Gateway Amiga Club, Inc.
Post Office Box 811
Bridgeton, MO 63044-0811

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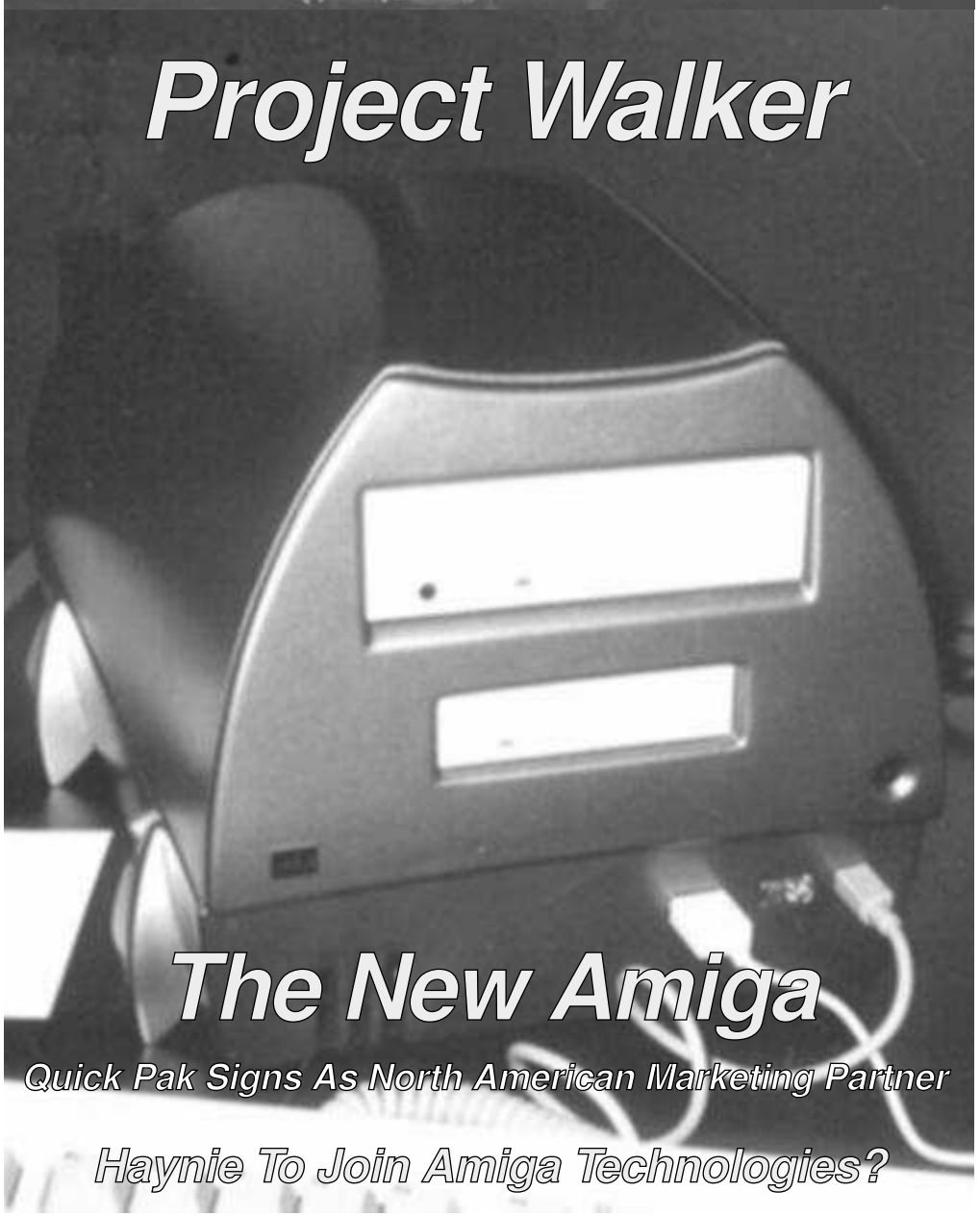
GAC FLAK

The Newsletter of the Gateway Amiga Club, Inc.
P. O. Box 811 Bridgeton, MO 63044-0811



Project Walker

The New Amiga

Quick Pak Signs As North American Marketing Partner

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Please make check payable to: **Gateway Amiga Club, Inc.** Mark Dues in notation. Bring your check and this application to a meeting, or mail them to the address above.

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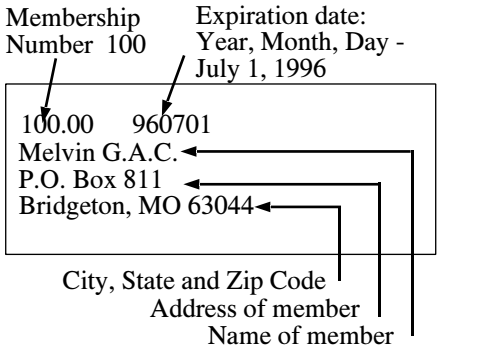
Meeting Times

The Gateway Amiga Club meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm. These meetings are open to the public.
The 1st Wednesday meeting is at Washington University Medical School Auditorium at 660 Euclid, St. Louis. The 3rd Wednesday meeting is held at the Prairie Commons Branch Library at 915 Utz Lane, Hazelwood, MO.
Maps are on page 14 at the right.

Labels

Here is an explanation of the mailing labels on the cover of the newsletter. If the expiration date is hilited, it's time to renew. We will no longer be sending newsletters to individuals whose membership has expired.



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Who Done It?

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Final Layout
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Wayne Womack
John Wilson
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Allowable submission methods are:

1. **Files** may be sent as **archives** to wmaddock@icon-stl.net or MO Amiga Dispensary. See HELP Key.
2. Files may be mailed, **on floppy**, to:
   G.A.C. FLAK editor
   2610 Del Oak Drive #J
   St. Louis, MO 63129-4247
3. **Floppies** may be handed to the editor at any of the meetings.

Articles are edited using FinalWriter, WordWorth, etc. They are then imported into Soft-Logik's PageStream3. Scans are done on an Epson ES800c scanner. Other programs utilized are ADPro, ImageFX, DPaint, Brilliance, ImageStudio, BME, etc.

An A1200 with 10 megs of RAM is used to layout and edit ***G.A.C. FLAK***. Masters are output on an HP LJ4MP.

All views and opinions of the writers are theirs alone, and are not necessarily held by the publisher, the Gateway Amiga Club Inc., its officers, or members. G.A.C. or its members assume no responsibility for damages due to errors, omissions, or ad content.

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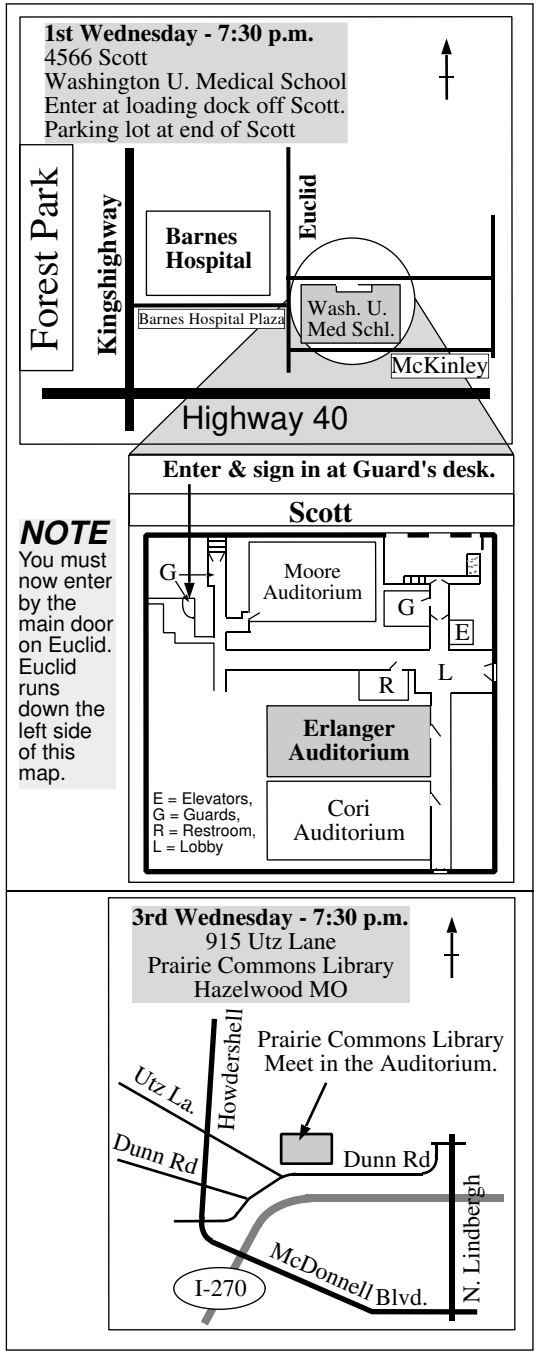
GAC meeting maps



Up and Coming

Let me apologize right from the start for the sloppiness of this issue. The news within is hot and there's no time for prettying it up.

In order to fill the newsletter quickly, I have used three rather large bitmapped graphics. The first, on page 7, Is the full picture, a portion of which makes up the cover art. Thanks to John Wilson for his graphics processing prowess in making this photograph presentable. The photo is ©1996 EPIC DATA. The second is a fragment of the version on AmiNET. It was cropped directly in PageStream3.0i, as is the case with the third, Seychellen.jpg.

There have been rumours flying about Dave Haynie joining AT in Germany. They are **not** true! Mr. Haynie is doing a small amount of consulting with them, and is **not** moving from Jersey.

AT has signed up Quick Pak as the North American Marketing partner. They will be responsible for large-scale distribution (50 or more units) and for marketing. The rest remains with SMG.

With the exception of the letter from Pat Larkin and the notice about upcoming demos (Bob Scharp), all of the articles in this issue are from the Internet.

Given the urgency of the news contained here. There has been no time to contact advertisers and get their ads in place. The exception being the A to Z ad at right.

Interesting events are forthcoming, and plentiful potential exists. Please stay tuned. If you are not a member, please use the form on the facing page to join the club. There is much more benefit available by joining than what you get from this newsletter.

William F. Maddock

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Editors Note:
This comes from a technical staff writer at CU-Amiga magazine.

Project Walker Specifications

CPU
68EC030 40Mhz (Proto 25Mhz while custom chip Tony a PLA/GAL)
Space for FPU. Could be socket or FPU as standard in production unit.

SUPPORT

Real time clock as standard.
Hard drive as standard (size depending on market when manufactured).
CD-ROM drive (Quad Speed) as standard.
Billed as 1MB CHIP RAM + 4MB of FAST as standard. Likely to be 2+4.

ASSORTED

PCB Currently 6 layers but expected to reduce to 4 and footprint to be reduced noticably. Rectangular optimised PCM layout is far cheaper to produce.
Return to dual in-line socketted 8520 CIAs even at greater cost.
PCMCIA in prototype but expected to be dropped for production unit.

EXPANSION

Standard multicontroller PC style IO chip. Exact model undecided since they are largely similar to include in the design and program.

Features

EPP Parallel port
High speed serial port
E-IDE port used for CD-ROM and hard drives
Floppy controller*
*-Floppy Controller is obviously capable of full speed (not half spin) HD floppy disk access but this provides a dilemma in how to support existing hardware illegal DD floppy access. Some sort of electronic switching is being considered as well as a physical switch/cable relocation to move between the new controller and the standard Paula-based interface. A change in the HD Amiga floppy architecture is also planned.

OS

Currently V43.1, KS 3.2 will move to a set of 1MB chips which while AT arent sure if it will be provided by THEMSELVES as a retro upgrade for existing machines (A3K/A4K and A1200 can take 1MB ROMs apparently) they are open to a 3rd party deal at the least.
Contains mainly bug-fixes and small enhancements like the removal of the 2GB limit from FFS.

CDFS revamped and bug-fixed to function with Scala etc and obviously the new E-IDE interface.

included some fairly powerful software for disk setup (the same as that used by the RapidFire II, apparently. Sorry, I cant remember the name) but essentially no documentation for this software. The Ferret documentation focused on an older software package.

I bought the Cobra and Ferret in conjunction with an IOmega ZIP drive. I have had no errors with this drive or the controller, but the ZIPs transfer rates are not exactly astonishing enough to push any SCSI controller. The Ferrets software did a reasonable job of recognising and setting up the ZIP drive but I could not find any way of setting up the drive using standard settings.

The boards have been highly reliable since installation.

Although they dont make a fuss of it, the Cobra includes a real-time clock (unlike some earlier boards). The 68882 has been minimally useful (mainly used for Scenery Animator).

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation for the Cobra was of reasonable quality given that there wasnt really all that much to document. I picked up a clue about the board scraping against the shielding by reading the manual closely. The actual installation instructions could have been more helpful, however.

Documentation for the Ferret was moderately woeful. Certain points in the installation procedure were not explained well (the lay-flat connector has two sides, slightly different; did it matter which was on which side? I have no idea.) Not really suitable for beginners.

Documentation for each product basically consisted of standard, cheap-photocopy, stapled, 8-page booklets. Could be better, could be worse.

LIKES

Its proved fairly reliable. It is, to the best of my knowledge, the cheapest way (barring a standalone MMU) to obtain an MMU for the Amiga. The Ferret, since its not limited by the PCMCIA port, I expect to be faster for SCSI operations than, say, the Squirrel. The PCMCIA port is left free.

Its probably one of the most versatile cards available in this price range.

DISLIKES AND SUGGESTIONS

The problem where the board scrapes against the shielding during installation needs fixing. It wouldnt matter if there were no circuitry on the board at that point, but there is.

Documentation for the Ferret needs work.

The Ferrets SCSI port sort of hangs loosely in the back port of the A1200. Theres nothing holding it in place but the Cobra itself. The potential for disaster here makes me nervous. A sudden tug could wreck the machine. Its far too easy for dust and other foreign substances to get into this hole.

There was no way to confirm independently that the Ferret was being recognised.

They probably decided that the engineering team needed to duplicate the device would be sufficient protection. I suppose that this makes it a dongle.

MACHINE USED FOR TESTING

Amiga A1200. 2MB Chip, 2MB PCMCIA RAM (16 bit, VVEERRYY SSLLOOWW)

1 external 880K floppy.

Supplied (Seagate?) 40MB internal hard drive.

IOmega ZIP Removable Disk SCSI drive (100MB cartridges).

Kickstart & Workbench 3.0

INSTALLATION

Installation was a nightmare.

Initially I put the 4MB SIMM onto the card. Then, with an unreasonable amount of force, I managed to get it into the trapdoor connector. This was the first place that I used the screwdriver. I then pulled out the back panel on the A1200 to fit the Ferret. The Ferret attaches to the Cobra with a special lay-flat connector which is somewhat finicky about exact positioning.

Turned it on. Nothing happened. Blank screen.

To cut a long story short, part of the board was scraping against the shielding around the motherboard. I ended up opening up the system (the second time that screwdriver came in handy) and put a wad of paper between the board and the shielding. After this the system booted correctly. But it didnt recognise the Ferret.

I detached then re-attached the Ferret and it started working. That finicky connector.

REVIEW

The installation process was my main problem with the board. Since the initial problems, the board has worked flawlessly.

I was pleasantly surprised by the speedup with my internal hard drive; being an IDE drive, the accelerator sped up access noticeably. The PCMCIA RAM no longer had an opportunity to slow down the system. SysInfo reported that the system was a little faster than an A3000, as I would have expected. The system in general was noticeably snappier.

Unfortunately I cant give any solid benchmarks at this point. :-(Compiling Angband with SAS/C 6.55 and full optimization took a couple of hours. The Angband sources are about 700K.

The 28MHz Cobra includes an MMU (the main reason why I bought it rather than the 40MHz model, which is only slightly more expensive.) I havent yet had opportunity to use it but it should be very useful for development work.

The system included a floppy containing a utility to map Kickstart to RAM; I have not yet used this utility. The Ferret

SLOTS

Theres one slot located dead center in the motherboard. However its split into two sections so that it may house 2 cards if needs be. The exact details on the signals and purpose of each half werent finalised or available but basically one can surmise that one is a CPU slot and the other a video slot. Signals will be duplicated so that different cards could function.

Amiga Technologies will market their own PPC upgrade! Though it was developed in conjuncton with Phase 5, AT will provide the upgrade which will contain a new OS on-board and such forth. PPC603 based.

If its not obvious, its possible in theory to plug in a GFX board in the video half and a 680x0 based accelerator in the CPU half. Its not clear if the PPC card will need both or just the CPU slot.

Another major application could be to make a Zorro and/or PCI break out board from this slot. No, there are NO Zorro or PCI slots as standard though the physical nature of the slot is PCI style.

An additional small IO slot is being considered. 3rd party simple hardware projects such as a networking facility, extra serial ports or a sampler could be used with this as well as home made projects conceivably. This isnt decided, just considered at this time.

CASE

The only way to describe it is with a picture. Interestingly, AT says that the hood could be raised by spacers and such forth to make more room internally for a bus board for cards etc.

TIMEFRAME

AT says that the design will be finalised in the summer ready for production. Its not decided if Solectron will be the manufacturer. The production unit should be available in the fall for the Christmas Season.

FINAL

The name Walker is not the production name! Therefore we call it Project Walker. The name is undecided and Amiga Technologies have decided to run a competition for the name of the unit! This competition will be run through CU-Amiga magazine. Both by writing in to the standard address and E-mailing walker-compo@cu-amiga.demon.co.uk. Just state your name in the body of the mail. Thats all thats required If you win Ill be in touch via E-mail to sort out the prizes: 1st: Amiga Surf Pack; 2nd: Amiga Magic Pack.

AFTERWORD

I dont know about you but I dig this machine from the bottom of my heart. Its made me feel better about the future of the Amiga. Its a step in what I believe was the right direction.

Three cheers for AT!

Upcoming Demonstrations of the Fantastic Amiga Computers Capabilities brought to you by your friendly fellow club members. Have you signed up to show off your favorite program yet?

March 20

Zip Drive	An explanation of how easy it is to use a Zip drive on your Amiga. Charles Meier talked about how he installed a Zip drive on the clubs A1200 using Bill Maddocks Squirrel SCSI device. A discussion on how the clubs 60 meg hard drive was replaced with our new hard drive. (The old drive is for sale.) Charles told all about how he backed up the drive on the Zip drive cartridges the club bought.

April 3

Networking your Amiga	Yes, Dick Brewster will explain and demonstrate Networking on the Amiga. Dick intends to bring both of his Amiga computers and show just how he networked them together. Youll be able to see him type in one and listen to it access the other machines hard drive. He will explain in detail the problems and the solutions he found to make all this possible with the various Amiga programs he uses.

April 17

ThemePARK	Demonstration by Bob Scharp. This exciting game by Bullfrog took the Brits by storm.

PRODUCT NAME

DKB Cobra 030 Accelerator (28MHz)
DKB Ferret SCSI adapter for DKB accelerators

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Cobra is a 28MHz 68030 SCSI accelerator with MMU for the A1200.
The Ferret is a SCSI adapter which work together with the Cobra.

AUTHOR/COMPANY INFORMATION

Name: Ronny Cook
Address: 8/17 Everton Rd, Strathfield, NSW 2135 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61-2-550-4448 (work)
FAX: +61-5-519-2551

E-mail: ronny@tmx.com.au
World Wide Web: http://www.tmx.com.au/~ronny

LIST PRICE

Cobra with 4MB RAM: AUD$499 (I think - I paid $449)
Ferret: AUD$199 (again, I paid $199 so this may not be right.)
I bought the card with a 68882/33 FPU & crystal which cost an additional AUD$75.

DEMO VERSION

None.

SPECIAL HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

HARDWARE

An Amiga 1200. A screwdriver would probably be handy.

SOFTWARE

None.

COPY PROTECTION

Letters

Dear Chief Editor,

Just got your March newsletter today, and I must say, it looks great! I wish I could get my halftone screen to look so good! And that coverI dont know where to begin! Lets see: I tried to include those pics of the scanned brochures for the A4000T and A1200 but they didnt come out nearly as well (I think I tried to print them too big). And the scanned Back for the future poster also looks great, too. And the blacks are so smooth and solid, with no fading (MegaBall screen shots). But what really impressed me the most were the masthead, with the arch and the buildings showing through the title, and the pics of Dr. Kittel, Herr Tyschtschenko and Monsieur Bourdin. I have to ask you: where did you get those great head shots? And what frequency do you set your halftones to? Also, how do you duplicate your pages? Oh, yes, and how do you get the copy to print so close to the edges of the paper?

Our masters are printed on an HP LJ3 and copied on an office copier, and I have to be very careful not to push the halftones to too great a density. I tried printing a Toaster Framestore portrait of our vice president at 90 lpi last April, and it copied very poorly, even after a lot of work in HamLab Plus. The highest I dare go is 75 lpi. It makes me wonder if the HP LJ4MP is capable of 600 dpi output. A friend of mine has the HP LJ4L, and I thought it would only go to 300.

In short, I am impressedkudos to you and your staff!

Just to keep your head from becoming TOO swelled, I did notice a few typos. For instance: on the membership application, in the line that starts Do you wish your name and address... Remember the old rhyme about I before E, except after C? Im talking about the word recieve, which should be receive. I wouldnt even mention it, except that I figure this page is in every issue. I also notice that, of the four times Bob Scharps name appears, it has lost its c in half of them. (Up and Coming, page 3, and byline, page 9.)

Not that our. newsletter is perfect, by any means. Jill often tells me it just wouldnt be the same if we didnt find at least one typo in each issue after it has been mailed! For example, I just noticed this month something that has been in the A.S.K. Info box on page 2 of every issue since I started as editor (November 9416 issues!). In the paragraph about AMIGA OnLine, our BBS: Special access is is given to ASK members... At least in recent issues the two iss appear at the end of one line and the beginning of the next, where almost no one would ever notice. I just looked at the other issues, and theyre in the middle of the line!

So anyway, congratulations on such a fine-looking publication. Heres to many future issues!

Pat Larkin
Amiga Society of Kentuckiana
Louisville, KY

	Build the highest and fastest roll-coaster ever, the spookiest haunted house etc., all in AGA on the clubs A1200.
May 1	
AFS (AmiFileSafe)	Demonstration by Dick Brewster. This new file system for the Amiga is getting put on a lot of machines! Check out its features and the reason why they say it Zoomsssssssssssssss.

Other demos coming up are a CAD drawing package, Image FX, Analyze (the spreadsheet−not dead yet!), Music of Bars and Pipes and SuperJam, Cybervision Board, Address Book vs Organizer, SuperBase Pro the relational database, Final Calc, Auto CLI and any others you can think of. Just write your ideas down on the demo suggestions form with your own name so we can talk to you about your wishes. Or call me, Bob Scharp, at 314-739-5181 and leave a message, fax me at that same number, or see me at a meeting.

Bargain-Priced Exposure To The World's Most Loyal Customers!

In the spring of 1995 a miracle occured. A dead computer platform was resurrected. While the new owners are a necessary ingredient in this tale, the real reason the Amiga has arisen, like a phoenix, from the ashes of Commodore is the special quality of its users.

There are quite a few special people in this world, but when it comes to loyalty Amiga users are a breed apart.

By the shear willpower of these people Amiga is back from the dead. Against all odds, against the wills of many corporate computer giants, inspite of the ridicule thrown their way by those that think a computer is nothing more than a pile of metal and plastic, Amiga users brought their computer back.

Amiga users have learned not to wait for the manufacturer to promote their productthey do it themselves.

Isn't this the kind of customer you want?

Even Amiga users can't read minds. You must let them know that you're out thereand you support their cause. You must advertise.

Advertisements are always welcome in the ***GAC FLAK***. Ad Policy on page 14 shows our ad policy and pricing. It shows very reasonable prices. We print over 100 copies every issue, exchange issues with as many as 20 user-groups nation-wide and upload copies to two sites on the Internet: AmiNET (docs/mags), and the ***GAC FLAK*** Web Page at http://www.icon-stl.net/~wmaddock/.

If it's world-wide exposure you're looking for, we regularly get over 100 hits on the web page per month and over 20 downloads per issue from AmiNET. That's **world-wide exposure** at just $35 a page **very reasonable rates**.

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The Newsletter of the Gateway Amiga Club, Inc.

AT Walker Info

From Michael Metz (Amiga Technologies GmbH)

Hello All,

I think you did not get the latest news from us through the internet. So Ill do a small summary about our current activities:

1. At CeBIT the new AMIGA Walker (this is the current name for the project) will be shown. This prototype AMIGA is a working model of what we intend to have on the shelves in September.

2. A 68EC030/40 MHz based AMIGA with AGA chipset, Quadspeed CD ROM, additional Enhanced Parallel Port (bidirectional), enhanced Serial (including MIDI support) and PC like HD floppy support. On the motherboard there is one slot for future expansions. This slot is meant as a CPU slot which shall be expandable to multiple bus and CPU systems. There is a floppy bay inside with AMIGA DD floppy support. The new design of case is able to be expanded to a tower slice by slice, so no more external stuff (except for scanners etc) is needed. Each 3rd party vendor will be able to receive those slices from AMIGA to built in his expansions.

3. The time scedule for the first PPC AMIGA was confirmed for spring 97. If it will be a ready selling machine by that time can not be confirmed. There will be an PPC AMIGA including some major ports of the OS at least as a prototype.

4. At CeBIT in Hannover there will be a devcon at the Motorola booth for all important commercial developers to develop key applications. Those applications shall be on the hardware and on the software side for the new PPC AMIGA. Mailings left our house (I hope we did not forget somebody). This is just a short resume.. Please contact Gilles Bourdin (gbo@amiga.de) for further info.

Michael Metz

PS: Sorry, I will not be able to keep contact because of training the German dealerships (including ESCOM) for the next 6-8 weeks.