AMIGA news

95¢

Vol. 1, No. 5

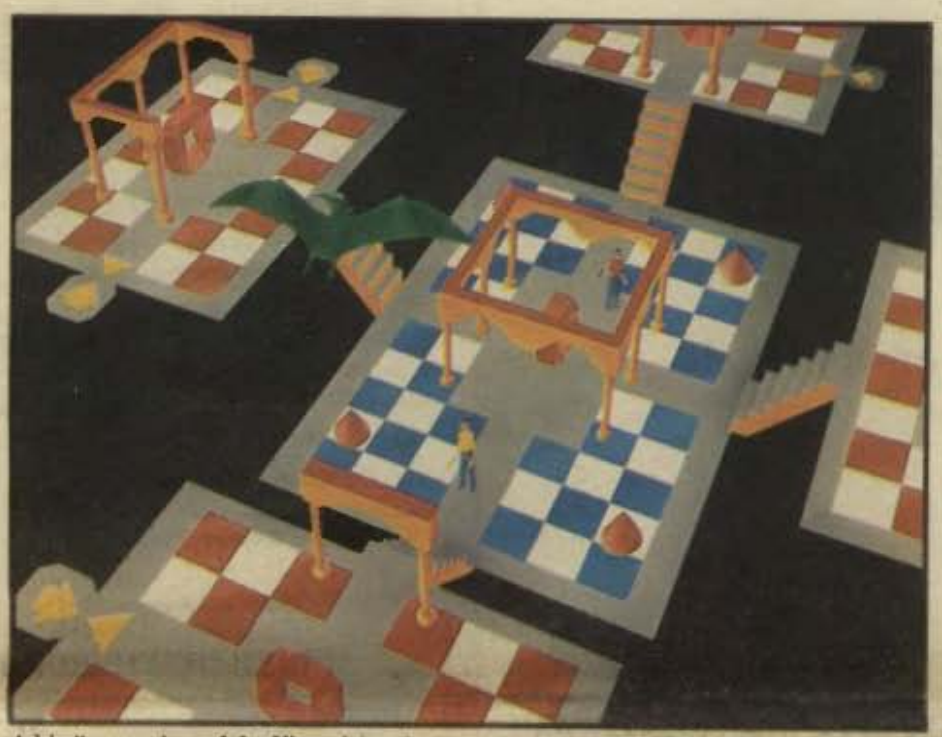
MAY 1992

Contest News

It's not too late to sign up for a free AIR DRIVE to be given away as first prize in the June issue of *Amiga News*. Also participating in **The Great Amiga News Give-away** is *Designing Minds* who has provided gift certificates for second through fourth place winners. All you have to do is send your name, address and phone number on a post card to *Amiga News, Box 51, Peterborough NH 03458*. Drawing will take place just before the June issue goes to print.

User Groups Wanted:

If your user group is not currently getting copies of *Amiga News* and wishes to do so, contact Pauline at (603) 924-9455. Selling *Amiga News* is an excellent way to boost your club's treasury.



A bird's-eye view of the Virtual Reality game Dactyl Nightmare.

Virtuality Reality . . . Now A Reality

by Pamela Rothman

Imagine yourself on a floor in open space, full of twinkling stars. There are four levels on each side above you. You can move up or down the stairs, or use a hoverboard. You'd better move, too, because someone is after you. Maybe even someone you trust, like a husband or girlfriend. Your heartbeat sounds in your ears--there! Darting out from behind that obstacle, grenade launcher at the ready!

They shoot and miss. You take your time aiming, since it will take a while for their gun to reload. Revenge will be sweet--but there's the pterodactyl! It grabs your opponent and carries them high, then drops them to the floor below. You see body parts, (rendered in 3D graphics) flying all over. But they'll be back.

Dactyl Nightmare. It's a computer game. But I'm not playing my husband with a second joystick or even over a modem. We are in the game, wearing helmets with little screens in front of our eyes and little speakers by our ears. It's virtual reality, and the Amiga has brought it out of the future and into the present.

Virtual reality means that you are experiencing a computer simulation that is virtually reality. A look at the graphics of Dactyl Nightmare might make you skeptical; they are not particularly realistic. But that is only a part of the totality of the experience.

To play you climb into a pod, a platform surrounded by a round railing. Then you strap on a fanny pack and hold your combination gun and walking controller in the hand of your choice. Pressing a thumb button in the hand module moves you forward in the direction you are facing. You can move your body or just your head to indicate direction. A trigger button fires your grenade launcher. The game will keep track of all your movements and translate them into action.

I found it remarkably easy to slip into this world. The small details contribute to the illusion. You can see your hand and gun, which can be moved in any direction. The angle seems to affect the angle of your shot. If you crouch down, your point of view changes, and you can hide behind

Continued on page 15 — Virtual.

World of Amiga Show is a Hit

The New York City edition of the "World of Commodore Amiga Shows" was an absolute success for all those in attendance. For *Amiga News*, it was a chance to get out in public and meet all the terrific people who have helped make our little newspaper such a success over the past five issues. For the estimated twenty thousand attendees, the show was a chance to get together with their favorite vendors and take home the latest version of top software and hardware packages.

Our rival publication *Amazing Computing*, in combination with ASDG and Commodore CATS, assembled a most excellent HO scale railway. This 15x14 foot layout featured two trains and a trolly in simultaneous motion, either in the switching yard or on open rail, with all switches being controlled by an Amiga. The Great Amiga Railway was good fun and our hats are off to all who participated in its creation and operation.

I am currently discussing the possibility of a full scale Amiga News blimp for next year, operated by an Amiga 500 and public domain software, but my editor has balked at the 6.7 million dollar pricetag, calling it "too flashy."

Represented at the show were: *Amazing Computing*, *Amiga News* (us), *Amiga World/Run* magazine, Anjon and Associates, ASDG Inc., Avid Publications (cool *Amiga/Video* magazine), the Boston Computer Society Amiga User's Group, Carina Software, Commodore Business Machines, Creative Equipment, Disks and Labels To Go Inc., Dr T's Music Software Inc., Electronic Arts (and the very latest version of *Deluxe Paint*), Gold Disk Inc., Great Valley Products (and a vast array of stuff to sell), Hypermedia Concepts inc., Image Solutions, Memory World, Micro Pace Inc., Migraph Inc., National Computer Distributors, New Horizons Software Inc., New Tek (and the fabulous Video Toaster), N.Y.C.I.G, Octree Software, Pacific Digital Effects (with an awesome display), PIM Service Bureau, Parallax Publishing (who announced that they were taking over the distribution of their Authoring System, Foundation, from its previous publisher), Premier Software,

Continued on page 15 — World.

Virtual Reality 3-D glasses in operation at the booth beside ours at the World of Amiga Show in New York City.

LETTERS

ANOTHER VOTE, ANOTHER CRITIC

If I had my choice, I would rather have *Amiga News* keep its current newspaper style, but come every two weeks instead of every other month. I hate waiting on *Amiga World* to come every month, and a newspaper that came more often and covered the latest shows with up-to-the-week information would be welcome. I understand this would substantially cut down on size, but I would rather have 8-10 pages of information presented every two weeks than 32-40 pages every two months that is already been hashed over by a monthly magazine.

Another point, I would be a little more professional about where ads are placed. Specifically, the ad for "Beautifully Digitized Lingerie models" on the front page of the March issue was a BIT much even for a male college student. I don't particularly care for the color scheme being used either. Use some different shades of blue and red and don't invert the text on the color block, just make the text the desired color, and make the headline bigger and stretch it across the front page. And, no more than $.95, make it $.50 and every two weeks!

I know you are probably yawning and searching for File 13 as you finish this, but hey, at least I got it off my chest. Speaking of getting things off your chest, just what is *Amiga News*' policies concerning submissions, i.e., are there any benefits beyond the obvious fame and publicity that will immediately befall whomever gets published, not to say that it would matter. I may still relish the idea of writing an article concerning Amiga desktop publishing over the prospects of relinquishing another minute cramming for that @$$#%#@ biology lab practical.

I couldn't find any information in an Amiga source on Pacific Page XL (RISC based Postscript card and cartridge) and the HP LaserJet IIP+ printer which I recently purchased. An excellent, cost-effective solution for FA ASSTT Postscript laser printing with my Amiga 3000. Now that you are thoroughly bored, this is the Amiga Maniac over and out.

Robert C. Fernatt
Boomer, WV

Sorry, but we can't lower the cover price. In fact, the distributor is asking us to raise the price to $1.50! Because the newsstand operator gets 40% of the cover price and we get 50%, that leaves the distributor with only 10% (9.5 cents) to cover trucking and labor costs. The distributor feels that fifteen cents would be more appropriate, given his fixed overhead costs.

We are discussing decreasing our percentage to 44%, giving the distributor 16% of the cover price. That would give him 15.2 cents per issue to cover his costs.

As for advertisement placement, we're learning from our mistakes (and you aren't the first to mention that particular advertisement).

Color. Color is dictated by costs. By us-

Continued on page 18 — Letters.

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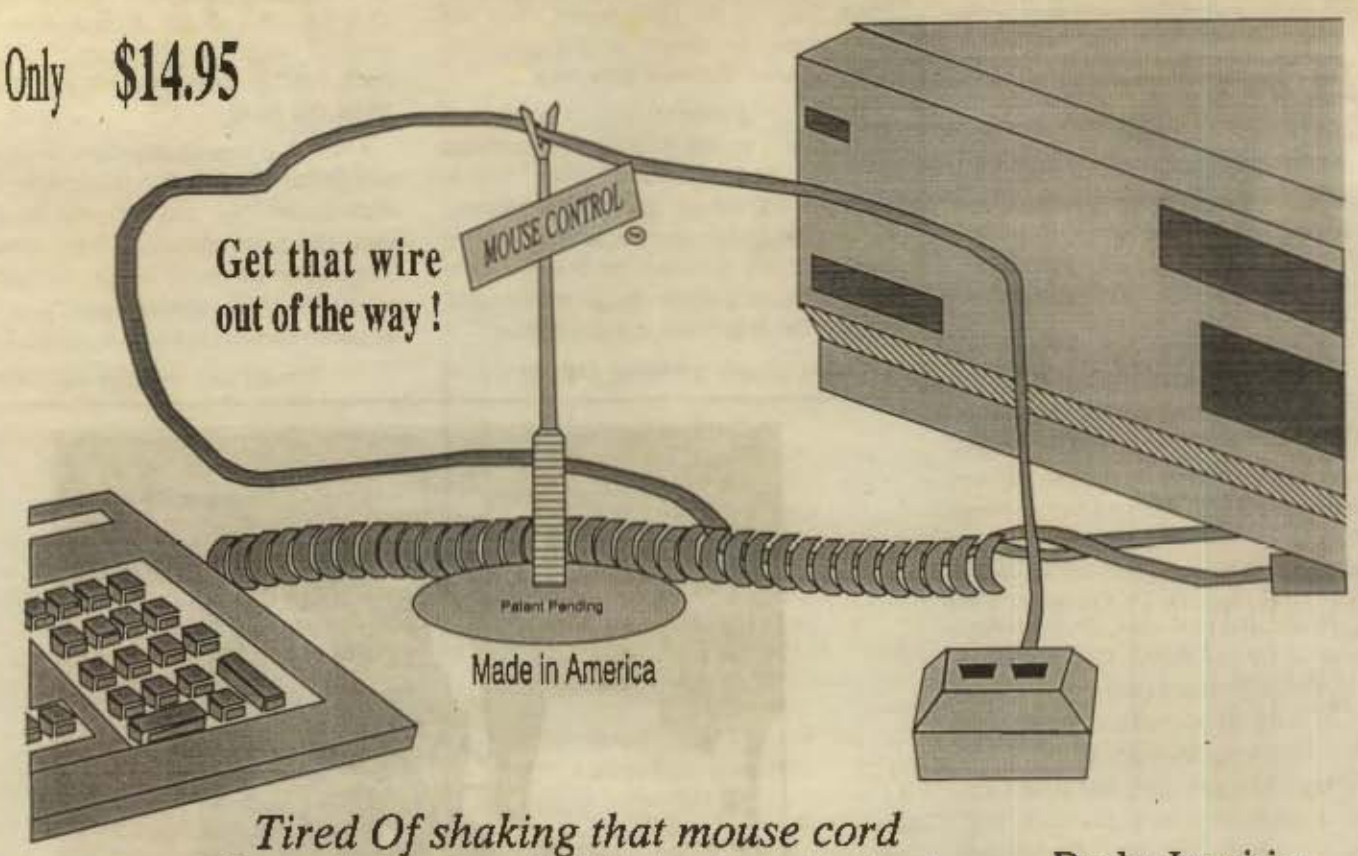

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CSA's 40/4 Magnum for the Amiga 2000 Now Shipping

The new 40/4 Magnum runs at a blinding 20 MIPS (Million Instructions Per Second) — 3 times the speed of the fastest 68030-based Amiga currently available. By comparison, a standard 68000-based Amiga runs at about .8 MIPS, while an Amiga 3000 (with the Motorola 68030 CPU) runs at 5.5 MIPS. The 40/4 Magnum also provides a means to bypass several key Amiga performance bottlenecks, including memory, serial, parallel and SCSI throughput.

Computer graphics, animation and video professionals will especially benefit from the release of the 40/4 Magnum. In addition to working with the NewTek Video Toaster, a 40/4 Magnum will provide an Amiga 2000 with enough horsepower to perform sophisticated ray-tracing, 3-D modelling and animations at a rate of 1.3 instructions per clock cycle: nearly 70% the speed of a base, single-CPU RISC workstation.

"CSA cleared many technological hurdles in developing the 40/4 Magnum." says Steve Riker, director of sales and marketing for CSA. "The 40/4 Magnum is fully compatible with version 2.0 of the Amiga operating system, and our interfaces are working and complete to all of the other key elements: the Motorola 68040 CPU, 1 megabyte of Static RAM and room for 64 megabytes of Dynamic RAM."

Built using advanced Surface Mount Technology, CSA's 40/4 Magnum comes with 1 megabyte of burstable (zero wait state) 32-bit Static RAM, a fast, (DMA) SCSI hard drive controller and 3 high speed ports — one parallel, and two serial (RS232 and RS422) — all running within the 20 MIP environment of the 68040 CPU. It installs directly into the 86-pin CPU slot of any Amiga 2000-series personal computer and even has mounting points for most 3.5-inch internal hard drives.

The 40/4 Magnum currently supports 4, 8, 12 or 16 megabytes of Dynamic RAM in the form of four 4-megabyte 32-bit SIMM modules.

A full 64 megabytes of DRAM storage should be possible by mid 1992, when a number of manufacturers are expected to release the next generation of DRAM technology: a 16-megabyte 32-bit SIMM module.

Need more memory? The 40/4 Magnum can support up to 128 megabytes of 32-bit Dynamic RAM via a special 32-bit expansion bus (built into the board) which also opens a door to future technologies and products, such as parallel processing with multiple 68040 CPUs and more powerful RISC chips.

Software packaged with the 40/4 Magnum includes a benchmark and system analyzer that double checks the board's low-level functionality, and a ROM-based configuration program that ensures proper execution of the 68040's Floating Point Unit for maximum performance.

CSA describes the 40/4 Magnum as a "Single Board Computer" (SBC), and not just an accelerator. An SBC like the 40/4 Magnum works by taking over as much processing work as it can from the motherboard, bypassing the Amiga's traditional bottlenecks: input/output, and raw processing power.

"Installing an SBC like the 40/4 Magnum is like adding a second, more powerful 1992-model engine, transmission and cargo trailer to your favorite 1985-model car." says CSA's Steve Riker. "Not only can you drive faster and haul more luggage, you can still put in the same kind of gas (petrol) as before and still sit in the same familiar driver's seat." Adds Riker: "You even get better mileage from your old engine, because the new engine has taken over much of the work." The Single Board Computer is CSA's strategy for integrating new computing technologies with existing Amiga hardware and software.

"Aside from its speed," says Riker, "the Amiga is a very competent platform for professional graphics, animations, ray-tracing and other applications — and not just because of its hardware. The Amiga has a growing base of very high-quality graphics, animation and video-related software. What's more, both hardware and software are less expensive for the Amiga than for any other computer platform.

"By removing the Amiga's speed bottlenecks," adds Riker, "the 40/4 Magnum makes the Amiga and its software base a viable alternative for video, graphics and animation professionals."

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

Japanese I

Education Tutorial Software announces the release of *Japanese I Version 2.0* for the Amiga, an interactive language program which teaches the user to speak, read, and understand Japanese. *Japanese I* and its accompanying manual provide a thorough self-study course in the basics of the Japanese language.

Japanese I features digitized speech of a native Japanese to demonstrate the sounds of Japanese. Custom characters are utilized to teach the Japanese alphabets — Hiragana, Katakana, and thirty-eight Kanji.

The program uses a flashcard method to teach the Kana and Kanji, as well as common words and expressions, numbers and time, verbs, and adjectives. Five quizzes test comprehension in the reading, oral, and character recognition skill areas.

The list price of *Japanese I* for the Amiga is $41.95. A free demo disk is available upon request.

Education Tutorial Software at P.O. Box 988., Westminster, CA 92684, (310) 470-6205, fax (310)470-6205, ext. 222, CompuServe 76114,1105.

❑

World Atlas 2.5

Centaur Software has announced the availability of Version 2.5 of their popular *World Atlas* program for the Amiga family of computers. *World Atlas* provides geographic, political, historical and other information on over 170 countries and all fifty of the United States. Centaur's *World Atlas* has been updated to reflect the latest available global statistical and political information, such as the unification of Germany and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

Completely re-written in the "C" programming language, the revised version now features easy hard drive installation, the ability to print maps and other data, AmigaDOS 2.0 compatability and an extensive AREXX interface.

The *World Atlas* sells for $59.95.

Centaur Software, Inc. P.O. Box 4400, Redondo Beach, CA 90278. (310)542-2226. ❑

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GVP Redesigns the G-Force 030 Series

Price and Performance Improves

GVP has redesigned its Combo series for the A2000. Called G-Force 030, the new layout of the boards allows for greater performance at reduced prices.

The 22Mhz version of the Combo board has been replaced with a 25Mhz version which features a built-in SCSI controller, a 25Mhz 68EC030 CPU and a 25 Mhz 68882 FPU. The board comes installed with 1 MB of 60ns 32-bit RAM and is user-expandable to 13MB.

The 40 Mhz version replaces the Combo 33. Like the 25Mhz board, this upgraded system also features a built-in SCSI controller. Also included are a 40Mhz 68EC030 CPU and a 40Mhz 68882 FPU. This board comes installed with 4 MB of 32-bit wide 60ns RAM and is expandable to 16 MB. A choice of factory installed 120 or 240 MB Quantum drives transforms this accelerator into the ultimate hard card.

Both of these boards utilize the economical 680EC30 CPU, allowing GVP to offer increased speed without increased prices. Through the addition of hardware remapping of the Kickstart ROM, GVP has been able to enhance system performance without the need and cost associated with an MMU.

The 50Mhz version of the board features the standard 68030 CPU, 68882 FPU and a SCSI controller, as well as 4 MB of on-board RAM, expandable to 16 MB. This accelerator can also become the ultimate hard card with the addition of a factory installed 240 MB Quantum hard drive.

All three versions are available with an optional hard drive mounting kit, which allows a hard disk drive to be mounted directly onto the board. In addition, the boards also feature a 14Mhz SCSI controller chip which enhances the hard drive performance on all three accelerators.

Great Valley Products, 600 Clark Avenue, King of Prussia, PA 19406, (215) 337-8770, fax (215)337-9922. Contact Sheila Kirby. ❑

$20,000 in Prizes for 3rd Annual Animation Video Contest

The editors of *AmigaWorld* Magazine announced that over $20,000 in prizes will be awarded in the third annual *AmigaWorld* Animation Contest. State-of-the-art style and technique is the theme of this year's contest. Entries must be 2-D or 3-D animations produced on any Amiga computer. Winning animations will be produced on videotape and distributed worldwide through TechMedia Video in 1993.

The First Prize winner will receive the "Ultimate Commodore Amiga 3000 System" featuring an Amiga 3000 with 5MB, 100MB hard drive ($4,146), Amiga 1950 multisync monitor ($695), G-force 040 accelerator ($2,799) and Impact Vision 24 video/graphics board ($2,199) from Great Valley Products, Personal single frame controller from Nucleus Electronics ($425), and Caligari Broadcast 2.13 3-D animation and rendering software from Octree ($1,995).

The Second Prize package includes the *Harlequin 2000 32-bit Frame Buffer* from the Amiga Centre Scotland ($2,100), *Typaint* from Tecsoft, France ($1,500), *V-Lab* video digitizer from MacroSystem, Germany ($450) and Will Vinton's *3-d Animation* from Cineplay ($499.95). The Third Prize package is Digital Creation's *DCTV* ($499.95) and Progressive Peripheral's *3-D Pro 2.0* ($399.95).

In addition, the First, Second and Third place winners will receive Virtual Reality Lab's *VistaPro 2.0* with *MakePath* and *TerraForm* landscape generators ($149.95) and Progressive Peripheral's *Animation Station* utility software ($49.95). The next ten winners will receive: DevWare's 25 best video/graphics public domain disks ($98.75), Progressive Peripheral's *Diskmaster* ($49.95) and the *AmigaWorld 3-D Library* ($89.95).

Contest entries should be directed to: Tim Walsh, *AmigaWorld* magazine, 80 Elm Street, Peterborough, NH 03458. Entries must be submitted on floppy disk with full loading instructions and a 1/2" or 3/4" video tape review copy, preferably NTSC. Animations will have a maximum length of 3 minutes. They will be judged on a basis of content and technical expertise. Deadline for entries is October 15, 1992. Winners will be announced in the February 1993 issue of *AmigaWorld*. ❑

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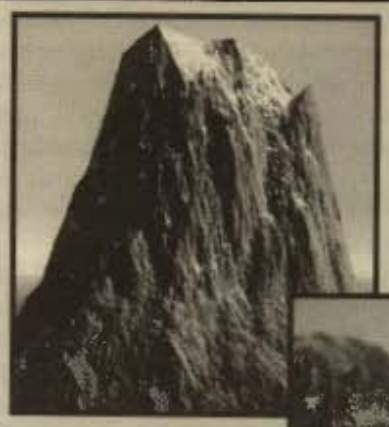

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Panzer Battles Released

Panzer Battles is the second release in the Battlefront series for the Amiga, and follows on from the highly successful *Halls of Montezuma.*

The Russian Front saw the greatest concentration of armored forces the world has ever known, *Panzer Battles* recreates six of those battles, using SSG's award winning World War II land combat system. Those battles are: *Encirclement at Minsk*-Disaster on the Frontiers 1941, *Gates of Moscow*-Siberian Shock Armies counter-offensive 1941, *Disaster at Kharkov*-First steps on the road to Stalingrad 1942, *Prokhorovka*-The greatest tank battle the world has ever seen, *Kursk 1943*, *Kanev*-Parachute bridghead across the Dnieper River 1943 and *Korsun*-1st SS Panzer attempts the rescue of the Korsun Pocket 1944.

Panzer Battles will illustrate the free-wheeling attack and counter attack of armoured warfare in Russia. On the German side are elite armoured formations, including SS and Army Panzer divisions. The Russian side includes the Siberian Shock Troops and the battle hardened Guards Tank Armies.

Panzer Battles also includes SSG's much admired *WarPlan* and *WarPaint* design kits. *WarPlan* allows existing scenarios to be edited, or new battles created. *WarPaint* allows Amiga owners to change terrain and other icons, all of which can be edited pixel by pixel to create the most realistic looking maps. Units can easily be created, complete with custom icons and just placed on the map with the mouse.

Panzer Battles continues the ground breaking work of *Halls of Montezuma*, and will be eagerly awaited by Amiga gamers.

The game requires 1 Megabyte of memory and Workbench 1.2 or 1.3, is hard disk compatible and two floppy disk drives are recommended. The game is not copy protected and is available for $49.95.

Strategic Studies Group, 8348 Monticello Drive, Pensacola, FL 32514. (904) 494-9397. ❑

Flicker Free Video Preferences Program

ICD, Incorporated, has begun shipping *Flicker Free Video Preferences*, a program allowing customization of the Amiga's video display.

Low vertical scan rates (especially the 50 Hz of PAL machines) can produce a "strobing" display that leads to discomfort and eye strain. *Flicker Free Video Preferences* takes advantage of 8372A ("Fatter") and newer Agnus chips to allow raising this scan rate for a steadier display. You can also lower the scan rate to provide a larger display! The vertical scan rate is adjustable from 49 Hz up to 100.2 Hz, though the actual frequencies usable may be limited by display hardware and monitor capabilities.

Flicker Free Video Preferences offers these features:

- Adjustable vertical scan rate from 49 Hz to 100.2 Hz to provide a more solid display.
- Can be used with or without a display enhancer on any Amiga computer, though features may be limited by the capabilities of some display enhancers and monitors. While *Flicker Free Video Preferences* was designed to be used with ICD's *Flicker Free Video* display enhancer, the program does not require it. The Amiga 3000 and A2320 display enhancer support all of *Flicker Free Video Preferences* features.
- Adjustable Workbench overscan for maximum use of display area.
- Adjustable number of Workbench colors, from two to sixteen with Workbench 2.
- Compatible with Workbench 1.2 and above, though some features require Workbench 2.
- Other features include turning Workbench interlace on and off, centering the screen, saving and loading settings.

The *Flicker Free Video Preferences* program is available to registered owners of ICD's Flicker Free Video display enhancer for $15 directly from ICD. Others may buy the program from their local dealer or directly from ICD for $29.95.

ICD Customer Service, 1220 Rock Street, Rockford, IL 61101-1437, (815) 968-2228, fax (815) 968-6888. ❑

New 38 Special Amiga `030 Accelerator

CSA Inc. has begun shipping the 38 Special, a new 68030-based Amiga accelerator that runs at a fast 38Mhz and installs into any Amiga 500 or 2000-series personal computer.

The 38 Special is a highly advanced and specialized version of CSA's popular Mega-Midget Racer accelerator. Like the Mega-Midget Racer, the 38 Special replaces the CPU inside your Amiga with its own 68030 CPU and separate math-coprocessor.

Unlike its predecessor, however, the 38 Special includes a faster 50 MHz 68030 CPU (Clocked at 38 MHz for reliability) together with the fastest 68882 math co-processor available, running at 50 MHz. Also unique to the 38 Special is an optimized Dynamic RAM controller rated at 40MHz, and full support for 32-bit Static RAM.

The 38 Special can be purchased with 4 or 8 MBytes of optimized 32—bit Dynamic RAM and has room for an optional 512k Static RAM upgrade. With or without SRAM, the 38 Special still supports CSA's proprietary remapping of Kickstart ROM for Operating System caching (1.3 or 2.0) for much faster operation. Also available in the 38 Special is a software—or hardware—selectable 68000 mode.

CSA's 38 Special was designed to meet the needs of professionals looking for the most affordable 50MHz performance option, but who doesn't want or need to configure it themselves.

Suggested retail price for the 38 Special is $1,250 (pre-configured with 4 MBytes of Dynamic RAM), or $1,595 (with 8 MBytes). A 513k Static RAM upgrade is available from CSA for $200.

CSA, 7564 Trade Street, San Diego, CA 92121, (619) 566-3911. FAX (619) 566-0581. ❑

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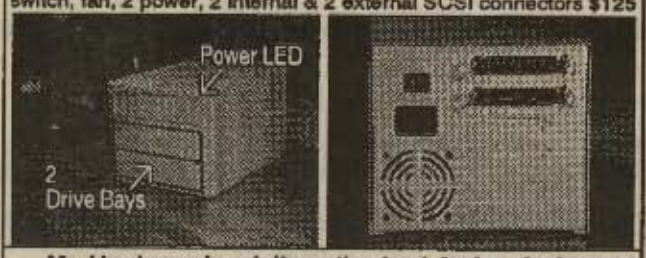

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The New A600

by Graham Heywood

A new Amiga, the A600 has been released in Europe. It made its official debut at the German CeBit Show in March.

While rumors and speculation have been around for a while about a new low-end Amiga, the specifications were a tightly guarded secret.

The A600 has a redesigned case with no numerical keypad which reduces the length considerably. It measures approximately 14 1/2 x 10-inches. The main styling difference is the wedge shape when seen from the side. This no doubt results from the built-in TV modulator, a ROM card socket, and to leave room for the proposed internal hard-drive.

The joystick port and the mouse port have also been relocated to the right side. The back remains pretty much the same with parallel and serial ports, disk drive port, RGB monitor connector and stereo sound outlets. Additional ports are: a output for RF signal and dual plugs for color composite video output.

The inside features a redesigned smaller motherboard featuring (surprise) a 68000 running at 7.14 MHz, the enhanced chip set with "super-fat" Angus capable of addressing 2mb of CHIP RAM. The A600 comes with 1mb of RAM. It is being shipped with Workbench 2.05 operating system. The major drawback seems to be that it will only be expandable to 2mb of RAM. Why?

The reason apparently for the limit on memory expansion is the disappearance of the left-hand edge connector. It has been replaced by an IDE connector hidden inside the machine, useful for connecting an internal hard drive, but not a lot else. The IDE connector is a strange move on Commodore's part. It makes sense if you assume that the only need for the edge connector is for a hard drive, and that the cheapest, smallest hard drives on the market are the IDE units manufactured for use in laptops.

The biggest drawback to this thinking is that it makes the A600 unable to use the CD-ROM drive (if it ever arrives in the States). This suggests that Commodore will continue to market the A500. It also makes sense of Commodore's decision to rename the A690 (CD-ROM) to A570.

So where does new Amiga stand? I assume with the addition of a ROM-card slot on the left-hand side of the machine, it's targeted at the Nintendoids. ROM-cards are small plastic cards which have a ROM hard-wired (they are similar to the cartridges on which console game machines operate). The card interface uses industry-standard PCMCIA/IEDA. The cards are in use on PCs and at the moment can carry up to 4MB of data.

The ROM cards are becoming more economical to manufacture and carry the advantage of being next to impossible to pirate. Software developers would be happy to spend the time and money to develop the best software, knowing that for every piece they sell, there are not going to be 1000 copies made.

The only other change in the hardware is the replacement of the input device handler 'Gary' with 'Gayle' to handle the new ROM card input device.

BIG DEAL

Is this new Amiga a technological breakthrough? No. The main importance is to the software producers knowing that most people who own a copy of their software have paid for it and not copied from a friend. After all, these people could kill the Amiga, simply by stopping development for the Amiga, if they consider that they are not getting a reasonable return for their development time.

The A600 is no giant step for Amigadom, but it may encourage better software. ❑

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Scala Inc. Launches Unique Public Information/Advertising System

SCALA, Inc., of Reston, Virginia has announced the introduction of the *InfoChannel* information display system to the North American market. *InfoChannel* is a unique marketing system for the production, scheduling and broadcasting of TV-based screens including advertisements and general public information. An *InfoChannel* user can produce elegant screens using a wide variety of included backgrounds, symbols, effects and special large fonts. After designing a series of advertisement or information screens, the screens can be "looped" together for continuous broadcast or for interactive kiosks. A large number of exciting animations (movements and transitions) can also be added to produce an attractive and exciting online presentation. The presentation can then be displayed directly on any attached TV screen or transferred to any number of in-house or remote TV networks.

InfoChannel is used in airports like the Stockholm International Airport to broadcast information to travellers and advertisements for tax-free shopping. *InfoChannel* is used by the London Underground, with over 20 installations to display information about the various shops at each of the stations. *InfoChannel* is even used by a large number of cable TV companies, like KTAS in Copenhagen, to improve the quality of their community and service channel broadcasts.

InfoChannel had 3 user levels (novice, intermediate, advanced) so that the user can add more features as they learn. The user starts with one of the ready-made, artist-designed backgrounds and then adds texts, prices, logos, and scanned color photographs. Texts can automatically be imported from other computers or, with the use of WYSIWYG text-processing features texts can be entered manually. Features for layout, color palettes, 3D and outline fonts allow for complete control over screen design. Over 25 "wipes" or transitions can be used for giving the texts animated motion or for moving between the different screens. An unlimited number of screens can be "looped" for continuous display or can be scheduled for specific time and date display. Interactive touch-screen applications can also be made even by the non-technical staff.

InfoChannel is designed around the Commodore Amiga. The minimum *InfoChannel* system requires a standard Amiga 2000, 3MB of memory and a hard disk drive. Modems and other communications options can be added for distributed solutions.

Scala Inc., 12110 Sunset Hills Rd., Suite 100, Reston, Virginia 22090. Telephone: (703)709-8043. Contact: Rick Salmon ❑

Micro-Pace Distributors, Inc. Announces Creation Of Micro-Pace U.K., LTD.

Micro-PACE adds new European division

Micro-PACE Distributors, the leading distributor of Amiga related software and hardware, announced that it has created a new European division with the addition of an office and warehouse located in Slough, Berks, near London.

"Our goal here is to help integrate the European and U.S. markets. By making U.S. products more available overseas, our vendors will see greater profits which will enable them to research and develop many more innovative products for which the Amiga is famous. Conversely, by marketing and supporting European products within the U.S., the whole Amiga community benefits from a greater selection of titles. Support and service to the entire Amiga community worldwide has always been our goal," said Micro-PACE President and founder, Robert Wolter.

The expansion of Micro-PACE into the European community is good news for Amiga users, dealers, and vendors around the world. Micro-PACE U.K. will be purchasing through U.K. sources for the majority of its products. Where permissible, hard to find products will be supplied by Micro-PACE U.S. "We will respect and adhere to vendor's territorial restrictions in regard to importing and exporting Amiga products," said Jeremy Farrance, VP of Sales for Micro-PACE U.S.

Micro-PACE Distributors USA, Inc., 604 North Country Fair Drive, Champaign, IL 61821, (217)356-1884. Contact: Jason Chin.

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* Lets users create customized databases with names, addresses and phone numbers.

Priced at $449, GVP'S PhonePak FaxMail will work with the Amiga 2000/3000. For more information or your nearest GVP dealer call (215)337-8770, fax (215)337-9922. ❑

Agony

by Lee Heywood

When Psygnosis puts its name to a product, you can rest assured that it's a quality product and *Agony* is no exception to the rule. *Agony* was developed by Art & Magic and reworked by Psygnosis into a superbly professional package.

Agony's story line consists of Alestes, a wizard's apprentice, transforming into a magical owl to find the secret of Cosmic Power, while the wizard's other apprentice, Mentor, tries to stop him. Pretty cheesy, but since when has the story-line been of major relevance to a shoot-em-up?

Agony's first impression on loading the title sequence is, and I quote from my notes: "Very nice, but I've seen games where the title sequence is better than the game. Judging by the sound quality from my 1084, I should hook this one up to the stereo." After connecting the stereo, I was impressed! No fewer than 8 people were responsible for the sound track.

After the game itself loaded, I was impressed even more with the multi-layer scrolling backgrounds and foregrounds. In fact, the first couple of times I played the game, I died rather quickly because I was paying more attention to the artwork than to the attacking beasties! The animation of the owl is superb, utilizing the Disney technique of double bob, rather than the straight-ahead technique. The attacking sprites are nicely detailed, but not animated to the level of the owl. In certain places even the backgrounds are animated!

Agony is a six-level game with each level progressively more difficult, so be sure to collect the spells, you'll need them. The spells (power-ups) come in the shape of flagons and scrolls, and contain an assortment of magic from reverse firing to invulnerability. These spells are of limited duration, so part of the strategy of this game is to save them for the most appropriate time. There are also swords laying around, which when acquired become part of your attacking strength by hovering around you and dealing with some of the beasties flying above or below you.

Programmer Yves Grolet has created the standard by which 1992 games will be judged. My only complaints are the copy-protection scheme and the floppy disk access routine. The copy-protection prevents my installing *Agony* onto my hard-disk. Surely, in this day and age when hard-disks and expanded memory machines are becoming more common, some method of copy-protection could be utilized to allow hard-disk installation and then load the complete game into RAM.

The disk access routine turns the swap disk requests into a mini-game in itself. I always understood that you don't remove or insert disks while the drive is in motion, but unfortunately the routine seems to have some sort of timing sensor rather than disk sensor.

Agony also has a problem with *Kickstart 1.2*, but works fine under 1.3 and 2.0.

These two complaints aside, *Agony* is the type of game that will make those poor owners of Genesis and Super-Nintendo machines green with envy.

Psygnosis, 29 Saint Mary's Court, Brookline, MA 02146. ❑

Report on AgfaType

The Agfa typefaces are outline faces that are very professional, which is understandable given the fact that Agfa (formerly Compugraphic) produces phototypesetting equipment for the printing industry. The type faces are optically correct with proportional X-height, beard-length etc.

You can, with a little work, utilize them with Pro-Page and Pagestream (I do not have access to Saxon's pagemaker).

Of course, any program that can access the system fonts can use the Agfa fonts without any problems.

The typefaces contain the sorts that are normally not provided with 'average' fonts: accents, fractions, etc.

The only drawback I can see is the pricing quoted in the accompanying catalog: $99 for 4 styles of the same face, Medium, Medium Italic, Bold and Bold Italic. ❑

AmigaDOS 2 Companion

by Lee Heywood

AmigaDOS 2.0 is a radical step forward. As such, it has spawned quite a few books due to the fact that the manual that comes with the new operating system was completed before the software. As a result, the documentation contains errors and omissions.

The latest book is *Amiga World*'s Official AmigaDOS 2 Companion by Bob Ryan.

I don't know what the official in the title refers to — is it *Amiga World*'s official book or Commodore Business Machine's?

The book is aimed at beginner to intermediate users, and as such, explains in detail the functions of 2.0. The 2.0 Companion takes you on a guided tour of the new operating system; going from *Workbench* basics through *Preferences* into the *Extras* drawer, thence the *Shell*, delving into DOS, showing you how to manipulate files and devices, dealing with scripts, and finally going into *ARexx*.

2.0 certainly needs a companion book, and as such the Official AmigaDOS 2 Companion is great. If you already possess any of the other books, then the "Official" version contains nothing exceptionally new.

The Official AmigaDOS 2 Companion costs $24.95 and is available at bookstores, software stores or direct from the publisher; IDG Books Worldwide at (800) 762-2974. ❑

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The Silent Type: AIR Drive

by Lee Heywood

One of the advantages of computer ownership is that most of the internals are solid state. Once the initial burn-in period is over, the chances of things going wrong are small. But there are things that whirr and make odd clicking noises, and occasionally these things make you go ummm — it's time to replace this, or maybe just add one more of these clicking things.

Fortunately (or maybe unfortunately) Amigadom has at the moment a single standard (880k) floppy. What this means in practice is that externally most floppies look the same, so when the time comes to replace or add a drive, high on my list of priorities is quiet, precise operation. The AIR Drive fits that description, plus it comes with a one year warranty (one minor exception).

External drive connection is simple: Just turn off your computer, plug in the AIR drive, make sure the on/off switch at the back of the drive is in the UP position, turn on your computer and that's it. The on/off switch is a useful switch as each drive you mount uses a small amount of RAM and machines with the minimum memory sometimes need to be able to disable the external drive to use some software.

An internal drive on a 2000 is a different proposition. First, you remove the cover, then the drive mounting bracket, then set the drive select jumper on the AIR drive to DS1. Mount your drive to the bracket, use the enclosed jumper block on the motherboard and attach the power supply connector to the drive. Attach the drive ribbon cable, test it and reassemble. Piece of cake, right? Just follow the enclosed documentation and you can't go wrong.

The documentation takes you step by step through all the procedures in a clear, concise way, so even a guy like me with two left hands had no problems. The only problem with the documentation was the type size, (about three point, I think — one third the size of this type).

As mentioned earlier, the AIR drive comes with a one year warranty. The exception to that is if you attach the power cable the wrong way. Doing that will fry your drive and that's a no-no — the warranty doesn't cover that. But seeing that the power cable is designed to attach only one way, attaching the cable backwards would be difficult.

In performance, the drive proved to be quiet and reliable and performed the PD disk checks flawlessly. Installation is quite within the bounds of the average user, although reading the docs, the 1000 internal installation does require drilling and soldering, so if you are uncomfortable with a soldering iron, then a trip to your local service person would be in order.

Further information on the AIR drive is available from Advanced Integration Research, 3006 North Main Street, Logan, Utah, 84321, (801) 753-4947 ❑

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The XYXIS Corporation has announced the introduction of a 5.25-inch Erasable Optical Subsystem that is compatible with the Commodore 2000, 2500 and 3000. The XY600RW-HS is accessed via an Amiga 20901 SCSI interface board. It features a storage capability up to 600 megabytes and an ability to be erased more than 1 million times. For security or portability, the device can be removed and transported or stored. For those Amiga users who have high end work stations, this device is available for DEC, SUN, IBM RS6000 Microsystems, as well as Apple Macs, IBM-PC AT, PS-2.

The suggested retail on this Erasable Optical Subsystem is $5,245. Rewritable cartridges are $225 and attractive discounts are available for retailers.

Give Art or Tom a call at (612) 949-2388 if 600Mb of storage is something you need right away. They're shipping orders now. Also, if you can come up with a less boring name than XY600RW-HS for this extremely useful and hard working Amiga accessory, send your suggestion, along with thanks for supporting the Amiga, on a postcard to: XYXYS Corporation, 14631 Martin Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. If they change the name to what you suggest, you'll receive lots of satisfaction and gratitude for a job well done. ❑

More Power

Micro R&D has announced a power supply upgrade program for the Amiga 3000. For $149.00, you can replace the A-3000 135 Watt circuit board with their rugged 200 watt powerhouse. The Micro R&D upgrade gives the A-3000 owner the opportunity to install the Video Toaster, time base correctors, accelerators and other power-draining devices that tend to overburden other lighter-weight power supplies.

To learn more about this new product, call Micro R&D at (800) 527-8797. ❑

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Demo Pack #1

1. PINK FLOYD, THE WALL-- An awesome 6 disk demo, must be seen to believe.
2. PHENOMENA ENIGMA--Classic Demo.
3. SCOOPEX MENTAL HANGOVER--Slammin'
4. SIMPSON'S BY DECAY--Do the Bartman.
5. 3D BY EXIT--Blue&Red glasses req'd.

Demo Pack #2

1. ODYSSEY--5 disk movie/demo 40 min.
2. HARDWIRED--Killer new 2 disk demo.
3. VIRTUAL WORLDS--3D Vector Journey.
4. SKIDROW DEMO--(Not the Rock Group)
5. ANARCHY DIGITAL INNOVATION--Awesome.

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10-19 DISKS $4.00
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GAMES

GAM001A-STAR TREK, THE GAME-Brilliant 2 Disk game by Tobias Richter. A RPG wherein you are the captain of your ship and must complete several missions while keeping you and yours safe.(1 meg, PAL)
GAM001B-DISK 2 of above.
GAM005-Wizzy's Quest,Pipes, Cubik-Wizzy's quest is a puzzle/ adventure with multiple levels. Pipes is a clone of the popular game Pipeline. Cubik is a Rubiks Cube simulator.(Wizzy's Quest is PAL).
GAM018-GAMES #1-Contains 3 great games. Rebound, a very good Arkanoid clone. Invaders, a defender-type game. And GridRunner a Centipede-type game that most C64 owners will remember.
GAM033-ST BASH-A space invaders type game where you blast the Atari ST's, a great multilevel blaster.
GAM034-THE HOLY GRAIL-A great text only adventure where you are on a quest for the Holy Grail.
GAM038-GOLDEN FLEECE-Another great adventure from the author of The Holy Grail, the author claims they are comparable to the INFOCOM games. Worth a look.
GAM039-BLIZZARD-Nice playable Uridium type horizontally scrolling spaceship blaster.
GAM040-STAR TREK-Another Star Trek RPG (different from the one in GAM001A/B) this one features digitized sound and graphics from the original Star Trek series. Comes on 3 disks and is highly recommended.
GAM041-Disk 2 of above.
GAM042-Disk 3 of above.
GAM045-7 TILES-Excellent Speedball clone. This is a sort of futuristic Rugby/Soccer simulation.(PAL, I can't get it to work properly on an A3000.)
GAM046-SEALANCE-Excellent submarine simulation. You are the captain of a state of the art nuclear submarine charged with ridding the Earth of Alien invaders. Extremely absorbing.
GAM049-SHAPES-An excellent puzzle game, you must fill in the black area of the screen in the allotted time.
GAM053 - BATTLE PONG- Remember the first arcade game Pong, well here's an upgraded version of the old bat 'n' ball game, this one has dif- ferent weapons and special features.
GAM054 - ZEUS- Another very playable game, very much in the sokoban style, a very good and challenging brain teaser.
GAM066 - ARCADE PERFECT ASTEROIDS - the name says it all(PAL)
GAM068 - MECHFIGHT- An Ultima style RPG set in the future on a deadly space station.
GAM070 - MEGABALL- Probably one of the best PD games available, this is based on the Arkanoid theme, the graphics, sound and playability just cannot be faulted.
GAM071 - JUMPY- This has to be one of the more infuriating of games on the PD scene. You control a little guy who collects bones. Very good.
GAM077 - Hate - Includes Hate - an excellent Zaxxon type game and Nebula - a hovercraft type 3D shoot'em up.
GAM079 - Llamatron -Cubus -&Columns - Llamatron is an excellent update of the classic robotron - Cubus is a 3D version of Tetris - and Columns is a Tetris variant just like the arcade game by Sega (Llamatron and Cubus require a 1meg Agnus to run.)
GAM081 - Pom Pom Gunner - You are a WWII gunner on an American Battleship trying to shoot down enemy planes.
GAM084 - PacMan and Galaxians - Two Arcade Classics - different from other PacMan disk(PAL)
GAM085 - Operation Lemmings - Like Operation Wolf - only you shoot the Lemmings -(requires 1meg Agnus)
GAM086 - Intruder Alert - A game like the Arcade classic - with updated graphics and sound.Very well done.
GAM096 - Dungeons of Nadroj - A good role playing game.
GAM099 - Good Game - 'Quick and Silva' - This is the best Super Mario type clone I have seen on the Amiga - features 1 or 2 player mode - great graphics and excellent game play - A MUST HAVE! (runs only in PAL , and not under WB 2.0 w/o Chip Ram)
GAM103 - Motherlode - Remember LodeRunner on the C64? Well here it is on your Amiga - an excellent platform game.
GAM104 - Peter's Quest v1.2 - A very good Mario Bros. type game with powerups and bonuses.
GAM105 - Puggles - An excellent Q-Bert type game - works best in PAL.
GAM110 - Skate Tribe - A very good vertically scrolling skateboard game created with AMOS.
GAM111 - Marble Slides - Great puzzle game in the Pipemania mold.
GAM112 - 21 Games - On one hot PD disk, every kind of game is featured and they all work out at less than 15cents each. Chinese Checkers, Backgammon, Invaders, Missle Command, and many many more, buy it or forever drift into oblivion.....
GAM113 - Solid Squad - A 3D game by R Evand, guide your boat or car through the fast moving landscape amassing as many points as you can on the way.(1 meg only)
GAM114 - Airmania - An original Game that really is very good, try it.
GAM115 - Numpty and the Alien Invaders - A very good platform game, in the manic miner mold. Very good and very addictive.
GAM116 - Cosmic racer - A fast moving game that puts you in charge of a jet bike. Power your way through level after level of hot arcade action.
GAM117 - Revenge of the Mutant Camels - From the same demented team that brought you Llamatron. Very good.(PAL)

ANIMATIONS

ANI033 - Optimum Pressure Crisis - An Excellent Comic Book Style Collection of short Animations by the author of the 'Classy Animations' disks.
ANI049 - TOBIAS RICHTER-LANDING - Needs 4 Meg Ram - Awesome Ray-Traced Animation of SpaceShip landing, docking, and taking off again (on 4 disks)
ANI050 - Disk 2 of previous.
ANI051 - Disk 3 of previous.
ANI052 - Disk 4 of previous.
ANI053 - 3-D DEMOS - Features 3D, by the group Exil, very well done Eurodemo style programs which require red and blue 3D glasses to view(PAL).
ANI054 - BATMAN - E. Schwartz Anim w/ Batman battling archenemy the Joker + 2 others.
ANI055 - TREKLY - ENTERPRISE through and asteroid field, a well crafted 3D Animation by Leo Schwab.
ANI057 - Porky Pig Animation - An animation of an old Porky Pig cartoon. Good ole Porky hits his thumb with a hammer and almost bleats out an obscenity.
ANI059 - RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK - In my opinion the best scene from ROTLA is depicted in! his anim, it is the scene where indy shoots the black robed guy doing the fancy swordwork, very funny.
ANI065 - 3 STEALTHY ANIMS - BY E. SCHWARTZ
ANI076 - CAR & UNICYCLE - Cool 3D animation done with VideoScape of a unicycle trying to cross the road and getting nailed by a sportscar.
ANI090 - WALKER VS AMY - By Eric Schwartz Amy chases a Star Wars Walker with a wrench.
ANI102 - SHUTTLECOCK Anim - By Eric Schwartz - 2 Space Shuttles playing at badminton using a satellite.
ANI103 - ATF Agility - Another Eric Schwartz Aerotoon, an aging jet teaches a young whippersnapper a lesson.
ANI105 - Anti-Lemmings - Need HD and 2 Megs of Ram. This is another Eric Schwartz classic animation which pokes fun a the game Lemmings, excellent peresentation lasts several minutes.
ANI106 - The Dating Game - By E. Schwartz the Adventures of Flip the Frog - Need 3 Megs and a Hard Drive. Flip has a difficult time making it to his date.
ANI107 - Too Much 3D - Classic Animation of a RayTracing Amiga going Berserk
ANI109 - Gulf Conflict - Funny Animation by Eric Schwartz with Hussein and a smart bomb
ANI110 - At The Movies - Amy the Squirrel Movie - Amy is on a date at the movies - slightly risque
ANI111 - Amy Does Schwab - Short -Looping anim. w/ Amy the squirrel on a unicycle - by Eric Schwartz. this is a bit of fun by Eric, taking a potshot at the classic animation, Berserk by Leo Schwab.
ANI116 - At the Movies 2 by Eric Schwartz. An excellent followup to At the Movies, starring Amy the Squirrel and her adventurous boyfriend. Comes on 4 disks will run on 1meg of RAM, but really needs 3 to get in all the music and sound.
ANI117 - Disk 2 of above.
ANI118 - Disk 3 of above.
ANI119 - Disk 4 of above.
ANI120 - Amy vs. Walker II by Eric Schwartz. Yet another tremendous cartoon animation starring Amy the Squirrel who is once again pitted against a Star Wars Walker, and this time she is armed with only her trusty staplegun. Comes on 2 disks requires a minimum of 3megs RAM.
ANI121 - Disk 2 of above.
ANI122 - A Day at the Beach. Another really well crafted cartoon by Eric Schwartz. This one features Flip the Frog and his girlfriend Clarisse the Cat on an adventure to the beach. 2 disks req. 3megs RAM, HD or 2DD
ANI123 - Disk 2 of Previous.
ANI124 - Probe Sequence, This shows an imaginary sequence recorded from a space craft as it journeys into an un- charted region and onto a strange planet where there have been reports of life.

DEMOS

DEM003 - PUGGS IN SPACE - As featured in The One mag. Brilliant Demo from the Liverpool based programmers. Features Puggs an ugly red alien on a trip to earth. See him fall from his ship, get run over, get crushed by a falling helicopter and dance to Michael Jacko...& more.. Great Graphics, Great Music, Great Animation, What more could you want?
DEM037 - Pink Floyd, The Wall - This is an awesome 6 disk animation which features digitized music, graphics and sound from the movie. If you are a Pink Floyd fan this is a must have. If you are an Amiga fan this is a must have.(In PAL, so you will need a 1 meg Agnus.)
DEM038 - Disk 2 of previous.
DEM039 - Disk 3 of previous.
DEM040 - Disk 4 of previous.
DEM041 - Disk 5 of previous.
DEM042 - Disk 6 of 6.
DEM058/59 - BEATLES DEMO DISKS - Excellent Digitized Beatles music with some 60's type color cycling animations.
DEM101 - HardWired - A 2 disk Megademo by the combined talents of the Silents and Chronics. One of the best so far of '92.
DEM102 - Disk 2 of above.
DEM103 - ODYSSEY - This is an incredible movie/demo! 5 disks and it lasts for 40 minutes follow the adventures of an outer space rebel, and be amazed!
DEM104 - Disk 2 of above.
DEM105 - Disk 3 of above.
DEM106 - Disk 4 of above.
DEM107 - Disk 5 of above.

MUSIC

MUS050 - MED V3.2 - Latest version of the BEST PD music creation utility for the Amiga.
MUS055 - OctaMED v1.00b - A tremendous 8(!) channel music editor - really nice.
MUS056 - StarTrekker - Another excellent Soundtracker-type music creator.
MUS057 - EDPlayer - A great MOD Player - plays nearly any mod - and sports a nifty CD-type interface.
MUS064 - SampleMaker - A program for synthesizing your own sounds and instruments. Comes with a SoundTracker type interface. (PAL)
MUS065 - CyberSounds - A collection of several good songs with a definite rock-n-roll theme,(I was getting tired of the new wave stuff). (PAL). Very Good!

UTILITIES

UTI014 - Disk Full of Printer Drivers - Drivers for most printers not covered on WB Extras disk including Citizen GSX140 and HP Deskjet - also includes PRTDRVGEN to create your own drivers.
UTI045 - WindowsBench - Give your WorkBench the look of Windows only this is much faster(it only looks like Windows) - will not work w/Dos 2.0.
UTI055 - NComm 2.0 - A great PD Communications program - features a powerful scripting language that can turn it int o BBS.
UTI061 - D-Copy 2 - Excellent copy program that really can't be bettered, fast reliable and very nice to look at. what more could you want?

HOME AND BUSINESS

HBU032 - II BASE II BASE - EXCELLENT -EASY To LEARN DATABASE
HBU033 - Label Base v3.0 - Excellent PD Base program with label printing capabilities
HBU034 - TextPlus 3.0 - Excellent PD WordProcessor from Germany
HBU035 - Clerk 4.0 - A complete Small business accounting program.
HBU036 - TextEngine - Excellent PD WordProcessor w/Spell check program

GRAPHICS

GRA020 - WINGNUTS FRACTAL GENERATOR - Excellent Fractal Producing Program
GRA021 - RED DWARF SLIDESHOW - A must for fans of the TV Show.
GRA024 - CONVERTERS PACK - A very good collection of graphics conversion utilities. Includes many graphics format conversion utilities
GRA044 - 3D Master - A good shareware version of an inexpensive raytrace program which features a graphical interface. The shareware requester tends to pop up at rather annoying times, though.
GRA046 - SpectraPaint 3.0 - An excellent PD Paint program in the DPaint II mold.
GRA047 - Allantys Slides - WOW!! You MUST have this disk. These are some serious graphics! Got 2.0? Go to your friends, as this disk is that good.(PAL)
GRA048 - Star Trek The Next Generation - Excellent digitized HAM pictures of the characters from the series.
GRA049 - Gator Graphics Tutor - This disk features a series of tutorials on how to create those cool Logos you see on all those Eurodemo disks.

NEWEST OF THE NEW

GAM120-BUCK ROGERS-An Amigafized version of the C64 cartridge classic! Includes an excellent LightCycles game. (PAL)
GAM121-LEMMINGOIDS- The definitive Asteroids clone. Blast Away! Intro is in PAL, but game works fine in NTSC.
GAM122-TOTAL WAR!- Good Looking 'RISK' -type of game. Conquer the World.(PAL)
GAM123-ATLANTIS- Nice looking role-playing strategy game.
GAM124-ASSASSINS GAMEDISK 15- Includes BattleCars, a 3D driving shoot'em up. Mambamove, a classic 'Snakepit' game Letrrix, a shapeshifting puzzler. All are very good.(Letrrix is PAL)
GAM125-ASSASSINS GAMEDISK 16-Includes Wastelands, a good game. MissionX, an awesome vertically scrolling shoot'em up. PACMAN, and Dilemma, a good brainteaser.
GAM126-ASSASSINS GAMEDISK 18-Contains Omegarace, just like the arcade classic Henry in Panic, a good platform game. Skydy, a superb SEUCK blaster. Frantic Freddy a fun platform game.(Some are PAL)
EDU009-TOTAL CONCEPTS ASTRONOMY- Good interactive Hyperbook tutorial on Astronomy.(not for small children.)(PAL)
EDU010-TOTAL CONCEPTS DINOSAURS- Like above, only on Dinosaurs. Very Good!
EDU011- MR MEN STORIES- Good disk for children learning to read.
UTI068-LANGUAGES DISK- Several good PD Languages, includes versions of FORTH, MODULA-2, XLISP, and LOGO, a basic knowledge of the CLI is required.
UTI069-RAZOR 1911 UTILITIES- Over 30 great utilities on one disk. Unfortunately, no docs. Includes Directory utilities, virus checkers, DiskSalv, etc. etc. too many to list
UTI070-SUPERKILLERS- EXCELLENT Virus Protection disk, ferrets out over 200 virii. A MUST HAVE!!
GRA050/051-TV GRAPHICS- Superb DPaint backdrops and lots of great fonts.(2 disks)
GRA052/053-VIDEO APPLICATIONS- Several good video and animation utilities, includes a couple of PD titling programs, and more
GRA054-GELIGNITE FONTS- Several great IFF fonts which were ripped from games and demos.

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Computer-Assisted Creative Writing
Your Amiga can help you write poetry

Today most writers are sold on the benefits of word processors. These utility programs are magic wands that make writing, editing, and revising easier than in earlier days.

With respect to the job of fashioning imaginative word images, can computers also help free up the creative process itself?

As owner of an educational software company dedicated to exploring new ways of using the Amiga for instructional purposes, I was interested in finding a promising answer to this question. So I asked my wife, Barbara Esbensen, an award-winning children's book author to design an Amiga program that might help youngsters undertake this task. The following is Barbara's explanation of Image Spinning, *the Amiga program she designed:*

When we write creatively, we are encouraged to be accurate, to say what we really mean, and to say it as economically as possible.

No special language or tricks are necessary. What IS necessary is finding the words that can capture our feelings and our impressions of the world around us.

In writing poetry, for example, we need not go down the June/moon/spittoon/baboon trail searching frantically for words that rhyme. Poetry does not have to rhyme, or look a certain way on the page, or have lines with a certain rhythmic pattern. Poetry captures images. Words are the trap we set to do the job.

Perhaps we forget something about the English language. It has been described by linguists to be one of the richest in the world.

The writer, Joseph Conrad, was Polish. He spoke French, then learned English as an officer on English merchant ships. When he began to write his great books, he said he never for an instant hesitated about the language he would use for his novels. He chose English for its tremendous variety, its shades of meaning, its color.

It is this richness of language which can excite us. It can encourage us to enjoy words for their sounds, their colors, and even for the shape of a particular word on the page.

Combinations of words that delight and astonish us can show up at an early age.

EXAMPLE: A five-year-old rushes in from the garden and shouts, "Mom! Come quick! There's a celebration of bees out there!"

EXAMPLE: A three-year-old excitedly announces that the fire in the big cabin fireplace is "roaring like a tiger" and "waving like a flag."

This is poetry.

Here are two poems about morning.

The first is by a ten-year-old:

Morning comes
like a big parade
with the brass
sun at the head.

The second poem is by an eight-year-old:

Daisy doorknob!
The sun
looks as if it is
two inches away.

Sherwood Anderson once wrote in an essay that "one works with words and one would like words that have a taste on the lips, that have a perfume to the nostrils, rattling words once can throw into a box and shake, making a sharp, jingling sound . . . ."

This Amiga program is designed to help a student create interesting word combinations and them put them together to form a poem.

First, from a bank of uncompleted lines, the Amiga randomly selects nine and places these on the screen.

For example:

[1] AN ALPHABET OF ____ TO ____
[2] ____ BALANCED AGAINST ____
[3] SEE ____ IN EVERY ____
[4] TAKE THIS ____ FOR YOUR ____
[5] IN THE ____ I SAW ____
[6] LOOSEN THE ____ OF ____
[7] ____ SPEAK A LANGUAGE OF ____
[8] READER OF ____ - SINGER OF ____
[9] THESE ____ ARE LADDERS TO ____

Let us say that you are the student.

You now choose from two to five of these lines to complete for possible use in a poem. This is done by pressing the number of each desired line. The order in which the lines are chosen will determine the order in which you will work with them.

Let us suppose that the following lines are selected: 3 9 1 7 4.

The screen is now cleared and the chosen lines reappear along with the thirty-five additional single words printed beneath these lines. These additional words have been randomly selected by the Amiga from another word bank.

From these words, you now select two for the blanks in the first line. If you prefer to use words out of your own head, that's fine. In writing poetry, one word really does lead to another!

Let's say that you select the words AUTUMN and ELM. The Amiga now prints:

SEE AUTUMN IN EVERY ELM

For the next line, you get to choose from a new list of thirty-five words. You select DAYS and CLIMB. The Amiga prints:

THESE DAYS ARE LADDERS TO CLIMB

Then another list of thirty-five words appears. You choose LEAVES and COLOR, and the next line is printed:

AN ALPHABET OF LEAVES TO COLOR

Again, thirty-five more words are presented. From them, you take TREES and TIME:

TREES SPEAK A LANGUAGE OF TIME

The final thirty-five words now come on the screen. You select LIGHT and DREAMS, and the line line is printed:

TAKE THIS LIGHT FOR YOUR DREAMS

Putting the five lines together, you get this:

SEE AUTUMN IN EVERY ELM
THESE DAYS ARE LADDERS TO CLIMB
AN ALPHABET OF LEAVES TO COLOR
TREES SPEAK A LANGUAGE OF TIME
TAKE THIS LIGHT FOR YOUR DREAMS

Finally, the Amiga tells you that you can re-shape your lines, making whatever changes you wish for your polished version. Although what you have done so far is not a bad effort it can be improved by playing around with the line placement.

->Remember, you do not have to use anything exactly as it has presented to you.

By changing the appearance of the lines (and, therefore, their rhythm), and by adding the words "and you can" where they will help the flow of things, you can make the poem less like a series of statements. The result will be a nice image of a season that can be called

OCTOBER
SEE AUTUMN IN EVERY ELM!
THESE DAYS ARE
LADDERS TO CLIMB, AN ALPHABET
OF LEAVES TO COLOR.
TREES SPEAK
A LANGUAGE OF TIME, AND YOU CAN
TAKE THIS LIGHT FOR YOUR

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Switch-IT by Global Upgrades Inc. Electronic ROM selector switch allows for compatibility of ALL your software. Automatically switch between 1.3 or 2.0 ROM from keyboard or mouse. Does not overlap the 68000 for compatibility with accelerator. $39.50
McCoy PLCC Angus Chip Puller sold as Surady by CBM for $25. Our price $14.95
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DREAMS.

Emily Dickinson once wrote in a letter that if she read something that made her feel "so cold no fire can warm me," and if the words made her feels as though "the top of my head were blown off," then she knew she was reading poetry.

One day an elementary school pupil dashed to the teacher's desk with a poem by Emily Dickinson.

"She sweeps with many-colored brooms," read the student.

And then, with that feeling we all recognize when we've met something really fine, the youngster said, "I wish I'd thought of writing that."

Can this be an effective program?

Here is what one Southern Maryland teacher had to say:

"I put *Image Spinning* to the acid test with 14-year-old learning-disabled boys who are insulted if you suggest that rap music has anything to do with poetry. Once they saw the freedom they had to produce variations and experiment with *Image Spinning*, these 'non-readers' were vigorously writing and reading their poetry to each other."

In effect, Barbara's program is simply a powerful variation on a word game that she sometimes plays with teachers and students when she works as a language arts consultant:

Two boxes are used. In one are slips of paper, each with a noun written on it. In the other box are slips of paper containing adjectives.

Without looking, each player draws a slip from each box. The challenge is then to fashion a word image based on the noun and the adjective that were selected.

One incident that Barbara recounted in connection with this technique will always remain with me. In a fourth grade class she was teaching, one student pulled the words WRINKLED and GOWN from the two boxes. In Barbara's opinion, this was such a non-starter that she told the youngster he could draw again.

But he shook his head. He would work with the two words he had drawn. A bit later, he came back to Barbara with what he had written:

UNDER THE SNOW
THE RIVER FREEZES
LIKE A WRINKLED GOWN.

Many of us would-be writers would kill for this kind of inspired imagery!

And — Barbara later discovered that her young poet was a mentally retarded boy who had been mainstreamed into the group!

I'd like to hear from readers of this article concerning what they think about the possibilities of computer-assisted creative writing.

Image Spinning is available in Amiga, C64 and IBM formats and may be purchased for $49.95.

MicroEd, Inc., P.O. Box 24750, Edina MN. (612)929-2242. Contact Thorwald Esbensen. ❑

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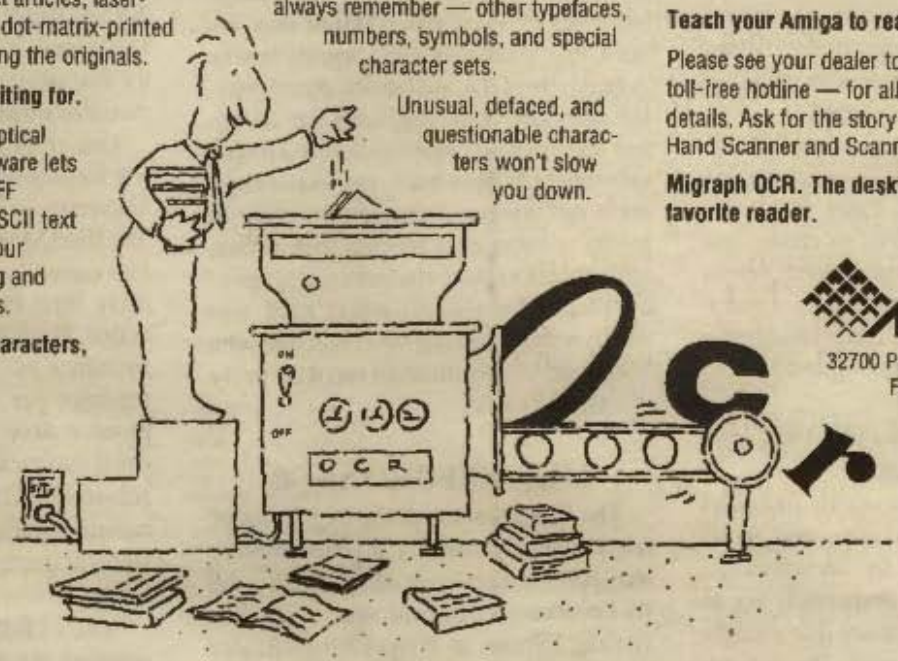

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Virtual Reality

The Promise and the Performance

By G. Shawn Glisson

The President commands the Nation to go to war. Mass forces of teleoperated helicopters, tanks, and smart missiles descend upon the adversary without the risk of a single American life. All battles are fought remotely by operators distant from enemy lines.

A surgeon enters a patient's body on a fantastic voyage that immerses him into the left ventricle of the human heart. From inside the patient's heart valve, the surgeon turns his head to view the surrounding tissue and feels the pulse of the flowing blood. He graphically and intuitively assesses the course of treatment required next.

You step into you cybersuit, carefully pulling the tight-fitting body glove over each limb. You place your head-mounted-display (HMD) helmet on and enter your selected virtual world. Through a virtual reality (VR) network, you call upon your favorite VR partner and begin a familiar exhilarating exchange of tender touches and whispers. Through tiny tactile sensors, vibrators and heating elements throughout your cybersuit, you sense your partner's breath on your chest; you feel your partner's caress of your body, and you reach out to touch the curves of your partner's fictitious form.

Each of these scenarios is very different in its desirability, usefulness and technological achievability, yet each serves as an example of the promise of virtual reality. In just two decades, electronic computing technology has evolved from simple number crunchers and text manipulators to colorful graphic animation and musical multimedia systems simulating real-world processes.

Now, a convergence of academics, government researchers, corporations, entrepreneurs, and home-bound inventors are striving to pull a world of technology together to allow computers to make the final leap of simulated realism.

With the technology to simulate reality, we also become free to explore new worlds of imagination. Laws of physics and nature can be altered to create new worlds never before experienced. People with imagination can work with a seamless palette of creative tools to create a new world that can be experienced by even the most unimaginative.

Aldous Huxley wrote in his 1954 work The Doors of Perception:

"We live together, we act on, and react to, one another; but always and in all circumstances we are by ourselves. . . Embraced, the lovers desperately try to fuse their insulated ecstasies into a single self-transcendence; in vain. By its very nature every embodied spirit is doomed to suffer and enjoy in solitude. Sensations, feelings, insights, fancies — all these are private and, except through symbols and at second hand, incommunicable. We can pool information about experiences, but never the experiences themselves. From family to nation, every human group is a society of island universes."

Mr. Huxley viewed mescaline and other drugs as a means to break through these walls of perception that isolate each of us from each other. VR offers one of the first promises of a new door to perception without the many pitfalls of drugs and with several specific advantages; a virtual reality world of perception is controllable, repeatable, and shareable simultaneously with others.

Current developers and users of VR technology fall into two basic categories: the practical and the recreational. Regarding the recreational aspect, Aldous Huxley in the previously cited work writes:

"That humanity at large will never ever be able to dispense with Artificial Paradises seems very unlikely. Most men and women lead lives at the worst so painful, at the best so monotonous, poor and limited that the urge to escape, the longing to transcend themselves if only for a few moments, is and has always been one of the principal appetites of the soul."

The prominence and success of various means of escape in our society testify to the continuing truth of his statement — from literature to movies, drugs to alcohol, and Disneyland to vacation travel, everyone seeks his own form of escape. VR offers the promise to bring Disneyland to your home or deliver any other world imaginable.

Regarding the practical uses of VR, VR offers the promise of physicians to enter the human body; architects to walk through buildings or even cities before they are built; explorers may enter worlds hostile to humankind (*i.e*, volcanoes, outer space, the deep sea, etc.); engineers can design and test drive automobiles before a physical model has been built; real estate engineers can walk-you-through a variety of homes without ever leaving their office; students can explore the inner workings of a molecule or visually travel back into history without leaving the classroom; with VR the physically disabled can walk or fly in a virtual world.

THE PERFORMANCE

The first scenario at the beginning of this article of remotely manned robotic wars has been under development by the US Department of Defense since the 1970's. Thomas Furness at Wright Patterson Air Fore Base in Ohio oversaw early development in the VR arena. From this development grew the Heads Up Displays and in the 1980's the development of the Visually Coupled Airborne Simulator projecting a 3-D target area onto the pilot's helmet visor. Thomas Furness now serves as Director of the Human Interface Technology Lab at the University of Washington.

Of course, VR is already being used by the military for training in flight, tank and battle simulators, but we are still some distance from robot wars.

Ivan E. Sutherland is credited as the father of virtual reality with his discussion of an "Ultimate Display" at an industry conference in 1965 and later with his creation of the first head-mounted display in 1968 at the University of Utah. Much innovative work has been performed at NASA under the guidance of Michael McGreevy, including the development of the data glove and relatively low-cost Head-mounted displays.

One of the most impressive displays of VR technology today can be found at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The Head Mounted Display at UNC Chapel Hill currently employs a Sun 4 as host to drive their own custom graphics engine called Pixel-Planes 5. They claim performance of 2 million arbitrarily-sized triangles per second. Computer graphic pioneer Alvy Ray Smith had once indicated that "reality is 50 millions polygons per second." Unfortunately, even with higher computing speeds, the current selection of HMD helmets offer very poor display resolution.

VPL of Redwood City, California, has received much of the attention for being among the first to successfully commercialize VR products with their own version of NASA's HMD and their own patented data glove. A very low-cost version of VPL's data glove was marketed by Mattel for the Nintendo machine as the Nintendo Power Glove.

With relatively high-speed graphics and stereo sound the Amiga has played an early role in low-cost VR technology, but, as usual, it has received little attention. Haitex Resources of Charleston, South Carolina, released one of the first low-cost stereoscopic glasses available for desktop computers called X-Specs 3D for the Amiga in 1988. X-Ray Specs 3D is based on the principle that instead of placing two tiny CRTs in a helmet the user will wear a pair of glasses that allow each eye to time-share one large CRT on the desk. The process is named field-sequential stereoscopic display (FSSD). The technology utilized is to place a high-speed liquid-crystal (LC) plate over each eye mounted in visor-like glasses cabled to the computer. An image is displayed to the left eye while the right eye is blackened with an LC plate; a fraction of a second later the right eye is exposed to a new image while the left eye is blackened with another LC. If each image is created with the proper perspective, the mind merges the two images into one stereoscopic image with lifelike 3D depth.

Derivatives of FSSD involve wireless versions (infrared or RF link) and passive polarized glassed. Passive polarized glasses work by placing two large oppositely polarizing plates of liquid crystal of the CRT surface or in front of dual projection lenses; to view, the user merely has to wear glasses with opposite polarization for each eye.

Continued on next page — Promise.

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Continued from previous page.

This method is more expensive for a single user but more convenient. For a large viewing audience passive polarized glasses are cheaper because the glasses are simple; this is the method used at Disneyland. Other manufacturers of FSSD include Stereographics Corporation of San Rafael, CA and Tektronix, Inc., of Beaverton, OR. This glasses formerly marketed by Sega Corporation of Japan were also LC FSSD.

The advantages of FSSD are low cost, high resolution, and ease of use. The disadvantages are lack of total immersion obtained by HMD and the inability to turn your head for additional graphic display.

Haitex Resources also markets an interface named X-Specs TV that provides for stereoscopic display of 3D film that has been recorded field-sequentially on conventional home video equipment. Toshiba has also marketed such an interface, as well as a dual-lens camcorder for recording stereoscopic images.

One of the first commercial virtual reality systems for the recreational industry is also Amiga based, the Virtuality 1000 SD from W Industries of Leicester, England launched in early 1991. Their system is based on an Amiga 3000 with two TMS 34020 processors.

You can build your own home-brew VR system today on the Amiga. Start with a pair of X-Specs 3D from Haitex Resources or build your own head-mounted CRT helmet; acquire a pair of Mattel Power gloves or the new Logitech 3D mouse and purchase a copy of Haitex Resources' X-Specs Developer's Kit for the Amiga.

It's best if you can upgrade your system to a 68030 or 68040 and add a high performance graphic card such as the Resolver from Digital Microsystems of San Diego, CA or the Rembrandt from Progressive Peripherals & Software of Denver, CO; both offer direct support for the X-Specs 3D through their shared Sage programming library. If you wish to pursue VR on the Amiga further, you will find a collection of info and like-minded individuals on Haitex Resources dedicated BBS system, (803) 881-7522 (9600 MNP, 24 hours).

The full promise of VR may still be decades away, but you can share in the performance of evolving VR technology today on the Amiga. Don't wait.

G. Shawn Glisson is founder and President of Haitex Resources.

Haitex Resources, P.O. Box 20609, Charleston, SC 29413. (803)881-7518, fax (803)881-7522. Contact: Shawn Glisson.

QUICK TIP

If you hold both mouse keys down during power-up, under 2.0, you are given the option of which drive to boot from. Very useful if your internal drive is giving problems.

There is also an advanced options page, showing priorities, and giving you the option of not using your startup-sequence.

Continued from page 1 — Virtual.

(and shoot through) the obstacles scattered around the playing field to better outwit your opponent.

It takes a little while for your grenade launcher to reload after shooting. That's why you have to keep a cool head and shoot only when you have your aim set and a clear shot. (I have the bad habit of panicking and running into the other gun.) After eight shots, the Pterodactyl comes for you. If you don't shoot it in time, it grabs you, lifts you high, (actually dizzying if you look down,) and then drops you. This is bad for you.

Even the spectators can vicariously enjoy your virtual reality. Each pod has a monitor that shows your point of view to others. Helpful spectators can yell "Look out behind you!" but your attention is focused on getting your opponent before they get you. It's difficult to pay any attention to the real world, when you are so involved in the computer one. You have speakers over your ears, filled with eerie music and heartbeat sounds. When you look up your point of view changes, and when you move the landscape changes around you proportionately. Your brain begins to believe what your senses are telling it.

There's an Amiga 3000 in each pod. The two Amigas each have a 68040 processor, a 33 megahertz graphics processor, and are running an Ethernet network. The 3D graphics are Amiga generated.

The system is called Virtuality. The pods, helmets, and other hardware are made by W. Industries, U.K. At $60,000 apiece, this isn't something that will arrive in your living room next year. In the U.S. the system is distributed by Horizon Entertainment of St. Louis, a division of Edison Brothers Stores.

I played Dactyl Nightmare, but there is also a Capture the Flag game, played with four units, available in some locations. Legend Quest, an adventure game, will be coming soon, and Spectrum Holobyte, the distributors of Tetris, will be developing some software for the Virtuality system.

The gaming possibilities are endless; a boxing game where you actually move your fists and feet, a skiing game, hide and seek in real time, but the applications are by no means restricted to games. Any human activity can be simulated with these techniques, with even better input and feedback devices. Surgery, movies, even vacations, could develop from this tip of the iceberg. The future has arrived! Don't forget to tell everyone that the Amiga made it possible.

Where You Can See the Future

When I played on Long Island, the price was five dollars for one four minute game, or ten dollars for three four minute games. These prices may vary. You can play against the computer if you don't have a partner, but playing against live people is more fun.

If you don't see a location near you, call 1-800-ILLUSION for more information. New locations are opening all the time, and old ones may be moving, so it pays to call first.

Time Out, Smithhaven Mall, Long Island, NY
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Continued from page 1 — World.

(who dazzled everyone with colored labels on their public domain software - don't you just love those little extras?), the Queens Commodore User's Group, (swell folks), SCALA, Software Concepts, Software Hut Inc. (who had incredible volumes of programs there to sell), Software Plus, Very Vivid (from Canada), and Amiga Centre Scotland

Seminars of all types and flavors were run throughout the weekend. Everything from desktop publishing (hereinafter to be known as "Electronic Publishing" so as not to confuse Amiga professionals with Macintosh amateurs), to videographics and Commodore engineering, were well attended. The discussions were lively, interactive and informative.

An unexpected visit was paid to World of Commodore Amiga by British Royalty in the form of Queen Elizabeth II (actually the sleek ocean liner by the same name). The pride of the Cunard Line slipped in for fuel and lobsters, backed out, made a quick bat turn and scooted on down the river as easily as one might dock a 28-footer for a quick six-pak. Master sailors, those British. World of Amiga attendees applauded in appreciation at the QE II's deftness in maneuvering.

Equally impressive was the attention to detail, energy and enthusiasm displayed by Karen Jewel. Thanks largely to her efforts and to the professionalism of the union workers on Pier 88, the World of Amiga Show was virtually hitchless.

Would I recommend World of Amiga Shows to companies, large or small, out there in Amiga Land, who might be ready to meet the public in person? Absolutely! The spirit of cooperation between vendors reminded me of how much fun work can be when you're among friends. Even Commodore got into the spirit of things, lending wheel carts to different vendors in need. It was inspiring.

I would be remiss if I did not add some comments concerning the Big Apple. I was, frankly, very apprehensive about attending a show in New York City. It can be a scary place. But wonder of wonders! The taxicabs were clean, their drivers friendly and helpful, the population outside the show was both considerate and non-threatening, and as already mentioned, the show attendees were great. As a first time vendor at an Amiga show, I found the entire weekend to be a complete success. Thanks to everyone who signed up either for subs or for the contest.

GAME TIP

Psygnosis's *Agony*'s later levels are difficult, to say the least. A way to run your lives up to the maximum of five is available at the end of level one, the River God scene. First, make sure you don't acquire the sword. Then, when the big guy appears at the end of the level, position yourself at the tip of the lower lip and zap away at the balls appearing. You can run up a zillion points, but there is not much point in running points up once you have attained your five lives.

Learning Skills: *Designing Minds*

by Graham Heywood

Wat dis country neads is mure edukation . . . and a series of programs from Designing Minds are designed to further that aim. They cover a variety of topics from math to geography and are presented in way that makes the subjects more fun than tedious rote learning.

WORLD TOUR — EUROPE

The first package I grabbed was the *World Tour —Europe*, a subject I thought I knew a little about. I was right. I did know little about it. This geography program is designed for ages nine thru adult, and contains complete tutorials on capitals, currency, governments etc. One minor complaint is that the U.S.S.R. is still regarded as one country, instead of the current several countries.

The program loads the title scene, plays a pleasant little tune while waiting for a key-press before presenting you with the main program. The main menu presents several options from which you choose tutorials or set individual preferences on the quizzes, anything from one to three tries to answer, type or point and click and which categories to answer questions on. You can print quizzes and certificates.

There is also an option to set a bonus trivia question to pop up if you get the quiz answer right on the first attempt. The questions asked are not covered in the tutorial and are of the variety that requires a reasonably extensive knowledge of Europe. The program also makes use of the speech chip and thankfully gives an option

to repeat the question or comment.

The tutorial is a good place to start. Just select from the menu and point and click. Up pops a screen displaying pertinent information on the selected country. The program also contains informational maps giving general information such as rainfall, population topography etc.

After absorbing all this information the next step is to play the quiz game; choose from Country, Capital, Currency, Major Language, Major Religion or Flags; set Players to one or two, amount of tries, and number of questions to be asked. Points are awarded, from ten for getting the answer in one try, down to three for three tries, with the last attempt being from a multiple choice list. I could usually get the answer from this list, because, for example, I knew that Andorra was certainly not Germany or France.

Electing to turn the voice on enables the program to give praise and comments during play. There is also a limited spell check facility. This option just checks the first four letters of the answer. This will avoid frustration at a close, but not exact, answer.

At the end of a two player game the award screen shows the winner's balloon crossing a winning line first — a nice touch for the younger users. The program will also print certificates with the player's name and score.

World Tour — Europe presents what could be potentially a boring subject in a format that encourages learning.

Designing Minds also have programs covering the rest of the world, including the U.S.A.

SPELL-A-FARI

Designing Minds *Spell-A-Fari* provides an entertaining way for a child to improve his/her spelling skills, utilizing both digitized and generated speech and a colorful interface to the modules. *Spell-A-Fari* is also meant to be used by teachers and parents in generating hard copy spelling drills and games. It also generates customized certificates for rewards.

The word list is capable of being changed at will, and of being hard output as in a spelling list, anagram list, matching list, or hidden word list. The hidden word list is challenging; words in the list are randomly placed into a matrix. A list of the words contained are listed below the matrix to be circled when found.

The heart of *Spell-A-Fari* is creating a list and the help menu is very useful to make the Amiga speak correctly. The first option is Phonemes. This aids fine tuning of the spoken words. Also available is consonants, which opens a window containing phonemes, which are used to create the sounds associated with consonants in English. After entering a word, click on the gadget labeled "Say" and the word will be spoken. If the word doesn't sound the way you like, and if you used the speech chip at all, you will appreciate the two editing options.

The easiest way to edit is to use the "Sounds Like" gadget and use a forced misspelling, after entering the "misspelling" (e.g. "lee sa" for Lisa) the "Phonemes" gadget is updated. The second method of editing is the "Phonemes" gadget where you can enter letter and number combinations. Using phonetic spelling you are able to stress parts of words and use intonation to alter the way the phoneme is voiced. This is a very useful way to get recognizable speech from the Amiga but requires a lot of playing with to master.

The main program consists of three animals:

1. Mike the Monkey: Find a word in a list. With a easy option; six words are selected out of the list and the child is asked to find the spoken word. The first part of the sentence is digitized speech. The hard option requires the child to recognize the correctly spelled word from a list of five. This requires the child to utilize pattern recognition.

2. Patty the Parrot: An anagram module. The easy option is a match of five scrambled words with the correct spelling. The hard option is a list of five scrambled words and the child is asked to match the spoken word.

3. Elly the Elephant: The closest thing to a traditional spelling bee. In the easy option all the letters are present when Elly asks the child to spell a word. In the hard version, no letters are given.

A further nice touch is the 1 or 2 player requester. One or both of these players can be the Amiga and the skill factor can be set for the computer from 10% to 90% accuracy. This enables the child to "beat" the computer.

All-in-all, a well thought out way to present a necessary skill.

THE MATH DOCTOR

The Math Doctor is aimed at K-9 grade levels and deals with everything from addition through fractions and decimals. It contains step by step demonstrations and 16 tutorials. It gives three levels of difficulty, interactive responses and timed quizzes.

The strength of *Math Doctor* is its interactive help. A major weakness in our understaffed school system is the lack of personal coaching available. If your child doesn't stay with the main stream, then he/she is left behind. Or if he/she is brighter than average, then he/she is held back to the norm. *Math Doctor* allows the child to progress at his/her own pace and the ongoing statistics give the parents an instant report card.

For further details on any of the programs mentioned contact: Designing Minds Inc., 3006 North Main Street, Logan, Utah 84321, (802) 753-4947. ❑

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Game Hints 2 [#217] MEGA disk full of game cheats, hints, docs, and quick references! Plus *Dr. Dongle* (look "inside" the dongle protection without opening it up). 1 disk.

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Vivian's Supershopper [#354] *Supershopper* (budget, grocery list and shopping aid), *Furnish* (interior design program), *Hacks* (fun screen hacks). Very good! 1 disk.

Window Decorator [#178] MEGA disk, near 3 megs of animated pointers, pointers, and a huge array of neat Workbench icons. Decorate your Workbench! 1 disk.

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Telecommunications 1 [#161] JR COMM 1.02A--the latest update of the most popular terminal software on the Amiga. "Very powerful!" 1 disk.

VIDEO

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Animation Assistant [#345] AVG disk! Will solve many of your animation problems, especially when Anims are incompatible between programs. Powerful, sophisticated animation players and utilities. 1 disk.

Picture Tools [#343] AVG disk reviewed in 1992 Special Issue AmigaWorld. Many practical programs highly recommended for graphics users. 1 disk.

Video Kit [#178] MEGA disk of earlier AVG disks. Utilities and 30 fonts, over 10 programs. Highly recommended! 1 disk.

Video Plus [#292] MEGA disks of useful video/graphics applications. Features *AGraph* (good easy AMOS bar & pie graphing), *Free Paint* (near DPaint's quality), *Graffiti* (AMOS painting), *PicBase* (great IFF pictures organizer), *StillStore* (great for professional use), *TitleGen* (rolling credits), *Video Librarian* (database tapes), JPEG, ImageLab, VTOT and more! 3 disks.

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Continued on page 2 — Letters.

ing standard Magenta and Cyan colors on the newspaper, we get maximum benefit for minimum cost. Using other colors (fire-engine red, for example) would cost more. Until Amiga News *starts to show a profit, we have to keep expenses as low as possible.*

Thanks for taking the time from your busy schedule to write us.

Terry

APPRECIATIVE READER

I, too, like *Amiga News* very much. You were pretty vague about what postal regulations affected your mailing (& how). I like the newspaper format - it's "Newsier" and contains an inherent anti-glossy/glitsy atmosphere that pervades *AMIGA WORLD* and ever *.info*. There hasn't been anything so meaty & informative since the *Amigan A&J* — what ever happened to Dick Barns anyway?

Your layout could use some improvement - the very professional content of the articles is somewhat off-set by amateurish lack of proofing of the copy. A minor complaint, though, the content is what's important. When are you going weekly?

Tom Roberts
Dixmont, Me 04932

Thanks for writing, Tom. The postal regulations are very straightforward: for us, everything goes first class, at either fifty-two or seventy-five cents each (depending on whether we have twenty or more pages), until we reach a minimum level of 300 subscribers/pieces mailed. At that point we can start sending them out bulk rate, at 19.2 cents each.

Also, at that point, we can apply for a second class mailing permit. There are very strict requirements for this. We must prove (via deposit slips or MC/Visa forms) that over ninety percent of our subscribers requested/paid for their subscriptions and advertising cannot exceed sixty percent of the content of the newspaper. Further, complimentary subscriptions (free issues sent to potential advertisers or important people in the industry) cannot exceed ten percent of the total requested/paid subscriptions.

The difference between the two mailing types is that bulk rate mailing have a non-delivery rate (the Post Office loses them) of over ten percent, while second class is treated as first class mail (with a non-delivery rate below three percent)

It takes several months for the Post Office to do the necessary paperwork. In the meantime, everything goes out bulk rate. As soon as we build up enough subscribers, we will start mailing second class.

We will be staying with the tabloid-newspaper format. Not only does it make it possible for us to produce it faster, but it also keeps cost down. If we were to go to magazine format, the cover price would have to increase to at least $2.95, and it would be three weeks between the time we take the magazine to the printer and the time he returns it to us. At present, we drop it off by 5pm Thursday afternoon and pick it up at noon on Friday.

We're working on making the newspaper more professional (I hope you've noticed the improvement in the last two issues), while not sacrificing any of the other qualities.

Weekly? Gads!

Actually, the limiting factor is advertising. If the advertiser support is there then we will eventually go to a weekly format. In the meantime, we will stick with the present monthly schedule.

Terry

MESSAGE TO THE AMIGA MASSES!

Let it be known thru-out the land that Derek Godat, a clean-cut, Amiga using guy, is searching desperately for a good programmer with whom he can collaborate on *Killer Action Games from Hell!* Please spread the word. Any information or leads will be greatly appreciated.

Derek Godat
Rte. 24, Box 379
Terre Haute, IN 47802.

AMIGA INSIGHTS

This is a great newspaper! *Amiga News* is not only timely, but also sincere. So here's your $12.40 for a subscription. I hope this puts you in the black!

Amiga users need this type of current and easily accessible forum. I would hope that Commodore has many subscriptions to *Amiga News*, so that they will finally hear every month from their users!

Which brings me to the article by Joe Rothman *"Who's At Fault?"* March 1992, page 18. Mr. Rothman brings out many good insights into the difficulties of marketing. However, that goes for all companies trying to sell their specific system. They all make mistakes. Some learn from their mistakes and sometimes succeed. Others die almost instant death while others linger for years. Unfortunately, many of these companies have really great products. Somehow, the public never has the opportunity to truly evaluate the genius of the individual's idea.

I am an Amiga enthusiast. I belong to three Amiga users groups. AMUSE, BUG and WAUG. They're located in the N.Y.C. area. We have an impressive, talented, sincere group.

First, I think we should acknowledge companies and people, no matter what type of platform, for accomplishments in this very fast moving field. Since this is basically a marketing subject lets include Compaq for daring to enter the IBM world, Apple for actually being able to break into the corporate world. Northgate for breaking the mail order barrier. And, New/Tek for making the Amiga noticed in the business world. Please note these are my observations.

Now let's get down to the meat and potatoes, Commodore Business Machines. One could almost cry at the missed opportunities throughout their entire history. They certainly had it in 1985. Their research/development and engineering staffs

should be praised endlessly. But genius doesn't sell the public. Wouldn't it be interesting to know what went on at the Commodore headquarters during those years?

Let's look at Amiga users as sellers . . . after the initial 85/86 effort by Commodore, I believe the user community did just that and offered support. The retailers managed to be nice, patient,and supportive of the user community.

I feel both Commodore and the Amiga Community have kind of gone in different directions. Both feel the other hasn't listened. Both feel the other hasn't understood or attempted to comprehend the problems involved.

From a user prospective, here are some question, observations, comments, that have passed through my mind.

Is there such a thing as a full time CBM salesperson? I mean a person that goes to the retailers on a regular basis, a person that tries to develop business in new areas, and a person that speaks to users to gain insight into practical and reasonable "wish" lists, which may entice more of the public.

Is there anyone in customer service that can answer questions? Other than telling you where the nearest dealer is. Is there anyone in technical service that can answer technical questions? I've found that if you don't have some specific person's name that you got through the grapevine, you might as well save your nickel.

Is it possible to write a letter and get an answer that's useful?

I've noticed that everytime CBM comes out with a new idea they run with it, show it, promote it and advertise it. After a month or two, if one billion haven't been sold, everything stops. There doesn't seem to be a solid long term plan.

Why doesn't CBM work more closely with developers and why is CBM doing so well in Canada and Europe?

CBM should go to more exhibits, and advertise in vertical market magazines. Having ads in Amiga only publications is not the only way to attract business.

Potential computer buyers would have a real basis of comparison if they did a couple of general computer shows.

Warren Modell
Yonkers, NY

A500 UPGRADE

I have an old rev 5 1.2 A500 that I purchased used and want to upgrade. I do community access T.V. and want to set the A500 up to do simple titling and DTP — nothing fancy, just the basics.

Lance Thurston
Alameda, CA

AMIGA IN EUROPE

I'm a proud owner of an AMIGA 2000 (OS 2.09) and I use the AMIGA to create 2D/3D animations.

I'm already a regular reader of British Amiga magazines and would like to subscribe to a US Amiga magazine. I bought some "Abacus" books on the Amiga and found your address in one of the appendices.

Long live the AMIGA!

Jose Olivera
Lisbon, Portugal

ATTENTION AMIGA DEVELOPERS

If you, or your company, are a developer, producer or distributor of Commodore Amiga products or services, then I want to know what you are doing. Please send all press releases, new product announcements, information from reliable sources and unsubstantiated rumors to my attention. Be sure to indicate if your product is compatible with the European PAL video system when applicable. All submitted materials will become eligible for publication in one or more of my regular columns which are presently:

- Morton's Musings in Jumpdisk Magazine
- Qui Stati Uniti D'America in IHT's Commodore Gazette

Morton's Musings is updated and consolidated five times per year, translated into Italian and published in Commodore Gazette, IHT Gruppo Editoriale, Milano, Italy.

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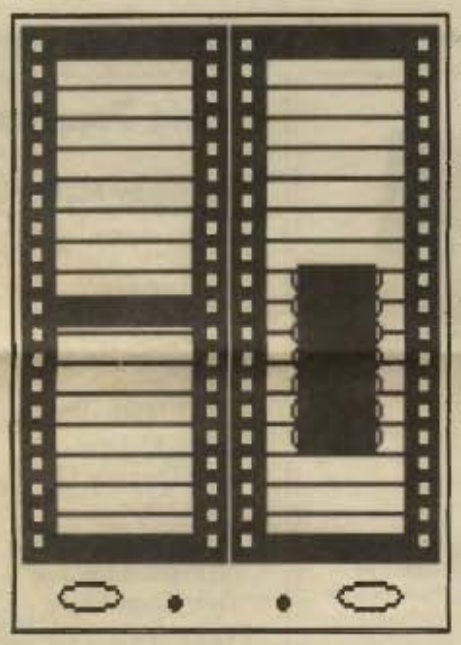

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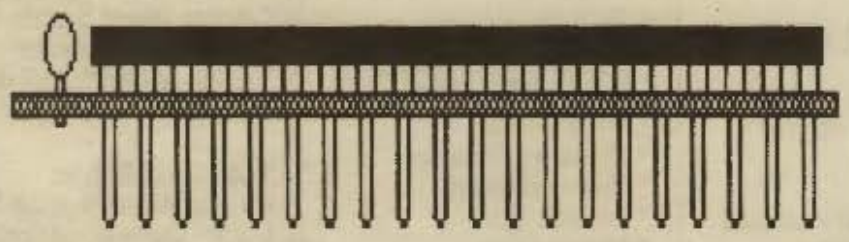

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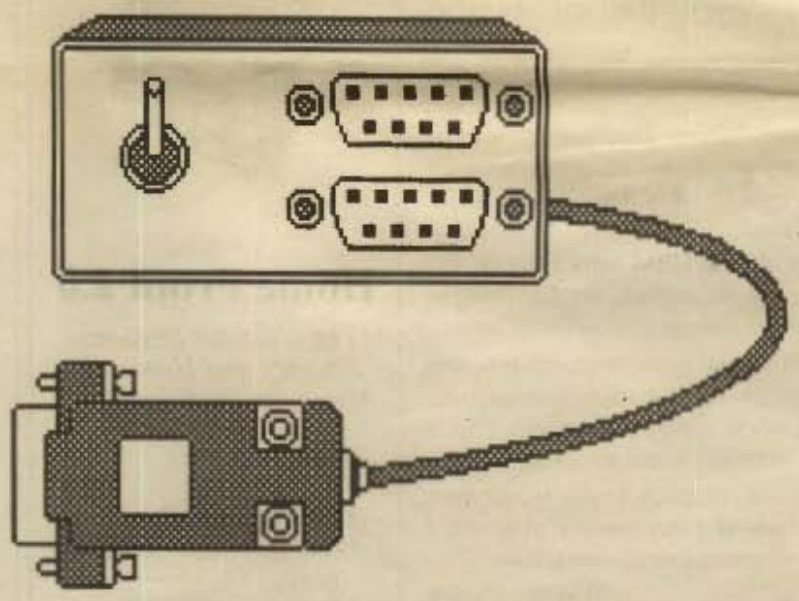

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