineer teaching OS-9 classes and lives just outside of Des Moines, Iowa with his CoCos (1, 2 and 3), MM/1, and OS-9000 Toshiba laptop. He's a Leo who likes classic rock. His favorite musical group is The Monkees. In his spare time he enjoys visiting theme parks and writing odd things such as this to include in Fest reports to see if anyone actually reads them...

Mostly harmless.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In case you haven't figured it out by now, I am a semi-major fan of Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series. This is where my famous robe comes from which I wear to most all the Fests. (In the book, the main character, named Arthur Dent, is woken up as his house is about to be demolished and attempts to stop the bulldozers by lying down in the mud in front of them. He is then swooped away on an amazing adventure through time and space still in his robe — much like the adventures I have had at these Fests.)

On a side note, the term *Sub-Etha* also comes from this series, as in Sub-Etha Sense-O-Matic, Sub-Etha Radio, and so on. Apologies to Douglas Adams' lawyers...

My introduction to this report, featuring various dictionary definitions, is what I consider to be my most clever and entertaining of the batch. I was rather proud of that one, if I do say so myself. And I do. (Ahem, your milage may vary...)

The comment about Mark Marlette as hacker extreme "Turbo 2000 Deluxe Edition" is an inside joke in reference to a program Eric Crichlow was working on what was/is to be an update to his already completed MM/1 game "Gold Runner 2000."

The "legendary" game programmer I bought a copy of the CoCo 3 emulator for was Steve Bjork. Maybe this is what helped convince him to attend the Pennsylvania Fest later that year?

Roger Taylor's Projector-3 was available only in demo form for one dollar per disk and only a few picked up copies, much to the sadness of Roger. This is by far one of the most advanced picture utilities ever on a CoCo. I believe the reason it did not catch much attention was due to it basically just running by itself on a table. I actually thought it was just an MM/1 slide program running for most of the show!

The odd chocolate mixture drink which Joel brought to me is called a Tootsie Roll.

I would like to point out that I am also rather smug and proud about my summary for this report.

Did you read the ABOUT THE AUTHOR section for a new, yet possibly still not funny, joke?

Ron Bull

ABOUT THE 1997 PENNSYLVANIA FEST

(From the man behind the one-man Fest.)

Greetings! My name is Ron Bull. I started with the Color Computer back in November of 1983. I was in the Air Force then and when I got transferred to Clovis, New Mexico, I found only a couple of people had a CoCo. I put out an announcement on base asking anyone who would be interested in forming a club to meet with me at the base recreation hall. Only six others showed up. We formed the Curry County Color Computer Club. We had a ball learning everything we could about the CoCo and watched our club grow to well over fifty members. We had our own BBS called the Tandy Rapper and put out a local magazine called The Connection.

I was then transferred up to Pennsylvania. I could not find a club up here nor could I find anyone interested to form one so I set up BULL'S BARN BBS. When I learned of the CoCo List, I jumped in and found that Fests were being held in Chicago and Atlanta. I tried to go to both every year up to the time that I heard that the one from Atlanta wouldn't be held anymore. Well, I decided right then and there to volunteer to hold a fest here in Pennsylvania. WOW! I didn't know how much work, time and MONEY would be involved!

I was committed and I am a man of my word. Again the CoCo Community came through! The only advertising that I did was with a web page and word of mouth. It seemed everything was choppy and I was a total nervous wreck. The day of the show was hectic! If it weren't for some very special people helping me out every step of the way I think I would have collapsed! I received e-mail prior to the show from Steve Bjork stating that he wanted to come to my show! I should have passed out right then and there! He not only showed up and helped to get things started, but helped with the creation of The Color Computer Preservation Society. He is truly a very special man, and was very active at the show. Actually, I was blessed to be part of this special family of friends. It seems everyone there was helping make the show a success.

Another history making event happened at the show. Brother Jeremy got to talk Kevin Darling into releasing the unreleased OS-9 Level 2 upgrade, which we called the OS-9 Level 3. Kevin was to be at the show, but due to unforeseen health problems he could not make it. After the show was over on Sunday we all relaxed at the Golden Corral restaurant. It was such a boost to see all of the famous CoCo greats that I decided to host another show. I learned a lot from the first show and this next one will be even bigger and better! I will be advertising and sending out press releases as well as the website. I will have a lot of surprises for those that come to the PENN FEST '98 show.

Ron Bull, April 1998

(Written just four months before the scheduled date of the 1998 PennFest.)

This Fest report is dedicated to the memory of Alex Forrest, one of the few remaining CoCo-only hackers I know, and a friend who will be sadly missed by all who knew him.
May 1, 1966 — July 19, 1997. I miss him.

1997 Pennsylvania CoCoFest

(August 2-3, Carlisle, PA)

by Allen Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software

[With contributions from Sock Master, Ron Bull, Carl Boll, ...]

(08/04/97, 08/11/97, 03/05/98)

NOTE: Any mistakes in this report are most likely unintentional, with the exception of those which were placed here on purpose. Those, of course, are not unintentional and are therefore not to be noted.

Sometimes if you want something done you have to do it yourself. Ron Bull wanted a Fest in his neck of the woods, so he did it himself. This is his story...

But first, a poem.

Once I had a toy machine,
I bought at Radio Shack.
All my friends had always said,
I should just take it back.
But here I am, some ten years past,
And my toy is still such fun.
Who would have thought, when I bought it,
that it would be the one,
I'd come to love and use so much,
through all hours of night.
And let me know that I did good,
And that they, of course, weren't right...

*Dedicated to my favorite "PAL", who sometimes
fights me, but never says "GIME"...*

TIMELINE

UPS is about to go on strike. The Soviet Mir continues to be in trouble. Walt Disney World celebrates its 25th Anniversary. Microware reports a quarterly loss, but announces many new upcoming contracts (such as another million OS-9 licenses for set-top boxes in Ireland). A little robot runs around the

Mars surface, running a non OS-9 operating system (and needing to be rebooted from time to time). SPAM on the internet reaches an all-time high.

THE DRIVE

Thanks to my job as a technical training engineer with Microware I had enough frequent flyer miles to make this journey by aircraft. Thank you, TWA.

Friday morning at 6:00 a.m. I was scheduled to depart on a flight which would take me to Pittsburgh, PA which is about three or four hours from the actual Fest location. I was scheduled to meet up with CoCo game-great Steve Bjork for a visit to Kennywood, America's oldest traditional amusement park in West Mifflin. Fortunately, my scheduled arrival went fine and as I stepped out of the aircraft unloading hallway thingie, Steve was there and together we took his rental out to the park, right on schedule.

While my main purpose of this trip was the Fest, Steve had something else he wanted to take care of. He had a meeting at the park in order to do an amusement article for the new magazine he is editor of, *E-Tech News and Review*. At Kennywood (www.kennywood.com) we met with a nice gentleman named Andy who filled us in on the history of the park, from its 1920's vintage roller coasters, to it's currently world-record setting Pitt Fall drop ride (215 feet and, by contract, the world's tallest free-fall for at least the next year). We spent four hours exploring the park, then headed out on a drive to Carlisle.

THE ARRIVAL

The Fest location was at the Embers Inn. We checked in, unloaded, and went out to explore the surroundings. The large Fest area was set up as Ron Bull and others started putting things together. This was a "good thing" since originally it seemed the hotel wasn't going to let them have access to the room until early Saturday morning, which is never a good thing for vendors wanting to have fun Friday night without having to wake so early the next morning.

THE PRE-SHOW

Most of us were spread out between three of the buildings. Almost no "hanging out" was done in the show area that evening, so the pre-show consisted mainly of a group of us getting together to go to Golden Corral. We loaded into Scott Griepentrog's minivan and headed down to the, unfortunately, closed restaurant. So, we headed a bit further to the, fortunately, non-closed Olive Garden.

Our crew consisted of Scott, myself, Steve Bjork, Boisy Pitre (following in his car), James Jones, and John Strong. The meal was uneventful, made only slightly eventful by Scott's juggling and our overly thorough server who offered us more options than even the latest version of Microsoft(tm) Word. After this, we dispersed back to the hotel and went our separate ways.

THE SHOW AREA

The only accurate map would be Ron's (to scale). Instead, I present this inaccurate (See Also: Disclaimer) version:

(See map on the following page.)

1997 Pennsylvania:

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+-----+
|Bruce  Norm Landrailt  Rick's Comp.  SockMstr  MonkOWare  Glenside  Luckey |
| Moore  XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXCorner |
|      X                                                    X      |
|Disco  X                                                    X      |
|Ball   X      XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  X Paul |
| (#)   X      Bargeman Labs                                X      X  Z.  |
|      X      S-BUG X                                      X      |
| <- stage  X      Dirt Cheap                                X      X Ron |
|      X      XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  X Bull |
|      X                                                    X      |
|      X                                                    X      |
|      XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  XXXX  |
|  Unlimited Elec.  StrongWare  FARNA Systems  Adv. Surv  |
+-----+-----+
                                Registration X
                                XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  Seminars ->

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No booklet and no map this year, so the following list will be from my ever-failing memory (with recent corrections from Ron Bull after he saw how my ever-failing memory was continuing to ever-fail):

Adventure Survivors — Beanie Babies (the real ones, by Ty). I think they have some kinda adventure game newsletter as well. Also, I'm not sure which game it was they were playing, but it was a sky-view role playing type game with characters and fighting and all kinds of neat things. Adventure Survivors has done quite a bit over the past years to contact authors and acquire rights to distribute some of the classic adventure/role playing games made for the CoCo. If you know someone who wrote some of the "lost" CoCo adventure games, why not get them in touch with the Survivors and let them bring the software back?

Bargeman Research Labs — Karolton W. Sefcik had quite a bit of literature he'd accumulated dealing with CD-i players, Motorola products, and other items of interest. One of the more interesting items was a list he'd obtained from Philips with over 500 active CD-i companies. Neat stuff!

Bruce Moore — This gentleman was there with a booth to try and sell off his Frank Hogg KIX-30 OSK machine. He had it on display with terminals and other things at quite a good price, but I don't believe he had any takers.

Dirt Cheap Networking, Inc. — Dave Halko and his wife (I think her name was Michelle or something) returns to a Fest, this time without Neil Brookins (author of the

Bible Concordance search engine). He had a variety of networking cables and a project plan for a FOUR 6809-CPU board computer. He needs interest and support to continue the project, which will require OS-9 being written to operate on the system.

Note that this is NOT part of the “CoCo 4” project also underway, but a specific piece of hardware for a specific project Dave wants to do, and if it works out, we might find other uses for his platform. Anyone interested?

FARNA Systems — Mr. and Mrs. Swygert (hey, that sounds neat) were able to stay for the Saturday portion of the show (they had other travel plans for Sunday) offering “fixed” NitrOS9 V2 disks and others. One item of interest I picked up from his table was a flyer promoting *American Independent*, a magazine devoted to many of the small, “yet historically significant” American automobile manufacturers. It was billed as “a magazine for you and your car,” and sounds neat (even if I know very little about cars myself).

Glenside CoCo Club — Carl Boll was there to sign folks up, talk about the IDE interface project, and generally pick on me. As usual, the show wouldn’t be the same without Carl present.

Luckey Corner — Brian Goers (was Howard around?) was listed as maintaining this booth, but somehow I never got around to connecting with them.

Monk-O-Ware — Brother Jeremy was running the “rumored” OS-9 Level 2 upgrade and showing off the various CoCo 3 prototypes that OS-9 for the Color Computer was developed on.

Norm Landrault & Eric Jan Tromp — I spoke with Eric many times during this show and was amazed to discover he, apparently, had already worked out OS-9 Level 2 “Year 2000” patches, which were fairly easy to do since Microware had the foresight back in 1980 to store the year as a full byte. It’s just certain utilities such as “setime”, “date”, and anything that relies on the date in the file system which need significant changes.

Rick’s Computer Enterprises — Rick Cooper and Stuart Wyss had tons of Sundog Systems games and took subscriptions to the CoCo Friends disk magazine. Rick also mentioned he now has subscriptions by e-mail, and a way to receive .DSK emulator images so you can view the diskazine on a PC running Jeff Vavasour’s CoCo 3 emulator. There was also talk of a native DOS program which could view the issues directly.

Stuart, whom I finally got to meet, had a wealth of information to share and was just an overall nice guy.

Ron Bull — The master of ceremonies had a table full of “free” items, both hardware and software, for Fest attendees. Quite a nice perk for those who made the trek.

Strongware — John Strong and Don Adams represented both Strongware’s classics (OSK tools, and the CoCo GEMS and Soviet Bloc) and demonstrated the new MM/1 version of Invaders09 by myself. This version was rewritten by jamiec@mit.edu and should hopefully see the light of day in the near future. Some of the enhancements include digital sound, and a 256-color screen. The original CoCo OS-9 version made only minimal clicks and operated on a 16 color screen. Unfortunately, one of my favorite “features” was taken out of the MM/1 version (the “cheat mode”).

During the show John made the rounds with two Kodak DC20 digital cameras taped together. He was snapping images in hopes of producing some 3-D pictures for the MM/1 and, possibly, the CoCo. These might work their way into the upcoming Adventure Game engine currently in the works (again).

Unlimited Electronics Repair — A local vendor from the area showed up briefly during the first day. Ron reports that they realized they had the wrong type of monitors for our group :(

Paul W. Zibaila II — Paul had a variety of CoCo goodies on his table, including a rather interesting item. A company was using CoCo 3s as touch-screen kiosk computers in GNC stores. (You know, the health store in every mall with all the vitamins and supplements.) The unit had a large I/O card attached (with a hard drive!) and was displaying on a CM-8 monitor in a wooden frame case with a touch sensitive screen in front of it. You could point and select items and navigate through a very professional full color interface. The response time was very impressive (better than some “modern” kiosks I have found in malls these days!) and who knows — maybe we’ve all actually seen a CoCo in the mall and never knew it!

Some of this hardware may be sold off, so perhaps the designs can be acquired for the various interfaces. I believe there was even some form of networking on board. Hopefully we can get more details from Paul on this exciting bit of CoCo history.

S-BUG — Dick Albers stood in for Andre LaVelle with a variety of hardware goodies, including mini-mice and blank disks.

Sock Master — John Kowalski offered compilation disks of his various outstanding CoCo 3 demonstration programs (as endorsed by Larry Greenfield and many others), including: CoCo MOD music player, GLOOM 3-D maze engine, color demos, high-speed life simulator, Twilight Terminal (32 color ANSI, high speed RS-DOS terminal!) and much, much more.

Watch out for his “Moon Patrol”-style game, coming soon (we hope). More comments on this can be found in his seminar notes, elsewhere in this report.

NO SHOWS

Some of the vendors expected to attend were missing. Ron had hoped to see **ELITE Software**, **EZ Friendly Software**, **John Sladek**, **Jim Hathaway**, and **Second Source, Inc.** I’m not sure of the details of these, but I know a few of them are “long gone” CoCo vendors. Perhaps we can try again for the next Fest and talk them into making it out?

THE SEMINARS

Although few in number, the quality of the seminars at this show will be difficult to beat.

Saturday:

9:00 — **PA Online**

A no show, but they were scheduled to discuss Fidonet, Internet and WWW access.

10:00 — "OS-9 and Multimedia" — **Kevin Darling**

Kevin also didn't make it. It was hoped he'd discuss items which he is no doubt familiar with after spending the last few years working on various digital set-top boxed based projects.

11:00 — "CoCo IDE" — **Carl Boll**

Carl gave updates on the status of the IDE interface for the CoCo, currently being produced by the Glenside CoCo Club. The hardware seems stable, but some driver problems with the 16-bit software have them working overtime in order to ensure a perfect product (or very close to it) on delivery. This is an example of "modern hacking" on the CoCo.

1:00 — "Game Programming" — **Steve Bjork**

This was the event that, to many, justified attending. Steve stepped out of CoCo retirement to present a multi-media game programming seminar. For those who might not know, Steve was a primary CoCo game programmer for Radio Shack. In about 1992 when the CoCo was discontinued he moved on to write *Crystal Quest* for the Nintendo Gameboy, then a series of other projects such as *Chessmaster* for the Sega Game Gear, *Rocketeer* and *Bass Masters Classic* for the Super Nintendo, *Captain Planet* for the Sega Genesis, and also *Iron Hammer* for the never-released Sega-VR helmet. His most recent endeavor is as editor for *E-Tech News and Review*, a high-tech gadget magazine for folks like us who love technotoys and other forms of amusement (simulators, theme parks, etc.)

Steve recently surfaced on the CoCo listserver (bit.listserv.coco) and has chimed in from time to time when people asked just where he'd been. Somehow Ron Bull was able to talk him into coming to this event and putting on this session at his own expense (in spite of rather nasty attacks by two former CoCo people who seem to want to ruin things for the rest of us). For those of you who saw it first hand, you can appreciate the time and money that went into the presentation.

The seminar room was set up with an overhead projector, television set, and Color Computer. The presentation began with a video clip playing on the monitor which started with a zoom-out from a CoCo motherboard fading into a zoom out of the CoCo case, then screen shots from various CoCo games Steve worked on, all set to music with crossfades and video effects between segments. The segment was very energetic and produced entirely on a digital video editing workstation (those Californians have all the toys, don't they?). After the clip ended, Steve was introduced as the Audio Spectrum Analyzer played to the music from Disneyland's Main Street Electrical Parade (which, incidentally, "retired" after a near 20-year run at Disneyland this past summer).

Steve began his speech by explaining this was exactly how the product was pitched to Tandy, in a presentation that began a career that lasted well over a decade with Radio Shack. Looking at things now, it's amazing to imagine there was a time when a person could make a very comfortable living off of writing Color Computer programs!

Since the main focus of the seminar was game programming, with healthy bits of CoCo history thrown in, I'll attempt to summarize the main points. The attendees were all given

handouts which had code fragments and definitions of game components (and “suggested reading” listings) while Steve used the overhead and slides. The topics ranged from “items that make a good game” right down to data structures for object control (something taken for granted today, but “new” in the early 80's when even the C' language didn't have a standard).

Another video was played showing a game clip set to three different background tracks (CD audio, similar to what you might hear on a modern game system or PC). Steve explained the different “feel” music could give to a game, then mentioned that the game being shown was a project he completed but never released. Apparently, Steve “found” the game during a recent CoCo housecleaning when getting ready for this Fest. The game is titled “Horizons” and combines a 3-D star background (similar to Warp Fighter 3-D) with a “horizon view” of alien ships to blast scaling in from space (similar to the way the dirt bikes came into view in Desert Rider). The player's ship stayed in the bottom center of the screen while the objects moved left and right giving a good sense of motion and “depth.” As enemies were blasted, the “score” value popped up in their place. Perhaps we can convince Steve to finally release this game?

During the discussion, Steve paused and said he needed a laser pointer so he dug into his bag and retrieved a hand phaser (like the ones used in *Star Trek the Original Series*) and “shot” it at the overhead screen. A laser dot appeared as the sound chip played the phaser noises. After things settled down, he dug out a regular laser pointer for the rest of the seminar. (On a side note, he has the phasers for sale, I believe. It seems he really thought a *Star Trek* phaser needed a real laser in it to be a bit more realistic!)

Some code samples were shown in 6809 assembly and techniques were discussed for sprite placement and background tiles, such as the way several megs (if uncompressed) of graphics were stored in the Super Pitfall cartridge. (Chet Simpson has published part of an article dealing with this subject in *the world of 68' micros* as well, so those who weren't able to attend this seminar might find back issues interesting since some of Chet's techniques are the same or very similar to items Steve has used in his games as well.) Among the “game trick” comments made were the fact that Super Pitfall simulated 160K in a 128K CoCo by using the entire 128K (including the 32K “hidden” under where the ROM-paks loads in) and the full-size ROM memory. Many non-Bjork projects were also mentioned, such as Shanghai by Rick Adams being a program that Tandy “banned” from the offices due to a noticeable drop in productivity from employees playing it! Did you know Rampage was created for the CoCo in just 35 days? It seems there was a nice “bonus” for completing it before the deadline, and the CoCo version was faced off against the Tandy 1000 version at the Tandy corp. offices to further show how great the CoCo really was compared to the other machines Tandy was pushing at the time. Unfortunately, we all know how things ended up.

During the seminar, Sock Master contributed some cycle counts to clarify some of the things Steve was talking about (the MUL instruction takes 11 cycles, I believe he pointed out), and Steve asked him to chime in if there were any items he mentioned that were wrong, and also urged Sock Master to offer any improvements or other ideas in his own seminar which happened later.

It's worth noting that the seminar was videotaped, and Steve made the journey to the Fest to "test the market" for a game programming package which would include source code (and maybe the unreleased Horizons game), printed material, and edited version of the video, and other goodies. If this happens, Steve wants to turn over distribution of the project to an existing CoCo vendor, allowing them to make some money on it.

So, if you would like to see something like this done, please drop a note to Steve and let him know. He can be contacted at:

E-Tech News & Review

17029 Devonshire St.

Suite 127

Northridge, CA 91325

editor@e-technews.com

(Please note that this is NOT the same address which existed for years for SRB Software.) And if you think this write-up is long, recall the one I did for Dennis Kitz from the 1997 Chicago Fest :)

3:00 — "OS-9" — **Boisy Pitre**

As an "insider" (but speaking for himself) with Microware, Boisy was able to give his views on the future of OS-9, from sadly realizing that the desktop hobbyist days are most likely gone for good, to the happy days of realizing soon we may all have something in our house that runs OS-9. I was not at this seminar, so I'll leave the details up to someone else.

4:00 — "Sock Master Demo-stration" — **John Kowalksi**

Sock Master made the trip down from Canada and showed off a plethora of NEAT things, including his 4 MHz CoCo accelerator. This item "sneaks" in an extra clock cycle anytime the 6809/6309 isn't going to be doing bus/memory access. A toggle allowed him to halt or slow down his machine, and the true speed of his modification was shown when he toggled his MOD file music player's display screen from low to high speed.

Other items shown included his bouncing ball demo, which bounced a large rotating ball around a checkered background (which had a few more colors on the screen than the CoCo can really produce, which is of course impossible), his MOD file player (playing four voice digital samples while updating the display screen in real-time, which is of course impossible), and his 3-D "Gloom" filled-wall maze demo (which kept a nice frame rate including wall clipping and everything, which is also of course impossible). I suspect most of what he showed, such as 816 colors on the screen at a time, is really impossible and he just doesn't seem to understand the concept of "it can't be done on a CoCo."

At one point, when the size of his MOD player was revealed, Steve suggested we put the MOD player in ROM instead of the "hidden" snapshot saying it would make a much nicer use of the space. Imagine that — something truly neat in that "lost" 6K. Anyone with a ROM burner want to give it a shot? I'd love to be able to do CTRL-ALT-Reset and play MOD files...

Also shown was the workings of a Moon Patrol-style game for the CoCo 3, featuring four layers of parallax background scrolling (VERY SMOOTH using some GIME hardware scrolling tricks along with software screen blits). This item could very well be one of the “best” CoCo 3 games produced if Sock Master decides to turn it into a full game.

Sunday:

8:30 — Sunday Morning Worship Services with our own **Brother Jeremy**

9:00 — PA Online (no show)

10:00 — “Open Forum” — James Jones and others spoke on a variety of computing related topics.

11:00 — “Open Forum” — **Steve Bjork** led a slightly different seminar, by moving it into the unused section of the main exhibit hall (right under the disco ball near the presentation stage, actually). Although billed as Steve’s time, he took a mediator position and opened the floor as **Rick Cooper** and others discussed, formed, and established the “**Color Computer Preservation Society**,” otherwise known as **CoCoPS**. Everyone seemed to have something to contribute, and we ended up with this:

A quarterly newsletter, sent out snail mail, informing out community of CoCo happenings, such as updates from the various clubs and organizations (there might be, for instance, a Glenside column and an Atlanta Computer Society Column, and a recap of what was in Frank’s magazine), then club listings, bulletin board numbers, web site listings, and general CoCo news such as new products, Fest information, and anything else that seems important.

Scott Griepentrog volunteered to typeset the initial issues, and Rick Cooper volunteered to handle the money, photocopying, and mailing of them. A move was made to take up a collection to send a copy out to all 500 people listed in Rick’s CoCo Registry database (five hundred!?!?!). Steve and others will assist by contributing information and assistance with the editing.

If you want to help, or just want to sign up, send a five dollar (\$5) check to Rick’s Computer Enterprises. The checks will initially be “held” for a short time to see if there is enough interest for this project to continue. So, DON’T HESITATE! Send your “subscription” in now and join the grooviest preservation society of them all.

Send \$5 Today:

Rick Cooper *or* CFDM *or* Rick’s Computer Enterprises

P.O. Box 276

Liberty, KY 42539

Scott mentioned that he would be setting up an e-mail address (**cocops@stg.net**) and allocating web site storage for the organization. Watch your favorite CoCo news source for details on the progress of this endeavor.

1:00 — “Open Forum” — **John Strong** operated another seminar from the main show area which, unfortunately, I didn’t sit it on.

It's interesting to note that the hot events and seminars this year were non OS-9 related, unlike virtually every Fest in the past few years. Apparently, the resurgence of "CoCo Users" as opposed to "OS-9 Users" is stronger than we might have thought. Many of the "new faces" I encountered were just CoCo hobbyists and didn't even run OS-9. (This echoes the messages that have been showing up on the coco internet listserver when people "rediscover" the machine who likely got out of it before OS-9 became popular.)

THE EVENINGS

On Saturday night, a rather large group decided to meet at Golden Corral (when it was open this time!). Several tables were full and the list of attendees included:

Rick Cooper, Steve Bjork, Alan DeKok, John Kowalski (Sock Master), John Strong, Scott Griepentrog, Carl Boll, Ron Bull and family, Stuart Wyss, Don Adams, Brian Goers, Paul Zibaila (er, you know the drill), James Jones, some guy who sat right next to me and I'd even spoken with before but I told him I wouldn't remember, and many others I have left out since I am just terrible with names. If you were there, please let me know and I'll add your name to the revised version of this report I plan to release in the CoCoFest Chronicles (See Also: Printed Vaporware).

Later, at the hotel, a small group met in the bar and soon became a larger group. Carl England joined in as we all talked of the past and mused about the future. (We also got to play with Steve Bjork's Star Trek laser and I *finally* got to lose miserably at Crystal Quest on the Gameboy.) I am proud to say that, unlike the last Chicago Fest, I consumed not a drop of anything whatsoever which might make me unable to attend the Sunday portion of the show. So there.

Many hours later everyone headed back to their rooms, and John Strong and I worked on images from the 1997 ChicagoFest for the "upcoming" (don't hold your breath) graphical adventure game.

SUMMARY

One person simply cannot undertake all the duties involved in organizing an event on this scale. Ron did an excellent job, all things considered, and most likely would be able to ensure a duplicate attempt would be more successful. As of this writing, Ron has stated he would like to make another Fest happen in Pennsylvania in 1998. If you are interested in assisting, or attending, let him know as soon as you can. He can be reached at: **ronbull@aol.com**.

According to information published on Ron's website after the event, 149 people attended the Fest (and, apparently, all their names and addresses are on file), and 26 vendors were scheduled but not all of them showed. Many vendors pulled double duty by representing those who weren't able to attend themselves. Ron even mentioned that Alfred Santos was even present, though I didn't know that during the show. (He is responsible for the CoCo Chronicles text file which covers a vast amount of CoCo history.)

I personally found Sock Master's demo-stration and Steve Bjork's game programming seminar well worth the effort to attend. Meeting a former GENie member, John Morris, was also a "good thing," even if I didn't get to speak with him at any real length (and, for some reason, I still have this feeling I owe him a disk or something). Also, anytime Carl England shows up things will be interesting. Carl gave me a copy of his "ultimate auto-boot" program which boots a program when you do a "DIR" on

the disk. This software, by the way, promotes a new concept called Pyramid-Ware. When you make a copy of the disk, send \$1 to the name at the top of the list (Carl's), then move all the names up. As you pass the disk around, you not only raise money for Carl but also stand a chance to make \$50,000 IN THREE WEEKS, honest :) (For the humor impaired, I take no responsibility if you try this and don't make \$50,000 in three weeks.)

RUMORS

No new rumors were generated at this Fest, oddly. At least none that I can report here. Other than a "virtual Fest" adventure game, possibly with 3-D imaging. Or a new (?) CoCo project by a former CoCo programmer (or, perhaps, one by a demo programmer). Certainly the rumors of another PennFest in 1998 can't be true, nor the ones of Year 2000 patches for OS-9 being available "in the near future."

I'll hold my breath.

THE RETURN

Since our flights departed from Pittsburgh, Steve and I had to leave the show area around 3:00 p.m., so anything we may have missed afterwards I cannot comment on. Will someone please do another report of this event so I can, for once, see things from a different side? Any takers?

At the airport, I took a final look at the Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood display and got to see a pair of his sneakers and one of his sweaters used in the children's television program. (It turns out that a million dollar "ride" based on Mr. Rogers exists in Idlewood Park about an hour from Pittsburgh. Perhaps next year I'll take the trolley to the Neighborhood of Make Believe and check it out.)

DISCLAIMER

Anything you hear about me purchasing a Beanie Baby from Adventure Survivors will be denied by myself. To the best of my knowledge there is no photographic evidence of such claims. Honest.

Also, if I left you out of this report, don't get mad — just drop me a note and I'll do my best to add you in. So there.

THANKS

Thanks, Ron, for undertaking this. It should be known that Ron personally funded this event and, like most CoCo events, it's very unlikely he made any money off of it. A true example of the love for an "obsolete" home computer which was invented nearly two decades ago.

Cool...

Allen C. Huffman, formerly of Sub-Etha Software

COCO-SYSOP on Genie (never checked)

OS9AL on Delphi (often checked)

allenh@pobox.com on the Internet (rice checked)

<http://www.pobox.com/~alsplace>

P.O. Box 22031 / Des Moines, IA 50325

Greetings go out to: George, John (all of them), Steve, Boisy, James, Mike G., Alan D., Ken S., Dave H., Brother Jeremy, Carl (all of them), Stuart, Rick, the RiBBS guy (? forgot his name but he has OS-9 patches), Paul Z., Al D., R.C., L.E. and Nan, the “hoodlum security crew” <grin>, all the computer widows attending with their husbands and families, Scott G. (and his balls), and everyone else who made the journey! See ya’ll next time, ya hear?

FUTURE FESTS

Glenside says “yes” to a ChicagoFest in 1998, and Ron also says another PennFest (as he’s calling it) should happen as well. Tune in to your favorite information source (or sign up to CoCoPS) for more details!

Elgin, Illinois

April, 1998 — 7th Annual “Last” Chicago CoCoFest

Carlisle, Pennsylvania

August (?), 1998 — 2nd Annual PennFest

(Time and location subject to when and if we get enough attendees and vendors interested.)

SPECIAL REQUEST

Let’s get more guest speakers! We simply have to get Sock Master back at another Fest, and then talk Steve Bjork, Kevin Darling, Marty Goodman, and Jeff Vavasour (CoCo emulator) into showing up as well. If we can work this out, perhaps we can draw more people to the events. If someone would like to take up a fund to go towards compensating these “guest speakers,” I’m sure Glenside and Ron would be more than happy to work with you.

THE END

...unless, of course, Ron decides to try this again next year, which it seems he will. With the “CoCo 2000” mini-mania happening lately, I guess we can hope for two more years of Fests (at which point everything that runs on computer power will pretty much blow up and crash anyway so it will no longer matter)...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allen Huffman has been a loyal CoCoist since about 1982, and now is a semi-loyal CoCoist due to him having owned a PeeCee laptop since 1996. He started with a grey-case CoCo 1 (E board, upgraded to 64K and lowercase) and has progressed through the years from there. In 1990 he cofounded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including RulaFord Research’s K1 MIDI Librarian, and Sub-Etha’s own MiniBanners and Towel. He has attended ever CoCoFest since 1990 and written reports on all but the initial 1990 Atlanta show, and even that has been done in retrospective format for an upcoming *CoCoFest Chronicles* “book.”

Allen has contributed to *UpTime*, *OS-9 Underground*, *the world of ‘68 micros*, and various newsletters around the country and has had several letters published in *The Rainbow* (including one

which prompted them to reprint their first two-page issue). He also serves as Color Computer SysOp in the Tandy RoundTable on Genie and has been mentioned in The Computer Shopper for this position.

Allen now works for Microware as a technical training engineer teaching OS-9 classes and lives just outside of Des Moines, Iowa with his CoCos (1, 2 and 3), MM/1, and OS-9000 Toshiba laptop. By the next Fest report, he might even be married. Or not. You know how these things go...

BEHIND THE SCENES

Since this report, I have discovered that Norm Landrailt and Eric Jan Tromp aren't the only ones who have worked on Year 2000 patches for OS-9/6809. Gene Heskett apparently uploaded patches to the os9archive.rtsi.com FTP site on the internet sometime in early 1997.

Some of the no shows reported may not quite have been no shows after all. It seems that a lot of the planning involved phone calls and folks saying "yes, I'd like to be there" with no actual solid confirmation. For 1998, it appears Ron is going to make more efforts to lock in and confirm who will actually be showing up. For a first show, it was an amazing job - and imagine how it could have been with something other than internet and word-of-mouth advertising with all the vendors he planned on showing up actually showing up!

One of the discussions that happened after this event was of some dialog that happened between Steve Bjork and Carl England during an auction. Frustrated at the lack of interest people were having at Ron's attempt to make up some of the cash he was losing on the show (out of his *own* pocket), Steve stepped in to hype the history of some of the CoCo software being bid on, ending with "this is worth a lot more than one dollar" or something similar — to which Carl bid "one dollar" which lead to those immortal words from Steve, "You, fine sir, are an ass." While Steve was probably frustrated, I cannot imagine this was any sort of "tantrum," and, to back it up, I have a photograph taken in the lounge that has Steve and Carl (among others) all sitting around having a good time. At least, this is how it appeared to me...

If nothing else is remembered about this show, the formation of the *Color Computer Preservation Society* should be. Membership continues to grow, and since its main focus is the exchange of information, the newsletter is available free of charge on the world wide web at: <http://stg.net/cocops>

Note that this is indeed the *revised* Fest report and I still don't remember the name of the guy from dinner!

Crystal Quest on the Gameboy was written by Steve Bjork and, I believe, was the first time Nintendo ever directly credited a game author.

And I admit it. I *did* buy a Beanie Baby! It was a white bear named *Valentino* with a birthdate of Valentine's Day — the same as my girlfriend's :)

A Brief CoCo Music History

BY MIKE KNUDSEN

OUTLINE of CoCo Music, by Type

Pre-MIDI: Direct Sound Synthesis

Prerecorded Sounds:

Games (Mega Bug, DoD, Donkey King, Skiing)

neat graphics program, what was that?

Text-to-Music Compilers:

Color Quaver by Dennis Bathory-Kitsz

Stereo Composer by Speech Systems

Unreleased BASIC program by MJK

Orchestra-90 by Tandy

Computer-Keyboard Real-time “Organs”:

Synther-7

Unreleased FM Organ program by MJK

Graphic Notation “Composers”:

“Music” Cartridge by Tandy

Musica II by SSS

PAN (under OS-9) by Tandy

Non-MIDI hardware synthesis:

Symphony 12 (used Musica II) by SS

Keyboard to play the above by SS

MIDI, pre-OS-9

Sequencers (Recording and Numerical Editing):

CoCo-MIDI by SS

CoCo-MIDI Pro by SS

Walnut cased MIDI Pak

Other 3rd MIDI Paks

Graphic Notation Composer:

Lyra (direct and MIDI) by SS

MIDI, OS-9

UltiMusE-III by MJK

BEFORE MIDI — DIRECT SYNTHESIS — CoCo RULES!

The CoCo was unique in having a built-in, six-bit, digital to analog (D-A) converter whose audio output fed into the TV sound and the cassette port.

A D-A converter or DAC allows digital sound samples (such as stored on CDs) to be played directly from the CPU's calculations or RAM lookups; this is called Direct Synthesis.

No other personal computer at any price had a DAC when the CoCo appeared. The mighty Apple II and upstart IBM-PC had only “one-bit” sound, also provided on the CoCo, and good only for beeps of varying pitches.

So only the CoCo could play realistic pre-digitized sounds with its games — La Cucaracha and “We Gotcha” of Tandy's “Mega-Bug” by Steve Bjork; the breathing and armor-clanking of “Dungeons of Daggorath” or even the swishing sounds of Tandy's “Skiing” cartridge.

Hal Chamberlin had written a 1977 *BYTE* article on playing music not by reading out pre-digitized samples from RAM, but by computing musical tones in real time. He could play four-part harmony on the KIM-1, a 6502-based microcard plus a user-added DAC, so naturally the CoCo's 6809 could do better with its built-in DAC.

TEXT MUSIC COMPILERS

Dennis Bathory-Kitsz, the true Renaissance Man of the early CoCo era, wrote and sold Color Quaver, a tape program where you typed a musical score into a text file using a cryptic shorthand notation, and the program translated or compiled your text into a binary file that the CoCo could play in real time, using Chamberlin's techniques. It could do three or four part harmony.

A similar program was The Composer, later Stereo Composer, the first product from Speech Systems of Batavia, Ill. To upgrade the sound from six bits to eight, and provide two channels, Speech Systems sold an optional hardware Pak with two eight-bit DACs and small audio amplifier. Speech Systems was off to a long and productive career in CoCo music, even before RAINBOWfests — you had to mail order the stuff.

Meanwhile, before the CoCo 1 came out, Mike Knudsen had put Chamberlin's code into his KIM-1 and developed his own text "note-tation" and written a SNOBOL4 program to run on mainframes at work to compile his music into binary files for the KIM-1. When he got his CoCo, Mike wrote a large BASIC program to compile his text to binary files to run on his own 6809 assembler upgrade of Chamberlin's work. Although Mike demoed his four-part harmony program to the Glenside CoCo Club around 1984, nobody wanted a copy, and it seemed too big at the time to publish in *The Rainbow*. But his notation re-surfaced in 1998 as an addition to UltiMusE.

The final and most successful text compiler was Tandy's Orchestra-90, sold in Radio Shacks, including a stereo DAC Pak similar to Speech Systems' that also carried the compiler in ROM. It's unclear how many users ever typed in any notation, but Orch-90 Paks are still the easiest way to get a dual DAC onto your CoCo.

REAL-TIME KEYBOARD ORGANS

Typing in cryptic text can reward patience with four-part harmony, but for sheer fun it can't beat playing "live" music from the CoCo's own keyboard.

"Synther-7" by a forgotten author mapped two rows of CoCo keys into a piano-organ keyboard, and most other keys controlled various Moog synthesizer type sound parameters. The variety of sounds was astounding for a 1983 vintage program. The excellent manual told how to get "the world's first 128-foot rubber band" and the sound was just as hilarious, although plenty of good serious music could be played, after some *practice* — this *was* a musical instrument!

Mike Knudsen wrote a similar program using FM (frequency modulation) synthesis, such as used in Yamaha keyboards, but like Synther-7 using nothing but the CoCo's 6809 and DAC. Plus the A-D (analog to digital) Pak from CoCo Max II, which let the player control the volume and tonal brilliance (FM modulation index) from the X and Y axes of the joystick. A great way to simulate music sung by an alley cat, but again nobody at the Club wanted a copy.

GRAPHIC NOTATION COMPOSERS

Finally we come to the programs that skip cryptic text and let you draw notes directly on the screen, with simulated staff lines and other components of real sheet music.

The first entry was an early Tandy cartridge called simply Music. You used the joystick and keys to place two or three parts' worth of colored notes on one or two staves (staves), and then played them by direct synthesis. It was very limited but may have taught many kids the basics of music notation back when Tandy pushed the CoCo equally as a machine for games, education, and home finance.

Speech Systems wasn't about to miss the graphics functions of the CoCo, releasing a tape or disk machine language program called Musica and later Musica-II. These allowed four parts on treble and bass clef staves. An especially nice option was the "Chorus" mode for three-part harmony, where two of the four parts were combined but slightly out of tune, to provide a "celestial" wavering effect. Musica-II was perhaps the first program of any kind to recognize the famous "Speed Poke," with a mode to double the CPU speed (and audio sampling rate) at the cost of whiting out the screen in a blizzard and possibly losing its marbles and your score data ("Save first," the manual warned).

“Lyra” is mentioned here since it had a direct-synthesis option, but is described under MIDI programs.

The last (but hardly best) direct-synthesis graphics notation program was Tandy’s own PAN, a disk for OS-9. In any argument over which of Tandy’s OS-9 offerings was the worst, and did the most to make OS-9 look bad, PAN will always get honorable mention, as it had only three part harmony, was very limited and awkward to use, and soooooo sloooooowwww. But it *was* the first OS-9 music notation program. Take that, UltiMusE! Please!

NON-MIDI EXTERNAL HARDWARE SYNTHESIS

Direct synthesis is limited by the 6809 to four to eight harmony parts and not much in the way of expression or tone shaping. So the next step was to move the digital sample generation out of the CoCo, leaving the 6809 to control or “conduct” the music, much as a player piano roll controls the keys but doesn’t actually make the sounds.

MIDI is the ultimate application of this principle, but there were some exciting stops along the way.

It was no secret that the Atari 400 and 800 and Commodore 64 used special chips inside to generate three-part musical tones plus a “noise” channel for percussion and game explosions. Atari used the off-shelf General Instruments AY-1013 chip.

SYMPHONY-12

The enterprising hackers at Speech Systems mounted four of these chips into a Pak with audio amplifier, thus giving the CoCo twelve harmony parts plus four drummers! Their software could also combine one chip’s three voices into one single complex tone using Hammond Organ concepts. The effects were stunning.

Speech Systems lavished software support on the Symphony-12 Pak. An upgrade to Musica-II let you play through the Pak and the CoCo’s DAC together. Special editors let you set up the complex sounds and map musical voices to different chips, much like MIDI channels today.

The final shot was their Piano Keyboard — a five-octave, full-sized, synthesizer keyboard with a Pak interface to let the CoCo scan the keys. With this and the Symphony-12 (needing a Multi-Pak Interface), you had a real keyboard instrument.

When Speech Systems later came out with their MIDI Pak, they included software to map the Keyboard into MIDI output, giving a “MIDI Controller” to hand-play those low-cost MIDI instruments with the “toy” keys.

THE MIDI ERA

MIDI is an industry standard interface whereby a computer or keyboard can send commands to play notes on a separate synthesizer, or the notes played can be received by a computer and recorded in memory for editing and playback. Like a player piano roll, MIDI does not make music, but tells an electronic instrument which notes to play when and how loudly.

CoCo’s MIDI history can be divided two ways: RS-DOS versus OS-9, and sheet-music notation versus numerical byte-hacking editing. Each has its strong points and can do certain things better than

the others.

PRE/NON-OS-9 MIDI BYTE SEQUENCERS

MIDI communicates “events” such as Note-On, Note-Off, Change-Sound, etc. as groups of two or three eight-bit bytes. So, any MIDI musical performance can be just a listing of these byte-groups, sorted in time, with the exact time of each byte-group notated. A patient user can create or modify a musical piece by typing new or corrected numbers, just like a spreadsheet or income tax form.

[Editor’s Note: Maybe, but this is certainly alot more fun!]

Luckily, such “Sequencer” programs do something new to the CoCo with the advent of MIDI — they can RECORD a human’s playing from the keyboard! And they can record one part, voice, or “track” at a time. So the gritty byte-editing is needed only to fix mistakes or tweak up the performance, not to enter a whole piece!

The best-known MIDI sequencer is from who else but Speech Systems, “CoCo MIDI II,” followed by “CoCo MIDI PRO” to exploit the extra RAM of the CoCo III. CoCo MIDI can record and merge parts, edit MIDI bytes, switch parts to other channels, and many other operations at a fairly low level. It has evolved through many upgrades over the years, and was last sold in the early 1990’s, though contacting the author, Lester Hands, one might still be able to obtain a copy today.

CoCo MIDI Pro has been demonstrated at the Glenside Fests by Brian Schubring and “The Music Men,” featuring its recording abilities.

MIDI HARDWARE

To use MIDI one must buy an electronic keyboard, or at least a “tone module” or “clock radio,” a synthesizer box without a keyboard. Next it must be wired to the CoCo.

Since the MIDI physical interface is just a serial line (two wires each way) running at 31,250 Baud (remember when that read like sci-fi?), the CoCo’s rear serial port can be used to cable to the keyboard, after wiring up the correct connectors — the four-pin DIN at the CoCo end and a five-pin DIN (same as the CoCo’s cassette port) at the musical end.

But — the CoCo’s bitbanger software serial port drains valuable real-time when playing, slowing down complex music. And it simply cannot record hand playing!

So, Speech Systems developed the MIDI Pak — with a UART/ACIA chip to convert the bytes between serial and parallel as used on the “big” computers, with a CPU interrupt line. Their CoCo MIDI program got the option of using the Pak or the serial port, but once you owned the Pak you forgot the old serial “option.”

Two other outfits joined in the MIDI fray, with sequencer programs and MIDI Paks of their own. One Pak was made of solid walnut, with a clear plastic top covering to show off the beautiful printed circuit board artwork (it wasn’t that much nicer than Speech Systems’). Another was metal, versus Speech System’s plastic. At least one “alternative” Pak had multiple MIDI outputs to play several synths at once. Big deal. Neither company lasted long, and their Paks are rare today. But stranger things have turned up at Chicago Fest auctions! *[Editor’s Note: The Speech Systems Pak, when sold*

later through Rulaford Research, was available in several options. The one I own contains MIDI In and Out, as well as two switches which toggle two additional ports between Outs, Ins, and Thrus! Talk about versatile!]

IN 1996 the Glenside Club remanufactured a small run (about 50) of the MIDI Paks, using Cecil Houk's design artwork with his permission. There remains a small but steady demand for them.

GRAPHIC NOTATION MIDI COMPOSERS

We've already described non-MIDI "composing" programs where one draws sheet music on the CoCo screen and then plays it, using a mouse and/or keys to edit the display and change the music played.

With MIDI, the number of voices, instrument sounds, and quality of tone are limited only by the money spent on the separate synthesizer(s). So Speech Systems wasted no time in demonstrating a Beta version of "Lyra" at one of the last RAINBOWfests.

NON-OS-9 — LYRA

Lyra was an outgrowth of Musica-II, reworked for MIDI output (but no input for recording). The direct TV sound was also retained but only up to four parts. Lyra was an instant hit and dozens of devotees moused in hundreds of songs. Speech System's own Cecil Houk moused in vast libraries of popular and classical pieces, selling them separately by the disk and tossing in a few with Lyra to show the new user how it's done. Lyra is probably still in use today, and was ported to the PC. Oddly, no competitor sprang up; Speech Systems ruled the RS-DOS world, and kept its denizens happy with frequent upgrades, newsletters, and a BBS.

To thwart pirates, each new version of Lyra required a different set of keys to be held down while loading from disk. Years later this can make our old copies of Lyra hard to use!

Like CoCo MIDI Pro, Lyra could use either the CoCo serial port or the MIDI Pak. A user of CoCo MIDI Pro had no new hardware to buy.

Lyra (and UltiMusE) kept the demand going for MIDI Paks right up to the present day. After they were discontinued, Glenside CoCo Club got Cecil Houk's permission to make fifty more Paks from the original plans; these sold out the first day of the 1996 Fest. Still more CoConuts want one, and Glenside is considering another run.

[Editor's Note: Lyra was later ported to MS-DOS by the author, Lester Hands, and at one point a freeware demo version was available and it even came packaged with an off-brand PC sound card.]

OS-9 COMPOSERS — ULTIMUSE

As good as Lyra was, it had limitations. The 256-pixel wide graphics were hard on the eyes, and the product was never upgraded to the CoCo 3's 640 pixels. Only eight parts or voices. Time and key signatures could be given at the beginning of the piece but could not be changed inside the score for different sections. Editing multiple voices was awkward.

And it ran under RS-DOS, where disk files could not be date stamped and a disk could hold only 150K bytes.

Mike Knudsen had been experimenting in the pre-OS-9 days with drawing music using RS BASIC's drawstrings. When OS-9 came out he ported these test programs to BASIC09, writing his own drawstring interpreter. When he saw the beta Lyra demo at a Fest, he was so thrilled that he drove several miles to Speech Systems (Pal Parry's home in Batavia, IL) to get the first copy actually sold.

After tiring of Lyra's limitations, Mike decided to write his own version. While experienced at small assembler programs, Mike balked at writing such a huge and complex program in anything other than C, a language he used at work and available on the CoCo only under OS-9. Thus MusEd (Music Editor) was committed to OS-9 instead of Lyra's RS-DOS. This natural separation of markets helped keep the rivalry friendly between Lyra and what was quickly renamed UltiMusE (Ultimate Music Editor, or UME for short). *[Editor's Note: It is worth noting that there **was** an OS-9 version of Lyra being produced at one point, and a demo copy was released, but the final product was never completed.]*

Mike was about to give UME away, but Glenside club members thought it was too good for that (people could actually make money in the CoCo market then).

So UME was first released as shareware in March 1988, available for download from CIS and Delphi (both still hotbeds of CoCo activity) and some private boards. Requested donation was \$25, but Mike was really testing the waters for a more elaborate version.

The shareware version used the "medium resolution" 256-pixel-wide CoCo 1/2 screen, but required a CoCo 3 for enough RAM just to hold up to 1500 notes. Enthusiastic users quickly moused in some amazing music within that limitation, and urged Mike to bring out the improved version.

Ed Hathaway, longtime president of the Glenside club, had formed Second City Software, based on the inventory from a closed out software house and some assistance from silent partner Howard Medical Inc., a favorite RAINBOWfest seller of color monitors. Ed suggested to Mike that Ed should market the new UltiMusE.

So, at the April 1989 Princeton RAINBOWfest (actually held in Somerset, NJ), Mike and Ed revealed UME 3.3.0, with a full CoCo 3 640-wide screen and a Layout Menu for customizing up staves, clefs, and parts (none of which Lyra could do). This was the last year for the "other" RAINBOWfest in NJ.

Mike and Ed drove the whole way from Chicago to Somerset in Ed's Accord through snow and rain, arriving barely in time to take their booth. Customers didn't seem to notice Mike and Ed's lack of showering for the last two days as they snapped up copies of UME at \$55 a pop, minus any previous shareware donations.

Technically, the "buyware" UME was interesting since it really ran two processes connected by the "pipe" feature OS-9 had borrowed from UNIX. The second "Fran" process handled all the screen graphics. To keep the refresh time acceptable, Mike used the VDG screen (intended for OS-9 games) and direct writes to the video RAM, rather than the Level 2 graphics calls.

This raised some eyebrows among OS-9 purists, but was necessary and used documented system calls to get to the video RAM. Around 1996 Mike eliminated the VDG screen and used a genuine Level 2 window, but kept the direct accesses.

A few years later, Mike released an UME version using Virtual Memory to store up to 32K notes, by swapping 8K-byte OS-9 L2 memory blocks. *[Editor's Note: This may have been released at an Atlanta Fest — Mike actually did fly down to the second one in 1991.]*

A year or so later, virtual memory was applied to the executable code as well, with new features fragmented or “fragged” out into separate subroutine modules. Again, OS-9's superior design made this possible.

As of Spring 1998 there are eight such function modules, besides the main UME3 program and Fran. When all ten pieces are added up, UltiMusE-II becomes the largest non-game CoCo program of all time, and perhaps the most comprehensive in what it does and operating system features used. *[Editor's Note: A discussion of this subject appeared on the internet CoCo mailing list awhile back, debating that the code work put into NitrOS9 make it the largest, but overall UME seems to be the largest single application. It is also important to note that during an upgrade to UME, a discovery was made about how the OS-9 C compiler generated code allowing a new C optimizer program, “cnoy,” to be created which took a smidgen of code size away and gave another smidgen of performance. This is quite possibly one of the more interesting ways a C compiler add-on has been created.]*

It may also have the longest life-span of evolution and support, entering its 11th year of public release. Every CoCoFest — *Rainbow*, Atlanta, or Glenside/Chicago — has seen a new release.

ULTIMUSE and the MM/1 COMPUTER

UltiMusE was probably the first application program for the MM/1. When Paul Ward conceived his Multi-Media One machine, he naturally wanted a MIDI music program on it. So he got MM/1 designer Kevin Pease to loan Mike Knudsen a prototype unit to give him a head start on porting the program to OS-9/68000 (OSK).

Mike did the port but wasted about six months waiting for Kevin Darling to add the SKeySense and mouse-click timing features of Tandy OS-9 L2 to the MM/1 (Boisy Pitre finally put these in years later). Finally Mike worked a way around these missing features and UltiMusE-K was introduced at the 1991 AtlantaFest, with Ed Hathaway still as the very active vendor.

Ed had moved from the Chicago suburbs to Greensboro, NC, and changed his company's name from Second City to KalaSoft, after his [grand/]mother's name. A drawn out legal battle with silent partner Howard Medical kept Ed from promoting UltiMusE for a year or so, but the MM/1 version revitalized sales, even at the stiff price of \$150 (\$110 for owners of the CoCo version). Plus the \$50 MIDI Paddle board needed to get MIDI in and out of the MM/1.

UltiMusE-K was almost instantaneous on the screen refreshes, and played even “house music” percussion with perfect timing. It also got some new features one Fest ahead of the CoCo version, but thanks to virtual memory programming techniques, the CoCo has always caught up with the MM/1 as to UltiMusE features.

A FRIENDLY RIVALRY — BATTLE OF THE BANDS

At each Fest, *Rainbow* and afterwards, Speech Systems (now reformed as Rulaford Research, named

after Cecil Houk's grandfather) would mount a huge array of speakers, amplifiers, and synthesizers, all driven by a CoCo running CoCo MIDI Pro and another running Lyra.

When Second City started showing up with a less impressive looking but equally powerful sound system (largely borrowed from Glenside member Gene Brooks, who would later do the CAD layout for the IDE controller) running UltiMuse-III, the Fest conference room became a "battleground of the bands." Even Lonnie Falk had to call for a cease-fire each time he wanted to hawk his outdated cassettes on the PA system! Attendees learned to hold their serious conversations out in the hallways.

After a while both sides ran out of new tunes and realized they could attract more customers by demonstrating on request. But the rivalry was always civilized — Ed and Mike would negotiate with Cecil as to who would open each day with the national anthem and who would close it. At one of the first Chicago CoCoFests, Mike surprised attendees with a long-overdue rendition of "O Canada."

During one of the last RAINBOWfests, Mike and Ed met with Cecil and the other Rulaford crew at a Schaumburg pizza parlor and got Cecil's permission to market a program to convert Lyra scores to UME format. Mike started work on the program but never finished it, one of his most serious mistakes. A converter program would have preserved the hundreds of Lyra score files then in existence. However, the note ranges of the two systems were not entirely compatible, and transferring files between RS-DOS and OS-9 is a slow and time-intensive process.

Another other major error was in not equipping UME to play through the CoCo's DAC TV sound, despite Mike's expertise in direct synthesis. With MIDI keyboard prices dropping to \$150 at one point, Mike felt this was not needed, but many potential buyers at Fests made it clear they would buy the program if they didn't need a synthesizer.

A third career miscue was failure to complete a port of UME to the PC around 1990, but in this context we'll forgive Mike for that one. A Linux port is in the "twinkle" stage...

Starting around 1995, Brian Schubring starting bringing enough MIDI and sound equipment to the Chicago Fests to blow down the hotel. This was mounted on a huge cart that was wheeled into the seminar room for lecture demos — probably to the immense relief of those who stayed in the main hall! Rulaford had long since disappeared by this time. Partnered with Mike Knudsen and player-pianist Mike Carey as "The Music Men," this trio has given lectures and demos at recent CoCoFests on both the latest features of UltiMuse and the enduring power of CoCo MIDI Pro to record and edit music from the keyboard.

ULTIMUSE — BACK TO SHAREWARE

Ed Hathaway had about four other side businesses going besides his job, and as new sales of UltiMuse (and other CoCo and MM/1 titles) dwindled, he lost interest in handling it. People started getting the notion that UME was unavailable.

Late, Mike Knudsen met with Colin McKay of Northern eXposure (more great capital letters in funny places!) and Colin was contracted to promote the product. After a year of Northern-X ads in *68 micros* that never mentioned UME, Colin admitted that he was really interested only in NitrOS9. He and Mike parted friends, and shortly thereafter Mike took advantage of the new FTP archive site,

os9archives.rtsi.com, to put UltiMusE back where it had started — as shareware for downloading. Both the CoCo and MM/1 versions may now be copied and distributed by anyone. *[Editor's Note: Please support shareware by sending in donations as requested by the authors — without that, great works like this might fade away.]*

COMPARISON OF UME AND LYRA

Without going into details, Lyra was more oriented towards *playing* music, while UltiMusE was better suited for composing and displaying and printing it. In fact, UME was conceived as a sheet music editor, with playing a secondary concern. Knudsen wrote the playing subroutines last, although long before unveiling the project.

Lyra was a follow-on to the CoCo MIDI Pro sequencer, and as such had better facilities for getting into the dirty details of the synthesizer, such as including MIDI “Events” in the score.

UltiMusE tried to encompass all of musical notation — repeats, first and second endings, Codas, changes in key and time signatures, multiple staves with several choices of clefs, and other items that practicing musicians would demand. Repeats and the like save a lot of note memory! Ironically these also made it easier for a total beginner to just mouse in a copy of a sheet music piece — and Mike remembered to point that out in public!

Lyra is four times more efficient with memory, using two bytes per note against UME’s eight. Lyra stores each part or voice in its own time-sorted stream (as in MIDI File Format 1), but UME merges all voices into a single timestream like a Format 0 file. Each format has its strong points.

With its more elaborate display and high-level C-language, UltiMusE takes longer to refresh the display after each change than Lyra’s assembler code and simple display.

How much “literature” is available for each system as moused-in scores? In addition to hundreds or thousands of user-entered scores, Cecil himself built up an impressive library of classical and other favorites, including many pipe organ classics, and sold sets of these disks as “The Lyra Lybrary.”

Not to be outdone, Ed Hathaway moused in superb arrangements of his favorite classic rock and Beatles tunes, which he also sold on floppies. Ed knew his Yamaha PSS-480 inside and out, and patiently moused in such marathons as “Stairway to Heaven” and “Pinball Wizard.” Dozens of other “UltiMousers” specialized in country-western, classical piano, Christian rock, and everything else. Like the Lyra pieces, these were uploaded to Delphi and CompuServe and passed around at Fests.

THE STANDARD MIDI PLAYER

Paul Seniura, a member of the Oklahoma City OS-9 Club, was an early devotee of the Standard MIDI File Format (SMF). After years of trying to get Mike interested in it, Paul released a set of programs that translate SMF files into a binary form that another of his programs can play on the CoCo. This opened up a huge mass of music files from the PC, Mac, Amiga, and Atari worlds to be played by CoConuts with OS-9.

Paul’s player gives impeccable timing even on a CoCo’s serial port, probably due to divining the secrets of the CoCo’s GIME chip’s 14-bit countdown timer.

Around 1994 Mike gave UltiMusE the ability to write out SMF Files, so we can share our work with the other computers.

EDITOR'S CONCLUSION

This certainly does not begin to cover all of the many areas to CoCo music. For that, we would quite possibly need another entirely separate book. Over the years, many music and audio related items came and went for the CoCo, and as fate has it, many of them (such as the CoCo MIDI Pak) seem to return from the "grave."

Many other outstanding achievements, such as SoundTrax which played multiple voice SAMPLES, and John Kowalski's MOD file music player (one of the many items he did which most said couldn't be done) have pushed CoCo-generated music to new levels. Who knows what other music creations were done using CoCos that were never made publicly available. Did the CoCo have a monumental impact on computer based music? Perhaps not, but it certainly provided many people some great musical times.

Outroduction

A FEW MORE WORDS FROM THE AUTHOR

Getting to review all of my Fest reports really makes me appreciate some of the things we've been through as a Community. In 1990 when Terry and I attended our first Fest, neither of us were old enough to even set foot in the hotel bar. Today, we wish we were that young again. Indeed, **eight** years is quite a while. Just look at what technology has done! When the first AtlantaFest happened, you could walk into your local Radio Shack (or other similar places) and pick up a home computer for under \$200 that you could learn to program, write letters on, or even balance your checkbook with (not that kids my age then had checking accounts). Today, doing the same thing through a modern name brand computer store would set you back around \$1500. Frankly, my CoCo could tell me I spent more than I had just as well as my low-end 166 MHz Pentium MMX Compaq laptop does today! Ten years ago, not only did you have a choice in what software packages you'd use to do this tasks (though limited, I admit, by today's choices), but you also had a choice of what **computer platform** to run them on. Today, the **only** new, supported option one really has is an IBM compatible machine (as modern as they are, they are still based and retain code from the 1981 IBM-PC days) or an Apple Macintosh. Is this progress?

When the first Fest was held, 2400 baud modems were a luxury. Today, 56K modems can be purchased at Wal-Mart. When the first Fest was held, if you were online that meant a bulletin board system. No one had an internet account, web page, or e-mail address. When the first Fest was held, the thought of owning a cellular telephone and a pager was kept to the ideas of business folks. When the first Fest was held, an 18" digital satellite dish picking up hundreds of television stations was truly something from *Star Trek*. So, some change certainly seems to be good, and perhaps this "change" is what has let us lose something quite special. Is it worth it? Perhaps, but to many of us, we'll always miss those days long gone. The days of writing a simple ten line program in BASIC to print out a mailing label (as opposed to spending \$20 or more to buy a fancy one these days) are no more. The days of subscribing to a magazine and finding programs you could type in over a few evenings to do something useful or fun are gone. The days of, frankly, finding computer owners who even know anything about computers is, sadly, gone. Maybe it's not progress, but the effect of consumers embracing something that was once the sole interest of techies? Perhaps a little of both.

Regardless of the cause, the world today is different in many ways. Remember the threat of nuclear missiles from Russia? Remember when a "Gun Free School" was just the accepted norm? Remember when there was no Generation X, or "alternative" mainstream music? Certainly, not all change is good, but we cannot deny that things have to change. It's just a pity that the CoCo couldn't have changed with time as well.

To me, this book is not just a chronicle of some computer conventions. It's a journal of a part of history that we were all a part of. We changed things, even if indirectly. Without the CoCo, where would Microsoft have ended up (that's a lot of BASIC interpreter licenses they got through Tandy). Without the CoCo, would OS-9 be going into all these amazing devices that it is today? Would NewTek have been formed (employing famous CoCo folks of yesterday) allowing the Video Toaster

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to amaze us with graphics in shows such as *Babylon 5*? Perhaps. Or perhaps it was **us** supporting this neat little “toy computer” that set many things in action. I like to think so, anyway.

Thank you so much for purchasing this book. There are so many items I would have liked to have included, such as photographs, more commentary, CoCoFest trivia, and history. Perhaps a volume two will occur at some point down the road. If you'd like to see that, let me know. Also, if you haven't already done so, take a moment to sign up for the Color Computer Preservation Society. Resources such as that will allow us to continue to do fun little projects like this — even ones that don't require you to still own a CoCo, or run the emulator on your “other” computer. May none of us ever forget the fun we had (and some still have) with this wonderful computer that brought us all together.

Thanks, Tandy, for getting it all going.

Allen, April 5th, 1998

