

UpTime

The newsletter for:
RS-DOS, OS9, OSK,
CoCos, and 68xxx's.

Volume 2, Issue 1

September 1993

Editorial

We've heard news back from the Atlanta Fest, and it seems as though there was a mixture of excitement and slight disappointment: excitement for the new products that inevitably make their debut at a 'fest and the slight disappointment at a smaller than expected turnout. I'm not really going to try and comment on the 'fest as I only got a few preliminary reports, but a full 'fest report will be in next month's issue by Allen Huffman, our official 'fest reporter!

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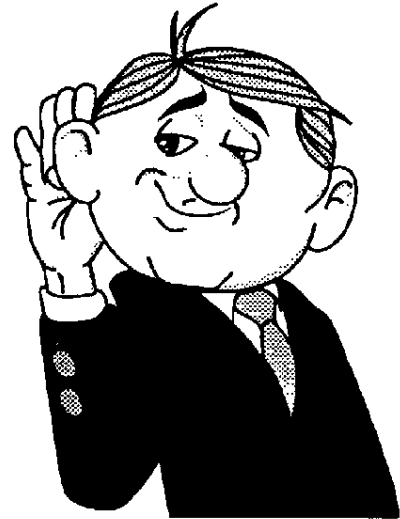
This month brings you two reviews of products from Radical Electronics and Federal Hill Software. Next month we'll be bringing you the 'fest report as well as some other articles of general interest to the CoCo Community.

-Jordan Tsvetkoff

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"... and at the Atlanta Fest..."



CoCo-Accountant III You Always Know Where Your Money Is

There are thousands of software packages available for the CoCo 3. Some include good games, bad games, good utilities, bad utilities, etc. What's my point? Well, today I have a good program. No, I have a great program that just about anyone can use. If you need to keep better records of your transactions, *CoCo-Accountant III* is for you.

CoCo-Accountant III is a "Home and Small Business Accounting" package designed specifically for the CoCo 3. *CoCo-Accountant III* covers just about all (if not all) there is to cover related to personal and small business accounting. I could not think of anything related to accounting that needed to be added or changed.

Right from the start I was impressed with *CoCo-Accountant III*. The owners manual was a colorful, professional-looking book. It was packed with 43 pages of clear, easy to read and understand instructions. The text was smaller than normal, but the

clarity of the text was so great that reading it was not a problem. So, there is a great deal more information on the 43 pages than if the text was average or large.

On the first two pages was a numbered table of contents. I like it when the pages are numbered because items are faster and easier to find when you know exactly what page a certain topic is on. Not only were the topics numbered, they were arranged in a neat and logical manner.

From reading the manual, I could see that Federal Hill Software has taken the time to listen to its customers and incorporate user suggestions into the program. That is what makes this program stand out: it contains what the people want.

The manual was also great in that it contained friendly, non-technical language. There were a lot of new terms and processes that I needed to know to effectively use *CoCo-Accountant III*. But Federal Hill Software took care of that. *Everything* was carefully explained to me with definitions and where necessary, examples. *CoCo-Accountant III* is menu oriented. Every option in every menu was explained to me. That made choosing an option effortless and most of all, safe. I never had to worry

UpTime

Editor: Jordan Tsvetkoff

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about choosing the wrong option because I knew exactly what they all did.

The manual was also humorous. The author was very effective in keeping my attention. After all, there was a lot of reading. The author was explaining in the manual how to prepare a working disk and keep the original in a safe place in case my copy "should crash, or get eaten by the dog, or trampled by the kids." This is the type of stuff that happens every day. You get the feeling that the author knows you and is talking only to you.

Enough about the manual. Lets look at the program. You start *CoCo-Accountant III* by typing **RUN"CA3"** and hitting **ENTER**. In a few moments, you are presented with the main menu. There you get information such as the current file being worked on and how much space remains on your disk. You are also presented with options that allow you to open/create files, add/correct entries, get reports, maintain the checkbook, and quit the program. There are other options too. There is a setup option where you tell the computer your printer baud rate, data drive number, maximum screen width (80 columns recommended for large reports), drive speed (you can choose high or low speed), and your monitor type. If you tell the computer that you have only one drive, the computer will prompt you to change disks when necessary.

Upon creating a file, you set up your accounts. There are three types of accounts. They are expense, income, and memo, all of which are explained. You may use rent as an expense item and your job as an income item. I don't wish to go into too much detail, but you are fortunate to have as many accounts as you wish to a maximum of 72.

I managed to get thirty or so. When it comes to finally entering the specifics of any transactions, the data entry screens are very neat, as is the display of the data.

Because *CoCo-Accountant III* is a recent version, old users may wonder if they can still use their data from previous versions. In one word, yes. *CoCo-Accountant III* includes a program that will update the data files to the current version. This I bet will come as a sigh of relief to some users.

When you get into the reports menu, you have the options to view ready-made reports such as yearly or monthly by account, but you may want more specific reports. That is where a good feature of the program comes in. If you enter the criteria for a report, *CoCo-Accountant III* will find partial matches for you. In that way, you do not have to go through the trouble of typing all of the details of the criteria. In addition, you can have all the reports go to the printer or the screen.

With frequent use of *CoCo-*

UPGRADE Disk Magazine! From: Mid Iowa & Country CoCo Now in its eighth year! There is a national Disk magazine!

With the UPGRADE National Disk magazine, we've grown to be one of the largest CoCo outreaches! I can say that firmly by the response from our members in over 40 states and 5 provinces of Canada, with others in Australia & England, we expect to be around for a long, long time.

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- Does keep you informed with news from around the country.
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- Does have OS-9 articles concerning the CoCo. We've just started an excellent Level II tutorial series.
- Does have Basic program technique article & tutorials.
- Does carry a full variety of in-depth articles and reviews.
- Recently adding "Mary's Memos" column by Mary Goodman!
- Carries tips on where to buy printers, drives, & hardware.

This is a News disk, not a software disk. Our "Mid Iowa & Country CoCo" library is available where ever you are. You can select from the Best available public domain, shareware, and orphanware for a filing & backup fee of \$3.00 per disk. Plus a Christian software sub-chapter.

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Accountant III, the data file may become corrupted. So Federal Hill Software has included a program that will fix the structure of your data file to prevent crashes. This is a very good idea. Personally though, I would rather that the computer did this automatically before damage is done.

Other than the possibility of a crash, I could not find any problem with the program. *CoCo-Accountant III* always uses a 40-column screen except when it comes to come reports. Then, the computer will use an 80-column screen if available. Federal Hill Software and I recommend that you give 80-columns a try. It makes viewing data a lot neater and easier to understand. When you look at your monitor, you will notice that the program is 100% text. There are no graphics. Nor is there a need for them. There are no fancy pull-down menus. Then again, they are not needed. *CoCo-Accountant III* is simple and to the point. You can't ask for more.

CoCo-Accountant III is a wonderful software package and is very practical for most users. I would recommend that you check Federal Hill Software out for your home and business accounting needs. It sure makes tax time a lot easier when you want to know what happened to your money. I give *CoCo-Accountant III* a grade of 90%. Requires *CoCo 3*. Federal Hill Software (no address given).

- Sheldon Parsons

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Color Schematic Designer v3.0 A Powerful Design Tool

Many of the people in the CoCo Community know little about electronics. So for most people, a schematic designer is not on their Christmas wishlist. But for those of us who are into electronics, this is probably the product you've been waiting for.

Color Schematic Designer is a very effective schematic drawing tool. The program is started by typing **RUN"BOOT** and pressing **ENTER**. After a few moments, a blank workspace and grid appear on the monitor with a menu at the top. Within a few minutes I had my first schematic drawn up. If, however, I did not read the instruction manual twice previously, I don't think I would have

managed it.

Color Schematic Designer is a powerful program and will help you make professional looking schematics. But you need to read the manual first so as not to accidentally erase a couple of hour's work. The manual is 21 full size (8.5"X11") pages long. It is well written, but you will need a little knowledge of some electronic terms to fully understand the instructions. The second page includes a well laid out table of contents.

One of the features I really liked was that you could exit the program and re-enter without losing data. For example, suppose you want to save a schematic but don't know if you have enough disk space. All you have to do is exit the program and use your regular **DECB** commands to find out. You can even format a disk if you need to. All you have to do is run the boot program and tell the computer you want to keep your old data.

I also liked the fact that *Color Schematic Designer* is an improved version with more features and user support. I liked it when the author said, "Found a bug?? Let us know so we can squash it."

Included with *Color Schematic Designer* are 43 symbols in the symbol set. It is good to know that you can modify each symbol with the **Color Basic DRAW** syntax or, if need be, add or erase symbols up to the maximum of 64. This allows for a customized symbol set.

Another handy feature is the redraw command. Sometimes with a lot of moving and deleting, your screen gets a little messy. Press a couple of buttons and bang, picture perfect.

One thing that really got my attention was the mouse driver. As I understood it, the mouse driver replaced the cassette driver already built in the computer-interesting. Fine by me as long as I (and you) remember

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not to try cassette I/O until we restart the computer to put the cassette driver back to normal. As for mouse control, there were two user-defined variables that controlled mouse sensitivity. I found that by changing the two variables, anyone can get the response they want.

The manual also gave good examples and made good recommendations on what print mode you should use, depending on your printer type. Folks, this baby supports laser printers. So if you are really serious about professional schematics, *Color Schematic Designer* is not limited to only dot matrix printers.

No program is perfect. As with most other programs I review, I did find some problems. When you are about to place a symbol on the schematic, you move it around with your mouse and have the option of rotating it. That is a good feature. However, you are limited to 90°

rotations only. I would rather see smaller rotational steps like 15°. Perhaps only a small problem, but it does limit your design possibilities.

You can put text anywhere in your workspace. This is another lovely feature of the program. You even get to choose from a list of fonts. But I constantly kept forgetting that the "@" was used as the backspace key. Remember, it is the little things that make a great program great.

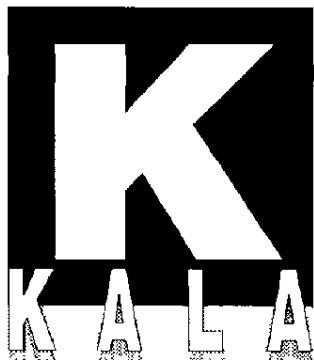
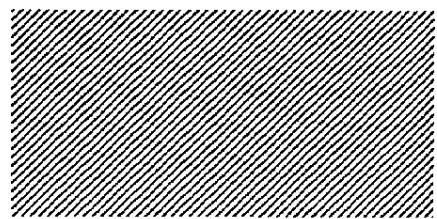
Another little thing that I was not fussy about was how to select display screen colors. You have to modify line 100 in the boot program to fit your display screen. For example:

```
100 DATA RGB
100 DATA NTSC
100 DATA INV
100 DATA MONO
```

Picky picky. Ok, so the problems I mentioned may not be very

significant. But I feel it is my duty to tell you about any problems I do see. Little quirks aside, I would strongly recommend *Color Schematic Designer* to anyone who designs schematics professionally or as a hobby. The program is effective and with an hour or so of practice, easy to use. I want to say that **Radical Electronics** did a very good job with this product. I really hope I get a chance to check out their other products. I give the program a grade of 75%. *Requires CoCo 3. Radical Electronics, Inc., P.O. Box 1350, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3N9, Canada.*

- Sheldon Parsons



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Have you ever wondered how nice it would be if you could lift an object on your screen out of it's surroundings by just pointing at it and clicking your mouse button? Or resize the working area on your screen that way? Now you can do that and a lot more with **level II graphics**.

But things don't stop there. You can save your objects in disk files, print them as clipart or paste them into another screen, even if this screen is a different type than the original. **Clipboard** functions also include stamp and reshape. You can even have multiple boards open simultaneously as long as you can find the memory for them.

Another part of **level II graphics** is the **canvas** program. Here you can make your own artworks with all the tools you would expect: brushes, sprayscans, drawtools, etc. The program also includes zoom, palette and animation functions. On top of that you have the entire screen as working area. File format is standard VEF and includes optional data compression.

Other programs included in the package are a **slideshow program**, **printer drivers** for black/white printouts and for color printouts that should work with most printers. You will also find a **font editor** and a **pattern editor** to make your own fill patterns.

There is still more: programs showing fractals from the Julia and mandelbrot sets. A program that shows you how to simulate plant growth on your computer. Graphics subroutines you can use with your own programs and source code that you can use as an example.

There is also an **installation routine** to take care of the hard parts of getting things to run reliably. All of this doesn't fit on a single disk so you will get 2: one SS and one DS.

System requirements are 512K and OS9. A hires adapter and ramdisk are recommended. Package includes 40 page manual for

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To get a review copy of level II graphics send \$5(+\$3 S/H). This amount will be credited when you purchase the complete package.

New products:

RScopy/OScopy - transfer files from OS9 disks to RSDOS disks and vice versa WITHOUT loading special device drivers. To get this pair of programs send \$10(+\$3 S/H).

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What's the catch? To build The Rocket cost effectively, we need at least 100 orders (at this writing, we've received the first twenty). We also have to leave out the OS-9/68K C compiler, BASIC-09, and a few other frills.

If you're interested in The Rocket, please place an advance order for either the ROCKET-CPU or the ROCKET-2MB before July 30, 1993 for shipment 10/93. As always, no check will be cashed or card charged until we actually ship The Rocket to you. If we don't get enough interest, we'll cancel the project and return your check. Call or write for more information.

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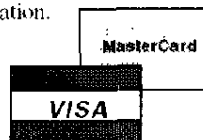
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Letters

No scenario I painted ever included Tandy backing out of the PC production altogether. Does this have some bearing on the vendor/customer loyalty mix?

Henry Harwell, Phoenix, AZ

[Ed: I received your comments about Tandy's computer line with your renewal letter. Yes, Tandy has dropped all of its computer equipment, and it may have been a very prudent move considering the current climate of the MS-DOS clone world. Beyond the 386 model line, hardware tolerances become much more important than before. High clock speeds require higher quality components along with

engineering designs that did not need to be considered. Along with all of these requirements comes much more R&D to provide a machine that does not crash on a regular business. This very problem will force a lot of the smaller clone builders out of the market in the future due to the small or non-

existent amount of R&D that was required to build the lower-class machines. Now this is not to say that Tandy is a small company, but their main production unit is not computers. Selling their line will probably bring them more income than selling and servicing the machines in the future.]



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Address correction requested