

C.C.O.G.
COLOR COMPUTER OWNERS GROUP
NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 1991

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PRESIDENTS COMMENTS:

Almost October already. Things just have a way of catching up to a person very quickly. School has started which means I have another night of my week taken up.

It's almost time for the "Second Annual Atlanta COCOFEST". I am really looking forward to going again this year. I am really interested to see the three OS-K machines again first hand. I will be ready to talk to people to see what's shipping. It will be interesting to see what's available in the way of software for these machines. Already we are starting to see adds for software in the RAINBOW.

The big question is "Is this club ready to start looking at and thinking about OS-K?". Do we have more than one member who is ready and willing to shell out a couple of bucks to move up to a more powerful machine?

It is also getting to that time of year when we have to think about electing "NEW"

officers for next year. I am very serious when I say "NEW". It's time for new blood to come in and take over the leadership of CCOG. The current officers, especially me, are suffering from BURNOUT. I will be willing to continue as newsletter editor. I have the facilities available to me to get the newsletter published each month.



Are you listening?

Bernie

COLOR COMPUTER OWNERS GROUP

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COLOR COMPUTER OWNERS GROUP
of Metropolitan Detroit.

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Minutes for C.C.O.G meeting August 27, 1991

The meeting was called to order at 7:35. There were 19 people in attendance. The minutes for last month were accepted.

Bernie had two items he wanted to take care of. First he wanted to thank Larry Schneider for taking over as club librarian. Bob Humphrey had to resign because of a possible job reassignment that could come at any time. Second, Bernie wanted it known that twelve vendors had responded to letters sent last month and of the twelve, nine are subscribing to the newsletter.

A request was made by Robert Gault. If you are interested in a particular area and you would like to see some information let Robert or Tom know. They can then prepare an article for the newsletter making their job a little easier.

Anyone can write articles for the newsletter. Someone asked what the time line was. The statement was made if you write it, it will get published.

There were two new people in the audience. One person heard about us from the fliers at Radio Shack, the other person heard about us from the BBS, and RAINBOW. A quick introduction of officers took place.

The library review was given. C.C.O.G. currently has 1387 files on 98 disks. With this information a plea went out for the membership to participate in the club meetings. This will help keep the club active.

Old business--Robert Gault reminded the members that they can get a \$2 discount on RAINBOW Magazine by giving him the money and he then writes a letter stating that this is a club discount. Do this before your subscription runs out.

Gus wanted to see more RS Dos and OS9 commands talked about at future meetings.

Someone else wanted to see more question and answer sessions.

Demonstrations for the evening were given by Robert and Tom. Robert, doing some more work with random numbers. Tom got into his wallet after last month's advertising in the newsletter and demonstrated a solitaire card game package that he purchased.

Next month's theme is education. Someone also wanted to see a very simple breakdown of setting up a OS9 system disk without reading all the manuals and everything else that must be done. It was pointed out that this has been done in the past but there was still a lot of interest. The next meeting date will be September 24, 1991.

There will be a conflict with the December meeting as the date falls on Christmas Eve. Several suggestions were given such as meeting at a restaurant, another date etc. Check the BBS for further updates.

BEGINNER'S CORNER by Robert Gault

When you write your own programs -you do write programs don't you?- have you ever thought, "This program is great. If I could only make it look more professional!" Usually when I write programs I am more interested in the efficiency and accuracy of operation. Still I do try to sell some programs and customers expect some flash for their money.

There is a very simple way to "improve" the appearance of programs by using "dialogue boxes". A dialogue box is an overlay on the screen within which you query the user; MultiView or Lyra menus are good examples.

While an overlay does much to improve the appearance of program I/O, there is a simple way to really spice up the look of an overlay; use shadows.

It is easier to show than describe a shadowed overlay. Let's just say that the effect is that of 3D. I am going to demonstrate with part of a program (you can consult the back issues) that I am rewriting for the commercial market. It will present a title page procedure.

The technique can be used with RSDOS (get/put buffers) but it is much much easier in OS-9 because of the "owset" (overlay window set) window command. Therefore the example will be in Basic09.

```
PROCEDURE title
0000     TYPE register=cc,a,b,dp:BYTE; x,y,u:INTEGER
0025     DIM regs:register
002E     DIM i,j,k:INTEGER
003D     DIM lf,cls:STRING[1]
004D     cls:=CHR$(90C)
0056     lf:=CHR$(90A)
005F     regs.a:=1
006A     regs.b:=$93
0076     RUN syscall($8D,regs)
0084     IF regs.a<>2 THEN
0093         PRINT cls; "Sorry an 80x24 text screen is required."
00C2     END
00C4     ENDIF
00C6     DIM title(5):STRING
00D2     title(1):="      COMMAND MERGER v1.0.0"
00F5     title(2):="      (c) by"
010F     title(3):="      Robert Gault"
012D     title(4):="      Generate maximally packed"
0152     title(5):="      8K blocks of code"
016F     RUN gfx2("owset",1,0,0,80,24,2,0)
0191     RUN gfx2("owset",1,26,6,28,8,2,2)
01B3     RUN gfx2("owset",1,25,5,28,8,0,4)
01D5     RUN gfx2("curoff")
01E3     PRINT lf; title(1); lf; title(2); lf; title(3); lf; lf; title
(4); lf; title(5) \ (* could be more elegant; but works*)
021A     RUN wait
021E     (* get back to program level; ie remove shadowed overlay *)
0259     FOR i=1 TO 2
0269         RUN gfx2("owend")
0276     NEXT i
0281     (* Since this is an example, exit to basic removing last overlay. *)
02C5     RUN gfx2("owend")
PROCEDURE wait
0000     DIM key:STRING[1]
000C     key:=""
0013     WHILE key="" DO
001F         GET #1,key
0028     ENDWHILE
```

"Viewpoints" by Gus Korte"

It was quite a surprise to read on the electronic bulletin board system (BBS) that club member Jim Snider operates had a hard disk crash. A lot of information was lost so that he had his hands full getting the BBS to operate again. It was good to see that the BBS is gradually recovering it's full operating condition. Jim has done an outstanding service for the COCO community by operating this BBS. We should all let him know we appreciate his efforts.

Recently I tried out the software called "DYNACALC". It allows one to set up a spreadsheet of columns and rows with tabulated information. I was unable to get it to go on my COCO3 after following the instructions in the DYNACALC manual from Radio Shack. Since the BBS for the CCOG was busy at the time, I thought I could get the difficulty solved just as quickly by contacting the local Radio Shack store. No one there knew the answer so I decided to call the Radio Shack technical support specialist at 12 Oaks Mall by telephoning a number they gave me. He said that they only have information regarding IBM compatible computers now and that the COCO was now discontinued. So I asked is this the way they support their own products? That put him on the "spot". So he said he'd get back to me later. I gave him two phone numbers to call. I never ever heard from him again. What poor support in this instance. Later I contacted Jim Snider at the following CCOG club meeting and he gave me the answer. Very simple if any of you want the answer.

Simply boot up OS9, insert the DYNACALC diskette, enter the requested date and time, then enter 3 commands at each OS9 prompt of CHD /DO, CHX /DO/CMDS, and DYNACALC. That's it thanks again to the good support we all get from this CCOG club. What do other computer owners do when their particular model is discontinued and the company's support vanishes? At least we have some support but they have nothing substantial to depend upon. So again I appreciate our CCOG club.

Did you notice the change at the last CCOG meeting? No bartender was in the "Foxhole". Now that the group is regularly meeting for BINGO on the upper floor during our meeting night at the VFW, we can use the bar on the upper floor instead. There was a slight problem at the last meeting since another group called the Marine Corps. League said they had scheduled a meeting in the Foxhole at the same time our CCOG was meeting. Fortunately they were assigned to a smaller room on the upper floor of the VFW Post. I contacted the Post Commander and he assured me that this is the way they will handle the matter in the future and I thanked him for our club. We are fortunate to have such agreeable persons willing to assist our club like this in the VFW. I was advised that in the future, since we will have no bartender in the Foxhole, that any money donated for the VFW by the club through the treasurer should be placed in an envelope (obtainable from the VFW bar manager). The envelope should be labeled Color Computer Club with the date and amount of money enclosed. Deliver this envelope to the bar manager and advise him to file it with the concession receipts. Unfortunately we will not be getting credit for our bar payments as we did when we had our own bartender. These details are mentioned here so that if the treasurer is absent and one of you are designated as the substitute treasurer, you will know what to do in the future. As in the past,

we are responsible to the VFW for managing our meetings and leaving the Foxhole in the same good condition as when we entered it. Thanks again to all for your cooperation.

The Detroit News on 8/4/91 and again on 8/11/91 had articles concerning 3-D TV displays that are being developed in Japan and also for use in computerized video games. It is expected to revolutionize the video game and TV display industries. In the game display a holographic-like image makes the figures come to life. The Japanese display has images that are encoded using two cameras set eye-distance apart, creating two slightly different images just as a pair of human eyes do. The TV has a liquid crystal screen which show both of these images in alternating columns. Covering the screen are corresponding columns of double-convex lenses, which direct the images out of the screen to the proper eyes. This results in a 3-dimensional image. Perhaps in the future we will be able to configure such images into our COCO system.

Karl Sefcik's message in last month's club newsletter is again repeated here for those of you who wish to subscribe to the Rainbow magazine. You can use a free telephone number to order by credit card. It is 1-800-847-0309. Since some of you do not use the BBS yet, this information is included here once again for your information.

A reminder especially for new members of the CCOG, the VFW uses your money donations from our club in it's many charitable activities especially concerning unfortunate hospitalized veterans. It's all going for a good cause. The Livonia VFW also collects used books and magazines to give hospitalized veterans. So if any of you want to contribute such, which you would otherwise discard, give them to the VFW bartender to make some unfortunate veterans happy. Also we owe some thanks to the VFW bartender because he volunteers his time to open the VFW Post for us and serve us drinks. He gets nothing for providing us this service so let him know you appreciate his efforts for us whenever you can.

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EXPERT'S CORNER by Robert Gault

There are times when you need to be able to send control codes to Shell or programs running in OS-9. How do you do that? You would think that you would just hit CTRL <code>, but it isn't so simple.

OS-9 has reserved certain CTRL <code> combinations as its own special screen codes. For example, the OS-9 code for "home cursor" is \$01; it can be used via Display. Now you might think that you could also type CTRL <1> but that will not home the cursor but rather print | (vertical line.)

You can look up the list of useful control codes in the windows section of the manual. There is also a list of OS-9 Keyboard Control Functions. Comparing the two will show the problem.

Most important but not mentioned and probably overlooked by many people is the OS-9 Keyboard Codes list. This is Appendix C in some section (I have reorganized my manual.) The table combines all possible combinations of keys and the resulting signal sent.

As it turns out, the sequential control codes 1-1A are sent by typing CTRL <a-z>; 0 is CTRL <@>. These codes may or may not be active depending on the application. They work best when used as embedded codes in text. The code itself will show as a '.' when typed but when printed will be active.

If you look at Beginner's Corner for this month you will see an array of strings used to construct a title message. A second method of doing that makes use of control codes and is somewhat easier to use.

```
title:=CTRL<j>"      COMMAND MERGER v1.0.0CTRL<j>          (c)
byCTRL<j>          Robert GaultCTRL<j>CTRL<j>      Generate maximally
packedCTRL<j>      8K blocks of code"
```

As it is typed the CTRL<j> appears as . but when relisted as:

```
title:="
COMMAND MERGER v1.0.0
      (c) by
      Robert Gault

Generate maximally packed
8K blocks of code"
```

You can ignore the indents the first time around with the result that all text will be flush left. The line can be edited as normal to add spaces for the indentation.

CTRL <j> (which sends as \$0A; linefeed) is not the only code you can use. All the codes in the table are available. Your imagination is the limit on their use.

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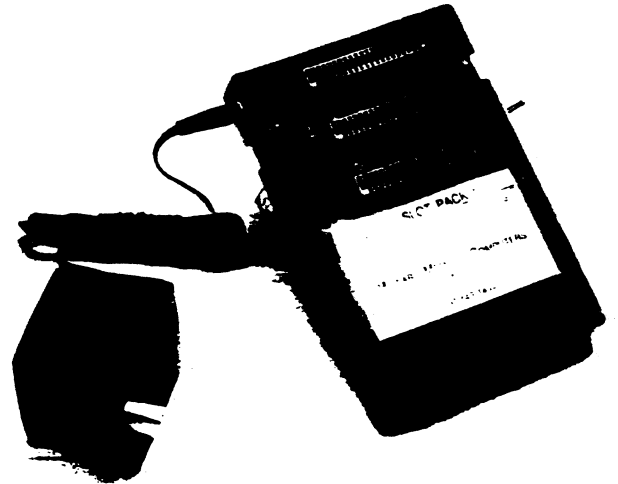
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RS-DOS versus OS-9 by Bernie Patton

(A very brief explanation)

Color Disk Basic commonly called RS-DOS was originally designed to work only with floppy disk drives. It also had the limitation of working with only 4 drives, designated DRIVE 0, DRIVE 1, DRIVE 2, & DRIVE 3. The system defaults to work exclusively with DRIVE 0. If you wish to execute a program or work with a data file in another drive you have to tell RS-DOS that you are doing so. There are two ways of doing this. You can use the DRIVE command to make a drive other than DRIVE 0 your "working" drive, ie. DRIVE1. Or you can designate the drive number in the file name, ie. "THISPROG.BAS:1" or "THATDATA.DAT:2". If you use the DIR command you will get the directory of the current default drive. If you wish to see the directory of a drive other than the current default you have to use that drive number with the DIR command, ie. DIR2.

Color Disk Basic does not use the concept of subdirectories.

OS-9 is a disk operation system. It could also be called a user environment. It has the ability to work with both floppy and hard disk drives. The floppy drives are designated as /D0, /D1, /D2, & /D3. A hard drive is designated as /H0. Each of these drives can be logically divided into various subdirectories. OS-9 uses what it calls an execution directory and a data directory. These can be the same directory or different directories, they can even be subdirectories on different drives. The default execution directory is usually /D0/CMDS. The default data directory is usually /D0. To find out the current execution directory the command is: PXD. To find out the current data directory the command is: PWD. To change directories the commands are: CHX (to change execution) and CHD (to change data directories.). It is generally good practice to keep the root directory of any drive as "clean" as possible. The "root" directory of a drive is the same as the name of the drive. If we give the command: DIR /D0 we see the files in the root directory of the disk in drive 0 (/D0). If we are running a floppy only system usually our OS-9 system disk is in drive 0 (/D0) and our data disk is in drive 1 (/D1). The root directory of our OS-9 system disk should not have many individual files in it. It should contain the subdirectories /CMDS and /SYS and /DEFS and should contain two files, OS9Boot and Startup. It is a good practice to name subdirectories with all capital letters and individual files with lower-case letters. The above description of an OS-9 system disk would be considered a "clean" root directory as the root directory contains only the two mandatory files needed to boot the system. All other files are in one of the three subdirectories. How you set up a data disk may be dictated by the application software you are using or you may be free to set up your data disk or directory any way you want to. (Always read the documentation FIRST!!!). You may wish to set up your data disk with subdirectories or if you are dedicating one floppy to the data for a particular application you may wish to just keep all the files in the root directory of that floppy.

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