AMIGA news

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Vol. 2, No. 4 MAY 1993

Video Toaster 4000
A New Generation of Toaster Technology

Advancing its position as the recognized leader in low cost, broadcast quality video production, NewTek has announced the introduction of a new product, the Video Toaster 4000. The Video Toaster 4000 is an enhanced version of NewTek's popular video Toaster, and provides a significantly higher level of performance at a lower price point.

According to NewTek President, Tim Jenison, "The Video Toaster 4000 is designed to take advantage of the increased capabilities of the Commodore Amiga 4000 computer. This powerful combination of new technologies has resulted in hundreds of new features in the Toaster 4000, many of which have never been available before on any video system, at any price."

The Video Toaster 4000 replaces the original VideoToaster as NewTek's flagship product. It is priced at $2,395, a lower price than Video Toaster System 2.0.

"NewTek's goal has always been to create a broadcast quality video production tool at a price everyone could afford," asserted NewTek's Vice President Paul Montgomery. "The original Toaster stunned the video industry, attracting thousands upon thousand of people who were looking for a low cost video production solution. The Toaster 4000, with its powerful nw capabilities and lower price, is the next big step in the personal video production revolution."

The Video Toaster 4000 includes a switcher with four video inputs and three internal digital sources. The system features close to three hundred video effects, from dissolves and wipes with user adjustable durations, to complex digital effects and animated transitions. Many effects feature drop shadows, glints, and smooth, full color animation.

Toaster 4000 also includes an integrated graphics loader, which allows users to load and display video frames, still stores, and animations. Both still graphics and animations can drop shadows, and can be keyed over video sources.

The system includes a 24-bit, 35ns resolution character generator. Toaster I features full support for PostScript fonts, including automatic kerning and text sizes up to 400 lines tall. Users can change font,color, shadow, and outline options on a character-by-character basis.

The new Toaster I can also load brushes from *ToasterPaint*, the Toaster 4000's 24-bit video paint system. Brushes and text can be positioned anywhere on the screen using the I's mouse driven "drag and drop" interface.

NewTek has focused significant attention on the development of *LightWave 3D*, the Toaster's 3D modeling, rendering, and animation system. With the introduction of the Video Toaster 4000, the company has added more than three hundred new features and improvements to the system.

Continued on page 19.

Commodore Sacks Sales Force!
Designated Distributors Now Sole Source for Amiga Dealers

by Bob Liddil

I can think of nothing worse than being on the back of a bucking bull and having the rope break. That's what it must have felt like last month to have been an American Commodore Amiga dealer in the midst of the maelstrom of rumors that were flying about. First, Commodore America sacked its entire sales force. Then, it closed every single one of its sales offices in the USA - coast to coast! Then, without so much as a word of comfort to its faithful dealers, Commodore sat smugly back and said nothing as the rumor mill fluctuated wildly between accounts that "Commodore is withdrawing from the US" to "Newtek is taking over US marketing operations for the Amiga!"

When the dust cleared and the organization began answering questions again, the answers that were forthcoming left just as much apprehension as the rumors. A spokesman for Commodore commented that "All sales of Amiga products have been consolidated into a distributor network, eliminating the need for outside sales representatives." When asked about the Newtek rumor, the spokesman said, simply, "Commodore and Newtek are entering into a joint promotional effort concerning the 4000 and the 4000 Toaster."

While CBM was busy making nervous wrecks out of their dealers, NewTek R&D was happily scurrying about creating a Video Toaster for the Amiga 4000. Since the announcement of the 4000, Toaster groupies have been salivating, waiting for NewTek to replace the aging 2000/3000 platform base with a new jet-propelled Toaster. Traditionally, in the USA, Amiga is distinctively identified with video and even film special effects, replacing expensive graphics work stations at a fraction of the cost. Such prestigious production companies as Amblin (Steven Spielberg) and Lucasfilms Ltd have invested heavily in A-4000 systems. It only stood to reason that the Toaster 4000 was in the wings.

On April 18, 1993, Commodore made it official. They announced a joint marketing initiative designed to bring the combined marketing power of the two giants of video effects to bear on a marketplace that accepts them as pathfinders. "The idea behind the Video Toaster is to give ordinary people all the tools they need to produce television at an affordable price."

ORDINARY PEOPLE WITH $5000 TO SPEND.

The fly in all this lovely ointment is obvious. With games manufacturers abandoning the Amiga like wildebeests fleeing a lion, an almost completely non-existent business software base, and only the barest minimum of desktop publishing, Commo-

Continued on page 18.

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Letters

G'DAY, TIM!

I have been receiving *Amazing Amiga* this year. Since examining the issues of *Amiga News*, I observe that you are at least a month ahead of their articles and I can expect to receive recent editions a month ahead of *Amazing Amiga*. In short, a subscription to *Amiga News* is warranted on the basis of currency alone.

You will be aware, no doubt, of the many differences between the two publications and I must admit to being initially wary of your combination press release/news article format. But I'm sure I'll be able to discern between them easily enough for that not to be an issue.

In conclusion, I have decided to start subscribing based on the expectation of getting information about new product release more rapidly than with any other publication. I also frequent Fidonet and other electronic conferences and I reckon you'll even be more useful (and less expensive) since you won't be bogged down with blather.

Tim Beard,
Wendouree, VIC, Australia

ANOTHER OVERSEAS SUBSCRIBER WRITES...

Amiga News was well received (at our recent meeting) and I was able to convince our other officers to incorporate *Amiga News* as part of our membership benefits. Instead of trying to sell *Amiga News*, all members receive a copy of *Amiga News* through us. This has encouraged a couple of other clubs to merge into ours, and a third, which was not Amiga specific, had all of their Amiga owners joining our club as well.

Steve Vanderhoef,
Japan Amiga Group

User Groups: Send us your Views

Amiga News is currently seeking participants in Amiga User Groups to send in opinions concerning hardware or software they have used. Kudos or slams, we want to know what you have to say.

Send to Mini-Reviews:
C/O Amiga News
PO Box 51
Peterborough, NH 03458

GVP Announces IV24 Version 2.0

GVP has recently released version 2.0 of its IV24 multi-functional video board. At the heart of Version 2.0 is enhanced software, which greatly increases the capabilities of the IV24. The new *MacroPaint 2.0* software features a full color, floating toolbox-style interface that gives the user the ability to move the toolbox to a more convenient location. Also new is the ability to load and save JPEG compressed files. Painting can be done on a 24-bit image, while viewing the work in 12, 15, 18 or 21 bits for faster screen updates and lower Amiga graphics memory requirements. *MacroPaint* has added so many new features and enhancements that it comes with a new, updated manual.

A newly designed custom version of *Caligari24* gives the users many more features than the original. Rendering directly to the IV24, *Caligari24* now features an unlimited number of light sources, hierarchical animation which coordinated the movement of complex objects with their primitive sub-objects, and free form defamation for more realistic rendering of organic objects like plants and flowers. Broadcast rendering capabilities ensure photo realistic representation of scenes. Like *MacroPaint*, *Caligari24* also comes with a new manual.

MyLad and *Desktop Darkroom* are also included in this upgrade. *MyLad*, a switching package, enables users to enhance their video productions by utilizing a large number of simple, yet creative transitions between video sources, while *Desktop Darkroom* offers image capture and complete photo retouching capabilities, as well as a full range of special effects for image manipulation and image processing.

According to Bill Prescott, GVP Product Manager, Version 2.0 represents a major advance in the professional capabilities of the IV24.

"The IV24, with its built-in real time frame grabber, 24-bit frame buffer, genlock, flicker eliminator, picture-in-picture and highly versatile VIU (Video Interface Unit) that provides inputs for all video formats and full transcoding capabilities, has always been a valuable tool for the video professional, photographer and educator," he notes. "And now with the addition of this impressive software upgrade, the system represents a dramatic opportunity for these professionals to optimize their creative potential and productivity."

A separate IV24 upgrade kit for existing users began shipping at the end of March and lists in the US for $149.

Contact: GVP, 600 Clark Avenue, King of Prussia, PA 19406. (215) 337-8770, fax (215) 337-9922. ❑

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Notes from the Nets

Rumor has it . . .

by Times Roman

NFTN is a collection of news, rumors, and speculation collected from various online networks each month. Although accuracy is one of my goals, it's generally difficult or impossible to verify much of what's written here, so *basing any decisions on the information in this article is done at your own risk.*

COMMODORE

DevCon is over, and although not much solid news has come out yet about what went on there, the consensus seems to have been that this year's developer's get-together was the best ever. Folks were using words like "professional" and "upbeat" in the same sentence with the name "Commodore".

Something in the neighborhood of over 300 developers from 13 countries converged on Orlando for the four day conference. Forty classes/sessions were offered and presentations were done by Commodore US management and Motorola. Over 700 pages of documentation and four disks were prepared for each attendee.

The unofficial title for the conference, as mentioned in a CBM press release, was "A New Era at Commodore". Although DevCon is essentially a technical conference where developers go to learn about the latest new and upcoming hardware and software and how to take advantage of new developments in their own products, there was an underlying feeling that at last, as has been quoted on *BIX*, "Commodore has a plan." Unfortunately, that plan probably didn't call for the $77.2 million loss taken by Commodore International in the second quarter (ending December 31st, 1992). Quite a few factors contributed to this, the biggest being the cost of shutting down a Hong Kong manufacturing plant and moving its operations to the Phillipines. On top of that, weak British currency, lower pricing on the Amiga and PC lines, and a sharp drop in C64 sales also contributed. Of course, there's the fact that although the AGA machines weren't yet available in quantity, everyone knew they were on the way, so sales of non-AGA machines probably dried up to almost nothing.

Commodore and other sources have said that the 4000 and especially the 1200 are selling well beyond expectations — approximately 100,000 1200s in the machine's first month — so expect the third quarter's numbers to look much better.

In 1992, in addition to the deal with Merisel, Commodore signed on a distributor called CEI to open the Central and South American markets to Amiga products. Recently, this deal was expanded to cover the US market as well. According to the press release, "Primary emphasis will be put into establishing new CEI authorized dealers from the Canadian border on the north to the southern tip of Chile in South America". CEI will focus on trying to bring Amiga machines into existing Apple and IBM dealerships, pushing the platform's strengths for multimedia.

The Amiga 4200 rumor has cropped up again; a few months ago a developer on GEnie said there would be an A4200 which was essentially a PCMCIA-equipped A4000. While that particular rumor didn't sound overly plausible, the latest 4200 rumors do sound more believable. The machine will supposedly use static column memory to support the 68040's burst mode, making it somewhat faster than the 4000 at many operations. SCSI-II will be standard, but probably in the form of the CBM plug-in card, not on the motherboard. The 4200, if it exists, will probably also include the DSP/68040 processor module that's coming soon from Commodore as an upgrade for A4000 owners.

Other persistent rumors of new machines include an '030 A4000 and an A4000T tower machine with two video slots. In fact, in some European countries a 68EC030 based Amiga 4000 has already begun shipping with an under $2000 price tag.

The 3.1 operating system is coming along well according to scattered reports on the subject. Among the 3.1 features will be new display database files to allow AGA machines to display in some previously unavailable resolutions. These might even include a non-interlaced 800x600 (but with a small number of colors) or an interlaced 1024x768 mode. For those who really want the full power of the AGA chip set, though, rumors from DevCon say that sometime around the middle of the year a hardware de-interlacer (which doubles as a 24-bit frame buffer) will be available for A4000-class machines. This would not only allow all AGA resolutions to be deinterlaced, but would actually give faster performance in the existing non-interlaced modes because mode promotion could be turned off.

A sure sign that the pre-AGA machines are on the way out for good, Commodore announced drastic price cuts on the machines beginning February 1st. These are

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not temporary offers, but permanent drops in list prices.

CDTV, the 2000, and all 3000 and 3000T configurations dropped in price anywhere from $260 to $2500. In addition, the 2630 accelerator dropped from $1799 to $1299 and the 386SX bridgeboard fell $310 to $649. Keep in mind that these are only the suggested retail costs; actual street prices will probably be much lower.

The big news from the big C= in late March was the announcement of the A4000/030. This new machine, essentially an A4000 motherboard with 4 megs of RAM and a 25 MHz 68EC030 on the processor card, has garnered an almost universal "Say what?" from the Amiga community. The use of the EC030 instead of a full '030 chip has been criticized, but the the most valid complaint about the machine is its list price: $2399.

Commodore also showed the A4000T at CeBIT in Germany, along with the 4000/030 and the new SCSI-II card for A3000 and 4000 machines. The 4000T will have 5 Amiga and 4 AT bus slots in a tower case, and will come with the A4091 SCSI-2 controller on board. No word yet on pricing for this machine or the A4091.

A European computer magazine reported that Commodore is looking into encorporating the 3DO technology into future Amiga designs, especially as a CDTV enhancement. If such a design could be achieved without too much added cost or incompatibility, it could be a real boon to the Amiga in terms of software availability once the 3DO machines start shipping and the backers start releasing software.

AMIGA GETS NETWORKED

Now that Commodore has finalized the SANA-II Amiga networking specification, it's starting to become much easier to connect Amigas to one another as well as to those inferior non-Amiga machines out there. Commodore's own AS225 networking software is said to be nearing a major new release, along with a companion package called Envoy. It has also been stated that at least three companies are working on Amiga drivers for various PCMCIA networking devices.

German developer VillageTronic is bringing several new networking products to the market. The first is the Liana.device, a software driver which will allow users to use any SANA-II compliant software to connect Amigas via the parallel port. This is similar to the popular ParNet (in fact, it can use the same cable), but offers the flexibility of being able to run other network protocols. The parallel port isn't exactly a high speed connection, but for those on a budget, the Liana might be a good solution. Optional data compression is available to speed transfers.

VillageTronic's other new product is the Ariadne, a Zorro II network card based on technology which offers theoretical raw transfer rates of 20 megabits per second (twice ethernet). The boards use a SANA II driver with optional data compression capability. No price was mentioned in the press releases for either of these products, and it's currently unclear when/if they'll be available in the US.

Although not exactly network related, a new product has entered the arena of multi serial and parallel port boards for the Amiga. In direct competition with GVP's I/O Extender, Scott Advanced Microdesigns has announced Triceratops, a multi-port Zorro II card featuring two nine-pin serial ports and a bidirectional parallel port. The serial ports have 16-byte buffers (so fast transfers with them will eat up less CPU time). Baud rates on the serial ports can range up to 691,200. Triceratops should be available in March at a list price of $125.

REAL CLOSE ENCOUNTER OR USENET HOAX?

A rather lengthy post appeared on usenet in late March from a user in Australia who claimed to have seen a beta version of a new Amiga, probably based on the ahead-of-schedule high end beyond-AGA chip set. He called the machine a 'non-descript looking tower' running Workbench 41.124 (the 3.0 WB is version 39 point something) on a screen with an estimated 1280x1024 resolution.

The post goes on to describe numerous changes to the Workbench, including animated backdrops (optional, of course!), changes in the functionality of icons, window dragging and resizing without the 'rubber bands' we're used to, etc. The OS itself, claimed the writer, supported data compression. The machine had sample full-motion video files and a player on it, along with video capture software that was used to do real-time video capture on the stock machine. A program called "SoundMachine" offered sample playback in 8 or 16 bits at rates as high as 100 KHz. Looking inside the machine revealed a small daughterboard which tied together the CPU board and several others. The poster claimed that the machine was powered by none other than a Motorola 68060.

Was this all a joke, like many similar posts in the past? Probably, but it's all harder to discern this time because Commodore has been nice enough to supply us with some real information on the next generation chip sets, and the article's claims seem to be in line with what CBM says the new chips will be capable of. The 68060 chip still hasn't shipped, but it's quite possible (and likely) that early version of it have been released to hardware developers as engineering samples to start getting their machines ready for the chip's official release sometime late this year or in early '94. It's even possible that the new Amiga chips are far enough along to put them into a sample machine for developers to work with. My question is, how did one of these machines, even if they exist, get to a back room in some university in Australia?

So if this usenet post shows up as a text file on your local BBS, don't take it too seriously. Think of it more as a fictional glimpse of what the future of the Amiga might look like.

GRAPHICAL GROWTH

Some news has gotten out about the features of the upcoming *Lightwave 3D* upgrade. This new version will add special flicker-reducing anti-aliasing, motion blur, depth of field, lens flare, splines, boolean operators, and something called 'bones' - objects that influence objects they're touching or near. Rendering times have been sped up signifcantly.

In other *Toaster*-related news, Sunrize has released new modules for their AD516 and AD1012 sound cards which will allow 16- and 12-bit sound tracks to be synchronized with *Toaster* transitions.

GVP's *ImageFX* and *Cinemorph* software have done quite well in the market despite the newness of the products and the tough competition they face. A new *ImageFX* upgrade released in late January provides improved AGA support, infinte zoom, point naming and locking, "regional dissolve", and *OpalVision* support. Registered owners should have received their free upgrades by now.

Rombo Productions, a UK company, has brought their popular *Vidi-Amiga* video digitizer to the Americas. This product can digitize video in less than one second. Unlike NewTek's aging *DigiView*, *Vidi* works on any Amiga and supports the AGA graphics modes.

The list of high-resolution, *Workbench*-compatible display devices is growing, though they're still tough to find on this side of the Atlantic. The latest of these is *Picasso* from VillageTronics. *Picasso* features diplays of up to 1280x1024 in 16 colors from a 262,000-color palette, 65,000 colors on screen at 800x600 or below, and true 24 bit at 640x480. *Picasso* is a Zorro II card and features its own on-board blitter and 2 megs of graphhics RAM. *Picasso* uses standard 2.0 display database drivers to allow any 2.0-compliant program to work, and the software is smart enough to automatically switch back and forth from Amiga displays to *Picasso* displays on the same monitor. Video and genlock capabilities are planned as future add-ons.

Viona Software has released a demo version of its EGS device-independent graphics libraries. Included are drivers for ECS and AGA displays, programming documentation, and some sample tools and simple programs. EGS drivers currently exist for the GVP EGS 110/24 and IV24, Rainbow II and III, Visiona, ColorMaster, and Domino boards. Software must be written specifically to take advantage of EGS, but any program so written will run on any of these devices. While the EGS solution doesn't offer the flexibility of the one that's supposedly in the works at Commodore, it's a decent start toward device independence, especially as drivers for more display devices are added.

HARDWARE NEWS

Microbotics has already upgraded its MBX-1200 RAM and math coprocessor board for the 1200. The new board, the 1200z, comes equipped with a real-time clock to correct one of the 1200's rather blatant shortcomings. The 1200z starts at

Courtroom
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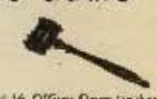
THE PLACE: FairView
THE TIME: Octobber 16
THE CRIME: Narcotics



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"Officer Tracker then ordered the occupants out of the vehicle, searched the vehicle, and found half a marijuana cigarette in the front ashtray. Officers Tracker and Jose Peterson subsequently searched the trunk and found $4800 in cash and 24 one-pound bags of marijuana. They arrested the driver, one Juan Mears, for possession of narcotics.

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$149 (with no co-processor and 0K, user populatable), and the clock hardware itself is available as the "12 0'Clock" board for any 1200 at a list price of $34.95.

Utilities' Unlimited's *Emplant* emulation system keeps getting more powerful in its Mac emulation incarnation. Version 2.0 of the software has been released, and now includes full support for the A4000/040. By the time you read this, an AGA video driver should be available that will provide 256-color displays, or up to 32,000 colors using HAM8 mode. The promised drivers for third party display devices are also on the way. The latest news on the A1200 PCMCIA *Emplant* is that it will feature SCSI and serial ports but no on-board memory.

Two new salvos have been fired in the Image Processing war in the Amiga community. Both ASDG and Black Belt Systems have announced major upgrades to their software.

The major new features in ASDG's *ADPro 2.3* (available as a $50 upgrade to current *ADPro* owners) include support for the Toaster framestore format, a direct link to *DPaint* and to the *OpalPaint* software that comes with *OpalVision*. *FRED* has been improved, and the package now comes with a number of *ARexx* Scripts to add additional functionality by automating multi-step processes.

ASDG has also acquired KludgeCode Software, and has expanded that company's *TRexx Toaster* control software for easy generation of *ARexx* scripts for use with not only the *Toaster* but *ADPro*, *MorphPlus*, *Pixel3D*, *Studio 16*, and more.

Black Belt's *ImageMaster* version 9.50 has also begun shipping. New in this update are features such as Epson flatbed scanner support, improved AGA display (including 800x600 resolution), and numerous new import/export capabilities. These include clipboard, 24-bit TIFF, AGA anims, windows BMP, autodesk FLI animations, PCX, and Amiga .info files. Other new features include an improved AGA pallette selector, *OpalVision* support, scientific operators, and new *ARexx* commands. New 3D packages coming soon promise to take Amiga ray tracing, modelling, and animation to new levels. AdSpec Programming's *Aladdin 2.1* (a free upgrade to registered *Aladdin 3D* owners) has added AGA support and up to a 7x speedup over its predecessor. Other new features include new grouping capabilities and line types and support for the import of *Art Expression* files.

Real3D 2.0, which might just be poised to give *Lightwave* a challenger, should be available very soon at a price of around $600.

In the realm of graphics hardware, Centaur Development has announced that three new modules for its *OpalVision* 24-bit display board will be available this spring at a price of $995 each. These include the Video Processor (giving *OpalVision Toaster*-like capabilities), a rack-mounted audio-video mixing unit called *OpalVision Suite*, and the Scan Rate Converter which will de-interlace all Amiga and *OpalVision* output, as well as serving as a Time Base Corrector.

GETTING PRODUCTIVE...

Micro-Systems software has announced Excellence! version 3. This upgrade sports a 2.0-style interface (with continued 1.3 support), *ARexx*, multiple language spell checker, speech, timed saves, Compugraphic font support, and a grammar checker. Upgrades to registered users are $39.95, and the package lists for $99.95.

Phasar Home Accounting version 4.0 is now available. Features include a hypertext system, date and address organizer, and modules for budgeting, reports, and tax information. Upgrades from older versions are available direct from the manufacturer, Terrific Corporation.

....BUT NOT TOO PRODUCTIVE

News from the gaming world is a mixed bag this month.

The bad news is that Maxis (of *"Sim"* fame) has announced that *A-Train Construction Set* will be its last Amiga product. In a public letter posted to the internet, Maxis VP of Product Development Joe Scirica essentially said that the return on their Amiga games was not sufficient to continue development. *DOS* sales for Maxis products are literally about 100 times more than Amiga products. The letter was careful to point out, though, that piracy was not an issue in the decision: "it is just as much of a problem on the other platforms as it is on the Amiga."

MicroProse has apparently decided to "indefinitely suspend" development of the AGA version of *Civilization*. The rumored reasoning behind this is that the game is too large for 880K floppies, and CBM has equipped the 1200 with neither high density floppy drive nor, in the UK, hard drive. (The controller is built onto every A1200 motherboard, but apparently Commodore UK has for some odd reason decided to wait before releasing a pre-configured hard drive equipped version and seems to be actively discouraging dealers there from setting up their own!)

On a happier note, the US market will shortly be seeing several new games from Ocean, including *Cool World*, *Lethal Weapon 3*, and others.

Psygnosis has released a demo of an upcoming new game called *Hired Guns*. If the final release of the game is anything like the demo, a lot of people will have a tough time believing it's from Psygnosis. The reason? It's hard drive installable, not copy protected, and runs under the most recent versions of the OS! In *HG* the player takes control of four future mercenaries performing various services that generally invlolve exploration and/or combat. *HG* resembles a sort of futuristic Dungeon Master style game, but with one crucial difference: each character acts independently. In other words, the player must control four different characters who could be acting or interacting in separate locations. If Psygnosis really does release this game HD installable and free of copy protection, I'll be the first to salute them for taking this big step, and I'll actually buy my first Psygnosis game.

For role-playing fans, Magic Matrix has released *Digital Dungeon*, a program geared towards assisting the referees in various role-playing games. The software can be used to design maps and monsters and to easily keep track of the progress of games without extensive paperwork.

MORE THAN WORDS CAN SAY

Softwood has announced Release 2 of their popular *Final Copy II* word processor. This version addresses the biggest complaint about previous *FC* releases: the lack of support for any but the rare Nimbus fonts. *FCII-2*, a $20 upgrade, now supports Adobe type I fonts and Compugraphic outline fonts.

THE 1200 MARCHES ON...

The Amiga 1200 continues to sell wildly in Europe and not half badly here in the US. Rumors of multi-month backlogs abound.

Commodore and other sources have said that 1200 is selling well beyond expectations — approximately 100,000 1200s in the machine's first month - so expect the third quarter's numbers to look much better.

Hopefully when the initial buying furor dies down, Commodore will send the A600 the way of the Plus/4 and make the 1200 the new low end Amiga, with an even lower price to match.

In the meantime, 1200-specific hardware is set to start popping up everywhere. Current rumors call for products from prominent Amiga companies to be on the shelves by late spring, joining GVP, Microbotics, and others in the race for the A1200 market.

Although no real details are yet available, Microbotics has plans to release several other A1200 hardware products along with their 12 A'Clock and MBX-1200 devices. Expect to see acceleration and SCSI from them at the very least.

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Atari's Falcon, the supposed Amiga killer (now where have we heard that one before?) has apparently started to trickle into the market in some parts of Europe. Apparently though, Atari goofed with the Falcon's price even worse than Commodore goofed with that of the 4000/030. After talking about a 499-pound price tag (to compete with similar pricing on the A1200), Atari has announced the real list prices for the machine: £599 for a 2 meg, floppy-only machine, £799 for a 4 meg Falcon, and £999 if you want a built-in hard drive. In contrast, the A1200 currently lists in the £350-400 range for the base machine.

Manx has annouced that development of the Aztec C compiler for the Amiga has been frozen indefinitely. Whether this means they'll continue to release bug fixes is unclear. Manx has lost a good bit of ground to its competitor SAS/C in recent years, and the pressure has apparently made Aztec C no longer profitable.

SAS will soon be seeing some new competition, though.Matt Dillon's shareware DICE C compiler will very shortly be available in commercial form, and lots of folks out there have such respect for Matt's programming skills that they'll buy it sight unseen. There are also new C

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and C++ compilers coming from Maxon in Germany. Of course, full-fledged GNU C and C++ compilers have been available for some time in the public domain.

Of interest to some programmers might be the new PD language "E"; while the language currently has some limitations that make it unsuitable for large projects (such as the fact that the compiler doesn't support multiple modules of source code), it's a rather easy language to get started with. For instance, opening a window requires far less code than a similar operation in C would.

Looking for a good removable storage media? You might want to take a look at SyQuest's new 3.5" 105 meg removable drives. SyQuest claims a 13 ms access time and up to a theoretical (read: don't expect to see it happen in the real world) 4 megs/second transfer speed, making as fast as many fixed hard drives. The IDE version is already shipping and the SCSI version will be available shortly. Predicted pricing ranges from $500-1000 for the drive; I'd guess at the lower end of that scale.

Remember NuTek? NuTek, not NewTek. They're the folks who a few years back promised cloned Mac ROMS Real Soon Now. Apparently they've finally made some progress; they've announced the impending release of the NuTek Duet, a machine which they claim will be able to run both MS-DOS and Mac software by using both a 486 and a 68030 on the motherboard. The base machine (without case, monitor, or drives) will list for $899. The real catch here is that reports say that only about 60% of Mac software is compatible with the NuTek ROMs. Applications that fail include (not surprisingly) just about everything ever written for the Mac by MicroSoft. It seems to me that certain Amiga Mac emulators do a much better job....

Intel is officially shipping the Pentium now, but for the time being it will only trickle out in small numbers and go into rather expensive machines. Word is out that in real world performance the Pentium is only about 80% faster than the 486 when it's not running Pentium-specific code; putting it onto existing motherboard designs will make it even slower. Clone builders are having to invest in designing new motherboards to get any real speed boost. They're also waiting for Intel's Pentium-supporting PCI local bus standard to be finished... this, of course, will compete with the VESA local bus as an incompatible second 'standard' in the already confusing clone market.

Oh, and the claims about Pentium being a 64-bit chip are not totally true. It has a 64-bit data bus, but the main purpose for this is to boost the efficiency of its internal cache by getting data there faster. The instructions themselves (except for floating point commands) all still operate on 32-bit chunks of data.

AMIGA IN THE NEWS

The recent announcement of the upcoming new Amiga *info* magazine has been followed up by news of yet another publication starting up. MicroMiga, formerly a large Amiga mail-order form, has put its sales business aside to begin publishing *Amiga Explorer*. This quarterly magazine will feature hardware and software reviews, technical articles, and information on PD and shareware software and online services.

Commodore's name was actually mentioned twice in a recent issue of *PC Week* (better known amongst Amiga users as "PC Weed", "PC Weak", etc). In an article about the Apple/IBM spinoff Kaleida negotiating with Toshiba to include its multimedia software in some upcoming CD-ROM devices that company is planning to market. The article mentioned that Commodore is the prime competitor for with Kaleida for the Toshiba contract. Of course, nothing was said of Commodore other than its name; no mention of the Amiga, of what strengths and weaknesses Commodore's proposal might have *vs.* Kaleida's. The rest of the article went on to describe Kaleida's history, plans, and products.

The other Commodore mention was a predictable one. Commodore introduces new machines, new architectures, new commitment: *PC Week* and its brethren either ignore it or never hear about it. But Commodore posts a 77 million dollar loss, and it suddenly becomes news worth printing...

Jerry Pournelle of *Byte* magazine's 'Chaos Manor' column is a favorite target for griping and ridicule among some Amiga users, and some of that is perhaps deserved. On the other hand, though, Jerry has put in good words for the Amiga now and then, while most so-called professional journalists don't bother to acknowledge its existence.

In the April *Byte*, Jerry gives a real boost to the Amiga and to Commodore by presenting them with an Orchid (that's Jerry's way of saying "good work") for the improvements over the past year. He says that "Commodore is back with a vengeance" and have "begun aggressive marketing of their Amiga line." While falling short of recommending it as a primary machine for everyone, he calls it an "ideal second machine for computer enthusiasts" and said that Commodore has a chance to rise to rival Apple.

On a slightly different note, take a look at the May issue of *Popular Electronics*, where in an article about multimedia, the Atari CDTV is mentioned as having found a small niche among Atari users. Does anyone else see the subtle piece of misinformation in that sentence? ❑

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New Goodies For Your Amiga 1200
from DKB Software

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With this product, your Amiga 1200 can provide you with file date stamping and "alarm" functions that you need in order to operate effectively.

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The Clock does not interfere with installation of other peripherals, and is automatically recognized by the operating system. *The Clock* requires no additional software and is compatible with all Amiga system software, including *AmigaDOS System 3.0* and later versions.

Suggested retail price is $29.95.

DKB1202

If you do animation, morphing, ray-tracing or any kind of image manipulation, then this peripheral is made for you. With the DKB1202 board installed, the Amiga 1200 realizes its full potential, using a high-speed floating-point co-processor and memory board, which uses the Motorola 68881 math co-processor chip running at 16 MHz clock speed. Faster clock speed of up to 40MHz can be obtained using the 68882 co-processor chip.

The DKB1202 also provides the much needed "Real Time" clock for the Amiga 1200, which maintains file date stamping and "alarm" functions. You have the ability to add up to eight megabytes of true 32-bit wide, zero-wait state FastRAM with 2 SIMM sockets for improved flexibility. DKB1202 can contain as much as 5 Megs of RAM and still use a PCMCIA card.

The DKB1202 board installs in the trap door (maintaining your A1200 One Year Warranty), comes with step-by-step instructions, and carries a suggested retail price of $189.95 (unpopulated).

Contact: DKB Software, 50240 West Pontiac Trail, Wixom, MI 48393. (313) 960-8751, fax (313) 960-8752. □

CEI To Distribute Amigas in the USA

Creative Business International (CEI) of Miami, Florida has finalized an agreement with Commodore Business Machines, Inc., to distribute the Commodore line of Amiga and PC computers and peripherals in the United States. This agreement gives Creative Equipment "National Aggregator" status and follows a recent Latin American distribution agreement between the two companies early in 1992.

With this new agreement, CEI will now be able to market directly to the existing dealer and affiliate network of Amiga resellers. Primary emphasis will be put into establishing new CEI authorized dealers throughout North and South America.

CEI will focus on establishing new multimedia dealers in the US by targeting those who have traditionally sold Apple and PC compatibles. These dealers will be able to purchase complete multimedia solutions for resale. Solutions will include complete Video Toaster workstations, Impact Vision animation systems, digital recording workstations and more.

Contact: Creative Equipment International, 6864 West Flagler St., Miami, FL 33144. (305) 266-2800, fax (305) 261-2544. □

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OK, I'm back.

Barbara Kane, Mishawaka, IN
Previously published in ComputerEdge Magazine, 6/89.

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How My Computer Made Me a Cheat and a Liar

by Camille C. Lenning

"Nothing here that a normally intelligent 12-year old couldn't have solved," he murmured as he slipped the program cassette into my computer. I flushed with anger and made rude signals with my fingers under the table. Desmond was an ex-lover. We hadn't seen one another for months and he wouldn't be here now if I hadn't been desperate for help with my computer.

I had embarked upon the PC adventure with stars in my eyes, having watched in awe as Desmond, in happier times, had flashed text onto the screen, made corrections like magic, caused whole paragraphs to leap from place to place and produces a word-perfect copy on his printer. Who wouldn't have been impressed! I felt ashamed of the manuscripts I was turning out on my old electronic typewriter — cut, pasted, stapled, scratched out, arrowed in. I could see how sordid and inefficient they were.

"Get a computer," Desmond urged. "You'll love it."

I followed his advice. All went well but it soon became obvious that I could no longer work at the dining room table. Unlike my typewriter, which could be stashed away in an instant when the dining room was to be used for its designated purpose, the computer, with its many accessories was all over the place.

"You need another piece of furniture," I reluctantly admitted. The only thing I could afford, described as a "Computer Center", had to be assembled. When a young man loaded it effortlessly into my car, the package was so neat and compact I couldn't believe that everything was in there.

Back in my garage, I attempted to remove it and found that it was either solid rock or had someone become bolted to the floor. I positioned myself in the doorway of my car, braced my back against one side, my foot against the other and heaved with all my might. The carton moved one-sixteenth of an inch. I went away and had a cup of coffee.

Should I drive back and pick up the young Hercules who had put it in there and get him to remove it, or was there some other way? There was. I returned with a sharp knife, slit open the package, extracted the wood piece by piece and stacked it in a neat pile.

According to the instructions, all that was required to assemble the Computer Center was a screw driver and a hammer, both of which I possessed. But when I look at the heap of lumber and saw the number of screws that had to be inserted, I realized I would need another pair of hands. Desmond had come to mind. Too bad we were no longer seeing one another.

In the meantime, I had been having serious problems with the computer itself. It was doing wanton, stubborn things, especially when I was in a hurry. Now I had a deadline to meet but for several days I had produced almost nothing. Why? Because of this answer to every writer's prayer, this labor-saving device, this clever, efficient, god-damned word processor that seemed determined to thwart me at every turn. That's why!

Again, Desmond came to mind. After all, he got me into this mess. It seemed only fair that he should get me out. So I buried my pride and called him. His response was unfriendly. After the way I had treated him when we broke up, I couldn't really blame him.

"Don't you have the instructions?" he asked coldly.

"Yes, but I can't follow them," I admitted humbly, "and you're so wonderfully knowledgeable about these things—Des."

"I'd like to help you," he assured me, softening a little, but I'm extremely busy at the moment."

"I understand," I responded soothingly. "Anyway, Desmond, it's nice to hear your voice and, in spite of our differences, I'd like to know how much I've always admired you. In fact, just the other day I was thinking about you and wondering if you would mind if I put you in the book I'm writing — the one being delayed by this little problem I'm having." I knew Desmond longed to be in one of my books. He used to toss out carefully phrased remarks tailored to fit whatever I happened to be working on — obviously intended to qualify him as the witty, urbane life of the story. Actually, he was already in one of them — but as himself — a role he could be relied upon never to recognize.

He was still wavering about coming over when I remembered how Desmond loves to eat. So I mentioned — casually — that I was preparing something special for dinner — "Noisettes de Chevreuil." I am probably the world's worst cook and I didn't have the slightest idea what "Noisettes de Chevreuil" was — it was in a restaurant review lying beside the telephone — but I was confident that Desmond wouldn't know either. Later, when I looked it up and found that it was venison, and that there was no way of obtaining the basic ingredient unless I went out and shot a deer, I wished I had thought of something else.

In any event, it tipped the balance. Desmond finally came and that he was making excellent progress, easily solving the problems that, to me, had seemed insurmountable. Unfortunately, he was already beginning to swagger with self-assurance at my obvious dependence upon him and to treat me as though I were seriously retarded. But that was the price so I buttoned my lip.

When he had everything working and explained to me at length and to his satisfaction, I broke the news about the Computer Center.

"It shouldn't take long," I said offhandedly. "Just a matter of putting in a few screws." Four hours and several nasty arguments later, we finally had it assembled. It didn't seem important that they were three screws left over until we stood it up. One section sagged alarmingly. We found the holes for the additional screws and Desmond, obviously fed up with the whole thing, inserted them. At least, he tried to insert them. As I pointed out, they were not completely in.

"It's OK," he said shortly. "That's as far as they'll go." I was dubious. I didn't want to leave them that way and I said so. He tried again — without success.

"Let me try," I suggested.

"Are you kidding?"

"Give me the screwdriver," I insisted. He flung it at me with an amused sneer. But Desmond had forgotten about my trusty tennis arm. It wasn't easy, but I managed a half turn and then, leaning into it, another. Desmond's expression hardened. I knew that each turn of the screw was driving an unbridgeable gulf between us but, in spite of — or perhaps because of — this, I kept at it. The screw was finally all the way in, snugly flush with the wood and I started on the others. I didn't look at Desmond. I didn't need to. The air crackled with loathing and disgust. Now, they were all in.

"That made you feel pretty good, didn't it?" he snarled, jumping up and letting the piece we had been working on fall on my foot.

"Don't be silly, Desmond," I responded, checking my toes to see of they would still bend. "It's not my fault if I'm stronger than you are." That did it! He puffed up like an over-ripe tomato, ready to burst and spatter all over the place.

"You're an Amazon!" he shouted. "A bossy, overbearing Amazon! And you always will be!" I was wondering if I could hit him on the head with the hammer and make it look like an accident, when he bounded over to the closet, retrieved his coat, and stomped out, slamming the door behind him.

How unfortunate, I mused, that our day should have ended so unpleasantly. On the other hand, he had accomplished just about everything I had in mind — and now I wouldn't have to kill a deer for his supper. ❑

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HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

Any Amiga with 1.5MB RAM and two floppy disk drives. Hard drive recommended.

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Amiga Artists on the Air
How Artists Use Their Amigas

by Terry Kepner

Rather than just tell you what artists are doing, Willow Mixed Media shows you. They provide video tapes in which the artists describe and demonstrate what they do, how they do it, and the part the Amiga plays in their work.

ROBERT ANDERSON

The tape I reviewed was number eight in the series, covering the work of Robert Anderson, who discovered the Amiga in 1986. In the thirty-minute tape, this professional painter and graphic designer explains how he uses the Amiga as an electronic sketchpad to rough out how he wants his finished piece to appear.

Robert uses art from history (such as by Bottecelli or from the Sistine Chapel) as a basis for his work, reinterpreted in his own style. After scanning in a painting with *Digiview*, he uses *Digipaint* and *Photonpaint* to add colors and textures, overlaying and intermixing sections to create a new artwork. This is where the Amiga assists him. It lets him experiment with different effects, using the UNDO feature to recover from results he doesn't like.

One of the results of using the Amiga has been the discovery that he like the gridded, squared-off format as a theme; to take a piece, enlarge it, and make it a big puzzle. This is definitely something he was not interested in prior to his use of the Amiga. Several of his works have been reduced to a children's hand-held 4x7 slide-puzzle, and produced in limited-edition, numbered runs.

He also produces lapel pins. These originally started as puzzle pieces with a pin on the back and dangles added. Now he expressly creates pins designed on the Amiga.

Although he uses an Amiga to create his art, it is only as a sketch. He produces the final art using traditional painting techniques.

He currently uses *IV-Paint* and a HAM-E board to output the "sketch" to a Polaroid Palette film recorder, creating a negative that he blows up to "... a fairly large size." Working from that photograph to canvas, he paints in acrylic, with some airbrush technique, to produce a traditional piece of art. But still in the block format.

On the average, Robert takes each sketch through anywhere from twenty to fifty steps before outputting the results for transference to canvas. This last step is the longest, taking about a month to finish the piece.

In the last ten minutes of the tape Robert takes us through the processes he uses to create an image, one step, in his sketchpad approach. Here he reveals that he has written his own *Arexx* scripts for the Ham-E to customize the cutting of images, and solarizing and coloring them. Fortunately, he says, that even though he knew nothing about creating scripts, programming, or *Arexx*, using *Arexx* is so simple that he only spent a small amount of time creating these customizations. He only had to learn what he needed, he could ignore those sections that didn't affect what he wanted done.

CRITICISMS

Most of the tape takes place as one long interview, and gives the feeling that it was done as one long, single take. It has that awful "talking-heads" look that bores people quickly, and uses very poor camera work. It could easily be improved by showing more examples of Robert's finished works as he talks instead of focusing on his face. Similarly, I would have liked to see more examples of his "sketches" at various points in his process.

PRODUCTS & PRICES

Willow Mixed Media currently has thirteen tapes, with lengths of 27 to 30 minutes. They are:

Isaac & Raphael Abrams, a father-son team who create images and animations.

Tobe Carey, a video maker who demonstrates Broadcas Titler 2, TV-Text, and Pro-Video Post.

Regina-Bartley Cross, an artist and sculptor.

Ilene Astrahan, artist and graphic designer.

Mark Smith, award-winning artist and animator.

9 Artists, a compilation of examples of work from Paul Gurcules, Aaron Marks, Michael Fisher, Vincent Morano, Jr., Raymond St. Denis, David Brothers, and The Grants.

Ellen Povill, former textile designer, who shares her graphics and titles created for her cable TV program "Woodstock Archives."

4 Artists, Florence Ormezzano, Peter Babula, Matt McElligot and Keith share their work.

Kevin Smith, shares animations and stills that illuminate the mix of healthy bodies and computer art.

Larry Keenan, commercial special-effects photographer and Amiga artist shares his illustrations and animations.

Perry Kivolowitz, ASDG founder and president tells how he got started with computers and built the company whose name has become synonymous with Amiga image processing.

Review Plus, review of *ChromaKey Plus;* video art from Lynn Pocock-Williams, a Neural Network model from Arthur T. Murray, and more.

All Tapes are VHS and cost $15. For more information, contact: Willow Mixed Media, Inc, P.O. Box 194, Lennox Ave., Glenford, NY 12433, (914) 657-2914.

The Analog Link

When flight simulators first came out on the Amiga, the keyboard, digital joysticks, or a mouse was the only way to fly your aircraft. This gave the computer an advantage because you could not fly as you would in the real world. Aircraft, automobiles, and weapons are analog. Give your Amiga a touch of the real world. Get the original Analog Link from Nicholas McIntyre (a good company). *Fly Fighter Duel Pro* (Jaeger Software), *Birds of Prey* (Argonaut Software), *Knights of the Sky*, *F-15 Strike Eagle II* (Microprose), and any other flight simulation with analog joystick options as they should be flown with a clone joystick (like CH Products, Flight Stick). **The Analog Link** connects between any clone analog joystick and the Amiga to give you true flying satisfaction.

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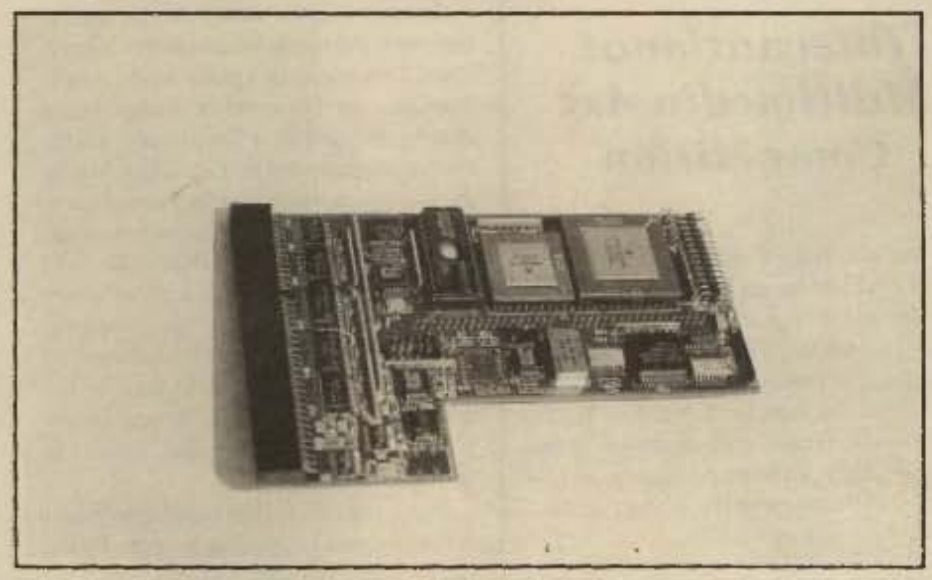

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Amiga Artists, Take Note!

International Multimedia Art Competition

Artfolio has recently announced it annual multimedia competition. All artists are invited to take advantage of this exciting opportunity. "The advantages of entering this competition are numerous," says Rachel Golan, founder of Artfolio. "It is the most economical way for artists worldwide to gain support and recognition as well as exposure to the general public, collectors, gallery owners and critics.

Judged categories include: painting, drawing, pastels, sculpture, printmaking, illustration, icons, watercolor, mixed media, cartoon art, computer art, miniature art, photography, holography, clay, glass, fiber/textiles, paper, furniture, wood, jewelry, metalwork and stone/marble.

Entries will be judged by a panel which includes Susan Kismaric, curator of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Douglas Hyland, director of the San Antonio Museum of Art; and Kathleen Derringer, curator of The Discovery Museum in Connecticut.

The top 60 entrants will be on display at a "Winners Exhibition" held in Art 54 Gallery, Soho, New York from December 8-26, 1993. Grand prize winner will receive a $5000 prize.

All requests for entry forms must be called in, faxed, or postmarked no later than July 31, 1993. Contact: Aryana Nolan, Artfolio, Art Department, 500 Summer St., Suite 206, Stamford, CT 06901, (203) 359-4422, (800) 359-9531, fax (203) 975-0266. ❑

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Welcome to the

Imagine Cafe

Coffee, Burgers and *Imagine* spoken

hosted by Ted Vandever

Imagine a place where Amiga animators meet and discuss methods for 3D creation. This would be a place where people from all over the world of Amiga would stop by for coffee, a Danish and a little conversation on what they are doing. Maybe the discussion would take the form of a new tip or technique. Perhaps someone would need a little advice to steer them in the right direction. Imagine this as a place where experts and hobbyists hold equal standing. This place has no physical substance, no parking lot or sign. It is located in the newspaper you are holding in your hands. It is a place out of the mind, known as *"Imagine Cafe"*.

It is about 5 o'clock in the afternoon and the crowd will be coming in soon. I have just enough time to clean the place up, wipe the counter and put away the glasses. I like this time of day. It gives me a chance to relax and look forward to meeting new people.

Looking over the counter top, I notice that it has a little shine to it. The specular is very high, 255 for all three primary colors. The color of the wood is a light brown. There is more red than any other color, a setting of 182 red, 100 green and 0 blue is about right. The blending of colors is a medium value of 120. The hardness of the wood is soft, maybe 80 or so.

I spot a few left over glasses at one end of the counter and pick one up to wipe it off.

WHEN YOU START TO LOOK AT THINGS AND WONDER WHAT THEIR ATTRIBUTES ARE, YOU KNOW YOU ARE A 3D FANATIC.

It becomes very shiny and smooth. It is transparent, but distorted slightly. Mmmm, must be that the index of refraction is turned up to about 1.66. Since glass is clear, there's no color. As a matter of fact, the filter and specular are set way up on all these values. As glass is a hard material, 190 seems appropriate.

Yep, that's the magic of *Imagine Cafe*. One sees things differently here. You look at something and it takes on a whole new meaning. See those checks on the floor? I bet you they're 16. When you start to look at things and wonder what their attributes are, you know you are a 3D fanatic. It is an obsession with everyone here at the cafe. It sticks to your ribs like grits for breakfast. You can't stop thinking about it.

How can you tell if you are a 3D fanatic? Glad you asked that. Here are some questions. Has it been more than a week since you looked up from your computer and said "Hi" to your spouse? Have you been forced to choose between your sports car payment and the latest accelerator board? Does the President of Master Card know you by your first name (because you financed his new yacht)? Do you read more magazine articles on 3D than you do on being a "sensitive person"? If the answer is "Yes," then you are a 3D junkie.

Speaking of fanatics, here comes one now. He enters the cafe and walks very slowly (about 15 frames per second) over to me, intending to sit down and order a burger. His hair is askew, his eyes are bloodshot. He's been staring at a monitor for the past 80 hours straight, even though I've reminded him that watching things render does not make them render faster. The magnetic field build-up around him has stopped my watch again. I gotta quit buying fake Rolexes in Times Square.

"What's wrong, Joe?" I ask, somehow sensing that something is wrong by the clumps of pulled-out hair he grips tightly in clenched fists.

"Ted," he moans, "I'm so glad you're here. It's driving me insane!" He whimpers piteously as I pour him a strong cup of International coffee.

"Tell me about it," I say soothingly. Sometimes it's best to be calm when they're this far gone.

"It's *Imagine*'s Detail Editor!" he moans, "While creating an object, I copied it, pasted it and brought up the transformer requester. I selected Rotate 180 degrees. When I looked at the front, left and top view, everything seemed OK. However," he stops and whimpers again, "the perspective view is showing lines running in all directions! I can't figure it out! It's driving me *C.R.A.Z.Y!*" His hand closes on the cup and he crushes it into powder. That happens a lot when people first come in here.

"Now, now," I begin, "the steps you took were OK, but remember, the order in which you create an object is critical. First you add an axis, then create the outline of the object

in Add Lines mode. Next, select Add Faces. When done adding faces, extrude the object using the Mold function. Now cut and paste your object. Bring up the transformation requester and rotate the object 180 degrees on its z-axis. Redraw the screen and your object should be correct in the perspective view. Any other way is incorrect and will result in a deviation from what you are trying to do."

A light of recognition passes through his eyes. He thanks me, pays for the coffee and burger and leaves in a haze of discovery, muttering, the steps in sequential order as I had cited them. Funny, I don't remember making him a burger.

But that's how things go in the *Imagine Cafe*. Problems come in, solutions go out. Many times they are the same ones over and over again. That's why I did a new videotape that answers most common questions asked about *Imagine 2.0*'s Detail Editor. It's a good tape and it's cheap, compared to driving around looking for the cafe. Only $34.95. Look on the back cover of *Amiga News* for an ad I created in *Imagine* just for you to read.

Meanwhile, if you have a tip or a question about *Imagine*, or the video, or Life, the Universe and Anything, call 501-225 0774 and ask for Ted Vandever, otherwise known as Chief Cook and Bottle Washer and Technical Guru for the *o*. As for the guy who keeps calling and telling me that "digital watches are a mouse conspiracy" and "watch out for falling whales parts", we get it mate. We get it.

Well, it's time to wait on the rest of the customers. I'll tell you about some of the more interesting ones next month in volume 2 of *Imagine Cafe* here in *Amiga News*. And just as a reminder, please buy my videotape, CSA has just released a new accelerator for the 1200..... ❑

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And the Winnah Is. . .

Greg Adams of Hampton, Virginia was the lucky winner of DKB Software's MegaChip 2000/500 at the recent World of Commodore Show help at Pier 88 in New York City.

Mr. Adams is a Tech Sergeant for the United States Air Force, stationed in Virginia as an electronic technician.

Mr. Adams uses his Amiga daily to run his second passion: a photo and graphic design business, which is becoming very successful. Mr. Adams is looking forward to the arrival of the MegaChip 2000/500, which is a must-have peripheral needed for the storage of Graphics and Digitized Audio in memory.

❑

Move Over, Chuck Yeager!

IBM Analog Joystick Adapter for Amigas

Is your home computer pilot frustrated because he/she must "fly" with a keyboard, mouse or digital joystick? Until recently, those were the only options for piloting your flight simulation programs.

Now you can get the *Analog Link* for your Amiga. *Analog Link* is an IBM analog joystick adapter that works with all Amiga computers and connects between your Amiga and any clone analog joystick to put you in the pilot's seat.

Analog Link has been tested with such flight sim programs as *F-15 Strike Eagle II, Fighter Duel, Birds of Prey* and *Knights of the Sky.*

Analog Link has a retail price of $12.00, and is available from Steven R. Nicholas, 1219 Meadowhaven Lane, Derby, KS. 67037-3414. (316)788-5253. ❑

The new Analog Link lets your Amiga use IBM analog joysticks for smoother, faster, and easier game control.

Chaos Makes Beautiful Music

Digital Expressions Research will shortly begin shipping their innovative new music composition product *Musiclab - IFS.* Unlike other algorithmic composition programs producing random or popular music, *MusicLab - IFS* harnesses organizational properties derived from chaos and fractals to allow anyone to compose music having complex structural levels, interrelationships and musical cohesiveness similar to "large-form" or "classical" music compositions. This product should be especially useful to multimedia developers looking for an alternative to random or popular styles of background music, and to accomplished musicians looking for a source of new ideas.

Using Iterated Function Systems and numerical codes, *Musiclab - IFS* can encode and generate an infinite variety of fractal and non-fractal musical scores. Many options exist for arranging scores into musical sequences with up to eight multi-voiced parts. Sequences can be previewed over both MIDI and the Amiga's internal audio, and can be saved in both MIDI and IFF SMUS music file formats.

Suggested retail price for *MusicLab - IFS* is $89.00. The program requires an Amiga with an least 1 MB of memory and Workbench 1.3/2.0.

Contact: Digital Expressions Research, W6400 Firelane 8, Menasha, WI 54952. (414) 733-6863.

❑

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USER GROUPS: Call to register your group with the Worldwide Amiga User Group Network.

Advanced Learning Center Expands Curriculum

Summer session forming now

The Advanced Learning Center of Studio City, CA continues to expand the horizons of Amiga users with the latest additions to their curriculum: Life Art Classes, blending the oil and water world of fine art with the printed circuit world of computers. ALC promotes these classes an "an exercise in exploring traditional sketching and painting life art in the electric realm, using modern electronic instruments and software as replacement for the classical tools for the artistic drawing of live models."

These three-hour classes is in two parts, with the first hour spent in a computer lab implementing software adaptation and the remaining two hours as a Life Study. The hands-on lab will use one of the computer paint programs combined with an optical pen brush designed to simulate the stroke a a fine art brush.

Life Classes join ALC's fine roster of Amiga-oriented classes, which include such topics as: Multi-media, Animation, Virtual Reality, Pagestream, Lightwave, Dpaint, and many more.

Summer classes are forming now — call, write or stop in to get their latest catalog.

Contact: Advanced Learning Center, 11020 Ventura Blvd., Suite E, Studio City, CA 91604. (818) 753-9799.

❑

RGB Introduces AmiLink/CIP

RGB Computer and Video has added a new editor to its AmiLink family called Amilink/CIP. RGB now brags that it provides the "total solution" to editing challenges.

According to marketing director Mike Rowe, the base system is the same. It's the type of equipment that AmiLink is controlling that makes the difference.

"A new user can begin by editing with lost-cost 'Prosumer' type VCRs, like the Panasonic AG 1970 or the Sony V-1000, and upgrade AmiLink to work with professional equipment," said Rowe. "Your investment can begin as low as $995 and add-ons can be gradual, so that your original investment is protected and the learning curve is a one-time process."

Rowe said the new AmiLink/CIP works exactly like RGB's PRO version. "You can even use the AmiLink professional JOG/Shuttle console, or POD," Rowe said. "All features of AmiLink/CIP are identical to that of our professional version, except for the limitations of the 'Prosumer' decks you may be using."

AmiLink/CIP now allows for a large number of popular 'Prosumer" VCRs, like the AG 1970 and Sony Hi-8 decks in the same suite, or expand to add professional VTRs with your 'Prosumer' VCRs.

Contact: RGB Computer and Video, 4125 Blue Heron Blvd., Suite 118, Riviera Beach, FL 33404. (407) 844-3348, fax (407)844-3699.

❑

Zero Surge

Experts report that ground-line surges can cause many of the mysterious problems, such as blown peripherals, keyboard lock-up, and lost/corrupted files, which computer users experience. The Model ZS1800 surge protector provides fast suppression of power-line surges. Developed by Zero Surge, Inc., of Montclair, NJ, it eliminates spikes and surges without relying on commonly used MOVs (metal oxide varistors).

The ZS1800 from Zero Surge, Inc., provides fast suppression of power-line surges to protect your computer and peripherals.

Unlike most other products, the ZS1800 reacts to surges and spikes instantly, diverting the surge to a capacitor bank which stores the unwanted energy. The ZS1800 gradually bleeds it back to neutral, never contaminating the ground with damaging surge-energy pulses.

Six-outlet ZS1800 handles 15-Amp loads at 120 volts, providing surge and spike protection without the use of MOVs. Omission of MOVs has practical advantages. Each surge "hit" passed by an MOV typically diminishes the clamping-voltage limit for the next surge, eventually resulting int Mov overheating and failure when the limit declines to peak line voltage. Thi can shorten effective life of MOVs to a little as 6 to 12 months before the MO fails, becoming a potential fire hazard.

A unique 10-year warranty cover ZS1800 surge protectors, hardware an software connected to them. Suggested re tail price is $199.95. The surge protector have UL and CSA approval.

Contact: Zero Surge, Inc., 215 Glenridg Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042. (201) 744 1760, fax (201)744-1804.

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Earthquake Productions and Publish ing is offering *SYScat* at a special introduc tory price of $39.95 until September 1 1993. After that time, the retail price wi be $49.95.

Look for *SYScat* at an Amiga dealer nea you, or contact Earthquake Productio and Publishing, 13353 Foothill Blvd Fontana, CA 92335. (909) 899-1800. Earth quake Productions and Publishing include freight on prepaid orders. California res dents add 7.75% sales tax.

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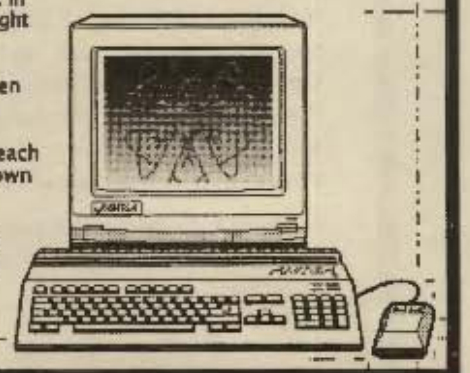

Directory Opus 4.0

by Graham Heywood

The Amiga is a versatile machine and its basic *DOS* comes with two user interfaces: A Shell/CLI and a *Workbench*. Both interfaces have their supporters, and with a bunch of utilities both can be made to do anything you want. But with hard-disks becoming the norm, a further interface is needed; a directory utility.

In its simplest incarnation, a directory utility will help you organize your disks and provide a few functions; view images, read files etc.All of the directory utilities I have used had their advantages and disadvantages: like the Shell and *Workbench*, you basically got what the individual authors thought were wanted. That has changed with the introduction of *Directory Opus 4.0*. Although it comes with an impressive list of functions it also possesses User Configure Buttons, and User Configurable Device Buttons.Of course you can format disks, copy files, view images including AGA/AA (4000/1200), display all ILBM formats (including SHAM), playback Anim and Anim Brush files. Play

THE REAL POWER OF *DOPUS* BECOMES APPARENT THE FIRST TIME YOU SAY TO YOURSELF, "I WISH IT COULD DO THIS."

sound files, formats supported are: Noisetracker, SoundTracker, ProTracker, MED w/MIDI, Oktalyzer, 8SVX, Raw Data. There may be some other formats that DOpus will not handle in its basic state, but I have not found one yet. *DOpus* will also run executable files, display fonts, launch *CanDo* Decks.The real power of *DOpus* becomes apparent the first time you say to yourself, "I wish it could do this." Well, it usually can: you just add another button which will add a command to the list.

Commands fall into five major areas: 1. Command, 2. Executable, 3. *Workbench*, 4. Batch, and 5. *ARexx*. Command uses the internal commands built into *DOpus*. These can take parameters from *DOpus* menus and buttons and also from *ARexx*. Executable: executables are treated as if you where running them from the CLI, opening an output window to receive input and display output.

Workbench: Workbench programs are executed as if you were double clicking. What use is this? Well a lot of programs do not accept arguments if run from the CLI (*DPaint* for instance). However, if you define the command as: *DPaint* {f} and have the command type set to workbench, *DeluxePaint* will accept arguments when run from the workbench, so the first file selected will be loaded into *DPaint* automatically.

Batch: batch files also called scripts. Selecting a command type as batch will cause that file to be executed as a script.

ARexx: *Arexx* obviously launches an *ARexx* script, but only if *ARexx* is active in the system. The *ARexx* port is set automatically to *Directory Opus*.Of course, you could manage without a directory utility. You could also manage to live without clothes for that matter, but once you've tried life with either it's hard to manage without. And *Directory Opus 4.0* is by far, the best directory utility I've seen.*Directory Opus 4.0* is by Inovatronics Inc. Suite 209B, 8499 Greenville Ave, Dallas, TX, 75231-2499. Tel: 214-340-4991. ❑

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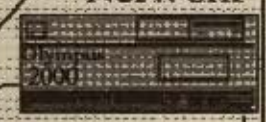

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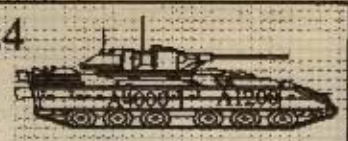

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Continued from page 1.

dore is betting the entire US Amiga on graphics and the willingness of Phil Ordinary from Pittsburgh to lay out serious money virtually exclusively for the manipulation and manufacture of pictures and sound. This, while ignoring the capabilities of CD ROM and the multi-media market or the obvious benefits derived from placing Amigas in school systems. The wad is literally bet on one horse!

While Commodore seems bent on turning its world upside down, NewTek actually looks to have it all under control. At the National Association of Broadcasters convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, NewTek proudly announced that the new Video Toaster 4000 would retail at $2,395, which is a lower price than the current flagship product. It will include a switcher with four video inputs, and three internal digital sources. Featuring close to 300 video effects, from wipes to dissolves to complex animated transitions, it promises to be a videophile's dream of hitting the lottery come true. Many of the effects feature drop shadows, glints, texture specializations, and smooth color animation.

If Commodore is going to bet on a horse, it could do no better than NewTek which has proven again and again that it has the tools to stay in the race. The new *Seaquest DSV* television series being prepared by Amblin, and the *Babylon 5* series, already picked up for broad-based syndication, are proof that Hollywood, at least, is still in love with the Amiga. ❑

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Dongle Disaster!

Scala Dongle Can Blowup Chips

by Terry Kepner

All new Scala packages ship with a new copy-protection device, called a dongle, which can blowup chips inside the Amiga should it be improperly installed. This new device is being added to in-use products such as Scala's MM-200 package.

The device, which looks like a small 9-pin gender changer, has special electronics. These electronics allow the Scala products to tell if the computer running the software is using a legally purchased copy of the program.

The dongle is a pass-thru unit that doesn't interfere with the operation of the mouse ports and is only used by Scala software. The problem is that if the dongle is not firmly inserted when installed, or is pulled slightly by a tug on the mouse cable, the dongle can cause chips inside the Amiga to blowup. Additionally, you must not install, remove, or otherwise touch the dongle while your computer is running.

On newer Amiga computers only a fuse will blow. But the older models lose chips. For participants in the Commodore Gold Service Plan, Commodore will fix any damage.

According to Michael J. Weaver, Technical Manager at Scala, the problem is in the design of the Amiga. He points out that Commodore warns people that attaching or removing any device could cause damage to the computers.

He regrets the need for the dongle, but other protection schemes require user activity on using the products and brought significant volumes of complaints from their customers. Normally, he says, customers install the dongle on an unused, or little used, mouse port and forget it is there. As most of their customers are professionals who infrequently use games, Mr. Weaver feels the dongle is the best copy-protection solution available for their company. ❑

Continued from page 1.

"Even with all its new capabilities, *LightWave* is still the most user friendly 3D package ever," said Montgomery. "We designed it to have all of the power and functionality of a $30,000 3D animation workstation, but maintain some of the biggest strengths of the Toaster-namely, an easy-to-use interface."

Among *LightWave*'s new abilities are its significantly enhanced rendering options. Users can now have *LightWave* automatically create lens flares, motion blurr effects, and even adjust the depth of field to create images with realistic focusing. The bones feature allows users to create skeletal systems for an object, and is ideal for character animation. Image quality has been improved with new color dithering and anti-aliasing routines, and at the same time render times have also been speeded up by 100% to 800%.

LightWave's Modeler now includes support for PostScript fonts, which makes 3D logo and text creation automatic. Modeler also features powerful new Boolean functions, which allow users to combine or cut holes in objects. The program also allows users to draw objects with spline curves, which allow users to combine or cut holes in objects. The program also allows users to draw objects with spline curves, which provides for simplified creation of round, organic objects.

"With all of the new features, probably the best thing about *LightWave 3D* is that it's a workhorse." said Jenison. "Our beta testers are Hollywood's top animators and special effects artists, and they've been using the program for months in the most demanding situations imaginable."

LightWave has become a major player in 3D software for Hollywood. *LightWave* animations have been used on shows such as *Babylon 5* and *Unsolved Mysteries*. The Toaster 4000 will also be used to create the 3D graphic effects for Steven Spielberg's new series *Sea Quest DSV*, which will debut this fall on NBC.

Montgomery is not surprised that the new works have been quick to embrace the power of the Video Toaster. "What's exciting to us is the ordinary people have used the Toaster to create their own personal visions are attracting so much attention from the broadcast industry. Toaster users are changing the fce of television."

For more information about the Video Toaster, contact NewTek at 215 SE 8th Street, Topeka, Kansas, 913-231-0100. ❑

TwelveGauge

CSA Takes Aim at the A1200

Amiga 1200 owners are trapped and running out of time. Large image files and long animations are filling up their hard drives. And there's no room to grow.

Why? Because the A1200 doesn't work with currently available mass-storage peripherals—like floptical drives, removable media and multi-Gigabyte replacement hard drives. All of these devices use a standard SCSI interface, but the A1200 only provides an IDE interface for a single internal hard drive.

To solve this problem, CSA has developed the *TwelveGauge*, a 50 MHz accelerator card for the A1200 featuring a SCSI interface. Now you can use your A1200 with such devices as CD-ROM drives, Syquest removable media drives, floptical optical drive systems and tape back up systems, and hundreds of other SCSI compatible add-ons.

Raw speed is another requirement for processor-intensive activities like rendering, animation and desktop publishing. Built around a 50MHz Motorola 68030 central processor, CSA's *TwelveGauge* runs from 7 to 10 times faster than a stock A100, with its 14MHz 68EC020.

In addition to its faster clock speed, the *TwelveGauge* also utilizes Burst Mode processing, a faster, more efficient way to manage the flow of data from 32-bit memory.

In addition to its speed, CSA's *TwelveGauge* also goes a long way to ease the necessary expense of adding memory. Instead of requiring expensive, proprietary RAM chips, the *TwelveGauge* uses industry standard A4000-type 32-bit SIMMS, which are less expensive. What's more, RAM upgrades can be made in affordable stages (to 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 or 32 Megabytes).

CSA's *TwelveGauge* installs easily into the A1200 trap door slot and can be ordered in several alternate configurations, depending on how much RAM you need, and whether you need a math coprocessor. A less expensive, 40MHz 68EC030-based version can also be ordered.

Twelve Gauge carries a retail price of $699 (with 50 MHz 68030, SCSI interface, 68882 socket and without RAM).

Contact: Computer System Associates (CSA), 7564 Trade St., San Diego, CA 92121. (619) 566-3911, fax (619) 566-0581. ❑

1992 AMIGA HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

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Pinball Fantasies — 21st Century Entertainment
An exciting animated pinball game.

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AmigaDOS Release 3 — Commodore International Limited
The newest version of Commodore's multitasking operating system

Best Hardware
Amiga 4000 — Commodore International Limited
Commodore's most advanced computer featuring the AGA chip set with 16.8 million displayable colors.

1992 Developers' Choice Awards Announced by Commodore

Commodore Applications and Technical Support Group (CATS) sponsored a Developers Conference in Orlando, Florida from January 36-30. A record number of 400 developers from 13 countries attended the conference to learn more about Commodore's plans and new developments for the Amiga line of personal computers.

Representatives from CATS, Commodore's Engineering staff and Commodore's sales divisions were on hand to conduct seminars and meet with developers. More than forty sessions were held during the five-day confer ace. Among the presenters were representatives from Motorola and the American Management Association. Over 700 pages of documentation and four disks were prepared for distribution to developer in attendance.

"The Developers Conference offers us the opportunity to share with developers our corporate direction and implementation strategy, as well as receive feedback from developers on our plans," says John Campbell, CATS director. "The success of this year's conference was apparent through the many comments we received from the record number of quality developers present at the conference."

Amiga software and peripheral developers selected top products released in 1992 in six categories. The developers of the selected products were presented with awards at a luncheon held at the conference. (See sidebar for the names of the products inducted into the "Amiga Hall of Fame.") ❑

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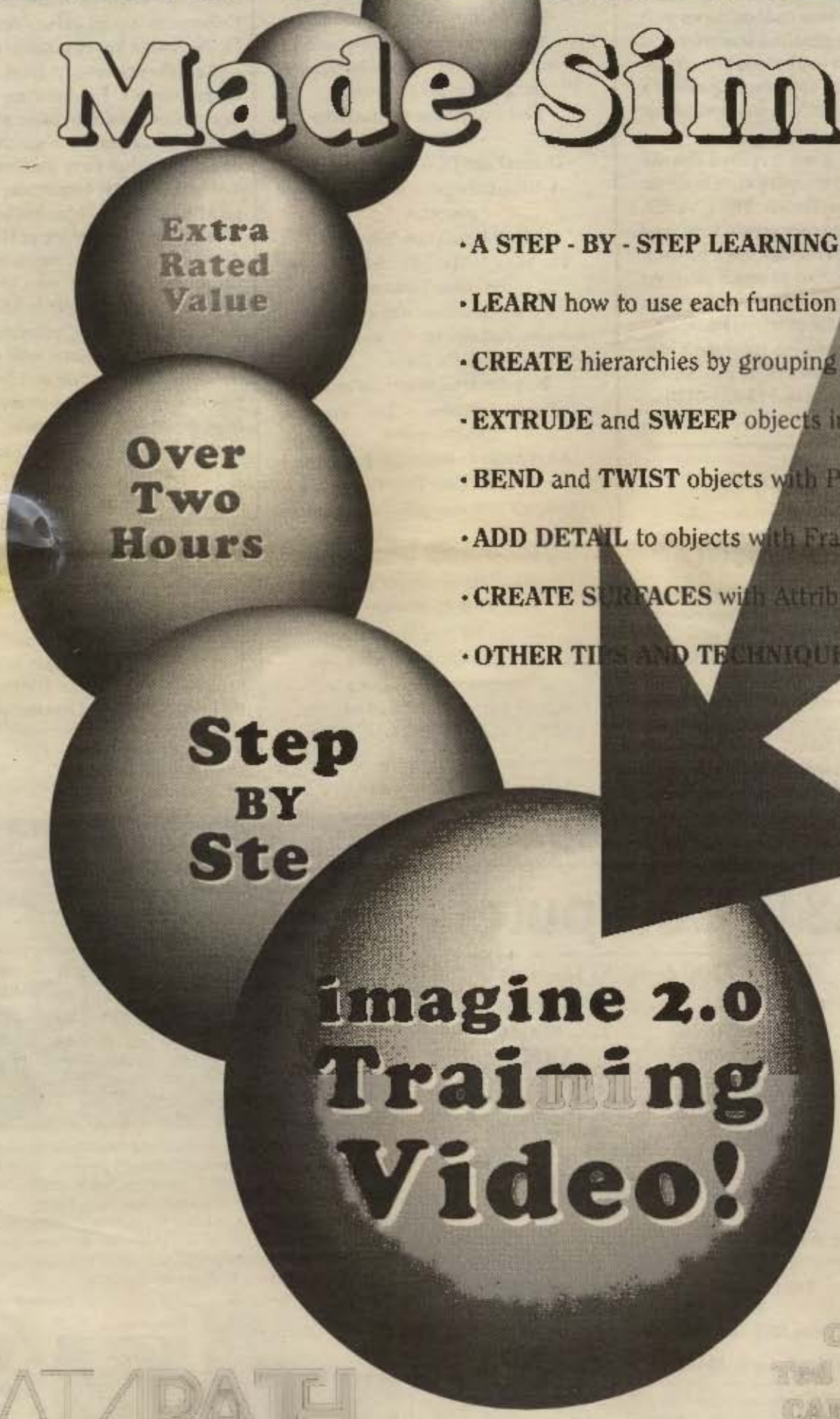

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Check out the premiere of Ted Vanderver's new "IMAGINE CAFE" column inside this issue

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