

DUP_MAR

Dark Unicorn Productions

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	<i>TITLE :</i> DUP_MAR		
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WRITTEN BY	Dark Unicorn Productions	August 10, 2024	

REVISION HISTORY

NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

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Chapter 1

DUP_MAR

1.1 Dark Unicorn Dispatch Newsletter

The Dark Unicorn Dispatch - April Edition
"An Entertaining and Informative Look Into The Amiga and CD32"

Let's~Rock~and~Roll!

View~The~Logo

Dark Unicorn Production's Headquarters - TOMBSTONE BBS (803) 863-0313 24
Hrs - 28.8K Baud - Latest Amiga Shareware - Commodore News - Cheats
DUP Products Are ALWAYS A Free Download - Great Credit Ratios

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1.3 The Editorial Page

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

Well, well, well. Another month has already come and gone for us here in Amigaland. At least the end is in sight. If you haven't already done so, go take a peek at THE~LATEST~NEWS and rejoice in the information it contains. The game is almost over.

Last month I blasted the companies that weren't supporting the Amiga who owed the Amiga platform their existence. I thought this month I would stop being depressing and negative (like the Bandito in Amazing Computing) and congratulate the companies that ARE helping us out. The companies that we ALL need to support more. The ones who deserve it.

First, hats off to TEAM 17. These guys are amazing. The number of titles that these people put out is incredible. What is more incredible is the QUALITY of these titles. TEAM 17 has been with the Amiga for quite awhile and they are being quite loyal and faithful. Their extensive support of the CD32 platform and attention to its special qualities is commendable. If you want to play some of the best in Amiga entertainment, pick up some of these excellent titles for both the CD32 and AMIGA: (Super) Stardust, Arcade Pool, (Ultimate) Body Blows, Superfrog, Project X, Assassin, Tower Assault, Alien Breed (2), and the tons of others they offer. Their support is continuing through the rest of the year, too, with TEAM 17 PINBALL, Alien Breed 3D, Kingpin (out now), 3D Off Road Racing, Worms, and a few others. Nope, they are not resting on their laurels. Help these people out; especially CD32 owners. Put some cash in their hands and keep them with the Amiga.

Acid Software is my next favorite group for the 90's. These boys have their heads pulled out of their butts, folks. With awesome support of not only the CD32 and AGA Amigas but also the poor folks that aren't blessed with one of those. Suprisingly enough, a few chats with Simon at Acid revealed that they aren't making the money they should be with their killer titles ROADKILL, GUARDIAN, and others. ZOMBIE Apocalypse was a freebie, but it still rocked. I know there are some pirated copies of these games you all are using out there. C'mon, don't make them stray too far to the PC platform (I see them already developing their new game SUPER SKID- MARKS for the PC and guess what? It will be better than the Amiga version - although not so for the CD32 version which will have raytraced tracks like the PC version). Send these people some money. Send them some nice letters. Send them something. I would LOVE to see a RK2.

Another company that I want to single out is TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE. Okay, Rise of the Robots was pretty and pretty unplayable. But that is the hugest multi-platform release ever and they SUPPORTED Amiga and CD32. My hat off and thanks to you guys. I understand that PRIMAL RAGE is coming to my CD32 and you guys are responsible. Cheers. I will buy TWO copies to show my appreciation. You people out there can write to Time Warner and let them know you didn't like ROTR, but you appreciate the support and will buy future, more quality products. Recommend they continue to support the NTSC and CD32 platforms.

Other companies that deserve some real praise include (but are not limited to - sorry if I forgot you!):

Core Design (Nice job with BANSHEE CD32 - Love it)

Almathera (How about some NTSC titles, now?)
Ocean (Guys are starting to slip. Be careful. Where's TFX?)
Rasputin (Jetstrike RULES)
Renegade (Can't WAIT for Chaos Engine II)
Mindscape (More Liberation games please)
Microprose (What do I need to say? Longer intros for CD32 games)
Gremlin (Hope you made millions on LITIL DIVIL)
Sensible (Sorry to see you leave - piracy will do that. <frown>)
Impressions (Need that CD32 version of LORDS OF THE REALM)

There are dozens of others I want to include, but just don't have the time to.

Special thanks go out to the Shareware programmers out there. You guys are GREAT. Everyone needs to help feed these guys too. \$5-\$15 is CHEAP for quality software. Ask any PC user how much they paid for DOOM. Speaking of which, if you are a shareware coder and interested in having your program reviewed here in the Dispatch, mail it Snail mail or better yet, upload it to TOMBSTONE BBS. We promise to give it a FAIR review.

The Amiga is on a little merry-go-round right now. One that is about to come to a stop. Now let's see who gets on board. I still have money on CEI. I really hope they pick it up - especially in light of TANDY considering AMIGA for distribution at RADIO SHACK. That would DEFINATELY bring the Amiga back.

Once again, I want to plead with everyone to show some support for all the companies supporting us still. They, as well as the users still with the Amiga, deserve commending.

- Shane R. Monroe
Dark Unicorn Productions

1.4 Coming Attractions

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Dark Unicorn Productions Update

Not much more to talk about since last month. Flying Tigers is still being worked on (we are going to start calling it FT '95 :) and Kit Felice and Shane R. Monroe are concentrating on their next project that will be a LOAD of fun.

John Graham (TOMCAT) is MEGA busy going to weddings and being social this month, but has still found time to work on his new FMV game. Last month we talked about a space-based FMV game. We decided to use killer raytraced graphics to make that game so Lightwave is busy at work. While the graphics are being developed, John is getting bored so he decided to give you guys a little treat in the meantime. By request, he is making NO STRIKE FMV BASEBALL. Yup, the first FMV sports game on the Amiga. Details are sketchy, but it is ARCADE based, not statistical so you people waiting for HARDBALL 3 are gonna have to keep waiting. If you are really tight about that fact, send him some mail and try to talk him into it.

Releases now available - PSYCHO SQUARES DELUXE, PSD: BAREST ESSENTIALS ADULT DATA DISK, TOMCAT, ITS THE PITS, and the FUTURE SHOCK 2 CD from DUP member SIDEWINDER.

The Industry News

There are TONS of titles on their way for us. I recently obtained a file from a group called the OUTLAWS. It is an AMIGAGUIDE document that shows a breakdown of companies and the new games they are bringing to us in the near future. It also shows tentative format information too. The file is included with this archive and it is called AGP3.GUIDE. It is freely distributable so let your friends see it too.

1.5 Shareware Update

Amiga Shareware Update

By Shane R. Monroe

CARNAGE - DELUXE GALAGA UPDATE - STARWOIDS

CARNAGE - Joseph Carlson and Randall Richards (\$20)
OS2.0+ and 1 Megabyte Agnus or AGA (TOTAL 1.5 Megs RAM)
Makes use of AGA if available - Modem and Local Net Playable
Stereo Sound Effects where available - HD Installable

If you have had the pleasure of playing the immortal EXTREME VIOLENCE, then you already have a good idea how this game is played. The basic idea is simple. Kill your opponent. The cool part is how many goodies there are to help you along the way. But I am getting head of myself.

First thing that jumps out at you is that the game is in High Resolution mode. Yes, you can read that as DOG SLOW on an unaccelerated Amiga in two player local mode. It is fast enough in remote mode where there is only one player being shown on the screen.

Of course, hires means MUCH better graphic detail in the game. You have to admit; the graphics are very clean and sharp and very well animated. AGA tends to move around a bit better, but still not blinding fast on an 020/14 with Fast RAM. Barely fast enough to play in Local mode.

Sound effects are very pleasant (could've been more) and appear in the appropriate locations. The intro music is kickin' though. I would've liked to have heard more atmospheric sounds like footsteps and echoes, but you can't have everything.

The thing that certainly separates EV with this game is not only game play over the modem but the amount of arms available to you to kill with. Different weapons have different characteristics and each one takes away a little of your battery charge (it comes back slowly). Not exactly the most original weapons system, but different enough to keep it

interesting.

A few other goodies set this game apart from its counterparts. There are intelligent robots that wander around too, and they go right for your throat. Not a good deal. There are other neat atmospherics there too, but I don't want to ruin it all for you. Sega and CD32 controller support is there too. A pretty well thought out little game. Not for one player, nor is it a lot of fun local. But over two computers, this game takes on a great charm all its own.

Deluxe Galaga Update V2.6

An update on one of the most popular Amiga Shareware games of all time. This time we see some real differences; mainly the addition of an AGA mode for the game. Also in version 2.6 - Bug fixes, a new preference editor (be sure to erase your current prefs to see this screen or hold down the fire button during the load to get back it again), mouse control, bonus and money limits, screen borders, some routines speeded up a bit, and some more color added to the explosions. Of course, numerous secrets have been added to the new version too. I have discovered a few which I will share now.

First, a nasty money theiving ship. Flies down (big guy) and all your money comes out and flies to him. If you don't kill him quick, you are a pauper. If you can kill him, prepare for a shower of cash.

Next, how about that question mark? New mystery item. DRUNK MODE. Joystick movement is reversed for a short period of time.

More stuff too ... AGA mode sports some nice 64 color graphics, but the graphics are primarily the same. You can see more 'light reflection' off the graphics now. Plus some graphics in the Meteor Storm is better along with some other stuff. Not a great deal of difference to me, but nice and smooth play. Still one of the most playable games on the Shareware scene. Might just end up getting replaced, though, by the next game on our review list this month.

STARWOIDS - Martin Kift and Rowan Crawford (\$15)

Arcade Action Game - PAL - ECS - AGA Compatible

Great music and sound effects with some small but nice graphics

One Player Only - Two Disks - HD Installable (Recommended)

What can I say? With the rush of STAR WARS related products for those LESSER machines out there, it was only a matter of time until the Amiga got her hand in the pie. This time it comes from abroad from the land of Kangaroos.

After watching the short but nice little animation of the X-Wing flying onto a planet, you get to start your mission. The registered version promises a host of hot features including raytraced intro/outros, etc.

The first thing I noticed is the nice pretty clean STAR WARS music. After getting incredibly sick of that Star Wars.MOD that was in the first incarnations of Scorched Tanks, these are incredible. Lots of great SW sound effects.

Game play initially sounds boring, granted. It is very similar to the old C64 game of Thrust or ROCKETZ AGA. The controls definately have a

steep learning curve. They are simplex in action, but difficult to master. The first screens give you plenty of room to move around (I know it may not seem like it, but believe me...) but later on, stand by. The missions vary in difficulty and in depth. Some missions, like the first one, simply make you rescue so many rebels on the surface of Endor. Next missions require destruction of key buildings, or even protection of rebel bases. Each mission is well thought out and put together. Filled with Stormtroopers, laser cannons, AT-AT's, TIE fighters, and all the popular cast of the movies are here.

Your only offensive weapons are your unlimited laser guns on your X-Wing ship, and a handful of powerful, yet non-guided missiles. They are very useful, but I guarantee unless you are an old dog at Thurst type games, you will end up wasting most of them. One little hint - the missiles seem to go off the screen a little bit further than regular laser blasts so you can knock off those laser towers while they are off the screen, vice being in their line of fire the whole time.

All the graphics are very clean (the ground sprites are a bit small, but it works for me). The backgrounds are detailed enough and all the graphics move nice smooth and fast.

Don't start playing this game unless you have some time to kill. This classic game has that incredible "just one more game" attribute. If anyone has actually received the registered version of this game, please send me some mail and let me know what you think.

1.6 Software Reviews

Software Reviews: Fears (Commercial), Base Jumpers, and Rally Championship

By Shane R. Monroe

Fears (Commercial Version) - Bomb Software

PAL and AGA Required. No Further Requirements.

Demo Version Reviewed - Commercial Version promises more/better graphics, null modem playability, dithered graphics, more controls, and more. NON-DOS formatted disk. Not HD installable.

The DOOM enthusiasts get a real treat this month. Finally, a commercial, fully functional, ready to play game of DOOM for the Amiga.

Last month we talked about Alien Breed 3D from Team 17 (due for release sometime in April). The rolling non-playable demo was nice and showed off that the Amiga indeed can run texture mapped games on as little as a 14 mhz Amiga (try that with DOOM, Pee Cee's). While it looked pretty good, it didn't let you play and even though it has some cool things like texture mapped reflective water, it was still about quarter screen and the weapons didn't really show up well. (CD32 Gamer had a review of AB3D this month and it is gonna be a good game too - full screen mode and everything). But, it looks like Bomb Software beat the big boys to the first commercial Doom game - FEARS.

Those of you who have seen the little Shareware Fears engine

floating around the last 6-8 months, forget everything you know about it. This is a totally redone beast. Tons better too, I might add.

If you are already all over the DOOM thing, skip the next paragraph as it is just a summary of the DOOM engine.

DOOM was first kinda born as Wolfenstein 3D back on the Pee Cee. The concept is that of texture mapping - a method of putting textures on moving surfaces that you could 'walk' around in a full 360 degree environment. Throw some scaling monsters, weapons, and treasure around and you got the original Wolf3D game. Now, give the game some elevators, depressions, and multiple levels of environment and you more or less got the DOOM engine. It was the first real action game the PC's were capable of (god forbid an action game like Mortal Kombat or Project X on a machine that didn't require \$2000 worth of hardware in it). But, since the introduction of this engine there have been more texture mapped games for the PC realm (all of them, as you can imagine, are more or less the same deal with different graphics) than there are horizontal shootemup games for the Amiga. Due to the very intense CPU speed required for this type of engine on the PC, crossing it to the slow CPUs on the Amiga were difficult to impossible and frankly I got tired as hell of listening to the PCers boast that they could do it when we couldn't. Of course, they had no idea what blitter and copper were really capable of, so they didn't realize that we could really do it; just no one wanted to program it. There were tons of demos and engines, but no real game.

So what does DOOM have that FEARS doesn't...NOTHING. Not a damn thing. All the true texture mapping is there, the 'bob while you walk' feature is in place, all the clean weapons like mini-guns are there (too bad there was not a chainsaw in the preview), as well as the multi-level environment, smooth clean monsters (looks cleaner in this department than DOOM), and the secret doors, switches and backround stuff you would expect.

The preview had a few problems. When I waxed a monster at the foot of a staircase, the lower half of his body disappeared. The game came on a non-DOS non-HD installable floppy. NOT ACCEPTABLE at all. The game loads fast enough, but HD installation is not an option anymore - it is a base requirement. You listening, Bomb Software? DON'T screw up your chances of owning this marketplace by making this thing floppy based. Don't do it. You can bet your boots that Team 17 will make theirs HD installable.

Overall, I STILL don't like these types of games, but if you want close conversion to the DOOM games, this game cannot be beat. The playable demo reviewed here is available right now on Tombstone BBS. If you are even remotely interested in this type of a game, get this.

Base Jumpers - Rasputin Software
PAL/ECS/AGA - One Megabyte CHIP RAM
Action Arcade Game - Platform Style

After playing JETSTRIKE CD32, I was really expecting a whole lot more from Rasputin. However, the game is not a total washup. It has some good gore effects while you play (one gore game per issue, please).

The game is a two parter ... First, run up the inside of a building gathering goodies and killing bad guys. It is quite fast play and the damn building scrolls up while you go up it. If you end up at the bottom of the

screen and the screen can't scroll past you, it will take away points or something else you would rather keep. Killing seems inconsequence here, more getting through the level is the highlight. The graphics and sound effects etc. are all okay and suitable, just nothing to jump out and make your tongue drop out. The controls are all nice and fluid, though.

The second level is a little more fun, simply because of all the gore involved. You get to the top of the building and then you parachute down the outside. Other paratroopers are trying to catch you too. Well, you don't have any weapons, but you CAN run them into things jutting out of the building. This is the cool part. Their little bodies break up, or even get chopped right down the middle. Nice and gory.

For the most part, folks, this game is pretty lame. The staying power is minimal, but at least the boys at Rasputin are TRYING. Commendable but just leaves you cold.

Rally Championship - Flair Software

PAL/AGA Required - Hard Drive Installer on Last Disk

Joystick or enhanced controls for CD32 controller

Road Racing Game - Arcade Action - One Player

Roadkill from Acid Software really snagged the market for the most playable overhead racing game around this year. But for offroad racing, it would seem that RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP (RC) is gonna be your best bet.

All-Terrain Racing is another offering (see previous issue for review) in the offroad racing market, and although it is clean too, I would have to recommend RC. It gives a little more authentic type play.

The massive amounts of diskettes that the program comes on will give you good vibes right after opening the box. The game is very graphic intensive and certainly needs the room.

First thing when you boot, the language selection thing, really needs to be different. You gotta wait for 5 seconds to get through the 'change language thing' everytime you boot. Kinda silly. Also, the game seems to take an unusually long time to actually GET into a race, what with all the options screens and all. I think a good handful of the options could be condensed into one screen.

Enough about the problems. Using the CD32 controller option will make playing the game a lot easier and is the recommended way of doing business. You can play loads of different courses and several different cars (when you get the cash to buy them). Customize your car with a navigator, the right tires for the course) and get some gas. Once this lengthy process is over, you are ready to drive.

This is a game of beat the clock, not the opponents. During the race, you will likely receive plenty of damage and getting too much will result in the end of the race. There are no weapons to shoot off, but there are loads of goodies to collect on the course as you drive.

The game is set from a slightly angled top view and your car sprite is absolutely HUGE for a change. The background graphics are suitable but not anything super special. Cool environmental things really make the game shine. Snow and night driving are just a couple of examples. The way your

headlights shine over the darkened road are cool. Finally, you can leave skidmarks anywhere, versus just a couple of places that the programmers thought needed. This is bad as hell in the snow where you continually leave tire marks. Of course, the terrain dictates how easy it is to drive.

Like Roadkill, the maneuvering is VERY touchy and you will find yourself over compensating a lot early in the game. As some people forget, you CAN take your foot OFF the accelerator during these hard turns. Controls are super fun and slick.

Flair did a super job this time folks. This is an incredibly clean translation of the popular arcade game WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP and the attention to conversion shows. Neat things like the cheaper Navigators not always telling you WHEN to turn and the little digitized voices in the game at some 'flair' *yuk yuk yuk*.

If straight racing is your game, and you like the qualities of the old overheader driving game NITRO from Psygnosis, this is a driving game you can't do without. A final note: The version I got had a buggy HD installer utility on the last disk. I don't know if it ever got fixed, but be ready to do a little work to get it on the HD. Worth it.

1.7 Hardware Reviews

Hardware Review: The Network CD and Serial Cable for the CD32
Suggested Price: \$42
By Shane R. Monroe

Last month I was to review this piece of hardware and it didn't quite make it to me in time for a review. This month, we will look at the system in depth and see if this is really a good buy.

The 'pack' comes with a special cable: one end is the 6pin DIN that plugs into the AUX port on the CD32, and the other end is a standard 25 pin serial plug. The 6 pin DIN has a 'passthrough' cable that allows items (namely a keyboard?) to be plugged in at the same time. With the cable comes a special floppy disk loaded with the various 'ready to run' network software (SerNet, ParNet, Twin Express, PhotoCD stuff and more) that boots or installs on your hard drive equipped Amiga. The final part is the CD32 CDROM disc itself. Folks, this CD is worth it all on its own. More about this later on.

First problem I encountered was that the plug didn't seem to fit very well in the CD32. In fact, I could never tell that I got it in right. In fact, I never got the cable to even WORK right. My CD32's AUX port may be bad and I didn't have another one handy. Thousands of people have used this system successfully, so it must've been my CD32 or my own ignorance.

The floppy disk that comes with it is well put together and easily organized. All the necessary libraries, devs, etc. are neatly in place. THAT must've taken some time.

Finally, the Network CD itself. What a clean collection of goodies here. First it is a fully booting 'reset deactivating' complete Workbench

CD as well. It has scripts for all different versions of the OS making it compatible with CDTV, CD32, and AmigaCD. First oddity of the CD is that you must boot in PAL, yet the machine will auto-adjust right back into NTSC. If you boot in NTSC to begin with it will lock up the machine.

The CD boots up with WB hacks and commodities galore. NickPrefs, Sun Windows, etc. In fact, when the Workbench was fully booted, I had about 500K less memory. Amazing. But it sure LOOKED great though.

Now for the contents. Let me tell you what. This this is filled with 400+ Megs of goodies. Not only the Net stuff like SerNet, ParNet, Twin, and all the others, but included: AMOS PD CD sampler, Term, NComm, SID2, tons of graphic converters, display utilities, slideshows, and the list goes on and on. Everything is incredibly slick and well put together and everything executes properly right off the CD; no unarchiving or anything like that. There are no odd 'INSERT VOLUME XXXX IN ANY DRIVE' or 'ARP.LIBRARY NOT FOUND' errors. It seems to be very well tested. It is like having all your necessary NET and Telecomm needs right in one package. Go poking around with a directory utility and you will find even MORE goodies. Truly a great product.

So what do I really think? Well, if you already have an SX-1 (i.e. parallel port for ParNet or serial port for SerNet) and the need for NET and telecommunication stuff, then there is NO other choice for CDs. Likewise if you have an Amiga with a CD-ROM and no hard drive. The AMOS PD stuff is great if you are an AMOS programmer.

As for speed considerations of this system, all I can do is tell you what the documentation says about the various NET devices. In the lead is PARNET with an approximate speed of about 55K/sec. SerNet is only 31K/sec MAXIMUM. Twin Express and the others go downhill from there. In all honesty, I recommend PARNET not only for its speed but its versatility in the fact that bi-directional transfers are allowed as well as the fact that it can be restarted from a cold dump without having to restart it from the other machine. Very useful.

In closing, peer-to-peer networks like these are a super cheap alternative to the high cost of networking. Your CD32 can really shine as a CD-ROM drive for another Amiga.

1.8 AMOS Programming

Programming in AMOS - PART 3

Those of you who haven't been following along in the column that last two issues of the Dispatch, we have been learning various programming functions and started applying them to an actual program. The back issues of the magazine are available on GENie in the Starship File Area #23 or you can call Tombstone BBS 24 hrs and get them.

This month, we are going to attack a few different command types. First we are going to look at the music and sound effects manipulation portion of AMOS along with the AMOS file requester and lastly the VU METER command for reading the sound channels. Lost yet? You will be an expert by the end of the article.

THE AMOS FILE REQUESTER

My apologies to the AMOS CREATOR/EASY AMOS users on this part. I will only be discussing the AMOS PRO file requester which is almost identical to the others, but there may be some differences. I just wanted to let you know ahead of time in case the old SYNTAX ERROR pops up.

```
A$=FSel$(<default path$>,<title1$>,<title2$>)
```

The requester has two lines for the user to enter some text on to title it. These are the two title\$'s in the command line. Use this to tell the program user what you are asking for. The default path\$ is when you want the requester to initially scan. Leaving it blank will load up the current path's directory first. Remember you must always put quotes around the strings in the command. A\$ will end up being the string that contains the full path and filename selected. As usual, you may substitute variable strings for the actual strings. Here are some examples.

```
A$=FSel$("DH0:games/","Please Select A Game To Load","Then Click OK")
```

```
A$=FSel$("", "Choose A Saved Position", "")
```

```
PATH$="DH1:Stuff/":A$=FSel$(PATH$,"Which File Is Ready?","Click OK")
```

The requester has a lot of other goodies it does when active, but that will vary depending on the AMOS you are using. It doesn't affect how you program it, though. The end result is the same. This requester will save you tons of time trying to get the user to input a filename. Here is a small example you can try in direct mode or as its own program:

```
A$=FSel$("", "Select an AMOS Bank to Load", ""):Load A$
```

The example will query a path and filename, then load that filename into an AMOS memory bank. It is really that simple.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

AMOS's biggest weakness is the bugs and hangups with the music and sound system. Digital sound samples tend to echo for no reason sometimes (a great indication that VALHALLA: THE LORD OF INFINITY was written in AMOS; listen to the intro sometimes) and the music system isn't entirely stable. But, don't let that discourage you. Most of the time it is okay. There is a MUSIC EXTENSION for AMOS available, but I have been told that the current release is a bit buggy and a new version is on the way. Let's look at some of the basics.

AMOS has a couple of cheesy built in sound effects built in. You can try them if you haven't already. The commands are SHOOT and BOOM. Try them from direct mode. You can, however, use the built in synthesiser commands to make your own sound effects using Attack, Decay, Sustain, Release values very similar to that of the old C64 music systems. We will not be covering those commands in this article.

Instead, AMOS gives us direct access to digital samples and pre-made music created on other popular Amiga music creation programs such as Protracker, Soundtracker, and those compatible with them. With some of the

conversion programs available in the PD, you may also convert other types like MED and MIDI files into "Tracker" music 'mods'. Support for the now elderly-near-death SMUS format as well.

We will do digital samples another day. For now, let's stick with the music aspect of AMOS. There are two ways to get AMOS to shake its booty and jam for you. Converting a music mod to the native AMOS format (an actual music bank) and then play it or use the built-in support for playing tracker mods directly.

Both of the options discussed have their advantages. The music banks advantages are numerous. It's biggest problem is that it has to be created before being used - i.e. it must already be in the AMOS custom format. This isn't really bad if you are writing a game, but if you are trying to make a music player, like we are, then it is quite unacceptable. Here are the advantages:

- o You can play sound samples while using music banks
- o You may alter the tempo and volume of a playing music bank
- o You can have more than one music bank at a time in memory
- o You can be selective in what voices you use while playing

There is an AMOS program included in the archive that will convert a good majority of Tracker mods to AMOS Music banks. To load and use a music bank, simply treat it as a regular bank.

```
LOAD "<bankname.abk>"
```

To start the music just use the command MUSIC 1. To alter the tempo (speed) of the tune, simply type TEMPO x (where x is the speed from 1-100 - 21 is about normal speed). To control the volume, use the command VOLUME x (where x is the volume level 0 to 63 - the classic FOR ... NEXT loop from 63 to 0 will make a great fade routine).

Tracker mods, however, are universal and can be utilized right away with absolutely no conversion needed. That is a great advantage if you are going to call on users to supply the music for the program like we are.

The commands for Tracker mods are as follows:

```
TRACK LOAD <filename$>,Bank#
```

```
TRACK LOOP ON/OFF
```

```
TRACK PLAY bank#
```

```
TRACK STOP
```

Bank# is the current bank that is to hold/or holding the Tracker mod. You can save this bank as a standard AMOS bank as well. This gives you music a touch of protection against track rippers.

TRACK LOOP will toggle whether or not the tracker loops after it plays.

The rest of the commands are pretty obvious.

The last thing we are going to talk about is the VU METER command

which will work regardless of which music format you use to playback tunes. This little commands will read the volume of any of the music channels. This is really handy for those cool 'move to the beat' demos. Now you will be able to duplicate what the pros make look easy. The command will return a numeric value from 0-63 which you can the attach to a BOB or SPRITE's X/Y position on the screen so you can make it move 'in time' to the music.

```
V1=Vumeter(0)  (Voices are not 1-4 they are 0-3 - reads voice 1)
V2=Vumeter(1)  <- Reads voice 2, etc
```

Before we go on, I don't want to sham you guys into thinking you can't use MED music with AMOS. You can via MED LOAD, MED PLAY, etc. It is just not as supported as the other formats and I want to keep the majority in the game here. If you have AMOS PRO, check the on-line help system on MED and you will find the needed commands to get you the goods.

Since we are writing a music player program, we want to able to play the majority of the popular music out there, so we will continue our program now and add the commands to load and play a Tracker mod and do a little bit of special effects based on the VU Meter.

When we left off, we had this routine done and in the code:

```
DO
MZ=MOUSE_ZONE:LOCATE 0,0
IF MZ>0 THEN PRINT MZ:ELSE PRINT NZ
IF MOUSE_CLICK AND MZ>0 THEN EXIT
LOOP
```

This was our MOUSE_ZONE checker. Looking at it, you will remember that this routine will wait until the user clicks on one of the five buttons on the screen then exits the loop. Now we need to start adding routines that will actually DO something when these buttons are selected. First things first, lets modify the above part of the program. Right now it contains what I like to call 'troubleshooting code'; basically little codes that give me clues to make sure that the program is working right. In this routine the code tells us what zone the mouse pointer is in. Let's take that out and make the routine 'clean'.

```
MAIN:
DO
MZ=MOUSE_ZONE : MC=MOUSE_CLICK
IF MC>0 AND MZ>0 AND MZ<6 THEN EXIT
LOOP
```

Notice we added the label MAIN and the variable MC to replace the MOUSE_CLICK command we had earlier. This would inevitably allow us to check for all THREE mouse buttons should we need it. In this example, any mouse button will activate the EXIT command. But should we want to assign it to specific button, you could use:

```
IF MC=1 THEN ....      (LEFT MOUSE BUTTON)
IF MC=2 THEN ....      (RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON)
IF MC=3 THEN ....      (MIDDLE MOUSE BUTTON)
```

Now let's add a conditional to see what button they clicked on the screen. We'll add a new command this time. Add this text to your code.

```
ON MZ GOTO LOAD, PLAE, STOP, TOGGLE, DONE
```

This command takes a numeric variable and tests its value. Based on that value, it will GOTO a label that corresponds with that value. In the example above in our program, MZ will be a value from 1-5. Our ON ... GOTO command will send the program to the label LOAD if MZ=1, PLAE if MZ=2, etc. Notice the strange spelling of the labels. I did this on purpose to show you one of the particulars of AMOS (and most other BASIC languages). You cannot use reserved command names as labels. Since LOAD is an AMOS command, we slightly altered it to L0AD so that we could keep the meaning, but still follow the syntax of AMOS. We can't use PLAY, so we made it PLAE. You can see how it works now. Let's do the first subroutine; L0AD.

```
LOAD:
A$=F$Sel$("", "Select A Tracker Mod To Load", "Then Click OK")
IF A$ <> "" THEN TRACK L0AD A$, 6
GOTO MAIN
```

The IF A\$ conditional in the routine will keep the program from trying to load in the Tracker mod if the user clicks CANCEL instead of OK (which will return an empty string to A\$). Regardless, the routine will return to the main loop when it is done. Now for the play routine. Simple.

```
PLAE:
IF TP=0 THEN TRACK PLAY 6:TP=1
GOTO MAIN
```

The variable TP will keep track for us as to whether or not a Tracker mod is currently playing. Next subroutine.

```
STOP:
IF TP=1 then TRACK STOP:TP=0
GOTO MAIN
```

This routine is pretty obvious, yes? See, it is all a matter of being able to think logically. Sometimes a routine look 100% correct and STILL renders bad values, or does something wrong. The thing to try (yeah, it works for me, anyway) is to just erase the old routine and rewrite it. I have done that before and the code looked IDENTICAL to the old code but amazingly enough the new code works. You'll learn all the little tricks in time.

```
TOGGLE:
GOTO MAIN
```

We are not yet ready to implement the dancing BOBs yet. Until next issue, we will just have this option go back to the main menu.

```
DONE:
IF TP = 1 THEN TRACK STOP
FADE 5:WAIT 75
END
```

This will take care of shutting off the Tracker mod if running then

fade the screen and quit the program.

There, now you have a fully working program - an Amiga mod jukebox. It is simple but it works. Are you all starting to get a taste for it? Yum, yum. It only gets better. Next issue - BOB control and a little step into the realm of AMAL, the machine language interrupt driven language that lets you control objects, rainbows, even SCREENS independant of the actual program. Very good stuff. Stick with us! We'll get ya through it!

1.9 CD32 Corner

CD32 Corner - By Shane R. Monroe

I want to take some time this month to discuss some titles I recently had the pleasure of playing in depth and give you all some feedback. I also have some level codes for the game SUPERFROG CD32 from Team 17.

Speaking of codes, anyone having level/cheat codes for CD32 games, we would love to hear them. Send mail to me via one of my mail addresses.

JETSTRIKE CD32 (Rasputin) - PAL (NTSC playable), 1-8 players

Every now and then, a game comes along that will truly inspire you to keep playing and playing and playing until you figure it out and start getting somewhere. Then the missions will keep you busy for a long time to come.

For those of you who have already played the Amiga version of it on floppy, I will quickly tell you the major differences between the versions. The CD32 version has the following enhancements:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * 24-bit Background Graphics | * Over 60 Aircraft to Play |
| * Over 60 weapons systems to arm | * True CD music soundtracks |
| * Nearly 200 missions many unique | * Simplified control system |
| * Multiplayer mode (2-8 players) | * MORE! |

Now, if you have never heard of this game, keep reading.

Imagine if you took a side scroller like Defender. Gave it the free moving abilities of Atari 2600 game COMBAT with the airplanes. Throw in some fantastic graphics, many varied missions to complete, tons of craft to fly like old and new planes/choppers/gliders/etc (even a dragon!), and great sound effects and music.

There are a dozen training missions to get you used to the different missions of landing, night missions, fog, refueling in the air, and more. The game offers a AEROLYMPICS mode, too, where you can compete in mini-missions with up to 7 other pilots. Loads of fun.

The soundtracks and sound effects are something special. Professional band did the music (with lyrics) and the audio is just plain clean all around.

The controls... Well, that is one thing you have to work on. The

RIGHT way to do it is using the controller properly (every button has at LEAST one function) and that will give you the most control. But, there is a wuss mode for those intimidated by using more than one button. I promise that the curve to learn for the controller is WORTH the effort. You may have a couple of gray hairs when you are done, but what the hell, eh?

So what is really wrong with this game? Well, the steep curve on the controls will frustrate some people to death. The only other thing is that the game runs almost intolerably slow without the presence of FAST RAM. If you have an SX-1 with some RAM, this is a game you can't do without. If you are just a standard CD32 owner, play before you buy if possible.

Alternative recommended titles similar - Super Stardust, Guardian, Banshee

COVERGIRL STRIP POKER (On-Line) NTSC, 1 Player

This CDTV title is a washout. It is advertised as working okay with the CD32 but it is crap. You have to fight with the mouse to get the controls to work. And it seems to fail to boot from time to time.

The game is a standard game of poker with very substandard old HAM pics digitized with what looks like a Digi-View. The speech is lame and not exciting at all.

Budget title or not, stay away from this game. CDTV owners may give this game a look; CD32 users - YUK! If you have the memory and HD space, get the freely distributable game KLONDIKE and get the dozens of adult card sets. Much more fun and certainly more stimulating.

BEAVERS (Unique) - PAL, One Player

I wanted SO much to like this game. I played over and over, trying to make it play like I anticipated. Just not to be.

The game is your typical platformer with some decent but unremarkable graphics. Music and sound are all just standard. The gameplay is where it could've shined, but didn't.

You are a little beaver (cute and all, but still ...) gathering stars and such. The screen scrolls on you whether you move or not and that just plain sucks. If the screen catches up with you, death occurs.

In all honesty, if you want a cute platformer, go get Super Frog. It kept me busy for weeks. The ZOOL games are a good alternative too, as is the game TROLLS. FURY OF FURRIES was even better than this. Finally, I would recommend BRIAN THE LION too.

BANSHEE CD32 (Core Design) - PAL, 1 or 2 players Simultaneous

We did a full review of Banshee AGA in a previous edition, so I will just talk about the CD32 specific parts.

In all honesty, there is very little CD-specific changes. A nice soundtrack off CD at the main menu, but nothing in the game. Too bad, too. A nice FMV intro would've rocked. Don't get me wrong; GREAT game.

Just if you got the AGA version, don't waste the extra cash on the CD32 version.

Just in here at Dark Unicorn Entertainment for the CD32 - Demo Mania 1, Dennis, Fly Harder, Kid Chaos, Lost Vikings, Manchester Soccer, Out to Lunch, Skeleton Krew, Subwar 2050, Universe, Beneath a Steel Sky, Akira, Death Mask, Theme Park, and Dizzy. Call DUE's on-line store located on TOMBSTONE BBS for pricing and information. Should have some more reviews on this software next month.

Codes for SUPERFROG CD32:

This isn't all of them, but enough so you can finish the game. Some are missing. If you have the other ones, let our powers combine and send them in to me. I will make sure you get the credit.

World	1-1 742891	3-1 099610	5-1 940317
	1-2 ?	3-2 261057	5-2 470914
	1-3 100101	3-3 ?	5-3 490902
	1-4 523924	3-4 612714	5-4 830521
	2-1 523924	4-1 ?	SPACE LEVELS
	2-2 230272	4-2 149632	680518
	2-3 167892	4-3 014400	711222
	2-4 324705	4-4 131872	720223
	2-5 174170		

1.10 Where Are We?

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Seumas McNally - LONGBOW
Troy Toulou - SPYDER
Kit Felice - CAPTAIN PSYCHO
Dale McBane - MORGAN EARP
Mike Hall - DOC HOLIDAY
Michael Welch - SCORCH

1.11 THE LATEST C= NEWS

THE LATEST NEWS ON THE COMMODORE LIQUIDATION

This is a new column for The Dark Unicorn Dispatch, but I believe it is necessary to provide the Amiga community the most factual information available during this time of need. I will attempt to give you the most reliable news possible in the most positive way I can (no ROOMERS columns in MY magazine) without the editorial comment. I will always divulge my sources whenever possible.

March 25, 1995 The Sam Report

I had a nice chat with Alex Amor of CEI today. He is aware that I report for Genie so this is cleared for release. <We have also been granted permission to use this text in the Dark Unicorn Dispatch. -Ed>

The auction will begin April 20th in New York and will last about a week. It now appears clear clear that the remaining interested parties are pursuing separate, non-conflicting, parts of the overall package (Commodore name, set-top technology, Amiga manufacture, etc.). It seems there is a pre-auction agreement (or at least an understanding) among the parties that whoever wins will gladly provide the others with the pieces they want. Only CEI plans to manufacture Amigas.

Once again, Alex mentioned the caveat that "somebody could come out of the woodwork and surprise us all" but he seemed less concerned about this than previously. He mentioned having an excellent information network that keeps an eye out for entities that might be lurking in the shadows ready to make a last-minute grab. Those sources indicate no lurkers at present.

The Gould/Ali matter is not a complication at all in the sale process. The creditors will go after them in a totally separate action that in no way affects the sale at auction.

He had no comment on the report that IBM was lined up as the contract manufacturer (said he couldn't discuss that). He referred to contracts for components that are valid and would be rescinded only if CEI doesn't prevail.

He confirmed my earlier report that talks have been held with Tandy and could develop into a distribution reality.

Again, initial production calls for A4000Ts and A1200s. The latter will be getting a larger case for more internal expansion, but that might not happen immediately.

Alex, in shorts and sneakers, went back to attending to store customers on a busy Saturday morning. As always, he appeared full of optimism. "by the 27th it will all be over!".

This has been the Sam Report from Miami for GENie.

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