

**FEBRUARY**

COLLABORATORS
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## Chapter 1

# FEBRUARY

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"One Step Above Excellence"

Dark Unicorn Dispatch Newsletter - Feburary Edition  
 "An Entertaining and Informative Look Into The Amiga and CD32."  
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### 1.2 toc

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## 1.3 intro

Welcome to the February edition of the Dark Unicorn Dispatch! We're certainly glad to have you aboard with us this month, as we have LOTS of goodies to share with you. We'll look at some of the hottest CD32 games out there, along with a full review of Simon the Sorcerer, plus lots more!

Now I guess I have to comment on the current situation surrounding the Amiga situation and the Commodore buyout. First, let me say that I have about had enough of this crap, and I am sure that all of you reading this have too. Knowing how long it has taken already, and how much longer it could be, we might very well end up an orphan computer owner after all. But, let me tell you what I know and then what I speculate about the future.

We've heard it all before; "The Amiga is going to be bought THIS WEEK at the latest. Definately...Last round of bidding starts...etc...etc." Well, this last time I actually believed that the whole ugly affair was finally coming to an end. Well, not to be. Let me bring you up to date from the last newsletter.

CEI withdrew their 'cash and carry' offer (missed deadline again?) and submitted a smaller one. CBM UK's Chinese backers were rumored to have pulled their financial support from them, causing them to miss their bid opportunity. Then, magically, they came up with the cash to once again submit a bid. This bidding 'ping pong' is certainly getting old, isn't it? The greed of the creditors and the seemly nonchalance of the oversight committee is starting to get on everyone's nerves, including the bidders. Then, when both parties were once again ready to put the bids on the table, rumor popped out that UK once again couldn't make funds appear, putting everything on hold again. Now, the latest that has floated down from the nets is that the creditors somehow found a way to get both the Bahamian AND U.S. courts involved in this dispute, allowing the creditors to review CBM's business practices over the whole last YEAR. Now, tell me what you all think of THAT? Hmmmm...A LONG wait? Yeah, sound like it to me, too. Imagine; CBM's dead clammy hand reaching out from the grave to try and strangle the LAST little bit of life left from the Amiga.

Well, add this to the fact that the Phillipino government is holding the plant facilities and inventory under armed guards to hold out for money owed them (read this as none of the basic parts expected to be on hand will be) so even once someone DOES get it, there will have to be manufacturing done FIRST before machines hit the market.

On the other side of the world, AMAZING COMPUTING/AMIGA is back in publication after missing a print deadline due to holding out for CBM liquidation news (I am told). As usual, the magazine seems to lack in the interest field again. I thought Amiga World was getting slow...Sheeze! Then, the most depressing part of the whole issue, ROOMERS, can just go right in the trashcan. It is hard enough to keep up morale in the Amiga community as a developer when you have a major Amiga publication spouting out to you that the Amiga is basically dead and there is no hope; that

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the CD32 is basically dead and there is no hope; that there will not be any real Amigas anymore, etc. etc. I will be honest with out all; if anyone from Amazing is reading this, GET RID OF THAT COLUMN and put something in there a little more factual. ROOMERS is far too depressing and the last thing you need is some potential Amiga developer reading that, taking it as gospel and not even entering the Amiga market. We don't need that. Use the column space to review more PD and put some more screen snapshots in the mag. When I read game reviews, I really want to see screen shots, not pictures of the box. Maybe it is just me...

Anyway, great issue here this month so go ahead and get into it. Oh, be sure to spread the word that all DUP software (except Scorched Tanks) is available exclusively through Better Concepts (800-25-AMIGA) and all registrations should be purchased through them. If we receive mail in registrations, though, we will still honor them, but we would prefer if everyone made the shift to Better Concepts.

Thanks again to everyone who is supporting Dark Unicorn Productions, including yourself for taking the time to read this newsletter. Some special thanks to Peter Olafson and Tim Walsh for their kind words about DUP in AMIGA WORLD as well as the great reviews. Also, thanks to Denny for his write up in AMIGA COMPUTING (do we get a copy?) We appreciate all the good press and good word of mouth you have all been giving us. We owe a lot of our success to you and will thank you by continuing to produce inexpensive, high quality software for the Amiga.

- Shane R. Monroe  
Dark Unicorn Productions

## 1.4 coming

As usual, we will start this page with the standard update on the Dark Unicorn Productions projects, then take a look at the latest and greatest games and programs coming to an Amiga near you!

### Dark Unicorn Productions - Update

As mentioned last issue, DUP has a support forum on the on-line service GENie. Support from everyone has been GREAT and I think that we have been successful in getting closer to our users. For those of you new or unfamiliar with GENie, just type M555;1 at any prompt then enter SET 23 at the next prompt. That will take you to our message base. File area #23 is ours in the Amiga file area. All our products may be found here.

The official distributors of the registered versions of our games, Better Concepts, Inc. is now ready to take your orders. Tomcat, Psycho Squares Deluxe, the PSD Adult Graphics Disk, and It's the Pits are all available. Call them at 800-25-AMIGA for all your DUP, PD, and CD needs. Look for our advertisements in Amiga World this month!

Here is a progress update on the DUP projects currently in development. Included are the names of the coders as well.

TOMCAT (John Graham) - The final version of TOMCAT is complete! You may

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purchase it from Better Concepts, Inc (800-25-AMIGA). This is the Amiga's first full motion video game without a CD-ROM! Fly your Tomcat against air, land, and sea targets. All \*real\* video action. Two megabyte playable preview available from Tombstone BBS, GENie, Aminet, or any other good BBS. Look at the full review of this game in the January edition of AMIGA WORLD as well as some more information about DUP! NOTE: For those of who with registered versions who have been experiencing lock ups during the game play, a fix patch is now available on Tombstone and GENie. It replaces the main file and fixes all known bugs.

IT'S THE PITS! (Kit Felice) - Yup! It is done too! Once again, Better Concepts, Inc. has the goods. This is your classic multi-gendre arcade game featuring 3D tunnels, a SWEET 'Thrust' type portion, a dodge and chase segment, and more. More playable action from Dark Unicorn Productions!

SCORCHED TANKS V1.85/90 (Michael Welch) - Ah, yes! The long awaited upgrade to the 1.77 version, this tank artillery game has 10 new weapons, much improved 64 color terrain, better graphics, some little enhancements, some new music, and more. (A seriously cool DUP intro too!) The Shareware version is now in wide spread and is available just about everywhere. You may, of course, purchase the full version for only \$12 from Northwest Public Domain.

FLYING TIGERS (Seumas McNally) - This seriously cool helicopter arcade/simulation is in its final stages and will very likely be released by 'press time' of this newsletter. You can always call Better Concepts and find out, since it is nearly certain that they will be carrying this game as well. For those of you who can't wait; just be patient. The game is really cool and you will not be disappointed with this one! Oh, better go and get a CD32 controller - it makes the game a TON easier!

FLEET COMMANDER (Shane R. Monroe) - Not much to say other than I have been impossibly busy. The project still has a green flag but let's just say that I got an offer I couldn't refuse and will be developing a different title for the CD32 for the next couple weeks. I will return to Fleet Commander soon. Never fear!

Last issue I mentioned that Sidewinder has joined our company. Now, everyone can hear some of Eric's famous Amiga music compositions without the Amiga! Yup, a few of you might know about it. FUTURE SHOCK II is a totally Amiga made CD. Jam at home, in your car, or anywhere with this killer audio CD. Techno/Rave/House music is featured in the hour long disc. Once again, it is available through Better Concepts!

#### Commercial Software - Update

The software just keeps coming and coming and coming. Lots of new releases for both Amiga and CD32....

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## AMIGA ECS/AGA (Available NOW!)

Theme Park (AGA/ECS)	Bubbles and Squeak
Ishar III (AGA)	On The Ball
World Cup USA '94	Dream Web (AGA/ECS)
Sensible Golf (AGA/ECS)	Sensible World Soccer (AGA)
Pinball Illusions (AGA/ECS)	Mr. Blobby
Lemmings III	PGA Euro Tour
Shaq Fu	Putty Squad
Out To Lunch	Super Stardust (AGA)
Dragon Stone	Field of Glory
Police Quest III	Robinson Requiem
Skeleton Krew (AGA)	Top Gear 2 (ECS/AGA)
Aladdin (AGA)	Banshee (AGA)
D-Day	Detroit (AGA)
King's Quest VI (AGA/ECS)	U.F.O. (AGA)
Alien Breed-Tower Assault	Cannon Fodder 2
Kid Chaos	

## CD32 (Available NOW!)

Marvin's Marvellous Adventure PAL	Jungle Strike PAL
Communicator	Arcade Pool PAL
Banshee PAL	Brian The Lion
Cannon Fodder PAL	Dark Seed
Dragon Stone	Fire and Ice
Guardian	Heimdall 2
Litil Divil NTSC	Ryder Cup
Simon the Sorcerer PAL	Sim City 2000
Theme Park	U.F.O. NTSC
Super Stardust PAL	Tower Assault PAL

Just a little update on some of the companies out there...

\* Sensible Software is leaving the Amiga due to the high levels of piracy that are abound on the platform. They said that for every legal copy bought, there are at least 20 that are pirated. Well, everyone was warned about it and now it is starting to happen. Pass the word, not the disk, folks.

\* NOVASTORM, the long awaited sequel to Psygnosis MICROCOSM is officially on hold. I called them personally and they said that the present Amiga situation is holding them back from releasing it. From the sound of it, it is done; just waiting a green light from the new company that acquires the Amiga.

\* Battle Isles II will NOT be coming to the Amiga after all. The company has dropped support for the Amiga.

\* After much duress, Ocean finally decided to release TFX for AGA/CD32. I haven't actually SEEN a copy yet, so until then it is just a rumor, but I believe it.

\* Rumor through the mill; Electronic Arts bought the software division of LUCAS ARTS, makers of the popular X-WING and TIE FIGHTER for those

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DOS-BOXES. What does that mean for the Amiga? Who knows? Last word was that Lucas Arts was getting back into the Amiga... Hmmm...

\* Time Warner Interactive entered the Amiga game area with the game RISE OF THE ROBOTS. Since Time Warner is also planning on doing a lot of movie liscense interactive video type titles, maybe we'll get to see one....

\* Dark Unicorn Productions is entering the CD32 market with their game TOMCAT, the Amiga's first full motion video game. Another title, to be announced, is also on the way.

\* In addition to TFX, OCEAN has decided to continue support of the Amiga line through 1995. Many cool new games are coming from them. Stay tuned.

\* Remember I mentioned the cool arcade game PRIMAL RAGE in past issues? Good news. It seems that TIME WARNER (distributors of RISE OF THE ROBOTS) is handling the release of this cool arcade game. If PR follows suit of ROTR, it will be released for all different platforms simultaneously. Cool!

## 1.5 shareware

### Shareware Update

Let's take a look at some of the newest Shareware titles now available.

ROKETZ V2.0 - For those of you who missed this killer little AGA game, I will fill you in. This is like the only Thrust kinda game where you fly around trying to execute the other player. Very similar to the game GRAVITY THRUST but with some phenominal graphics (raytraced to boot). If you got AGA, you should probably register and get this game. It is COOL!

ZAXXON - Ah, yes ... The classics. Bignomia strikes again with this pixel perfect recreation of the C64 version of ZAXXON, the original isometric scroller/shoot-em up. If you liked the original, you'll like this.

KARATE BABES - Uh..huh huh...This COULD be cool. BUT, the fact it was written with CANDO! is either a plus or a minus (depending on how you look at it). The graphics are choppy and the game is BARELY playable on an 030. However, it does show promise. Basically, two digitize 'babes' go at each other in the standard mono-mono fighting kinda game. The babes are BIG that is for sure. But, the graphics flicker too much and the play is slow. Now, our man here is working on learning AMOS so perhaps we are going to get to see another, cleaner version. Another game similar to it from the same author BIKINI KARATE BABES is supposedly in progress.

GIF PROCESSOR PLUS - My own little creation, actually, which was written up in February's Amiga World isn't QUITE as good as it sounds. However, it will change batches of GIFs into batches of HAMs which is exactly what it was designed to do. One or two of the GIF formats are not compatible with this program (hey, blame CompuServe and Unisys), but it still does the job most of the time. The interface, however, is sweet, if I do say so myself. If you need something like this, it is free, so give it a try.

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## 1.6 software

### SIMON THE SORCERER (AdventureSoft) Amiga/AGA/CD32

Although this is an older title, I recently got an opportunity to play it and feel like sharing my views on it with all the DUP readers. I have primarily played the CD32 version, however with the exception of speech, there is no real difference in game play.

AdventureSoft gave us the great Elvira games and this one is no less great! It is quite obviously a Secret of Monkey Island engine clone with the traditional list of commands at the bottom of the screen as well as your inventory. The top shows a side-cut view of your current location. Movement is conducted by clicking the mouse to the location to travel to, or clicking commands. You may interact with various items on the screen in conjunction with the commands. On the Amiga versions, you see the characters talk by the means of balloons over their heads. Not nearly as much, but it works.

What makes this game quite the deal is the excellent humor it has scattered through it. You will find yourself laughing at almost every screen you walk on. Little Simon's rapier wit is a riot. Probably the funniest line he says is when you are in this bar, talking to some wizards, trying to become a wizard yourself. When you ask them to help you, they insist that they are just common folk (yeah - with robes and the pointy hat) and ask why you would think that they were wizards. As with all the speaking choices you can make, the possible responses come up on the bottom of the screen. One of them was "Because when I move the pointer over you, the game SAYS you are wizards!" To which the wizard responds, "Oh. Good point there. Guys, I guess we can't dispute it any further. What can we do for you?"

The game is quite frustrating for many reasons (does this mean it is also playable?) First, you have to check every nook and cranny of the screen to make sure that there isn't something there you need to take. You can go to the same area a hundred times and STILL miss the rock with a note under it. Almost every object you can 'see' with the pointer is going to be necessary later. Many things you can't take or use without having another object first.

Another irritant is the fact that everyone in the game stiffes you. You do all these quests and help everyone out and you get jack squat. Not very encouraging. You would think that these guys could be a little more giving.

The game has the nagging ability to draw you in hard, then frustrate you to the point of giving up, then allow you to figure out the next puzzle within moments of you rebooting the computer. It is quite well done and the puzzle challenges are all logical but sometimes you tend to overlook little things or worse yet; obvious things. This makes you feel stupid. <at least it did me> I would certainly recommend playing this in pairs or even a group, as one set of eyes always sees something that the other person missed.

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The graphics are very pleasant and pretty detailed. Sound effects on the CD32 version are incredible; from the background waterfall sound to the birds in the forest. The interface is easy and well thought out.

All in all, this is quite a pleasant game and as long as you don't mind some cerebral challenges, I think you will truly enjoy this game!

## 1.7 hardware

### THE COMPETITION PRO CD32 JOYPAD

These days, games are getting more complex and in depth. Many of them are starting to make better use of two button joysticks and some are going so far as to utilize the CD32 controller (Deluxe Galaga is a perfect example of that) to control music toggles, extra weapons, more moves, selectors, etc. With all these new proggys making use of these type of controllers, it is getting more important to have the capability. While there are tons of Sega controllers that work just fine with the Amiga, 99.9% of the programs out there will only take advantage of one or two buttons of them. Although many experts will tell you that you cannot use a Sega joystick without risk of damage to your machine, there are tons of us out there who are using Sega controllers as the regular medium and have done so for a long time with no damage. So far, there have been very few alternatives to getting a Sega controller if you want extra buttons. Now, however, there is a choice.

The Competition Pro Joypad is a seven button standard plug controller that was designed to be used with the CD32 console. It is, however, 100% compatible with all Amigas too. Many programmers are adding stock support for CD32 controllers to make it easier to port to the CD32. This can give you a tremendous advantage. It also supports those programs using two button joysticks.

The controller is layed out like a combination of a Sega controller and a CD32 joypad. The thumbpad (or D pad) is solid construction and comfortable with specific diagonal pad areas. There are two buttons on the finger areas, and four in a group to the right (very similar to the button layout on a SNES). In addition, there is another 'bar' button in the middle. The buttons are colored/labeled as a CD32 controller. The red button simulates the regular joystick fire button, and the blue button acts as the 'second button'. This can also double as a CDTV controller too.

In addition to the sturdy construction, it also has auto/rapid fire controls for all the buttons individually via small colored switches in the middle. Very useful for some games!

With true Amiga digital type joysticks getting harder and harder to find, and with my burning desire not to fuel the Sega fire by buying their controllers, this is a great alternative. Many of DUP's upcoming productions will utilize the CD32 controller (Flying Tigers being the first). It's price is under \$30 and it is very durable. I have seen it for as low as \$26 on the street, so do consider it for your next controller purchase.

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## 1.8 cd32

### The CD32 Corner

There are some serious new games out for the CD32. It seems that the best is still coming and we are just getting a taste right now...

#### ALIEN BREED: TOWER ASSAULT - TEAM 17

First, let me say that I never was a big fan of the Alien Breed games. I played both the initial release and the sequel and just never got into it. The first just didn't grab me and the second one was just too dang hard! But, this, ah THIS is the cream of the crop! Although released for both AGA machines and the CD32, we will talk about the CD32 version here.

The first thing you will notice is that the game Alien Breed II is kindly included on the CD; I guess to get you primed or to play later on after your Alien Blasting skills get better.

After selecting Tower Assault you might as well just get comfortable. Oh, turn out the lights and get some popcorn. Did I mention to PUMP UP THE JAMS? Stand by for the coolest intro I have ever seen. It is a 1/3 screen, 256 colors. 30 FPS, full motion (live and Lightwave rendered) video that will DEFINATELY get you in the mood to ROCK AND ROLL! The popcorn is to help keep you from getting hungry while you watch the over TEN MINUTE (!) space opera unfold.

After you have rebooted the CD32 about ten times and are thoroughly tired of the intro (showed all your PC friends and your dog too) you are now ready to take the game on.

The game is the standard overhead view a la GAUNTLET (remember that game? That was COOL! "Elf; is about to DIE!") and the graphics and sound are considerably better than the earlier incarnations of the game. The game is totally HUGE! You will get lost quick if you don't start keeping track of your position.

The graphics are nice and gory. Dead bodies litter the floor and the aliens tend to eat on them while you watch (C'mon! You KNEW I would find a way to review something with tons of GORE!). Computer terminals are scattered through the levels to get you information and killer weapons. There are lots of atmospheric goodies like darkened rooms and invisible aliens. It is as pretty as it is playable.

Sound and music are kick butt. Lots of little clips of speech are in the game, plus some great weapon noises. With the stereo pumped up and the lights off; who NEEDS ALIEN vs. PREDATOR?

As before, you can take a friend along. Due to the size and complexity of the game, there is more reason to be a team player than an individual player. You can share the money and many of the security systems trying to kill you are easy to defeat with the second person helping out.

Even if you took away the awesome intro, this game would STILL be worth it. As it stands, this is probably the cleanest shootemup of its kind on

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ANY platform. The only reason you SHOULDN'T get this title is if you cannot display PAL. The game will change automatically to PAL (although the intro animation is in NTSC; figure that?) Team 17 is the company to watch on the CD32...

#### ARCADE POOL - Team 17

Billiards of any kind done on a computer is going to come up lacking in some way. The three dimensional ones were pretty cool, but lacked in accuracy, and the top down display ones usually just weren't real enough. Now, there is a pool game with some punch.

A pool game has to have three basic elements. First and most important is total ball control. Like in actual pool, you have to control the direction of the ball, the power you shoot with, and finally where on the cue ball you actually hit. With all those elements, you can do everything you can in real pool such as curves and other trick shots. Arcade Pool gives you that control. Second, it has to have accuracy. Kinetics (physics) are tantamount to play. Recoil, rebound, etc. all contribute to accuracy. Once again, Arcade Pool has this feature. Finally, the game has to have atmosphere. The sounds of the balls dropping in the pockets, people playing pool around you, the crack of the break, etc. Of course, realistic rolling balls and moving cue sticks help add the illusion of realism. As you might have guessed, Arcade Pool has this too.

The game is very detailed in every way. You can play a multitude of different billiards such as UK 8 Ball, US 8 Ball, Trick, Survivor, Speed Pool, and many many more. Options for changing the background sounds and other game elements are also included. My personal favorite is a 'trajectory' path that comes up when you position your stick. The animated path shows the route your cue ball will take if you hit it at the currently selected angle and the currently selected power and position. Quite a neat gizmo to add for novice players like myself.

Overall, well worth the cash. If you have the floppy version though, you may want to hold off as I couldn't see anything different about the game other than the charming collection of background sounds that you can select while you play. They are very good, but whether they are worth the extra twenty bucks is up to you. I like it, and it would certainly compliment the TOWER ASSAULT and SUPER STARDUST boxes you should have on your desk!

#### LITIL DIVIL - Gremlin Interactive

I read about this game years and years ago in a European Amiga mag and really wondered what ever became of it. Finally, after four years of development, Litil Divil is here.

Litil Divil is the perfect combination of all the classic games of the computer era. The graphics are like playing a cartoon. The music is all beautifully orchestrated CD audio tracks. The action is free moving joystick control. The puzzle solving is like Chambers of the Psi Mutant Priestess. The humor is more funny than an episode of Monty Python. What a game.

The story has you playing a little devil creature (really?) trying to

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deliver a pizza. Although the pizza thing is pretty lucrative, I guess it is better than some of the other storylines of games of this gender. You never see the pizza (at least I haven't yet), but ... Anyway, you must complete five levels of grueling challenges and puzzles to win. Each level is riddled with traps, puzzle rooms, stores, and even a bed chamber; each to be utilized in its own way.

The majority of the game takes place in dungeon mazes. You must explore the level completely to discover every last bag of gold or find that elusive key. Traps from pits, to spikes ("severe tire damage may occur ..."), to fire breathing masks hanging on the wall, to pianos dropping on your head litter the dungeon. Each trap brings about a new smile on your face as you watch your on screen alter ego (his name is "Mutt" by the way) take more punishment.

Most rooms can be entered any time (some require a key) and usually you are required to have and utilize an item within the room to conquer it. Sometimes the item is available at the store, but most of the time it is an item that you get from a different room. For example, the very first room you come to is the Spider Room. In it a huge spider sits on his web and releases little baby spiders which nip and bite at you, eventually wrapping you up in a spider web. Of course you can stomp the little guys (most satisfying) or even bend down, grab them, and eat them (spider tartar). You can't beat them all, so you must obtain the can of spider spray (this conveniently located in the level store) and spray his face til his head explodes (there is no real blood or anything, so parent don't have to worry; it is all cartoon violence at worst). Inside his head is a flashlight you will need later. The way he scares himself with it when he turns it on and subsequently scares the smaller spiders away is a total gut buster. The whole game is filled with loads of laughs and interesting puzzles.

You have a health bar that gets depleted as you get smacked by traps or fail to complete room puzzles. As would be suspected of this game, the deaths are a riot too. There are three that I have seen and each of them are inflicted by this little golem fat guy that doesn't like a lot of publicity in his torture chamber. From getting shut in a spike riddled iron maiden to being stretched mercilessly on the rack, you will be almost happy you died.

If I haven't painted a good enough image for you, find someone that has a playable preview (it was on a CD32 Gamer cover disc) or the actual game and play it. You'll fall in love with it. I can't fault this game one little bit.

#### SUPER STARDUST - Team 17/Bloodhouse

I did a review of this game in the last issue, so you can look for it there. What I DID want to talk about is the CD32 version of this cool game. As I suspected, the CD32 version has lots of CD music tracks (even in places where it could've gotten by without it) and some cool intro graphics. It is quite obvious that this intro was done before the TOWER ASSAULT one was. They tend to pause in between scenes. But, it is still really cool and the game play is almost identical with a few little niceties thrown in like the ion trail behind your ship when you thrust. Once again, Team 17 puts out a winner. This game is also in PAL and

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shifts automatically.

#### MICROCOSM - Psygnosis

Like most people I stayed away from this title as I was told that the game play was crappy and it was nothing more than a graphic showcase with little interactivity. However, I finally broke down and got a copy and let me tell you how surprised I was! This game is really great!

The best way to describe this game is that it is a FANTASTIC VOYAGE meets SPACE HARRIER. The scenario is presented in the form of a fantastic CDXL movie which last for quite awhile. The graphics and digital sound are truly impressive (the again, it IS a Psygnosis game so what did you expect?). Some of the camera effects they use will knock your socks off. Anyway, the story is about two rival companies in the future. One of the company's CEO is captured and injected with microorganisms targeted to take over his brain and put him in the power of the rival company. Your job, is to microsize yourself and enter the body, destroying the organisms before it is too late.

The game flies right in from the intro; likely taking you by surprise. The first segment you will fight is like some kind of warm up. You do not have access to most of the functions of the ship. You enter a microsize station in the body and choose your destinations. You take different ships (even a pressure suit) into the body parts to do battle, depending on the body area.

The perspective is a full 3D chase view of the vehicle you are flying through the body. You have full control of the ship (i.e. all over the screen) and cannot crash into the gorgeous realistic background graphics which smoothly flow from the disc in realtime. Truly breathtaking. You are allowed to choose from junction points through the game, but most of your efforts will be centered around killing everything that comes on the screen.

Your vehicles are equipped with a short 2D (read this as WORTHLESS) radar and many different weapons (obtained as you go) to help you out. A really neat on-line map function is available to, but you are still vulnerable when it covers up your display.

The ever changing background graphics, clean rendered video cuts, varied enemies and so much more will keep you playing this game again and again. It is pure shoot em up action and not for someone not willing to put in the time to develop the lightning fast reflexes for a game this fast. I DO think that many people will get discouraged due to the difficulty (not really difficult just ungodly fast). But, if fast action and unbelievable graphics are your cup of tea, this is the game to get. It is in limited quantities when you can find it, but it is worth the \$30 or so you will probably end up paying for it.

#### VIDEO CREATOR -

Not a game, but a multimedia imagination tool. To put it simply, this is a way to combine those cool Euro mega-demos with your own audio CD music and choreograph the entire thing yourself!

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This is a video creation product. It isn't practical to consider it for professional video productions, but more for those abstract, mind bending videos you see on the TVs littered in techno-house-dance clubs. Very psychedelic. However, I would not discount it for professional use; you just might have to figure out how to apply it.

Basically, you select a track from your favorite CD, either really upbeat or really mellow is recommended. Then you can elect for VC to create a video for you randomly, or create your own using a pretty easy to use timeline method (similar to the old Deluxe Video software).

The random mode will create a killer video every time in just a couple minutes. It selects pictures, vector objects, mini-animations, special effects and more from the thousands on the VC CD. Once completed, you can either have it start automatically or create it and take you to the editor. It creates a perfectly timed video that lasts exactly to the end of the song. You can plug the CD32 right into your VCR and record this killer, often hypnotic, video. If you elect to create it yourself, you can select the many resources available or add your own graphics. NOTE: If you have an expanded (SX-1 equipped) CD32 with some good memory in it (I have four megs of FAST RAM in mine) VC will make great use of this by loading in bigger, better, and more pictures and effects, making it repeat effects less and less. Don't worry, though; you will get a good show even without the extra memory. It is just a benny.

It is all very cool, but there are a lot of restrictions you should be aware of before you naff out your cash. First, the program is PAL and therefore is timed for european systems. Although you CAN run the program in NTSC and even record the results to an NTSC VCR, there are a couple of inherent problems. First, the bottom inch of the video is cut off, but usually doesn't detract from the video effect. Second, most of the menu items you will have to work with (and the status bar) are all on the bottom of the edit screens (which are also cut off) making creation even MORE of an experiment until you are used to it. Third, and most important, the videos are created by VC to be the length of the song as indicated by the CD track record. Since PAL is a slightly faster system, your videos will get cut short if you allow VC to do the job. A 3:00 song may only get a 2:54 video created. If you have a PAL displayable monitor, you can get around this by creating the video in PAL, then saving it, then reloading it in NTSC, tweeking the time, then play/record it. Which leads to the next problem.

You cannot save a video to the CD32's non-volatile RAM. They are simply too big. However, if you are using an A1200 with Zappo drive, or an expanded CD32, you can utilize any devices on the bus to save (and reload) the video (about 20K each). A mouse is also very helpful, although not necessary.

The bottom line is that if you plan to do something of the professional or serious type, you need an expanded CD32 or equivalent. If you have a system with HD, extra RAM, and a monitor, you will find this one of the most rewarding products you can buy for the CD32. If not, you might find yourself disappointed.

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## 1.9 amos

### Programming in AMOS - Part 1

Welcome to the wonderful world of programming! In the coming months, you are going to learn the basics of one of the hottest languages ever developed for any computer. AMOS, Easy AMOS, and AMOS Professional are three excellent packages to utilize to start making your own dream programs come true. Since most people have the original AMOS-THE CREATOR, all our examples will follow that packages' guidelines.

In this first part, we'll try and learn a little bit about the bare bones basics of general programming, and work into actual examples next issue. For those of you who have programmed before, this might seem kinda boring, but you may pick up some AMOS-specifics you didn't know about.

I am not a very structured programmer; therefore, my code often looks pretty craggly. However, I will try and be as organized as I can in the presentation of this tutorial. I am trying to make each of these articles 'stand alone' so we will not tackle anything REALLY major, but basically look at different 'mini-functions' that can be incorporated together to make a large project on your own.

These articles will assume you are familiar with the very basics of the AMOS editor (loading, running, saving programs and the like). If you are not comfortable with it, or I tend to lose you, go back to the manual and check out the chapters on the EDITOR.

The single hardest part of programming is coming up with the ideas for a clever program. Programmers are a dime a dozen, but GOOD PROGRAMS are not. AMOS has gotten a very bad reputation in the professional world because it gives so much power to those who probably shouldn't have ever been given it without guidance. With everyone being able to throw a proggy together, it is very much more likely that there will be more crappy ones too. I truly believe that AMOS can do anything your imagination can come up with.

Let's look at the basic layout of a program. It normally fits together in parts, making up the whole (unless you are me or John Graham; then it is a mess) functioning program. Here is a small example of code order...

INITIALIZATION/VARIABLE DECLARATION

INTRO/MENU

MAIN PROGRAM

SUBROUTINE 1

SUBROUTINE 2

SUBROUTINE xxxx

END OF PROGGY STUFF

This is how most programmers work. Usually the INITIALIZATION, MAIN

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PROGRAM and a couple of the SUBROUTINES are put together first, each growing as the program grows in complexity. Then more SUBROUTINES are added, then the INTRO/MENU and END OF PROGgy stuff is actually coded last.

Early programming languages required the use of line numbers to allow the program to know where each line of code was:

```
10 CLS
20 PRINT "WELCOME!"
30 INPUT "WHAT IS YOUR NAME?";N$
40 PRINT "HELLO, "+N$+", HOW ARE YOU?"
50 GOTO 20
```

This allowed the programmer to jump around from point to point in the program, giving him the ability to use the same routine over and over again. The above example shows an infinite looping program, since line 50 will ALWAYS send the program back to line 20. This also allows for conditionals to take place; like in this very simple password program:

```
10 INPUT "ENTER YOUR NAME:";N$
20 IF N$="PASSWORD" THEN GOTO 40
30 PRINT "INCORRECT PASSWORD. TRY AGAIN.":GOTO 10
40 PRINT "PASSWORD ACCEPTED!"
```

AMOS allows you to keep these line numbers if you wish. However, a much better process is available called LABELS. This lets you create routines by NAME so that you don't have to remember a thousand line numbers. Let's try the above example again, using LABELS.

```
START:
INPUT "ENTER YOUR NAME:";N$
IF N$<>"PASSWORD" THEN PRINT "INCORRECT PASSOWRD. TRY AGAIN.":GOTO START
PRINT "PASSWORD ACCEPTED!"
END
```

See? It is much easier. There is yet another way to piece together your programs, but it gets kinda ugly, so we won't get into it until a future issue.

Once you get an idea in mind, you should sketch it out on paper prior to beginning your code. It will help you organize better. I am not an advocate of the traditional flow chart (to be sure!) but just jotting stuff down will help.

Next, let's look at the core of programs; VARIABLES. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but they all serve the same basic function. They hold a value or expression that will change, be used multiple times, need to be compared, or will otherwise be manipulated. As you can imagine, there are MANY variables in every program. Each has its own unique designation and a following symbol (in some cases).

Variables in AMOS are of three basic types. String (or text), numeric, and floating point variables. Each require their own format. Let's look at them in detail.

STRING (or TEXT) Variable - For simplicity, let's say it can hold any printable character or symbol you can select with the keyboard. The

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variable must be followed by the dollar sign (\$) often called a 'string' by programmers. Examples are: A\$="HELLO";AMIGA\$="#1 COMPUTER!";Z\$="<== Excellent! ==>" and so on. You get the idea. String variables (in AMOS anyway) can be added and subtracted (quite a handy feature). For example: FIRST\$="SHANE " LAST\$="MONROE" NAME\$=FIRST\$+LAST\$. You may also subtract like this: A\$="HELLO THERE"-"E" This would render A\$="HLLLO THR". Neat eh?

**NUMERIC Variables** - These are whole numbers that can be added, subtracted, multiplied, divided, and much more. They are designated with letters alone, as such: A=10 B=55 SBC=234 CAT=983. Legal math for numeric variables may contain numbers or other variables. A=A+5 B=C+R G=6+323. Multiplication, division, and exponential notation require special characters; \*, /, and ^. For example: TIP=BILL\*.20 R=10/T MACH=C^10. As in all languages, math has a hierarchy which must be followed to get the proper results. Here is the order that is followed: ^, \*, /, +, -. These two expressions mean two different numbers: A=5\*5+6 A=5\*11. In the first expression renders a result of 31, while the second renders a result of 55. One way around rewriting your numeric variables is to use parenthesis. This will always for AMOS to figure these expressions FIRST. Example: A=1+2\*100/5^2 (this results in 9) where as A=((1+2)\*100)/(5^2) (results in 12). It may seem difficult and confusing, but play with it and you will understand it.

**FLOATING POINT Variables** - These are decimal numbers. Many programs require precision accuracy in calculation. They require a (#) symbol to denote them. In Numeric Variables, decimals are simply ignored, making the calculation process faster. For instance: A=2.2+5.5 (results in 7) where as A#=2.2+5.5 (results in 7.7). Avoid using floating point variables whenever possible as they are MUCH slower than regular numeric variables.

Back now to the basics of your program. Chances are that you will need to declare some of preset variables before the program begins such as lives, health, armor class, etc. (in say a Dungeons and Dragons kind of game). Since these may change in the game, you will want to make them variables. Therefore, the beginning of your program might contain the following:

```
LIVES=3:HEALTH=100:ARMOR=5
```

It is helpful to note that you cannot use spaces or symbols in your variable names, nor can you use AMOS Commands. If you need to space two words in your variables, use the underline (\_). The following are examples of ILLEGAL variable names that AMOS will not allow:

```
HIGH SCORE=10000 ER!@=567 INPUT$="TYPE"
```

HIGH\_SCORE=10000, however, WOULD be legal.

Now that we have touched on the longest initial building block of AMOS programming, we will continue next month by showing you general initializations and start up stuff to get your programs off the ground.

## 1.10 whererwe

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