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From the Desks of Boisy and Jim, (Boisy first)...

This issue of MOTD marks the retirement of several officers and the introduction of new leadership. From the concept of rebirth in late January of 1992 to the present, the OS-9 Users Group stands with a steady stream of new members adding to the old, and a healthy treasury. In addition, we are now a bonafide non-profit corporation.

Jim Destafeno of Wyoming, Delaware, has stepped forward to give his services to the OS-9 Users Group as the new President. I have known Jim for 5 years and find his enthusiasm for the Users Group nothing short of promising. Please join in support of Jim as he leads our organization.

Of course, all this would not have been possible without the vision and work of the following people who made the OS-9 Users Group a success:

- **Scott McGee** -- Scott participated in the OS-9 Users Group's initial formation last year and deserves much credit for its existence.

- **Carl Kreider** -- Carl brought experience and credence to the OS-9 Users Group at a critical time. He will be vacating his position as Vice-President, but will remain as a member of the Board of Directors.

- **Debi Kreider** -- Debi has put much of her time into making deposits,

writing checks, balancing the books, and making sure new members were properly endowed with membership cards, welcome letter, and a disk. Debi retires as Secretary/Treasurer.

- **Alan Sheltra** -- Alan's volunteer efforts on the MOTD proved helpful to the OS-9 Users Group. Alan also steps down as MOTD editor.

- **Zack Sessions** -- Zack has done an excellent job in bringing together the OS-9 Users Group Library and other packages; some from Europe. Zack will continue to serve as Librarian.

- **George Dornier** -- George will remain as a member of the Board of Directors.

These people have given of their time (and sometimes, money), without compensation, for the betterment of this organization. They all deserve our thanks and sincere gratitude for jobs well done.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you, our members, for your support. By becoming a member, you have contributed to this organization's achievement. <Boisy Pitre>

- Long live OS-9! -

"Hello", to all; it feels good to be on board. I want to give you an idea where we can go. Yet first I want to thank Boisy, the board members and the people behind the scenes for their good faith. Then to you members, I promise to do my very best repre-

senting your wants and needs.

I have watched the User Group through its vicissitudes for many years. It has been headed by computer dreamers, doers, engineers, programmers, and maybe others, but never a business major/computer user. I can't guarantee a better "ride", but you can lay money on us working the hardest on the basics.

For starters as editor of the "MOTD" the number one priority is to get it mailed on time. Right behind that is the "MOTD" content. I know I want to hear from and about people that are using OS-9 under commercial conditions. Who will be the first? We can do it by phone and tape if need be.

Also, I have an idea of what I would like to see in the MOTD, but the more important question is, "What sort of things would you like to read about?"

In another direction, there has been conversation about starting an OS-9 Standards Committee. In addition, others have been taking about reviving the thrust to get the Level II, Version 3.0 put together. The article beginning on page seven details the discussion. In both cases the UG has offered to help in any way possible. Would you like to help with these projects, or have another idea the UG can help with?

Whichever... together we are off on a new adventure. We hope to make a positive contribution to the community while having some fun. Please do let me know when you don't like where we are going, and why. Thanks again to all - now lets have some get to it.

<Jim DeStafeno>

Product Review

by J. Scott Kasten

Product . . . XSCF

Description Extended SCF file manager for OS-9 68000 V2.2 or later. Has enhanced line editing and recall capabilities.

Price \$60 plus \$4 shipping.

Company . . . ARK Systems USA
P.O. Box 23
Santa Clara, CA 95052
Phone/Fax (408) 244-5358

The XSCF package contains a well written 27 page manual and a program disk. The manual has complete descriptions of the files on the program disk, installation instructions, and usage information. The disk has the XSCF file manager, an attachment program, a program to create custom descriptors, and several ready to use descriptors.

XSCF is not a replacement for the SCF file manager, but is an enhanced file manager that works with SCF. The software requires a properly running SCF file manager and descriptor set to function. At present, it is not compatible with the file manager for G-Windows terminals, but the ARK people say they are working to resolve that soon.

The software is very easy to use. After loading it onto the hard drive, and selecting a ready to use descriptor, I used the attach program to get it running. Command line inputs are recalled from the approximately 1K command line recall buffer with the arrow keys. The arrow keys also move the edit cursor. Within an edit line, you have both overstrike and insert capability.

The latest version of the program has an intelligent insert feature. The insert mode is entered automatically when the cursor is stopped on a space character, thus allowing insertion of extra command line options with fewer keystrokes.

The intelligent part of the recall feature lets you type the first few characters of the desired command to be matched. This reduces the requirement of scrolling through all previous command lines to zero. Also, after a command line instruction is used it is

moved to the top of the recall stack so it may be accessed more rapidly if needed again.

The descriptors allow you to select the active hot keys for the XSCF file manager so it can be customized for any keyboard or terminal. To interpret the cursor movement keys of many terminals this file manager will even handle keys that generate ASCII sequences up to five characters long. Another nice feature, you don't have to edit and assemble a descriptor to customize it for your system.

An included utility simply asks for a module name, and has you strike the keys you want for the editing functions. The attachment program is what attaches the XSCF file manager to an active I/O port on the system.

**ARK is a new company
only in relation to the U.S.
They started in Japan in
1985 providing system
level programming and
consulting services for the
OS-9 68000 market. In
1989 they moved to
California.**

My experience with ARK has been good. There was initially an incompatibility problem with my system, but they proved eager to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. At the time of our review the software had not been tested with the V2.4 of the operating system. After several fax exchanges the cause of the problem was found and fixed. Apparently, Microware made some low level changes that required an update to the XSCF file manager.

This file manager enhancement will make your computing life easier. When you order, be sure to tell them what disk format you need. (Size, density, track/sector offsets.) Now there are no clear standards for OS-9 disk formats, therefore many vendors and manufacturers have peculiar format parameters. It is thus most helpful if you can tell a vendor specifically what you need. <JSK>

- Ved / 68000 - TEXT EDITOR 2.0

Our editor just got better! Ved 2.0 now includes an integrated spelling checker! Plus it supports multiple buffers! This is in addition to all the features of the original: user control over *Macros, Key-Bindings* and *Editing Modes; Automatic Indenting and Numbering; Word Wrap On/Off; Search; Find/Replace; Block Move/Copy/Delete; Word and Line Delete; and "undo"*.

Ved 2.0 supports also your K-Windows mouse ... but it still works with any terminal (as long as it has cursor positioning).

Ved comes complete with MVEF (an editor for creating the environment files Ved uses for configuration) and a 100 page manual which fits in your Microware manuals. For more information, just drop us a note and we'll send you full information on Ved and other fine products.

Ved 2.0, complete with the Spelling Checker and MVEF, costs only \$59.95 for a personal site license or \$250.00 for an industrial site license plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. To order please send your check or M.O. and preferred disk format to:

Bob van der Poel Software
PO Box 355 PO Box 57
Porthill, ID Wynnadel, BC
USA 83853 Canada V0B 2N0

Phone 604/866-5772
CIS: 76510,2203

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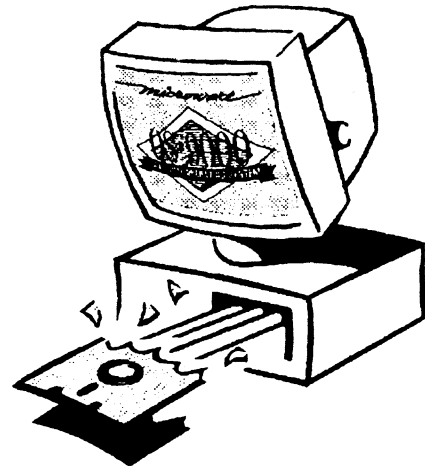
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 - *Pipe File Manager (named and un-named pipes)*
 - *Sequential Character File Manager (serial, parallel, A/D, etc.)*
 - *Random Block File Manager (magnetic disk, RAM disk, SCSI)*
 - *Sequential Block File Manager (tape, SCSI)*
 - *PC File Manager (DOS disks)*
- Math and CIO libraries
- 80387/80487 FPCP support
- Advanced Shell and utilities
- K&R C Compiler v1.3
- SrcDbg C source level debugger
- ROMbug symbolic debugger
- uMACS screen editor
- Professional OS-9000 manual set
- 90-Day "Hotline" Support

The following hardware is required:

- 386/486-based IBM PC/AT or compatible
- 2 Megabytes of RAM
- MFM, RLL, ESDI, IDE or SCSI disk controller
- VGA, EGA, CGA or Hercules video adapter or compatible
- 5 Megabytes of free hard disk space



Also make plans to attend the Microware OS-9000 seminar. We'll discuss the features of the OS-9000 operating system as well as software development and porting issues.

* 6.5% Illinois sales tax included in price. Limit 2 copies per customer, personal use only.

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Getting The Most From Your Tools

by Bob van der Poel

I heard an "old saying" for the first time the other day (well, remember I'm just a youngster): "*When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem ends up looking like a nail.*" And if this is true about home renovations and hardware stores . . . it contains a lot of truth for computers too.

How about some examples?

- If you are a C programmer all data will fit in a structure and all problems can be solved with a function.

- If you are a FORTH programmer, there is no such thing as a real number.

- If you love OS-9 the rest of the world is on non-real-time.

And so it goes. But I digress. What I want to talk about is how we let our tools determine how we solve problems; instead of letting the problems determine what tools to use.

In the worlds of OS-9 and Unix countless problems are solved everyday simply by combining basic programming tools (well, sometimes it isn't all simple). Here are some quick examples:

To find a lost program in the myriad of directories on your hard drive you could use a "find" program. However, you could just use the standard DIR and GREP that came with your system. To get a listing of the files whose name contains "ved" I could:

```
dir -ur ! grep ved
```

Or, for a text file containing a sorted listing of my C source files:

```
dir -ur ! grep \.c$ ! sort >cstuff
```

This is pretty basic for any serious OS-9er. Things get more interesting when application programs start to use the same tricks. Sometimes it works... and sometimes things don't work quite right.

I was trying a new program awhile ago. What it does, doesn't matter; nor is its name; we'll just call it ULTIMATE. A function of ULTIMATE is to edit a small text file. I suppose

ULTIMATE's author could have spent an extra six months writing a text entry and editing function. Instead he decided to let the user call up their own editor to do the job.

Being a thoughtful and considerate soul he didn't even force the use of a particular editor. Instead, he checked the shell environment variable EDITOR for the user's choice of editor. Then, ULTIMATE forks to this editor with the filename of a temporary file. When the editing is finished, the temporary file is combined into the application's database and the temporary file is deleted.

All this works, but ...

it is not the perfect solution.

First, ULTIMATE must assume it knows the correct calling syntax for the editor. In most cases this is an easy assumption to make. However, what if the user's editor insisted on having a "-f" in front of the filename? For this possibility a second routine is necessary. An "environment" or "initialization" file should be used to tell ULTIMATE the exact syntax. The design of the environment file can become very complex when one tries to take every eventuality into consideration.

Second, when forking to another editor, ULTIMATE loses control over the visual appearance of the screen. In a user environment like G, X or K-WINDOWS it is possible for ULTIMATE to create an overlay window for the editor to function in. This creates two more quandaries: will the editor work in a overlay window; and how does ULTIMATE know if a windowing environment is being used?

I don't have any easy answers to any of these questions. However, they are questions that must be addressed by the writer of an application program.

The following is what I hope is just the start of a list of things to keep in mind:

1. Shell environment variables that should be checked. Some common definitions I know about include:

- **HOME**, The name of the user's root directory.

- **SHELL**, The name of the user's shell (don't assume it's shell).

- **USER**, The name of the user (Bob, Joe, or Mary).

- **TERM**, The name of the user's terminal (vt100, wyse. Used by termcap).

- **PORT**, The name of the port (usually, an RS-232 line line /t4).

- **MODEM**, The name of the port used by the modem (/t5).

- **EDITOR**, The name of the preferred editor (emacs, vi, ved).

- **LINES**, The screen y-size.

- **ROWS**, The screen x-size

2. Never assume anything! Don't assume the user wants log files stored in /dd/LOG or game scores should be in /h1/usr/etc/data/games! Certainly you have to make some assumptions ... but be flexible. If you are looking in a directory, check in /dd, /h0, /h1, /d0 and HOME. Don't assume the user has a particular utility or, even if he does, it accepts a certain command syntax.

I recall a silent curse when I was using a Level II system. It had a replacement dir command. The original used an "e" to signal an expanded directory; the replacement needed "-e". Unfortunately, deldir forks the command "dir e" when asked for a listing. It worked fine with the original dir; but, with the new one, it attempted to list the directory "e".

3. With mass storage becoming larger and cheaper, be sure to store defaults and other options in a readable, user modifiable, accessible format. Environment files are good. In my programming I "assume" the user will keep an application specific environment file in "/dd/sys", "/h0/sys", etc.

4. Be cautious using "standard" utilities. Standards change.

With a new editor at the helm of MOTD, things for us OS9ers look promising. Let's keep up the tradition of sharing information. I always welcome article suggestions...but keep in mind, like programs, I only write the ones that interest me. Drop a note to CIS 76510,2203; PO Box 355, Porthill, ID, USA 83853; or PO Box 57, Wynndel, BC, V0B 2N0 Canada. <BvdP>

The OS-9 Users Group Library

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Castle Hayne, NC 28429**

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