January, 1997 Volume XVII, Number 1

Happy New Year! A New Look For 1997!

by: Carl Boll

With the new year come many changes and most I hope are for the better. We have new officers for the Club and a new publisher and editor for your newsletter. If there is something you like or dislike about the newsletter let us know! We are here to serve the members. We need feedback.

Let me introduce myself first off. I'm Carl Boll. In the past I've been a Vice President of the fine organization and have helped to get it organized for the Fests and other activities.

I'll try to make these newsletters as informative as possible but it is up to you, the member to help. I can't write all the articles nor do I know everything that is going on. If you do a project, write about it. If you solve a problem, write about it. Chances are if it was a problem for you it was also a problem for someone else. Let them benefit from your experience. I sure could have used a lot of tips when I started OS-9.

Now is the time to thank all of the people

that in the past have contributed to the CoCo~123 and helped make it the success it has been. Thanks to everyone who has ever submitted an article, written a column or letter. Keep up the good work.

From now on the President will lead off this newsletter (we have to make him think he's important!). I'll just do a column somewhere on the following pages.

Now that I've written all I have to write for the introduction of 1997, let me introduce your new President to you with his column,

The President's /term

by: Mike Knudsen

Greetings from your New President!

CoCo~123 Information

The Glenside Color Computer Club, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose members share an interest in the Tandy Color Computer ®. The CoCo~123 is the official newsletter of the Glenside Color Computer Club, Inc.(hereafter known as GCCC). GCCC has no affiliation with Radio Shack ® and / or the Tandy Corporation®. The opinions of the authors of the articles contained within this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Editor, the Executive Officers, or the actual Club Membership.

We are committed to publishing a minimum of four issues and a maximum of 12 issues per calendar year. For a fee of $15.00, for January through December, you may become a GCCC member with full membership priviledges. Send your dues to:

George Schneeweiss
RR #2 Box 67
Forrest, IL 61741-9629

CoCo~123 Contributions

If you would like to submit an article for publication in the CoCo~123 you may upload it to one of the Club BBS's or send it directly on a disk to:

Carl Boll
6242 S. Menard Ave.
Chicago, IL 60638

The following formats are acceptable:

RS-DOS - 5 1/4" disk
OS-9 - 5 1/4" disk
MS-DOS - 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" disk

All articles should be in straight ASCII format, not specialized word processing formats to facilitate importation into the newsletter.

Advertising is also accepted. If you are a vendor you may send an ad to the previous address. All ads should be "camera ready"* art. Please limit the size of you ad to 1/4 page. If you wish you may submit your ad on a disk in the following graphical formats:
JPEG, GIF, BMP, WPG
*camera ready art means printed out on paper ready to be photocopied or scanned. Artwork that has been folded is not considered to be camera ready.

Reprint Policy

If you or your club / user group desire to reprint any articles in part or in whole that appear in the CoCo~123 you may do so under the following guidelines:

1. Provide credit to the Author of said article
2. Provide credit to the CoCo~123

We encourage others to copy these articles and the newsletter and distribute it at you regular meetings.

Glenside Club Meetings

The GCCC meets every second Thursday of the month from 7:00PM to 10:00PM at the Glendale Heights Library. A social get-together always occurs after the meeting at a local restaurant.

Newsletter Exchange

The GCCC is happy to exchange newsletters with other clubs / user groups at no charge. Please send your newsletters to:

Dennis Devitt
21 W 144 Canary Rd
Lombard, IL 60148

These are your BBS's. Please support them.

Glenside CoCoRama BBS
847-587-9837
=/>9600 baud

Glenside's Cup of CoCo
847-428-0436
9600 baud

Glenside East
847-632-5558
9600 baud

The ChiCoCo BBS
773-735-3355
14,400 baud

Most Club members know me, but might as well fill in the details. I'm Mike Knudsen, 35 years old (as computer hackers reckon), I live in an old neighborhood on the north edge of Wheaton (close to Glenside), and design stuff for Bell Labs (Lucent).

As a kid, I built "computers" out of old pinball and telephonerelays -- in the '50s a computer was a wing of a building.I learned FORTRAN programming on punched cards as a freshmanin 1962, and loved bossing a big machine around. I was "bit good"by the programming bug, er, virus, er...well, still love it.

I got my first Coco in late 1982 to do graphics, games, and music,having already made 4-part harmony on a KIM-1 since '77.I joined Glenside Coco Club soon afterwards, back when Ed Hathawayruled over meeings that barely crammed into our Library space(and you couldn't get thru the crowds at RainbowFests to seeDennis Bathory-Kitsz' booth; but you'll get your chance yet,at this April's CocoFest!).

When I was a grad student in Computer Science, all my profs jokedabout what a poor excuse BASIC was for a programming language.I was pleasantly surprised to find it easy and elegant to use,packing a lot of power into a few statements.I wrote a music compiler and player in BASIC and assembler --one reason I bought the Coco was to program assembler forthe 6809, the greatest of the 8-bit micros.

But BASIC was hard to push to the size and complexity of programsI wanted to write -- I needed C, the language I use at work.So, I bought one of the first copies of OS9 sold in DuPage County,followed by BASIC09 and the C Compiler. Later I got a Coco3and had four Radio Shacks watching for OS9-Level 2.

I was writing piano ragtime and scoring fanfares and hymns forsmall brass groups, and wanted something to help me with allthe musical manuscript editing. I'd been doing music graphicssince the BASIC days, but with the Coco3 and OS9-L2 I ended upwith UltiMusE. Ed

Hathaway was eager to market it, and we hadit on the market from 1989 into early '90s. Today it's shareware,and I'm still working on it. I had one of the first prototype MM/1sand ported Umuse to that machine, which I still love using.

I have a few other machines at home, but my Coco3 and MM/1 stilldo all my "serious" work. I had my wife using OS9 for several yearsin her home office, till she got a Mac (could've been worse!).My son Dan got really good at some Coco games, and even got hispicture in The Rainbow, complete with camouflage outift and joystick.

Besides computing, I windsurf, scuba dive, collect old radiosand music machines, fix up pinball machines (the testing phase isthe best), and try to be a good President to the GCCC. WithoutTony and Carl and all the other hard workers, I couldn't do it.Nobody could.

Please keep on supporting your Club and the Coco as you've doneall along, and help make this year's CocoFest the best ever.

Your President, Mike Knudsen

Mike Knudsen

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Articles, Ads and CoCo~123
by: Carl Boll

The CoCo~123 is in dire need of ads, articles and cartoons! If you are selling something send us your ad! If you want to buy something, send an ad. If you have some information, share it by writing an article. It doesn't have to be long, just informative.

The CoCo~123 is all about the CoCo community. As such it needs to be supported by the community. Don't be shy. Help us get this newsletter out to you, send us something to print.

The Glenside Color Computer Club, Inc.
Presents:
The Sixth Annual Last Chicago CoCoFest!

Held at the Holiday, Elgin
April 26th & 27th 1997

Rooms at the Red Roof Inn.
(847) 885-7877

Make your reservations now!

Subject: Re: CoCo IDE interface

Hi All,

Some of you may have heard about the possibility of the Glenside Color Computer Club making an IDE interface for sale to the CoCo community and to be available at the 6th Annual "LAST" Chicago CoCoFEST! This is a real project that we are undertaking.

So what exactly are we talking about here? The IDE interface is a plug in board that can be inserted into the expansion buss of the CoCo to allow use of IDE hard drives with the CoCo. At this point it is strctly an OS-9 Level 2 device since those are the only drivers we have for it. In the future there may be OS-9 Level 1 drivers and even support for DECB under ADOS.

Let me describe the board as it is currently conceptualized. The board will have two sets of identical solder pads which will start just out side the CoCo. They will be properly spaced to allow soldering a 40 position card edge connector. This will allow you to plug the floppy controller into this card eliminating the need for a Y-cable or Multi-Pak. You can solder Header pins into the second set of solder pads and have an expansion bus which will allow you to add other future boards or you can add a second card edge connector, either on a plug in board using the header pin arrangement (suggested) or solder the card edge connector directly to the card. This will allow the adding of a third device like an RS-232 Pak.

Right now we are also planning on allowing a provision to supply external power to the board. This will be accomplished by a series of jumpers and solder pads. The instructions will be included. This will allow the user to add the +/- 12Vdc that Tandy neglected to provide the CoCo3. This will be a real plus to those of us who have repackaged our CoCo's or are planning on doing so.

The interface will be distributed in three forms. The first form will be just the PC board and the drivers. The buyer will have to find the parts and install them. This will require knowledge of proper soldering skills. There will be no warrantee with this option of course since there are too many variables (the only exception will be the proof that the board itself is bad).

The second form will be the board with the sockets, capacitors, resistors and LED's installed. Included in this option will be a single chip that is not available at the Rat Shack currently. The owner will have to purchase all of the other chips at the local Rat Shack (they are all "off the shelf items")and install them. There will be a limited warrantee with this option since the board will have been assembled and tested prior to sale. I might add that this form will end up costing the user more than the third option. If however you have the needed chips available (perhaps in your spare parts bin) you may wish to go this route.

The third form will be to distribute the board fully populated and ready to use. This option will have a full warrantee.

Of course none of this is set in stone as of now. The options may change as this project nears completion. Major reasons to make changes will be size of the board and cost.

In none of these options are we including a plastic case to house the board. The reason for this is cost. At this point we can't find enough to make it worthwhile to "fool" with. The other reason is time. Even if we found a source for the "old" style cases we'd still have to modify them. My personal suggestion to anybody buying one of these is to purchase a Project Case that is big enough for the card, cut the needed openings, mount the card in it and go with that. It is the easiest and best solution if you are uncomfortable having a bare board sticking out of your computer. Other options are to use an old 8-track cartridge case or to purchase one of the

cases that we do have access to for $5.00 and modify it.

This board is being prototyped right now. We have a hand made working board and we have schematics. The artwork is in progress. I can not give a definite timeline yet or a price (the artwork will determine the price) but we will have it ready for the Fest.

We decided on these forms of distribution since we are really only concerned about getting this project completed and out to the general community, not in profit. Our main reason for taking this project on is that it is unique and we feel that it has a definite benefit to the community. We have seen many good projects that had working prototypes and interest from the community die due to the lack of funds for producing a hardware project like this. An example would be the AT keyboard interface as well as the page scanner for the CoCo.

I would suggest that it may very well be that the plans and software (the original software, not the software included with the kit) may be released to the general public, this is up to the owner of the copyrights. The artwork will of course be copyrighted by the GCCC and it will be up to the membership if it is to be released to the Public Domain if the schematics are released (we could not release the artwork if the schematics are not released, a proviso of our contract with the copyright holder.

We received several excellent suggestions during the planning process of this project. One was to offer the board in a kit form.

This was an excellent idea and I took it one step further by installing the sockets, resistors (4), capacitors (9) and LED's (1). This way we can test the board before shipping it. It will not add to the cost of the board since the work is being done by volunteers.

Another idea was to take deposits before actual production of the board.

This is also a good idea. Right now we, The Glenside Club need to know just what kind of desire there is for these boards. My proposal is this:

1. Send me E-mail or US snail mail stating which option you are interested in.

2. At some point in the near future I will send you E-Mail or snail mail asking for a$15.00 deposit...do NOT send this in now. It will be sent to a different address than the Treasurer because he has enough to do with dues and Fest tickets.

The amount of requests we get will directly determine the amount of boards that we will have manufactured. Obviously the less orders the fewer boards. This will directly affect the cost. If we only have 50 boards etched they will cost more per board than 100 will. The same goes for parts.

At this point we are nearing the point of costing the whole job out. After we cost the job I'll have prices. The problem is we are not trying to make a profit on this and want to keep the final cost as low as possible. In order to do this I need an idea of demand and I also need to know what form is desired in order to determine how many parts to order.

I might also add that IF the Club determines that the cost will be lower (due to price breaks, etc.) those with outstanding orders will get the price break and if we determine that the prices must be higher those who have sent in a deposit will be locked in to the lower price! I wouldn't expect there to be a large difference but it could happen. Look what happened to RAM prices a few years ago.

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So, a recap, If you are interested in obtaining one of these interfaces I need you to send me E-Mail or US snail mail now telling me how many you would want and in what form, or contact Tony Podraza @ Glenside's Cup Of CoCo BBS at 847-428-0436.

Thanks to y'all,

Carl Boll
root@chicoco.chi.il.us
        or
Carl Boll
6242 S. Menard Ave.
Chicago, IL 60638

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FLASH!!!

Late breaking news:

The publishing of the newsletter was so late that we have decided to start accepting deposits for boards. These deposits will be non-refundable if you decide you don't want to purchase the board at a later date. If you have access to Internet E-mail you can send E-mail rather than a deposit. We still don't have a price on the boards yet but they should be between $45.00 and $60.00 for a fully populated ready to use board. If you send a deposit make sure you send a note as well with your name address, etc. You can send the deposit of $15.00 to the following address:

IDE boards
c/o Carl Boll
6242 So. Menard Ave.
Chicago, IL 60638

Please make the checks payable to the Glenside Color Computer Club, not me. One other note, please send checks or money orders but not Postal Orders. Postal Orders must be cashed at a Post Office and cause no

end of problems for us while money orders and checks can be directly deposited in the bank. One other note, >IF< the boards do end up costing more than the projected $60.00 then you will be entitled to a refund if you decide to not buy a board. The deposits will be accepted up until May 1st. Please get your deposit in by then. If you do not reserve a board by making a deposit there is no guarantee that ther will be one later if you decide you want one.

Thank you,

Carl Boll

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Ultimuse to be given away!

At the upcoming CoCoFest! the midi program Ultimuse will be given away! Yet another reason to attend this years Fest.

There will be seminars and vendors. If you've never attended a Fest you really need to attend this one. It may be the last one in Chicago.

Chicago has plenty of other diversions as well. Make attnding the Fest an family vacation. Visit the zoos and museums. Take a boat trip on the lake or the river. There is gambling at the riverboat casinos. We have two major airports and there is excellent transportation via limos or taxis.

Chicago has a lot to offer. Oh don't forget shopping! There are malls everywhere and you don't want to miss the specialty shops of downtown Chicago.

Make your plans now. Don't delay. See the next page for further details on the Fest and for the necessary phone numbers and addresses for rooms, etc.

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