AMIGA

WORKBENCH

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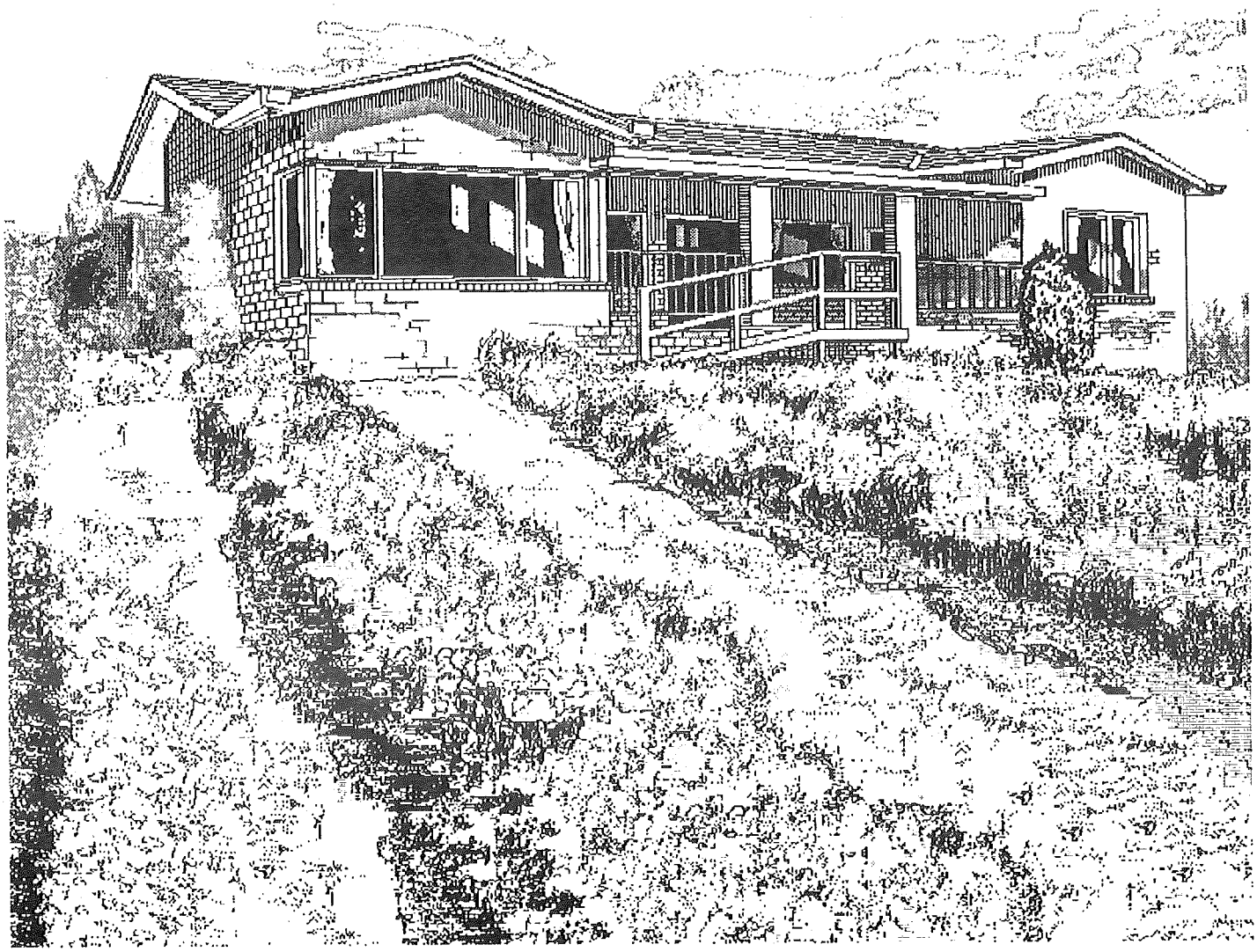

Next Meeting

Sunday, November 8th, 1987 at 2pm

AUG meetings are held at Victoria College, Burwood Campus
in Lecture Theatre 1 and the Community Resources Centre
Melways map 61 reference B5

Amiga Users Group Inc, PO Box 48, Boronia, 3155, Victoria, Australia

Australia's Largest Independent Association of Amiga Owners
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AMIGA™ Users Group

Who Are We?

The Amiga Users Group is a non-profit association of people interested in the Amiga computer and related topics. With almost 800 members, we are the largest independent association of Amiga users in Australia.

Club Meetings

Club meetings are held at 2pm on the second Sunday of each month at Victoria College, Burwood Campus, in Lecture Theatre 1. Details on how to get there are on the back cover of this newsletter. The dates of the next meeting is:

Sunday, November 8th at 2pm

Production Credits

This month's newsletter was edited by Peter Jetson. Equipment and software used was: TurboDOS S-100 computer, Brother HR-40 printer, Gemini 10x printer, Wordstar, Fancy Font and Grabbit.

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Contributions

Articles, papers, letters, drawings and cartoons are actively sought for publication in Amiga Workbench. Please submit your contributions on disk, since that means they don't have to be re-typed! All disks will be returned! Please save your article in **text-only** format (If it can be loaded by ED, it is text-only). Absolute deadline for articles is 16 days before the meeting date. Contributions can be sent to: The Editor, AUG, PO Box 48, Boronia, 3155.

Membership and Subscriptions

Membership of the Amiga Users Group is available for an annual fee of $20. To become a member of AUG, fill in the membership form in this issue (or a photocopy of it), and send it with a cheque for $20 to:

Amiga Users Group, PO Box 48, Boronia, 3155

Public Domain Software

Disks from our public domain library are available on quality 3.5" disks for $8 each including postage on AUG supplied disks, or $2 each on your own disks. The group currently holds over 132 volumes, mostly sourced from the USA, with more on the way each month. Details of latest releases are printed in this newsletter, and a catalog disk is available.

Member's Discounts

The **Amiga Users Group** negotiates discounts for its members on hardware, software and books.

Currently, **Technical Books** in Swanston Street in the city offers **AUG** members a 10% discount on computer related books, as does **McGills** in Elizabeth Street. Just show your membership card. Although we have no formal arrangements with other companies yet, most seem willing to offer a discount to AUG members. It always pays to ask!

Back Issues of Newsletter

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

AmigaLink - Our Bulletin Board System

The Amiga Users Group operates a bulletin board system devoted to the Amiga, using the Opus message and conferencing system. AmigaLink is available 24 hours a day on (03) 792 3918, and can be accessed at V21 (300bps), V22 (1200bps) or V23 (1200/75bps), using 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity.

AmigaLink is part of the world-wide Fido/Opus network of bulletin boards, and we participate in the national and international Amiga conferences. AmigaLink has selected Public Domain software available for downloading, and encourages the uploading of useful public domain programs from its users. AmigaLink is FidoNet node number 631/324.

Newsletter Advertising

The Amiga Users Group accepts commercial advertising in Amiga Workbench subject to the availability of space at these rates:

Quarter page	$20
Half page	$40
Full page	$70
Double page spread	$120

These rates are for full-size camera-ready copy **only.** We have no photographic or typesetting facilities. Absolute deadline for copy is 16 days before the meeting date. Send the copy and your cheque to: The Editor, AUG, PO Box 48, Boronia, 3155, Victoria.

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Creativity Software - A Personal View

by Stan Thomas

Creativity software - what is it? It is the kind of software that provides the tools and the means to be creative. Creativity software consists of programs such as Deluxe Paint II, that enable entire pictures to be painted using only a mouse; it consists of music programs such as Deluxe Music Construction Set or Sonix, that allow you to compose music using the four Amiga voices; or a program such as Deluxe Video, that lets you combine the graphics you have created with one package and the music you have written with another to create your own videos.

More recent advances in this field, programs such as Sculpt 3-D by Eric "The Juggler" Graham, use ray tracing to let you create solid objects of different textures that are shaded according to the light source and cast shadows on the landscape they inhabit. This is the kind of software that will see you sitting at your computer for hours on end, that will have you walking along the street in a kind of dream thinking up new ideas for videos or pieces of music, or rushing home from work to try out a new idea.

Be warned though, that what these various packages provide are a set of tools, the graphic or sonic equivalent of a word processor. Like a word processor, they make creation easier, but you still have to come up with the ideas and put in the hours to create a finished work. Exploring what a package can do is part of this, seeing what it can do, what its limitations are.

One package that makes effective use of other graphics and music packages is Deluxe Video. It will accept any IFF format low resolution picture, preferably drawn in eight colours, since it makes extensive use of dual playing fields. If you try and use a picture with more colours, it will attempt to recreate the picture using eight colours, based on which eight colours are used most frequently in the picture. It can use any piece of music saved in SMUS format, provided that there are no instrument changes during the song. Version 1.2 of this program will let you use instruments larger than 28K. Also, you can use sound effects saved as IFF 8SVX files.

This program has a large range of features. You can create a piece of text and then rotate it in any direction and change its size so that it seems to move towards you or away from you. There are a large number of wipes that let you replace one picture with another in various interesting ways. One feature available with this is that, if the new picture uses a different colour palette to the old one, the palette will change gradually to the new one, which can create some intriguing effects. Although it demands a lot of work, animation is possible, which involves first of all creating the different frames of a sequence using a paint package and then using a special program provided with Deluxe Video to create an 'animation object' that you can use in your video. This, however, is limited to the number of animation cels you can squeeze into a 320 by 200 picture area.

I've been using this package on a single drive, 512K machine, but it cries out for two drives and more memory to speed things up. The program is pretty robust, but it did crashed on me once so, as with most programs, it is best to save your work at regular intervals even if it is time consuming - few thing are more aggravating than losing an afternoon's hard work on a video masterpiece!

An older program which has been around almost as long as the Amiga itself is Aegis Animator. I've only had a few day's experience with this package, so I can't say much about it, but it does show great promise. Briefly, it seems to work in two areas. Firstly, you can draw any shape you want and then move and rotate it any way you like, and even change its shape. Secondly, you can use any paint package to generate a series of IFF format brushes and use them to create animated sequences. Since each frame of an animated sequence is saved as an individual file, the only real limitation is the amount of memory you have.

Both of these animation packages have strengths and weaknesses. With Deluxe Video you can generate titles more easily; you can change from one picture to another using any of its effective set of wipes; and best of all, you can add music and sound effects, which can lift a video from the ordinary to the spectactular. But you can't pull and twist shapes around, and the size and length of predrawn animation sequences are severely limited. With Aegis Animator you can play with shapes as if they were putty, and

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you can generate some extremely impressive animations. But you can't have music, and generating titles and text generally is a lot more difficult.

Deluxe Paint II has been discussed in these pages before, but I'll mention one good use I've put this brilliant package to, and that is to create instant landscapes. I wanted to create a landscape consisting of checkered squares, so first of all I drew four squares and grabbed them as a brush. Then I tilted it backwards using the perspective option, and then selected another option that caused the pattern to be repeated in full perspective to create a gigantic chess board receding off into the distance. Finally, after a small amount of editing to clean things up a bit, I had my checkered landscape ready for use in Deluxe Video. For any serious video or animation work, this package is a necessity. It is easily one of the very best pieces of software of any kind for the Amiga.

A video SIG (Special Interest Group) is about to start up where hopefully we can explore this area. The Amiga is at its best when being used for graphics and animation, so join the SIG and let's get started! How about a promotional video to advertise our user group? If you have written some music on your machine, why not use it as part of a video? Or design a logo that can become a recognisable symbol of our user group? We have the resources and the people with the experience and skills to do some exciting work. We can digitise photographs and sample sounds of all kinds and incorporate them into videos. Who knows, we could produce our own Juggler video!

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DBman under AmigaDOS V1.2

by C. Stinson

The latest Amiga world contains a review of DBman. They were less than kind with some of their comments and I do not think they gave the product the credit it deserves. Although I wrote a DBman review a while back, I have decided to put this together to show potential users of the product that it is not a nightmare.

I have been using DBman for some time now and have found it to be a reliable tool. One of my applications consists of 19 programs, 12 data entry screens, 10 data files (some with multiple indexes), and several menus (not of the pull down variety). Using this I have created about 10,000 data records spread over four floppy disks. In all this time the only guru I have met was while under 1.2 and using disks formated under 1.1. This combination will always cause problems so stick to 1.1 or 1.2, don't mix them.

The speed of sorts was a worry at first. It must be remembered that DBman is designed to handle large files so it does not sort in memory; instead it uses intermediate disk sortwork files. This causes a lot of I.O. and slows the sort down. There are three ways around this problem.

- Use 1.2 and ensure your disks are formatted under 1.2. This can be used in combination with either of the next two ideas.
- Use the DBman command "set default to ram:". This will use ram: for all sortwork files and speed up sorts. See the table below for the time saving. It can only be used if you have enough memory for the sortwork. Typically DBman leaves about 120k free on a 512k machine.
- From CLI use the command "addbuffers dfn: m" where n is the disk drive you are using for sortwork (usually df0:) and m is the number of buffers. Buffers require about 0.5k each so you can add a few before memory starts to run out. When adding buffers there seems to be distinct steps where performance increases but I havn't worked out how to predict them. Note that adding buffers two at a time to test the speed of sorts gives different results from adding the same number of buffers in one chunk.

It would be fair to say DBman is a well sorted out database package which has been hastily ported to the Amiga. It does not suport many of the Amiga fuctions and can be a little hostile when it encounters errors. One of the worst of these was its habit of locking up if a required disk was not present. Under 1.1 you must "Amiga M" to get at the error requester. 1.2 brings the error requester screen to the front as soon as an error is encountered. As yet there is only one competitor for DBman, and I have heard enough rumors about bugs in that package to be quite content with my reliable but plain DBman.

An update has been released in the U.S. I have not yet recieved my copy but I have been told it supports more Amiga funtions. If this is so it will rectify the only shortcoming of the existing package.

Test 1, 79 records of 12 bytes each

Condition Tested	Time
using 1.1	2:11
using 1.2	1:45
using 1.2 and ram: as sortwork	0:22
using 1.2 and ram: as sortwork and as destination	0:12
using 1.2 and ram as source, sortwork and destination	0:03
using 1.2 with 0 buffers	1:45
using 1.2 with 2 buffers	1:37
using 1.2 with 4 buffers	1:32
using 1.2 with 8 buffers	1:43
using 1.2 with 12 buffers	1:53
using 1.2 with 16 buffers	0:28
using 1.2 with 32 buffers	0:28
using 1.2 with 64 buffers	0:25

Test 2, 79 records of 120 bytes each

Condition tested	Time
using 1.2 with 0 buffers	2:05
using 1.2 with 8 buffers	2:05
using 1.2 with 16 buffers	2:10
using 1.2 with 24 buffers	1:45
using 1.2 with 32 buffers	1:15
using 1.2 with 64 buffers	0:38

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Purchasing Report

As most people are aware, the users group holds a modest stock of consumables. These are available to members at prices significantly lower than recommended retail price.

We stock the following:-

Nashua Disks

3.5 inch SSDD $30.00 per box of ten
3.5 inch DSDD $40.00 per box of ten

5.25 SSSD will be stocked if asked for
5.25 DSDD will be stocked if asked for

Dust covers $20.00 (out of stock, more coming soon)

All disks have full warranty and we are at ALL the meetings.

There have been people asking about modems, we can supply:-

Nice Modem 2 1200/1200,1200/75,300/300 $600.00

This modem will be upgradable to 2400/2400 in the near future and is the same type of modem we are using on our AmigaLink BBS.

If you have any queries, please contact me on the number on the inside front page of this newsletter.

SALES & SUPPORT PERSONNEL
FULL TIME/PART TIME

This organisation is always looking for people with experience on the Amiga Computer to assist us.

In particular we would like to hear from people with good knowledge of productivity software.

Additionally people who are interested in Part Time Lecturing positions on the Amiga are being sought.

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Balance of Power

by C. Stinson

This is a game for one or two players which realistically reproduces world political situations. You play the part of Reagan or Gorbachov and attempt to extend the influence of your country without provoking a nuclear war.

There are 63 countries in the world. This simplification was brought about by merging small neighboring countries of similar political and economic make up. You win points for each country under your control, with rich powerful countries worth more than poor countries. Some countries are also key countries and can be used as a base to spread your influence into a continent.

You have at your disposal six strategies each of which may be applied at one of six levels of intensity. These are used to influence the other countries.

Bullying

A country outside of your sphere of influence may be bullied into submission. Holding naval manoeuvers off its coast is a typical threat. Such a threat is only effective if you can amass troops in one of its immediate neighbors, otherwise it is just an empty threat. Even worse is that you then lose any chance of making that country a friend. Thus if you are the USA this strategy may work on Nicaragua but not Libya. To work on Libya a large troop build up in Egypt would first be required.

If your bullying works the government will become your friend. Finland's relationship to their powerful neighbor Russia is a classic example of this.

Coup

If you are unable to bluff the uncooperative government, you can alway try to get rid of it. Any government which fails to increase the standard of living of its people by 3% per annum will fall. Sending in the CIA or KGB can spark an incident to trigger a fall of government even earlier. Cutting off funds and ensuring the opposition also cease funding the government will also hasten its downfall. Amassing troops in a neighboring country will increase insecurity which will in turn increase military spending. This also reduces the standard of living. Poor countries are easier victims in this type of gambit, while totalitarian governments are very resistant to it. Voting a government out is classed as a coup. Coup pressure will also reduce your popularity with the government.

After a coup there will be a mild change of attitude to both superpowers. Thus a communist government in France would result in less anti soviet feeling but

still leave France in the USA team.

Revolution

This is by far the most radical way to change a country. Most countries have a group of dissidents, and if you supply them with arms and manpower they will overthrow the government and set up a new and grateful one.

Getting arms in requires that you have sufficient money to supply the arms. If you wish to supply large quantities, you also need troops in a neighboring country. This is because of the logistic problems of smuggling thousands of tons on equipment across a border. There must also be a large enough group of revolutionaries to accept them. Thus trying to supply the revolutionaries in Russia is a futile business.

You may also supply troops. The same logistic problems arise. If, as Russia, you wish to send 200,000 troops to help the Aboriginal Liberation Front overthrow the white oppressors in Australia, you first need a base of operations in a neighbor. Fortunately it's not difficult to start a communist revolution in Indonesia or the Philippines.

Treaties

There a number of ways to prevent the opposition's use of the above strategies from taking effect. The first is a treaty. Treaties prevent a government from succumbing to bullying. In making it feel more secure, it also reduces the chances of a coup. What is more, a treaty costs nothing until you are required to honour it. If you fail to honour it, you will find all your other treaties lose their effect. Thus a treaty can drag you into a level of conflict you would normally have avoided.

Financial Aid

This is a great anti-coup policy. The nice thing is that it offends nobody. If the government falls, it is unlikely that a new government will resent your generosity. Your funds are limited however, and the big countries can be very expensive.

Direct Intervention

To stop a revolution you can send guns or troops to support the government. This does not even require a base to work from as the government will allow you to use the shipping ports. There are other restrictions however. Government troops tend to be more wasteful of equipment that revolutionaries. Also some countries may refuse your intervention. Libya is unlikely to welcome American military advisors on their soil.

The down side is if you fail to prevent the revolution, the new government will remember who fought against them.

Strategy

If this were all there was to it, the game would be a good one. The number of subtle ways to apply indirect pressure as well as the restrictions on how and when a policy may be put into effect make for a varied game where one must choose carefully which fights to enter and which to avoid.

Nuclear War

There is one more factor. At any time either, side may ask the other to reconsider an action. The second side then has the option of backing down. If they choose to persevere, the first side has the option of publicly condemning the action. This starts an escalating cycle of challenge and reply which has one of three possible outcomes:

- The challenging side gives in, thus losing points for prestige. This public lack of nerve sets a pattern for future encounters.
- The challenged side backs down, also with loss of face and points. The longer the bluffing goes on the more points are lost.
- Neither side backs down and nuclear war erupts. The chances of this happening increase with each threat and counter threat until they reach 100% at about 6 levels of escalation. Neither side wins a nuclear war.

There are no rules over what you can get away with or what you can prevent the opposition doing. It comes down to a question of what you can convince the opposition you will go to nuclear war over.

Information

The game contains a number of menus which allow you to access information on any country. This information allows you to assess the chances of a particular strategy working. There are several hundred items of information available and all are based on the real world.

Play

The game provides a type of play found in no other game. It requires a lot of study. The above description only covers the main points.

Strategically, it could be compared with chess which requires a similar time to master.

The element of bluff and trying to guess whether the opposition will back down is only found in games like poker. The computer looks at a number of factors when trying to decide whether you will back down. Some are not mentioned in the manual, so it takes a while to understand whether the computer is serious in a given crisis. One bad backdown can undo years of careful strategy so the excitement during a crisis is real.

The graphics are functional and some of the dialogue is humorous. An example would be when I refused to get my American troops out of Afghanistan. After a number of threats, Russia's last words on the subject were "go ahead, make my day".

Realism

The game shows no political bias. The countries are all real, as are their attitudes. It is interesting to use the game as a real world simulation and try your own political theories out.

Conclusion

This is the only game of its type and well worth buying if you are prepared to spend the time required to master it.

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Amiga Desk Top Video - The Price

by Dennis Nicholson

The one thing that attracted me to the Amiga in the first place was its truely outstanding graphic capabilities for the price of just	2,495.00
So I thought I'd better obtain a second disk drive, at the then R.R.P of	599.00
A printer seemed like a good idea,	395.00
Software came next, Deluxe Paint at,	169.95
then Deluxe Art and Utilites,	59.95
followed by Aegis Images/Animator,	340.00
and its Art Pak I,	169.95
Grabbit seemed like a handy utility	74.95
Deluxe Paint II came in early '87,	245.00
(N.B, A full PAL version is now avail)	
so did Paint Art Pak II,	69.95
Digi-View seemed a must at only,	458.95
of course it needed a camera,	425.00
which is no good without a lens,	650.00
and a C mount to Nikon adaptor,	45.00
with Kodak Wratten filters, not plastic,	45.00
Business graphics meant Aegis Impact,	379.95
I couldn't live without Deluxe Video,	245.00
or Pro Video CGI,	389.95
and the Pro Video Font Pack,	169.95
Zuma Fonts 1,2,3 came in pretty handy,	69.95
so did TV Text (Now available in PAL),	199.95
and Prism was first with HAM paint,	139.95
and Butcher really cleaned up the mess,	79.95
Videoscape 3D impressed my clients,	345.00
and Sculpt 3D shows great promise,	250.00
Express Paint combines text with pics,	95.00
Lion Fonts added heaps of new fonts,	75.00
Digi-Paint blew away Prism,	85.00
Still working out Forms In Flight,	125.00
and E/FX,	200.00
Calligrapher makes great colored fonts,	100.00
That seemed like enough software to keep me going for some time. The only problem now seemed to be the lack of memory, so I purchased....	
The Insider and put it in myself,	899.00
Kickstart Eliminator added another 256K,	395.00
and Xpander 2 built memory to 3.7megs,	1,495.00
Oh yes, I forgot the Genlock,	1,500.00
not to mention the publications,	500.00
or the blank disks, over 400,	1,600.00
The price so far,	$15,581.35

All that in twelve months! The positive note on all this is that the machine has returned three quarters of the above figure in less than six months with all the work I have done on it for corporate videos and documentaries. So computer art can pay dividends.... but I've just

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5. 1081 colour monitor	695.00	595.00

Amiga User Group members *must* show their cards at the time of purchase to obtain these special prices.

ordered Animator's Apprentice and Caligari!!!

[Editor's note: So how about a review of some of this stuff, Dennis? Or even an article on exactly what you're doing with all this equipment?]

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A warped A2000 review

I know everyone always says they caught it from a 'toilet seat', but my story is different. I think I got it from an innocent-looking Amiga 1000 at a slightly disreputable dealer over on the wrong side of the tracks. My friends had warned me about taking home the "cheaper models", but it was so good looking...

I first discovered I had it after awaking one morning and noticing my social life had dropped off. The other symptoms followed quickly - a shrinking of the bank balance, due to obsessive buying behaviour.

As there is yet no known cure, I am now diagnosed as a terminal patient. I look forward to an existence of daily 'new software' treatments, until I can be finally hooked to a 68020 machine when it becomes available.

I would like to help others by telling of how I have dealt with the stigma, so that they too can lead a normal life in this IBM PC-using society. For those of you who may suffer from the related illness, the Mac Plague, there may also be hope on the horizon.

Fortunately, Commodore has recognized this problem, and offers sufferers a small range of cosmetic devices to cover the outward signs, and make it look and feel like the less-harmful PC affliction, DOS disease. This disease is now is so common it has become socially acceptable, turning quite respectable computers into mere clones.

Mac Plague victims can also look forward to a new lease of life with Apple's release of a similar range of MS-DOS softwear.

My therapist first prescribed the 'less-expensive' Amiga prosthesis called the Sidecar. The moment I put it on, I knew no one would be fooled by a single drive, 256K PC that didn't have any of the I/O ports you'd normally expect to see. A trip to my local hardware store got me a multi-function card, and my employer kindly provided me with a live-in hard disk to support me during the first difficult months.

Oh yes, it worked OK, but it was so uncomfortable! It restricted my mouse movements something chronic, and I had so little Amiga ram left I couldn't indulge in any serious Amiga activity whilst looking like a PC. Of course, anyone who looked closely could see the little tinge of blue around the edge of the display, a dead give-away that I was only covering up windows! On the other hand there were some good features. A quick double-click on the mouse removed the blue frame completely making the display more convincing, (thoughtlessly abandoned in later models), and if blue wasn't the colour of the month, you could change to any other colour, which is a real boon for the fashion conscious.

DIGITIZED PICS.

Images Digitized using Digiview 2.0 and returned on quality DSDD 3.5" Disk. All images are in Standard IFF Format and are printed out on a Cannon 4096 Colour Printer. Any size photo, artwork ect. can be digitized

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A further concession to fashion was the facility to chose whether you looked like a monochrome or a CGA display. The monochrome look was the sort of thing you'd use around the house when alone, as it didn't cover much of your workbench. I did enjoy the multi-tasking freedom it permitted, though.

My next visit to my therapist (after consultation with a specialist guru) suggested a little extra Amiga ram might ease the discomfort when putting on the Sidecar. I bought a Insider-board, as this was the only one that didn't clash with the Sidecar. It also came with a nice clock, which helped pass the time. The only trouble I experienced with this device was that it had been designed for use by a patient whose disease was only at its 1.2-NTSC stage (the most recent mutation of the disease diagnosed in the USA). I had already progressed from my initial 1.3B-HYBRID level to a more advanced 1.4-PAL form of the disease, only found as yet in some parts of Europe and Australia. It took another trip to the guru, and some minor surgery, but in the end it fitted. However, I was forced to hide my Amiga ram temporarily each time I put the Sidecar on. After a while I got used to it, though the thought of it still remains a turn-off.

One of the most difficult days I had during this early period was when the hard disk left me. It had

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so ably supported me in the PC guise, lending a sort of triple-fronted brick veneer solidarity to the image. It was even reasonably happy to perform under AmigaDos (though occasionally it complained when being DJMOUNT-ed). Of course, I knew it was only a temporary arrangement, as the hard disk was living outside.

How does one cope alone? Are there any self-respecting PC clones out in the world that still don't have a hard disk partner? What do you tell the neighbours when your hard disk leaves?

Clearly, I had to find a hard disk that was willing to live-in permanently. Rather a dilemma, as I wasn't sure just what sort of accommodation I could offer. I had by this time grown attached to the just departed Seagate-style hard disk, though it was loud, unattractive and slow. My first thoughts were to find another, because it was tolerant of my wolf-in-sheep's clothing problem, and guaranteed to be there when called.

Unfortunately I had gained confidence with my disguise, and thought I could handle life in the fast access lane again. I had been working together with an AT clone recently, and the very racy voice coil hard disk at its side was the sort of disk I'd like to spend the rest of my life with. Well, I did the rounds of the usual inner city PC pickup joints, and didn't like what I saw. They were all well packaged, but expensive.

Looking a bit further towards that wrong side of town again, I spied a Miniscribe 6032 in a place that was closing down. It had the right sort of credentials, though it was built a bit on the large side by the current 'skinny' standards you see in all the advertising. It was also very noisy, and guaranteed to shake the walls down when it really got going. Naturally, it was also cheap.

I took it home, together with a Western Digital controller, one of those ultra-new very short types, that has support for the 1024 tracks on this type of disk. "Guaranteed to get any hard disk going", the man said.

I plugged it in, and put the Sidecar on. After a normal boot up and completing the low-level format-play, I attempted to boot a second time.

And lo and behold!, the Sidecar wouldn't boot with the floppy. A common problem, I'm told, nothing to worry about.

Ah well, not quite the clone I thought I was. So I lent the disk and controller to a friend with a real PC, (to check the performance, you understand) and he came back all smiles the next day. Obviously this combination was only turned on by real PC's.

So another controller card was borrowed from a real clone; the card was un-branded, but it worked! - sort of. This time I got to partition the hard disk under both MS-DOS and AmigaDos, and format the MS-DOS partition.

But each time I dropped my PC window and tried to DJMOUNT the Amiga partition, the PC side yelled "divide overflow". I tried changing the controller

card again. The next one (a DTX) did exactly the same thing. Dis-illusioned, I gave up and kept the DTX card. At least it worked with the Sidecar. I needed the fast disk for certain PC situations, so I figured I could live with it for the time being. I hoped that a voice from heaven (Commodore Sydney) might, one day, provide an answer.

But, stage 2.0 of the disease was about to strike!

So enough of the history of my medical problems, and on with the real review.

The Amiga 2000 was released. You guessed it, I bought one. I thought I could keep the old hard disk, and throw away the A1000 and Sidecar (in a manner of speaking).

The A2000 looked like a new suit of clothes. Wow, it even had the same shape as a PC. As the box-stock Amiga, it was a pleasant improvement, having as standard the 1 meg ram, and a clock. Surprisingly, the manuals were improved as well, giving more information on AmigaDos, and even circuit diagrams! Together with the optional Amiga 2 meg ram and 3.5 drive, you are ready to sample a depraved lifestyle.

To get inside and fit the extras is no problem. The casing comes apart easily, and doesn't snag anything, as the internal design is as open and accesible as you could ever need. All of the drives and the power supply are carried on a sub-chassis which can be removed quickly. This makes fitting any cards, or optional drives a breeze. As standard, there is one card fitted, being the extra 512K of Amiga ram. You can add an additional 512K of ram chips to empty sockets on the card, but I'm told the card will disappear in later models, when the ram is put on the motherboard. The card currently occupies the only slot that an Amiga co-processor could be placed in, so it will pay to wait for the later update if you dream of 68020 power.

The subtle changes abound. The mouse looks the same, but it has a smaller diameter ball, and seems to move a little 'quicker' than its A1000 counterpart. The serial and parallel I/O ports on the rear have changed gender, and now conform to the typical IBM standard. The keyboard is completely different, and really takes getting used to, even after a real PC. Even the drives are different, being quieter and possibly faster than the A1000 drive. Of course, not all changes are better, as the noisier fan and the power switch on the rear face are testimony to.

One of the major departures from the A1000 philosophy is the inclusion of the kickstart disk software as a ROM chip set on the motherboard. The much-maligned kickstart-in-rom certainly means a quick boot-up, and only becomes annoying when you want to run something that doesn't like the extended memory. If you can't add the NoFastMem program to the disk in question, and doctor the Startup-Sequence, then you can forget about running it on the A2000. The old A1000 solution was to run kickstart 1.1. This problem seems confined to some early games, notably the Electronic Arts releases.

However, it isn't a PC without the bridgecard. That neatly engineered card and 5.25 drive come well packaged, but with the most proto-type documentation I have ever seen. It makes the Sidecar manual look like a James Mitchener novel.

The bridgecard has with it a new release of the PC emulator software, providing revised programs from the original A2000 workbench (and Sidecar disk) and the necessary MS-DOS software to use them. In the PC drawer you have the monochrome PC icon, which opens a full size PC window in the current workbench screen using the current workbench colours. A double-click in this window removes the left and right window bars, leaving only the window title bar and a thin line along the bottom window edge. A further double-click toggles the window between a quarter size version, or the full size. The colour PC icon works the same way, but first opens a custom screen over the workbench screen, allowing it to use different colours from the workbench.

Regrettably, it's not possible to remove the Amiga window border completely, as the old Sidecar software permitted, making the display indistinguishable from the 'real thing'. I say this because recently I needed to provide printed dumps of some new PC software's screens. On a PC this is difficult as the PrtSc (print-screen) key will not handle graphics, but running Grabbit! on the Amiga side allowed me to print the PC screen as a normal Amiga screen. It can be awkward trying to explain the presence of an Amiga title bar on an dump of a PC screen! Whilst the new emulator software will run on the Sidecar, the reverse is not true. You can can use the old software to bring up a PC window, but the keyboard doesn't work.

The LPT1 icon causes the Amiga printer port to become the PC's printer port, and creates title-bar-only 'window' announcing the redirection on the workbench. Clicking the window closed causes the port to revert to normal.

The MS-DOS software supplied consists of a Commodore release of DOS 3.2, with a few extra programs specifically for the bridgecard. To begin with, there is a utility which allows creation of a PC 'virtual disk' on any Amiga device (disks or ram). The "MS-Dos" disk appears as a file on whatever device you have chosen, which is kept locked until you have released it from PC use, after which it can be manipulated as an ordinary file. This 'virtual disk' provides similar performance to a conventional MS-Dos ramdisk when the Amiga device is ram:, and justifies having 3 or more meg on the Amiga bus.

There are also a pair of utilities to allow transfer of text or binary files between PC and AmigaDos formats. To test it, I downloaded a PC program using the Amiga, and de-arced the program with the Amiga 'arc' utility. I then transferred the file using the binary option to the PC hard disk. It ran perfectly. If, however, you forget to use the binary option switch, the PC will probably hang trying to execute the program. All these utilities are run from the PC side after activating an Amiga icon in the PC drawer called 'PCdisk'. Unfortunately, the activation of the PCdisk icon didn't always work. Admittedly, this release of the software is still marked "Pre-release", but it was an inconvenience having to power off the Amiga and re-boot when it didn't operate correctly. I finally settled on putting it the startup-sequence, and it seems reliable now.

Another potentially useful item is a PC preferences tool which allows the software that handles the bridge between Amiga and PC to be re-positioned at a different memory location than the original Sidecar default. I had hoped that this would fix the Miniscribe hard disk/controller problem, and make life more tolerable, but no, it was not to be. After installation using two of the possible addresses, it still uttered "divide overflow" at the crucial moment. The third option caused no error, but Amiga-dos didn't know anything about the JH0: device. A definite anti-climax. This tool also allows setting of which PC video modes (mono or colour) are capable of being used, effectively switching on or off the keyboard input to the corresponding window after it has been opened. I think this was intended to allow the user to change the default mode that the PC booted up in, but it does not over-ride the jumper settings on the bridgeboard. In the same vein, a switch is provided for the serial port, which presumably was intended to allow the user to access the Amiga serial port in the same way as the Amiga parallel port. It appears to do nothing.

Once the bridgecard is installed you have 3 or 4 PC compatible slots to play with. I immediately transplanted the multifunction card from the Sidecar. To add insult to injury, the multifunction card's extra ram didn't want to appear. The bridgecard comes fitted with 512K standard, so the extra ram should have taken the count to the 640K maximum. For some reason, 64K of the card's ram remains unaccounted for. I suspect this is a problem with the multifunction card's ram addressing, but in practice it works fine.

Luckily, I was able to palm off the hard disk and controller to another PC clone (beware the one night stand!), where they will be happy evermore. This meant finding another disk, but I shopped around again, looking for something more modern the the Miniscribe. I finally settled on a MicroScience HH1050, it had the right specifications, being slightly faster than the Miniscribe and a half height device.

I could match this disk to a DTX controller that has a rom which splits the disk into two logical devices (in this case, two 22 meg drives), and I knew that the DTX controllers were OK for AmigaDos. I first fitted it into the Sidecar, out of convenience. As half expected, when set up using the original Sidecar software, it didn't work as an Amiga device. But perseverance paid off. Changing to the MS-DOS 3.2 and the later A2000 DJMOUNT/PC Amiga software supplied with the bridgecard, it worked perfectly. The whole lot was instantly transferred to the A2000, causing the 5.25 drive to become homeless.

The partitioning program for the AmigaDos format allows you to split the disk up into a maximum of 4 areas. These then became 5 meg JH0:, JH1:, JH2: and JH3: respectively. As you might imagine, having the hard disk is a delight. For a comparison, I loaded Amigabasic into ram, and timed from the clicking on the icon to when the list window appeared. It took 4 seconds when in ram, 7 seconds from the hard disk, and 10 seconds from floppy. Whilst this isn't going to set the world alight, in real terms it means that a word processing document that used to take 30 seconds to load from DF1: now takes 15 seconds from JH3:. Purists may scorn the fact that it isn't a DMA/SCSI device, but when you consider that the Commodore SCSI hard disk controller card costs the same as the bridgecard, I think a free PC is better value.

Now for some of the bad bits. Apart from the kickstart-in-rom inconvenience, some software that uses a 'dongle' as part of its copy protection system will not work. This is because of two incorrect capacitors fitted to the joystick/mouse ports. It looks like an easy fix though, and has been officially recommended by Commodore. A little more serious, is the possible failure of the power supply, which is rumoured to self-destruct some of the motherboard on its way out. Naturally, mine died, but luckily, it happened within the warranty period, and caused no other damage. I'd like to give a plug for Megatron Computers, who repaired it in 5 hours!, the best service I've had from an authorized repair centre.

Another thing I missed badly was the keyboard slot under the casing. It's a shame they didn't stick with the idea, though it would be impossible with the huge keyboard supplied with the A2000.

In the long term, the kickstart-in-rom will become more of a hassle, as there is already a 1.3 kickstart/workbench combination in the pipeline. This pair is supposed to enable booting from a hard disk, so I will have to get a rom changed. Also, in the future, I'd like to get a 68020 co-processor, so a bit of ram will have to go.

On the PC side, one 'incompatibity' is the lack of sound, though it looks like there is a connection for a speaker on the bridgecard. It wouldn't be difficult to patch an output to the Amiga monitor, but without a proper manual, I'm hesitating. I suppose I could gripe about the silliness of the 4.77 MHz clock speed these days, but instead; "where is the AT card, Commodore?"

Overall, I am happy; the A2000 fulfills a working requirement now, and has such great potential for the future.

==========

Developer's Corner

by Chris Tremelling

C Programming for beginners

Beginners classes in C programming will be held at:

Burwood College,
Building E (where the SIGs are held).

Micom will be holding C programing tutorials every one to two weeks. These tutorials go for 2 hours and are limited to 10 people per class. It's a case of BYO computer and compiler. (Don't forget - a computer's attention span is only as long as its extension cord.)

The tutorials start at a beginners level and will take you through to advanced sytem programming. Experience with CLI and a text editor would be an advantage.

If you are interested and wish to enrol, call Eric Salter on 861-9117 for more details.

Micom (The Microcomputer Club Of Melbourne) is another computer club, and they meet on the third Saturday of every month (at Burwood College, Building E) at 2pm. The Micom C User's Group meet after the main meeting at 3 pm.

A1000 Expansion Problems

Occasionally, an Amiga owner finds himself the proud owner of a memory expansion board. Eagerly he attaches it to the side of his Amiga, anxiously he powers up the computer, loads KickStart and Workbench and finds to his relief that all is OK. Thinking "lets see this Amiga fly", he copies the C: directory into the Ram disk. So far so good, now to do something useful. Deft fingers flash across the keyboard as he loads his favourite program, but what's that? - the cursor stops tracking, EEEKK the screen goes blue - then black, and a hash noise blares out of the speaker. ARGH, he cries. Is my Amiga dying?

Sounds bad, doesn't it. Apparently, some early A1000's have a problem with noise on the expansion port which can result in the above scenario, however help is at hand! The problem has been isolated to two of the PAL (Programmable Array Logic) chips on the WCS (Writable Control Store) daughterboard which are not well grounded. This makes the chips susceptible to extraneous electronic noise. Apparently daughterboards that use TI (Texas Instruments) PAL chips don't exhibit the same problems as those incorporating MMI (Monolothic Memories Inc.) PAL chips. The TI chips seem to be less affected by electronic noise than MMI ones.

There are two solutions, one way is to have the MMI PAL chips changed over to TI PALs, or secondly, all four daughterboard PALs can be grounded together via a jumper connecting pin 10 of each chip.

For A1000 owners having trouble with peripheral devices attached to the expansion bus, a PAL swap or additional grounding may be the solution.

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Word Perfect Amiga Version

by John Broad (Editor UK-AUG)

Way back in the dim and dark past (issue 2 of our illustrious newsletter to be exact), I mentioned in the editorial (page 4 para 1) that the WordPerfect Corporation of America were in the process of converting their famous PC word-processor of the same name to a variety of machines, the Amiga being the one that interests us.

The Gospel

I can even remember at the time that our beloved Kevin even phoned the States to substantiate this. Well, dear readers, the wait is over and I am delighted to tell you that it is here at last, not as though that will be news to many of you who read the more intelligent magazines such as PC World and Byte to name the only two. In fact, in the August issue of the former, no less a person than Guy Kewney, renowned for taking no prisoners whatsoever, waxes lyrical about this product for the Amiga, forecasting a fight in their editorial offices for the office Amiga. He states that it (the Amiga) has now the Best Word Processor in the world, and now we can take the Amiga seriously!

Those of you who already use WordPerfect on your office or home PC's will know of the patience that is required to learn the vast number of facilities that this giant of a word processor has. This has been remedied in the Amiga version, with the use of the mouse and the host of pull-down menus which make it easier for first-time users. PC users should note that all the function key commands are duplicated on the Amiga, making it easy for those like me that bang away at the keyboards rather than mouse dabble. The transition is simplicity itself, the one exception is the Help key found on the PC as F3.

If you attended the recent Commodore show, you might have seen a development version being demonstrated by those nice people from Sentinel Software who handle this and the many other WordPerfect products in this country. Unlike Guy Kewney (PCW August) who warmly urges all Amiga owners to obtain a copy sight unseen immediately (some testament indeed), I have managed to obtain a copy for extensive review (many thanks to Jags and all at Sentinel).

Before we start, this review is being written using WordPerfect, as was the bulk of the last newsletter, and certainly the bulk of this one.

In issue two, I reviewed a program called Scribble, the only workable (and I use that term loosely) word processor available at the time for the Amiga. If I remember rightly, I made a comparison with a motor car for facilities offered as opposed to basic needs. If I continue to use the same benchmark, then comparing Scribble to WordPerfect is like comparing a banger to a Rolls Royce. I will not make comparisons with this program because at present there is nothing on the market to compare it with. What I will do is to run down a few of the colossal number of facilities that WordPerfect offers.

My review version contains four disks, the first containing the main program, the second the enormous help files (more later), the third the massive dictionary and thesaurus files and finally the extensive printer drivers (which number 261 so far) are located on disk four. Coupled with the disks is the extensive hard spiral-bound manual. The actual composition of the package is as follows: 4 disks, manual, keyboard templates, quick reference chart and keycals (keytop stickers) for the 1000.

Installation

The installation of this program is covered in a separate section within the manual for both floppy and hard disk users alike. A quick phone call from everybody's friend, our Kev, alerted me to the fact that WP had arrived, and this necessitated me making some sort of pathetic excuse at work to get down the shop and inspect the same. By the time I got there, Kev had WordPerfect installed and up and running on the shop's A2000 hard disk system.

As the majority of you and me don't possess a hard drive, I will work through the installation for floppy drives. From the Workbench (1.2), pop in the program disk in drive 0 and double click on the WP icon, and within a few seconds the WordPerfect screen is displayed and we are ready to go.

The next step is to install the printer driver(s). This is only really needed once as the driver files are resaved on your program disk. Up to six printer definitions can be selected from the vast number on the printer drivers disk. Click on the control from the print menu, not forgetting of course to pop the driver disk in. From this menu, select the printers option and select the printers of your choice. At the shop, we use three printers quite regularly, so ours chosen are the Star NL10, the Epson LX for the badged CBM 1000 printer and obviously the Epson laser.

Upon start up, you are presented with a plain blue background screen on which your lettering should be white, and in the bottom left corner you get the customary position numbers of your cursor. These default colours can be changed from within the program to whatever is your particular preferences are.

A quick click of the right mouse key brings up the seven main menus across the top - these are Project, Edit, Search, Format, Style, Print and Special. Just running the pointer down one of these main menus brings out further windows of sub-menus far too numerous to dissect at length in this article. From the main menu windows, you will see the names of the options, and if these are preceded by a double bracket >> then a further sub-menu will be found.

Spelling Checker

The dictionary is huge, boasting some 115,000 words. It is quite quick in operation, and as with most things in WordPerfect, it offers further facilities than just checking spelling. Available from the spelling menu is check word, page, document, change directory, look up and word count. The first three speak for themselves, whilst the fourth, change directory, gives you the option of switching to a specialised directory created by yourself. This is vital for things like this newsletter when editing all the public domain disks and the associated buzz words found within. Of course, the facility to add words is included and these are saved out in a supplementary file on your disk; periodically you can add these to the main dictionary if required. The last two options give you the opportunity of looking up a word before entering it in your script and of course, counting the number of words.

When the spelling checker is in operation, a menu appears along the bottom displaying alternatives when a word not recognised is encountered. You can skip once, skip all occurrences, add word, edit word, look up and phonetic, which allows you to type in the sound of the word for verification. When a word is found that does not match, alternatives are displayed in a window; just point to the right word and the offending word is replaced, with reformatting done automatically. The checker also caters for words that contain numbers (ie F3 above somewhere) and double words like the the, often at the end of one

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line and the beginning of another.

Thesaurus

A Thesaurus, no matter how you pronounce it, is certainly an essential tool for the less linguistically gifted (like me!). Along with a weighty dictionary, mine stands next to the monitor. Imagine my glee as WordPerfect has one built in. 10,000 head-words are claimed, and I've given this facility some extensive use. The speed at which I can write my reviews and articles has increased to warp factor with the inbuilt dictionary and thesaurus - now I only have to speed up the key bashing and learn to use another finger!

Columns

If you fancy having your text in columns, then look no further. This newsletter is an example, it certainly is a vast improvement over the early days when we actually did cut and paste with half the articles ending up stuck to the floor. Columns can be either newspaper style, with snaking text or parallel where you can protect the block of text and separate items across the columns - use this with the maths facility and you have mini spreadsheets.

Help

There is a massive help file of all the commands and this can be accessed with the Amiga's help key. If you press an alphabet key after the help key then a list of options available starting with that letter are displayed. For example, pressing the help key followed by 'T' gives you information on Tab, Tab set, Tab ruler, Table of authorities, Table of contents, Text in/out, Thesaurus, Time/date, Top margin, Typeover and Type-thru.

The Manual

The manual is hard bound in a ring binder and is quite extensive and easy to read, with a helpful tutorial at the beginning. There are over 600 pages plus a glossary and index at the back. This is divided vertically with a dotted line running down the right side in which the mouse movements are covered. The WordPerfect manual is a real classic for manuals, and is the best I've seen to date for an Amiga program. Don't be put off by the size; if you read it, you will uncover a wealth of useful information. It is a real joy to see such professional and instructive documentation.

And More

WordPerfect also gives you mail merge, full macros, line drawing, auto hyphenation, endnotes and footnotes, table of authorities, table of contents - the list of facilities appears endless. Yes, it even reads Scribble files as well, which is obviously a benefit for those thinking of upgrading. Mind you, those awful dot codes need to be sorted out, but this can be done from within WordPerfect.

WordPerfect itself uses imbedded commands for things like font change, centering, underlining (with a choice of 4 styles!), etc. These imbedded commands are easily seen with the toggle Alt F3, which divides the screen into two windows displaying your actual script above and a mirror below with the imbedded codes.

I Like It

Conclusion: WordPerfect is a historic step for the Amiga in its development as a serious machine. This is the word processor to which others will be compared.

WordPerfect is widely used on the PC by thousands of business and professional people and hobbyists alike and now it is available for your Amiga. I know of people who have bought specific computers just to run this program (me for one).

WordPerfect is a classic, and if you require a word processor that has numerous facilities, or do quite a bit of word processing on your Amiga, then look no further.

WordPerfect should be available by the time you read this, with a recommended retail price of 255 pounds (ex VAT). A special trade-in deal has been arranged between the AUG and Sentinel Software - see later in this issue. I can recommend this software whole-heartedly for both the experienced and newcomer to word processing.

[Editor's note: This article has been reprinted (with slight editing) from Amiga Mag, journal of the Amiga Users Group of South Australia, who reprinted it from the newsletter of the UK Amiga Users Group.]

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SIGs Report

by Bob Scarfe, AUG Co-Ordinator

It was very encouraging to see how everybody got involved with the concept of SIGs at the last meeting. From what I saw, I think that we will go from strength to strength as the SIGs get further down the track. However, they will not be without their problems, as experienced by the Graphics SIG, which has all ready broken up into four different groups.

To help any of you who have not yet been involved with the SIGs, or would like to know just what is intended to go on in your friendly neighborhood SIG, here is some information about them, from the people who are starting them off.

C Language SIG

This SIG came out of the Graphics group last month and is being organised by Mal Woods. He says that the group will have two main directions. Firstly, it will be a forum for C programmers to help each other and exchange routines, with emphasis on using Library routines. Secondly, a section of the SIG will be set aside to help people learn C, and he is keen to find out the names of anyone who would like to help out as a chalkie for a while, and also others who would be available as a tutor to help beginners who are having trouble outside SIG meeting hours. Mal can be reached on 288 5472.

Desktop Publishing SIG

Dean Samelli has set up the DTPSIG and is keen to meet anyone who has had success in producing laser printing documents on the Amiga. The inaugural meeting will be held at the next meeting and he hopes it will get a positive direction at that time. He can be reached between 8 and 9 pm weeknights on 848 4373.

Graphic Users SIG

The GUSIG will aim to be a focus for Amiga users who wish to create and present graphic images on their computers. The starting base will be to explore the capabilities of existing software packages, but basic directions will be worked out at the next meeting. Anyone with ideas or suggestions can contact Theo Denbrinker after hours on 509 1050.

Advanced Graphics SIG

The AGSIG is primarily concerned with 3D graphics, Image Processing and Animation. It will initially be studying the algorithms involved in Ray Tracing, constructive solid geometry and octree encoding. Then it will look at how these can be done on the Amiga using C and Assembler languages. Finally it hopes the SIG will collaborate on a group project. More information from Geoff Holden on 211 0283.

Games SIG

I do not have much information on this group except that it is very keen to get going and the first meeting will be held after the November main meeting. Phone Luke Devlin on 568 1252 for more information.

Beginners SIG

Pat Heuvel has consented to put together a Beginners SIG, but this will be different to other SIGs in that it will only run for a short number of meetings, after which it will reconstitute itself. It may also be possible to have two staggered Beginners groups meeting concurrently. Because of the nature of this SIG, it will only be open to those members who are prepared to bring their machines along to the meeting, as there is not much use trying to learn about a machine that is at home. Pat can be reached on 763 4548.

Developers SIG

This SIG met for the first time at the last meeting and already has a charter to work on. The contact is Chris Tremelling on 557 1349.

Video Production SIG

Although there will be a meeting of this group at the next meeting, negotiations are taking place to have the group meet at the Australian Film and Television School in King Street in future. Find out more from Geoff Woods on 580 7463.

ComSIG

This group also met last meeting and is well on the way to developing software in conjunction with the Bulletin Board. All enquiries should be directed to Drac on 792 1138.

SMAUG

This is our now-famous Music SIG, which meets mainly before the main meeting at Roland Seidel's place in Box Hill, but will be conducting an informal meeting at the main meeting site to recruit members and to explain the aims of the group etc. Ring Roland on 890 3934.

Because we have so many SIGs starting now, meeting times will be restricted to an hour, and will be held in two shifts after the main meeting in the VICTRAC building. A timetable will be posted in the foyer of the main theatre on the day. Although we have tried hard to give people the opportunity to be involved in as many different SIGs as possible, obviously clashes will occur. If you feel you are being unduly discriminated against, contact the committee and we will attempt to do something about it. Also, if there are others who wish to form their own SIGs, just tell me about it and I will help you get it going. In my opinion, the more the merrier.

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An Amigan Virus

At the last meeting, mention was made of a "virus" that had invaded several member's disks. The following information appeared on Compuserve (in the USA), and came to my attention through UseNet.

#: 87294 S3/Hot News & Rumors
02-Oct-87 02:41:08
Sb: #WARNING! Virus loose!
Fm: Larry Phillips/SYSOP 76703,4322
To: All

Well, it had to happen sooner or later. There are a variety of programs that are variously known as Trojan Horses, Bombs, and Viruses. While Bombs are generally destructive (as evidenced by their name), and Trojan Horses are either destructive or for the purpose of theft of data, Viruses have been known to be benign or malignant both. A Virus has shown up on the Amiga, arriving from Europe, and coming from a group calling themselves SCA. Since it is uncertain yet what its purpose is, that is, how destructive it may or may not be, it will pay to check any disks you boot from and kill the virus if found.

The method of propogation is as follows. An Amiga is booted with an infected disk. All works normally, with no sign that anything is amiss. If you then reboot the machine with the CTRL-Amiga-Amiga key using an uninfected disk, the virus is transferred to the boot disk, and it too becomes a "carrier", ready to pass it on, and so on.

The presence of the virus can be detected by looking at block 1 on a disk. Normally, this will have random data or a pattern of data in it, but you will be able to see the virus quite easily if it is there. Using Sectorama (SEC.ARC in DL 9... DiskZap will not show it), look at block 1 (Cyl 0, Hd 0, Sector 1). If the virus is present, run INSTALL on the disk. INSTALL will rewrite sectors 0 and 1, killing the virus. Then, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, TURN OFF the

Amiga's power. If you have booted from an infected disk, and have used INSTALL to kill the virus, rebooting without powering off/on will only reinfect the disk.

There have been a couple of reports of a message showing up on the screen, and one was followed by the disk being unusable afterward, but I can't confirm that it was trashed by the virus. The message was: "Something wonderful has happened. Your AMIGA is alive !!! and, even better, Some of your disks are infected by a VIRUS !!!". This is the same message that appears in block 1 of an infected disk.

Watch for it... stomp it out.

Regards, Larry.

#: 87306 S3/Hot News & Rumors
02-Oct-87 04:43:21
Sb: #87294-#WARNING! Virus loose!
Fm: Barry Massoni 73260,1413
To: Larry Phillips/SYSOP 76703,4322 (X)

Larry,

I`m not a programer or an expert, but I thought that re-booting the system was supposed to clear the machines memory - ow can the virus be transmitted?

Also, should someone without the ability to look at a disk in the way you suggested run across this message will a cold reboot solve the problem (so long as the "infected" disk is not used again)? Will initalizing an "infected" disk (after a cold boot) remove the infection? (along with anything else on the disk).

One more thing, don`t you think that this message is important enough to go at the head of the forum-so that you see it when you enter the forum?

Barry

#: 87327 S3/Hot News & Rumors
02-Oct-87 16:17:58
Sb: #87306-WARNING! Virus loose!
Fm: Larry Phillips/SYSOP 76703,4322
To: Barry Massoni 73260,1413 (X)

Barry,

The memory is not only not cleared upon rebooting, but there is a way to allow a program to survive a warm boot (CTRL-Amiga-Amiga). The virus itself is contained in the "boot block", and when you boot from an infected disk, installs itself in this manner. When you reboot with an uninfected disk, the virus writes itself out to the boot block of that disk, infecting it as well.

A cold reboot (power off, power on) will indeed remove it from the memory. The problem is, you must know in advance that the disk you are currently booted from is infected before you would think to go through this procedure.

As for looking at the disk to determine if the virus is there, the program to use is "Sectorama", which is in DL 9 as SEC.ARC. Perhaps someone will come up with a program that will detect and kill the virus, giving you a warning at the same time.

I do think it's important, and we will probably put it into one of the Data Libraries and mention it in the short bulletin which everyone will see upon entry to the forum.

Regards, Larry.

#: 87326 S3/Hot News & Rumors
02-Oct-87 16:17:55
Sb: #87294-#WARNING! Virus loose!
Fm: Alan Kaiser 70003,1677
To: Larry Phillips/SYSOP 76703,4322 (X)

Larry,

You mention an European group that likely does not ring a bell for many. Do you know the source of the virus? Any specific suspects? Is it a program or disk, do you think? And lastly, do you know if it can defeat write protected disks?

Thanks, Alan

#: 87343 S3/Hot News & Rumors
02-Oct-87 20:33:02
Sb: #87326-#WARNING! Virus loose!
Fm: Larry Phillips/SYSOP 76703,4322
To: Alan Kaiser 70003,1677 (X)

Alan,

I don't know the disk it started on, though due to the nature of the group, it likely came out originally on a stolen copy of a commercial product. As with a real virus, it really doesn't matter, as it will spread to any and all boot disks that it can. It is not contained in a named program, but is part of the "boot block" that every bootable disk has. So it doesn't help to watch out for a specific file.

I haven't tried it, but it is likely that the boot disk would be safe if write protected.

Regards, Larry.

#: 87424 S3/Hot News & Rumors
03-Oct-87 16:59:12
Sb: #87343-WARNING! Virus loose!
Fm: Bill Leach 71330,2621
To: Larry Phillips/SYSOP 76703,4322

Larry:

It would have to be safe. Write protection is a hardware function of the disk drive.

73,
bill

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The BBS Adventure Continues

by Drac

As promised the second article on our BBS will now unfold. This month we will look at the C)hange and F)ile menus.

This will conclude the Quick users manual. Next month I was thinking of starting a column that has a small selection of messages that would be of interest

to most people, kind of a "Best of AmigaLink". If this does not appeal to you or you would not like your messages to go into print, then let me know .

Since we live in an imperfect world, the various **preset** options presented to you may not be to your liking. Therefore, we give you the ability to modify them to suit your needs is catered for in the C)hange Setup command :-

Change Menu

The **city** option lets you change the city you told Opus you're calling from. Sometimes after logging in people muff their first time login, or they have moved house, this option allows you to modify the city/suburb that you NOW reside in.

With the **password** option, you can change your logon password. You should do this every few months for increased security. We recommend that you use a password that is at least 6 characters long. If someone else works out your password and makes an idiot of themselves (in your name), then you might have an difficult time proving that it wasn't you in the first place.

HELP LEVEL

You can tell Opus how much menu information you need with the **help level** option. There are three help levels:

Novice - A lot of help with full menus. For people using 300 baud, this can be a REAL irritation and I strongly recommend that once you have mastered the basic commands, you use one of the higher help levels.

Regular - A little help and brief menus. In this level you will only receive the letters of the commands. These help to jog your memory as to what the commands are.

Expert - No help, no menus. We mean it. With this level, the main prompt says only:

Select:-

Unless you really know what you are doing, don't set this help level.

The **more** option turns the "More [Y,n]?" prompt on or off. When turned on, Opus asks "More [Y,n]?" after displaying the number of lines equal to your L)ength of screen setting, while with it off, most information is displayed non-stop. You can still pause the display using CONTROL-S to pause and any other key to resume the display (usually Control-Q).

It is usually useful to have More on if you are running at a high baud rate. The screen will usually update too fast to read and with MORE ON you can read one screenfull at a time.

The **width** option tells Opus how many characters across your monitor can display. This is taken into consideration for message displays ONLY. Bulletins, file listings, etc. are always displayed assuming you have 80 columns.

You can tell Opus how many lines your screen can hold before asking you "More [Y/n]?" with the **length of screen** option. 24 or 25 lines is normal. Of course, if you have the MORE option set to OFF, this setting really doesn't matter.

The **tabs** option turns TAB expansion on or off, and with it set to on, tabs are sent as tabs. Your terminal software must be able to handle tabs correctly, or the spacing on your screen will not look right. Screen output is faster with Tabs ON. With tabs off, tabs are sent as a sequence of 8 spaces. Slower, but more reliable. Try it both ways and see which works best.

Nulls are ASCII 0's that some slower terminals need to keep up with Opus. If you're using a personal computer, chances are you don't need to worry about nulls.

You can turn ANSI graphics on or off with the **graphics** option. On the Amiga, there are a few terminal programs that can now handle the ANSI control characters. Most of the VT100 type terminal programs will change fonts instead of colours but its a start.

If, when in the help section of C)hange:-, the word RED on this line is highlighted or in color, then your computer understands ANSI graphics commands. Keep GRAPHICS ON. If, however, you see something like [31;1mRED above, then your computer is ignoring the ANSI commands. Keep GRAPHICS OFF.

Screen clear: Opus can clear your screen when appropriate when this option is set to yes. Material "scrolls" with no screen clear.

Full-screen editor

Opus is now pioneering the concept of the BBS full-screen editor. It allows you to enter messages using arrow keys, etc., just like a word processor. If you turn OFF the F)ull-scrn editor, you will use the LORE (line-oriented editor), the more orthodox method.

You must have ANSI G)raphics ON to use the Full-screen editor.

Opus "wraps" lines automatically - there is no need to press RETURN at the right margin. Press RETURN twice to quit the editor. <SPACE><RETURN> creates a blank line between paragraphs.

The **quit to main menu** command leaves the CHANGE SETUP Section and returns to the MAIN MENU.

File Menu

This has to be the most used section of any BBS. The AmigaLink BBS is no exception.

(flame suit on)

This section is also the one in which people show their true colours, by spending ALL their time DOWNLOADING as much as they can, in a single session. In some cases they are not satisfied with that and log on again for another session. These individuals would never think of UPLOADING anything, that may be of use to others. We have examples of this in our

records where people have downloaded over 4MB with NO uploads. All this takes time and adds to the difficulty of getting in.

(flame suit off)

The file section is there to foster the spread of PUBLIC DOMAIN software. The most useful utilities and new releases usually make it around faster via the BBS's file section than they do on fish disks. It pays to show a little thought for others here, by uploading the utilities that you find usefull. There are people out there who cannot get to meetings, or who do not meet other Amiga people, that benefit by being able to access the Public Domain utilities.

With the **area change** option, you can select another message area. Type "A" alone to see a list of available areas. You may also type a number immediately following the "A" to move directly to another area (e.g. A1, A;2).

Locate finds a file based on a short sequence of characters. THIS COMMAND SEARCHES ALL FILE AREAS, NOT JUST THE CURRENT AREA. Locate does not use MS-DOS "wildcards"; it does, however match the character sequence to both the file name and description.

For example, if you type "L;arc" ... you might get this:

```
huge.ARC        123456    This is a large file
fstextr.exe       2250    A fast way to unARC a file
```

The **file title** command lists files available in the current file area. Also lists file's size in bytes, date uploaded, and a short description. If the file is new since your last call, you'll see an asterisk "*" next to the date uploaded.

You can display a text file on the screen by using the **type** option, which only works with text files.

You log off (hang up) from Opus using the **goodbye** command.

With the **upload** command, you can send a file from your disk to Opus, provided your terminal software supports this. Check your documentation for details.

1. Tell Opus you want to U)pload a file.
2. Select the file transfer "protocol" you want to use - Opus will give you a list to choose from.
3. Tell Opus the name of the file you'll be sending.
4. Finally, when Opus says, "Ready to receive...", tell your terminal program to send the file.

The **download** command tells Opus to send a file to you, provided your terminal software supports this. Check your program documentation for details. To get a file from Opus:

1. Tell Opus that you want to D)ownload a file.
2. Select the file transfer "protocol" you want to use - Opus will give you a list to choose from. (Ask the Sysop which protocols are most efficient)
3. Tell Opus the name of the file you want to receive. (MS-DOS "wildcards" work with some of the protocols.)
4. Finally, when Opus says "Ready to send...", tell your terminal program to receive the file.

5. Think of the others who are trying to get on.

The **statistics** option shows system details such as time online, amount downloaded, etc. If you have a guilty conscience, then don't look at the Upload / Download figures!

You leave the FILES SECTION and return to the MAIN MENU by using the **main menu** option.

Guess what? Opus can display the contents of .ARC (Archive) and .LBR (Library) files with the **contents** command. These files are actually several smaller files locked into one large one for ease of transmission.

Epilogue

This concludes our quick run through. If there are any questions, you can see me at the meeting OR leave me a message in AREA 30 on the BBS.

-- drac();

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Starglider - a review

by Stan Thomas

"Just another shoot-em-up" you say, when you read that Starglider is a game where you fly around shooting everything that moves and avoid being shot at for as long as possible. But what a shoot-em-up! It uses three dimensional vector graphics with hidden line elimination. Being written in machine code, the animation is very fast and very smooth, with none of the jerky, slow animation that seems to plague these games. The only time they slow down to any noticeable extent at all is when there are several objects on the screen at once.

This game reminds me very strongly of Arctic Fox. One of your instruments is a small radar screen giving the position of enemy craft in a circle around you. Another similarity is that when you launch a missile you take the missile's point of view and can attempt to guide it (not very easy!) to its target.

The writers of this game seem to have thought of everything. The sound is good and includes a digitised female voice giving status reports about the ship's (generally lack of) health. Another big bonus, not often thought of, is that the keyboard controls are redefinable. In this kind of game where you have to control the speed and altitude of a spacecraft, watch the activities of all those pesky aliens trying to give you a severe case of death and try and wipe them out with your trusty laser beam, nothing is worse than being cursed with a keyboard layout that makes an already challenging game impossible to play. Not that you're restricted to the keyboard - you can use either the mouse or a joystick as well, or all three at once if you happen to be blessed (?) with more than the usual number of hands. With this unusual versatility of control options, you can set things up so that you can forget about the mechanics of the game and concentrate on the game itself.

In summary, if you like this kind of game, and I certainly do, Starglider is one the very best around, and is well worth the eighty dollars or so it costs.

Editor's Filler

(Written 25-Oct-87)

Well, other than this column, which is being tailor-written to fill the last 1/3 of a page, another newletter is done. No, I'm not doing it on the Amiga yet, it is still being written with WordStar, printed with a daisy wheel and pasted up with rubber cement. Several people have mentioned that it's a sad state of affairs to be making an Amiga newsletter on a different computer, and isn't it an admission that there really isn't any useful software available for the Amiga. I'm hoping that this situation will soon change, possibly even as soon as the December issue.

In a change from our normal "screen-dump-of-a-software-package" front covers, this month we have a drawing by Neal Glover, which was done as part of his work illustrating for real estate advertising. Neal uses Digi-View 2, Delux Paint 2 and a Ricoh PC Laser 6000 laserprinter. How about more contributions for the front covers people?

Speaking of contributions, we had enough for an extra four pages again this month, thanks to those members keen enough to pull their fingers out and put something back into the club. Now, it's **your** turn. Next month, **YOU** write something. Yes, you. Don't leave it up to someone else.

Starting with the December meeting, we'll no longer be holding our meetings at Burwood College. Instead, they'll be moved to Monash University. More details and a map of where to do in the December newsletter. For November (ie this month), we'll still be at Burwood.

That's enough from me, I'll see you all at the meeting.

SOFTWARE ORDER FORM

Disk numbers :								

Disks supplied by Amiga User Group @ $8	$
Disks supplied by member @ $2	$
Club Use Only Receipt #: Mailed on: / /	**Total** $

Mail to: Amiga Users Group, PO Box 48, Boronia, 3155, Victoria.

Member's Name:

Address:

Application for membership of The Amiga Users Group Inc

Membership is $20 per year. Send your cheque to: **Amiga Users Group Inc, PO Box 48, Boronia, 3155**

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What services would you like AUG to provide: _____

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

Details on this side are optional

Year of birth: _____ Do you own an Amiga: _____

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Interests: _____

_____

_____

Dealer's Name: _____

Dealer's Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to abide by the rules of the Association for the time being in force.

Club Use Only	Date	Paid	Rcpt #	Memb #	Card Sent

Where is Victoria College Burwood Campus?

New members and visitors sometimes have trouble locating our meeting place the first time. Victoria College is on the North side of Burwood Highway, Burwood, just East of Elgar Road. Coming from the City, turn left at the first set of traffic lights after Elgar Road. Follow the road around past the football oval, over three or four traffic bumps to the car parking areas near the netball courts. Further up the road, to the left, you'll find Lecture Theatre 2.

If you have a Melways, try Map 61 B5.

AMIGA™ Users Group

P.O. Box 48, Boronia, 3155, Victoria, Australia

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