The Newsletter of the Amiga Users of the Heartland Computer User Group

CHRONICLES

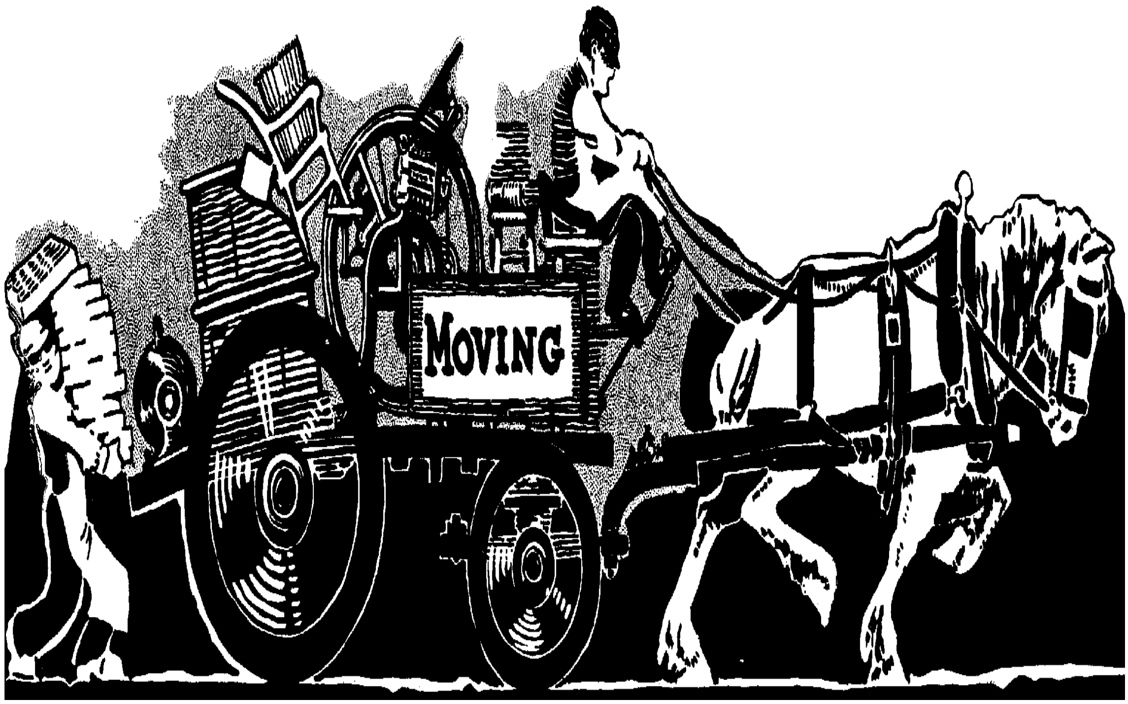
September 1994

Upcoming Events

October 18 - AUoH General meeting, 7:00 pm, see directions on back page

October 29 - Gateway Computer Show. See ad on page 11

November 1 - AUoH Exec meeting, 7:00 pm, Village Inn at 72nd and Mercy. Everybody is welcome to attend!



We've Moved!

The user group will no longer be meeting at the College of St. Mary but will now be meeting at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Milo Bail Student Center. The Student Center is located at 62nd and Dodge Street. The actual meeting will be in the Dodge Room. The Dodge room is on the third floor of the Student Center.

The easiest access to the third floor Dodge Room is from the northwest door of the Student Center building. Upon entering the building, use the stairs on your right, or go through the next set of doors and use the elevator on the right. Both sets of doors exit near the Dodge room. There will be signs up directing you to the Dodge room.

Parking is available at parking meters around the Student Center and Administration Building. Parking at the meters is free after 7:00 PM. Do not park in Reserved or Permit Parking Areas. Parking is also available in the Parking Garage southeast of the Student Center. See the map on the back page to get a better idea of where to park.

Amiga Users of the Heartland meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7PM. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

Amiga Users of the Heartland, Inc.

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Amiga Users of the Heartland, Inc. is a non-profit corporation established to promote the Commodore Amiga line of personal computers and advance the art of Amiga computing. Visitors are allowed two free visits to our meetings and membership is open to anyone for an annual fee of $25.00 U.S.

The Software Library of freely distributable material is maintained by **AUoH** for its members. **NOTE:** It is NOT the policy of **AUoH** to promote or encourage the illegal distribution of copyrighted software. Furthermore the club does NOT condone the theft of property known popularly as software "Piracy". Every effort is made to ensure that programs entering the club library are intended for free distribution. However in the event that a commercial program is mistakenly included, the librarian, upon notification, will immediately destroy all remaining copies. Club disks are provided for the personal use of club members only, and are NOT for resale. Fees charged by the club are for material costs only.

Submissions to the newsletter are encouraged, and are accepted from members and other sources alike. The group reserves all rights to materials received and to edit or refuse publication of any or all parts of any information submitted. Please submit all information on either an Amiga formatted disk (to be either given to any club officer or mail it to the group at the address listed at the bottom of this page) or telecommunicate it to *Larry's Hot Tub* BBS, 402-571-4316 (1:285/15).

Exchange of newsletters with other Amiga groups is encouraged. Unless otherwise noted on individual articles, permission is given for other non-profit groups to reprint portions of this newsletter (with proper attribution). Throughout this issue trademarked names are used. Rather than put a trademark symbol in every occurance of a trademarked name, we state that we are using the names only in an editorial fashion, and to the benefit of the trademark owner, with no intention of infringment of the trademark.

Local Omaha (402) Amiga BBS List

Name	Phone #	Max Speed	Software
Impact	345-7324	2400	C-Net
Amiga Barn #1	571-3843	2400	C-Net
Amiga Barn #2	571-3974	14400	C-Net
Amiga Spectrum	453-4510	28800	
Blue Silver	496-4325	2400	C-Net
Blue Silver	496-1489	14400	C-Net
Hideout	292-1591	16600 DS	
K-Line	292-8908	28800	
Larry's Hot Tub	571-4316	2400	Opus
Omaha AmigaNet #1	333-5110	14400	DLG Pro
Omaha AmigaNet #2	691-0104	14400 DS	DLG Pro

Have an addition/update for this list? Let an AUoH officer know!

Club Officers

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The Following Members have agreed to field questions regarding the area or program listed with their name. If you feel you have any experience or knowledge that might be useful to others in the group with either these topics or any other, please feel free to volunteer with any club officer at any group meeting.

Graphics		
OpalVision	Ron Cleveland	402-691-0801
Art Dept Pro	Ron Cleveland	402-691-0801
Word Processing		
WordPerfect	Eric Manley	402-895-7383
General		
CanDo	Ian Gunn	402-895-7898
Terminus	Greg Gerke	402-235-2499
Deluxe Music	Bob Dufford	402-280-2208
BridgeBoard	Mark Kenne	402-571-8975
Productivity		
PageStream	Greg Gerke	402-235-2499
Professional Page	Clete Baker	712-322-4514
SBase Pro	Mark Kenne	402-571-8975
ARexx	Mike Groshart	402-341-3957
Beginners Help		
	Clete Baker	712-322-4514
	Larry Zwart	402-571-1393
	Larry Lack	402-331-8697

SAS Drops Support of the SAS/C Compiler

(this text was retrieved from Usenet)

by Doug Walker
(walker@unx.sas.com)

I regret to announce that as of December 23, 1994, SAS Institute Inc. will terminate technical support for the SAS/C Development System for AmigaDOS. Development has already been suspended, and there are no plans to resume it.

The Amiga product has been fun, exciting, and challenging for those of us on the development and technical support teams. We have tried very hard to make the product succeed, but in the end it is a business venture and must make money if it is to survive. Our sales figures, both before and after the bankruptcy filing by Commodore International, demonstrate that the product can't support its quite substantial development and support costs.

I personally intend to continue reading the Amiga newsgroups, and I suspect Jim Cooper and Steve Krueger will also be around. However, we'll be reading and replying on our own time, so please don't expect too much. We have also created a new patch release (mostly on our own time) and will be releasing that before the end of the year.

The Institute plans continue selling the Amiga product until our stock is gone (and we have plenty right now), but we will make sure all purchasers realize that technical support will soon be dropped. Given the price drops from last summer, I think the compiler is still a good deal if you plan to develop code on the Amiga.

It's been a great eight years. For me, it's the end of an era. I wish the remaining Amiga developers the best of luck.

Little Red Riding Hood- The 90's version

(this text was retrieved from Usenet)

You all know the story of Little Red Riding Hood and how Grandma was eaten by the wolf and Little Red would have also had it not been for the courage of Jack the Woodcutter axing the wolf to shreds? And how Jack was the hero and the townsfolk all returned to their normal dull lives?

Well, the story has a new ending to more effectively reflect the times.

The town did not return to normal. An inquiry demanded by the Fair Treatment For Viscious Animals lobby determines that Jack had shown faulty judgement in not trying to talk to the wolf, or failing that, using minimum physical force to pin him to the floor and dialing 911 so police could read him his rights. Neither did Jack warn the Wolf, who was only armed with his teeth, that he was about to be shredded from head to toe with the axe.

Then a pathologist apeared on television and said the blow to the head had been delivered with unreasonable force.

It was further advanced by rights advocates that, though eating this old lady up may not have good form by human standards, it was the nature of wolves to do such things and therefore, could not have been an offense punishable under the criminal code. Also, it was noted that wolves, an endangered specie, were a persecuted minority picked on by members of majorities.

Social workers testified that the wolf came from a dysfunctional family, was a dropout,unable to find suitable work, and was disillusioned with society and government. Also, the wolf was 12 years old and would, had he lived to be charged, be protected by the Young Offenders Act.

This of course meant the wolf would walk.

Neighbours, who didn't like the old biddie Grandma because she always allowed her pet poodle to run around and dump on their lawns, told reporters with knowing leers that she had "nocturnal male visitors," including Jack. The result was that Jack was charged with second degree murder and interfering with wolves rights, and sentenced to 10 years, leaving his wife and 2 kiddies on the dole. One night, vigilantes burned their humble cabin to the ground.

Red Riding Hood wrote a book called "The Wolf and I," sold movie rights and bought a huge estate in the south of France.

The Grandmothers cottage became a tourist attraction where re-enactments were staged on the hour for tourists at ten dollars a ticket, children and seniors, half price.

Red's mother opened a souvenir shop selling knick-knacks like miniature axes, wolf tails, wolf whistles and Little Red Riding Hood hoods.

On the front lawn, is a larger-than-life granite statue, not of Jack the woodcutter, but of the wolf.

Proving once again that, as we all suspect, the bad guys are winning.

This article was taken from The CARP NEWS June 1994 written by Bob Hesketh. Hope you thought it was as funny as I did.

Dave Haynie on Operating Systems

(Ed. note: The below article was posted by Dave Haynie, currently employed by Scala, in the UseNet newsgroup comp.sys.amiga.hardware as a reply to a question about us all now having to buy Apple's. ;-) In his usual sedate and expert way, Dave addresses this question. The other person's questions are preceded by '>' signs)

> Is there some sort of a conspiracy
> going on? IBMs are a waste of
> energy, and everything else dying out.
> What is left? An Apple?

Unless something happens, and happens very soon, with the Amiga technology, you won't see any new Amigas. Even if the technology is bought, whoever gets it is going to be hard pressed to update things quickly enough. My personal opinion: they need to open it up. If any 3rd party can license Amiga chips and/or the AmigaOS for a fair price (something in keeping with similar pricing in the PClone industry), there's some chance an Amiga market will re-emerge and start to grow. Without that, you're going to need a new owner with very deep pockets.

That's from an overall system view, of course. I'm not saying the new Amiga company would be clueless. Greg Berlin is still there, and ready as ever to move forward with 68060 technology, some of which has been in the works for quite some time. Software updates and something beyond AA would be much longer in development.

OTHER HARDWARE

As for the other systems, your choice is gradually moving toward one of Operating System, primarily, and CPU, secondarily. The hardware on modern PClones is getting good, and cheap. Ignore, for the moment, the ugliness hidden down in the 80x86 and ISA bus architecture. What you have left is a PCI based system, which is exactly where the Amiga was headed. I won't pretend that these systems are as good as what I had planned, but they're better, hardware-wise, than existing Amigas, for many applications. The ISA bus is brain damaged, but it's no worse than things like the internal 8520 bus you have in every Amiga. As long as you have PCI, you treat ISA as "the place for slow, dumb peripheral chips" and it doesn't look so bad. You load up on that when you put the system together, get it all to work together (via jumpers and, hopefully, an expert or a good book on the ISA bus).

PCI is a very good bus, it's designed specifically for building modular, high-performance computers at a low cost. I designed my own bus for this at Amiga, but scrapped it when I got a PCI bus spec. PCI offered the same range of performance, slightly better CPU independence, and something you can't design into any bus: industry acceptance. Which translates to low costs.

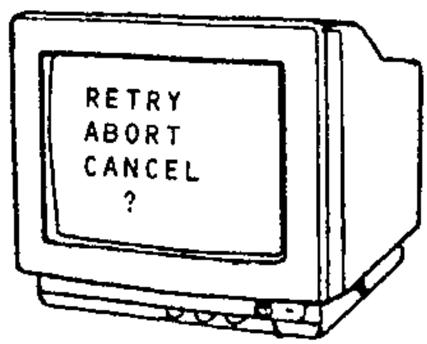
The next big push in the PClone industry seems to be standardization of the "passive PCI architecture". All this means is that, today, the PCI bus controller is right where the EISA or ISA bus controller was a few years ago in the PClone design -- it sits in a chip or two that are designed as general PC system glue. So, while PCI doesn't mandate any specific "host" processor or any processor dependence, most of the PCI chipsets capable of motherboard control out there hook directly to a Pentium or '486. What you eventually want (and what we were planning at Amiga) is a motherboard that controls all of the PCI stuff without a CPU in place. That way, you can add the CPU of choice just like any other PCI card. Several, if your software can deal with that.

Apple has announced their move to PCI on the next generation PowerMacs. That's a reasonable thing to do, and they really don't have a choice, since pretty much every other PC and Workstation vendor, except Sun, is doing something with PCI. The main problem with Apple is that, despite all their previous problems with being "proprietary", all their evidence that software vendors make more money than hardware vendors, etc. they don't want to give up being proprietary. While they have jumped into this PowerPC thing with IBM, they are balking the "reference platform" architecture that IBM, Motorola, and everyone else is standardizing on. The reason the PClones did so well, more than anything else, was that everyone copied the IBM machines down to the finest detail, so every system was hardware compatible. Sure, it was a bad specification, IBM never sat down to think this stuff through. But regardless, like the ISA bus, it became a standard. Now IBM, Motorola, and others are sitting down to establish a similar hardware/firmware standard for PowerPC machines. Only Apple is rocking the boat. While they may claim it's over technical details, don't believe it. They really aren't prepared to be open. That should scare you away from their hardware. And the reason for that is SOFTWARE.

OTHER SOFTWARE

I'll state off the bat that I haven't found anything I like as much as the Amiga OS. And that, if you liked the Amiga OS, the big three, MS-DOS, Windows, and MacOS will probably send you screaming from any new computer in record time. Ignoring MS-DOS (which is on the way out), you have today's Windows and MacOS, both of which are severely flawed. Both companies run "cooperative multitaking", which is probably OK if you're just trying to keep that wordprocessor going while you look for a file or check something on your scheduling program. But it's not what you do on the Amiga, especially if you're a ray tracing geek, or doing anything else that's pounding hardware and CPU cycles very heavily. Both OSs are full of 1970's technology, with some nice bits of modern stuff (some you can't get on the Amiga) thrown on top.

Windows will fighten you for many reasons. It can seem fast at times (its usually running on hardware much faster than the Amiga or Mac you're using, but it need it), while at other times it goes to sleep. Lots of neat CD-ROM games are out for it, and that, or little 180x90 movies, are what Windows people call "multimedia". It's not what you think of on as The M Word on the Amiga. Video, schmideo. Render it offline, you have big hard disk. Another spooky think about Windows is a bit harder to define. It kind of hits you when you realize just how Windows sits on top of MS-DOS. Like, every program you see on the Windows "Program Manager" is kind of a magic trick. They don't really exist, at least, not the way you see them. After all, underneath is MS-DOS, with 8.3 filenames. You can go to the "File manager" to see what's really on the hard disk. Anything with a ".GRP" extension is probably a magic Windows file that sets up a "program group", which is the thing that looks like a directory, but isn't, when you're in the "Program Manager". Got it? Supposedly in Windows 4.0 you'll have a normal correspondence between what you see on the "desktop" and what's in your filesystem, like Amiga, Mac, UNIX, OS/2, etc. does now (yes, most of these can mess with this correspondence, via links, special icon types, program objects, etc. But they're never as spooky, at least to me). Windows 3.1 also crashes alot, at least in my experiences. And that's just using tools, not developing.



The Mac OS has its own spookiness. The windowing system is certainly slicker than that of Windows. Of course, it better be, since ordinary mortals don't get a command-line interface for the Mac (developers do, after a fashion). The thing that scared me the most about the Mac OS (aside from frequent crashes, though maybe I got unlucky here too), was just how they got the windowing to go so slow. Even on fast machines, it's unnerving. The last Quadra I placed with made my old SparcStation IPC (SunOS UNIX and X Windows) seem snappy. Macs also seem to have the slowest hard disks around, though maybe the newer ones are finally learning about DMA. Or at least good PIO, like some of the better IDEs tend to be.

Of course, you aren't locked into these OSs, especially if you have a PClone. UNIX is one alternative, especially if you're the hacker type and don't care too much about large company support. You can get Linunx, a net-supported UNIX clone, for free by download, or for about $40.00 on a read-to-run CD-ROM. I played with this, it seems to be as real a UNIX as anything else today. Just about any UNIX/X code you get off the net should compile, and of course all compilers and such, TCP/IP, GNU, etc. come with it.

I got OS/2 for my PClone at home, and now we're using this as the standard development system OS at Scala too. Again, the price was right: it was about $30.00 on CD-ROM, when sold as OS/2 for Windows, since IBM didn't have to pay off Microsoft. OS/2 doesn't feel much like AmigaOS, but it has many of the things about AmigaOS they everyone likes. It's a real multitaking OS with its set of quirks, but prehaps, like AmigaOS, less arcane than UNIX. It has a fairly decent windowing system, and some pretty cool object-oriented GUI stuff in the "Workplace Shell" (the Workbench analog). You can have multiple OS/2 shells up, though they suffer from the "terminal emulation" nonsense that you'll find with MS-DOS, Windows, etc. -- you can't arbitrarily resize them like you can in AmigaOS and UNIX/X. At least the supplied shells; there's no reason to believe an Amiga-like shell would be a big deal. There's lots of PD support for OS/2, mainly because, like the Amiga early on, it attracted lots of hacker types who were sick of the mainstream stuff. Most of the OS/2 system these days is running 32-bit code, unlike the predominant 16-bit code that makes up Windows. You can find commercial applications for OS/2, but they're much less common than those for Windows or the Mac. You can run Windows and MS-DOS applications under OS/2. MS-DOS programs work much better than under Windows, and some Windows programs work well enough to fool you into thinking they're OS/2 programs. On the other hand, some Windows programs can crash OS/2, something you're not likely to see happening in native OS/2 apps, even when developing code.

> Was the fall of commodore some
> weird conspiracy....

Who's to say. It's clear that it was either planned that way or one of the greatest moron-fests of all time. The handwriting was on the wall back in 1991, and yet nothing was done to stop it. It was very clear to those of us involved just how to stop it, and many things were tried. At every turn, defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory.

But I digress. I made a video to explain some of that nonsense :-)

> The Amiga is powerful and cheap.
> Do we need to be rich to have this
> power?

You do need lots more memory to run any of the OSs I mentioned above. OS/2 is livable with 12MB, but really wants 16MB or more. I would recommend that for the MacOS, most UNIXs, and Windows as well. I have 16MB on my A3000, 8MB on my A3000+, and rarely use more than 6MB when going full out.

Dave Haynie
(dave.haynie@scala.com)

Software Review: TurboCalc v2.0

(this text was retrieved from Usenet)

by Michael Cox
(mcox@access.digest.net)

PRODUCT NAME

TurboCalc version 2.0

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

TurboCalc V2.0 (referred to as TC2) is a spreadsheet program similar to the MSDOS/Windows programs Lotus 1-2-3 and Microsoft Excel. For those that are familiar with Excel, you will find TC2 very easy to use.

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LIST PRICE

I paid $115 (US) for this product. The only place to find it in the USA, as far as I know, is from Amiga Library Services.

SPECIAL HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

HARDWARE

512K RAM is required. 1 MB RAM is recommended.

Space required on hard disk can be 1 MB or less, depending on whether you copy over all the example spreadsheets and the help file.

It works very well on my 68030 50MHz CPU and 50MHz FPU. An accelerator or FPU is not required nor even mentioned as a recommendation.

SOFTWARE

Will work on AmigaDOS 1.2 and higher. I have had absolutely no problems with it on my AmigaDOS 3.0 Amiga 1200.

COPY PROTECTION

None as far as I know. It does ask you for your serial number from the diskette label, however, and appears to save it somewhere on the disk, but you are never bothered by it again.

Can be installed on a hard disk just by dragging and dropping the drawer from the diskette onto the hard disk.

MACHINES USED FOR TESTING

Amiga 1200, 4 MB Fast RAM, 2 MB Chip RAM
465 MB hard disk (120 MB internal, 345 XDS IDE external)
Paravision 1230XA 50/50 accelerator
Commodore 1084 monitor
AmigaDOS 3.0

Amiga 500, 1 MB Chip RAM, 4 MB Fast RAM
46 MB TrumpCard 500 hard disk
Commodore 1084 monitor
AmigaDOS 1.3

INSTALLATION

The installation is EXTREMELY simple. If you have a floppy-only system, just make a backup copy and a blank disk for your spreadsheets. For hard disk owners, just double click on the TurboCalc disk icon, then drag and drop the TurboCalc drawer onto your hard disk. That's all there is to it!

THE BASICS

For those who are not familiar with what a spreadsheet is, here is a simple explanation. A spreadsheet program is just like a word processing program, EXCEPT that instead of manipulating letters and words, you will manipulate numeric information. You can also enter text, but it is usually limited to labeling what a column or row of numbers or formulas are.

A spreadsheet looks like a grid or table with columns labeled by letters and rows labeled by numbers. You can pinpoint a specific spot in the spreadsheet, termed a "cell," using the row and column labels as coordinates. For example, cell A5 is found in the first column (A) and the fifth (5) row.

REVIEW

The TC2 user interface is very intuitive and includes a toolbar for the most commonly used commands. I have heard from users of the demo version, available on Aminet, that it does not follow the Commodore guidelines. I do not really know if this is true as I have not read the Style Guide. All I know is that it is very similar to Microsoft Excel and it is very easy to use.

TC2 provides well over 100 functions that provide mathematical, boolean, text, financial, and other commands. Some of the math functions supported are ABS, ARC COS, ARC SIN, COS, SIN, and others. The financial functions let you calculate things such as interest rate, loan payments, and others.

The look of the sheet is entirely formattable. You can change the look of a cell so it looks 3D-like, change fonts, colors, and row and column dimensions.

What would a spreadsheet be without graphs? The common types are supported (bar, histogram, line, piechart). Once you make a graph, you can output it as an IFF file or print it on any printer that supports graphics.

Database functionality is also supported. A database, in spreadsheet terms, allows you to manipulate numeric data that can be sorted, searched, deleted, and copied. In addition, you can query this data using the above mentioned formulas. The database is kept in the spreadsheet and is just a selection of cells that you define as being a Database Range. This is useful, for instance, for keeping company data (profit margins, FEE, G&A, etc.) in one section of the spreadsheet while your formulas are in another and they reference the information in the defined range.

Finally, one of the nicest features is the support of macros and ARexx. Fortunately, you can record your macros so you can make repetitive operations easy to do. It has an ARexx port and gives some example scripts to help you out. I have not fully examined the ARexx capabilities, but all of the examples worked fine.

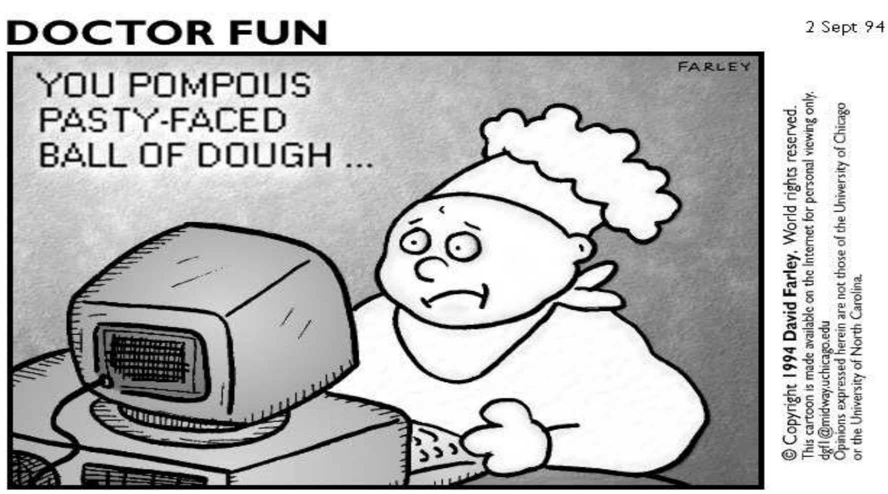
Another great feature of the TC2 package is that example spreadsheets are included. These sheets cover the basics, formulas, databases, charts, etc. So, if you ever have questions about how certain things work, you have actual working examples at your fingertips.

DOCUMENTATION

The manual is very well written and consists only of 191 pages, which includes contents, index, and several helpful appendices. As it was originally written in German, the English translation is very proper-sounding, but it causes no problems in understanding. Also, you will sometimes see decimal numbers written in the European style with a comma instead of a decimal point, "130,00".

The manual begins with a tutorial and is very easy to follow. Even if you are a beginner in spreadsheets, this tutorial will bring you up to speed on the basics. As a matter of fact, the manual is designed linearly so that you can start from the beginning of the manual and learn all of the program's capabilities as you go through each chapter.

The chapters are separated into areas of functionality. After the tutorial, inputting of data and formulas is explained. This is then followed by how charts are created, the macro/ARexx commands, menus and toolbars, and it is finished by a listing and explanation of all the built-in functions that can be used in formulas.



The Pillsbury Doughboy gets flamed on Usenet

The appendices cover error messages and provide tips on improving printouts.

LIKES

I love this program because it is so much like Excel which I use at work. It also imports SYLK very nicely and almost perfectly. Most importantly, though, is that I faxed them with the question "Do you still support TC2?" A couple of days later, I received a reply saying yes and that they were interested in hearing about my suggestions for the next version. Their email address will be used for support, too.

DISLIKES AND SUGGESTIONS

The only real problem is that not all of the formats of a cell's borders are imported. I am not sure if it is caused by TurboCalc or if it is a limitation of the SYLK format. The only suggestion that I would have to improve this program is to abandon AmigaDOS 1.3 and go to 2.0+ only.

BUGS

None showed their faces to me!

VENDOR SUPPORT

As I said above, they are supporting their product and are looking for suggestions on improving it for TurboCalc V3.0. Fax or email them with any requests.

CONCLUSIONS

This is an excellent product. It is being supported, which is a very important factor these days. If you need a spreadsheet program to balance your checkbook or track your results in the office football pool, this is the one to get!

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Recycling Obsolete Disks and Manuals

(this text was retrieved from TidBITS #242. Send email to: info@tidbits.com for more information on getting on the mailing list and more)

Kudos to GreenDisk, a company that recycles obsolete floppy disks and manuals to make fresh floppy disks, which Craig O'Donnell (dadadata@world.std.com) recently brought to our attention. Craig writes, "These recycled diskettes come from big-league software publishers who need to ditch last year's upgrade package or unsold inventory. The diskettes themselves - some 12 million last year - adhere to the high quality standards of major software publishers like Aldus and WordPerfect. The GreenDisk company claims that 98.9% of all materials it receives from publishers (including those hefty manuals and that slick packaging) is recycled. The diskettes are erased, relabeled with recycled-paper labels, and resold under the brand name GreenDisk. Egghead Software sells GreenDisks by catalog and vouches for their quality."

GreenDisk -- 206/489-2550

Notes From The 'Veep

by Kevin Smotherman

Where's that low-down, good for nothing, worthless, shifty-eyed, sorry-we-ever-elected him VEEP been, anyway? I don't know, I think Quayle went back to his Ivy-league stomping grounds.

But I'd like to apologize for my haitus. I went on a two-week vacation at the beginning of August, immediately followed by a two-week business stint in New York. And as some of you may know, I do quite a bit of bicycling during the warmer months, and AFTER I got back from New York I was involved in a minor traffic altercation that resulted in a broken left clavical and 5 broken ribs. And to top that off, I'm picking up on an old programming project on my Amiga that has been sucking up most of my spare time. Oh yea, AND my dog ate my last article submission. With all of that said, I do plan on making the next AUoH meeting, so hope to see you there!

Back to business. You guys stopped in at Amicom yet? Friendly folks. Knowledgeable staff. Lots of cool Amiga stuff. Hardware you can actually sit in front of. What more do you need? I've already had Bo scrounge me up a DataFlyer XDS external IDE case for my 1200, and I couldn't be happier. Well, I probably will be once I get my CD-ROM, which Bo at Amicom is also locating for me. Once I have that puppy, I think I'll be fairly maxed out on my 1200 and may have to starting shopping for a 4000. I've got my GVP 1230 Turbo (40 Mhz 68030 with a 40 Mhz FPU and 4MB 32-bit RAM), an internal 85 MB Maxtor hard drive, the new DataFlyer XDS external chassis with a 340 MB Western Digital harddrive in it, a GVP 8-bit audio sampler that takes turns plugging into the parallel port with my Panasonic 24 pin printer (that parallel port must be in promiscuous mode), my old but trusty 9600 baud Hayes Smartmodem, and last and certainly least, that battery-backed clock thingy from some manufacturer or other. A true weenie system if ever there was one, but I gotta buy my computers a piece at a time, for financial reasons. So I started with a bare 1200 and before long, well, you see the result! And all my new stuff will be coming from Amicom (and that's a promise, Bo).

And speaking of new local businesses, you are ALL going to buy stuff there, right? I mean, if you had some kind of Amiga thing you wanted you WILL be buying it there, right? Let's not just stop by to talk Amiga and look at stuff, and then order it through the mail. Yes, you save (usually) sales tax. Yes, it CAN be just a bit cheaper. But I think that buying it local from a fellow Amiga supporter and having home-town and grown support makes it worth the extra buck or two. I've heard people lament over Commodore's questionable marketing policies, but if we don't support the local retailers who carry Commodore products, who is really to blame?

Here's a random, stray thought, unapproved or sanctioned by any official of AUoH (other than my self, just at this moment). Would anybody out there like to see some type of 'lifetime membership' to AUoH? I mean, you pay, say, 10 years worth of dues at the going rate up front, and you get a lifetime membership. The club does depend on a steady source of income yearly from renewals, but with lifetime memberships they might get an influx of ready cash now. Most members would probably still go with the yearly membership, but who knows? It would save some members that hassle of forgetting when their membership expires only to remember when they suddenly wonder what happened to their issue of the newsletter. Oh, I don't know, say someone like ME. That's right, your VEEP has suddenly remembered that his membership expired at the end of August! Am I still VEEP? Does this count as an automatic IMPEACHMENT? (Dream on, buddy. You're STUCK WHERE YOU ARE! --Greg :) Honest, I'll pay up at the next meeting! I'm good for it! I just FORGOT, OK? [whine mode disabled]. I have another blatant misuse of my VEEPresidential powers that I've been meaning to get around to, so with Gerke shouting over my shoulder "You can't stop now, I need at least 750 more words to round out the issue!" now is as good a time as any: Anybody out there into raytracing? I have a need for some raytraced backdrops and rather than fumble around in the dark myself, maybe someone out there would like to help. The pay stinks, simply a mention in the docs and on the ego screen, but maybe just for the challenge of it? Look me up at the next meeting.

I just counted, and I have used the term 'out there' three times so far, just in this article. What does 'out there' mean, anyway? Who ARE you people?

Introduce yourself to me and tell me a little about yourselves and what you use your Amiga for. Or else... or else at the next meeting we'll pretend we're in third grade and I'll make everyone stand up and introduce themselves. Don't be shy - I use my Amiga for everything I can think of - fiddling around with graphics, playing those cool MOD and MED files, programming. And, oh, yea, GAMES! I just love to play mindless, money-wasting, oft-times-frustrating GAMES. You don't know where I could find any, do you? Games, I mean. I'll pay. Cash. No questions asked. AGA preferred. But I've done this bit before (quick - scramble for your back-issues - I know you save them) so I'll move on.

But move on to what? Can you tell that I just sit down at the word processor and start typing? Just pick a direction, no particular direction, mind you, and start rambling. It helps if you don't care what others think of you or your writing abilities, as I don't. Is this turning into a plea for article submissions from the general consintuency? I guess it is, or has if you prefer.

Some people actually pay, money, hard-earned dollars to have someone listen to them drone on and on. 'Therapy', I think they call it. Not me - I have you people.

I feel better now.

'Nuff said.

As the Editor Mumbles...

by Greg Gerke

Thoughts

Well True Believers, there's still no solid news on who's bought Commodore. Sure, there's plenty of rumors to go around but nothing that can be called "solid". Alex Amor (President of CEI) has been in the news quite a bit lately. He has done online conferences on both BIX and Portal concerning how the fate of Commodore and his company are intertwined. Alex (may I call him Alex? :) says that we won't hear anything final about the sale until the end of October. When asked about that's what we've been hearing since June ("Just two to three more weeks") he says that whatever else you've heard about a deadline is just rumor. As I say, plenty of rumors. If you haven't already, in the latest issue of Amiga Report (V2.28) there is a huge article on the Portal interview with Alex getting grilled from a number of Amiga folks. In my eyes, the guy comes off as a pretty easy going, personable guy.

A couple of things from the interview that I liked seeing:

- Alex actually *uses* an Amiga!

- He seems to tell it straight without any doubletalk (ie not going to be any Amigas by Christmas. The news isn't good but at least it's honest). He also didn't seem to try to talk up about stuff he doesn't know about.

- He says he realizes why Commodore went down the toilet and how he wants to change it.

- In the article he talks and seems to understand that he knows what a great asset the existing Amiga user owner is.

All in all a positive interview. And better yet, if the end of October comes along and a final decision is actually made we'll know if he's telling us honestly what he knows. Not that I have any inherent mistrust of people in upper management... :)

What, Another Thought?

After the AUoH Executive meeting earlier this month I met my cousin (hey Jon!) at the Macintosh User Group meeting (undercover, of course. And that trench coat got darn warm after pretty quick too :) down at the Peter Keiwet Conference Center. I didn't know what to expect for another user group's meeting since it'd been many, many years since I've been to a non-AUoH user group meeting. Anyway, I got there at what turned out to be the midway break point for their meeting. I didn't take a head count but I'm sure there wasn't as many people for that meeting than there normally are for one of our meetings. I don't know what happened up until that point but it was an interesting experience for the time that I was there. I saw no less than six (six!) different demos of various pieces of commercial and shareware software given by six different people. Each demo was at most only five to ten minutes long but it was just enough to get the idea of what the program did and what it looked like. This continued on for a bit after which time there was a brief "Apple in the News" segment where one guy got up and talked about what Apple was doing (more on this in a sec) and what's happening in their market. It all finished up around 9:30 or so.

Folks, I've got to tell you, this is closer to how our group should be running rather than how it is now. With many people actually taking the time to show off some little piece of software rather than the same people showing off their new stuff every month it made for a livelier presentation. Now, I realize that the state that Commodore is in now makes for some gloomy times, but HEY! With the number of dedicatd Amiga people that WE have in the group it should be just as easy to put on a better meeting than those miserable Mac people did! :) Now let me shuffle down off my soap box before I get a nose bleed from my high, saintly position.

Anyway, one thing that was mentioned at the Mac meeting that I thought was kind of cool was that Apple recently gave away ten top of the line PowerMac systems to ten different people that have contributed to the Mac community in some way. One of those people was a guy by the name of John Norstad. Among the pieces of freeware that he's written are a virus detector/killer and a newsreader program. These two programs are top of the line, professionally done items. From the report at the Mac meeting, the package just showed up on his doorstep one day with a letter explaining what it was and why he got the machine.

What does this have to do with anything on the Amiga? Not a darn thing. But I do believe it is the kind of goodwill gesture that the new Commodore could use to relay some appreciation to those people that consistantly write good programs for the use (and abuse) of all the rest of us. And the new Commodore (who from the Amiga Report is going with the name "Amiga Technologies International") is going to need tons of good will to get the user community behind them.

New Stuff

I recently got an ad from Walnut Creek, the folks that sell CD-ROMs of various types and purposes. One thing that I keep my eye out for is clipart (I'm sure you can guess why :). Anyway, listed in the brochure is a disk called "Clip Art Cornucopia" listed for $39.95. The description says it has 5050 black and white clipart images. In actuality there are only 2,525 images but in two different formats. All the CD-ROM's that I've seen use this ploy of having the image in two different formats (in this case the pictures are in .PCX (PC Paintbrush and .WPG (WordPerfect Graphics) formats). I guess not everybody's program converts on the fly a certain image. Anyway, it looked pretty interesting so I called the good folks down at CDROM World down in Lincoln and asked if they had it in stock. They not only had it in stock but were selling it for $12.00! Now, I dunno about you but I'm more than willing to pop for twelve bucks to get a disk like this to try out. So after giving them my credit card number and a small shipping fee the disc was delivered to my door and waiting for me to spin it up. If you have a need for clip art of this kind and have a CD-ROM drive I can't recommend enough getting this disk! Tons of nice pics separated and grouped into directories. In each directory you'll find a catalog of the pictures for that directory. All you'd have to do is print out the catalog for a quick reference of the whole disk and you're ready to fly. This is a nice disk to have.

I don't have the phone number handy for CDROM World handy but I'm sure they'll be at the upcoming St. Cecilia's Computer Faire and Swap Meet on Saturday, November 5th at 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Man, talk about giving a freebie plug! :)

For those of you that read AmigaWorld you might have noticed the ad from Digital Creations for their paint program "Brilliance". Sure, you've seen these ads before but there's a twist in this ad. For the low, low price of $49.95 you can upgrade your current paint program to the latest version of Brilliance. So for you folks that are still using Deluxe Paint I or Aegis Animator and you have the manual this is your chance!

I made the call last Thursday myself. And yes, they do ask you for what paint package you're using now so have that manual handy. Is it going to be a good deal? Well, I've heard that it's a darn nice package so I'm hoping it'll be worth the money.

Sim City 2000 for the Amiga

I've been in contact with a gentlemen from Maxis, the folks that make a number of simulators such as SimCity, SimCity 2000, SimLife, SimFarm, etc, etc. You get the idea. You're given a blank slate (in the case of SimCity 2000 (called SC2K from here on end) you start with a large acreage of land) and you design a city around it. SC2K isn't quite as intense as something like "The Settlers" but still it's more enjoyable and quite a bit more time consuming than I would have believed when I first played it. I know I've consumed many hours designing cities. For those cities that you don't like there's an option to have a disaster visit your fine town. My favorite is the alien that shows up and destroys everything.

But I digress.

Anyway, the guy that I've been talking to, Chris Weiss (cweiss@maxis.com) informs me that SC2K for the Amiga should be coming out some time in November. I'm personally looking forward to it since I just love playing this silly thing. It's probably just a passing phase but the game is pretty much the only reason I'll touch an MS-DOS machine without cringing. If/when it comes out I'll be sure to snag it and let you know how the conversion to the true computing power went.

Gateway Computer Show

This October 29th is the Gateway Computer Show in St. Louis. Since this is the only Amiga show in North America (as far as I'm aware) this year it should be the Amiga event of the year. This show will have various vendors and others that do work related with the Amiga. There will also be classes on desktop publishing, desktop video, animation & graphics, and Arexx. I'd like to be able to go to this show but due to prior obligations... sigh. If somebody from the group is able to go to the show please do me a favor. Take along a camera, take some pictures and keep a log of what you see and what you find out. And grab every freebie that comes along. Don't be embarrassed if people look at you funny taking pictures. Tell them you're a reporter for an Amiga trade journal and they'll leave you alone. Once you get back let me borrow the pictures and give me a quick report. The rest of us will thank for the info!

A New Look

Hopefully you noticed that something looked a bit different on the front page this month. After the underwhelming response I got from the AUoH conference on Fidonet where I asked about a mini-contest to name the newsletter I went ahead with my choice. I hope you all like the change. I'll be changing the rest of the newsletter gradually over the next couple of months (you wouldn't believe how many revisions I made just for the cover page) just 'cause I think the look of the newsletter is due for a change.

Closing Thoughts

That's about it for this month. Hopefully we'll know the final fate of Commodore by this time next month and will be able to know what the future of our favorite machine will be. I'm afraid all these proceedings may have gone on too long already and it's going to take a bunch of money and alot of work to get things back on track. The new owners are going to have an uphill battle. I'm still sticking with my Amiga not just because it's as comfortable as wearing a warm, terrycloth robe but in my eyes it still beats the pants off of the other platforms out there.

Dusting the Library Shelves

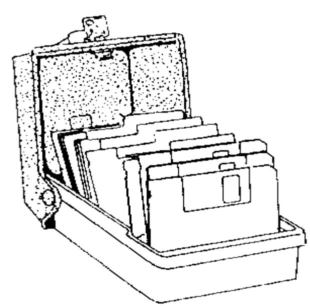
by Mark Wegener

Well here it is October and still no word on the fate of the Amiga, Oh well, I'm kind of getting used to this by now "And the news IS wait another two to three weeks!" We are moving to a brand new meeting place and I myself think it's for the best, as long as we keep meeting! Most of you are to the point where you are saying "Maybe I should go out and buy a clone" and some of our members have sadly enough. But three things I think you should take into consideration

number one: Just because the big C= is out of business doesn't mean your computer is any 'less' functional than it was before the bankruptcy. I think about it when is the last program than you bought that was made by Commodore. Or the last (I don't know) three peripherals you've bought for your Amiga were they made by C=.

Now granted at one time a great deal of stuff was made by Commodore a while back but really now the best computer support comes from third party developers (GVP, NewTek, Electronic arts etc...). Even most (if not all) shareware that's been produced in the last couple of years has been better than the best Commodore programs put out in their History.

Number Two: Even if they don't admit it, people who have 'upgraded (haha)' to a PC they still regret giving up their Amiga. I know of at least 10 people who have done this, in my opinion one of



the silliest mistakes of their lives, and then constantly scream at me over the phone desperately wanting their Amiga back, I can't help but sit back and gloat.

Number Three: This of course is THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT, you have a wonderful support system in the user group. Hardware and Software knowledge, people who have their finger on the pulse of the internet, Amiga files as well as information on the future of Amiga development.

And last but not least a GREAT File library with the newest demos, utilities, graphics, animations, tools, tutorials, communications programs and more:)
So with the Christmas season almost upon us let us see how many people like lemmings run to 'Best Buy' to snatch up all those inferior machines, not because they ave a use for one, but because they think they have to have one in their house for one reason or another.

Anyway on with the show:

Greg's Favorite Downloads - October '94 (1 of 2)

AmiCDROM-1.14.lha : Device driver for CD-ROM drives
AmigaWorkStation-1.4.lha : Display system information during booting
Bview_110.lha : Another IFF viewer with some nice features
CacheFont11.lha : Speeds font access
DefaultIcon2.3.lha : Eases use of the workbench for files w/o .info
Director14.lha : Create macros with keyboard & mouse movements
PostScriptDT390.lha : Postscript datatype
ProxWatch12.lha : Put a small clock in your title bar
Remind1.41.lha : Nice reminder program
SnoopDos30.lha : Essential tool for watching AmigaDOS
tin122.lha : Port of a popular Usenet News reader to the Amiga

Greg's Favorite Downloads - October '94 (2 of 2)

Spot13.lha : Very nice Fidonet message reader
Spot13pch.lha : Patch to Spot 1.3 for those without AmigaDOS 3.x
uuxt30b.lha : UUencode/decode text for mailing binary files
TrapListPrefs1_1.lha : Easily edit your TrapList settings
TrapPrefs1_3.lha : Easily edit your TrapDoor settings

DeliTracker 2.0 Mod Player and more Plays virtually any sound/music file you can think of even 32bit, .wav files, on screen decompression, and the ability to play files directly from Fast memory, too many features to mention here for a better description see last months copy of Amazing Computing:)

DeskTop Magic Demo: The first commercial modular screen blanker for the Amiga! Really excellent demo contains quite a few modules for experimenting with as well a sounds that can be integrated with the blanking process VERY NEAT A 'HAVE TO HAVE'

I will be doing a number of demonstrations of library disks over the last couple of months so remember club disks are still three bucks or you can always call ahead and have them ready for you before the meeting :)

If Operating Systems Ran Airlines

(this text was retrieved from Fidonet)

DOS Airlines

Everybody pushes the airplane until it glides, then jumps on and let the plane coast until it hits the ground again, then push again, jump on again and so on.

DOS with QEMM Airlines

The same thing but with more leg room to push.

MAC Airlines

All the stewards, stewardesses, captains, baggage handlers and ticket agents look the same, act the same and talk the same. Every time you ask questions about details, you are told you don't need to know, don't want to know, and everything will be done for you without you having to know, so just shut up.

OS/2 Airlines

To board the plane, you have your ticket stamped 10 different times by standing in 10 different lines. Then you fill out a form showing where you want to sit and whether it should look and feel like an ocean liner, a passenger train, or a bus. If you succeed in getting on board the plane and the plane succeeds in getting off the ground, you have a wonderful trip . . . except times when the rudder and flaps get frozen in position, in which case you have time to say your prayers and get yourself prepared before the crash.

WINDOWS Airlines

The airport terminal is nice and colourful, with friendly stewards and stewardesses, easy access to the plane, and an uneventful takeoff . . . then the plane blows up without warning whatsoever.

NT Airlines

Everyone marches out on the runway, says the password in unison and forms the outline of a plane. Then they all sit down and make a whooshing sound like they're flying through the vapor.

UNIX Airlines

Everyone brings one piece of the plane with them when they come to the airport. They all go out on the runway and put the plane together piece by piece, arguing constantly about what kind of plane they are building.

CPM Airlines

No movies, no stewards, no barfbags, no seats, no copilot. You fly it yourself. It gets you there and very seldom crashes.

Amiga Airlines

Soon to be grounded, airport terminal is nice and colorful, with friendly stewards and stewardesses, easy access to the plane, an uneventful takeoff. For the more adventurous: travelers can travel on multiple planes and visit multiple destinations all at the same time. During these multiple plane trips the user can even take a side trip on Mac, DOS, Unix, or Windows airlines. But when you disembark, you find you never got anywhere.

VMS Airlines

You buy the ticket. Then they make you pay again for a boarding pass, pay again for a seat, pay again to take off, pay again for a barfbag, pay again for the loo, when it crashes you pay again for the exit slide.

MPE Airlines

It's a little difficult to get a ticket because you have to sign up for the right plane, specify you want a seat to sit in, identify each piece of baggage and list it on your ticket, and once you enter the plane you may never see the same steward/ess twice. However, once the plane takes off, the ride is exceptionally smooth and usually on-time, unless you cross a timezone (this results in your being placed in a holding pattern for 1 hour until the plane's clock and the local clocks are synchronized). Should the unthinkable happen and your flight ends in a crash, you will be magically whisked back to the origin of the flight where you will be placed on the next plane out.

MVS Airlines

Old planes with one big engine. You sit backwards in your seat. You wait for hours to take off and 90% of the time you crash and burn. Costs 10 times as much as any other airline.