

EXPRESS

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PENN - JERSEY COLOR COMPUTER CLUB

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JULY 1988

PYRAMIX AND UTILITY PROGRAMS OFFERED AT GREAT DISCOUNT TO PJ-CCC MEMBERS!

ColorVenture, a computer software design and development company from New York, is offering a special deal to members of Penn-Jersey Color Computer Club. For instance, PYRAMIX, an arcade game for the CoCo 3, which retails for \$24.95 can be purchased for \$10 until August 31, 1988, IF there are five or more orders through the club.

ColorVenture also has a complete MENU of UTILITY software written by Ace Programmer Chris Baocock. These utilities will "help you tap the untold potential of the CoCo 3" according to ColorVenture. The MENU of Utility Software received rave reviews in RAINBOW Magazine, according to Eric Tilenius, president of ColorVenture. Club price for the utility software is \$20 for programs that sell in the Rainbow for \$100.

Tilenius, writes "What's the catch? The only requirement is that you act as a club. When your club places an order for 5 or more copies of PYRAMIX or our complete MENU of Utility Software, you can get prices that are lower than most dealer prices.

"Frankly, we're taking a risk by doing this. We're hoping to make up the drastically reduced sale price by higher volume. But we think you deserve it this way...Clubs have helped the CoCo Community grow and flourish, and we'd like to give all club members a chance to get high quality software at a tremendous savings. We won't skim on service, either. Each order will be shipped by Priority Mail within 24 hours of when we receive it. And we'll even ship at no extra charge to you."

PYRAMIX is 100% pure machine language brilliance - written by Master Programmer Jordan Tsvetkoff to take advantage of all the poer in the CoCo 3. PYRAMIX features the finest in animation, graphics, sound effects, and game play available today. It has all the extras, too, like a pause option, RGB/CMF, keyboard or joystick/mouse play, help screens, multiple skill levels, and the ability to make a backup of the disk.

The RAINBOW Review (12/87): "The colors are brilliant, the graphics are razor sharp, and the action is fast and furious. Excellent sound effects are used thruout the program to enhance the animation... I loved PYRAMIX. I believe this program snows off the graphics potential of the CoCo 3 at its best. ColorVenture should be congratulated for an excellent product, and I anxiously await other CoCo 3 developements from them."

MENU - the utility software program includes, Backup Lightning 512K - the fastest disk duplicator anywhere. Reads in single or double sided 35 or 40 track disks, or 55 80 track disks, OS-9 and RSDOS. Then, it lets you use ALL your drives for making copies. Backup Lightning is SO FAST it will format AND copy a double-sided 40-track disk before and IBM PC can even format one. No need to pre-format disks- Backup Lightning does it all.

Also included on the MENU disk is CoCo MAX II Patch (MaxPatch). Now use CoCo Max 2 on your CoCo 3 and never orry about the Colorware pack. Lets you use the Jandy Hi-Res Interface (cat. #26-3028, \$9.98) or the CoCoTech Interface to run BOTH CoCo Max 2 and Derringer's MaxEdit on the CoCo 3. Sell your CoCo Max pack and free up a multipack slot, and get FULL 256x192 response using Tandy's interface. It also supports the X-Pad.

Another program on the utility disk is a Hi-Res Joystick driver. This is a program that lets you use the Tandy Hi-Res interface in your programs. Lets you get 640x640 joystick resolution in your software using JOYSTK command in BASIC or from Assembly Language. Get total screen control. Also includes a license to use this driver in software YOU sell.

PRINTER LIGHTNING is another of the utility programs on the MENU disk. This print spooler gives you a 44K buffer from a 128K CoCo 3 or up to 438K (200 pages) from 512K. Fast and reliable. Does not slow down BASIC or miss characters you type as other spoolers do. Selectable baud rates, line

Continued on page 2

MEETING THIS FRIDAY JULY 29, 7 PM

NEW DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GAME FOR COCO

Thor Software of Louisville, KY has announced a dungeons and dragons type game for the CoCo (32K with disk drive). The game is called SPELLBOUND and was written by Thornton Lipscomb, Ph. D., of Thor Software, Suite 162, 9431 Westport Rd., Louisville, KY 40241.

The programs that make up the game are all in BASIC and it already has received the "PCM seal of certification" and will be listed as "received and certified" in the September issue of the RAINBOW. Cost is \$20 for the disk, documentation and support.

In SPELLBOUND you are the leader of a group of adventurers that you yourself select. There are 4 races (human, elf, dwarf and gnome) to choose from and there are 5 classes (paladin, fighter, thief, wizard and priest) as well. You can also choose the sex of the Adventurer (there is no discrimination here). You can take up to 6 at a time down into the dungeon in hopes of training them to the point that they can eventually defeat the evil archwizard. The dungeon is known to be deeper than 10 levels and there are 400 rooms on each level. There are a great many different types of monsters with individual characteristics, but none that are friendly. The computer is the Dungeonmaster and you are all 6 of the Adventurers.

If you are familiar with the concept of dungeons and dragons you will find this faithful to the principle although the rules are not exactly the same. If you haven't tried dungeons and dragons, this may hook you. It is basically a game of skill, although a bit of luck doesn't hurt. If you don't care for those adventure games which require the input of wrds, this is especially for you. It is menu driven and your options are always laid out for you. It will take a very long time to complete the game, but you can choose to pause for an indefinite time, by entering the escp, when exploring the dungeon, or the Green Dragon Inn, when in the village.

There are no high resolution graphics. The left side of the screen shows your view of the dungeon for a distance of 3 rooms, while the right side of the screen lists information about the adventurers and lays out the options. There are different layouts for encounters and camp. The game is completely in basic so that the movement is not lightning fast. It will take from 1 to 3 seconds to move into the next room, but there is a provision for faster movement if you don't wish to examine each room.

It will take weeks to train the group to the levels necessary to fight their way down to the Archwizard's lair - and even when you defeat the Archwizard, the quest may not be over.

FOR ALL THOSE ORDERING BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 1988 - the price for SPELLBOUND is \$15 instead of \$20. Send your check or money order to THOR SOFTWARE, Suite 162, 9432 Westport Rd., Louisville, KY 40241.
then

PYRAMIX AND UTILITY PROGRAMS

Continued from front page

feed option. Works with ColorVenture RANDISK for a real productivity combo. Works with any program using the standard BASIC print vector.

The fifth program on the MENU software disk is the ColorVenture RANDISK. The finest RANDISK Driver for the 512K CoCo 3. Reset protected. Gives you TWO 35 or 40 track drives in memory with lightning-fast access. Reconfigures drives - use drives 0-5 and switch them. Works with PRINTER LIGHTNING. Crash protection to let you recover data if your machine crashes.

So if you are interested in either of these programs, make sure you bring cash or a check (make checks out to ColorVenture) to the next meeting and we should have at least five members interested and the order can then be sent in through the club. COST for PYRAMIX is \$10 and for MENU -Utility - \$20.



GUESS WHO?

MEETING THIS FRIDAY JULY 29

6809 EXPRESS

PENN - JERSEY COLOR COMPUTER CLUB

The "6809 EXPRESS" is the official monthly publication of the PENN-JERSEY COLOR COMPUTER CLUB. The club is based in the greater Lenigh Valley area of Northeastern Pennsylvania including sections of Northwest New Jersey. Any club or non-profit organization may reprint any part of the newsletter as long as credit is given. PJCCC will gladly exchange newsletters with any other computer club. For any written correspondence send your request to EDITOR, 6809 EXPRESS, Penn-Jersey Color Computer Club, P.O. Box 2742, Lenigh Valley, Pa. 18001.

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ED JUGE

Tandy Topics

By Ed Juge
director of market planning
TANDY Corporation/ RADIO SHACK

RAM CHIP UPDATE

Unless you've been really out of touch, you know there is a shortage of RAM in our industry. Many producers decided a while back to convert to 1Mb chips since the 256K variety was not terribly profitable. (Remember hearing folks say "RAM is FREE"?)

Well, the more dense 1Mb chips are a lot harder to make. Consequently, the yield is still pretty poor... a lot of what should be good chips don't work, and have to be thrown out. This keeps prices high, and quantities short. Meanwhile, back in the world of 256K chips - which most of us are using - not enough people are making them to keep up with the demand.

Tandy's cost has risen considerably. However, we're hearing from some folks who aren't large enough to command quantity pricing directly from the manufacturers, that chips are being "brokered" for about eight times what we were paying before the shortage.

So, if you were fortunate enough to load up your computer before prices went up... congratulations! If not, try to get along on what you currently have for a while. Many observers feel the situation will ease, but few expect any real relief before the end of 1988.

As I told you a couple of months ago, it seems RAM prices reside in a seesaw world. It should improve.

In the meantime, Tandy is affected like all the rest of the industry. We have raised RAM upgrade prices, but as of this writing have not increased computer prices. We are allocat-

BASIC CONVERSIONS AT THIS MEETING

Danny Zacharias is scheduled to present the topic of BASIC conversations from the CoCo 2 to the CoCo 3 at the July 29 meeting of the Penn-Jersey Color Computer Club at the Northampton County Community College.

Danny, club librarian, has presented other interesting topics on the CoCo 3 and this should be no exception.

So make sure you come to the meeting this FRIDAY, July 29 at 7 p.m.

ing memory upgrades to our stores, to be sure we can take care of Tandy computer owners who need more memory.

THOR CD

Probably no other subject (or new product) has caused as many phone calls as the recently announced erasable Tandy THOR-CD™. The level of interest is so high, some additional discussion seems in order.

Last month we talked about the general characteristics and what such a product might mean. This month, let's go into a little more detail about the product...

When Tandy's scientists set out to develop an erasable CD, they had two major criteria. First, the disc had to be compatible with current CD and CD-ROM formats. It had to play in existing players. Second, it had to be low cost. THOR-CD achieves both goals.

Our people looked at several erasable optical disc technologies, including "Thermo-Opto-Magnetic", "Phase Change", and "Dye-Polymer." The first two had two problems. First, neither is CD or CD-ROM compatible. Second, a single blank disc can set you back \$200 or more! (Ours will cost about the same as a present-day CD.) By the way, in a recent Business Week article, several companies were said to already be in the erasable disc business. They are all using one or the other of those two technologies.

Dye-polymer had been worked on for about 3 years. Optical Data Inc holds a patent on a "bump-forming" technique. To be compatible with existing formats, pits (or bumps if you're looking from the other side) must be formed on the surface of the disc, while maintaining the reflectivity necessary for laser reading of the data. Our people decided dye-polymer held the most promise. A number of large companies have been working on improving this technology, but only Tandy has been successful in increasing the reflectivity to a level sufficient to achieve a backward compatible (with CD) optical disc.

Tandy scientists, through significant original work, were able to produce a dye-polymer based, low-cost, erasable and re-recordable CD. We have an agreement with ODI for the use of their patent. The two-plus years of work done to reduce the patent to practice in Tandy's Magnetic Media Research Center was done alone, and was not a joint development. Tandy has several patents pending on our work.

Many people did not understand the "18 to 24 months" before a product would be avail-

Continued on page 4

Tandy Topics

Continued from page 3

ble for purchase. That had nothing to do with development. That's simply the time it will take to get a recorder/player to market... the normal lead time for a piece of hardware. No new technology needs to be developed for the hardware.

The computer data recorder/player will require more time, since the tolerances and accuracy must be considerably better. Tandy does expect to manufacture discs as well as recorder/players. We will also license others to manufacture both. That's the reason we announced "early." With disclosures to potential licensees, it would have been just a matter of time before word leaked out.

Are THOR-CD discs different from what you buy today? Somewhat. First, and most noticeably, they're blue in color. Second, they can't be "pre-recorded" or "pressed" like records or conventional CDs. We don't foresee a method of pressing, so we anticipate that our discs will all be recorded in real time. Since we don't expect there to be any time or cost advantage, THOR-CD probably won't be attractive to anyone wanting to make copies of pre-recorded discs.

As I said last month, the capacities and fidelity of these discs should be approximately equal to current CDs. You might be interested to know that THOR-CDs can be erased in bulk, or one pit at a time.

Many people have asked how THOR-CD would compare to DAT. Well, the DAT folks claim much higher data storage per tape... on the order of 1.2Gb plus. However, you must wind the tape to find the data you want, while a

THOR-CD will be a random-access device. I would also expect a CD to be harder to damage than a tape of any kind. And initially, DAT hardware will be very expensive because of the limited market. CD, on the other hand, is an existing and highly successful media. The high demand can mean significantly lower initial prices.

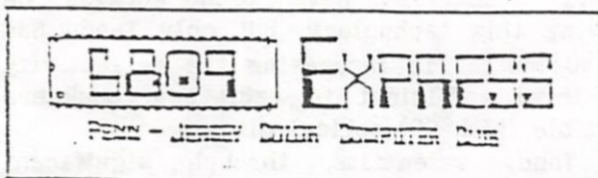
On the question of computer data access rates, we expect the first drives to be about the same as today's floppy disk drives. Future development in CD head technology seems to offer the real possibility of access times more like hard disks.

No, I'm not going to tell you HOW the process works. I wouldn't even if I knew. Maybe this will help satisfy your curiosity in some areas.

THE TOP TEN

COLOR COMPUTER

- 1 26-3272 Sub Battle Simulator (Disk)
- 2 26-3046 Download (ROM)
- 3 26-3095 Color Baseball (ROM)
- 4 26-3072 Thexder (ROM)
- 5 26-3273 Home Publisher (Disk)
- 6 26-3242 Flight Simulator II (Disk)
- 7 26-3078 Springster (ROM)
- 8 26-3277 Color Computer Artist (Disk)
- 9 26-3197 Get. Start. w/EXT BASIC book
- 10 26-3093 Dungeons of Daggorath (ROM)



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