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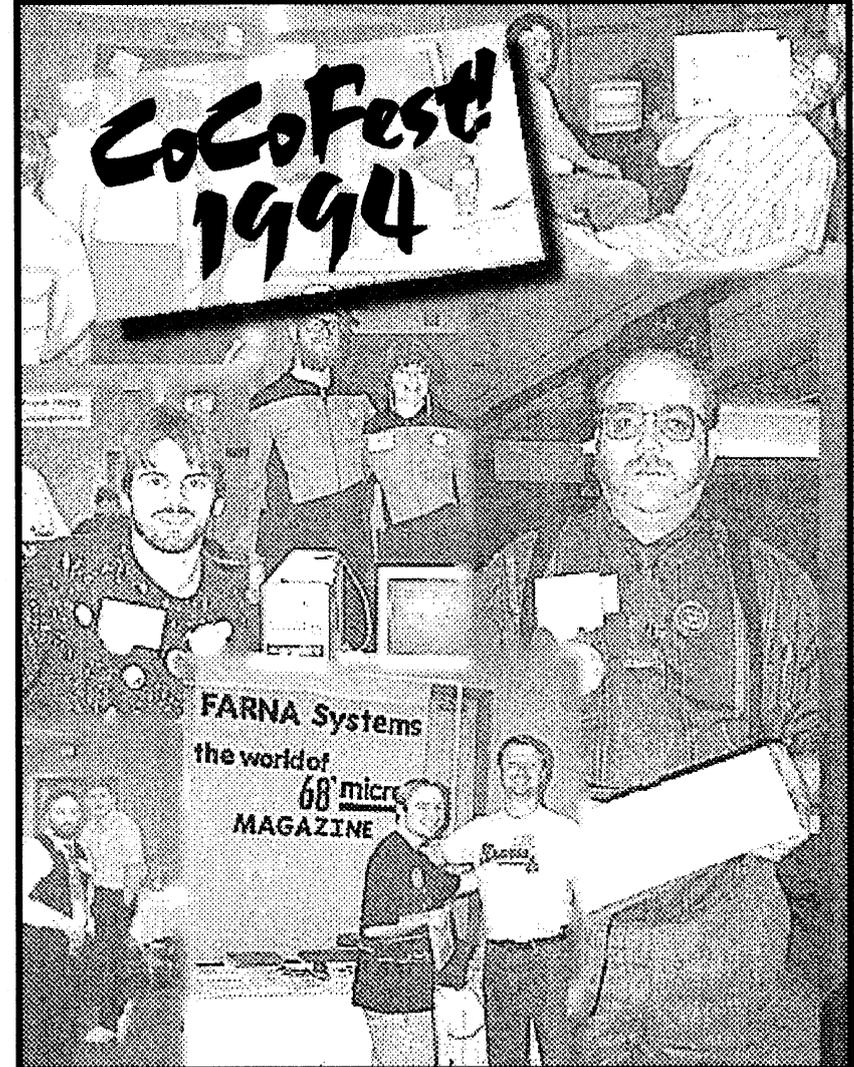
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The "International" OS9 Underground Magazine

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Volume 2, Issue 5



CoCoFEST! Chicago Style

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One man's glimpse into OS-9's Future and what we need to do to get there.

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"Checks" and "Basic to C" will return next month in our Communications Issue.

Under It All

By Alan Sheltra

It's Fest time again, and this time it's Atlanta that vendors and attendees are gearing up for.

In this issue, though, we bring you pictures and a fest report of the last fest, the Chicago CocoFest! Both the report and pictures are courtesy of Fest Reporter Extrordinaire, Allen Huffman (of Sub-Etha Software) and staff writer.

By the way, all of these pictures in this issue were placed directly from a Kodak Photo CD Rom created from the original negatives sent in by Allen. They're definitely superior to scanning snapshots by hand, as was done in previous issue.

We hope to have similar coverage of the Atlanta Fest in an upcoming issue as well.

OS9ers List

Most of you have heard about the Coco List (Email list), but did you know that there is a list dedicated strictly to OS-9? Well, there is! It's called the OS9ers list and is a privately run Email list, run by yours truly. The OS9ers list

is free to all (you don't need to be a subscriber of this magazine, nor is this magazine discussed there, the FATCAT list is for that!). If you're not already a subscriber, you're probably asking, "How do I subscribe to this OS9ers list?". Easy. (So long as you have internet access). Just send Email to:

listserv@zog.wa.com

and in the body of your message, type: subscribe os9ers your name (Obviously, replace "your name" with *YOUR* real name). You'll start receiving messages right away. Messages may be posted by you by sending Email to:

os9ers@zog.wa.com

These mail messages are "bounced" to everyone subscribing to the list. (at last count, nearly 100 subscribers).

Also, many files and previous articles of the Underground are located on the "listserv" and may be retrieved by mail. I'll cover this in detail in the next issue... *The Communications Issue*, next month.

See you then!

-Alan Sheltra (ZOG)

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The "International" OS9 Underground magazine is published by Fat Cat Publications which is located at 4650 Cahuenga Blvd., Ste #7, Toluca Lake, CA 91602. (818) 761-4135 (voice) · (818) 769-1938 (fax). The OS9 Underground and its logotypes are registered trademarks. All material within these pages are copyright (C) FAT CAT Publication 1994. Illegal reproduction of this magazine is strictly prohibited. Written permission must be obtained from Fat Cat Publications must be obtained if you wish to reprint any portion of this magazine in any form or media.

going strong, and there is an immense amount of information that could be shared among these groups. We should commit to keeping in touch with overseas OS-9 users through electronic and conventional mail.

In conclusion, it is important to keep in mind that the idea of OS-9 existing outside of industry is a proven one. CD-i and the Tandy Color Computer are prime examples of OS-9's use in home and entertainment markets. As personal OS-9 advocates, we can take pride in the fact that OS-9 is so diverse and versatile, qualities that aren't possessed by those other "operating systems."

The next time a DOS/Windows fanatic chides you about OS-9's obscurity, ask him this question: What other operating system out there monitors experiments in space, guides missiles for our military, controls underwater robots, directs traffic, makes interactive TV a reality, entertains your family with movies, and challenges you with a stimulating full motion video game of 7th Guest in your living room?

When the shock of his ignorance wears off and he's once again able to speak, buy him a drink. He'll need it.

-Boisy G. Pitre

Microware Systems Corporation; Des Moines, Iowa

Internet: boisy@microware.com
OS-9 - *Clearly Superior*.

The opinions expressed herein, unless otherwise stated, are mine only.

About the author:

Boisy G. Pitre, 23, is a software engineer at Microware Systems Corporation in Des Moines, Iowa and has been an avid OS-9 user, programmer and advocate for over six years with specific interests in system modules, applications, compilers and utilities. He holds memberships in ACM, EFO and the OS-9 Users Group, and has authored a number of OS-9 related articles. Boisy can be reached via Internet at

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COMING NEXT MONTH: Communications Issue

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OS-9 Conferences

I firmly believe that periodic OS-9 conferences are necessary to sustain the momentum of the personal OS-9 user. The benefits of one-on-one discussion, dialogue and learning in such an atmosphere are worth the effort.

Such a conference could feature:

- OS-9 seminars on such topics as:
 - CD-I
 - OS-9 In the Real World
 - Beginner OS-9/OS-9000
 - Advanced OS-9/OS-9000
 - Beginner C programming under OS-9
 - Advanced C programming under OS-9
 - Writing Device Drivers for OS-9/OS-9000
- OS-9/OS-9000 System Internals
- Using debug/RomBug
- OS-9 networking
- Exploring Ultra C
- OS-9 Graphics Programming
- OS-9 Live Q&A
- Writing OS-9 Applications for Personal Users
- OS-9 Applications Review
- Formal papers on a variety of OS-9 topics
- Vendor participation
- Panel discussion on a host of topics dealing with OS-9 users, both personal and industrial
- OS-9 Users Group, Inc. Annual meeting

CoCo Fests have been serving this need for some time; however, it is arguable that the personal OS-9 community should cease to ride on the coat tail of a now defunct computer. Because OS-9 is an operating system, it can run on a number of systems, and therefore, has the opportunity to attract many more people than an event aimed at one particular machine.

Supporting CD-I

CD-I is the closest thing to a mass-

marketed personal OS-9 system since the Tandy Color Computer 3. There are already add-ons which will be available soon to turn a consumer CD-I player into a computer system. When this equipment becomes widely available, it will undoubtedly open up new doors for the personal OS-9 market.

A Strong National Users Group

The OS-9 Users Group, Inc. has some very able individuals at its helm who are capable of leading the organization to growth. Supporting the organization is necessary to insure any kind of success in these goals.

Participating on Information Services

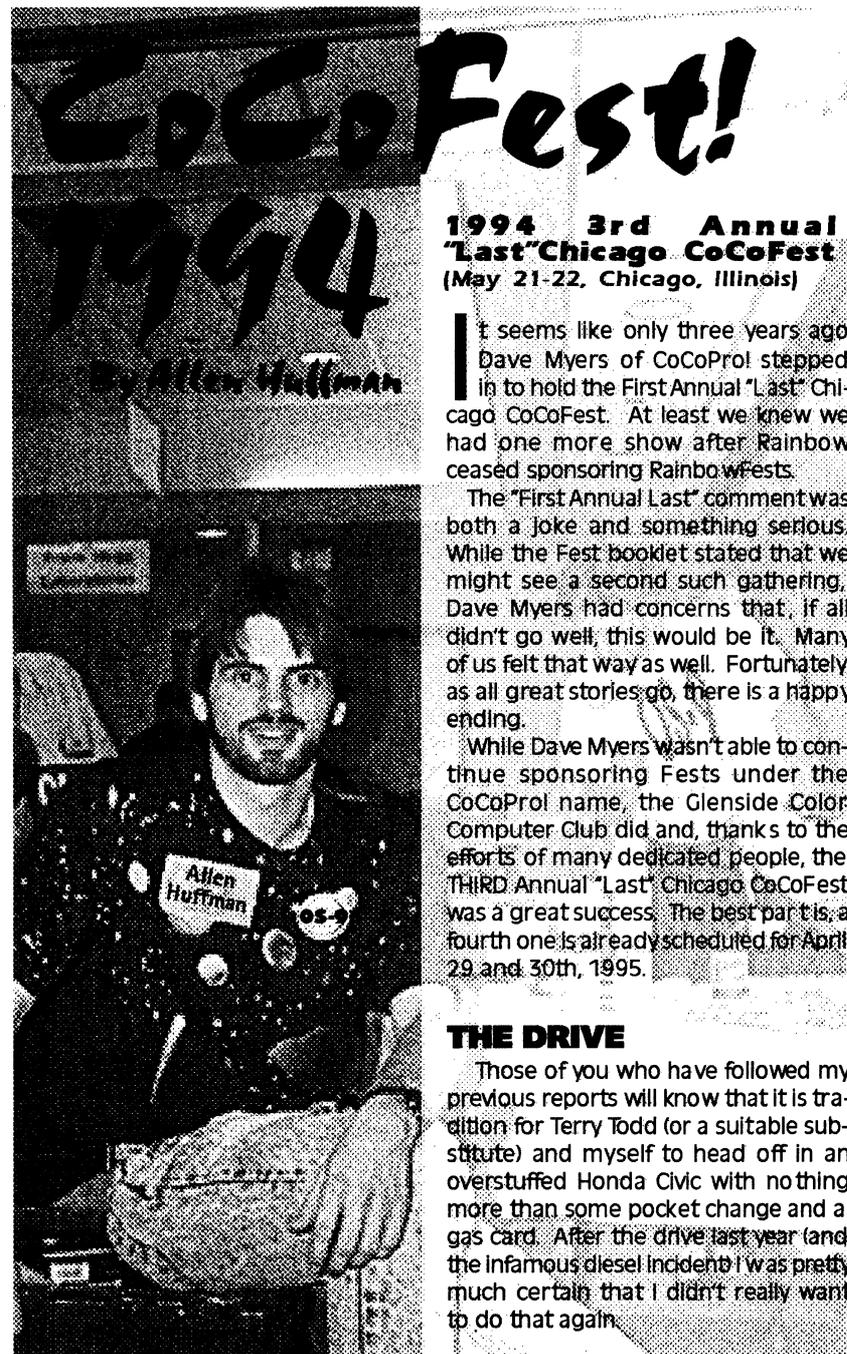
Both Delphi and Compuserve have OS-9 forums. These places are great for on-line conferences and Q&A sessions. They can also be utilized to provide full access to OS-9 Users Group material such as proposals, minutes of meetings, etc. While information services may not include everyone, they do offer benefits such as electronic mail on the Internet and quick access to other OS-9 users.

Participation on the Internet

With all the hype in the media these days about the "information superhighway," it's only a matter of time before the majority of us will have convenient access to the Internet. This not only means access to information services, but also the ability to subscribe to Usenet groups such as comp.os.os9, which caters to industrial and personal OS-9 users.

Communication with International OS-9 Groups

This was started to some degree last year, but has slowly faded. EFFO (European Forum For OS-9) is still



1994 3rd Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest (May 21-22, Chicago, Illinois)

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 van full of passengers.

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 9am 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.



Dave Pellerto tending VCR for his "Video Newsletter"

THE ARRIVAL

It was about 6am 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



Mr. & Mrs. Al Dages of the Atlanta Computer Society

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 S w y g e r t (FARNA Systems) at-

tempting to check in. He was also not able to do so, but was able to enjoy the whirlpool with us.

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).

It is difficult for one to argue the case that the former remains a profitable and salable product. Though it may still be a practical choice for those who continue to use it, CoCo OS-9 has zero growth potential outside its current circle of users because: (a) it supports an outmoded processor and (b) the software is no longer sold or supported. In light of this, it is accurate to conclude that in terms of potential growth, CoCo OS-9 is essentially dead.

Taking this into account, it is now time for the interests of the personal OS-9/680X0 market to be addressed in totality. While the Color Computer played an important role in touting OS-9's potential as a personal operating system, efforts must be focused on using and supporting current and future OS-9 technology.

Personal OS-9 / Industrial OS-9

While there is not friction between these two groups per se, there is a distinct lack of communication between them. This lack of communication tends to breed some misconceptions. Personal OS-9 users and developers have a tendency to feel that they are victims of marketing practices which aren't necessarily compatible with their interests, and this usually warrants unnecessary criticism at Microware.

Microware's role is a provider of a primary product, software, which is developed and sold to eventually become part of a working system. An original equipment manufacturer, or OEM, purchases an arbitrary number of software licenses from Microware, and tailors OS-9 to a specific piece of hardware. The finished product is then made available to the consumer through the OEM or through a reseller.

This paradigm places specific emphasis on the equipment manufacturer and the reseller for end user support. While some argue that Microware could

do more to promote OS-9 as a personal operating system, it is clear by the model above that the OEM/reseller team chooses which vertical and horizontal markets to pursue based on profitability and risk. Since OS-9 is a real-time operating system, it is not surprising that it is largely known in industry, while mostly unheard of in personal circles.

Efforts from people such as David Graham, Ed Gresick, and others to bring affordable desktop OS-9/68000 systems should not be taken for granted. These are the entrepreneurial-minded individuals who risk their capital and invest their time to bring the rest of us an opportunity to own a personal OS-9 computer. For this, they should be patronized.

CD-i: OS-9 In A Box

Largely ignored by personal OS-9 user is the fact that CD-i, the compact disc based system which combines audio, text and graphics, is essentially an OS-9 computer sans keyboard and writable storage. Over the last few months, this technology has really begun to take off, and will undoubtedly become more prevalent in the consumer market.

I personally did not realize the impact of CD-i until I purchased a unit for myself. Not only is CD-i a useful addition to one's entertainment system, but it renders obsolete the notions held for so long that (1) OS-9 is for hackers; and (2) OS-9 has no mainstream software. CD-i has games such as Dragon's Lair, Space Ace, Mario Hotel; full motion digital video movies and music videos; the list goes on and on. And the simple fact that so often evades us is: it's all running under OS-9!

Ideas For Promoting Personal OS-9

Below are some key ideas that I feel are necessary for success and growth of the personal OS-9 market.

A Commentary on Personal OS-9

by Betsy G. Pitre

Even though OS-9 is first and foremost a real-time operating system, no one can deny its distinct duality. Ever since its entry into the home market through the Tandy Color Computer, OS-9 has enjoyed a sizable following of technophiles, hackers and average users. Not surprisingly, this unique dichotomy has led to some splitting of hairs over the role of OS-9 as a personal operating system.

When people find a good thing, they generally like to share it, and OS-9 is no exception. At the time that the Color Computer was widely available, it was easy to convince friends and colleagues that an OS-9 system was a worthwhile buy. There was no question about support - Radio Shack was everywhere. There was also a healthy selection of software, both first and third party. The price point was ideal for people with limited budgets, and the computer was expandable.

Times have changed. Today OS-9/6809 is antiquated and no longer supported. Tandy is out of the alternative computer market. Computers are no longer partitioned and sold piece by piece, but are packaged and presented as complete, ready to run systems. The dominating microprocessor company for personal computers is Intel, and the most widely used personal computer operating environments are MS-DOS and Windows.

While it may be idealistic to think that OS-9 will dominate as a desktop operating system in the foreseeable

future, it is entirely reasonable to expect that an OS-9 based personal computer with productivity and entertainment software can be sold outside the canonical arena of Color Computer users.

Perhaps the computer which immediately comes to mind is the MM/1. Originally intended as an upgrade path for OS-9/6809 users who saw their support dwindling, the MM/1 was considered *avant garde* vis a vis the Color Computer 3. The increase in graphics resolution, speed, memory capacity and supported processor made the MM/1 a spectacular investment for power hungry OS-9 users.

The MM/1 was not without its problems however, and for the most part, it fell short of expanding the personal OS-9 market beyond Color Computer owners. However, it did serve to magnify two inescapable divisions in the OS-9 world: the one between CoCo OS-9 and personal OS-9/68K users, and the other between personal and industrial OS-9/68K users.

CoCo OS-9 vs. Personal OS-9/68K

This division is hallmarked by the different views of those who continue to use Color Computers and those who have invested in one of the emerging personal OS-9 systems (such as the MM/1, System IV/V and the Kix). Over the past several years, we have witnessed this gap widening due to a depletion of support for CoCo OS-9 and a desire for personal OS-9/680X0 users to be accepted into the current mainstream of computing.

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

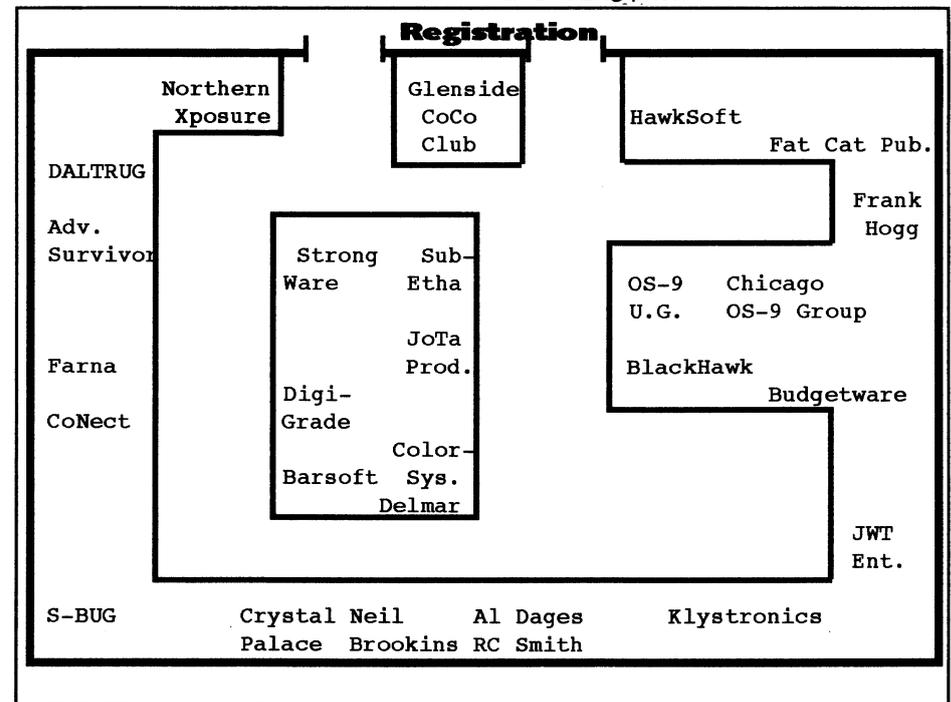
The large convention area was setup as follows (more or less):

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 maybe alphabetical) were as follows:

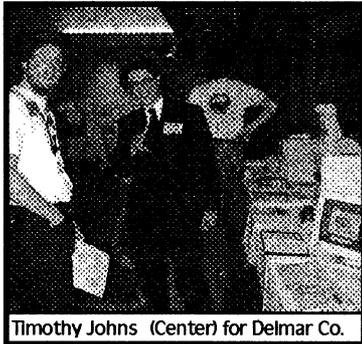
Al Dages & R.C. Smith - From Atlanta, these two seem to appear at all the 'Fests. A plethora of "previously owned" hardware and software was available. With each purchase you received a free ni-cad battery, too.

Adventure Survivors - The "friendly" 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 ad-ons (including an "anthology" disk of some of J o e l Hegberg's M M / 1 goodies). There was also a system software upgrade disk for the MM/1



Timothy Johns (Center) for Delmar Co.

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



Hugh Mehlenbacher & Wife, show off a copy of "Planet Engine."

might need to have in stock. Software designer Stanley Scott should get a large round of applause for his achieve-



The Pagets, owners of Adventure Survivors

ment 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 Shanghia-type Tiles game for the MM/1 was also available, and Brian Kitt was showing off his work on a 3D texture mapped "maze" engine similar to Wolfenstein 3D 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 15mhz 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

and their show guide.. *SHOW GUIDE!* AAAARRRRRGGGGHHHHHHH!!!! I forgot to tell you about the show guide!! This is perhaps one of the most important details...HA. ITEM OF MAJOR IMPACT. A well thought-out presentation of the show floor area, presented with advertisements, exhibitor information, editorials, and an area for names, addresses, and notes could be the most important, long-lasting memory and information source of the event to those who attend. It is extremely important to mention the show guide to all prospective exhibitors and vendors. There may be some who will not be able to attend but would want to participate and maintain their presence in the event by advertising in the show guide. To this extent, try to keep the advertising prices manageable. This will guarantee a sizable number of participants, and give them a good return on their investment. Glenside has received information regarding vendors that still support the community by making sure that the vendors knew about the show guide for the FEST!

A few parting thoughts from my compadre, Carl Boll, without whose assistance and constant mortal support, I would have long ago become bald from pulling out what little hair I have left on the top of my head. In planning your timetable, be sensitive to dates that may have already been taken by other groups planning similar events as well as holidays. When you are looking for a date, have a calendar handy that has as many holidays, school vacations, religious observances, etc., as possible listed.

Also, the exhibitor pool isn't exactly getting any larger, and the individuals resources necessary to attend these events aren't unlimited. So help spread out these FESTS! over the year and try not to schedule too close to another..it will only hurt attendance..both exhibitors AND the public.

If you have a large local group of prospective attendees, you may want to "hitch a ride" on the coattails of another local event to ensure coverage by both your target attendees as well as those not currently involved. A few new users have been gathered into the fold, that way. If you decide to attempt a national or regional crowd, give yourself three to five extra months of promotion so people can mark their schedules WELL in advance. If you can, offer assistance to anybody putting on an event to get a feel for the legwork required before you have to put up the "front money" AND ALL the time necessary. Glenside was able to follow in the footsteps of Dave and Nancy Myers, who, as D&N Enterprises/CoCoPROI sponsored the First Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFEST! We thank Dave and Nancy for sharing a large portion of the ins and outs of the event-planning necessary to pull off a successful show. I believe that you have now read most of their list, given verbally to me, as well as a few stones that Carl and I stumbled over during the last two years...and there is always one more thing to pass on. But, I can't think of any more tonight.

So gather your pencils, spread-sheets, notepaper.....AH YES! Keep very detailed records of all the financial transactions, contracts with exhibitors, and verbal promises of any kind. Otherwise, you just might get embarrassed.

Now as I was saying...get your stuff together, make your lists of things to do, and may you have as much fun as we have had planning and pulling off the Annual "LAST" Chicago CoCoFESTS! (and don't set your date anywhere within four months of April 29 & 30, 1995 or I will sneak up behind you and get you when you're not looking!.. Ha!) Best of luck. Shalom

-Tony Podraza



bypass switch to give a glorious display of sound and light...one time only!

How large a meeting facility do you expect to need? ...Hmmmmmmmmm, HARD ONE! Do you expect to have seminars? How much will this cost? I can't answer these for you, but they need to be asked. How can you get a reduced rate if you hold the event at a hotel with a banquet hall? Ask if a reduced rate would be possible if the event sells "X" amount of room-nights during the course of the event. If that fails, then go to room-nights per night. This could save you between \$100-\$300 on the rental of the banquet facilities. Be sure to settle on a "code" for the event. Then be sure that your promotions make prominent mention of that code. Oh, and try to lock in a special rate for the rooms, too. Go for a minimum of 20% off of regular room rates, but don't be greedy, even a 10-15% discount is a discount and will pay for the state and local taxes, usually. Remember the cardinal rule of the thrifty...it never hurts to ask.

Okay, you've got your facility. Now, find someone who is really good in laying out the tables. Do whatever you have to win that person over to the position of laying out the room when you know how many exhibitor you will have. Second, make arrangements with a food service so the exhibitors won't have to leave the show area to get something to eat and drink in the middle of the day. We pulled this one off this year and did it make a difference! Third, find a way to identify who's who in your layout.

Unless you have spent BIG BUCKS and have gotten a decorator who has provided booth backdrops with poles and curtains, you probably won't have a handy area to place signs. Taping them to the table is one way, but when people stand in front of the table, the

sign can't be seen. Standing the signs on the table works...sort of...but takes away from the usable space that the exhibitor would like to use. We had the good fortune to have a drop ceiling this year, and the manager of the facility said that we could suspend the signs with fishing line from the ceiling supports, just as long as we didn't put holes in anything. TABLES!!! Make sure that the facility has enough tables for the event...and try to get them to include them in the price of the room without any extra charges. If they don't have enough, see if you can bring your own tables (which you will probably be able to acquire from a local rental center at the same price that the facility would be able to pay, AND you won't have to pay the add-on charges that the facility will tag onto the rental bill. Remember, they're out to make a profit on every penny that THEY spend on your behalf. PA system! Go FM cordless. The Host can be mobile, that way. Live interviews, announcements, surprise meetings can be soooooo much more interesting. And a cordless lavaliere mic shouldn't cost more than 15-25 dollars a day.

EASELS and PODIUMS! A must for the seminars. And don't forget a table in the seminar room. The speaker may have some equipment to set up for the discussion. Do you ever get thirsty? Make arrangements to have the facility personnel maintain a water station, iced, if you please. And one last detail...refuse containers. Be sure that the exhibitors and attendees help you keep the show area looking neat, clean, and professional. Everybody will have a more enjoyable time, and the facility will welcome you back.

The day of the event approaches; the people are at the registration booth, anxious for the start of the show; they purchase their admissions and you reach into the box to give them their bag of fliers

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 ♥ 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 14.4kbaud would soon be available, and the CoCoLO 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 lit-

erature 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 Swygert was on hand with his version of the PVC Nightmare backdrop, but with a classy "world of 68' micros" logo on it. The Patch OS9 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 was unable 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. *Editor's note: Pictures in this issue were taken by Allen Huffman and this is the issue Allen refers to!*

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 XPosure - 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 ad-ons such as hard drives, disks, etc.

StrongWare - John Strong and his crew were sporting new airbrushed "Team OS9" 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

Building the FEST!

by **Tony Podraza**
FEST! Coordinator
Glenside Color Computer Club



It has been said that if you build it, they will come. I have been asked, "How do you build a CoCoFEST?". I only wish I knew, then perhaps, I could get it right. 1994 has been the second year that Glenside has sponsored the Chicago-area CoCoFEST! (Yes, the exclamation mark IS part of the name) and each year has brought new items to the fore to be smoothed out for the next FEST! AH! you haven't heard, The FOURTH Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFEST! will be held on April 29th & 30th, 1995; same place as the 2nd & 3rd. More about that in the future. Now, where was I?

The first item under consideration is whether or not to put an event together. There are quite a few items to consider. Is there enough interest for the event? Are there enough helping hands for the menial tasks to be done? Is there enough "front money" to invest in the necessities, let alone the bells and whistles? IS THERE ENOUGH TIME FOR PROMOTION? Do you have enough time to make all the contacts, arrangements, phone calls, mailings, etc. This last requirement is PERSONAL time, not calendar time. And who is going to pay the phone company?

All right, so you're committed to plan, prepare, and perform a FEST! (and you will soon realize that you SHOULD be committed for wanting to do such a crazy thing). Step 1: find a place! It should be close to major highways, easy to get to

without too many turns (remember, you have to tell people how to get there so directions must be simple...no "only 1/2 mile south of the old barn that is around the corner from Harold's General Store and Ice Cream Emporium 2 blocks west of the Citgo Station by the crossroads of..." you get the idea); locating your event near a Metropolitan area is helpful, as is a couple of nearby airports (we have 4 within shouting distance in the Chicago area, O'Hare, Midway, Rockford, and Mitchell Field in Milwaukee, though who would want to fly into Rockford?). (Now that I've alienated all the Rockfordites...) Finding your meeting place will be the hardest part of your quest. Most GOOD convention centers and hotels with meeting facilities will be booked almost a year in advance, so plan EARLY! Be prepared to shift your event date(s) to accommodate the availability of the meeting facility.

Once you have a location, PROMOTE! PROMOTE! PROMOTE! Get the picture? Use every logical and ethical means at your disposal. Use periodicals, trade papers, newsletters, BBS's, on-line services, networks, posters, fliers, postcards, and every FREE means you can find as well as the paid advertisements. Write articles for newsletters and periodicals and slip in a blurb here and there...but don't abuse the privilege. Talk to prospective Exhibitors, notice that I didn't say Vendors; not everyone who participates in the event will have something to vend, they may just want to show off their latest whatzit that shorts out the phone lines to the electrical

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.

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!

Traditional Endings

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 Kahn Mongolian Barbeque 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 it's 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 Shubring, Ken Scales, Tim Johns and Katy, Scott Unzicker, 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 goodbyes were said and we all headed our own ways with "see you in Atlanta" being heard.

Allen C. Huffman
Co-Owner - Sub-Etha Software
COCO-SYSOP on GENIE
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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 co-founded Sub-Etha Software with Terry Todd and has brought several programs to the market including Rulafor 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 2-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.

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 WriteRight 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 reusable, 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 - "NitROS-9"

Bill Nobel and Curtis Boyle demonstrated how to install Nitros-09 along with a Q&A period in which they received a lot of valuable feedback from NitROS-9 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.

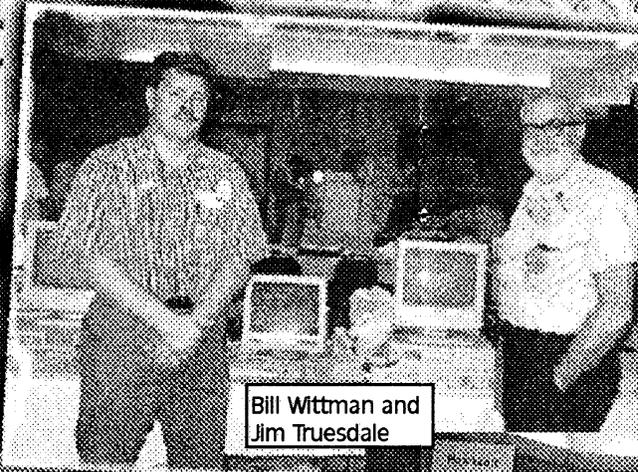
01:00 - "NitROS-9"

Another Q&A session on NitROS-9.

Chicago CoCoFest! 1994



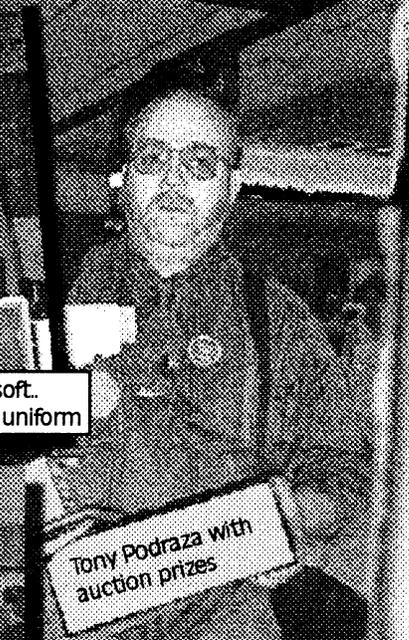
Alan Dekok zaps a few aliens



Bill Wittman and Jim Truesdale



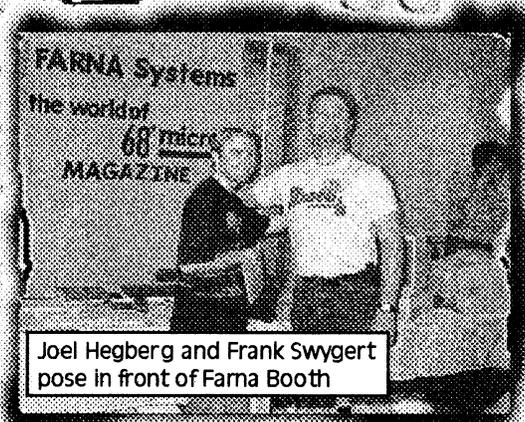
Beam me up Hawksoft.
Chris & Nancy in full uniform



Tony Podraza with auction prizes



Mike Knudsen auctions off prizes for Glenside at the Fat Cat Publication Booth.



Joel Hegberg and Frank Swygert pose in front of Farna Booth



David Graham of BlackHawk Enterprises



Paul Jerkatis with his "Sun" and Scott Griepentrog with his laptop.



Ken Scales chats with friend