AMIGA news

95¢

Vol. 1, No. 10

NOVEMBER 1992

Arcade Action

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See inside for more details.

IT'S NEW! THE AMIGA 1200 TO BE LAUNCHED

Commodore to Offer Ultra-Game Machine in Europe First!

Exclusive to *Amiga News* by A. Britt

In a bold attempt to match the American launch of the A4000, Commodore UK have set their sights on the Future Entertainment Show, London, November 4, as the introduction date for the new Amiga A1200! Amiga enthusiasts from all over Europe will be feasting their eyes on the Amiga of the future, even as, or shortly after you read these words!

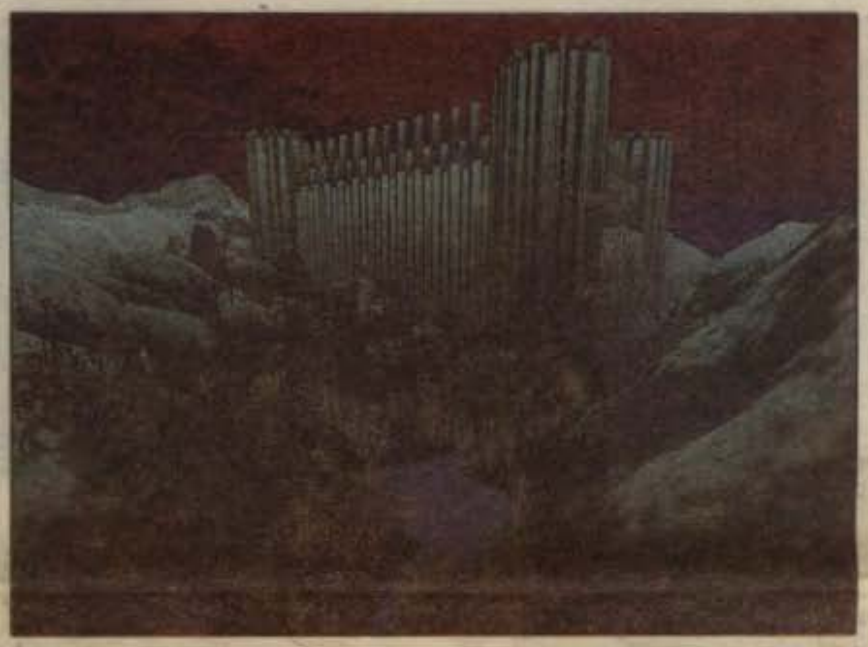
The A1200 will feature the new AGA chipset, PCMCIA slot, 2Mb chip RAM, keyboard with keypad, and CPU expansion slot. With an expected retail price of £499, the machine will be bundled with games and productivity software to satisfy the most discriminating of Amigaphiles.

25,000 units are said to be poised for release into dealer channels before Christmas and, we speculate, probably sold out just as quickly. (We English love our Amigas.) Undoubtedly Amiga outlets will be swamped with the curious and the interested as the holidays approach.

Billed by CBM as "TheUltimate Home Computer", (which is slightly aside from the traditional conservative British description of even a most exciting thing), the A1200 will be pitched at £200 above the existing A600, allowing plenty of room for choice between primarily game and consumer oriented activities and more serious applications.

Like the A600, the A1200 will be offered with a built-in hard disk option for an extra £100, but it will surprise no one if an internal examination of the new machine reveals an ability to self-install the hard drive of one's choice.

We English are fortunate to have many of the best things in the world right here at our fingertips: Rolls Royce autos, the Monarchy, the Loch Ness Monster, and now, of course, the wonderful new Amiga 1200, brought to our doorstep by an enthusiastic Commodore marketing team with practiced ears tuned to the needs of the Amiga community. Eat your heart out, America, and Happy Christmas from Great Britain! ❑



Explore New Worlds of your own Creation

Vistapro2/Makepath/Terraform

by Ross Trowbridge

One of the main reasons I decided to purchase an Amiga was its enormous graphic potential. After seeing the original "*Juggler*" animation, I was hooked.

I've used a wide variety of graphics software in the almost five years that I've had my 500. The latest addition to my library is a wonderful program from Virtual Reality Laboratories, Inc. — *Vistapro2*.

FRACTAL GEOMETRY

Using a technique known as fractal geometry, *Vistapro2* is able to generate amazingly realistic pictures of real and imaginary scenery. Just about everything imaginable is controlled by the user. If you want a river in the bottom of a canyon, a couple of mouse clicks and you have it. Lakes and trees are no problem. It's even possible to add roads and buildings to your landscape.

Continued on page 3

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LETTERS

MOVE UP FROM NINTENDO?

The Amiga 600 looks like it's going to be a good machine. If what I hear is true, the new slot has the same lines as the expansion bus on the Amiga 500. Maybe anyone of the third party companies can make a special adapter so we can take our hard drives and memory expansion cards on the 500 and plug them right into the new slot on the 600 (I would hate to lose my new GVP II hard drive!)

Commodore and the dealers might want to try a promotion offering a trade-up from a Nintendo or Sega. Try this one on for size: "Parents, are you tired of your children just playing games on their games decks? Well, for just a few hundred more, you can trade up to an Amiga 600. All you have to do is bring in that old game deck and we'll give you $???.?? off the retail price of the A600." *(Commodore, hint, hint.)*

Also, socket the 68000 for expansion purposes here in the US. Over here, it's more than just a game machine. People are going to want to expand. And Commodore, you really do need to do an advertising campaign over here. I was talking to an office employee that thought the Commodore-Amiga was out of business. *(Ouch!)*

Edward R. Stewart, Canton, GA

ZIPPERWARE DISKS FOR SUBSCRIBERS

I enjoy your *Amiga News* greatly, but am very disappointed in that loose ends are note looked after. I took out a subscription to *Amiga News* and as you have advertised I was to receive a Zipperware disk free and have yet to receive it.

Please forgive me if it was something you could not control. I sure hope things like this will improve in the future as this is a great paper and I would like to see it become bigger and bigger.

Joe Salaba, Assiniboia, Sask., Canada

We extend our apologies to Joe and to all our new subscribers for your delay in receiving your Zipperware disks. The human error was on our end, not with Zipperware, but we have (finally) resolved our state of confusion. New subscribers have had their names sent on to Zipperware and you should be receiving your disks shortly.

CLARIFICATIONS

In our excitement last month, we forgot to thank Paramount Pictures for allowing us to reprint their offical publicity photograph of Lt. Worf.

Readers of our "Dances with . . . Amiga" article (August 1992) should note that we misidentified the company responsible for the interactive system at Wanuskewin Heritage Park. The wizards responsible are Integrated Solutions, Inc., not Integrated Sounds, as we mistakenly referred to them. Our apologies to Rob and Jim. For more information about their project or their company, you can contact them at I.S. Integrated Solutions, Inc., 342 Fairview Rd., Regina, Sask., Canada (306)565-2061, fax (306)543-0207. You can read more about Integrated Solutions next month when we discuss their latest project—the creation of a complete sound track for "Eli's Lesson," a made-for-television movie starring 1992 Academy Award winner Jack Palance.

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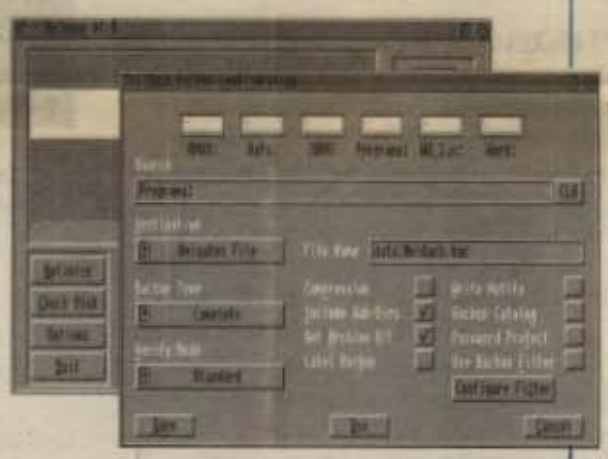

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Continued from page 1

Explore New Worlds

The *Vistapro2* package is well done. Two beautiful images are included on the front and back covers to give you a taste of what you are about to discover. A nice surprise for me was the inside cover. It was devoted to information on an organization known as The Nature Conservancy. This group purchases, then manages, undisturbed land to preserve its natural setting. I've visited their Silver Creek Preserve near Sun Valley, Idaho, and was highly impressed.

Vistapro2's manual is complete and well organized. It begins with an overview of the program, its capabilities, and system requirements. Following this is a short section on how to install the compressed program and its data on a hard disk or floppies. Next is an item by item listing of all menu and control panel options. The remainder of the manual is devoted to three appendices, two tutorials, and a very comprehensive index.

Generating landscapes of this type is very memory and processor intensive. The program requires a minimum of 3MB of RAM and recommends an accelerator. I used *Vistapro2* on my 5MB unaccelerated Amiga 500 equipped with an IVS Trumpcard 500 Professional and an 80MB Seagate ST-1096 hard drive.

Vistapro2 operates easily from either the *Workbench* or the *CLI*. After a short pause, the program opens onto its main work screen. Two-thirds of the screen is devoted to the current landscape. The remainder is taken up by the program's control panel. Everything on the control panel is clearly labelled and nicely organized. The embossed design makes it easy to identify which options are currently selected. I found it quite easy to load in a landscape and render an acceptable picture without having to even open the manual. The programmers did a fantastic job with the interface.

The current landscape is represented as a topographical map. The colors range from white representing the highest peaks through several shades of gray, then brown, then green, and so on to blue as the lowest altitude. Positioning the viewing point (Camera) is simple. First click on the Camera gadget then click on the topographical map at the point from which you wish to look. The viewing target is positioned in the same manner.

Here's where you have to decide which of *Vistapro2*'s special features you want to use. Rivers, lakes, and trees are available. Should the scene be during the day or night? What angle should the light come from? How much texturing should the landscape have? What colors should the scene be? All these variables and more can be changed with little more than a couple of mouse clicks.

Once you have designed your perfect landscape, it's time to take a look at it. *Vistapro2* has a couple options to view your landscape. A wireframe perspective mode is available to give you a thumbnail sketch of your landscape. You can also render your landscape with one of the larger polygon sizes available (I like size 4 with Blend and Gouraud shading turned on for previewing). This gives you a good idea of the arrangement of mountains and valleys in your image and lets you know if you should move your Camera or Target to get a more pleasing view.

With all of the details now arranged, you are ready to render your final picture. All standard Amiga screen modes are supported, including HalfBrite and Ham. For even better images, *Vistapro2* supports DCTV, HAM-E, and the Firecracker24. Overscan screen sizes are also supported. Most of my images are in interlaced HAM. You may also decide to let *Vistapro2* generate a simple animation by moving the Camera a little closer to the Target for each frame. Make sure you have plenty of hard disk space if you do this. A fifty-frame animation I generated was over 2MB in size.

Vistapro2 deals with two types of landscape. The first type is taken from the U.S. Geological Survey and allows the program to generate landscapes from the real world. The images I created of the Tetons near Jackson Hole, Wyoming were fantastic. I've visited the real mountain range many times and the accuracy of the computer was astounding.

COMPANION PROGRAMS

Virtual Reality Laboratories, Inc. has released two companion programs to use with *Vistapro2*. *TerraForm* is a landscape editor to allow you to design your own worlds or to modify an already existing landscape. It uses a simple interface which shows you both the entire landscape and an enlarged detail area for editing the fine points of your landscape.

The tools available to modify the landscape are very well thought out and easy to use. The tutorials in the accompanying manual quickly teach you the basics of designing your own mountain range.

MakePath is a highly useful program for designing advanced animations through the *Vistapro2* world. Several different styles of animation are possible. You can fly through the landscape in a glider, jet, helicopter, or cruise missile. If you prefer, you can follow the contours of the landscape in a dune buggy or motorcycle. It's even possible to do a barrel roll! You can choose to have the camera locked in place looking forward, or you can lock it on a target and stay locked on that target as you move past. This program is indispensable for those wishing to do any amount of animating with *Vistapro2*.

Vistapro2 and its add-on programs combine to form a very powerful yet easy to use graphics ensemble that can create truly beautiful imagery. If you are interested at all in tapping the creative side of your Amiga, this program is a must.

Contact: Virtual Reality Labs, Inc., 2341 Ganador Ct., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401, (805)545-8515.

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THE AMIGA . . . BEHIND BARS

Teaching illiterate prisoners to read

by Tory Esbensen

Minnesota's Stillwater Correctional Facility is a maximum security prison. Built in 1914, it has cell capacity for more than thirteen hundred adult male felons.

Sixty percent of the inmates are white, twenty-six percent are black, six percent are American Indian, and seven percent are Hispanic or other.

At the time of admission to prison, approximately eighty percent have histories of chemical abuse, and over fifty percent have been convicted of crimes against persons.

The prison is the home of The Prison Mirror, the nation's oldest continuously operating inmate newspaper. First published in 1887 at the original territorial prison, the newspaper's founders included Jesse James' gang members Bob and Cole Younger.

Into this setting in the spring of 1992, my software company (MicroEd) introduced an Amiga-based educational series designed to teach illiterate prisoners to read. For this opportunity, I remain indebted to the encouragement and cooperation of Dee Swanson, the woman in charge of the lower level reading program at the Stillwater facility.

A TALL ORDER

The goal of our literacy series is to bring illiterate persons up to a general newspaper level of reading comprehension. That's a tall order. But until it can be achieved, effective functioning in the real world will be greatly hampered.

We use a phonics-based approach to reading instruction. This is because the ability to *decode* the printed word is a basic pre-requisite for reading comprehension. Therefore, it makes good sense to concentrate initially on those word-attack skills that can create this ability.

Although it is true that the English language is chock-full of words that do not conform to the rules of phonics, it is a simple fact that most words do — if not in whole, at least in part. So even though there are exceptions all over the lot, our approach has been to bring as many useful patterns as we can to the chaos of English. This article aims to show that the results can be promising.

WHAT THE PROGRAM INCLUDES

At this time, between three and four hundred lessons have been completed for use at Stillwater. Much remains to be done, but this is a beginning.

The contents of these initial lessons will come as no surprise to phonics advocates. But for the benefit of the uninitiated, let me summarize some of the skills that students are being asked to master:

Part One
- Short Sound of A

Part Two
- Short Sound of U
- Short Sound of E
- Short Sound of O

Part Three
- Consonant Clusters

Part Four
- More Consonant Clusters
- Sight Words (does, would, *etc.*)

Part Five
- Words Ending with NG or NK
- Words Beginning or Ending with SH
- Words Beginning or Ending with CH
- Words Ending with FF
- Words Ending with SS

Part Six
- Words Ending with LL
- Words Ending with TT, NN, ZZ, DD, or GG

Part Seven
- EER as in CHEER, EAR as in FEAR
- Vowel Digraphs and Diphthongs (*i.e.*, EE as in SEEN)

Part Eight
- EA as in SPEAK
- OO as in BOOT
- AI as in TRAIN

Part Nine
- OA as in ROAD
- OUR as in SOUR
- AU as in HAUL
- Words that end in Silent E

Part Ten
- Printed booklets with stories are introduced. The student works back and forth between the computer and the stories. Reading comprehension now comes to the forefront. Because the student is an adult and not a little child, the stories in the booklet (although using a simple vocabulary) features grownup topics: Facing the Gang, Driving Too Fast, and so on.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The computer screen explains things for each tutor, whose job it is to monitor the progress of students using the program:

"First, the student will see a sentence which the computer will read aloud. If the student wants the computer to say the sentence again, he or she can press the F10 key.

Underneath the sentence, there will be a blank line. The student should type the sentence on that blank line.

Next, the computer will say the same sentence again. But this time, the sentence will not be shown. The student's task is to type the sentence without seeing it.

Continued on page 5

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Continued from page 4

THE AMIGA . . .BEHIND BARS

If the student needs help in doing this, the Help Key can be pressed. The computer will then show what is to be typed. The student must still type that sentence.

Remember: If the student wishes to hear the sentence spoken again, the F10 key should be pressed.

Following the completion of this task, the computer will show some uncompleted sentences. The student is to complete each sentence based upon the sentences that were previously presented during the lesson.

Finally, the student will be asked to type answers to one or more questions that the computer might ask about rhyming words, who did what, and so forth.

NOTE: The lessons build upon themselves. That is to say, the first set of lessons contains only words with the short sound of A. However, the lessons from the second set — which concern themselves with the short sound of I — also contain words from the first set (short A).

If the learner does not know the names and order of the letters of the alphabet, the program will also provide that instruction.

The entire series incorporates an integrated reading, spelling, and listening comprehension approach to instruction, based upon immediate reinforcement for the learner as the basic skills for reading are gradually mastered.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PROBLEM

Our company also has an eleven-disk series designed to begin the job of teaching English as a second language (ESL). I have often had persons suggest that our literacy series be used to teach non-English speakers English as a second language. This would not work.

In teaching ESL, you might be starting at zero in almost every respect. With our literacy series, we are starting with students who can already understand and use *spoken* English. Their problem is that they can't *read* it. That's a different kind of problem. The one should not be confused with the other.

IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT

A crucial feature of our instructional strategy is the *letter-by-letter* computer assessment of learner responses. Each keystroke by the student is evaluated by the computer and the screen will flash red if the letter being entered by the computer is incorrect. In this way, the learner knows *at each step* whether he or she is proceeding correctly.

THE TUTORS COMMENT

Darrell and Dick are inmates at Stillwater and work as tutors there. Both men were using other computers in other programs when MicroEd entered the picture.

Each tutor had students who were not learning much with those other programs. Rolando, a young Hispanic inmate, was a prime example.

"I worked with Rolando for five months in another literacy program," says Darrell. "We achieved nothing. I mean NOTHING. We made zero progress. Everything was too hard for him. So when MicroEd's literacy program came along, I was glad to try it. What else was there to lose?"

"I can tell you that the difference has been astounding. In four months, Rolando has gone from Level 1 to Level 4."

(Lest these results be misinterpreted, it should be noted that "level" does NOT mean "grade level". Newspaper reading would be approximately level 22.)

"Rolando's attitude," says Darrell, "has also undergone a great change. At the beginning, he didn't think he could learn anything. He had tried and failed so often with our other programs that he doubted anything could help him."

"Now, all this has changed. Now, when Rolando's lesson time is up, he doesn't want to quit. He is a different person."

Dick has the same type of success stories to tell about the inmates he is tutoring:

"The MicroEd lessons are really teaching them to read. And you can see as they sit at the computer keyboard, how engaged they are with what they are doing."

"With our other programs, you have to keep walking them through the lessons to show them what their mistakes were. With the Microed program, they know right away with every keystroke how well they are doing."

"Also, as tutors, we can use MicroEd's Authoring System, *CLAS*, to create our own lessons — to put together some things that might be especially helpful for a particular student. That's a marvelous feature of MicroEd's literacy series. It's open-ended so that we can actually write our own lessons whenever we see something special that might be useful for our students."

"Finally, let me just say this: For those students who haven't been able to learn before, once a little window of progress opens for them, it's another world."

Tory Esbensen is president and chief educational designer for MicroEd Incorporated. He has taught at all grade levels and has been an elementary principal, an assistant superintendent, a superintendent, university professor and college dean of instruction. He has served as consultant for the McGraw-Hill Book Company and as an education consultant for Commodore business Machines. ❑

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CYCLEMAN

Human Figure and Motion Cycles for Imagine

Cycleman is a unique model of a human-like figure, and a perfect complement for the 3-D program *Imagine*. With it, Amiga users can now easily afford the power to generate computer animation of the human form.

Cycleman is the ideal companion for *Imagine* because it gives beginners the perfect tool for experimentation and learning, and allows them to begin creating human simulations with great ease. Yet it is also flexible enough to satisfy advanced users interested in building more sophisticated animation and images with the human form.

The software comes with a completely built 3-D model of a human-like figure, ready to use.

It works only with *Imagine*, so there can be no confusion about translating different object formats.

The figure comes with its own motion ready to use. A very life-like WALK or RUN motion for the 3-D model can be loaded straight off the disk. So users can have the figure walking or running through their animation without spending hours trying to design these basic movements.

The attributes and modeling of the figure can be adjusted as with any *Imagine* object, so users have complete control over the appearance of the figure.

Users can build their own poses and motion for the figure, since all the limbs of the figure are separate objects, grouped in a special hierarchy.

The software is accompanied by a detailed manual with instructions for building motion with the figure, and changing its appearance, as well as other *Imagine* tips.

Owners of the software may use renderings and animation of the figure in commercial productions.

Suggested retail price for *Cycleman* is $59.95.

Contact: Tim Wilson, P.O. Box 4691, Crestline, CA 92325. (714)338-1786.

AMI-GADGET Magazine is Good Reading

by Bob Liddil

I found another great Amiga publication. Now don't get me wrong, I want you to read *AMIGA NEWS* always and first, but dogonnit I've discovered a little magazine that's a whole lot of fun, and I thought I'd share it.

AmiGadget Magazine is just that — a magazine. Volume 1 Number 1 is the summer 1991 issue, so this publication is a little older than we are (we started November 1991). Billing itself as "The Journal of Amiga Creativity," it features articles such as "Complexities of Draw 4D" by Shamms Mortier, PhD, "The Ins and Outs of Time Code for Video" by Mike Sox, as well as assorted discussions and tutorials concerning *ARexx, Bars&Pipes* and the creation of clouds.

These are not trivial subjects. Much of Amigadom is concerned with creating just the right picture in any one of a dozen paint/scene making programs or just the right sound effect to go along with that perfect animation. So an article entitled "Trees: Poetic and Artistic - Creating Trees in Amiga Paint Programs" is not only interesting, informative and timely, it can be downright necessary! And any space dedicated to *Bars&Pipes* can only help generate more music.

One of my most passionate loves is Science Fiction and all things extra-planetary. My imagination is active but my artistic ability ranks slightly below that of a sea anemone with colored pencils. While reading Doctor Mortier's piece on tree making, which is lavishly illustrated with alien landscapes (and alien trees), I caught the feeling that I too could be a terraformer. Forget jargon and technobabble! This guy communicated with me and made me believe that I could do what he does.

Whether it be trees or clouds or canyons on Mars, *AmiGadget Magazine* tweaks the artistic bones you don't believe you have. I saw more alien landscapes in Issue 1 of *AmiGadget* than in the last three issues of *Aboriginal Science Fiction*! Now that is enough to make an old Trekkie's heart go pitty-pat.

If *AmiGadget*'s thrust is to be defined, the word "creativity" must be used. An article entitled "Mozart's Dice Game" deals with computerized music in *AmigaBASIC*. "Scoring Sheet Music with Bars&Pipes" gets into hard details concerning what the title describes. And just when I thought I had a handle on what the 'zine's all about, I see in the table of contents articles like "Getting to know *AmigaDos 2.0*" and "*WordPerfect*'s Secrets Revealed" which totally dislodge any stereotyping that might be taking place.

Of course, all this costs money. But since your supply of *AMIGA NEWS* is assured, you won't mind spending a little green on *AmiGadget*, will you? A six issue subscription with disks (each of which is chock full of examples of the themes of the issue) runs only $50. The magazine alone, sent to your front door, is $27.00 for six and $4.50 for a sample. Not bad, considering the information enclosed.

It behooves us all to support efforts like *AmiGadget Magazine*, which, in turn, keep the Amiga healthy and alive. If it were a lightweight, or not worth the bucks, I'd say so. Fact is, I found *AmiGadget* to be conversational, informative, and worth the asking price. That's as much as any unit of software can be expected to provide. If you discover that you love it, as I did, then so much more the bonus.

Contact Jay Gross at *AMI-GADGET MAGAZINE*, Box 1696, Lexington, SC 29072 and mention *AMIGA NEWS*. (If you do, Jay will send you a free copy of his magazine — he promised).

Help for *Pro Page* users

The folks from Vidia have added another volume to their library of reference books. The latest addition is the *Vidia Guide to Pro Page 3.0* and focuses on typefaces. The book shows samples of type in sizes ranges from 13 to 120 points, text passages from 7 to 12 points, typestyles such as italic, bold, reverse, underline and various tracking settings. One full page is dedicated to each Compugraphic or PostScript typeface. The book also includes keyboard equivalents for *Professional Page* and *Article Editor*, and a guide to text formatting codes.

The *Vidia Guide to Pro Page 3.0* complements Vidia's earlier book which covers versions 1.3 and 2.0. Most of the material in the earlier product is not repeated in this book.

The *Guide to ProPage 3.0* has a retail price of $7.95 and is available from Vidia, P.O. Box 1180, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. (310) 379-7139.

To obtain a copy of the earlier *Vidia Guide to Professional Page*, send $3.75 to Vidia at the same address. ❑

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Also included are an easy-to-learn video titling system for your videos or multimedia presentations and a introduction to the exciting world of 3D modeling.

PRODUCT INFORMATION

The IV24 is best supported on an Amiga A2000 or A3000 with at least 3MB memory, a hard disk, a 68020/030 with a 68881/882 floating point coprocessor.

Suggested retail price for the IV24 is $2,199.

For more information or to locate a GVP dealer near you, contact: Great Valley Products, 600 Clark Avenue, King of Prussia, PA 19406. (215)337-8770, fax (215)337-9922.

❑

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See you in school!

Adaptec SCSIs now available from Merisel

In October 1992, Merisel signed an agreement with Adaptec, Inc. of Milpitas, CA. Under the terms of the agreement, Merisel will distribute Adaptec's full line of Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI) controllers, including the SCSI Master and SCSI Direction, throughout the United States, Canada and Northern Mexico.

"Our agreement with Adaptec is strategic to Merisel's growth in the SCSI market," said Merisel Director of Peripheral Prodcuts, Allan Schroeder. "The products fill a critical need of our customers in the fast-growing storage and multimedia segments and complement Merisel's broad line of hard drive, CD-ROM and tape product offerings."

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The MediaPhile Video editing system from Interactive MicroSystems now supports Sony VISCA protocol decks and VBOX control of Sony CTL-L/LANCS - port decks and camcorders.

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Complete systems including a Commodore Amiga computer and video decks range from $2,500 to $10,000. Edit decision list software starts at $200.

Contact: Interactive MicroSystems, Inc., 9 Red Roof Lane, Salem, NH 03079. (603)898-3545, fax(603)898-3606.

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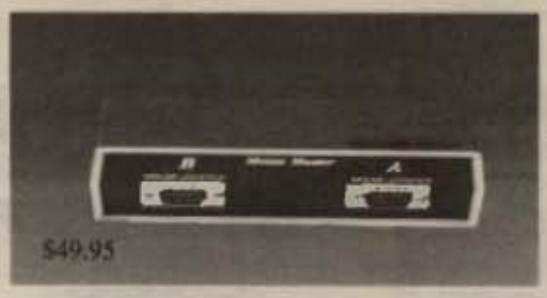

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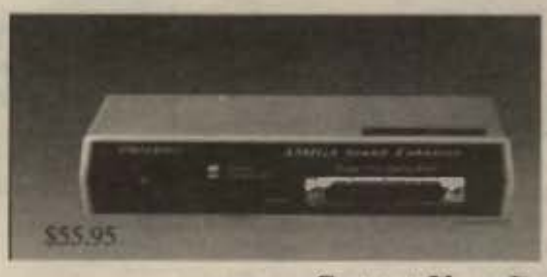

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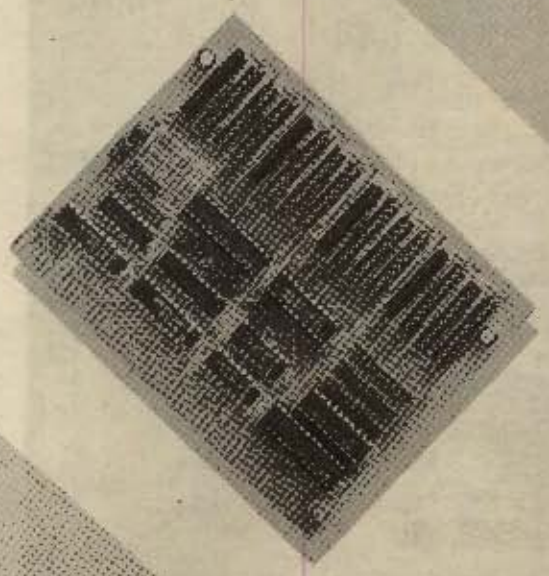

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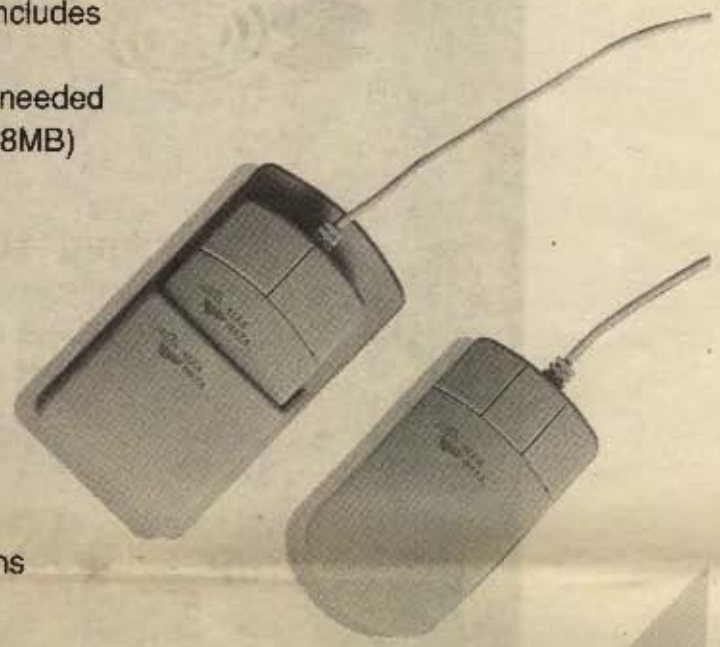

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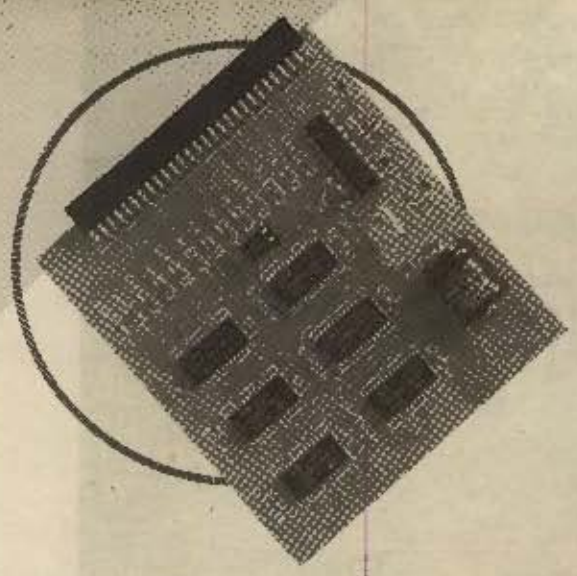

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Toast and Coffee — hold the jam

Desktop video fans now have a new source of information and assistance. *Toast and Coffee*, a bi-monthly video periodical by Videographix, Inc., premiered this September.

The premier edition includes segments with desktop video installations, tips and techniques, new products and equipment and "The Gallery" — a showcase of subscriber material.

The "Installations" segment will enable subscribers to see how others are using desktop products. The September edition visits Serving Software of Minneapolis, MN, who are using their *Toaster* to create the company's promotional videos.

The "Tips and Techniques" segments will be hosted by John Gross of Alpha Video in Bloomington, MN. John is a freelance writer for *Avid Magazine* and *Video Toaster User* and will be appearing regularly on *Toast and Coffee* to bring many of his tricks and insights to life for subscribers.

As the publication continues, more segments will be added, with help from subscriber input and interests. *Toast and Coffee* will be produced every two months, with an annual subscription rate of $48.00.

Contact: Videographix, Inc., 12232 Nicollet Ave. S., Burnsville, MN 55337. (612) 890-2189, fax (612) 890-3354.

NOTES FROM THE NETS

Rumor has it . . .

by Times Roman

What you are about to read (unless this paragraph causes a complete loss of interest and you move on to something else) is a monthly collection of rumors, speculation, and the occasional summary of a press release or two, gathered mainly from various computer networks. ***Nothing contained within is to be construed as pure fact, but I'll try to be as accurate as I can.***

COMMODORE

The big news from Commodore is, of course, the introduction of the A4000 (among other things) at the Pasadena World of Commodore-Amiga Pasadena in September. Commodore even released details of the next two beyond-A4000 chip sets, which, since it's now public information, has given me quite a bit less to write about in the coming months.

Anyway, since most of the World of Commodore-Amiga news will probably be repeatedly hashed over in every Amiga publication in existence, I won't repeat it here. What I will do is report on some of the news and discussions that have sprung up as a result of the World of Commodore-Amiga show.

The introduction of the AGA (formerly called AA) chip set in the A4000 has got many A3000 owners up in arms about not being able to plug the AGA chips into their machines. Folks, Commodore never told you you'd be able to — in fact, they've been saying for years something along the lines of "any theoretical 32-bit chip set will not work in any of the current (pre-A4000) Amigas". There is a great deal of physical impossibility involved in plugging a 32-bit chip into a socket that's only wired for a 16-bit chip, and that's what you'd have to do to use AGA.

But before you start mourning your A3000 as orphaned, think about this. Two of the effects of the A4000's introduction will be to drive down the 3000's price (there were said to have been 3000/25-50s at World of Commodore-Amiga for under $1,500) and, well, to sell 4000s. What this means for you is lots more ZorroIII equipped machines out there, and thus lots more incentive for developers to come out with real 32-bit ZorroIII cards which can work not only in the 4000 but in your "outdated" 3000.

World of Commodore-Amiga Big Question Number Two was "Why the @#%$#! did CBM use an IDE controller instead of SCSI?" Well, the answer is that it was essentially free to manufacture. Apparently the IDE controller consists of just a few minor adjustments to one of the custom chips. The general consensus (and I agree — how's that for unbiased journalism?) is that on a $3,000 machine that's supposed to be a multimedia workhorse, free IDE is a lousy tradeoff for SCSI. Most buyers would probably be willing to pay an extra $100-200 for an A3000-style on-the-motherboard SCSI. Commodore has promised to come out with a fast ZorroIII SCSI card soon, but its installation leaves only three free expansion slots.

One bright side to the 4000's IDE controller is that we'll probably soon see lots of new ZorroIII SCSI boards from third parties.

Another frequent A4000 question: "Why only two megs of Chip RAM?" I was going to defend this as being plenty, but yesterday while running a number of screens worth of applications, my 2-meg-chip A3000 ran out of Chip RAM. Although more Chip RAM would have been nice to have, it's not as if the machine is crippled by the 2 meg limit. You'll just be able to open fewer 262,000-color 1280x400 screens than you'd like.

"Does it work with the *Toaster*?" Word is: nope. Officially it "hasn't been tried," but the unofficial word on the grapevine says not a chance. The earlier *Toaster* software broke with the ECS chipset. In any case, it won't take advantage of the AGA chips without major changes to the software.

Another criticism of the 4000 is its use of the old Paula and lack of a more advanced sound system. This may be the case at the moment, but CBM has promised a Digital Signal Processor module for it in the not-too-distant future. In fact, there are two internal ports in the machine which seem geared just for that.

Missing from the World of Commodore-Amiga show were a mid-range AGA-based machine and a redesigned CDTV. Both are supposedly in the works though. An A2200 or A1200 might have made the news as an official product by the time you read this, if the European Amiga magazines are to be believed. It will most likely arrive in time for Christmas . . . an under-$2,000 AGA-based '020 or '030 machine might sell well over the holidays.

A side note on AGA: A few months ago Black Belt pulled its HAM-E board off the market; BB's president, Ben Williams, claimed that he couldn't say why because of non-disclosure agreements with Commodore. This statement stirred up quite a bit of speculation: would the then-just-a-rumor new chipset be the ECS with HAM-E capabilities added in? Well, although some of the specs for AGA sound a bit like a superset of HAM-E's capabilities, the word from CBM engineers is that there is absolutely no relation between the two.

The HAM8 mode on the A4000 apparently doesn't really offer displayable colors like Commodore has been advertising . . . it's even better than that! According to some Commodore people on UseNet, careful use of the HAM8 mode will allow every pixel on the screen to be chosen from any color in the 24-bit palette. That means that on a 1280x512 screen, the 4000 can animate 640,000 individual colors at 60 frames per second!

THE A600

The Amiga 600 appears to be here in the States at last. This controversial little machine sold 65,000 units in Britain alone in the first three months of its existence, so those who worry about it turning into another Plus/4 should find something better to worry about. Commodore UK has even lowered the price of the HD-less model to 299 Pounds, citing a very low failure rate (less than one percent) as the main reason for the price cut.

A couple of rumored upcoming A600 products from CBM include a '386 emulator that fits into the "hatch" on the bottom of the machine and an '030 accelerator that sits in the PCMCIA slot.

CDTV II?

As for a CDTV-II, rumor has it that the redesign is undergoing redesign. The next generation CDTV might even include the AGA chip set instead of the fabled DCTV add-on. It will most certainly include one of the new higher-speed CD-ROM drives and a bit more memory, and based on hints at World of Commodore-Amiga, it's very likely to have support for MPEG decompression of full-motion video. Look for this new machine in time for the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

Commodore is pushing the current CDTV with a trade-up offer in the UK (give us your 512K A500, we'll give you a big discount on a 1 meg CDTV with floppy, keyboard, mouse, and 2.04). In the US, you now get a free CDTV (complete with the Fred Fish collection on CD-ROM and a cable and software to allow you to mount the CDTV as a drive on your Amiga) with purchase of a 3000.

These offers, combined with the fact that the A570 CD drive seems to be finally shipping in Europe and on its way to the US, should dramatically increase the market for CDTV titles. Look for the release soon (in fact, some might already be available) of long-awaited CDTV titles like Sherlock Holmes, a "modernized" revamp of Defender of the Crown, and a number of impressive projects from LucasFilm.

Jerry Pournelle, well-known (but usually not so well respected among Amigans) *Byte* columnist, was at the World of Commodore-Amiga show, and apparently had some nice things to say about the Amiga. If CBM sends him some more free hardware, he'll probably even publish those nice things in an article or two.

Although there still hasn't been much public discussion of the Commodore/DEC deal, a bit of information has come to light. Amigas will appear in the DecDirect catalog as Multimedia Workstations, possibly with a DEC logo slapped on the front to sneak them into places where the machine would normally not even be taken into consideration.

A set of shared libraries being worked on at CBM under the name "Commodore Amiga Multimedia Driver" (CAMD) promise to provide standards for just about all aspects of MIDI as well as ways to do things like synchronize sound, video, MIDI, etc. It will allow music software to establish "MIDI Links" through which to send "MIDI Messages" — essentially a means of sharing musical resources simultaneously across multiple applications.

The Amiga's advancement has been slowed for years by the large number of developers whose software bypasses the operating system and goes right to the hardware to get things done. Whenever a hardware or OS upgrade came along, lots of software would break. It seems Commodore has come up with a solution to this problem for the new AGA machines and future architectures: they're just not going to release a hardware reference manual. The message to developers (you'd think they would have gotten it by now, but a large number of them haven't) is "do it through the OS or don't bother doing it."

HARDWARE HAPPENINGS

A little device called Emplant has been stirring up heated discussions all over the networks. As of this writing, no one has yet seen this Emulator-to-end-all-emulators in action. A prototype board has been shown . . . but not plugged into the machine. Jim Drew of Utilities Unlimited, one of the board's designers, said he would be at the DMI booth at World of Commodore-Amiga Show. Emplant's color Mac emulation capabilities are to include support for the DMI Resolver, but unfortunately (due to problem's with the Resolver board Utilities Unlimited was testing on) the support for it wasn't ready in time for the show. Since Jim didn't have anything to show that used a DMI product, he wasn't allowed in the DMI booth.

He did show up on the last day of the show for two hours to show off Emplant at the Commodore booth. He had a circuit board with him in a briefcase, but didn't actually plug it in to a machine to let people see it running. This has left quite a few folks wondering whether Emplant is real, and if it can meet its currently-promised September 20th release date. At least it has apparently passed FCC testing.

Some of Jim's latest network postings about Emplant make quite a few claims which, if even mostly true, will make Emplant a very revolutionary product. Here, in random order, are a few of the features he's publicly claimed exist now or are being worked on for Emplant.

The current Mac emulation runs on a 40 MHz '030-based Amiga about 3.5 times faster than on a Mac IIx (16 MHz '030), and is compatible with the 68040 and the A4000, even taking advantage of the AGA graphics modes. There is a software driver in the works which will allow Emplant's built-in AppleTalk port to be used to network the Amiga side of the system as well as the Mac side. The IBM emulation software will have an optional daughterboard that will allow full access to A2000/3000/4000 IBM slots; there will also be an adaptor to allow Mac NuBus cards to plug into Zorro II/III slots to be used by the Mac emulator. In both cases, the Amiga side will be able to access these boards as well. Jim claims that Emplant's IBM emulation

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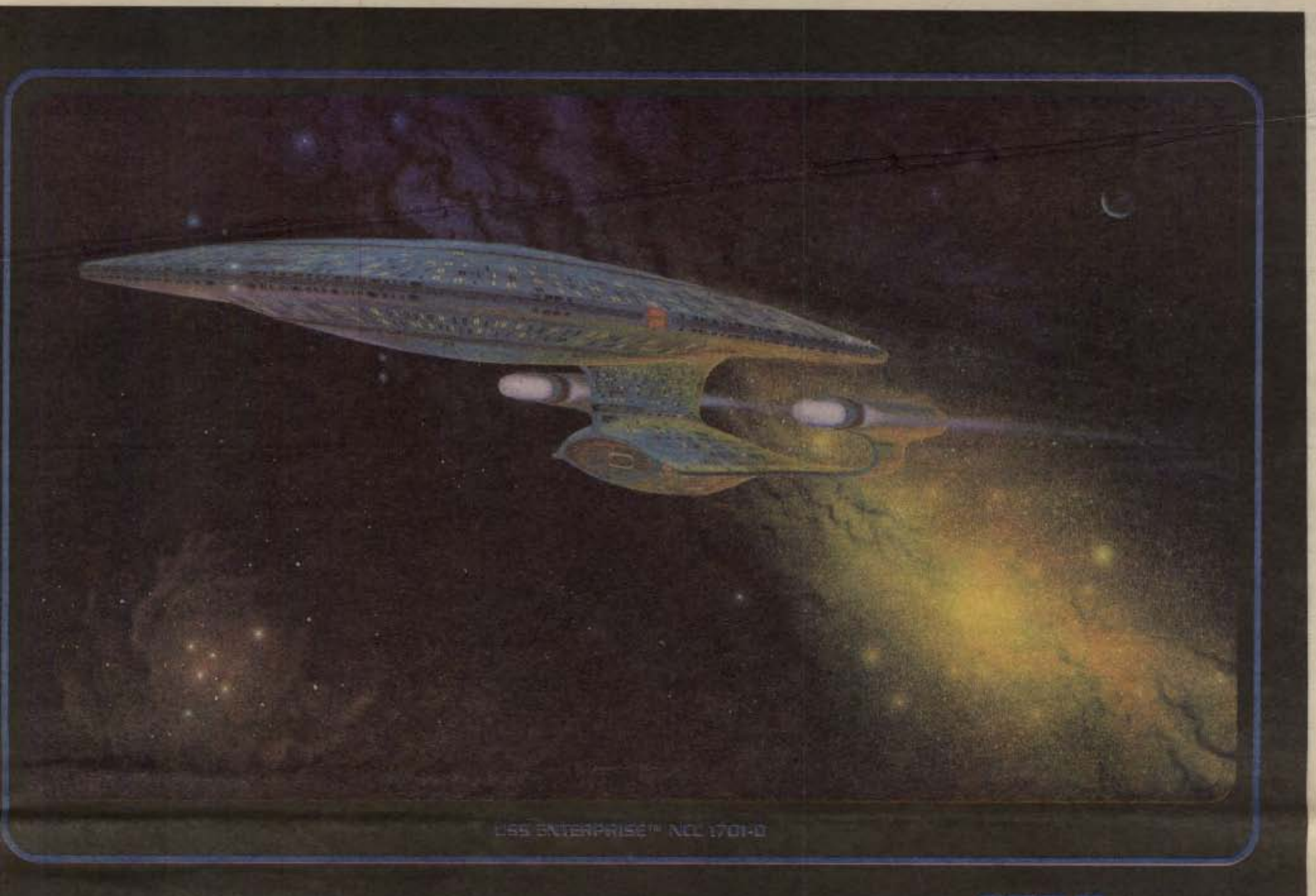

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NOTES FROM THE NETS

will provide 20-25MHz 80486 speeds on a 3000-class machine.

Want faster IBM emulation than CBM's 386 bridgeboard? Don't want to wait on Emplant's 80x86 emulation? Elite Micro-Computers of Port Reading, NJ has put together a 30 MHz 486SLC (A Cyrix chip that's plug-compatible with the 386SX but much faster) bridgeboard which they say will go on sale October 1st at a list price of $1,350, or $675 as an upgrade for current A2386 owners. Apparently they're buying A2386s and retrofitting them with the Cyrix chips. This price includes 3 megs of RAM, *Janus 2.1* software, and *DOS 5*. A math coprocessor can also be installed for an extra $180.

I believe they've been mentioned here before but still not seen outside of Australia, I'm referring to the Bright Spark board and Chip RAM Accelerator from Black Knight Peripherals.

BrightSpark is a 32-bit graphics board (24-bit color plus eight bits for overlays, transparency, etc.) that will likely sell for under $400. A set of on-board chips will speed graphics operations. Apparently this board has a modular design similar to that of the now-shipping OpalVision board; future plug-ins will add to its capabilities. The BrightSpark will be the basis of a powerful video system called the Rainbow Factory.

The Chip RAM accelerator is designed essentially to eliminate the bottleneck of Chip RAM speed on Amiga 500 and 2000 series machines. By putting up to 2 megs of high-speed RAM onto the Chip bus, high-res many-colored screens will no longer cause the system slow-down as they normally do. BK also plans on introducing a line of accelerators which will work in conjunction with the CRA to provide speed enough for 24 frame-per-second HAM animations.

SOFTWARE SIGHTINGS

Worried that it will take a while for software to support the AGA chipset? Unless you're into games, don't be. Existing 2.04-compliant applications can be updated relatively easily, and we're already starting to see some software with AGA support. By the end of the year, we'll likely see AGA-supporting products such as *ProWrite 3.3*, *Final Copy II*, *"Brilliance"* - an impressive new paint program from Digital Creations that was demonstrated at the World of Commodore-Amiga Show, *DPaint 5* (!), *ProDraw*, *ProPage*, *Page Stream*, and *Imagine*.

ASDG has announced a "Retroactive Upgrade" to support AGA machines for *Art Department Professional*. The upgrade is retroactive in that *ADPro 2.1* has already had AGA support for months! To turn it on: just install the software in a 4000. Also recently announced from ASDG is support in *ADPro* for the Abekus Digital Disk Recorder, a high-end Videographer's tool. This support should even further boost the Amiga's presence in the professional video community.

The latest version of Black Belt's *ImageMaster* (which should already be shipping) includes support for SoftLogik's *"HotLinks"* system. This will allow *HotLinks* users to dynamically share images between *ImageMaster* and other *HotLinks*-capable applications. Black Belt is the first developer other than SoftLogik to include *HotLinks* support in a product.

Rumors surfaced at World of Commodore-Amiga of some upcoming new Electronic Arts products, including *DPaint 5* and a long-awaited upgrade to *Deluxe Music Construction Set*. Also making the news recently is the fact that EA has bought Origin, makers of such popular games as the *Ultima* and *Wing Commander* series. Since EA seems dedicated to supporting the Amiga, it's now much more likely that we'll see ports of these in the future.

SoftLogik is making updates available to some of its products. Making the rounds on BBSes by now is a free patch to upgrade *PageStream* to version 2.21, along with some new and updated printer and import drivers. For $35, current owners of *HotLinks Editions* can upgrade to *HE 1.1*, which includes the latest versions of *BME* and *PageLiner*. *BME* (*BitMap Editor*) version 1.1 includes direct TIFF import capability and an auto-tracer to convert bitmap images to structured DR2D clip art. *PageLiner 1.1* has some new font capabilities and a new Settings menu. The *HE* programs are 2.1 and 3.0 compatible and support the "Locale" library in these operating systems. *HE 1.1* will list for $150. Since support for *HotLinks* has begun showing up in 3rd party products, look for an *HL*-only package for around $75 in the near future (just *HotLinks*, without *BME* or *PageLiner*).

Also slated to finally ship by the end of the year is *Art Expressions*, SoftLogik's long-awaited structured drawing program. It will list for $250, but there will be a $125 offer for current *PageStream* owners and a similar offer to *ProDraw* owners willing to "Power Up." *HotLinks* support for exchanging DR2D graphics between applications is not yet supported, but is in the works for future SoftLogik releases. Bundled with *BME 1.1* (with autotracer) and 25 Type 1 fonts, *Art Expressions* will be a welcome addition to the still-maturing Amiga structured drawing market.

New Horizons has announced *Pro-Write 3.3*, the latest upgrade to their popular word processor. Its new features include *HotLinks* support, better font and graphics handling, clipboard support, support for the AGA chip set, and more. The package will list for $99.95, and there will be an upgrade offer for current owners.

Rumor has it that *ProWrite 4.0* is already being worked on; watch for capabilities like footnotes, endnotes, indexing, etc.

Walnut Creek, a large multi-platform CD-ROM vendor, has taken over distribution of the Amiga product CD-ROM FS. This will likely mean that we'll see Amiga reader programs on many of Walnut Creek's upcoming CD-ROM products. In fact, they've already announced *Desktop Library*, a collection of over 2300 works of literature on a single CD; this product will include an Amiga reader program. (It might just be "more", but it's a step in the right direction anyway . . . .)

Rumor has it that Commodore and NewTek are just about at each others' throats at this point. Each party blames the other over the fact that the *Toaster* doesn't fit in non-2000 machines. There has apparently also been a lot of contention over NewTek's *Toaster* Workstations clogging up Amiga dealerships, and according to *AVid* magazine, NewTek has decided to stop selling the standalone *Toaster* boxes. Commodore has apparently gone so far as to threaten revoking Amiga dealership status to anyone selling *Toaster* Workstations.

Intel has announced that its P5 chip won't ship this year as expected. Speculations on the reasoning behind this decision range from bugs in the chip to manufacturing problems to a desire to milk the 80486 a bit more before announcing the next generation CPU. In any case, don't expect this 100-MIP processor to be gracing any desktop PCs for at least a few more months.

The price-slashing and undercutting in the PC-clone business is finally taking its toll on hardware manufacturers. Not only have large numbers of the smaller Far Eastern cloners faded from the scene, but some of the big companies are in trouble too.

NorthGate, after a $10 million loss and a layoff of 90 people, has had most of its board of directors ousted. Everex is "letting go" of 12% of its employees only a short while after a 10% workforce cut, and Zeos, after a loss of about $13 million over the last two quarters, is cutting 93 from its work force as well. Wang has filed for bankruptcy and will be laying off nearly 5000 of 13,000 employees as the latest attempt to stop its years of decline.

Compaq is currently undergoing reorganization, which according to *InfoWorld* might mean a loss of 500 employees. Apple Computer is in the process of laying off hundreds of employees; as many as 1000 are scheduled for "release" from the company's distribution arm.

Our old friends at Atari are about to announce the Falcon, a not-half-bad machine which might sell rather well through the dozen or so dealers Atari still has left in the US. Atari posted a $39.7 million loss in the 2nd quarter.

IDG Communications, parent company of numerous computer magazines including *AmigaWorld* and *MacWorld* has announced *Desktop Video World*, a magazine geared specifically toward people who use their computers for video-related work. This magazine won't turn into a PC or Mac publication, either — it's headed by well-known Amigan Lou Wallace. In fact, *DTP World* is likely bring the Amiga quite a bit of notoriety.

That's it for this month. Be sure to check other sources for complete World of Commodore-Amiga news. Look for news of products like *Brilliance*, *Vivid24*, *EditMaster* (real-time image capture and compression!), *SunRize*'s new 16-bit sound board and upcoming DAT/CD interface hardware, *PlayMation*, *CanDo 2.0*, *CineMorph*, and probably a few things I've missed. This World of Commodore-Amiga was the most important, exciting event in the Amiga community since the A1000 was introduced. World of Commodore-Amiga comes in the midst of the worst period of doom and gloom the machine has ever faced and sends out a clear message to the "infidels":

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Quick Print supports IFF, RAW and ILBM formats including HAM, Extra-Half-Bright and 24-bit images. *Quick Print* provides an easy way to combine and print high quality images created on the Amiga using the Sony UP-D7000 color printer. Pages may include a single image to combine multiple image file formats onto a single page.

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The UPD Shared Library allows programmers and other applications to directly support the UP-D7000 printer with as little as 5 lines of code, and no additional disk space. End users may then purchase the library from KarmaSoft to allow these applications to utilize the UP-D7000 printer.

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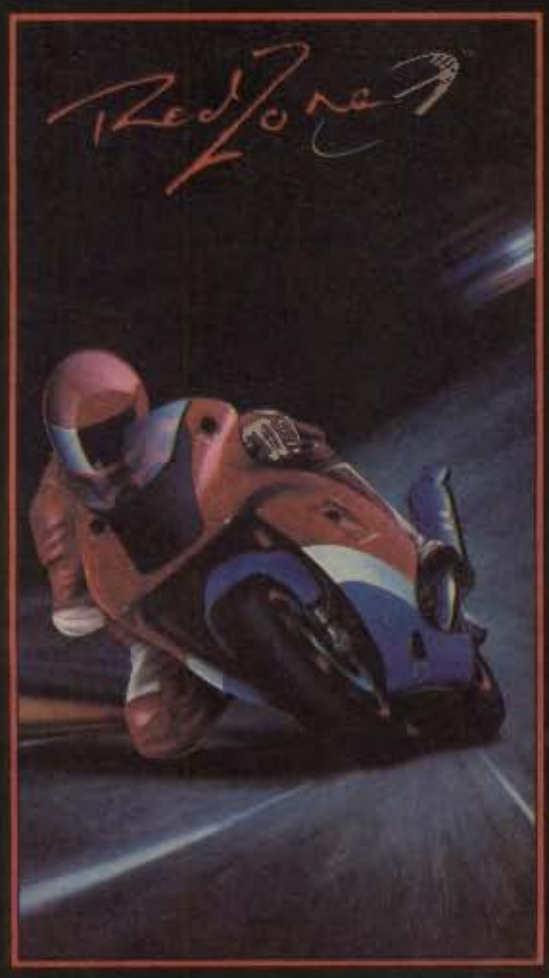

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GET CONTROL OF YOUR VIDEO WITH A MEDIAPHILE CONTROLLER

I regard myself as an average Amiga user. I have a house, a wife, one child and a camcorder. In the natural course of events an accumulation of video footage is generated, the usual stuff of course: a basketball game or two, a family get-together, sightseeing and before you know it you have a whole mess of tapes that no one watches the whole way through. The simple answer of course is to assemble the highlights into one glorious home movie, throw in a few titles, graphics etc. and we all know that there is a whole bunch of software for the Amiga for doing just this. And then there's all those animations that you've laboured on or maybe you've just created a super flying logo and that needs to get to video tape.

The average assembly job needs a genlock and lot of starting and stopping of the VCR and maybe a little rewinding or fast forwarding thrown in for good measure. What the user really needs is a way of automating the process, after all what's the use of owning a computer if you have to do all the work? With this thought in mind I went shopping, bearing in mind that my needs were basically simple, I needed to be able to perform (a) Insert and Assembly Editing, (b) Title overlays with Genlock Control, (c) Animation Recording. But, I thought, the system needs to be expandable, if I acquire a Toaster and want to do A-B Rolls with synchronized audio dubbing, and maybe control laser and compact disk players and and ...

... The only piece of equipment I found able meet my needs was the MediaPhile Controller this and the software provided by Interactive Microsystems is the most versatile available. The 2.0 Infrared controller comes with a lot of VCR deck control commands resident with the provided software, it is also capable of learning any infrared commands, so if your DAT player is not covered, then it's a simple matter of learning new codes. There is also a serial port version of the controller if your VCR is equipped with a LANCS or CTL-L remote port.

The Infrared controller is capable of controlling several different pieces of equipment at the same time, as long as they have different control codes. For example in the system I created for my editing needs; it controls my camcorder, video deck, CD player (for background music) and TV.

The software that allows this is the MediaController program, you simply run as many Mediacontroller programs as you need to control your equipment. The next piece of software required is the MediaEditor program, this allows you make an edit decision list. Tape containing raw unedited footage is placed in the player VCR and scenes are logged into the list by viewing the video, start and end points of the scene you wish to include into the final master are recorded either by hitting the return key at the in and out points or by entering a value into the provided boxes. This enables most home footage to entered on the fly, so to speak. There is also a MediaBase program which is an interactive database which logs video scenes, audio segments etc.

A further nice touch is the MediaPhile Servers, which is a collection of software interfaces that provides programs such as AmigaVision, CanDo, Scala, The Director, Showmaker, MicroFiche Filer, Sculpt Animate 4D and VideoScape 3D etc. the ability use the controller. There is also MediaManager, a general purpose ARexx server which allows any ARexx program to control devices through the MediaPhile controllers.

For the home user the MP2.0A controller is probably the controller to go for, it attaches to the audio output and is capable of sending and learning infrared commands from any device, it posses two Sony style S/JVC outputs and a Audio input for reading the SMPTE time code signals. With infrared control the system was accurate to 10 +/- frames (about 1/3 sec.) on my system, unfortunately I wasn't able to use the SMPTE option which promised accuracy of 1 +/- frame.

So now I have a home video editing system which is easy to use, what am I doing with all this spare time, well I'm spending a lot of it writing to Santa, the Easter Bunny and even the Great Pumpkin hoping one of them will come through with a 4000, equipped with a Toaster and Kitchen Sync and then its going to be; move over Industrial Light and Magic.

If you have any questions concerning the MediaPhile controller range why not give those awfully nice chaps at Interactive MicroSystems a call at (603) 898-3545 and I guarantee they'll do their utmost to help you.

The ARexx Cookbook

Not another reference manual, *The ARexx Cookbook* is a step by step approach to learning *ARexx*, in graduated lessons from simple stand-alone programs to complex interprocess control programs. Along with presenting good programming techniques, a thorough treatment of parsing, string handling and arrays insures that the readers will have the equipment to write any *ARexx* programs they need.

The purpose of *The ARexx Cookbook* is twofold: to bring less experienced Amiga users quickly up to speed in *ARexx;* and to provide some really useful *ARexx* programs that can easily be adapted or used as is for real world applications. *The ARexx Cookbook* is designed to help you get over your initial fear of programming and to accelerate you climb up the first hump of the learning curve, and to lead you to the level where you can begin to use the full power of your Amiga. For others, at a more intermediate stage, the book is an immediate source of useful code (and inspiration) that you can use to make your own programs in *ARexx* to customize your Amiga applications.

All programs in the book, as well as many more are available on two disks: The regular Companion Disk; and a new disk just for Desk Top Publishers for creating Indices and Tables of Contents using TurboText and any DTP package that will export ASCII text.

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Interactive Microsystems has just released a $50 infrared controller that operates from the game port of Commodore-Amiga computers.

The company's MediaEditor program operates the controller together with the Video Director, Mediaphile, Future Video and Sony VBOX and VISCA controllers for video editing and multimedia presentation. The NewTek *Toaster* and Panasonic WJMX switchers are controlled for A/B-roll and special effects.

Infrared control for multimedia presentation from Amiga Vision, Showmaker, Scala, and other programs is supported with an *ARexx* software interface. A Programmer's Toolkit is available for infrared control of laser and compact disk players, video and audio decks, camcorders and other devices from C-Language and BASIC programs.

Complete infrared control systems including hardware and software start at $250.

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New Video Adapters from INOVAtronics

Brilliant, high resolution 16-million color (24-bit) and 4096 color (12-bit) graphics are now within reach of all Amiga users, thanks to two affordable new graphics enhancement boards from INOVAtronics.

AVideo12 and *AVideo24* let you work with high color 12- and 24-bit images using any standard Amiga monitor. They can breeze through 12-bit animations at up to 25 frames per second, and output a crisp, broadcast quality, genlockable signal — all without taking up any valuable expansion or video slots, or interfering in any way with systems using the NewTek *Video Toaster*.

AVideo12 and *AVideo24* are also the first video adapters that let you overlay normal Amiga images on top of 12- or 24-bit graphics, and then further combine them with a video signal using your own genlock. This type of 3-layer image (*AVideo* + Amiga graphic + video) is not possible using other video adapter, such as *HAM-E*, *DCTV* or the *Firecracker24*.

AVideo24 comes with *TVPaint*, a broadcast quality paint system for creating 16-million color IFF images (known as IFF24), or editing IFF24 images from programs like *Art Department Professional*, *Lightwave 3D*, *Imagine*, *Pixel 3D*, *ToasterPaint* and *DPaint IV*. The *TVPaint* packages even lets you edit 24-bit images in real-time without having to toggle to another display to see the real effect of your image editing.

The *AVideo* boards are also completely ARexx-driveable, working well with such ARexx interface authoring systems as *AmigaVision* or *CanDo* and making them excellent for use in kiosks and presentations. Both packages also come with *Opera*, an ARexx-script control system that lets you run automated multimedia presentations.

Both *AVideo* board install between the DENSE graphics chip and the Amiga motherboard. The *AVideo* works with any Amiga 2000, 2500 or 3000 computer, while *AVideo12* also works with the Amiga 500.

The *AVideo* boards support all Amiga resolutions up to a maximum size of 724 x 566 pixels in OVERSCAN mode (the physical limit of the proprietary AGNUS and DENISE chips). Larger images (768 x 580 pixels) can be loaded, although only 724 x 566 pixels will be displayed.

Both *AVideo* boards are available now. The *AVideo24* carries a suggested retail price of $999.95, while the suggested retail price for the *AVideo12* is $499.95.

Contact: INOVAtronics, 8499 Greenville Ave #209B, Dallas, TX 75231, (214) 340-4991, fax (214) 340-8514.

In Europe, contact INOVAtronics GmbH, Im Heidkamp 11, W-5000 Cologne 91 Germany. +49-221-875126, fax +49-221-8704747.

CanDo - 2.0 and improved

CanDo, the multimedia authoring and development environment from INOVAtronics, is now available in version 2.0. The new version includes many enhanced developer tools and a completely new user manual designed to simplify understanding and access to *CanDo's* extensive feature set.

Along with a new set of tutorials, the 400-page, fully indexed manual contains more and better explanations about authoring, scripting and database design.

A number of additions have been made to the software itself to reduce developer time and effort, and to increase the usefulness of *CanDo* applications.

One of these improvements is **Script Bookmarking.** Frequently requested by *CanDo* users, Script Bookmarking speeds development by providing a convenient way to return to certain scripts in just one or two keystrokes — an extremely useful tool when developing large scale applications.

Another addition in *CanDo 2.0* is **SuperDuper,** a timesaving utility which lets you automatically insert complete spreadsheet-style columns and rows of objects (buttons, fields or sliders) into your applications. Also supported is the **DOS Notify** function under Kickstart 2.0, which is a more efficient way to tell the operating system to watch for specific file systems changes.

Also new to *CanDo:* an **Object Layer Tool,** which lets you change the hierarchy of objects and **Bug Basher,** an all new script test and verification suite which improves error-checking on scripts. *CanDo* also comes with a **Configuration Utility** that allows you to define and edit the location of documents or tool types with a simple interface.

CanDo 2.0 now gives you better control over brushes and brush anims— including a single step control — and better control over audio: now you can stop and start any one of the Amiga's 4 sound channels separately, without affecting the others.

Other enhancements include:

User definable grids (with a snap-to-grid option)

Improved online help

Full support for international characters (Spanish, French, German and Italian)

Support for images up to 1700 x 2000 (RAM permitting), such as 200dpi faxes.

Support for scripts in excess of 1000 lines (limited only by memory)

More efficient memory usage

CanDo 2.0 is available immediately, and carries a retail price of $199.95. Owners of *CanDo 1.6* can upgrade for $50 (plus $5.00 for shipping). For owners of version 1.5x, the upgrade costs $65 (plus $5.00 for shipping). *CanDo* owners with versions earlier than 1.5 may upgrade to 2.0 for $105 (plus $5.00 for shipping.)

Contact: INOVAtronics, 8499 Greenville Ave #209B, Dallas, TX 75231, (214)340-4991, fax(214)340-8514.

In Europe, contact the company at their new office, INOVAtronics GmbH, Im Heidkamp 11, W-500 Cologne 91, Germany. +49-0221-875126, fax (+49-0221-8704747.

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Dr Chip suggests a **KISS** for those who like their older model Amiga and want it to:

- run ***faster than an A3000!***
- run ***faster than most accelerator boards!***
- continue to be **user friendly!**
- achieve **33 MHz** operation for **under $300.**

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A Toast to Mac and IBM?

One Man's Opionion

by Bill Panagouleas

I am sure by now everyone has heard about the revolutionary *Video Toaster* from NewTek. This is the one piece of computer hardware that totally blows away anything else on personal computers. It rivals many features of high-end graphic workstation software like *Wavefront*. The *Video Toaster* was voted the top and most innovative piece of computer hardware of 1991 by *Discovery* magazine. It is the one peripheral for the Amiga that has put it on the computer map in the USA like no other. NewTek even has an improved marketing strategy over Commodore by giving away a FREE VHS video tape promoting their product. The *Toaster* has made people stop calling the Amiga a game machine and made their mouths water with desire. What you may not have heard is that NewTek now has a stand - alone version of the *Video Toaster*. In reality, this is nothing more than an Amiga 2000HD in hiding. NewTek buys Amiga 2000s from Commodore in bulk and covers up the Amiga logo with the *Video Toaster* nameplate, then resells the machine as a *Video Toaster* Workstation. This helps the Amiga, believe it or not, because it makes people buy Amigas who would not have otherwise. The shocking news is that NewTek is coming out with a *Video Toaster* for the Mac and IBM. How can this be, you say, when the *Toaster* requires the Amiga video slot and uses the Amiga custom chips to do much of its magic? Why would a loyal Amiga developer even try to do such an unthinkable thing to the one product that has helped the U.S. Amiga market? Do not let the NewTek-ian marketing gurus fool you, as they have hidden the Amiga again. The *Video Toaster* for the IBM and Mac is nothing more than an entire Amiga 2000 HD linked in SCSI to a Mac or IBM. You see the *Toaster* logo and interface on the other computer. You can even control the digital video effects that the *Toaster* displays on the other machine (in reality all this does is send a signal to the Amiga and the *Toaster* through the SCSI cable and the Amiga/*Toaster* does the work). But if you want to perform any of the other marvel s the *Toaster* has built in (*Lightwave 3D*, *Toaster CG*, *Toaster Paint*, etc.), you must move over to the Amiga! The PC and the Mac have become the ultimate highTech dongle for the Amiga - unplug the SCSI cable and the *Video Toaster* software on the PC is useless. NewTek did this because when the *Video Toaster* was first released and displayed at computer shows, consumers were told that they would need to buy an Amiga to use the *Toaster*. The response was less than positive - Mac and IBM users did not take the *Toaster* seriously and clung to to their outdated non-video systems. They didn't want to hear that the *Toaster* would not plug into their catch-all PC and could not accept that they would ever need the Amiga for any purpose. Additionally, they felt that the *Video Toaster* did not cost enough to contrast its alleged power. A few of them did see the light and purchased the *Video Toaster*, much to their advantage, as NewTek raised the price of the *Toaster* within a year of its initial release. The cost of the Mac and IBM versions weighed in at more than $5000! Another downfall that users of the PC and Mac *Toasters* were faced with was the inconvenience of lugging a bulky, Amiga 2000 ghost home to link it with their primitive machines. After tiring out from playing with the Digital Video Effects that are the heart of the *Toaster*'s interface, the PC/Mac Toaster user is forced to go to the Amiga keyboard and mouse to use the remainder of the package (where the true power of the *Toaster* lies!). It amazes me how some people cling to Neanderthal technologies even when they come face to face with the new. I am glad that when the car was invented people did not cling to the horse or when the airplane was introduced, they did not swear by the ship. These transportation modes have their place of course and they are still around. But, one should not try riding a horse to Europe. In the same respect, you should not try to use an IBM PC or Macintosh for video. ❑

Compact Laser Printer From Sharp

Sharp's latest entry in the laser printer market is the JX-9500H, targeted toward power users or small workgroups.

At nine pages-per-minute, the JX-9500H delivers a page every 6.6 seconds. Its 1.3 square foot footprint takes up a minimum amount of desk space and features a stack design including an internal paper tray. This allows the user to add optional paper trays without increasing the printer's footprint.

A standard 250-sheet input tray, available in four sizes, offers automatic printing. The manual paper feed, with its straight paper path, accepts envelopes, transparencies, labels and other non-standard paper stock. With the optional second paper cassette unit, the JX-9500H can print up to 500 sheets continuously. A 40-piece automatic envelope feeder is also available.

With all three paper bins in operation, the JX-9500H can easily handle mail merge applications using WordPerfect or WordStar. Multiple-page form letters can be merged with mailing lists to enable the JX-9500H to print the first page onto company letterhead, additional pages on plain bond paper and address the envelopes automatically. The printed job is conveniently collated and delivered on the top output tray.

Five printer emulations are standard: HP LaserJet Series II, Epson FX-80 with extended mode, IBM Graphics Printer, IBM Pro Printer and Diablo 630. Also included are two font cards for increased user flexibility and 512KB of RAM (upgradeable to 4.5MB). Parallel and serial interfaces are standard. Suggested retail price is $995.

Contact: Imaging Systems Group, Sharp Electronics Corporation, Sharp Plaza, Mahwah, NJ 07430. (201)529-9600. ❑

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HotLinks Edition version 1.1 now shipping

HotLinks Edition version 1.1 is now available from Soft-Logik Publishing Corporation. Designed to exchange data between programs, *HotLinks Edition 1.1* includes : *HotLinks, BME with Trace, and PageLiner. HotLinks 1.1* also has redesigned requesters which provide more edition information and are easier to use. The Publish and Information requesters use a popup menu to switch between blocks of information. *HotLinks* also follows the latest Amiga interface guidelines and is *Workbench* 3.0 compatible.

BME now has a built-in autotracer which converts selected areas of bitmap pictures into structured drawings. With numerous options, users have total control over the trace process.

PageLiner also contains many new features, including a Settings menu to make it easier to set preferences and programmable function keys.

HotLinks Edition 1.1 retails for $150.00 *HotLinks 1.1* is also available separately for $75.00. Registered owners of *HotLinks Editions 1.0* can upgrade to version 1.1 for $35.00 Registered owners of *PageStream*, New Horizon's *ProWrite 3.3* or Black Belt's *Imagemaster* can purchase *HotLinks Edition 1.1* for $110.00, or *HotLinks 1.1* for $55.00.

Contact: Soft-Logik Publishing Corporation, 11131 F S. Towne Square, St. Louis, MO 63123. (314)894-8608, fax (314)894-3280.

Merisel Enters OnLine Services Market

Merisel has signed an exclusive agreement with Ventana Press to distribute to the computer retail channel *The America Online Membership Kit and Tour Guide*, which consists of the access software necessary to get up and running as well as a handbook on the *America Online* service. A special offer of 10 hours of free time will be made to all purchasers. With a comprehensive book and 10 hours of free time, the AOL Membership kit will enable users to "explore before they pay." Macintosh and *DOS* versions will be available in October, 1992. A *Windows* version is currently under development.

"The arrangement with Merisel ensures a strong position in the marketplace," said Ventana Press President Josef Woodman. "The America Online/Ventana Press alliance will unite the permanence of printed information with the breadth and dynamism of the America Online service to deliver a powerful information tool to personal computer users."

Contact: Merisel, 200 Continental Blvd., El Segundo, CA 90245. (310) 615-1230.

America Online, (703)883-1503.

Ventana Press, (919)942-0220.

Online Help from MicroProse

If you've experienced problems with any MicroProse products or if you need technical support or the latest MicroProse news, you can access MicroProse Technical Representative Quentin Chaney on the following online services:

America On-Line: Industry Connection, Keyword "MicroProse." Address: MicroProse.

CompuServe: Game Publishers Forum, "Go GAMPUB." Address:MicroProse, 76004, 2223.

Delphi: GameSIG. Address: MicroProse.

GEnie: Scorpia RT. Address: MicroProse.

MCI Mail: Address MicroProse.

PC-Link: Computer Forum, Keyword "MicroProse." Address: MicroProse.

Prodigy: Computer Club "Other Games." Address XHFK15D.

Promenade: Industry Connection, Keyword "MicroProse." Address: MicroProse.

Q-Link: Computer Forum, MicroProse Section. Address: MPSLabs.

MicroProse BBS: Dial 410-785-1841,300/1200/2400/9600, N,8,1. Sysop: Jim McConkey.

FidoNet: available soon.

Amiga *Trek*- The Next Generation

A Computer Space Opera

By Bob Liddil

News, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the *USS AMIGATREK*, its 5 year mission (we hope), to seek out intelligent life at Commodore Fleet Headquarters, to contact and communicate with lifeforms at Amiga user's groups inside the known galaxy, and to sell advertising to Amiga support developers, both hardware and software...**to boldly go where no Amiga publication has ever gone before** (and survived to write about it).

>Insert music clip here.<

"Second Officer's log: Multi-tasking date 921115.14 (just before tea-time). A subspace distress call has come in from a planet called A-500, in the CBM sector of the galaxy. Umm -- hold on a minute... Navigator, just exactly where is the CBM sector of the galaxy?".

"Oh, that's an easy one, Second Officer, Your Worship. It's just a few parsecs from the GVP nebula."

"I hate it when the navigator's being sarcastic, it throws off my timing.. lessee, where was I, oh, yes, distress call. I've instructed our navigator, Denise, to lay in a course for planet A-500. No need to wake the Captain for this one."

>Insert scene of USS AMIGATREK whizzing through the galaxy at breakneck speed.<

Suddenly the red alert sounds..."Danger, danger, Warning, Red alert, Will Robinson, Red Alert!"

"Will somebody shut that damn thing off, please!"

"Second officer's log... supplemental, Computer, make a note to find out where we got the new red alert module from and see about sending it back. Why couldn't we just have a siren, and flashing lights, like everybody else?"

>Suddenly, the whole bridge shakes and shudders. Fortunately there are no showers of sparks or malfunctions of computer equipment (Amigas are much tougher than that.).<

"Second officer, we're attack! An enemy has just fired on us!"

"An enemy? Which enemy? Quick, put it on the viewscreen!"

>Insert clip of a huge rectangular blue Box onto the viewscreen. It seems to have a giant multi-colored apple attached to it where the bridge would normally be.<

"Omigawd, Second Officer, Sir, it looks like the dreaded OStwo have returned to this section of the galaxy. They want to blow us out of space and hog the galaxy all to themselves!"

"Relax, Navigator, we have a weapon that dwarfs anything they can muster. Weapons Officer!"

"Weapons here!"

"Arm the *Toaster*, hook up the 040 accelerator, and prepare to do combat!"

"Oh, good, I normally don't get to do that much in parodies..."

"Do it now!"

"Aye, Second Officer."

"Prepare weapons array and fire at will."

"Uh, he's not on the show any more, Second Officer."

"Fire at the enemy ship, you idiot!"

>Insert graphic of enemy ship being bathed in a rainbow light, but otherwise being largely unaffected.<

"Second officer, we're being hailed. It's a human. He says his name is Gates."

"Put it on the screen."

>Insert graphic of Ferengi trader.<

"I thought you said he was human."

"Sorry, Second Officer, I left the disguise filter on."

"Ahoy, *USS AMIGATREK*, surrender now and we will allow you to explore the OStwo side of the galaxy. The new alliance is too powerful for mere Amigas to overcome. Do you think that running advertising on the unaligned planets of *Byte* and *Infoworld* is going to convert anyone to your technology? Behold, the power of the MSdos and OStwo combined forces..."

>Insert tape of exploding starships.<

"Look at that, Second Officer. It's the *USS TRS*, the *USS ADAM*, the *USS SINCLAIR*, and the *USS ATARI*."

>Insert tape of USS WANG and USS TANDY offering surrender.<

"As you can see, *AMIGATREK*, we have conquered the known galaxy. Even the mighty mega-battlecruiser *WANG* and the whole Tandy Federation couldn't stand up under our attack! What will you do, *AMIGATREK?* **What WILL YOU DO?**"

"We will allow you to beam over a 386SX Bridgeboard to be installed in our communications panel. But otherwise, we will give no quarter. We will never give up the fight, regardless of what Commodore Fleet Command decides."

"Very well, *AMIGATREK*, we will agree to peacefully co-exist,--for now. But mark my words, if Commodore Fleet Command doesn't start supporting you, with advertising, better technical support, and generally more respect for conditions in this part of the galaxy, even the great hero, Fat Agnus, will be unable to save you!"

"He knows about Fat Agnus!" *(Gasp).*

"Quiet!"

"Beamover complete, Second Officer. They didn't send much software though."

"Navigator, warp us outta here!"

"Roger."

>Reinsert scene of USS AMIGATREK whizzing through the galaxy at breakneck speed.<

"Standard Orbit, Navigator."

"What *is* standard orbit anyway?"

"Just push the 'Standard Orbit ' button on the console, haven't you noticed? This console has only got four buttons, Go, Go Fast, Go Faster Than We Are Designed to GO and Standard Orbit."

"What do sensors say?"

"Beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep."

"Wiseacre. I mean, read the sensors for me."

"Sensors indicate that there is a powerful new starship in asynchronous orbit around the planet A500. It's one of ours, a powerful sucker too. Omigawd, it's the new *USS AMIGATREK DEEP SPACE 4000* . . . ."

"Have you adjusted your sensors for disguises, Ensign?"

"Doing that now, Second Officer. Oh, yes!. Sensors indicate that the *USS AMIGATREK DEEP SPACE 4000* is lightning fast and jam packed with goodies! Commodore Fleet Command has commissioned a new kind of battlecruiser of enormous importance!"

"But intelligence said it was a . . . *vaporship!*"

"Warp us outta here quick, Ensign,. We need answers and we need 'em today!"

"Shall I wake the Captain now?"

"Shut up and drive!"

Graphics Library Disks from Digital Designs

Digital Designs Group brings you the most comprehensive collection of art and animation for the Amiga. Digital Designs Group Video Graphics Library Disk (VGLD) collections are perfect for all Amiga, video, business graphics and multimedia applications.

Images are in standard Amiga interlaced screen resolutions (320 x 400 or 640 x 400), and most are overscanned (352 x 480 or 704 x 480). Extensive effort goes into ensuring colors are not oversaturated to avoid chroma crawl and color bleed, and fine lines with contrast are avoided to minimize flicker.

The VGLD sets include the following collections: *Earth and Planets, Galaxies and Other Worlds, Auto Racing, Scenery Backgrounds, Nature Backgrounds and Birds, Up Close.*

VGLD sets retail for $39.95 each.

If you are producing multimedia, business presentations or commercial art graphics, take a look at the Multimedia Graphics Library Disks (MGLD) from Digital Designs. MGLD graphics are not restricted by the color and resolution requirements applied to the video graphics line. MGLD sets include *Birds in Nature, Worldwide Maps, More Worldwide Maps, and Auto Race Thrills.* Suggested retail price for MGLD disks is $49.95 per set.

Contact: Digital Designs Group, P.O. Box 593, Whiteville, NC 28472. (919)642-6295.

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CyberEdit

The new desktop video editing software for Amiga computers

If you're involved with desktop video, then you need to take a look at the newest release from Cybercall, Inc. *CyberEdit* works in conjunction with the *FutureVideo* desktop Edit controllers and a large assortment of popular VCRs and Camcorders.

CyberEdit was designed with one purpose in mind — to be the fastest and easiest video editing tool around. Just about everything that needs to be do can be done with mouse control. Its features list includes:

Simultaneous control of two VCRs and/or Camcorders. Edit video by using cuts-only Assemble Edits, Audio-only Inserts, Video Inserts, A/V Inserts, and Freeze Frames. Edits can be put into a list and performed one at a time or in a fully automated mode.

Precise repeatable video editing when used with a SMPTE-capable Edit Controller such as the *FutureVideo* 3200 TC.

Powerful features for non-SMPTE users including an inline VCR recalibration facility and a tape slippage tracking scheme to maintain high editing accuracy without using time code.

A fast and friendly user interface that follows established Amiga GUI standards. Most operations are mouse-based including VCR transport control, and edit list management functions. Text search, location search and search by attribute edit operations are also provided.

Facilities to support multiple source tapes, and can automatically change during mixdown.

Online instructional guides for all complex functions to help minimize the need for written documentation.

An *ARexx* compatible VCR software driver that can be controlled by other popular *ARexx* software such as *Deluxe Video III*, *CanDo*, and *The Director*.

SPECIFICATIONS

CyberEdit requires a *FutureVideo* desktop Edit Controller (available separately), and is compatible with models 2200DT or 3200 (no SMPTE) or 2200DT/TC and 3200TC (with SMPTE reader). *CyberEdit* works on Amiga 2000 and 3000 computers having 2MB or more of RAM. *AmigaDOS 2.04* or later is required. One built-in or expansion serial port is required. Hard disk and accelerated CPUs are recommended. *CyberEdit* uses high-resolution interlace display mode — Flicker Fixer is recommended.

Dual channel SMPTE is supported through the EditLink 3200/TC-DT Edit Controller. Non-SMPTE, or single-channel SMPTE is supported through the EditLink 2000/TC-DT Edit Controller. Non-SMPTE editing is supported through the EditLink 2000/DT Controller.

CyberEdit's VTR (Edit Controller) interface process is *ARexx* compatible. Other Amiga *ARexx* software can control one or both of your VCRs without running the *CyberEdit* user interface.

The next release, *CyberEdit Pro* will offer control of FutureVideo's GPI trigger, and the NewTek *Video Toaster*.

CyberEdit is being introduced at a suggested retail price of $395. For a limited time, and until the next version becomes available, all registered owners of *CyberEdit* will receive a free upgrade to *CyberEdit Pro* upon release.

Contact: Cybercall, Inc., 20 Cleveland Avenue, Highland Park, NJ 08904. (908) 249-9883.

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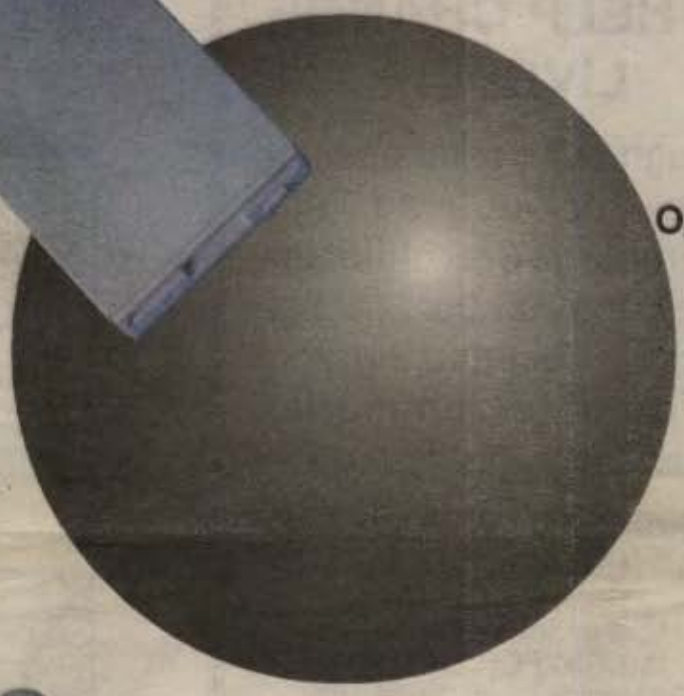

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