

Quadra Blues...

by Michael S. Bean

It was late one night, I had several reports to do, files to update and needed my Macintosh to perform these duties swiftly and neatly. I looked at the Quadra 700 sitting on the floor and wondered should I try to get my work done on this new ultra fast Machine from Apple Computer?

I first noticed that the traditional white box was now a grocery bag brown. Hey, what's the difference right? Besides it's better for the environment according to Apple. So we opened it up. If I had only known then that the brown bag was a sign of things to come I may have waited till things were a little slower.

I plugged the puppy in and let her run. The Quadra was hooked up to the appletalk cable, modem, and ready to run. Things went great! I ran Speedometer 3.0 just so I could see how fast it was. You have to have some facts to brag about, right? Speedometer 3.0 is a great Mac Speed tester by Scott Berfield and its available on the AMUG BBS.

Speedometer 3.0 ran like crazy on the Quadra 700 with results that indicated that Quadra had an overall speed of 12 times my steady Macintosh II. I was in awe over the speeds of the color contortions and the great graphic gyrations. I thought to myself this is great stuff but its time to get to work. This Quadra will make fast work of it.

Next, I hooked up the Gig drive to the SCSI port. The beautiful clear sound of the Quadra starting up now turned to alarm chimes and sad macs with error codes on a black screen. I thought to myself, no big deal. Probably SCSI ID problems or termination. I checked the ID's to find the Quadra at 0 and the Gig drive at 5. No problem there. Next, I added a pass through terminator to the Gig drive. It booted up fine.

I knew I had it under control now. Soon, I found that the Quadra would only boot in this fashion 1 in 10 times and that no matter how many terminators I used it never consistently worked. I found I could get both drives running by only turning the Gig drive on after the internal had booted and using SCSI Probe to mount it. This worked 65% of the time. Oh well, must be a loose gizmo right?

I thought, this a real pain but I can get it running. Next, I pulled out my Tops 3.1 upgrade that I had just ordered from Sitka. I have many programs that are necessary for my work which do not like System 7 yet. So, I run these programs with 6.0.7 machines. Tops allows me to network both 6.07 and 7.0.1, or at least I thought! Turns out Sitka forgot to tell me that 3.1 does not work with the Quadra or with CommTool box.

I called Sitka and asked when a Quadra fix would be in place. I was told that first quarter of 1992 was the target date and that until then Quad baby was land locked from mounting 6.0.7 machines. Bummer! I asked Sitka if they had a beta, even promised to test for them. The technician said, if you really want to know Apple reclaimed our Quadra so we have nothing to work with now. At this point I laughed at my situation and said goodbye.

Well, I thought I'll just get out my Excel spreadsheet with all my financial records in them and do some book keeping. Quadra said NO. Quadra would simply send Excel back to the finder each time it ran. I got on Applelink and went to the Microsoft board. Surely there must be a patch, right? Quadra said NO! I found, some other poor guy with the same problem without an answer as well.

Time to try Word 4.0. Quadra said NO! Again, back to the finder. I must admit it was one of the fastest returns to the finder I had experienced, but not exactly what I had in mind. At this point, I scratched my head and wondered if Microsoft and Apple had cut off relations. All I had left in the Microsoft arsenal was Works. I double clicked on Works and it ran like a champ. The irony I now faced was a supercomputer that only ran the low end software of the the leading Macintosh software developer.

It was clear to me by now, I would not be getting much done with Quad baby as my needed tools had an allergic reaction to 040 power. So, I thought lets see how this baby runs with more RAM. I opened the hood to see a beautiful clean new case. Far different from the dusty cubboards of my old Mac II. I looked for the RAM slots as I pulled open my 4 meg simm package to push the 20 meg limits.

As I looked for the memory slots, I could not easily find them. I then realized that in order to install any memory in the Quadra, even video RAM, you have to not only pull the hard drive, but the entire plastic hard drive container and drop the board out entirely. Taking this \$6,000 toy completely apart just to get at the memory slots just seemed to much. Why such poor planning? Any stable part of the board could have gone under the drive, I thought. Certainly, memory should be able to be put in without having to make a cross word puzzle out of the project. I gave up.

I then went to try my telecom Tools, AppleLink, America On-Line, all worked. I tried the slow and buggy Copernicus point software. To my surprise, it ran like a bat out of hell and compressed and decompressed packets faster than I had ever seen. It even seemed like a real program. I smiled. Some things did work.

Next, I tried a sound file program. The sound was awesome, but I had the control panel volume set to 2 and it was still too loud. Everyone was asleep in the house and the Mac sound grew louder and louder. I pushed the reset and it still grew louder. I pulled the plug and it still grew louder. Finally I screamed for help.....

Suddenly, I found myself sitting straight up in bed with the alarm clock cord in one hand and the LED clock swinging gently as it hit the bed side.

Was I dreaming or was this reality. I got up out of bed and kissed my dusty old Mac II screen. She looked better than ever. What a work horse I thought. Had my morning coffee then called the office and told purchasing to hold off on those Quadra orders for a few months. He said why. I told him Quadra said NO. I could tell he did not understand and said we would talk about it later.

Quadra had said NO just too many times.