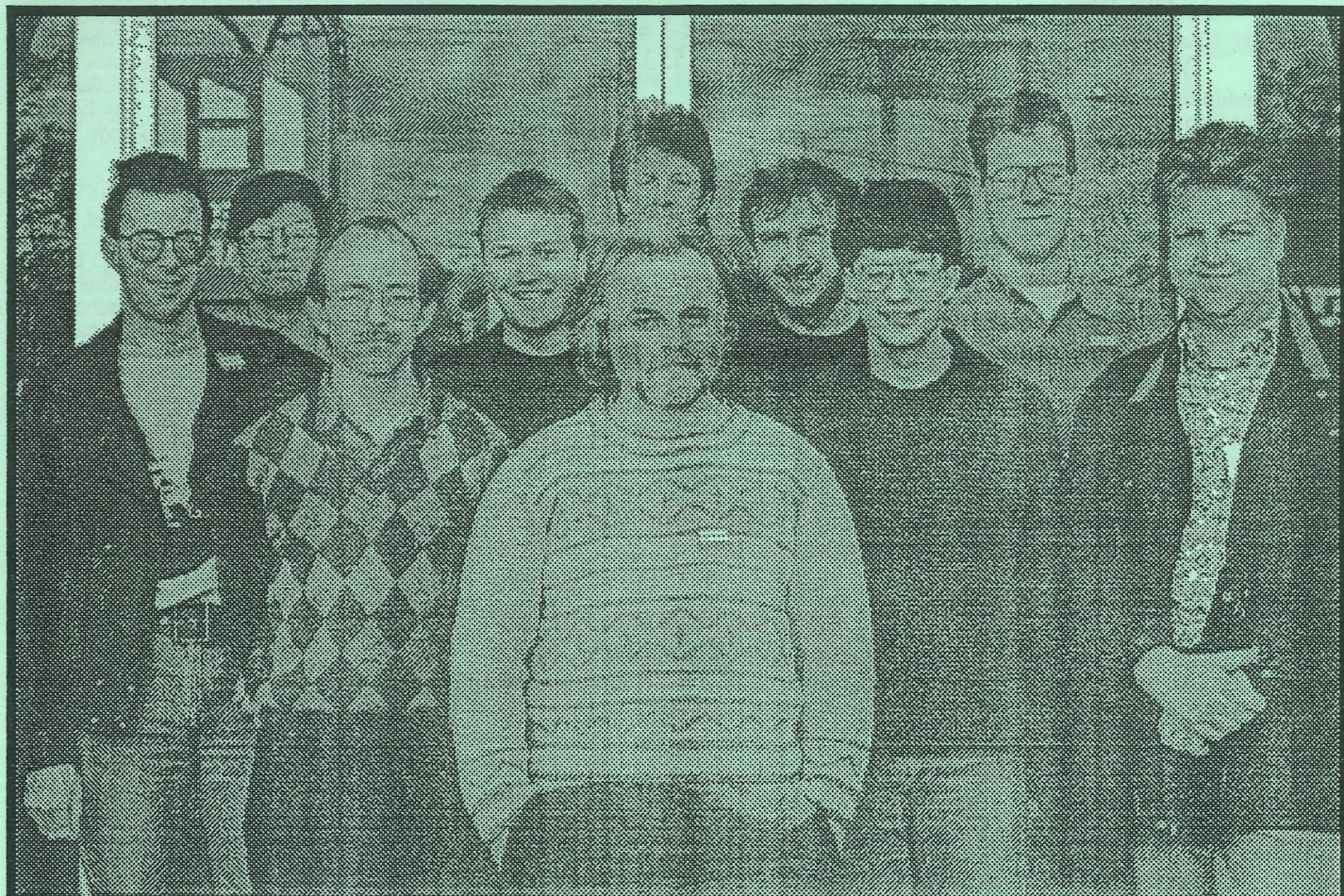


Workbench

Journal of Amiga Users Group Inc., G.P.O. Box 684E Melbourne 3001 Victoria Australia
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"The Good, The Bad & The Ugly"

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AMIGA USERS GROUP INC.

P.O. Box 684E Melbourne 3001, Victoria Australia.

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CLUB EVENTS

For details of club events and meeting dates, check SIG Reports and the AUG calendar inside the back cover

An entry fee is charged by the groups to cover the cost of hall rental and light refreshments. Meeting times and directions are listed in the rear of the Journal.

Back Issues of Workbench

All back issues of Amiga Workbench are now available, for \$2 each including postage. Back issues are also available at meetings.

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Articles, papers, letters, drawings, cartoons and comments are actively sought for publication. Contributions may be sent in on disk, paper or uploaded to Amiga Central or Ratz BBS's in the area set aside for this purpose. Please send your contribution in text-only, non-formatted if they are on file and remember to include your address for return of disks. Deadline for articles is the first wednesday of the month of Publication. Contributions can be sent to: The Editor, AUG, PO Box 684E, Melbourne 3001.

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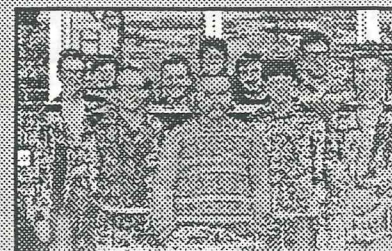
Here is a list of AUG members who have volunteered to share their knowledge/experiences with others. If you want to help and have your name listed here please contact the editor. They are not listed in any order or priority. Please keep contacts to reasonable hours (6 - 9 pm unless otherwise noted) and remember the basis of this service - they are volunteers.

Introduction to the Amiga / Prowrite	Rudy Kohut	- 807 3911
Amiga Basic (Advanced)	John Elston	- 375 4142
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Public Domain	Rob Pemberton	- 571 4579
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Editorial

Have you noticed the changes in the names over at the left there?

I'm back as editor for a start, after last issue when apparently Jim Berry decided that as he had done a lot of editorial leg work while I was out of commission with the lurgi, he would be editor. As my editorial column last month was pre-empted, I'll repeat my thanks to Jim and to Rob Pemberton for their assistance while I was offline.

Also with this issue Justin Deeley, who has done the printing for the last two issues, has taken over the layout as well as the printing.

The previous A.U.G. committee accepted Justin's offer, in June, to do the full bit to save both money and time in production of Workbench. In the past, the magazine has gone through the hands of the editor, been passed on to Jim Berry (for layouts), then on to yet another person to print proof and final pages, and then taken to KwikKopy for the bulk printing when everything was right. Our thanks to Jim for the painstaking attention he has applied to the layout of the magazine.

The hope is that with fewer hands to go through now, Workbench can operate with a later deadline for club news and events, and meeting reports and other items which would be out of date if held over to the next issue as the old system would require. Of course we still want articles, and the earlier we can get them the better, mainly because I prefer to check editorial revisions with writers whenever possible, and also to allow us to better balance issues and spread articles over issues as appropriate.

A little further to the left, on the inside front cover (does anyone EVER read that page?) are some more changes - the new committee elected at the AGM last month is now running the A.U.G., and they are making some changes already. A few of these will be reflected in the look and content of Workbench, in an attempt to make it more relevant to members needs and responsive to readers feedback; this will be much easier if we actually get some feedback so please write, or leave a message on one of the Bulletin Boards. If you like Workbench as it is, let us know that too, so we don't make changes no-one really wants!

This issue also sees the final instalment of Jeff Kirkland's excellent AmigaDOS series, so if you have an interest that you'd like to see covered, let us know what we should look at for the next in depth series of articles. Or, maybe you could write the next in depth series of articles, and see your name over there at the left.

Homesglen Raffle

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There are few if any spreadsheets for the Amiga that I would be pleased to show off to a Microsoft Excel or Lotus 1-2-3 user. In the December 1992 edition of Workbench I reviewed MaxiPlan4 and said that unless you could handle the problems with that program you would be better off trying another product. Version 2.0 of Professional Calc has now been released for comparison.

Professional Calc is a big program by Amiga standards. The program itself is 537,224 bytes in size and when started in the default standard screen configuration consumes 620,424 bytes of ram of which 91,376 is CHIP ram. Opening on the Workbench screen, which is an option, will use slightly less memory as would setting the standard screen to use 4 colours instead of 8. Of course, going the other way and opening a 256 colour screen (if you are using a new Amiga 1200 or 4000) would consume more memory. Once you then add in the actual data to be used in a spreadsheet, it becomes obvious that running on a machine with only 1 Meg of ram is dubious for any serious use.

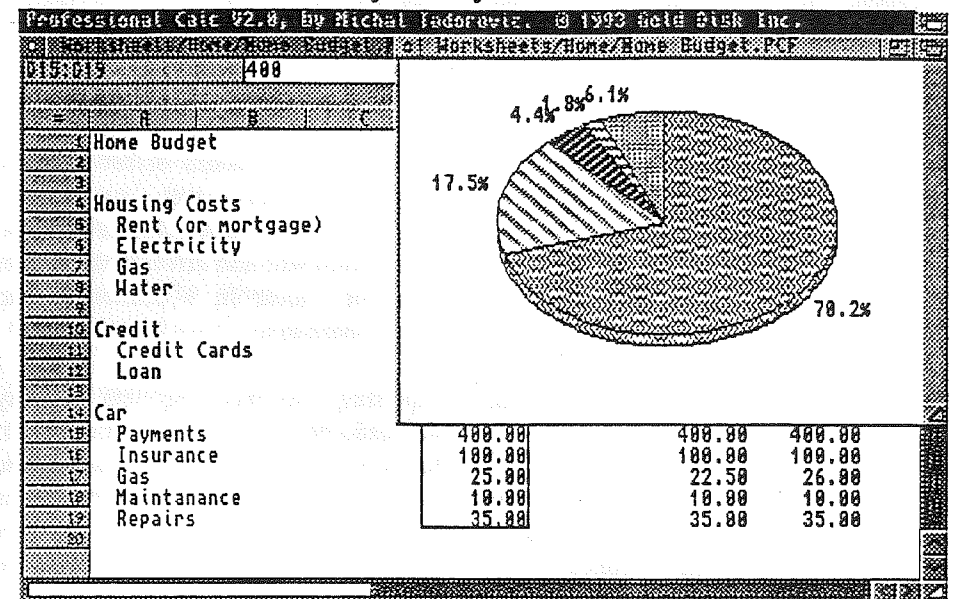
If you consider this to be a large program, consider that Excel 3 on the Macintosh is more than 1.2 MB in size, or more than twice as large as Professional Calc.

When you buy the program you get 3 disks and a cheap paperback manual of about 190 pages in length. There is also a 1 page manual "update" for version 2.0 features. The "Program" disk has the main program as well as the "install" program, which works easily and just as explained in the manual. The "Utilities" disk has some ARexx example files and a directory of 20 fonts for use with this and other programs. The fonts include the ".metric" files needed for Postscript output. The third disk has a number of example files that demonstrate the use of Professional Calc across a range of uses.

Despite being half as large as Excel on the Macintosh, Professional Calc provides comparable basic functionality. The bells and whistles of Excel are reflected in the relative prices of the programs: about \$450 for Excel 4 versus about \$180 for Professional Calc. From my experience, most of the options available in Excel are rarely used. However, that does not matter if you

Professional Calc 2.0

by Rudy Kohut



suddenly need one of those bells or whistles to do something and the program cannot respond!

With Professional Calc you get over 130 built-in functions for doing general math, trigonometric, statistical, and financial calculations, as well as functions for decision-making ("Boolean"), database, string manipulation, time, index, error-trapping and style control. One of the built-in functions, called "REXX", lets you use the ARexx interface to have another program use data from the spreadsheet, manipulate it, and return a result to the spreadsheet. So you could in theory have your Professional Calc spreadsheet use another program to do calculations it cannot handle itself. (This is different from the ARexx Script Macro language - see below).

Additional to these built-in functions is the ability to define your own functions and add them to the list that Professional Calc will use. For additional flexibility, some functions are defined that allow accessing data (read only) from other spreadsheets, either open in memory or on disk.

The number of spreadsheets you have open at one time depends on how much memory is available. Each spreadsheet can have up to 65,000 rows and 65,000 columns - the default is 100 by 100 and is changed in preferences within the program. The manual claims that empty cells are not saved or loaded into memory, yet I did note that Professional Calc files saved were about twice as large as their Lotus 1-2-3 equivalents. I also noticed that the Professional Calc default worksheet I saved was 1900 bytes in size versus 314 bytes for a MaxiPlan4 equivalent. I can only assume that the greater size is due to all the formatting options available and included in the file header information.

Professional Calc is fairly easy to come to grips with. It has extensive menus and sub-menus, menu requesters and a "Control Panel" with common features accessible through clicking on icons. Moving through the cells is easy with keyboard or mouse, and data entry or editing is, again, straightforward.

While the manual gives a good general introduction to the program, I found it lacking in examples for critical functions, leaving the user the task of experimenting. I found by accident that when strings are to be entered in a formula you must use double quotes and not single quotes around the string. Such a simple but critical message should have been in the manual. Other items that the user needs to know are in the manual but not highlighted or given the emphasis needed. For example, you need to know that when entering a formula in a cell it must begin with an "="

sign. This critical information is in the middle of a paragraph on page 4-5. It is not highlighted. Nor is there an entry for this in the index. If you buy the program, read the manual with care and mark critical facts and add references to the index yourself. The program does not have any built-in "help", which is a pity given the poor manual. (By the way, the Chart menus have two new additions which aren't mentioned anywhere - neither in the manual addendum for version 2.0 nor the disk "read me" file. Funnily enough, I noticed one of them when I was wondering why it wasn't possible to change the font for the chart axes, and behold, that's what it does!).

For repetitive tasks the user can create simple macros that repeat keystrokes, or can develop complex 'ARexx script macros' that can be launched either from a menu or by double-clicking on a cell in the spreadsheet (you must have ARexx running on your computer). Either a simple macro or an ARexx script macro can start automatically when the spreadsheet is opened. The ARexx command set within Professional Calc is extensive but inexplicably does not cover the charting functions.

Professional Calc has included a "database" analysis feature which is close to the industry standard in functionality ie. the ability to define multiple databases, multiple criteria for sorting or searching, etc. It does lack a "Data Form" user interface that is found on most other similar programs including Maxiplan4.

Charting is good as well, with a basic selection of 2D and 3D line, bar, pie, column, X-Y and area charts that cover the majority of user needs. Chart options are extensive over all aspects of the layout of each chart. In version 2.0, the option has been added of being able to save chart definitions to file and load them again. While the number of options for individualising charts is extensive, the user interface to access those options is daunting. For example, there are 16 different options for the chart axes on the axis requester, 10 on the legend requester, and so on. Each type of chart has its own options requester as well, with buttons to bring up other requesters. Every "data piece" drawn on a chart can be given a different

colour and/or pattern, for example, every bar on a bar chart. With all those options, what I missed was having the ability to set some "global" options, such as the ability to set the font to something other than the default (topaz 8).

Professional Calc includes commands to hide or reveal columns or rows and to create "outlines" that provide a hierarchy or rows and columns to view. This feature will also affect what does or does not appear in a printout or an export operation.

Importing and exporting data is fairly well handled. I have managed to import Lotus 1-2-3 files and "CSV" format files with no problems. (Earlier versions appear to have had problems). The files in question were generated by Excel on the Macintosh. I have imported and exported data to and from ProWrite 3.3 using the system clipboard capability of both programs as well as their text file reading/writing ability; again without problem. Professional Calc seems to pay great attention to the Lotus 1-2-3 link, to the extent that it includes Lotus 1-2-3 function names that are equivalent to and can be used in place of Professional Calc function names, if required. Charts can be exported in IFF, Aegis Draw Plus, Professional Draw, Postscript and EPS (Encapsulated Postscript) formats. On the down side, Professional Calc makes a mess of importing Maxiplan files!

The most awkward part of Professional Calc relates to the printing functions. There is an unfortunate use of terminology that can create some confusion. The program refers to two types of "output": Postscript and "dot-matrix". Using "output" instead of "print" seems odd in itself. Referring to all non-Postscript output as "dot-matrix" is odder still. The use of the words "sideways output" in place of "landscape" printing and the words "graphic dump" in place of "graphic mode print" also requires some mental adjustment. While one can often rejoice in the individuality shown by programs, I use too many to need the aggravation of learning yet another list of words for common functions.

Anyway, the real problem with Professional Calc is that not all the print

options are accessible through the program interface. For "dot-matrix" output, the program uses the Workbench printer preferences and these are not changeable within the program. You only get to choose "to disk", "sideways" or "graphic dump" from within the program. For Postscript printing, the "output" requester allows choice of "EPS" (Encapsulated Postscript), sideways or colour, plus four margin settings. You can also choose to print to file or select the printer port. Incredibly, a page size option for Postscript was only added in version 2.0 but is included only in the "Tooltypes"! This is a most awkward arrangement indeed, for if you need to change page size you have to quit the program, change the "Tooltype" and start again.

Still, with the ability to choose fonts, font sizes and different styles, the output from Professional Calc is potentially of high quality depending on your printer. The Postscript option is now enhanced in version 2.0 by the inclusion of a special Postscript Prolog file to handle extended character sets. Unfortunately, I haven't direct access to a colour printer to test the quality of the colour output.

I have to say that the program is very fast even on a standard A500. If you have an accelerated machine with a math co-processor, the program will fly. Large and complex spreadsheets should be able to be handled easily.

To date I have managed to generate a "GURU" only once - when I referenced a cell outside the spreadsheet boundary in a function argument. The program should have returned an error message but decided to collapse instead. The HLOOK() and VLOOK() functions don't work exactly as advertised in the manual but are close enough. The functions which change the colour of a cell contents depending on set conditions are quirky - they not only change the colour but add the colour value to the cell contents. To avoid problems, multiply the colour function argument by zero. The only other problem I've had was with the setting of the tooltype for the ARexx window - the manual example uses "Newcon:" which doesn't exist under AmigaDos 2.x or 3.x. The ARexx script macros won't run properly unless the tooltype uses "Con:" instead.

Professional Calc is "hotlinked" to Gold Disk's text editor "TransWrite", if you have that product running in the background. This will allow the creation and editing of "extended cell notes" and ARexx Script Macro's without having to leave the program.

So, what is missing? Well, Professional Calc does need a few things to qualify as a first rate program. To start with, it needs an UNDO feature and some on-line help, especially with function arguments that are sensitive to how the data is set out.

More seriously, circular references should be identified by the program and the user queried if the program is to continue or abort. At that point, the program could ask for the user to confirm or vary the number of iterations required. In addition to the number of iterations, the program should allow the user to specify a maximum value not to be exceeded by the calculation on any one cycle of iteration. The program should also give the user some means of identifying precedent and dependent cells (direct and indirect) for any cell on the spreadsheet. A separate window that

opens up to give not only that type of information but also formula, style, and cell note data would be extremely useful and would help in "auditing" the spreadsheet. Such auditing would also be helped if you could display cells by their "Names" as well as by formula or value.

Cell names are allocated on an absolute basis, which means that if the data is cut and pasted to another part of the spreadsheet the names don't move too. This is acceptable in some situations but not others. The option to make cell names relative should be available.

Greater consideration should be given to ease of use by the user. For example, the tab key is usually available in spreadsheets to move the cursor to the right one cell after data entry. This does not happen in Professional Calc. The cursor keys are not available for movement within the cell editing box - they should be. All program options should be settable by the user from within the program, not through "tooltypes" or by needing to access the Workbench preferences programs.

In summary, Professional Calc has the potential to become a great Amiga

program. It is more stable and less quirky than Maxiplan4. The changes that are needed to bring the program up to a high quality level are few, and Gold Disk has a reputation for improving their products. At the price, Professional Calc is good value.

System Requirements:

Kickstart 1.2 or later,
1 Meg Ram

Recommended:

Kickstart 2.04 or greater
Hard Drive
2 Meg Ram

Reviewed On:

Amiga 500
(Standard 68000 cpu)
Meg CHIP ram
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AmigaDos 2.1
GVP Impact A500+ Hard Drive

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Getting to know AmigaDOS

by Jeff Kirkland

Here is the last of Jeff's series on bringing AmigaDOS to the masses. This month he explains the finer points of wildcards and their many uses

Part 9

One thing that can prove both useful and dangerous in AmigaDOS are wildcards. Wildcards let you specify part of a name and AmigaDOS will try to find names that match it. The AmigaDOS wildcards are ?, %, | and #.

The ? tells AmigaDOS to substitute an unknown character. As an example typing 'DIR page?.doc' <CR> would locate files named 'page1.doc', 'page3.doc' and 'page9.doc' but it wouldn't find a file called 'page10.doc'. This is because we've told AmigaDOS to substitute just one character, and the '10' is two characters.

The # tells DOS to substitute any number of characters. Typing 'DIR page#.doc' <CR> would find 'page1.doc', 'page10.doc' and even 'page_temp_1.doc'. In fact it will find any filename starting with 'page' and ending in '.doc', including 'page.doc' with nothing between 'page' and the '.doc'.

The | (the character above the ") means OR. DIR (a#?|c#?) <CR> will give a list of all files starting with either A or C. DIR #?(.doc|.txt) would find all the files that ended in either .doc or .txt.

The % means a NULL (or non) character. For example - DIR A(B|%).doc would find AB.doc or A.doc.

AmigaDOS 2.0 and above can also use the * character as a wildcard in much the same way as MS-DOS does. This feature has to be turned on by using software. I use a small program called WILDSTAR available from the AUG's Fred Fish collection) to do this but there are several others that can be found on BBS's. With the wildstar option enabled it is possible to use DIR *.* instead of DIR #?. I guess this is just to make MS-DOS users feel a little more at home when they come to their senses and move to the Amiga environment.

These wildcard commands can be used by DIR, LIST, DELETE and COPY. Remember to be especially careful if you use wildcards with the DELETE command. It is quite easy to delete more than just the file you were intending. DELETE #? will delete every file in the directory.

This is the last of the AmigaDOS articles. While there are many more AmigaDOS commands and functions that I could write about, this series was intended to give the new Amiga owner a basic grounding in DOS. Anyone who has followed this series from start to finish should be equipped to handle most day-to-day AmigaDOS problems.

Thanks to all those who have given me encouragement and feedback over the last twelve months.

Ed note: Wildstar vers 1.2 can be found on Fish #611, available from the Club Library.

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Another Dutch Master: The Video Backup System

by Russ Lorbeck

As featured at last July's AUG meeting at Holmesglen, here's the promised bells & whistles review of the Video Backup System.

I suppose most of you fortunate-hard drive owners have, like me, lost some data at some time and then thought 'Well it really is about time I did a backup isn't it!' OK - what are the options?

First I used BRU (a Backup & Restore Utility included with Workbench 2.0), and created a lovely collection of about 35 disks (for about 30Mb) - lotsa time and lotsa 'lost' disks, and a most unwieldy program to use - you can't easily read the backup disks and there is no indexed method of restoring files - just grind through the disks until BRU comes to the file(s) you want.

The next alternative was to think about a Streaming Tape unit, but the price of this - over \$1000 including software!! - welllll.

A new product recently arrived on the market entitled Video Backup System (VBS) from Holland, and its price, attracted my attention. For around \$A150, the program supplies (nearly) all the hardware

needed, and you use a normal VCR and normal high-quality video tape to save your partitions on; hmmm. It is claimed to work on all Amigas (except A3000) using OS 1.2 or higher, including AGA machines. There is an add-on available to get the required black and white composite signal from an A3000 to enable VBS to function.

The package comes in one of those video-type cases with the hardware, a manual and a disk. The majority of the manual has been written in very clear English (except for a portion of the Help chapter which seems awkwardly translated). It contains good straight forward explanations of what the program does and how it achieves this, together with lots of hints and suggestions for efficient usage and some helpful screen dumps. I did find the section on the File Requestor a bit long, but some users may really appreciate it. You can select to backup either in Floppy mode - a track-by-track floppy disk image with an option for multiple floppies - or Filesystem mode. The latter is for backing up any filesystem device such as RAD:, DH1: or any directory.

A clear diagram helps to prepare one to hook up the machine and start the program. A few small problems arose at the setting-up stage - firstly, the wires supplied have RCA connectors (called CINCH in Europe?) and they need to connect to the Video In/Video Out jacks which are BNC on my VCR. I found a spare set of converters in the handy-connections-box fortunately; secondly, one (optional) wire leads to the Composite In of your monitor - ok if you run a 1084, but not for my monitor so I don't know what this wire achieves; the backup process was not affected though. Thirdly, the system assumes that your VCR's counter works in hr:min:sec mode so my strictly numeric counter had to be used differently than the manner described in the manual.

OK. All wired up, instructions read and re-read and off we go. I selected the partition I wanted to backup, then easily de-selected a few files I could do without, and pressed the Start button. The program first of all performs a check of the physical connections; it reported that something was wrong with my set-up. I checked everything but could find no obvious problem, so I

disabled this check using a supplied Tool-Type, and Started again. You enter the VCR's counter position and where to send your log file to, then start the VCR and finally Left-click. You are then greeted with a title on the monitor giving the date and details of the backup. After a few seconds, the screen changes to show 4 columns of changing bar-codes, then solid lines as the next section of the partition is read.

Advice in the README file is most pertinent - disable your screen-blanker before using this program (a video signal is essential to its working). Then retire to plan the next chapter

of your autobiography, and estimating that VBS will record about 37Mb in an hour, return at about the right time to stop your VCR when told to on your monitor. Details then appear concerning the date, title and length of the backup.

Seemed pretty easy, but how was I going to check the copy? Simple: just use the Verify option. Rewind your tape to the beginning of this backup file, using your counter, and press the Verify button. The program reads a portion of the tape, instantly compares it with the disk section and reports any file containing discrepancies. I had none reported so my pleasant

feelings about VBS were confirmed.

Restoring is similar to verifying, but you have the option of restoring all, or part of, a backup file; a step by step set of instructions again leads you through the operation. The original tree structure is resurrected, but existing files are never over-written on the hard disk - a nice precaution.

Summary: 120Mb of data backed up on a 3 hour video tape at less than \$10 and my mind is more at rest concerning hard-drive catastrophes than it has ever been before; a worthy investment!

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Take care when you compare!
Michael Granat takes a look at the real differences between the Amiga and PC

Many Amiga users are looking at the over-kill specification of the IBM PC clones, and are mistakenly making direct cost-performance comparisons.

Beware of Imitations

The Amiga is an original, proprietary design, manufactured by a company that owns, develops and supports the brand. Commodore has been making Amiga for eight years and intends to make it for some time to come.

With a few, very pricey exceptions, PC clones are assembled from a grab bag of bits. They are not the product of an original equipment Manufacturer/Developer, but of a branded box Assembler. Don't expect innovative product development or long-term support from a kit maker.

IBM Incompatibles

An "IBM compatible" is simply not 100% compatible with IBM standards. International Business Machines Corporation supports their own operating system and electronic architecture. OS/2 - not Windows. Micro Channel architecture (not an EISA, VESA, Local, Met, Greyhound or School bus). Clones are Microsoft incompatibles.

WYSIWYG or WYGINWWAF?

No PC is truly WYSIWYG or What You See Is What You Get. They are all WYGINWWAF (pronounced "Wiginwaff") or What You Get is Not What Was Asked For.

Windows screens are inaccurate representations running on an overlay program manager. Windows is not yet an operating system, which is why it is so slow and cumbersome. The PC is a text based machine, straining at trying to handle graphical output linked to analogue input (a mouse). (On most clones, the mouse card even uses up an expansion slot!)

Object oriented operation, multitasking and colour graphics are best handled by a machine and operating system developed together to handle them. Such an integrated system, pioneered by the Amiga Lorraine Corporation, continues to advance since its 1985 debut.

Inactivity or Productivity?

Which would you rather have, an incredibly powerful computer weighted down by inefficient operating systems and program design - or a lean, mean and fast machine.

The performance specification of an MS-DOS machine disguises the fact that it has more to do than it can handle, which leaves the PC user waiting and waiting for action. The high efficiency Amiga operating system allows programs to run smoother and faster than their PC equivalents, by making the best use of system resources.

We are yet (hopefully never) to see an operating system that requires 60-70 megabytes of hard disk space and requires several megabytes of RAM and virtual memory plus the fastest possible

processing to run. Namely IBM OS/2 (jointly developed by Microsoft and IBM) and Microsoft Windows NT.

For example, the new OS/2 takes 6-8 hours to install from floppy disk and then has 14 HD floppies (20 megabytes) of bug fixes to install.

Starting Blocks

An Amiga takes moments to run from power up (*I wish - ed). Starting OS/2 uses the time it takes to eat a cut lunch. (I saw this every day on a recent job with IBM.) Afternoon tea and a toilet break are needed to cover for the shut-down sequence. Windows NT (For "Not Today"?) should be no better. The current Windows 3.1 can take several minutes to start.

The Real Deal

Hardware

The cheapest Amiga starts at under \$1,000 and heads up to \$4,500 at recommended retail prices - monitor not included. A Commodore dealer can sell you whatever specification of Amiga you want.

On recent figures - a genuine IBM 486 33 DX, with 129 megabyte IDE hard drive and 4 megabytes of RAM costs \$3,320 - monitor not included. An IBM is typically \$600 to \$1,000 more than the equivalent clone. Any faster genuine IBM is not available through retail outlets and must be ordered direct from IBM Australia.

In terms of clones, only the fastest and most expensive EISA bus machines can match the Amiga 4000 32 bit architecture. This makes the 4000 a high performance bargain.

To match the Amiga sound capability, a sound card is needed at around \$350. To match the Amiga display speed, a Windows accelerator is required - also around \$350. So add \$700 to the price - and you still can't record direct to videotape because of the PAL incompatible PC VGA output.

OPERATING SYSTEMS

MS-DOS 6.0 @ \$199 +
Windows 3.1 @ \$225 = \$424 *
AmigaDOS 2.1 or higher = \$147

SOFTWARE

Top quality Amiga productivity software is a fraction of the price of equivalent MS-DOS software.

For example:

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Quark X-Press for Windows
\$1885.00
Pagemaker for Windows

\$1445.00

PageStream or Professional Page
for Amiga

under \$300.00

WORD PROCESSING

Microsoft Word for Windows
\$735.00
Final Copy II for Amiga

\$150.00

ProWrite 3.3 for Amiga

\$100.00

IN REAL TERMS

An Amiga 1200 HD computer with PageStream or Professional Page and a top word processor costs less than the price of Quark X-Press!

1994 AUG Annual General Meeting Holmesglen 17th August

Well - what a meeting. Some would say pure joy at such efficiency, while others might suspect "behind the scenes" plotting. Well, unlike previous years where we had to beg to fill positions, this time it went like clock work. Even Lester, who did his usual job as "returns officier" was suprised. Now just maybe wouldn't it be fun if Canberra could operate like this... But hey that's fantasy, this is real life! Lets all wish the "new" committee luck in making the Club and the Amiga a greater success than it already is..

Ward Horsfall.
(Late Meeting Chair)

You'll find a list of the 93/94 AUG committee on the inside cover

Music SIG Report

by (EX Co-ordinator) Norm Christian.

I quote hereunder several extracts from last month's report, with certain highly relevant words capitalised.

1: " *With so many AUG members now having the same keyboard, great possibilities open up. For a start, we will all be able to swap data dumps and files, without the necessity of editing the latter; also it seems to me that a series of PSS-51 orientation nights would be a distinct advantage.*" *With this in mind, would any interested members PLEASE ADVISE me, so that arrangements may be made if the response is sufficient.*"

2: " *I would appreciate FEEDBACK from members as to what they would like to see or do in future SIGs, also OFFERS of venues on a one-off basis would be welcome.*"

3: " *If anyone can assist by being Co-ordinator, even if it is only on a trial basis, or would allow their home to be used for a meeting, PLEASE LET ME KNOW.*"

Note the key words - **ADVISE, FEEDBACK, OFFERS.** The response was wait for it **N I L !**

Following the outstanding success of the July meeting at the shop of Pianos Plus, this was a great disappointment, especially in view of the fact that there are now 19 known owners of Yamaha PSS-51 keyboards amongst our members. This alone should have ensured continuing success for the SIGs.

2 (yes **TWO**) people turned up at the August SIG. Two other considerate people rang to apologise. It appears that my latest (and final) offer to resurrect the SIG has failed; therefore there will be no more Music Sigs unless some other brave soul wishes to try bashing his/her head against a brick wall. There will **NOT** - repeat **NOT** - be a Music SIG in September.

On the other hand, help, advice, sympathy, tea & biscuits will still be available from me to those in need. Ring me on 798-6552 if you would like to visit.

NOTE: "Music Hardware SIG" -- At 7.30 pm on Monday, 20th September, Pianos Plus will again open their shop to members interested in the latest music hardware. In particular, there will be an in-depth demonstration of the Yamaha PSS-51 for those who wish to learn more about this incredible keyboard. Phone them on 583-0590 if you wish to attend.

The SEAUG needs YOU

The energetic individuals who got the SEAUG up and running during it's first two years are no longer available to provide the 'one-way' entertainment that members enjoyed and now appear to expect routinely.

SEAUG needs YOU to show us what you have done or to ask for help in what you cannot do. Those who have acquired a skill* in relation to ANY Amiga process, whether it be animation (the Amiga's specialty); a short cut not-in-the-manual (which means just about everything useful) of an application; the sequence of steps necessary to produce a tangible result i.e. a 'demo'; or a few words on any of the virtually inexhaustible possibilities of the operating system that you have discovered. Or just to come along and talk.

Robin Whitehead has acquired the latest A1200 and we believe that he will test fly it for us at the next meeting on the 14th September.

The SEAUG elections are to be held on Tuesday 14th September. As the current Coordinator was pressganged last time, a golden opportunity awaits the proud new incumbent - the only way forward is UP.

All the Best to the incoming committee
Dick Bartholomew Coordinator

skill.....any operation that produces a wanted result.

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ART SIG

by John Barlow

It seems to me that there is a resurgence of interest in Amiga graphics. Perhaps the 1200 is partly responsible, whatever the cause it is great to see some new faces at our meetings. I hope that they will continue to attend and enjoy the meetings. I would like to encourage anyone attending the Art SIG to bring along their work, no matter how small or simple, either on disk, video tape, or on their computer. This way everyone has a chance to discuss techniques and perhaps discuss different ways of achieving the same or similar results. Bring along any problems (Computer related) too, there is certain to be several people at the meeting eager to help. The Art SIG is not exclusively for expert computer artists, and whilst we like to see what can be achieved by some of the very talented and experienced users of the Amiga, we also like to share our knowledge and encourage more people to try this exciting side of the Amiga.

Over the last few months we have shown the Deluxe Paint Beginners and Deluxe Paint Advanced videos. This month Geoff Wood brought along a documentary on computer graphics, called Computer Dreams. The two Deluxe Paint Videos gave a lot of good information on how to produce various effects and how the various parts of the program work. Computer Dreams gives lots of ideas on the types of animations or techniques that could be attempted.

One of the things that seems to happen regularly at Art SIG meetings is that someone will show an animation or technique that they have been playing around with and then other people will either suggest other ways of doing the same thing or something similar. Often then additional techniques will be discussed until finally a small idea has brought forward a myriad of ideas and techniques. Its not just the beginners who pick up new ideas either. There are so many possibilities with Amiga Graphic packages, that the more they are discussed, the more variations seem to emerge and the more everyone learns, experts included.

Geoff Wood showed off a new rotating logo that he has created with Imagine and his Opal Vision gear. The quality of the graphic was as good as the TV Station Logos. With the Imagine software, the Opal Vision hardware, a reasonably quick computer, and a lot of creative talent it is now possible to produce effects that can match anything on TV. The only limitations are time, creative talent, and memory and hard disk capacity. Unfortunately Opal Vision represents a considerable extra investment for most Amiga owners. The improved graphics capabilities of the newer Amiga's tend to bring these machines closer to the Opal Vision standard, so effects very close to the quality that Geoff produced should be possible on a 1200 or 4000. However the Opal Vision package is still a brilliant one and I hope that continued development will see Opal Vision become a benchmark computer graphics program like Deluxe Paint has become over the years.

The next Art SIG will be held at Aspendale on Tuesday 21st September at 8.00 pm. Anyone interested in attending, or finding out more about the Art SIG should contact, John Barlow at the next AUG meeting or call on 5514760.

MULTITASKING MILLIONS

By Michael Granat

Here's some facts to warm the cockles of Premier Jeff Kennett's heart (and his team of economists) - an Amiga led recovery for Victoria - and why not Australia! Right now, one of the biggest businesses in Australia is computer gaming (read gambling) and, believe it or not, the biggest news in the gaming industry is Amiga. Over five thousand accelerated Amiga-based video gaming machines are in operation around Victoria, in Tabaret casino-style venues.

Since they were introduced less than a year ago, Amiga based gaming machines have earned over two thousand million dollars - which is around four hundred thousand dollars in yearly income for every Tabaret Amiga!

The Totalizator Agency Board (TAB) that owns and franchises the Tabaret video gaming concept (and controls all legal race betting in Victoria) even uses Amigas at its business headquarters. They have been using Amiga 3000s in their offices from as far back as late 1991.

A reliable source within the TAB has told me that TAB management has been astonished by the quality of the equipment, the clarity, speed and realism of the graphics and the unparalleled reliability of the Amiga system in their Tabaret venues. Obviously, so has the gambling public.

To the best of my inside source's knowledge, there have been no major equipment failures and virtually zero down-time among their five thousand machines. No bugs. No crashes. No Guru meditations. What a credit to these Amigas and to the people who programmed them - which includes some of our own AUG club members.

Of course, there are those that think that MS-DOS is the way to go in all things. Tattersalls did - and they have paid dearly for their mistake.

Recently, the Tattersalls MS-DOS gaming machines were caught out by eagle eyed gamblers. It seems that some patrons were watching a Tatts machine go through its demo mode when one patron noticed that the demo was actually giving away the sequence that must be played to win.

Over a couple of months, these patrons virtually drained the Tattersalls machines of millions of dollars - winning with every turn. Not surprisingly, Tattersalls was not amused and quickly had their machines re-programmed so that they would be harder to catch out.

If only they realised that to play against an intelligent gamer, you need an intelligent computer - the fast thinking, hard playing Amiga.

So don't let anyone tell you that the Amiga is not a business computer. In this recession hit economy, Amiga video gaming is the biggest business there is.

Sunday, 31st October 1993.



Moonee Ponds Community Centre,
Mt Alexander Road, Moonee Ponds.

Fish Disks

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Fish Disk 871

ABackup

A very powerful backup utility that may be used both for hard disk backup and for file archiving. Has a full Intuition interface, a "batch" mode, can save/load file selection, handle HD floppies, use any external compression program, etc... Includes both English and French versions. Version 2.43, an update from version 2.40 on disk 838. Shareware, binary only.

Author: Denis Gounelle.

DImpWin

A GUI interface for Disk-Imploder (included) by A.J. Brouwer. DImp is one of the most efficient disk archivers available for the Amiga. It offers 7 different levels of compression, the ability to create self-extracting archives, MULTIPLE CYLINDER RANGES, ability to work with any floppy compatible device (such as RAD: & FMS disks) and it can also add a text file to the archive that will be displayed during extraction. Via the GUI interface, DImp-Win will invoke DImp and tell it what to do. DImp-Win version 1.0, DImp version 2.27. Requires AmigaOS 2.04+. Binary only.

Author: Colin Bell (DImp-Win) and A.J. Brouwer (DImp)

Planetarium

An astronomy program which displays and animates the planets of the solar system at specific times. Useful for quickly and easily determining the best times to view the planets, observing retrograde, etc. Version 1.0, OS 1.3, 2.x, 3.0 compatible. Shareware, binary only.

Author: Jim Schwartz

StatRam

Stat-RAM or 'SD0:' is a very fast recoverable ram drive that takes advantage of FFS under WB2 or FFS International under WB2.1 or 3. This work is based on ASDG's 'VD0:'. ASDG-RAM has been reliable for many years since it was placed in the PD. However it has always been slow because it uses OFS, or old file system. On accelerated machines, SD0: is up to 7 times faster, and averages 5 times faster than the original VD0:. It's also 4 to 5 times faster than RRD. It survives the deepest re-boot, even the ColdReboot of re-kicking a KS file. Version 1.5, binary only.

Author: Richard Waspe

TrashIcon

A WorkBench 2x application icon to delete files. Puts an icon at a possibly user defined position on the WorkBench screen, and deletes all files that are dragged onto it. This is version 1.4, an update to version 1.2 on disk number 839. Binary only.

Author: Mark McPherson

UnivCosq

A strategy game where two human players battle for control of the universe. The game has several variables that allow the players to vary the density of planets, the initial number of ships, and the length of play. Status information is continually updated to allow the player to concentrate on strategy, not statistics. Includes digitized pictures and sound.

Version 1.08. Compatible with WB 1.3 & 2.x. Binary only.

Author: Randy Wang

Fish Disk 872

Convert

A units conversion utility inspired by "Units" (by Gregory Simpson) but is easier to use and can be customized by changing the data file (conv.dat) alone and does not require recompilation of the program. V1.3, binary only.

Author: David Whitmore.

ToolManager

Part 1 of a 2 part release of the very popular program by Stefan Becker. This part contains LHA archives of the binary files and graphics. Part 2 can be found on disk number 873. ToolManager is a full featured program for either WorkBench or CLI tool management. Includes the ability to add menu items to the 2.x "Tools" menu, add WorkBench icons or dock Windows. Features multi-column docks that automatically detect largest image size, AREXX, sound and Locale support. Version 2.1, an update to version 2.0 on disk number 752. Includes source, lots of graphic images, and programmers support for using the toolmanager.library. Requires 2.x for full functionality.

Author: Stefan Becker

Fish Disk 873

Cross

A program that creates crossword puzzles. Has a message data file to allow easy translation into almost any human language, with English and German currently supported. This is version 5.1, an update to version 4.1 on disk 537. Includes source in M2Amiga Modula-2.

Author: Jurgen Weintel

Flif

A very versatile directory listing utility. It can examine the contents of files and display a short type description. In addition, Flif has a whole slew of options that allow you to filter files by type, date, age, size etc., as well as recursive directory descending, and adjustable output formatting. So next to simply listing directories, Flif is extremely useful for creating hybrid commands that perform functions closely tuned to your specific needs. Version 1.15, binary only.

Author: Peter Struijk

MRIconSort

MRIconSort is a nifty little tool which will alphabetically sort and align your icons and optionally create icons for files and drawers which don't have them. If you have drawers with tons of icons which are a hopeless jumble, this program is for you! Version 1.01, binary only.

Author: Mark R. Rinfret

ToolManager

Part 2 of a 2 part release of the very popular program by Stefan Becker. This part contains an LHA archive of the source, TeX docs and programmer's support files. Part 1 can be found on disk number 872. ToolManager is a full featured program for either WorkBench or CLI tool management. Includes the ability to add menu items to the 2.x "Tools" menu, add WorkBench icons or dock Windows. Features multi-column docks that automatically detect largest image size, AREXX, sound and Locale support. Version 2.1, an update to version 2.0 on disk number 752. Includes source, lots of graphic images,

and programmer's support for using the toolmanager.library. Requires 2.x for full functionality.

Author: Stefan Becker

Fish Disk 874

DFA

NOT just another address utility. DFA(address) features email support, dialing, different types of printing addresses, full commodity support, application icon, AREXX port, font sensitive windows and can be fully directed by the keyboard. This is version 1.23, lots of enhancements and bug fixes since version 1.1 on disk number 782. Shareware, binary only.

Author: Dirk Federlein

TWA

A commodity that remembers the last active window on any screen. If screens are shuffled, the window is automatically re-activated, when that screen is brought to front. Version 1.2, an update to version 1.0 on disk number 781. Binary only.

Author: Matthias Scheler

Fish Disk 875

ADoc

A help utility for the Amiga. Features include automatic search of any work on which you clicked, ability to use Auto-Doc and AmigaGuide files, support of locale.library, an AREXX port, and more. Version 3.01, an update to version 1.21 on disk number 747. Binary only.

Author: Denis Gounelle

APrf

A print utility with a full Intuition interface, a preview function, page selection, line numbering, multi-columns mode, customizable headers and footers, an AREXX port, an AppWindow, and more. Includes both English and French versions. Version 2.11, an update to version 1.40 on disk number 747. Binary only.

Author: Denis Gounelle

AZap

A "new generation" binary editor, able to edit files, memory or devices like hard disks. It can open several windows at the same time, supports locale.library, and handles all OS3.0 file systems. This is version 2.04, an update to version 1.00 on disk number 759. Binary only.

Author: Denis Gounelle

Blanker

An attempt to provide the Amiga community with a future-compatible, easily expandable screen blanker. Provides a platform for others to write custom screen blanker modules and not have to worry about the difficulties associated with setting up a Commodities interface and dealing with concurrency problems. Version 2.3, includes source and several sample blanker modules.

Author: Michael D. Bayne

KillAGA

Allows you to run old, badly written, programs (mainly demos and some games) from your A1200/4000 hard disk without having to continually reboot and switch chip settings. On return from the program, the system returns to full AGA state. Version 2.0, binary only.

Author: Jolyon Ralph

SeekSpeed

Measures the seek performance of any valid device. It works by using the system's very accurate E clock and measures the time taken for seeking and reading varying numbers of sectors under both sequential and random access. Every test is performed 100 times if possible, and the average reported. GUI interface, can be run from the CLI or WB. Requires

OS2.04+. Version 37.12, binary only.

Author: Richard Waspe

Fish Disk 876

ArmyMiner

An ultimate "XMiner-type" game that integrates all of the best aspects of the previous Amiga versions of the game. Options include: Automatically mark or clean the neighbours of a square; Safe start (no explosion at first click); Safe click (gadget-like behavior for squares); Question marks (for configuration analysis). You can also specify your own custom board settings. The game has a very useful pause option, sound effects, high-score tables and a very nice interface. It works under OS v1.3 or 2.0, NTSC or PAL. Version 1.1, an update to version 1.0 on disk number 851. Binary only.

Author: Alain Laferriere

BattleStar

A fun text-based adventure game. It is reminiscent of Dungeon (aka Zork) and Adventure. You start out on a space ship under attack and must get off and back to the planet. Ported from UNIX, with very little "amiga-ization". Runs from the CLI only. Includes source.

Author: David Riggle, Amiga port by David Ingebretsen

Fish Disk 877

Lyapunovia

A mindbogglingly colorful program that produces fractal pictures from a simple mathematical formula called "Lyapunov Space". Lyapunovia pictures vary from colorful candy to mean metal (or something), offering you everything you ever wanted in visual representation of mathematical abstractions. Lyapunovia has been tested on all Amigas from WB1.2 to 3.1. The program supports AGA graphics, floating point units, 68020+ CPUs, and 24-bit output (to 65000 x 65000 pixels!). A zoom factor of 10,000,000,000,000,000 is possible. Version 1.5, an update to V1.0 on disk 784. This is the full program, the difference between the unregistered and the registered version has been eliminated. Binary only, shareware.

Author: Jesper Juul

Fish Disk 878

bBaseIII

An easy to use, versatile, yet full featured database program that will run on any Amiga. Search or sort on any field, print mailing labels, (un)delete records, mail merge, get reports in many formats, scramble files, flag records, and more. Fields are user-configurable, so bBase can be used to keep track of addresses, tape or video collections, recipe files, or anything else you can think of - one program does it all! bBaseIII is a greatly enhanced successor to bBaseII. Version 1.3, an update to version 1.1 on disk number 760. Shareware, binary only.

Author: Robert Bromley

DockBrushes

Fifty plus 16-color dock brushes for use with ToolManager, AmiDock, or just as icons.

Author: David Voy

DrChip

Four utilities to make your C programming life a little easier. Included are: ccb -- A C-source code indentation beautifier; list -- generates lists of functions from either C or C++ files; hdrtag -- ViM, Z, and emacs support tags; topro -- converts source code to and from old K&R style to the new prototype-using style. Binary only, freeware.

Author: Dr. Charles E. Campbell, Jr.

Tuesday	Aug 10	SEAUG Meeting
Sunday	Aug 15	Holmesglen Meeting
Monday	Aug 16	Music SIG
Tuesday	Aug 17	Art SIG
Wednesday	Aug 18	NWAUG Meeting
Wednesday	Sep 1	NWAUG Meeting
Friday	Sep 3	Deadline for Articles, October Workbench
Tuesday	Sep 14	SEAUG Meeting
Wednesday	Sep 15	NWAUG Meeting
Sunday	Sep 19	Holmesglen Meeting
Monday	Sep 20	Music SIG
Tuesday	Sep 21	Art SIG
Friday	Oct 1	Deadline for Articles, November Workbench
Wednesday	Oct 6	NWAUG Meeting
Tuesday	Oct 12	SEAUG Meeting
Sunday	Oct 17	Holmesglen Meeting
Monday	Oct 18	Music SIG
Tuesday	Oct 19	Art SIG
Wednesday	Oct 20	NWAUG Meeting
Sunday	Oct 31	NWAUG Amiga Expo
Wednesday	Nov 3	NWAUG Meeting
Friday	Nov 5	Deadline for Articles, December Workbench
Tuesday	Nov 9	SEAUG Meeting
Wednesday	Nov 17	NWAUG Meeting
Sunday	Nov 21	Holmesglen Meeting
Monday	Nov 22	Music SIG
Wednesday	Dec 1	NWAUG Meeting
Wednesday	Dec 15	NWAUG Meeting
Sunday	Dec 19	Holmesglen Meeting

Workbench Steering Meeting

There will be a meeting held at the Homesglen meeting to discuss the future layout and content of the Workbench. We'd really like to hear from anyone who has any ideas as to what they would like to see in future months, and how they would like it presented.

Holmesglen AUG meetings are held on the the third Sunday of each month at 2.00 p.m. Doors open at 1.00 p.m. The venue is the Conference centre at Holmesglen T.A.F.E. College on the corner of Warrigal Road and Batesford Road, Holmesglen (Melways Map 69 reference F1).

North West AUG meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday from 7.30 p.m. on the first floor of the Essendon Community Centre, corner of Mt.Alexander Road and Pascoe Vale Road, Essendon (Melways Map 28 reference J7).

South East AUG meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7.00 p.m. in the Cheltenham Hall, corner of Nepean Highway and Charman Road, Cheltenham (Melways Map 86 reference H1).

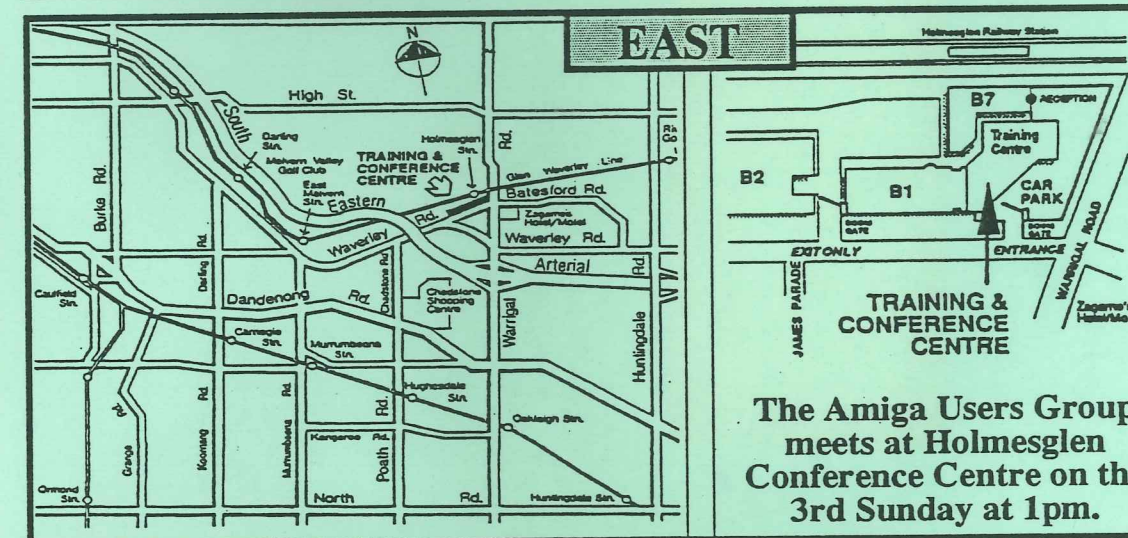
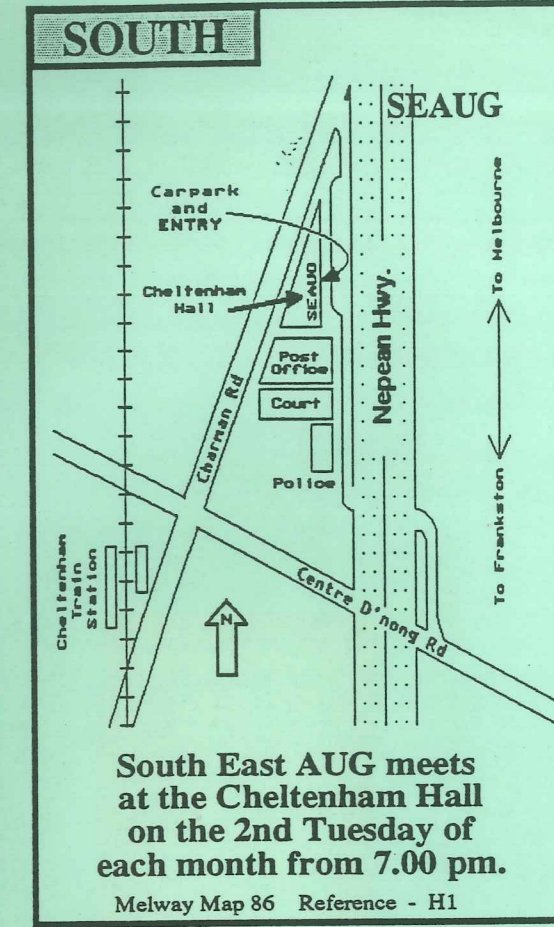
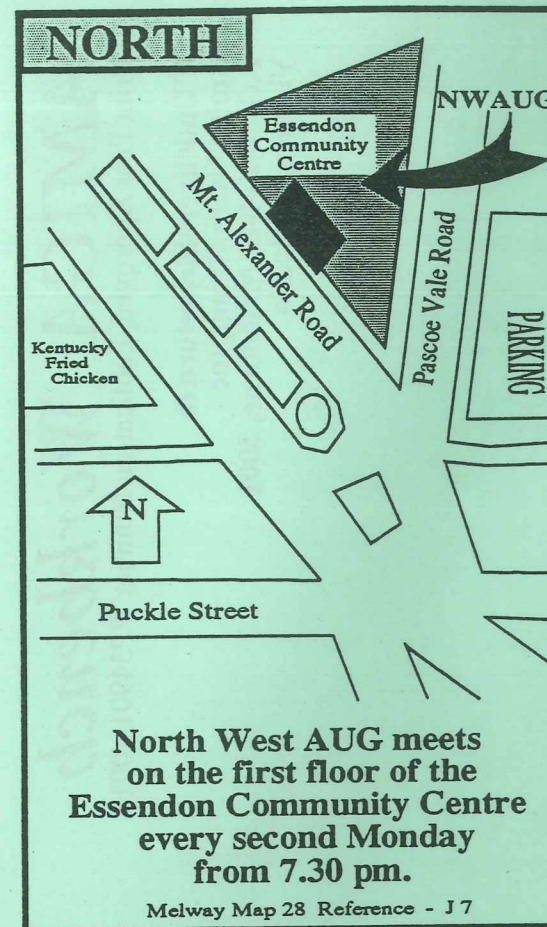
Music SIG meets at varying locations on the day after the Holmesglen meetings. Contact the SIG Convenor at the number given in SIG reports for details.

Art SIG meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month (N.B. this is NOT always the Tuesday following the Holmesglen meeting!!). The venue may vary, so check the Art SIG reports for the location of the next meeting.

If you are arranging (or know of any) forthcoming meetings, demonstrations, lectures or other events that would interest readers, please let us have the details so that we can publicise them here. Country members are encouraged to use this calendar for local events.

Event Organisers!

The dates in the calendar are based on information provided to us. If the dates are incorrect or changed, please advise the editor as early as possible to ensure updating of the calendar.



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