AMIGA news

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Attention Amiga User Groups

You're one of our resources on what concerns Amiga users today. Your opinions mean a lot to us! If your group publishes a newsletter, please add us to your mailing list. Don't forget: selling Amiga News is a great way to earn extra money for your club.Call Mary or Pauline at (603) 924-9455 for details.

VOL. 1 NO.8 **SEPTEMBER 1992**

Michael Tobin demonstrating his Amiga-based medical teaching system at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Nuclear Medicine.

Amiga — Star of the Show

The Amiga Stars At Yet Another Medical Convention

by Michael Tobin M.D., Ph.D.

My various expansion boards were so delighted to return home from the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America held last December in Chicago that they practically jumped inside my Amiga computers. Little did they know that six months later, they would be unceremoniously yanked from their Zorro slots and sent to Los Angeles, there to show their multimedia capabilities at yet another major medical gathering — the annual meeting of the Society of Nuclear Medicine.

NUCLEAR MEDICINE

Nuclear medicine is a branch of Radiology concerned mainly with the diagnosis (and sometimes the treatment) of various diseases. Unlike other areas of Radiology, images are produced by radiation internal to the patient, given in the form of extremely small doses of radioactive material. Rather than merely telling what is inside the human body (anatomy), nuclear scans excel at giving information about how well the various parts of the body are working (physiology).

NUCLEAR MEDICINE PERSONNEL

Nuclear medicine physicians and technologists are widely regarded as the "computer people" within the hospital. Because nuclear medical images are produced and analyzed digitally, this radiological subspecialty has always attracted technically-oriented people. Nuclear medicine personnel are strong advocates of technology and are unusually open-minded about new computers and instrumentation in medical diagnosis and education. For these reasons, other hospital staff respect their opinion regarding computers and seek out their advice and recommendations. Nuclear medicine personnel are therefore important people to reach regarding the Amiga and its multimedia potential.

Continued on page 16

Vidia Offers Digital Photography Library

The first two packages in Vidia's digital stock photography library are titled *Winter & Snow* and *Postcard Scenics*. *Winter & Snow* includes photos of glacier ice, snow-covered mountains and trees, rivers, icypond, and wilderness winter scenes. *Postcard Scenics* features an eclectic mix of striking photos, including green rolling hills, sunsets, ships at dock, cities at night, etc.

Each package contains 24 photos. Suggested retail price $49.95 (HAM), $169.95 (24-bit).

Contact: Vidia, P.O. Box 1180, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. (310) 379-7139.

A sample sunset from the Vidia picture disks "Postcard Scenics."

Travel Time with *Lords of Time*

Lords of Time is an epic adventure with over 10,000 screens of smooth-scrolling animation. In this fantasy role-playing game, you guide the time traveller, Major Thom, on his quest to return to his own world and time. You'll enjoy superb graphics with a three-dimensional overhead perspective and full animation that allows you to watch as the character pursues his quest — and is in turn pursued by dwarves, spiders, zombies and others. The solutions to various key elements in this game are randomly selected each time the game is started, so you can have a different adventure every time you boot up.

Suggested retail price is $49.95.

Hollyware Entertainment, 13464 Washington Blvd., Marina del Rey, CA 90291. (310)822-9200, fax (310)390-0457.

❑

LETTERS

A READER SUGGESTS...

I agree with you that software piracy hurts all of us. I particularly feel for Curtis Wood. No one deserves that! I do feel, though, that software developers are partially to blame.

While Amiga software is relatively cheap, I resent spending a hundred (or more) for a program only to find out that I have to shell out an additional fifteen for a backup of a copy-protected program.

Years ago, I bought a copy of the *Bank Street Writer* for the Commodore 64. While it was protected, it came with a backup copy included. This, I think, is a fair solution for everyone. I urge you to encourage software developers to do the same.

F. Kurka, Forest Hills, NY

AMIGA SUPPORT — OR LACK OF IT

Is the Amiga doomed? Yes.

The Amiga support system is a major failing. True, the Amiga is a very clever machine, but it will not become a popular machine, since it does not have the support services that that average computer user needs. Both IBM and Mac have numerous classes that will pilot the consumer through a jungle of esoteric technological maneuvers.

Educators that need to learn computercse will gladly take a class in order to understand the technology that they need. 99% of the human race learns by being taught by others, yet I have never seen an Amiga class offered. Amiga is targeted only to those willing to struggle through manuals in the quiet of their den. For this reason, it is not a people-friendly machine. The Amiga user groups that I have attended reflect the nature of the machine, an odd collection of very bright people eagerly willing to pummel your mind with esoteric punches. Gosh, maybe I can find out what he meant if I buy an Amiga magazine? Sorry, Charlie, for a learning task, buy a Mac and take a class.

Michael E. Weatherby, Auburn, WA

AMIGA DEALERS, COME OUT OF THE CLOSET!

Regarding, the article by Graham Heywood, *Is the Amiga DOOMED?* (June 1992)— I hope not! I have a few ideas. One of them I will be acting on very soon. The first idea is cheap and should get the message out. Rent an advertising slot on the local advertising channel of your local cable service, referring people to their closest dealer. Maybe you could also list the price on a CDTV or Amiga 500 (1 Mg) with the advertisement.

The other suggestion is to have dealers hire reps and have them go out with the actual product to malls, shopping centers or other independent stores with high traffic volume. Show off the product and let

Continued on page 18.

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- 2.04 ROM only (NTSC / PAL) without kit..... **$39.95**

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ELIAS 3000 MODULE EXPANDER

(THE ULTIMATE 2 MEG CHIP RAM UPGRADE BY MICROWORKS OF CANADA) Commodore recently developed a new, improved 2 meg Agnus chip to work with their new A500+ and A600. This chip (8375) is now available in the Elias 3000 plug-in module & provides the much needed 2 MB of CHIP RAM at low cost. Never run out of chip RAM again in your A500 / 2000 / 2500. Fully compatible w / 2.04 & 8373 Super Denise. If you use desktop video, 3D rendering & animation, multimedia or desktop publishing, etc., then you need the Elias 3000. We will even buy back your old 1 meg Agnus and still give you the newly designed Goliath chip puller FREE. Comes complete with 8375 chip, additional RAM & instructions (specify NTSC or PAL)..**$234.95**

1 MEG FATTER AGNUS CHIP (8372A)—Comes with FREE Goliath Agnus chip puller (a necessity). "Final Test" diskette (18 diagnostic programs), and complete step-by-step installation instructions ..... **$44.95** **(We'll beat any competitor's price on this chip and still give you the diagnostics and newly designed puller.)**

AMIGA 500 MOTHERBOARD

Now for the first time, and **only** at Grapevine, purchase a NEW A500 PC motherboard at prices lower than an Amiga dealer pays! Each "board" is populated (31 chips), tested and has a 90 day warranty. Contains 1.2 and ½ meg Agnus. PAL format also available..**$99.95**

EMERGENCY STARTUP KIT

(Revised April 1992)

Stop sending out your Amiga for repairs. Save a lot of time and money by repairing your own. Over 90% of broken Amigas are easily repaired by this kit. Kit corrects 28 symptoms and includes: Two 8520A CIA Chips, 8362, 8370, 8364, Chip Puller, Fuse, Schematic, Diagnostician Booklet and The Final Test Diskette. A $224.00 value for **$99.50**
(Above kit with 8373 Super Denise ..... **$109.95**)

SWITCH ITT — **NOW WITH A ROM SPEAKER**

Unique 1.3-2.0 ROM Selector

Electronic ROM Selector Switch by Global Upgrades, Inc. allows for compatibility of ALL your software. Automatically switch between 1.3 or 2.04 ROM from *your* **keyboard**. Built-in speaker confirms 1.3 or 2.04 ROM. Does not overlap the 68000 chip, which means complete compatibility with AdSpeed or Mega Midget Racer, etc. Simple plug in, no soldering. Lowest priced keyboard switch available. Instructions included .. **$32.95**

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- **A2000 keyboard** **$89.95**
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- **2.04 ROM Chip only.** For those multi-Amiga users who do not need the full operating manual and diskettes, this is for you. We now sell the latest version of the 2.04 ROM chip at a fantastic price. Schools, businesses and multi-Amiga users will like the price..... **$39.95**
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2 MB card ..... **$169.95** 4 MB card..... **$224.95**

SUPER DENISE 8373 UPGRADE

New 8373 ECS Super Denise chip adds new screen modes: **productivity** mode for flicker free display and enhanced picture, **superhi-res** mode for ultrasharp video titling (1280x200 pixels), **scan** mode and new **genlock** mode allowing greater flexibility. (This is the same chip used in the A500+ & / A600 / A3000.) **Comes with Super Denise diagnostic and installation software programs.** This chip is an absolute must with the 2.0 and is the latest of the Enhanced Chip Set (LOWEST PRICE ANYWHERE)..... **$32.95**

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1x1 / 80	$3.85
4164 / 20 (used but guaranteed)	$.29
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Gentlemen, Start Your Amigas!

Design Mirage is currently working with Eastman Kodak to create an interactive multi-media "video brochure" promoting the company's Kodak Film Racing Team.

The "brochure" — actually a computerized kiosk, combining text, graphics, animation, sound and video — will allow viewers to learn more about NASCAR racing, the Kodak Film Racing Team (including team driver Ernie Irvan), and the Kodak Film Chevrolet race car. Using simple menus and touchscreens, viewers will easily pace their way through the system.

Design Mirage chose the Amiga 3000 computer as the heart of the computerized kiosk. "Combining the Amiga's custom co-processors with its easy-to-use graphics software enables users to create graphics quickly as well as display real-time animations. In addition, the ease of digitizing narration and music gives the programmer greater latitude in designing presentations. The Amiga provides these capabilities at a fraction of the price of an IBM or Macintosh system," says William T. Garlick, Design Mirage general manager.

The Amiga will power a constantly running "attract loop" of photos, narration, graphics, music, animation and video to draw in viewers. A simple touch screen will move the viewer into the main menu, from which several selections will be available:

- Profile on Ernie Irvan, Kodak Film Racing's NASCAR driver. This selection will use photos, animation and narration.
- Highlights of the 1991 NASCAR season on video.
- A typical day for the race team on video.
- Interactive depiction of key systems of the Kodak Film Chevrolet race car, using graphic cut-aways, narration and animation.

"This type of easy-to-use, interactive format lets exhibitors like Kodak get involved with the technology," Garlick said. "For example, Kodak can insert promotional symbols or messages between the main menu and specific selections."

"This system also can be updated readily with new, relatively inexpensive software applications. Kodak eventually plans to add a program section on taking better photographs at a racetrack."

Look for the kiosk at NASCAR events and various special locations, such as car shows and shopping malls. ❑

Oxxi Now Connects Amigas With Novell Netware

Amiga computers can now access the largest base of networks, as well as utilize powerful file-sharings and manipulation tools for enhanced productivity. *Amiga Client Software* from Oxxi allows Amiga computers to connect as clients on networks utilizing Novell *Netware*, the leading networking software in worldwide corporate installations. By providing the ability to share files with both PCs and Macintoshes, the Amiga computer can now bring its unique abilities to the corporate environment.

Oxxi's *ACS* also provides any multiple Amiga installation the ability to efficiently share expensive peripherals such as laser printers and large storage devices. Using a file server with a large hard disk, Any Amiga connected to the network can easily share large size files, such as 24-bit images or animations.

ACS requires a PC-based file server Novell *Netware* version 2.15 or greater, including version 3.11 for 386-based files servers. It will work with either *Arcnet* or *Ethernet* systems and is compatible with all of the networking cards available for the Amiga computer.

In addition, there are utilities available which are Amiga-specific, including: *ResTo-Data* for copying the resource fork of a Macintosh file to a data file from with Amiga or PC workstations and *NetMessage* for display of messages on the network either to specific workstations, groups of workstations, or the entire network.

PRICING FOR *ACS*

is based on the number of Amigas connected to the network. A single Amiga configuration carries a suggested retail price of $199, up to 5 Amigas list for $499, *ACS* for up to 10 Amigas lists for $899. The price per Amiga drops for larger configurations.

ACS is available directly from Oxxi, Inc.

Oxxi, Inc., P.O. Box 90309, Long Beach, CA 90809-0309. (310)427-1227, fax(310) 427-0971. ❑

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Keep a lookout for *Pro-Drill*, a utility which will quickly specify Pad, Via, and custom hole sizes on your PCB. Using *Pro-Drill* can speed up the PCB design cycle and avoid human errors and high labor costs during the tedious manual entry process. *Pro-Drill* supports both the *True-Drill* and *Excellon* file formats and is fully compatible with *Pro-Board V.2.0* or higher.

List price for *Pro-Board V.3.0* is $439. List price for *Pro-Drill* is $89. Current owners of *Pro-Board* should contact Prolific for upgrades. Both *Pro-Board* and *Pro-Drill* are available immediately.

Contact: Prolific, Inc., 6905 Oslo Circle, Suite B3, Buena Park, CA 90621. (714)522-5655, fax (714) 994-6435. ❑

HOI — For the Nimble-Fingered

HOI is an advanced game of strategy and reflexes, made to challenge every one of your arcade skills. There are five levels of complexity in *HOI*, with hundreds of objects to dodge, climb, avoid, swim past, jump over, balance on, and memorize. Be careful of the numerous traps and pitfalls.

Suggested retail price for *HOI* is $39.95.

Check with your local Amiga dealer, or call Hollyware Entertainment.

Hollyware Entertainment, 13464 Washington Blvd., Marina del Rey, CA 90291. (310)822-9200, fax (310)390-0457. ❑

CrossDOS 5.0 And *CrossPC* Now At Micro-PACE

CrossDOS has long been the standard for reading and writing *MS-DOS/PC-DOS/* Atari ST format disks on the Amiga. Because it is a file system, it allows your applications to access *MS-DOS* disks transparently, as if they were a standard *AmigaDOS* disk. Now *CrossDOS* has been improved. New features in version 5.0 include support for 1.44 MB disks (requires Commodore's high-density drive) and removable media (SyQuest, Insite flopticals, etc.) The Format and Diskcopy utilities now support *AmigaDOS* as well as *MS-DOS* formats.

CrossPC is a multi-tasking IBM PC-XT software emulator that runs many PC programs. Included is an optimized version of 68020/030/040 accelerators. The following PC devices are emulated:

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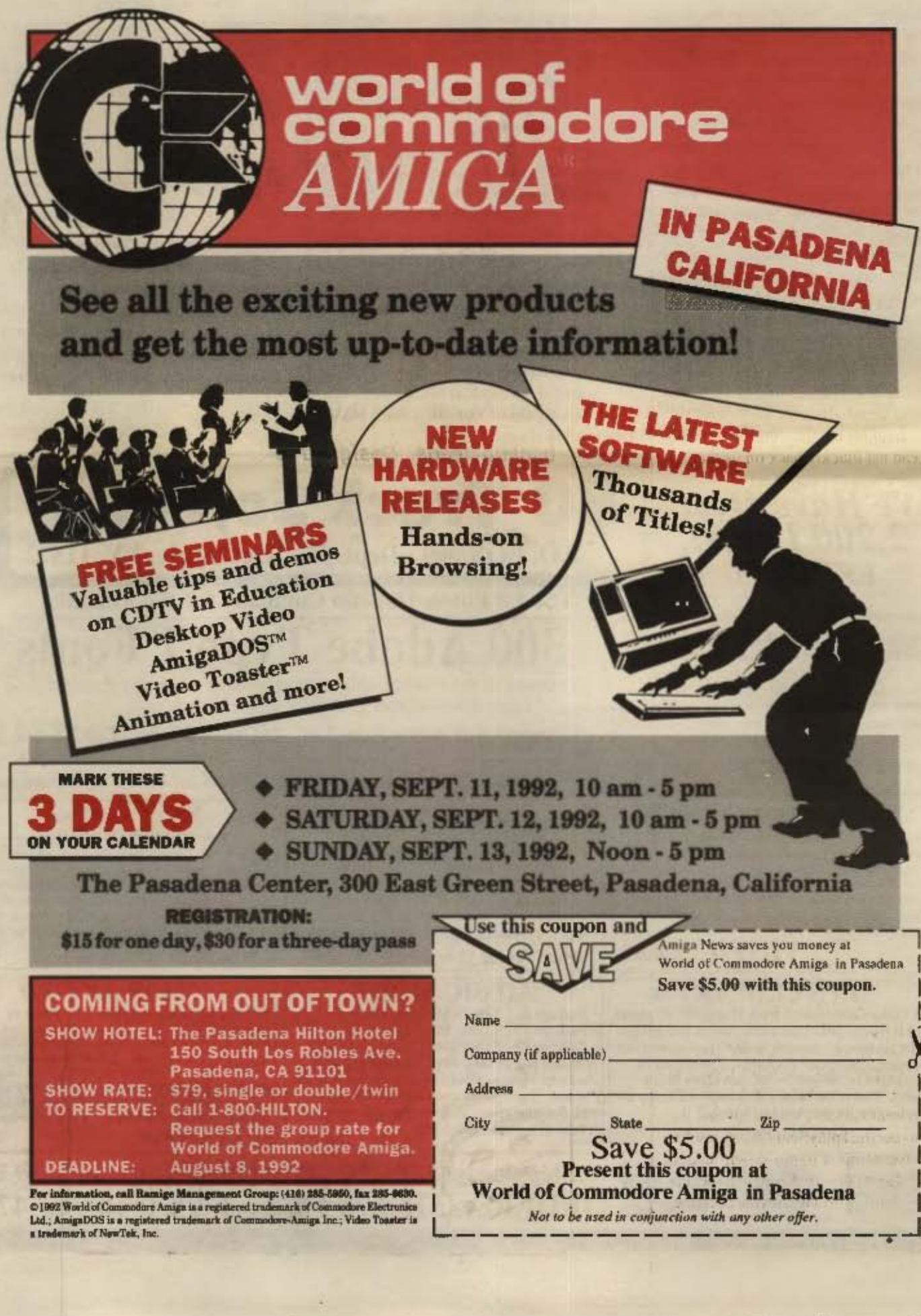

Notes from the Nets
Rumor has it. . .

by Times Roman

This column is essentially a compilation of Amiga-related news and rumors that make their way across the vast computer networks that span the world. As such, it is bound to contain inaccuracies as often as it contains "real" information, so don't take it too seriously. I try very hard to separate the junk from the good stuff and I consider myself reasonably good at it; nevertheless, if anything should slip through that's incorrect, the offended party should reread this paragraph several times.

With the disclaimer out of the way, let's move on to this month's news.

FIRE AT PP&S

In an early-morning fire at the building which served as a warehouse for Progressive Peripherals and Software, PP&S and two of the three other businesses in the building were destroyed in a fire that took over 70 firefighters four hours to bring under control. There were no injuries, but the building itself was all but destroyed by the fire and the collapse of much of its roof. The fire began inside a molding company adjacent to PP&S.

Steve Spring, Progressive's owner, has promised that his business will "rebuild from the ashes." Meanwhile, expect delays in the arrival of Progressive's 68040 boards, graphics devices, etc. Let's hope PP&S can get quickly back on its feet.

COMMODORE

The A2386SX bridgeboard has finally crossed either the Atlantic or the border with Canada and made it here to the US... however, right now it can only be obtained as part of a bundle purchase with an A3000 series machine. As reported before, the card sports a 20MHz 386SX, 1 meg of RAM expandable to 8, and basically the same graphics support as the previous bridgeboards. New *Janus* software is also included. When the supply situation improves so that the board is available separately, it will carry an MSRP of $959.

There are a few further rumors on the 'AA' chipset, but nothing terribly new. British magazines have once again reported that an A2200 is on its way which will include the AA chips; their description of AA fits pretty well with rumors from various other sources but adds a few more details. Rumors seem to agree that, as reported here before, the new chipset will probably allow 256-color displays (with 256,000+ color HAM mode) from a 24-bit palette. According to UK magazine *Amiga Computing*, the chips will be capable of displaying these color modes at resolutions of up to 1280 x 1024, with a 4x speedup over current chip speeds and the ability to use dual playfields in any resolution. It also mentions improved sprites and mixed video modes. In the same issue, the magazine runs an article with the headline, *"A2200 planned for Autumn Launch"*. ***Amiga Format***, another popular British Amiga publication, also reported in its July issue that the A2000 is "Sure to be replaced".

It appears that Commodore's ad campaign that's been running in quite a few magazines will be continuing into the fall with at least one new ad and coverage in quite a few magazines. According to *GeNie's "5 Minute News"*, the current (tentative) schedule has 77 ad appearances planned from July to December, with the heaviest focus in September, October, and November. These ads, like the ones that are currently running, won't be geared solely toward Amiga owners. They'll be showing up in places like *Byte, InfoWorld*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and a number of other magazines whose readers might be interested in the multimedia, educational, presentation, or video facets of the Amiga's abilities.

A text file has been passed around on quite a few networks and bulletin boards lately (and in fact appeared on the front page of last month's *AmigaNews*) in which the writer claims to be a developer who's been "chomping at the bit" to talk about several new machines he's been beta testing. It then goes on to describe these machines so that they sound essentially like a concise compilation of all the rumors that have been passed around lately about next-generation Amigas.

These descriptions sound like they're all based on the rumors because they are. In the text of the original post on **UseNet**, the author ended the message with an admission that the entire story was basically his own invention; he has no new

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machines to beta test, and doesn't know any more hard facts about new Amiga models than any other user. Unfortunately, this admission was left out of the text file that's circulating.

My point? If you come across this text file, don't take it seriously. It's just another bunch of rumors.

A570 CD-ROM

Although the A570 CD-ROM drive is still not available in the US (nor is it apparently easy to get in Europe), CBM is promising a "Real Soon Now" delivery date. There's still no clue is to if and when such a drive will become available for the 2000 and 3000 series. A small rumor on *GEnie*, though, has suggested that a third party company is working on a device which will allow any CDTV title (including those which use the CDXL motion video technique) to be used on an Amiga equipped with a standard SCSI CD-ROM drive. This doesn't seem overly likely, since no third party has much of a chance at being able to acquire CDTV ROMs, but if true it does sound promising. Commodore's inactivity on the CD-ROM/CDTV compatibility issue has stalled the emergence of CD-ROM programs and gadgets for the Amiga in a time when this media has finally started to take off on other platforms.

Finally, *Amazing Computing* reports that at around the same time CBM signed the distribution deal with Merisel earlier this summer, there were rumors popping up that Commodore was doing some heavy negotiating with DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation; the people who make Vax minicomputers, various workstations, and a reasonably successful line of MS-DOS machines). Speculation about the possible subjects of the rumored communication between DEC and CBM range from the use of DEC's powerful Alpha chip in future Amigas (highly unlikely) to Amiga distribution via DECDirect to the addition of an Amiga in disguise to DEC's product lines as a multimedia workstation. DEC apparently markets Commodore PCs as its own in Europe, and one *Usenet* user says that his university has purchased a large network system from Digital which includes a number of *Toaster*-equipped Amigas.

Phillip Robinson, in a recent article in the *San Jose Mercury News* which subsequently appeared in numerous national papers where the Amiga is normally unknown, pronounced that the Amiga was dead. He said that the only justification for buying one is for the *Video Toaster*, and that essentially support for the machine had all but stopped.

Surprisingly enough, Commodore responded publicly to discussions about this article through postings sent out across the networks. Commodore seems to be genuinely taking an interest in its future, through marketing, public relations, and even the (very quiet) development of new products. Below is the text of Commodore's response to Mr. Robinson's Amiga obituary. Although it doesn't go into specific detail, many of the rumors above are supported by this text:

[Grabbed from GEnie]

Amiga RoundTable
Category 15, Topic 20
Message 551 Fri Jul 24, 1992
DENNYA [Denny Atkin] at 21:58 EDT

This is cross-posted from another network at Commodore's request:

TITLE: Commodore asks for help...

Commodore is aware of the activity on computer networks in response to the "Amiga/Slow Death" article written by Mr. Phillip Robinson. Commodore wants to assure all you who are concerned that we are not taking this lightly, and would appreciate your help in responding to Mr. Robinson and to newspapers who have reprinted the article. Therefore, we are providing the information that follows. It is a version of a correspondence sent to dealers in market areas where the article has appeared.

All of us at Commodore share your concern about this story. The Commodore marketing and communications staff agree that this story is one-sided, contains several inaccuracies, and does not communicate the current thrust of our emerging, dynamic and leading U.S. business presence in multimedia and related applications.

Specific Actions And An Update

We've had two conversations with Mr. Robinson since his article first appeared. We communicated to him all of the reasons why suggesting that "Amiga is dying a slow death" couldn't be further from the truth! We have one additional interview scheduled with Mr. Robinson next Wednesday (July 29th). He will be writing a follow-up article after the interview. The follow-up article will appear first in the San Jose Mercury News and then will be distributed through the Knight Ridder distribution channels to your local paper. That process usually takes up to two weeks.

Mr. Robinson reports that the feedback he's currently receiving from the "Amiga/Slow Death" article is the heaviest he's experienced in the eight years of doing this column. He reports that some of the more virulent negative feedback has included threats of violence. We of course do not endorse violent feedback of any kind. But you can take constructive steps to channel your negative reaction to Mr. Robinson's article.

You can help manage the negative public perception Mr. Robinson's article has created by taking action with your local broadcast and print media. Please consider doing the following:

1) Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper that ran the Robinson article. Correct the record. Use some of the message points we've provided. Voice your strong objection to the one-sided and ridiculous suggestion that Amiga and Commodore have no future.

2) Send a copy of your letter to the editor directly to Phillip Robinson. His address is P.O. Box 1357, Sausalito, CA 94966 (as printed in the San Jose Mercury News).

3) If you wish, voice your opinion to Mr. Robinson by leaving a voice-mail message for him at (415) 289-9498. Do this in the next seven days so you have impact on his follow-up article.

Here are the primary message

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2. Walker-2
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points that Commodore hopes to get across to Mr. Robinson. Perhaps you can include some of them in your letters to the editor:

* Commodore is a one billion dollar company.

* There are more that three million Amigas installed worldwide.

* Phillip Robinson's recent article, which talks about a "slow death" for the Amiga, was written with no input from Commodore.

* Commodore is not "killing" the Amiga. In fact, the company, and its developer network, currently are working on several enhancements to the Amiga product line. Significant product announcements are planned this Fall at the World of Commodore show in Pasadena.

* Approximately 1000 dealers distribute the Amiga in the United States.

* Commodore recently signed a sole national distribution agreement with Merisel, Inc., the world's largest publicly held distributor of microcomputer hardware and software products.

* Commodore recently signed a strategic product reseller agreement with Digital Equipment Corporation.

* Commodore, its shareholders, its dealers, its developers, and its end-user base continue to have a long-term commitment to the Amiga and its future as a multimedia, business and consumer microcomputer.

* Commodore (and the Amiga) is a pioneer in the emerging multimedia market. The company and its independent developers actually are helping define multimedia. Many companies say they are "in" multimedia without really knowing what that means. Commodore has a strong end-user base executing a wide variety of multimedia applications today.

* Multimedia is not a single market or application. Multimedia is a method of designing and integrating computer technologies on a single platform that enables the end-user to input, create, manipulate, and output text, graphics, audio and video with a single user interface.

* Commodore is focusing on four key business markets, for professional applications, in the United States: videography, professional training, kiosk information systems, and presentation systems. The company has significant market share in each of these business markets.

* The company recently launched an aggressive marketing and advertising campaign to support and increase its leadership position in these four key business markets. In addition, Commodore is updating industry trade editors and reporters about the company's U.S. business strategy against these four key professional markets.

* Commodore has added new senior management to the consumer side of the business. The company plans to extend current strengths of the Amiga into consumer channels with a variety of product announcements and new consumer applications during the next 12 months.

* *NewTek is a valued developer.* The Video Toaster *is a great Amiga peripheral. But the Amiga is much, much more than just a power supply for NewTek's* Video Toaster. *In fact, to say that the Amiga is "just a power supply for the* Toaster*" is a totally wrong and misguided depiction of the Amiga. And, NewTek's* Video Toaster *is dependent on the Amiga's custom chip technology.*

* The Amiga offers the best "price/performance" for multimedia computing solutions available today. In addition, the Amiga provides "traditional" office computing applications and a wide variety of entertainment packages. The Amiga also provides options to read and write MS-DOS and Macintosh files.

* This is the most exciting time in the history of Commodore and Amiga computing. The company's visibility in the microcomputer industry should increase significantly during the next year as new programs, products, strategies and applications mature.

Final Thoughts

We are taking specific steps to not only regarding this incident but also to ensure that we regain more leverage and positive coverage in the general media and reporting environment going forward. To that end, we're planning some specific press events at both World of Commodore and Fall Comdex. We've also begun an intensive telephone contact campaign to strengthen our ongoing relationships with hundreds of editors, reporters, and freelancers who write about Commodore and the Amiga. We are committed to increasing the flow of accurate information to these important and influential media

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audiences.

In the meantime, please help us with the impressions precipitated by the Robinson article; follow through on the recommendations we've made in this correspondence.

Please consider faxing Mandi Griffies, in our corporate communications department, copies of any correspondence you generate on behalf of this effort and report subsequent media feedback and results directly to her. Her fax number is (215) 431-9465. Thank you for your concern and partnership.

P.S. "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated."

—Mark Twain, 1897

JERRY SPEAKS UP

Toward the end of his regular column in *Byte Magazine*, Jerry Pournelle says in the August 1992 issue: "Next month, the Amiga scene: a new Amiga arrived last week." Of course, this could mean anything from "I just found out there was an Amiga 3000" to "I had an A600 sent in from Europe" to "Commodore is letting me preview their new machines". Who knows; it might even be a reprint of the "chomping at the bit" article...

586 DELAYED

Intel has announced that the P5 chip, successor to the 80486 that currently marks the high end of the *MS-DOS* computing world, will not be shipping in quantity this year as had been expected, but will probably show up during the first quarter of next year. The delay, according to a *Wall St.Journal* headline, was to "Refine [the] production process and eliminate bugs".

UPGRADES & NEW STUFF

The big news in the Amiga gaming community is that MindScape has contracted with Origin to port Origin's popular PC-based *Wing Commander* games to the Amiga. Mindscape hopes to have the first one done in time for Christmas this year. It will be interesting to see how an A500 can cope with a game that just about requires a fast '386 in its MS-DOS incarnation.

Scala Multimedia 2.0 should be released sometime in late August by Scala, Inc. This package, originally marketed by GVP in the US but taken over by its parent company, adds many new features to an already powerful video and presentation system. Sound support, external modules, wipes, fades, transitions, a "shuffler" program to allow easier control over the organizing of presentations, and a "Snap-Load" feature for quick loading of sound ad graphics are some of the features of this package.

To those who were worried that *Superbase 4* for the Amiga would fall by the wayside after the PC version was bought out and the rest were sold to Oxxi: take heart! Oxxi is readying both an new version of the software and a runtime module which will let developers distribute *SB4* applications without requiring users to own the product. At just under $400 for an unlimited distribution license, it's not something every user will be rushing out to get, but it pricing is very competitive with (and in many cases much better than) database product pricing on other platforms.

A new version of *SB4* is in beta testing now. The release version will likely include SQL support and enhanced network features. *Superbase Personal* users will be interested to know that there will likely be a new version of *SB Personal* on its way as well.

A SoftLogik employee on **Usenet** reported that SL would be bringing a European product called *FontDesigner* to the States; unfortunately, he later retracted this statement, saying that there was no official word on this yet. *FontDesigner* allows for the editing of fonts and interchange between many different font formats, including Adobe and Compugraphic.

Fred Fish, probably the best known name in the Amiga community, has announced the availability of disk 700 of his freely distributable software collection. Disks 691-700 include, among other things, a revised and updated version of the five-disk "Amiga C Manual" distribution. Pretty soon the Fred Fish CD-ROM might need to come in a boxed set!

Disk caching programs are a big deal in the *DOS/Windows* world these days because they can offer tremendous disk speed advantages (in exchange for the use of some RAM for the cache). DOS disk caches have become very feature-laden lately. Although a few floppy caching programs are floating around commercially and in the public domain, most of them lack features or functionalities that keep them from being ideal solutions.

It's possible, though, that an upcoming piece of software might change that. Watch for a shareware or commercial program called *DynamiCache* to appear in the not-too-distant future. It works with hard and floppy disks, dynamically allocates the memory it needs, and runs as a commodity under 2.04. Sorry, 1.3 users, it won't work for you. Time to get that upgrade.

Soft Logik's long-promised *Art Expressions* structured drawing program seems to finally be approaching shipment. SL reps on the networks claim it will show up in the fall of this year. Unfortunately, in the program's initial release it will not support *HotLinks*. This is due to the fact that neither *PageStream* nor the *HotLinks* system itself currently include support for structured graphics. This will, however, be added to future versions of the products.

SL also posted the following request on *GEnie*:

> *Art Expression*, Soft-Logik's upcoming illustration program, will be bundled with an autotracer. The tracer is, in our opinion anyway, one of the best for any platform. We would like to test it with real- world files before release in order to ensure that it meets your needs. If you have files which choke your current tracer, or which it traces poorly, put them on a disk and mail them to:
>
> Soft-Logik Publishing
> P.O. Box 510589
> St. Louis, MO 63151-0589
>
> Mark them attn: Art Expression Tracing.
>
> Our test group will run them through our tracer, and if necessary, tweak the program to ensure that it's as good as possible. Black and white, color (palette, RGB, CMYK, grayscale), large (up to 32000x32000 I believe) pictures are welcome.
>
> Please include a note stating whether the pictures are PD or commercial. If they are your creation, state whether the resulting drawing can be used in *Art Expression* advertising, literature, etc...
>
> Submitted disks cannot be returned, sorry. Please do not submit

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- **DOS HELPER** --a program that will help you understand AmigaDos and the CLI commands. A must for all Amiga owners!
- **MOTHERLODE** --This game is great! It is a clone of the classic *LODERUNNER* with better graphics/sound and a tougher gameplay!
- **AGRAPH** --written in AMOS, this is an excellent user-friendly graphing software. Use it for reports or multimedia presentations!
- **FREE PAINT** --a painting program just like *DPaint* with complete manuals. You'll be amazed at all the quality features and tools!
- **VIDEO LIBRARIAN** --now you can organize your messy collection of videotapes with this database program. Simple, just enter data!

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- please allow up to 4 weeks to receive free ZIPPERWARE disk -

pictures by email. (We spend long enough online as it is!)

Soft-Logik Publishing

By the time you read this, Digital Creations should be shipping a $290 RGB converter for DCTV. This device will allow, among other things, the interaction of DCTV with RGB genlocks and the ability to mix DCTV and non-DCTV displays on the same RGB monitor.

GRAPHICS NEWS

It looks as if Centaur Software is very serious about its *OpalVision* graphics board (described here a few issues ago)... serious to the tune of a four-page ad in *AmigaWorld*. *OV* will provide a means for users to add extensive graphics power to their machines in (relatively) inexpensive increments. Meanwhile, Inovatronics is bringing the European AVideo board into the US. AVideo is an inexpensive 24-bit device which should be attractive to many Amiga users.

There are now almost as many separate types of enhanced display devices for the Amiga as there are in the MS-DOS world. All we need is for Commodore to embrace one of the two existing device independent graphics standards (SAGE and EGS), or to create one of its own, so we can start to transparently use all these devices with most of our software.

TOASTER WATCH

AMReport, an on-line magazine which gets distributed across quite a few networks, reports that NewTek has work well underway on the *Toaster 3.0* software. According to AMR, *Lightwave 3.0* will surpass *Wavefront* (a powerful, very expensive graphics package which runs on high-end graphics workstations) in capabilities. *Toaster*-generated graphics will be seen in the upcoming box-office releases "*The Mallers*" and "*Tales of Regis*".

EMULATION

Vortex has released their 25 MHz Golden Gate 80386 bridgeboard in Europe. As mentioned here previously, this device sounds superior in many ways to CBM's bridgeboard offerings. Will we ever see it in the US? Maybe not. It was hoped that GVP would market the GoldenGate in the US, as it does with Vortex's earlier ATOnce products, but unconfirmed rumors say that GVP will not be marketing the GG, but rather are working on full 32-bit 386 and 486 bridgeboards of their own.

Although the Emplant board seems to have missed its promised mid-July shipping date, a new, rather bizarre possibility has opened up for this device. One user on **Usenet** jokingly asked if, in addition to Mac II and 486 emulation, he'd be able to play games from the expensive NeoGeo console system. Jim Drew, Emplant's main designer, replied:

"Actually, I just obtained full memory maps and schematics to NEOGEO and SNES machines. Since there a rash of 'console' copiers available, and the Amiga being the wonderful machine that it is, it only makes sense to look into the emulation of these machine with EMPLANT."

Could Emplant really be the Mother of All Emulators? Its list of possible features seems hard to believe; let's hope it ships soon so we can decide for ourselves.

ASDG NEWS

In a June 18th conference on *CompuServe*, ASDG's Perry Kivolowitz (sorry if I mangled your last name, Perry!) revealed some of his company's current projects and future plans.

ASDG's flagship product, *The Art Department Professional*, will continue to evolve. Coming additions include virtual memory, new features which take more advantage of (and in some cases require) 2.04, a Mac PICT format converter, and a DCTV loader. Perry also said in reference to the "morphing" features of Black Belt's *ImageMaster* software and *DPaint 4*: "Two companies so far have claimed to have the first `real' morphing. We will shortly prove them wrong."

ASDG has also let slip rumors that they are busily developing a new video/multimedia software package of some sort, probably along the lines of a powerful authoring system.

That's all for this month. Here's hoping that by the time next month's **NFTN** rolls around, there'll be some new hardware from Commodore for me to babble about . . . ❑

Cascade, a sample scene from Vidia's Digital Photographic Library.

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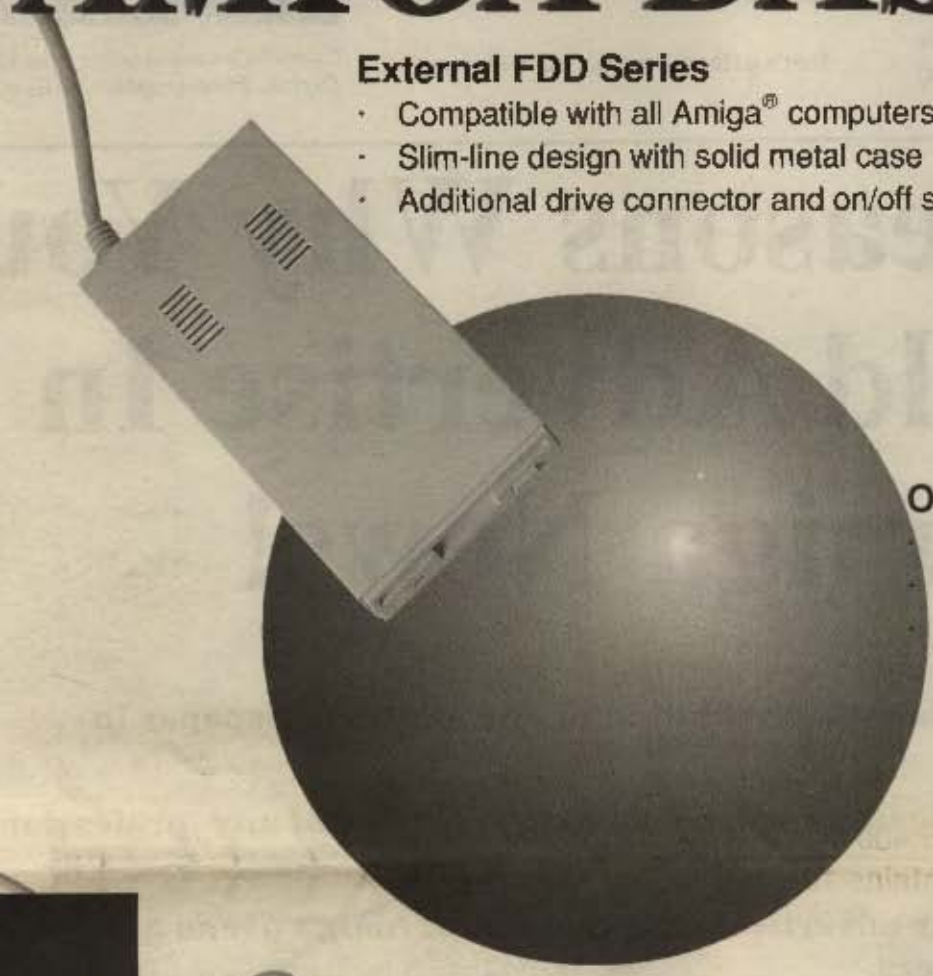

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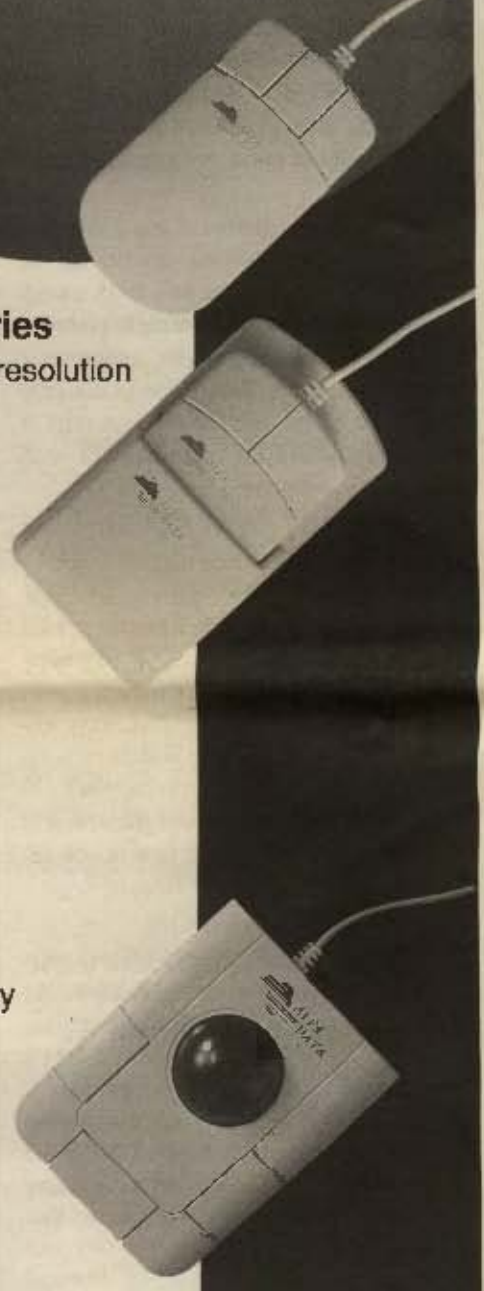

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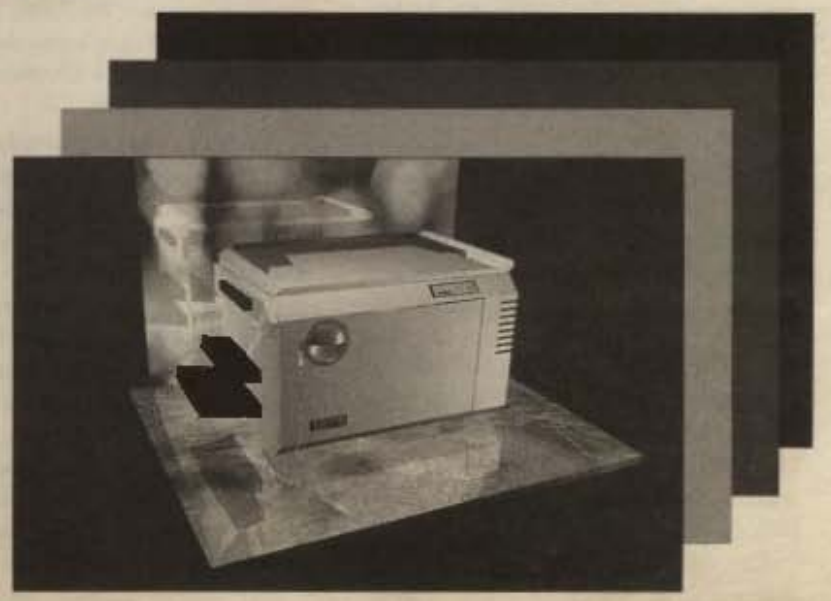

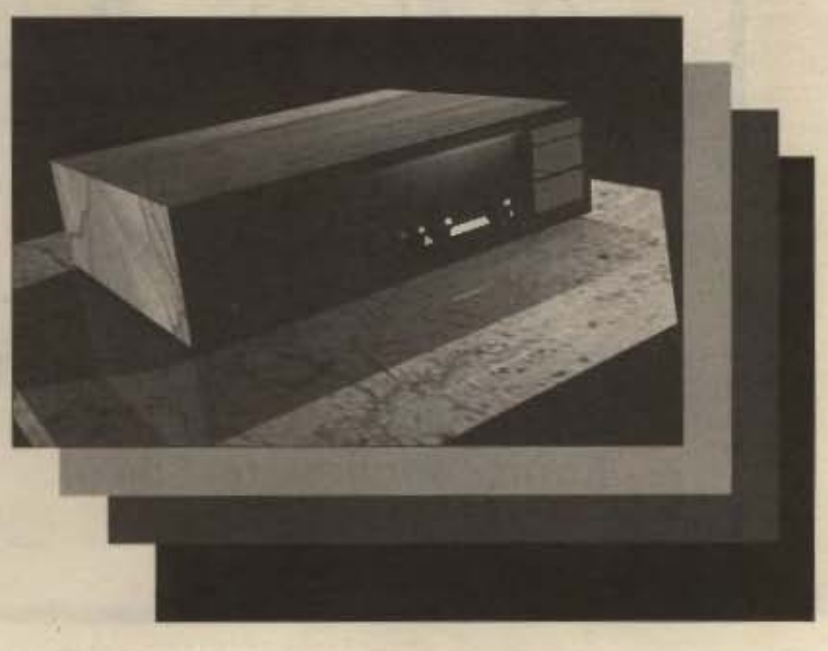

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The Bell Tolls for Thee, Amiga

By Joe Tom Collins

I was sitting down and reading the spec sheets on GVP's new EGS 110/24 video display system when I realized that I what I was really seeing was the end of the Amiga computer. Quickly, I scanned all the information I had on the ACS *Harlequin* board, PP&S's *RAMbrandt*, Inovatronics *AVideo24*, and the DMI020 *Resolver*. Despite the differences in each board, they all painted the same grim picture. I then checked my old prereleases of the Sunrise Industries and Beta Unlimited 16-bit CD quality sound boards, and once again I heard the bell tolling for the Amiga. I looked up sadly at my glowing 1084S with its new *Workbench* 2.04 interface and only then did I feel an ember of hope for an Amiga future.

You see, up until now, the Amiga has been defined by its custom graphic and sound chips: Denise, Paula, and of course Agnus in all her varied weights. These new 24/32 bit cards that offer outstanding resolution in 16.7 million colors all use their own graphics processors with loads of their own video RAM. The same holds true for the new CD quality audio boards. The EGS information sheets even brag about the fact that programs running on the EGS use no chip RAM.

This may sound great, but if the Amiga is doing all its graphic on a widely available Texas Instruments 34020 chip with 8 megs of high speed video RAM, and its sound is coming from a widely available Yamaha sound chip with its own audio RAM, with a widely available Motorola 68030 or 68040 microprocessor running the programs, the only thing setting an Amiga apart from a Macintosh, NeXT, or other Motorola based computer is the *AmigaDOS* operating system!

This revelation brought me to an interesting question. Is the Amiga a computer, or is it an Operating System? The answer is **BOTH**. Rumor has it that Commodore is planning on a heavily advanced set of custom chips which would prolong the life of the Amiga computer, but there is no official word from CBM and no guarantee that these new chips will be downwardly compatible with to the A500/2000. Amiga 1000 owners already know the troubles of trying to get today's advanced chipset to run on their machine.

No matter what, Commodore will have to patch *AmigaDOS* for the enhanced boards, making the Amiga much easier to clone, but the Amiga operating system is what may keep all the Amigas alive.

AmigaDOS, when compared to operating systems like *MS-DOS* with *Windows* and *System 7* on the Macintosh, has one outstanding feature. It is the first personal computer operating system designed to multitask. *MS-DOS* and *System 7* are both very old operating systems that have been forced to multitask only in recent years to meet user demand. As a result they do so in a very sloppy manner, requiring much more RAM for a clunky operation which the Amiga does with ease and grace. *OS/2* may be designed to multitask, but it is about as compatible with *MS-DOS* as *AmigaDOS* is. The other major multitasking *OS* is *UNIX*, but it's also old and wasn't designed as a personal computer *OS*. It was designed in the days of mainframes to serve many users on a single system, and because of its age it does not have a Graphical User Interface integrated into it as *AmigaDOS* does.

There is a good argument which states that if *AmigaDOS* were ported to other systems, it could win the last great battle in the microcomputer market — the war for a standard *OS*. There are already boards for the other platforms that use the same graphics and sound coprocessors as the new Amiga-specific third party boards. In the cases of the Macintosh and NeXT, the computer is already using the same family of microprocessor. All that Commodore would have to do is make a version of the 2.0 *Kickstart* ROM to replace the ROM in those machines and they would be on their way. Those machines might even be compatible with the current Amiga software in many cases, so long as the program was written within the limits of the *AmigaDOS* and not to specifically use the Amiga's hardware. A version of the *AmigaDOS* could also be made to take on Microsoft's *MS-DOS* itself, although compatibility would be much harder since the clones all use the 80x86 microprocessor family. All those machines already have high density floppy drives that could be coaxed into a reading Amiga format disks, hard drives, loads of RAM, mice, and huge installed user bases.

Of course there are some grim realities to face. For instance the total lack of standard, industry accepted, software for *AmigaDOS*. Sure, *Pagestream* or *ProPage* might beat *Pagemaker* or *Quark Express* hands down, but I've never seen a "Help Wanted" ad that specified "*Pagestream* experience a must." I see them all the time for *Pagemaker* and *Quark* however.

Ports of business software are the price a computer manufacturer must pay if they intend their machine to be successful in the business market. Like it or not IBM and the clones took the market early on. Those are the machines that set the standards. Apple had no problem with this philosophy when trying to sell business on the Macintosh, and it worked for them. They introduced the Mac by creating the niche market of desktop publishing and made sure serious business software was available to do other jobs on the Mac. Now the Macintosh has almost 1/3 of the business market and the machine is only a year older than the Amiga.

Commodore has made a lot of mistakes that scare away business buyers from the Amiga. The first of these was the Amiga 1000. While it was not a mistake to make it, it was a very big mistake to completely abandon it and leave no easy upgrade path for its owners. Probably 1/3 of Apple's business comes from people who bought an older Macintosh and upgraded the logic board to the new version. By making new computers that fit into old cases, Apple created a large used-computer market for people who need a Mac on tight budget, and keep their original customers up to date at a much better price than having to buy a whole new machine. It would be a good idea for Commodore to implement this type of policy in the U.S.

The next big mistake was wooing game programmers rather than business software companies. Commodore's earliest partnerships were with groups like Electronic Arts. EA was known in the computer community for its games and made some really nice ones for the Amiga, but to date the only serious program EA created for the Amiga is *DeluxePaint*, with a possible second of *Deluxe Music Construction Set*. That's not too bad, considering EA is really still a game company. None of the other companies Commodore originally went to for development gave the Amiga that much. In fact, except for *DeluxePaint*, I can't think of a single program written for use on the 1000 that is still currently supported. There certainly was no good word processor before *WordPerfect*, and *WordPerfect* has abandoned the Amiga leaving us with *ProWrite* and *Final Copy*. Both are good programs, but not of

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the same scope as *WordPerfect* or Microsoft *Word*. The overall perception of the Amiga is that it's a game machine. At this point, an old game machine.

Commodore's third mistake was incorporating true IBM hardware compatibility into the Amiga2000. Instead of giving the Amiga its own identity, Commodore positioned it as an over-expensive clone. Sure it had special features as an Amiga, but in the *MS-DOS* realm it was just another clone and only a 286. The 286 bridgeboard was dated before it ever shipped. The end result is either a half-empty computer with a lot of slots the user feels are useless, or two separate computer in the same box that each need their own graphics cards, monitors and RAM.

Commodore is currently making it's fourth and biggest mistake: losing its niche market. Commodore created desktop video market with the Amiga, but has not kept pace with the Macs or *MS-DOS* machines in this field. In fact, if it weren't for Newtek's *Video Toaster*, the DTV niche market would be lost to the Amiga. Commodore has done nothing in the way of supporting development of a non-linear video editing system: something that the *MS-DOS* platform now has at least 3 of and the Macintosh has at least 2 of. When your competition has things for the niche market you created, that you don't, you know you're in trouble.

Furthermore, Commodore has been slacking off in the one area they were the undisputed champion of: development. Commodore has a reputation for creating machines so good they can survive on their own merit for long time. The Commodore 64 was the most successful home computer ever made — the Model T of the computer industry. The reason: it had great graphics and sound for the day. The Amiga was a real step in the right direction, but Commodore has let the Amiga rest on its custom chips for far too long. Macintosh released their Quandra 700, 900, and 950 as desktop video workstations, and what did Commodore counter with? CDTV, and the Amiga 600, toys. Now all the Amiga's critics that said the Amiga is nothing but a game machine have gotten a response from Commodore equivalent to saying "Oh Yeah....?" to some who insults you.

Commodore needs to reaffirm its position with some new developments and with a software support policy.

There should be a top-of-the-line 68040-based Amiga 4000, and it should have been released at WOC/A in NYC! This unit should also include at least an 8-bit resolver-type card if there is to be no super chipset, and be modeled to look a little like the 3000T.

Next (pardon the pun), there should be a pack of new 3000 class 030' machines released, not just the 3000 and 3000T, but a 3500 and a 1530, or something like that.

The 3500 would be the ultimate video machine. It should be logic board compatible with the A2000 case to hold the *Video Toaster* etc., and it should have 8 *Zorro III* slots. I don't care if Buster can only handle 5, get a new Obese Buster or something. Another thing is that the 3500 should have NO PC SLOTS. NONE! If you want to run a bridgeboard, at this point, there will be more than enough solutions to the problem with the 3000 and the 3000T. Let this be a 33 Mhz unit that Newtek can purchase from Commodore instead of buying a GVP board for their $8000 Workstation. The extra *Zorro* slots would be to accommodate memory cards, Network cards, and other serious application needed for desktop video. If one desperately needs *MS-DOS* card compatibility it's probably cheaper to buy a real *MS-DOS* machine anyway.

The 1530 would be a 32-bit A500 in a 500-style case running 25mhz. This would be marketed as a low end business machine. Direct competition for the MacLCII, IISI, and all the 386 systems sold to business, extra! This is the unit that would require heavy productivity software to be a success. Its compact design would fit well into the office.

All these machine should include a SCSI port built-in, especially the 1530, 2megs of chip and at least 8megs of Fast RAM expansion without resorting to an external card or a daughter board. The 1530 could use a trap door method that allowed 1, 2 and 4 meg simms. The 3500 and 4000 should be expandable to 32 megs on the logic board, or at least 16 like the 3000 is.

Enhanced chip set and *Flicker* fixers on all, of course. But also DUAL serial and DUAL parallel ports, to allow for Sound AND Graphic digitizers, for a modem AND a graphic tablet? These are the things that people using their computers business and multimedia need. A side benefit would be that any of these machines could run *UNIX*!

As for the 500, CDTV, 600 and 2000, they will become the Prosumer stuff. The 500 will be the AT, 286, Mac Classic competitor, CDTV and the 600 will be the Nintendo/Sega/CDI competition of the Amiga community. The 2000 will be in a class by itself as a low end video/multimedia home computer. The 2000HD and 2500 should be scrapped completely! Third party cards for the 2000 already surpass the quality of Commodore's equipment and will continue to. Commodore won't need to produce the inferior cards because the Amiga 3000 and 4000 line will fill in the space the 2000 used to occupy. 2000 owners would also have the option of upgrading to a 3500 since the cases would be identical.

On the software side, Commodore should reinvest a few years' profits to pay WordPerfect, Microsoft, Lotus, Borland, and Aldus to develop their products to the Amiga. By paying the development costs, they could insure that the products were developed with the Amiga's look and feel, while still retaining the look and feel of the product so that someone from another platform would be able to use it without a problem.

At this point, *AmigaDOS* would be worth porting to other machines, but the Amiga would be a strong enough platform that it would sell on its own.

The fact is, we're in a world-wide recession, and unless Commodore starts going where the money is, it might not survive this recession. Then there would be no Amiga computer or Amiga Operating System. ❑

RGB Expands Facilities

RGB Computer & Video, maker of *AmiLink*, is expanding its facilities for the third time in less than three years, according to president Bob Gilbert.

The latest expansion, which Gilbert says is necessary to keep pace with customer demand, will add 2,200 square feet and allow for additional technical support and manufacturing growth.

RGB started in 1986 and *AmiLink* has been in use by video production houses since 1987. *AmiLink* was the first computer-based editing controller to take advantage of the new grphical operating systems, the first multi-tasking video workstation, and the first video tape controller for the IBM PS/2 computer running under *OS/2* or *Windows*.

RGB's newest product, the *AmiLink IMC*, or *Inboard Machine Control* card, which was introduced in May at the Desktop Video show in San Francisco.

Contact: Mike Rowe, Sales Manager, RGB Computer & Video. (407) 844-3348. ❑

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Cut the Glare With KANTEK Screens

Relieve eyestrain with the Spectrum Univeral Anti-Glare Screen from KANTEK.

Computer users frequently complain about the difficulty in viewing their computer screens. One of the best ways to solve this problem is with an anti-glare screen. But where do you find one to fit your particular monitor? Try KANTEK, Inc., who has just introduced a new line called Spectrum-Universal.

Designed to fit most 12- to 15-inch PC monitors, Spectrum-Universal Anti-Glare screens are constructed of optically pure glass with multiple anti-reflective coating on both sides, substantially reducing glare and reflections by up to 99%. The screens improve screen resolution and contrast, install in seconds (no tools required!) and lift up for easy cleaning.

The Spectrum-Universal, Anti-Static, Anti-Radiation Screen features a conductive coating and a grounding cord, and blocks up to 98% of ELF/VLF E-field radiation, reduces UVA/UVB radiation, eliminates static, and complies with Swedish and E.C. standards.

Suggested retail price for the Anti-Glare screen is $74; the suggested retail price for the Anti-Radiation screen is $119.

Contact: KANTEK, Inc., 15 East Main St., East Rockaway, NY 11518. (516)593-3212, fax (516) 593-3295. ❑

Improved *ARexx* Control With New Release of *Superbase Professional 4*

Oxxi, Inc. is now shipping version 1.2 of *Superbase Professional 4* to registered *Superbase Professional 4* owners. Anyone who purchased earlier versions of *Superbase Professional 4* after June 1, 1992 is eligible for a free update to version 1.2

The new version addresses all of the bugs known in version 1.01, and includes improved *ARexx* and printing support. This release versions places an emphasis on performance and reliability.

Major refinements include:

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- ASK command
- Improved Form Display
- Foreign character output

The improved *ARexx* support helps integrate *Superbase Professional 4* with other applications on the Amiga computer. Users can create extremely powerful DML programs and through use of *ARexx* command scripts, perform data extraction and manipulation tasks not available with any other product on any other computer.

Suggested retail for *Superbase Professional 4* version 1.2 is $299.95. Upgrades to version 1.2 are available to registered owners of *Superbase Professional 4* for $20. *Superbase Pro4* products purchased after June 1, 1992 qualify for a free update. To obtain the free update, registered owners should send in a photocopy of their dated sales receipt.

Contact: Oxxi, Inc., P.O. Box 90309, Long Beach, CA 90809. (310) 427-1227, fax (310) 427-0971. ❑

Ami-Back Tools Now Available from Moonlighter Software

Ami-Back Tools, a disk utilities program designed to keep your floppy and hard drives in top condition, is scheduled to be release to the public in September 1992.

Ami-Back Tools includes the following features:

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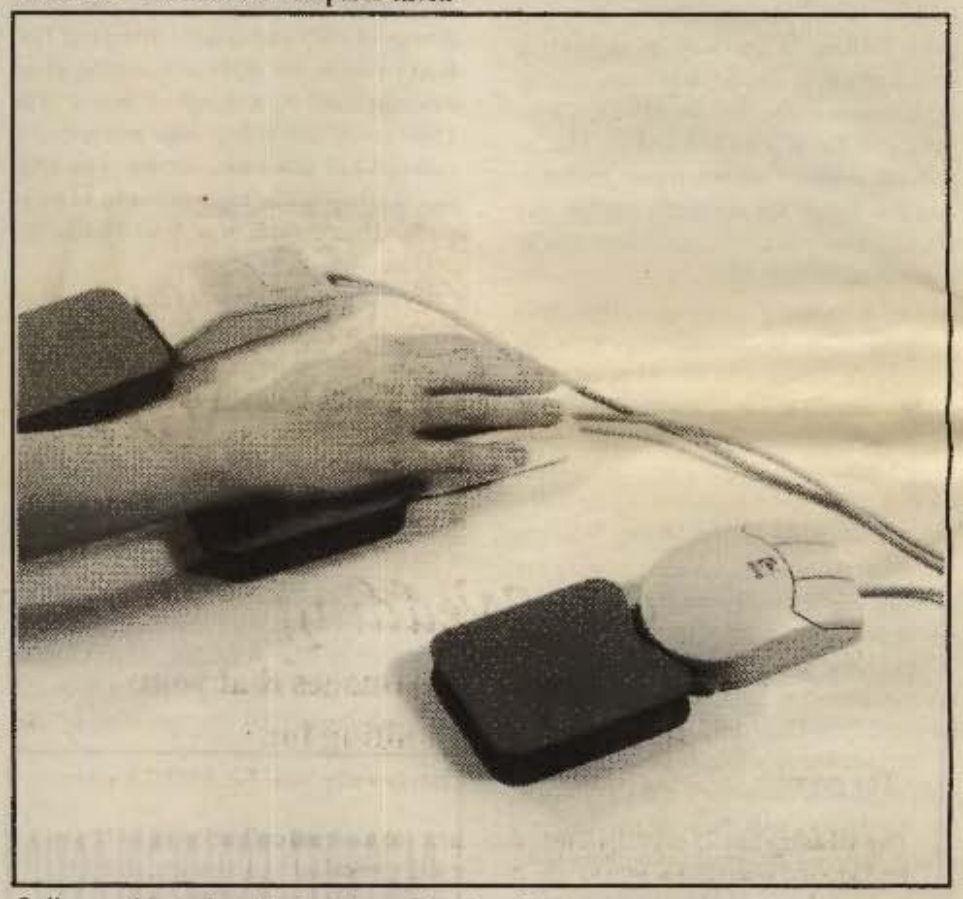
Administrator — ties these utilities together and allows you to set-up, schedule, and perform any or all of these tests.

Suggested retail price for *Ami-Back Tools* is $79.95. Registered owners of *Ami-Back* will be offered a discount off the list price of *Ami-Back Tools*. *Ami-Back Tools* will operate on any Amiga model computer with at least 512 kilobytes of memory.

Contact: Moonlighter Software, 3208-C East Colonial Drive, Suite 204, Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 384-9484, fax (407)384-9391. ❑



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The **Mouse Paw** has a universal design. One edge is straight, and attaches to flat-backed mice, such as those from Apple and Sun. The other side is V-shaped and attaches to round-backed mice such as those from Microsoft and Logitech. "The **Mouse Paw** is especially helpful for word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, CAD/CAM, and other applications that require extensive mouse usage," according to company Vice-President Julie Donnelley.

Mouse Paw is available from Marty's Computer Workshop, Cambridge, MA. Retail price is $7.95.

Contact: Marty's Computer Workshop, P.O. Box 550, Cambridge, MA 02142-0004. (617) 491-6935, (800) 927-3504, fax(617) 491-7046.

❑

The Amiga-Generated Video Bulletin Board Experiment

by Terry Alan Blanchard

I volunteered to handle the updating of the church signboard in front of the Union Baptist Church. It was the typical white sign with movable black letters of one style and only a few sizes. I had to tailor the information on the sign to the limited space and limited number of letters (you never have enough S's). It was very boring, to say the least and within a stone's throw were three other churches with bigger, better signs. We had a very unusual church but our blah blah blah signboard just didn't convey that.

A few years later I purchased a Commodore 64 and began to see the possibilities of a dynamic video signboard to replace the stagnant signboard, using *VideoTitler* software. It would take installing a TV set into the front wall of the church and running a continuous loop of video on the C64. But I wasn't quite ready to dedicate my C64 complete with disk drive to the purpose. I did create a 40 minute instructional video called "The Bible in Time and Space" (which I'm in the process of redoing on my Amiga for broadcast on Public Access Channel 35/36) which showed me that I enjoyed and had an aptitude for video production. It also showed me that, great as the C64 was, I needed more colors, memory and speed.

It was then that I began looking at the Amiga computer as the ideal video platform. After 6 months of research, I purchased an Amiga 3000 (25 Mhz/50 Meg hard drive) with a V.I.P. encoder. After only a month with *DeluxePaint III* (truly powerful software) and *AmigaVision*, I was convinced that anything could be done with it, including my Video Signboard idea. I still didn't want to subject a computer to continuous use, being hooked to the TV, though. I gave some thought to putting the display on videotape and getting an electronics wiz to wire up a timer to turn on the TV and VCR and to begin a 6 hour tape playing at a certain "prime time" each day. However, a little over a year ago I saw a Samsung Video Player with Auto Repeat for $179 and I knew it was time to try my idea. I purchased the DigiView Gold digitizer with copy stand/camera setup to get images into the A3000. To sell the idea to the leaders of the church I produced a demo videotape showing what it would take to bring the idea to fruition. It wasn't as hard a sell as one might expect, since there is a high degree of computer literacy among the leadership and they had seen enough of my work at that point to realize that I could pull it off. Everyone thought it was just the type of innovative sign that would aptly convey our church's uniqueness to the neighborhood.

A used Zenith 25" TV set was purchased for only $100. (Interestingly, the TV was cheap because it took longer than usual to warm up: no problem for a TV to be used 24 hours a day.) The VCR was installed in a locked cabinet (we didn't want some joker slipping a copy of "Debbie Does Dallas" into the VCR for display on the street when we weren't looking, did we?) with an exhaust fan to keep all the little diodes happy. The TV was such a tight fit in the window we had built for it that it took a dozen hits with a sledgehammer to wedge it into place...and it still worked! So, within a month of approval by the church leadership, the old sign was removed, the first videotape was produced, the TV was installed and we were up and running. The *Press & Sun Bulletin* came and did an article on it shortly thereafter and a classy sunshade canopy was made by others in the church to make viewing possible in the sunny afternoon through evening hours.

While it was thrilling to see people's reaction to our new sign, all of my free time from then until now was spoken for in producing a new video for each month. I come up with a general theme and flesh it out in storyboard form, digitize selected images with *DigiView Gold*, manipulate and animate them with *DeluxePaint IV*, and them tie them all seamlessly with *AmigaVision* and work on the timing of everything. The 3 to 10 minute presentations are put into a continuous loop using the *AmigaVision* "Goto" Icon, and videotaped onto a 2 hour master tape and a 30 minute backup tape. The master is played for the entire month. That's approximately 360 consecutive plays and rewinds! I found Memorex videotapes (only $2 each in bulk) worked just fine for this application. I save the masters for future re-use when I need a break.

After 8 months of continuous play (5,840 hours), the VCR needed a new video head. It turns out that video heads are rated for 5,500 - 6,000 hours mean time between failures. The bad news: because the model of VCR was so new, there were no spare parts in the USA yet (no one thought they would be needed for a couple of years anyway) so it took a month to get the video head from Samsung (Korea). The good news: the VCR was warranted for 1 year, parts. A new VCR was purchased and the repaired one kept for a backup.

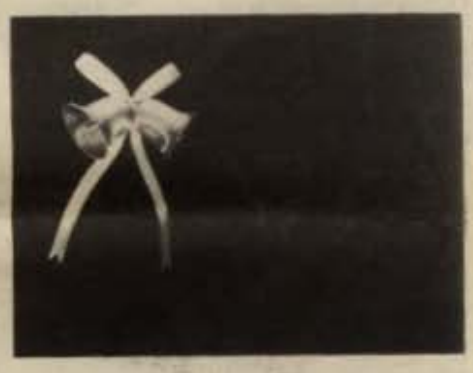
Since then, I have upgraded my Video(Chip) memory to 2 Meg and RAM(Fast) memory to 8 Meg so that each month's entire video production can be loaded into RAM for videotaping. (Previously, I would display a screen of text for viewers to read while *AmigaVision* loaded the next image or animation into memory.

When my IBM-using friends remark on my genius in what I do with computers and video, I tell them that 95% of my genius was in choosing the Amiga in the first place. It is an amazing computer with some of the most innovative software in the industry.

Reprinted courtesy of the Binghamton Amiga User Group.

❑

If YOU have an interesting application for your Amiga, please let us know. We'd like to share it with our readers.



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Continued from page 1.

THE 39TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE

Held at the Los Angeles convention center June 8 -12, 1992, the meeting featured numerous review courses as well as the latest results of research. Manufacturers of nuclear imaging devices, computers, and radiopharmaceuticals had extensive displays. A smaller area was devoted to scientific posters and exhibits. And, it was here for the first time that there were non-commercial exhibits of physician-developed educational computer programs. Of the 15 exhibits, one was based on the Amiga (mine), 13 on MacIntosh, and one on the IBM.

A COMPUTER-BASED RENAL NUCLEAR MEDICINE TEACHING FILE

In a computer-based teaching file system, the computer becomes a book and every screen becomes a page in that book. Unlike a regular book, pages have active areas. When one selects an active area, an answer to a question can appear or perhaps an image will be displayed. It all depends on the programming.

In my teaching file, I had 46 actual teaching pages. Each page contained a thumb-nail sketch of a nuclear scan which, when selected, could display either a larger, more detailed 16 level greyscale image using native Amiga graphics or a 256 greyscale image using a GVP IV24 graphics board. By selecting other areas on the screen, the reader could obtain the patient's clinical history, nuclear scan interpretation, CAT scan and ultrasound images when available, and answers to a series of relevant questions. Because "lists" were used, the screen was uncluttered.

In accordance with accepted teaching methodology, each screen, or case, was designed to teach one concept. Similar cases were "linked" together so that the reader could experience the advantages of non-linear learning. A central list of references was accessible from any page in the book. Because the program kept track of the reader's progress, losing one's place became a thing of the past. Unique features of the teaching file included its ability to print out questions and answers for later review and the use of voice for instruction.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

Commodore, which clearly does support its users, graciously loaned three Amiga computers (two 3000's and one 2000) and four monitors (three 1960's and one 1084S). I sent five boxes (220 lbs.!) of my own boards, disks, and peripherals to the meeting. I included a VCR so that I could show a *VideoToaster*-edited tape on how one can integrate images and text to create a teaching file.

I chose Gold Disk's *Hyperbook* for my authoring system, because of its simplicity, flexibility, reasonable price, and ease of use. Whatever limitations it has are easily overcome using *ARexx* which is, in fact, how I learned to use *ARexx*!

The 256 greyscale nuclear images were captured using Progressive Peripherals **FrameGrabber256** attached to a Panasonic black and white CCTV camera. Because these images are on transparencies, they were placed between a light source (viewbox) and the camera for frame capture. Art Department *Professional* (ASDG) was used to scale the images, convert them to 24 bits, and expand their dynamic range. These processed images were stored on Syquest88 removable hard drives which I have found very convenient and reliable both with the GVP combo SCSI and also the SCSI standard on the Amiga 3000.

I chose a GVP IV24 graphics board to display the 24-bit images because it can use the same monitor connected to the computer without the user needing to turn the board "on." Medical images generated by the IV24 looked "first-class" on the Commodore 1960 monitors. Because I did not have my GVP IV24 upgraded for the IVU interface in time for the meeting, I was unable to demonstrate frame capture with this unit.

While surely not an essential feature, my teaching file does access music on compact disks which I think increases the enjoyment of studying. For this, I used the CD ROM hardware and software from Xetec, which as usual, performed flawlessly.

At the meeting, I emphasized the need to keep track both of the numerous medical images (which I did with *ImageFinder* from Zardoz) and the patients (which I did with *SuperBase Professional 4.0* from Oxxi).

Because digitizing transparencies is only one way of capturing medical images on personal computers such as the Amiga, I used an Amiga 3000 to run a Scala (*Digital Visions*) slide show on two other ways of achieving the same result. I made several screens with *DPaintIV* incorporating images either scanned in with my Sharp JX-100 scanner (ASDG software) or captured by my *VideoToaster* (Newtek — just in case you've hidden under a rock for the last couple of years). I included a morphing sequence using *DPaintIV* as well as an animation demonstrating normal kidney drainage as a function of time. There was even a screen with color cycling.

The last Amiga, another 3000, was running the latest version of *AMAXII* (ReadySoft) with the 128k Mac ROMS still on the cartridge rather than on their new board. I felt I had to show the cross-platform capabilities of the Amiga with so many Macs at the meeting. I also used this computer as part of my FrameGrabber256 (Progressive Peripherals) digitizing set-up.

HOW WAS IT RECEIVED?

In a word — spectacularly! Physicians and technologists were impressed with the amount of hardware and software available for the Amiga. There were many conversations that began with "Now I know why that friend I have is so enthusiastic about his Amiga." Some were ready to buy both my teaching application and the Amiga on the spot including one physician from overseas who wanted to purchase 10 systems for his hospital.

People loved the Scala slide show with its color cycling, morphing and animations. There was a lot of "How did you do that?" as Scala did its magic. In particular, attendees loved the animations. And why not? Only one Mac was running an animation and had images so blocky that they looked pitiful.

Voice instruction as an innovative part of the teaching file was well received. Unsurprisingly, the Macs were silent. The poor, lone IBM, needless to say, has known for a long time to keep its mouth shut.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

My Amiga medical teaching application has received more interest than I could have hoped for. I have received an invitation to present my teaching application at the European Congress of Radiology in Vienna, September, 1993 as well as the opportunity to place my program on display at The Learning Center for Interactive Technology which is part of the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland.

First I want to finish adding about 15 more teaching cases and really polish up the program. I've considered putting it on CD ROM although it would prevent adding new cases to the teaching file which really was one of my goals. I also have what I think are some fascinating new applications that I would like to develop. I'd like to become much better at *ARexx* and I'd like to try my hand at *CanDo* (Inovatronics).

FINAL THOUGHTS

If you want to experience the excitement and satisfaction of creating something new, something that never existed before, take the plunge and try it. Get the best tools you can afford, take care of them, learn how to use them, and see what others have built with them.

If your creative effort involves a computer then know that you made an excellent choice in the Amiga. Even the Amiga 500 is a capable machine. Every single program that I used for my teaching application is available commercially and will run on an Amiga 500. I also want you to know that you don't have to be some kind of "computer genius" (whatever that might mean) to use the excellent multimedia authoring systems we are blessed with on the Amiga.

Know finally, that you must be willing to work hard to meet your goals. Your Amiga will meet you more than halfway and will reward your hard work by making you look good.

❑

Michael Tobin is a Board-certified radiologist and nuclear medicine physician practicing in New York City. A graduate of Harvard (A.B. , Columbia (Ph.D.), and Albert Einstein College of Medicine (M.D.), he has been published widely on computer applications in medicine. He is interested in multi-media medical education and had had Amiga-based exhibits at major medical meetings.

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Multi-media Authoring

Getting Started

by Michael Tobin M.D., Ph.D.

O.K., so you've seen those multi-media instructional displays which teach you everything from nuclear physics to where the hospital cafeteria is located. Cute aren't they? With their little animations and glitzy fonts, they don't seem all that difficult to do. You feel now it's time to try your hand at this kind of thing. Well, where do you start?

If you read the usual Amiga magazines with their repetitive reviews, you might think that now is the time for endless in-depth reviews in mind-numbing detail of all the authoring systems available to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses. While there is definitely a place for such product reviews — and indeed you will probably have to make some kind of choice somewhere down the line — I suggest that you ask yourself the following questions before you begin.

1. Do you really have something on your mind that you want to say and are you willing to put in the effort to get your message across?

This is NOT a trivial question. Whatever it is that you decide to communicate will take time and effort to research and present in a useable and attractive form. Don't overlook the commitment factor.

2. Are there people out there interested in what you have to say?

The answer to this is almost always "yes". In spite of the incessant outpouring of TV, movies, books, etc., truly valuable and useful information is in short supply. Anything you can do to extract the pearl from the sludge will be truly appreciated.

3. What else has been written or produced on your topic?

Maybe someone has recently done an award-winning multimedia exhibit on electricity which is exactly what you had in mind. If you feel strongly enough, I would encourage you to go ahead anyway. The definitive work is yet to be written. Nonetheless, it is important to know what else is out there, if you agree with the approach and contents, and how you would do it differently.

4. Are you willing to become something of an expert on your topic?

Even if you are only writing a module on where the exits are in a public building, you'd better have a very clear idea of where they are yourself. People become uncommonly angry when given directions which lead them into brick walls. And — heaven forbid — if there is a fire in the building when they find a brick wall instead of an exit, they will be very unhappy campers indeed. The moral — Make sure you know what you're talking about. This will require some effort on your part (see point 1).

5. Who are you writing for?

Is your multi-media presentation on how to avoid the common cold intended for young children, expectant mothers, or the 77th annual convention of physicians expert in infectious diseases? More presentations fail because the speaker or writer neglected to take into account his or her audience than for any other reason. Your content, scope, and approach must be adjusted for the group you are trying to reach. I guarantee you that the very same lecture on special relativity that resulted in your being carried out in triumph on the shoulders of theoretical physicists, will get you nothing but spitballs from a group of seventh graders.

6. Is your topic well defined?

The importance of the Amazon rain forest is much more manageable in its scope than the topic of environmental conservation from the 17th century until now. If you make your presentation too narrow ("A multi-media approach to eyeballs of the newt") you may be limiting your audience unnecessarily (although maybe not if you are targeting newt experts). I recommend starting narrow and expanding if necessary. "Lizards in the area of Walden Pond" is a well-defined topic that could be fun both to author and to learn about. You can always broaden your topic to include lizards that used to live near Walden Pond if you need to.

7. Is a computer presentation the best way to communicate your ideas?

A little kiss on the cheek and an "I love you" whispered in the ear has yet to be duplicated on a computer system. Books, pamphlets, fliers, spots on radio and TV all have their place. Think — Is a computer the best way to go?

8. What computer authoring program should you use?

If you do decide on a computerized multi-media approach, now is the time to make your software selection. Read the magazines, speak with your friends, but above all, get a demo disk and see completed projects made by others. Obviously, you don't want to select a software package that doesn't handle music well if your project places heavy emphasis in this area. And just as obviously, some programs are easier to use and less problem-prone than others. But having said this, the limiting factor is usually the creativity of the author rather than features lacking in the software, which often can be easily and satisfyingly "worked around."

So before you begin making those "hot spots" on the screen, ask yourself the questions I have listed above and any others you feel I have left out. Then take a deep breath and . . . start creating! ❑

Docks, a sample scene from Vidia's Digital Photographic Library.

Pro Video CG II

If you've an active interest in video production on your Amiga, take a look at *Pro Video CG II* from Shereff Systems. This professional video character generator software offers the following:

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Minimum Hardware Requirements

Commodore Amiga A2000/A2500/or A3000.

Workbench 1.3 or higher.

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The number of Fonts and IFF images on-line is memory dependent.

Hard drive with at least 3 Megabytes of Free Space.

Suggested retail price is $199.95.

Contact: Shereff Systems, 15075 SW Koll Parkway, Suite G, Beaverton, OR 97006. (503) 626-2022, fax (503) 626-2303. ❑

The Top Ten Reasons to Choose an Amiga Home Computer

10. REPUTATION

The Amiga ranks high among publications that rate home computers. For example, for the last three years in a row, Germany's leading computer magazine, *Chip*, has named the Amiga **Home Computer of the Year.**

9. ANIMATION

The Amiga has superior **animation** capabilities. This is why the Walt Disney company chose the Amiga over the IBM and Mac as the platform on which to introduce its first animation development program for home computers.

8. EFFICIENCY

The Amiga's graphical user interface (GUI) is twice as memory-efficient as the Mac, and *four times* more efficient than Microsoft *Windows*. The Amiga's GUI runs well in as little as 512k, while *Windows* needs about two megabytes.

7. SUPPORT

Famous users of the Amiga include scientist Arthur C. Clarke, creator of the communications satellite and author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Then there is B.B. King, and many others. Over 2,000,000 Amigas have been sold to date, and the machine is supported by well over 2,500 computer programs.

6. DESKTOP VIDEO

The Amiga is the leading compter in the rapidly growing field of desktop video, in terms of both capability and available software. According to a recent survey, over 50% of video professionals with desktop computers have Amigas.

Continued on page 18.

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Continued from page 2.

people see it for themselves. You can't buy what you can't see.

My wish list includes:

GVP — to come out with an internal modem for their Hard Drive for the 500.

Someone to develop a card with the C-64 chips for faster and better emulation.

NewTek — to shrink their card size for the *Video Toaster* (to help the Amiga grow).

Last, but not least, for Commodore to get off their whatever and stop stabbing their loyal customers in the back. Don't raise the price on your computers. Lower the prices drastically on the CDTV's (I saw the CD-I for $499.00 at Radio Shack). Release the 500 plus, etc.

Edward Stewart, Canton, GA

Oxxi offers Network version of *Superbase Professional 4* for Amiga

Amiga users of *Superbase Professional 4* will now be able to share data files with other Superbase users on networks, including users of *Superbase Professional 4 Windows* on PCs.

"Networking of computers is the hallmark of today's corporate user," according to John Houston, Oxxi president. "Databases must operate efficiently and effectively on networks in order to maintain viability in this market. *SBase Professional 4 LAN* brings the Amiga version of *Superbase Professional* 4 into this vital arena."

SBase Professional 4 LAN will be priced according to the number of Amigas accessing the network. Networking module pricing is as follows: single user version, $149; up to 5 users, $435; up to 10 users, $799.

SBase Professional 4 LAN will only be available directly from Oxxi and will be made available only to registered users of *Superbase Professional 4*.

Contact: Oxxi, Inc. P.O. Box 90309, Long Beach, CA 90809. (310) 427-1227, fax (310)427-0971. ❑

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Continued from page 17.

5. OVERSCAN (SCREEN ANIMATION)

Unlike the IBM and Macintosh, the Amiga has **overscan**, the ability to display images all the way out and beyond the visible edges of a monitor screen. The Amiga supports overscan in all resolutions, including severe overscan.

4. MULTI-TASKING

The Amiga has the built-in ability to run several different programs at the same time. This feat, called multi-tasking, is not as easily performed on the other platforms because (1) they were not originally designed with *true* multi-tasking in mind, and (2) they lack the Amiga's special custom chips that assist the CPU in the multitasking function.

3. MULTIMEDIA

The Amiga's custom chips — Denise, Fat Agnus, etc., — are dedicated to music, graphics, animation and so on — giving the Amiga superior multimedia capabilities. The Amiga was designed from the ground up to be a true multimedia computer.

2. VERSATILITY

Neither the IBM nor the Mac can run Amiga software, but the Amiga can run IBM and Mac software from special plug-in boards and chips.

1. SOFTWARE EXPENSE

Software costs much less for the Amiga. Often, software on the other platforms is sold to businesses, and is priced accordingly. Businesses have more money to spend on software than you do. Why should you have to pay those prices?

My Lunch with ASDG

by Jason Chin

Wednesday is the middle of the week. The middle of the week is never any fun. The middle of the week is never productive. Never say never.

On Wednesday July 22, 1992, Gina Cerniglia from ASDG came to visit the salesforce at Micro-PACE Distributors. Her, and ASDG's reputation precede her. ASDG, as any true Amigan is aware of, is a very important developer of Amiga software. Utilizing the Amiga's incredible capabilities for graphics and image processing, ASDG continues to set the standard (with *Art Department Professional, Pro ScanLab, et.al.)* by which all other graphic products are judged. Thus, armed with the promise of a demonstration of "something wonderful," Gina arrived (just in time for lunch!) to find a Micro-PACE eager to be dazzled.

And dazzled we were.

Coming soon from ASDG (in fact, it may even be available from Micro-PACE by the time you are reading this) this is a revolutionary new program. Did you see *Terminator 2*? Have you seen Michael Jackson's *"Black or White"* video? Have you ever even heard of "morphing"? Do you have an Amiga? If the answer is yes to two ro more of those questions, get ready to be amazed. Coming soon from ASDG, available at Micro-PACE Distributors for dealers, is *MorphPlus*. This astounding program will allow you to take any image and have it "morph" into another. Smoothly transform a beautiful woman into an owl. Age a young bou into an old man. Perform never-before-seen transitions. All with one software package.

Now, Micro-PACE salespeople have seen products come and go. These are not easy people to impress. Once upon a time, these salespeople were all agog over things like Fantavision and the Juggler demo. No more; but this was different. This was exciting. *MorphPlus* performed special effects that were previously the domain of multi-million dollar studios. When Gina played the demo tape of *MorphPlus* for Micro-PACE assembled, a collective gasp was heard. She was excited about this new product and her enthusiasm spread to us.

Also, Micro-PACE plays host to dozens of developers in order to learn more about the products we carry. We are all, admittedly, Amiga fanatics and when something new comes out we want to be the first to know so we can relay our information to our dealers. The more we know, the more the dealers know, so we are constantly opening our doors (and our increasingly crowded salesfloor) for developers to demonstrate and explain their products. We've been excited about products before, but his was something else. ASDG has once again pushed the Amiga to new heights of professionalism with *MorphPlus*.

If you're an end user, ask your local dealer for a demonstration of ASDG's *MorphPlus*. If you're a dealer, call Micro-PACE for *MorphPlus* today! ❑

Jason Chin is Show Coordinator for Micro-PACE Distributors.

Happy Birthday, *AmiLink*!

RGB Computer & Video, maker of *AmiLink*, will celebrate its fifth anniversary in business this year by hosting an open-house and professional training session on September 10-11, 1992, for AmiLink dealers and customers. The firm will also be celebrating one year at its new location in Riviera Beach, FL.

"We anticipate around 400 people will attend," says president Bob Gilbert. "We'll have refreshments and entertainment, as well as product demonstration." More than 100 *Ami-Link* dealers and 2000 customers nationwide have been invited.

Ami-Link users include some of the nation's biggest corporations, such as Eastman Kodak and Xerox,; large government organizations, such as NASA and Canadian defense forces; post-production houses; medical colleges; police and fire departments; and hotels.

Contact: Mike Rowe, Sales Manager, RGB Computer & Video. (407) 844-3348. ❑

IBM Plays Catch-up

Always a follower, never a leader

by Terry Kepner

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I mean, I was attending PC Expo (June 1992), where companies were supposed to announce new and powerful products, and these guys were making a big deal about their "new and unique" device that let you — gasp! — connect your computer to a TV! What a concept! (Where have I seen that?)

Imagine, you can now connect your IBM PC computer to a TV or, even more fantastic, to a VCR. That's right, now you can make a copy of your *Windows'* display to impress your friends!

Of course, adding this capability to your computer does cost a little money, but it should be easy to find an extra $1,165 in your budget. You can just do without some of those frivolous line items, like the phone or electric . . . .

There are a couple of restrictions on this of course. First, your computer must have a VGA display. Second, you must have either *Windows 3.0* or *MS-DOS 3.0* (or higher).

The other memorable item I saw was a computer-in-a-keyboard. This exciting product is a wedge-shaped device that looks just like a standard IBM 101 keyboard, until you notice that it has a disk drive on the right side.

For both of these devices I couldn't help but think of the Amiga. I knew the IBM designers were a little behind in the ground-breaking department, but I didn't think it would take seven years for them to catch on to the Amiga.

Gosh, but those guys are quick.

❑

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