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[Amiga Monitor Logo]

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All business and concerns associated with The Amiga Monitor are currently handled through email at 103165.3700@compuserve.com, and the email address to the author of each article can be found at the end of each article.

Availability of The Amiga Monitor

"The Amiga Monitor" is published monthly online in a variety of formats. Its

home location is:

The Webb Site, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>

[Click here to view the current complete list of official mirror sites.](#)

[Check out this page to register your site as an official mirror!](#)

The Amiga Monitor is based in Binghamton, New York, USA. The Amiga Monitor, HTML Version, is optimized for IBrowse on the Amiga.

Join The Mailing List!

The Amiga Monitor is now offering mailing lists so that issues of The Amiga Monitor can be distributed directly to you in UUEncoded format. There are currently three mailing lists, varying with format: HTML LhA, HTML ZIP, and AmigaGuide LhA. Send an email message to: 103165.3700@compuserve.com in which you specify the list(s) you would like to join.

Become a Writer for The Amiga Monitor!

Send email to s.ormes@genie.com describing what sort of writing you would be interested in doing (If you have already been in contact with a member of the staff regarding contributing, please continue to work with that person unless otherwise notified). We may be able to publish your work.

You can indirectly contribute to the content of the magazine as well if you have any Amiga-related product you would like us to review, or any interesting pieces of information that we could cover or investigate further.

Editor's Notes...

Well, it's been just over a month, and here we are again. I'd like to start off by thanking all of you who helped to make our first issue a success; your interest is appreciated, and it is our goal to continue to earn it in the future.

The last month has been an interesting one; let's just say it's amazing to see how fast one person's email traffic can increase in such a short time ;). Seriously, though, the interest and feedback were appreciated; in general, all contact with you, the readers, helps to improve this magazine. This has, of course, been a time of developing and implementing a working system of bureaucracy by which we can efficiently and effectively manage all AM-related business. This system is much-improved from a month ago, but is, of course, still in its early stages. So I ask that you bear with us if there has been any delay or omission in processing your communications with us; we're working on it, and we appreciate your patience in working with this issue. As a result of requests and inquiries from a number of readers, we have added several new "features" to the magazine: there are now mailing lists for distribution of the magazine, as well as a well-defined policy on the addition of new mirror sites, in addition to a current list thereof. In addition, I am happy to say that the HTML code, while still IBrowse-Enhanced, is now significantly more Netscape-friendly. If you detect any major

formatting errors, feel free to let us know, as we endeavor to iron out all the bugs and make the magazine more widely-readable. Oh, yes, I can also tell you that you shouldn't be able to find any stray hyphens in this issue ;).

With that, I'm going to leave the rest up to our contributors for now, and hope you enjoy reading the second issue of The Amiga Monitor.

Michael Webb

Editor-in-Chief

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Amiga Monitor Mirror Sites

This list is subject to growth and change.

The Webb Site, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>: This is the Official Home Site for The Amiga Monitor. All formats are available here. New issues appear here the soonest.

CUCUG, <http://www.cucug.org/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>: The home site of the Amiga Web Directory. Mirrors The Amiga Monitor online in HTML format.

<http://www.livewire.com.au/amiga/cucug/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>: CUCUG's mirror in Australia

<http://www.vol.it/mirror/amiga/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>: CUCUG's mirror in Italy

<http://www.ispid.com.pl/mirrors/cucug/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>: CUCUG's mirror in Poland

<http://www.iprom.com/amigaweb/amiga.html/amiga/amiinfo/monitor/>: CUCUG's mirror in The United Kingdom

San Diego's "Aminet Source," <http://www.tmisnet.com/>: Carries archives of The Amiga Monitor. Other status information uncertain at this time.

Craig Graham's web site, <http://www.blksheep.demon.co.uk/>: Mirrors The Amiga Monitor online in HTML.

The AmigaUser forum on CompuServe, <http://www.compuserve.com/cgi-bin/exp?amigauser>: You must be a member of CompuServe, and have your browser properly set up for interfacing with CIM, to use that URL. Or, if you are a member not using CIM, simply type "GO AMIGAUSER" at the prompt. Once there, search the libraries for keywords such as "Webb" or "Monitor."

The Starship Amiga Roundtable on Genie: you must be a member of Genie in order to access

this. Type in keyword "Amiga," or "Move 555" to get to the Amiga RT, or use ↔ navigation buttons if you have a Genie frontend program. Once there, search the libraries for keywords such ↔ as "Webb" or "Monitor."

Check out this page to register your site as an official mirror!

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How to register your site as an official mirror

If you are interested in registering your site as an official mirror site of The ↔ Amiga Monitor, read on!

Send EMail to 103165.3700@compuserve.com with "Register AM Mirror" as the subject, ↔ and specify the following information:

- * A precise URL to be listed as the mirror site
- * An EMail address to which new issues of AM can be sent, and with which we can ↔ communicate with you
- * A short description of the site
- * The format(s) you will be carrying (HTML online, AmigaGuide online, HTML LhA, ↔ HTML ZIP, AmigaGuide LhA)
- * Whether you will keep archives of old issues available
- * A country or general geographic location of the server supplying your site

That's it! If we register your site as an official mirror site, you get a listing ↔ in the mirrors.htm file that comes with every issue, and eventually on The Webb Site itself. Thank you for ↔ supporting The Amiga Monitor.

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Part one of this series takes a step back to the REALLY early years of the Amiga -- where it all began. Adapted from a presentation by RJ Mical in the mid 1980's.

Amiga MIDI Tools We Can All Use
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Fred Ericksen investigates the Amiga Music/MIDI scene, and tells what's out there for all current or would-be Amiga musicians. If you do music, this is your guide.

Michael Webb's Investigation of AmigaDOS
By Michael Webb

Shortcuts, keyboard equivalents, hints, suggestions, and otherwise "neat"

things -- Michael Webb gets out his digital magnifying glass and starts looking for clues...clues to make using your Amiga easier and more pleasant.

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Michael Webb's Amiga Gaming Retrospective continues this month with a look back at MarbleMadness!

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The staff of The Amiga Monitor tackles your problems and answers your questions, just like we do every night live on Genie.

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By you, the readers

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The Sam Report: Thirty Miles from West Chester

One may ask just how devoted Amiga users are; one of the more remarkable answers to that question takes the form of the Cecil Amiga Users Group.

s.ormes@genie.com

So close to the center of Amigadom back in 1994, Jerimy Campbell of Rising Sun, Maryland made plans to form an Amiga users' club in rural Cecil County. Dissatisfied with the elitist attitudes prevalent in the nearest user group in Newark, Delaware (where they scoffed at the youngster who only ran an A500 with no hard drive), Jerimy dreamed of creating his own "user friendly" club in Rising Sun.

Plans were well underway when Commodore ruined everything by failing. West Chester became just another town thirty miles away in another state. Like so many devoted but discouraged Amigans, Jer put his dreams on hold and continued to enjoy his new A1200. "I couldn't see starting a user group for a computer that was not even being manufactured", he said.

And then.... hope arrived in the form of Escom/Amiga Technologies. Machines were being manufactured for Europeans at least, and the time seemed right for the sun to rise on The Cecil Amiga Users Group.

"Now I could start my group on the wave of rebirth. I did some preparation, advertising in papers, sending our flyer to magazines and Amiga dealers, inserting our flyer in Amiga magazines at bookstores, calling people on the phone, etc."

says Jerimy. A fellow Amigan, John Goodie, ran an appliance store and offered it as a meeting place. CAUG was in business!

Learning from his previous club experience, Jer Campbell makes sure there are 2-3 Amigas running at every monthly club meeting, and takes pains to ensure that the novices get plenty of attention. He went so far as to buy up a bunch of A500/600s at an inventory liquidation so that the club and its members would have access to machines.

Membership of CAUG is currently about 40, of which some 12-15 will show up for meetings. A monthly newsletter is published and the club will soon have its own Web page. A software library is maintained for members. The club has its own logo, available on tee shirts too. A typical monthly meeting includes presentations on such things as enhancing your WB 2.0, game demos, showing the Deathbed Vigil tape, etc. Operating cash is generated solely from raffles at the monthly meeting....no dues!

CAUG is listed in the user group sections of such prestigious mags as Videomaker, Video Toaster User and Amazing Computing. I saw it recently in The Informer, an important newsletter in New York State. His dream realized, Jerimy Campbell puts it into perspective in his typically modest way:

"I don't have any real serious goal for this group. I just wanted a place where Amiga users could meet up once a month to confirm that they were not alone."

A message from Sam... You may be thinking "Big deal...an Amiga club doing what Amiga clubs do everywhere!" To that I respond that you should try to find Rising Sun, Maryland on your map. I know of clubs in major cities that are lucky to get 12-15 Amigans to a monthly meeting. This is the boonies, folks!

I say "well done, Jerimy!" The same to co-founders John Goodie, Ed Belote, and George Lomas. Born in the chaos of the post-CBM era and keeping the flame burning, CAUG should serve as an example to all of us. Thirty miles from West Chester!

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Our Charter...Continued

In our first issue, you got to meet all of us except for Paul. Now he provides his story as an addendum to the original message.

103165.3700@compuserve.com

Last month, I outlined some of our key goals in undertaking this project, and most of our staff members included a little information about their backgrounds so as to illustrate how they would fit into this magazine.

Unfortunately, Paul Somerfeldt, our Chief Contributing Writer, joined the magazine late, and was therefore unable to provide his "autobiography" in time for the publication date; but his background is as important and interesting as any of ours. So without further ado, I present you with Paul Somerfeldt's story:

psomerfeldt@delphi.com

I jumped on board this little outing a little later than most of the rest of the folks here. As a result, I have been a bit slower up to speed than the rest of the folks here. In fact, as I write this, I have just read the charter page.

Another problem I have had with writing this is that I have been pondering long and hard about what to say. The answer is, I have nothing special or unique to offer in the way of the Amiga. I do have a unique perspective, though. After reviewing the other editors' life stories, I find that I may have entered the Amiga world both first, and last.

When I was in high school a couple of years ago or so, my home room teacher had on one desk a box with a television set on it. This box didn't have a tuner attached to it, though. It had a Commodore PET attached to it. One of the original ones, with the white display, and a "chicklet" keyboard. I spend my first couple of years of computer programming on that machine. Microsoft Basic and the CBM PET. Then I discovered the Atari 800, and Star Raiders (IMHO the best computer game ever.) I remember spending \$80 to upgrade the RAM in that machine from 24k to 30k. My, how much memory has come down in price. In 1983 I worked for Atari ComputerCamps as a teaching assistant. In 1984 the fools actually hired me back, but before the summer started Atari was sold to the enemy. Jack Trameil, late of CBM, bought several portions of Atari from Warner Communications. He announced the making of a new computer, a 16 bit computer that would take the world by storm. The Atari press fell all over themselves, while speaking not so well of another revolutionary 16 bit computer.

Warner Communications, in its infinite wisdom, decided that no one would ever need a 16 bit computer, and would not let research be done on one. Plus Warner had a tendency to annoy their engineers for no apparent reason. That other computer was the Amiga, designed by the one of the fathers of my beloved Atari.

I say that I am probably the newest user here, as I didn't actually get an Amiga until 1991, when I bought a used 2000 from that same high school teacher. (Thanks for everything, Jim.) From a bare system, I have built it up slowly to a decent system, capable of most anything I want to do with it. Along the way, I have learned a lot about the machine. I have learned by error, and by participating in the Genie RTC's. Of particular note is a man whom I only knew as Pete, or PETER-CPM. He, among all others, has helped me the most. He is no longer with us, and although I can never pass on as much knowledge or patience in helping as he gave me, I try to give as much help as I can.

Unlike others here, I have no special fields, but bounce around to a lot of different areas. Word Processing, telecommunications, programming, and whatever else I can think of that day.

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Lynx: Dinosaur or Dragster?

A look at one of the first, and still the fastest, WWW browsers

<mailto:d.green7@genie.com>

If someone observes you using a web browser that does not support graphics, you invariably hear, "No pictures! Get something modern!" The truth is, while Lynx may not be cutting edge, it can easily hold its own against anything out there for information retrieval.

The first point that it has going for it is that it is faster than graphic-type browsers for the simple reason that you don't have to wait for graphics to download. This does not mean that you cannot get them, it just means that you get only the ones that you want. A second point is that it is still usable at baud rates as low as 2400! I will grant that it is slow at that speed, however. (A graphic-type interface is almost unusable at any speed less than 14,400.) A third point is that it has become a standard.

This means that once you understand how to use Lynx, you will be able to go into most libraries that offer an internet connection and "cruise the net".

Lynx should be offered by most of the commercial providers. I know that it is available on Genie.

This article is not an attempt to "put down" graphic-type interfaces. IBrowse, AWeb, and all of the rest are great! My point is that folks that don't have access to them should not feel left out. Lynx is also a very good Internet tool.

Now that I have expounded on the virtues of Lynx, I am sure that you are just dying to know how to use it! I will cover here the basics of using Lynx. If there is sufficient interest, I will write an article covering it in more detail.

The arrow keys on your keyboard will control most of the action.

The down arrow key will jump from link to link downward in a document, highlighting them as it goes. The up arrow key will do the same going up. The right arrow key will jump to the page that the highlighted link is connected to. The left arrow key will jump to the last link that you jumped from. If a document that you are viewing is longer than the screen, Lynx will print a message on the bottom of the screen telling you to press the spacebar for the next page.

Another important key is the "G" key. If you hit this, Lynx will prompt you to enter the URL to go to (after entering which you press "enter"). If you forget which keys do what, at the bottom of the screen Lynx will display a reminder. If the reminder is not there, hit the "O" key. The "O" key will bring up Lynx's options. There are about eleven options, but the one you need to be concerned with for the moment is the last one "U)ser mode". Hit the "U" key and then the space key to toggle through the options. (There are Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced). When it is set for Novice, hit the "S" key, this will save your options. Hit the "R" to return to Lynx.

Well, that's it for this time. During the coming months I will write more articles on using the Internet. If you have a suggestion, send me some EMail.

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The Time Capsule - Part I

Where it ALL began

mailto:g.noggle@genie.com

"Always hold your head high, my little friend, you've done very well for yourself, and I'm proud of you."-RJ Mical, Director of Intuition-

The following is based on a presentation by RJ Mical in Boston in late 1986 or early 1987, as recorded by Gary Oberbrunner.

The Early Days

Amiga Computer Inc. had its beginnings, strangely enough, RJ began, with the idea of three Florida doctors who had a spare \$7 million to invest. They thought of opening a department store franchise, but (as RJ said) they wanted to try something a bit more exciting. So they decided to start a computer company. "Yeah, that's it! A computer company! That's the ticket! :-)"

They found Jay Miner, who was then at Atari (boo hiss) and Dave Morse, the VP of sales (you can see their orientation right off..) they lifted from Tonka Toys. The idea right from the start was to make the most killer game box they could. That was it, and nothing more. However Jay and the techies had other ideas. Fortunately they concealed them well, so the upper management types still thought they were just getting a great game machine. Of course the market for machines like that was hot in 1982...

They got the name out of the thesaurus; they wanted to convey the thought of friendliness, and Amiga was the first synonym in the list. The fact that it came lexically before Apple didn't hurt any either.

However before they could get a machine out the door, they wanted to establish a "market presence" which would give them an established name and some distribution channels - keep thinking "game machine" - which they did by selling peripherals and software that they bought the rights to from other vendors. Principal among these was the Joyboard, a sort of joystick that you stand on, and you sway and wiggle your hips to control the switches under the base. They had a ski game of course, and some track & FIELD TYPE GAMES THAT THEY SOLD WITH THIS JOYBOARD. But one game the folks at Amiga Inc. thought up themselves was the Zen Meditation game, where you sat on the Joyboard and tried to remain perfectly motionless. This was perfect relaxation from product development, as well as from the ski game. And in fact, this is where the term Guru Meditation comes from; the only way to keep sane when your machine crashes all the time is the Joyboard. The execs tried to get them to take out the Guru, but the early developers, bless 'em, raised such a hue and cry they had to put it back in right away.

When RJ interviewed with Amiga Computer (he had been at Williams) in July 1983, the retail price target for the Amiga was \$400. Perfect for a killer game machine. By the time he accepted three weeks later, the target was up to \$600 and rising fast. Partly this was due to the bottom dropping completely out of the game market; the doctors and the execs knew they had to have something more than just another game box to survive. That's when the techies' foresight in designing in everything from disk controllers to keyboard (yes, the original original Amiga had NO KEYBOARD), ports, and disk drives began to pay off.

The exciting part of the Amiga's development, in a way its adolescence, that magical time of loss of innocence and exposure to the beauties and cruelties of the real world, began as plans were made to introduce it, secretly of course, at the winter CES on January 4th, 1984(?).

Adolescence

The software was done ten days before the CES, and running fine on the simulators. Unfortunately when the hardware was finally powered up several days later, (surprise) it didn't match its simulations. This hardware, of course, was still not in silicon. The custom chips were in fact large breadboards, placed vertically around a central core and wired together round the edges like a Cray. Each of the three custom 'chips' had one of these towers, each one a mass of wires. According to RJ, the path leading up to the first Amiga breadboard, with its roll-out antistatic flooring, the antistatic walls just wide enough apart for one person to fit through and all the signs saying Ground Thyself, made one think of nothing so much as an altar to some technology god.

After working feverishly right up to the opening minutes of the CES, including most everybody working on Christmas, they had a working Amiga, still in breadboard, at the show in the booth in a special enclosed gray room, so they could give private demos. Unfortunately if you rode up the exhibit-hall escalator and craned your neck, you could see into the room from the top.

The Amiga was, RJ reminisced, the hardest he or most anyone there had ever worked. We worked with a great passion.. my most cherished memory is how much we cared about what we were doing. We had something to prove. .a real love for it. We created our own sense of family out there."

After the first successful night of the CES, all the marketing guys got dollar signs in their eyes because the Amiga made SUCH a splash even though they were trying to keep it "secret."

And so they took out all the technical staff for Italian food, everyone got drunk and then they wandered back to the exhibit hall to work some more on demos, quick bug fixes, features that didn't work, and so on. At CES everyone worked about 20 hours aday, when they weren't eating or sleeping.

RJ and Dale Luck were known as the "dancing fools" around the office because they'd play really loud music and dance around during compiles to stay awake.

Late that night, in their drunken stupor, Dale and RJ put the finishing touches on what would become the canonical Amiga demo, Boing.
(Editor's Note: So this is where "multiflasking" truly got its start, eh?)

At last the true story is told.

Money Problems

After the CES, Amiga Inc. was very nearly broke and heavily in debt. It had cost quite a bit more than the original \$7 million to bring the Amiga even that far, and lots more time and money were needed to bring it to the market. Unfortunately the doctors wanted out, and wouldn't invest any more. So outside funding was needed, and quick.

The VP of Finance balanced things for a little while, and even though they were \$11 million in the hole they managed to pay off the longest-standing debts and keep one step ahead of Chapter11. After much scrounging, they got enough money to take them to the June CES; for that they had REAL WORKING SILICON. People kept peeking under the skirts of the booth tables asking "Where's the REAL computer generating these displays?"

Now money started flowing and interest was really being generated in the media. And like most small companies, as soon as the money came in the door it was spent. More people were added - hardware folks to optimize and cost-reduce the design; software people to finish the OS. Even the sudden influx of cash was only enough to keep them out of bankruptcy, though; they were still broke and getting broker all the time. How much WOULD have been enough? RJ said that if he were starting over, he'd need about \$49 million to take the machine from design idea to market. Of course Amiga Inc. had no where near that much, and they were feeling the crunch. Everybody tightened their belts and persevered somehow. They actually were at one point so broke they couldn't meet their payroll; Dave Morse, the VP of Sales, took out a second mortgage on his house to help cover it, but it still wasn't enough.

They knew they were going under, and unless they could find someone quick to buy them out they were going to be looking for jobs very shortly. They talked to Sony, to Apple, to Phillips and HP, Silicon Graphics (who just wanted the chips) and even Sears. Finally.. they called Atari. (Boo! Hiss! [literally - the audience hissed at Jack Tramiel's name!]) Trying to be discreet, RJ's only personal comment on Jack Tramiel was (and it took him a while to formulate this sentence) "an interesting product of the capitalist system." Ahem. Apparently Tramiel has been quoted as saying "Business is War." Tramiel had recently left Commodore in a huff and bought Atari "undercover" so that by the time he left C= he was already CEO of Atari.

Realizing that Commodore was coming out with their own hot game machine, Tramiel figured he'd revenge himself on them for dumping him by buying Amiga Inc. and driving C= down the tubes with "his" superior product. So Atari gave them half a million just for negotiating for a month; that money was gone in a day.

Of course Tramiel saw that Amiga Inc. wasn't in a very good bargaining position; basically, unless they were bought they were on the street. So he offered them 98 cents a share; Dave Morse held out for \$2.00. But instead of bargaining in good faith, every time Morse and Amiga tried to meet them halfway their bid went down!

"Okay, \$1.50 a share.
No, we think we'll give you 80 cents.
How about \$1.25?
..70 cents."

And so on...

Even Dave Morse, the staunchest believer in the concept that was the Amiga, the guiding light who made everyone's hair stand on end when he walked into the room, was getting depressed.

Gloom set in. Things looked grim.

Then, just three days before the month deadline was up, Commodore called. Two days later they bought Amiga Inc. for \$4.25 a share. They offered them \$4.00, but Dave Morse TURNED THEM DOWN saying it wasn't acceptable to his employees; he was on the verge of walking out when they offered \$4.25. He signed right then and there.

The Commodore Years

Commodore gave them \$27 million for development; they'd never seen that much money in one place before. They went right out and bought a Sun workstation for every software person, with Ethernet and disk servers and everything. The excitement was back.

Commodore did many good things for the Amiga; not only did they cost-reduce it without losing much functionality, they had this concept of it as a business machine; this was a very different attitude from what Amiga Inc. had been working with. Because of that philosophy, they improved the keyboard and made lots of other little improvements. What could Commodore have given them that they didn't? The one thing RJ wanted most from them was an extra 18 months of development time. Unfortunately Commodore wasn't exactly rich right then either, so they had to bring out the product ASAP [and when is it ever any different?] Also, he said, they could have MARKETED it. (applause!). If he'd had that extra 18 months, he could have made Intuition a device rather than a separate kind of thing; he could have released it much more bug-free.

The Future

RJ's advice for A1000 owners: "Keep what you've got. It's not worth it to trade up. The A1000 is really a better machine."

This may be sour grapes on RJ's part, since the Amiga 2000 was designed in Braunschweig, West Germany, and the version of the A2000 being worked on in Los Gatos was rejected in favor of the Braunschweig-Commodore version. However the A1000 compares to the A2000, though, the Los Gatos 2000 would have certainly been better than either machine. C= management vetoed it because Braunschweig promised a faster design turnaround (and, to their credit, were much faster in execution than the Los Gatos group would have been) and more cost-reduction, which was their specialty. Los Gatos, on the other hand, wanted a dream machine with vastly expanded capabilities in every facet of the machine. The cruel financial facts forced C= to go with the Business Computer Group, who did the Sidecar in Braunschweig as well, and quickly and cheaply.

So they fired more than half the staff at the original Los Gatos facility, one by one. That trauma was to some extent played out on the net; no doubt many of you remember it as a very difficult and emotional time. There are now only six people left in Los Gatos, and their lease expires in March, so thus expires the original Amiga group.

And that's how RJ ended his talk; the rise and fall of Amiga Computer Inc. The future of the Amiga is now in the hands of Westchester and Braunschweig, and who knows what direction it will take?

- "The Time Capsule," by Greg Noggle, will continue next month in:
The Amiga Monitor

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1.9 midi

Amiga MIDI Tools We Can All Use

Fred Ericksen investigates the Amiga Music/MIDI scene, and tells what's out there for all current or would-be Amiga musicians.

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So you have an Amiga (or two), and are into music? MIDI is the professional environment to work in. If you have MIDI Instruments, Keyboards, Sound Modules, or Drum Machines, then hooking them into Ami is a great beginning. Here is a little roundup of some of the Pro Quality MIDI Sequencing packages that have been available to the Amiga platform. Most have been around for quite a few years and should be fairly easy to come by used, even if they have become discontinued for the Amiga. Many Amiga programs actually pre-date any version available on the other two computer platforms, and some even are as powerful as pee-cee type stuff that is available now as "State of the Art." Microsoft has recently purchased the rights to Blue Ribbon's Bars and Pipes and SuperJam. Bars & Pipes has yet to be ported to the clone, and IMHO, the Microsoft version of SuperJam is less than super compared to the Amiga version.

The following is a list of programs I have, or currently use, on my A2000 & A600. I have no accelerators or graphics cards on my machines, and most programs I use can run on 1.2 through 3.1 OS. Some are RAM intensive, and need more than the 1 meg on most ECS machines. I'll provide special notes for each one, and recommended minimum setup.

Sequencing software:

- * Bars & Pipes Professional:
- * SuperJam!:

These programs, like most Amiga sequencing programs, are no longer available commercially. Bars & Pipes Pro (hereafter known as B&P), and SuperJam, however, are available on CompuServe for free downloading. If you don't have these programs, and have access to CompuServe, GET THEM! They are located in the Blue Ribbon area of MSHome (Go BlueRibbon).

This is THE premier Amiga MIDI sequencing package, and with SuperJam and all the available accessories Blue Ribbon had, you would have spent upwards of \$500.00 for this package.

If B&P and SuperJam have any drawbacks, it is that they have the most powerful tools of any MIDI sequencing program on the Amiga I've seen. With so many options and tools, it can discourage many, yet it is very easy to use once you get to understand how tools interact with tracks. I currently use it with the Triple Play Plus interface Blue Ribbon made for the Amiga. It has one MIDI in and three separate MIDI outs, each addressable from the main program, so I have 3 outs X 16 MIDI channels each for a total of 48 MIDI channels! Add to this the One Stop Music Shop, Blue Ribbon's internal sound card based on the E-mu Protias chip with it's own MIDI interface, you have a whopping 64 MIDI channels! Also B&P integrates nicely with third party 16 bit sound digitizers like the Sunrize and the Toccata. It's a shame this setup will not go forward, but we can hope someone will carry the torch on for our platform and maybe take an innovative approach with Amiga MIDI software/hardware like Blue Ribbon did. You can bet I'll be talking more on this subject, and more on using Bars & Pipes and SuperJam in later articles, including using SMPTE to sync to tape machines.

Bars & Pipes could do well with a graphics card, as I've noticed that without it I can get some timing glitches during playback, unless I close the tracks window. It definitely needs 2 or more megs fast RAM, and I don't think I'd try to run it with only 1 meg chip.

* Music-X:

Next up is Music-X, the sequencing program that started it all for the Amiga.

Music-X is a fine program, and as far as I know, the only professional MIDI sequencing package still commercially available on the Amiga. If you like to think in terms of tape tracks rather than drum machine style, measure and loop when sequencing, Music-X is the program for you. You can do the loop thing with Music-X, but it's great for straight recording and punch-in. It also currently comes with a notation program called Notator-X, although I haven't used Notator-X much yet (Again, more on this subject later).

I'm a long time Music-X user, as it was the second sequencing program I bought for my Amiga all those years ago. It is currently at version 2.0, and I've been informed by Hollyware, the company that owns the rights to it, that there will be no further updates to the program. They have also informed me they will be porting it over to the pee-cee machines, like so many other successful Amiga programs.

Music-X will run on ANY Amiga with at least 1 meg RAM, and I've used it for many a year on an A500 w/OS1.2 and 1 meg RAM. It's bullet proof!

* Texture:

That brings us to the first MIDI sequencing program I bought for my Amiga, Sound Quest Texture.

For those of us old enough to remember, and those who are not, here's a bit of music history:

Back in the late 70's and early 80's a New York record label named Bearsville had a number of hits from an up and coming artist, none other than Todd Rundgren. Todd later formed a band named Utopia, and the keyboardist, Roger Powell, started the whole sequencing craze with a program he wrote called Texture. Todd, being an innovator, utilized a number of Amigas for audio/video productions, and MTV and Interactive CD-ROM was born. Texture was ported over to Amiga from Roger's original.

Texture is another fine program: although it is old, I still use it today. It will run on any Amiga, and even with only 512K. Don't let this fool you; it is a pro program, but minus the graphic note editor Music-X or Bars & Pipes have. It is still available from Sound Quest, so I have to take my earlier statement "Music-X..... the only pro MIDI package still available for the Amiga" back.

* Mastertracks by Passport:

Passport has long since dropped the Amiga version of Master Tracks, but it is quite a good little program. I was using a demo of MTPro to add pitch bend to tracks via the mouse before I bought a secondhand copy. The most recent version is 3.7.

If you are thinking of sequencing with your Amiga, you may find some secondhand copies of any of these programs, sometimes including a MIDI interface for as little as \$50.00. Master Tracks could be a good first choice. It will prime you for going to Music-X or Bars and Pipes Pro or MANY of the programs available on the Mac or Pee-Cee's. The transition is minimal. They all have the same basic tools and windows on them. Tracks, Transport, Piano Roll style graphic editing etc.....

* DMCS, or Deluxe Music Construction Set:

I have only briefly used DMCS, and only have it because it was included with an Amiga 2000 I recently acquired. It is a good program, although not a powerful MIDI sequencing program. It was meant more to use as a simple notation/playback type program. I like the idea of drag & drop the notes onto a staff and hit play to hear what you've input, but it lacks too many features to be considered a desktop-quality printing program. It does have

MIDI, but the version I have has no quantization, so it's nearly impossible for it to be accurate as a transcribing tool.

You will no doubt run into quite a few DMCS format song files in many libraries at any given Amiga site. I like the ease of putting a song into it from a book to hear what it's supposed to sound like. It does sound a bit stiff, but can actually play the score from the Amiga's internal 8-bit sound chip. I haven't used the internal sounds on my Amiga for anything but playing a metronome click, now that I have an Akai sampler, and many Amiga users are into .MOD files. Many .MOD files sound quite good using only the Amiga's 8 bit sound, but I haven't any experience using them.

* Dr. T's Copyist DTP

Any Amiga user who wants to use their Amiga to print quality music: this is the one for you! Unfortunately, again this program is no longer supported. If you see a copy, get it! I got very lucky, and after wanting it for a number of years, and finding out Dr.T's was no longer selling it, I found a new copy in a mag for \$79.00. It originally sold for around \$200.00.

With the Copyist DTP you can set up your page any way imaginable. This is a no-holds-barred environment where your music can look like a Beatles ballad or a John Cage nightmare. It has a good balance between using the mouse and the keyboard to get the music up on the screen and can be used with Dr.T's KCS, Tiger, Tiger Cub, etc. in an integrated environment. Dr.T's uses MPE (Multiprogram Environment) where the program shares it's information. You can have several screens, each displaying the song you're editing in a different way: the Track screen, a Graphic editor using a piano roll type notation grid; and a screen for QuickScore, which comes with the KCS program. QuickScore lets you grab and save out a performance to import to the Copyist.

So these are the main tools I have in my arsenal, and next time I'll talk a little about.....who knows? Maybe more Amiga Music ;)

Feel free to send your EMail to The Amiga Monitor. If you're into MIDI and the Amiga, I'd like to hear from you.-Fred ""|

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1.10 dostips

Michael Webb's Investigation of AmigaDOS

Some obscure little details and tidbits that can make using your Amiga easier

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What Exactly is Going to be Covered Here?

I will immediately tell you that this is NOT going to be an advanced tutorial. While that is something we can certainly do in the future, for now this is intended to reveal some relatively simple, but obscure, and potentially quite useful features of the Amiga OS.

Introduction

Were you ever sitting there using your Amiga one day, and wishing that something was just a bit easier...that perhaps, you could improve your efficiency just a bit, or hope to find just one more ounce of versatility in the operating system?

Well, I've been using Amigas for nearly a decade now, and what that means, aside from my having seen many an LED-blinking/flashing red-orange rectangle over the years, is that I've had plenty of opportunities to explore the OS, (sometimes with, er, questionable results ;)), and I've found a number of things you might find useful.

Most, and probably even all of the tips I'm going to give you here ARE, in fact, documented somewhere. You might find them in books written by other long-time Amiga users, or in the system manuals themselves; but the point is that, generally, they're not well-known. So here's a roundup of some of the more useful obscure features of the Amiga OS that I use from day to day; I hope you find them useful, if you haven't heard them before.

The Investigation Begins!

Listed here is each tip, followed by a short description thereof.

- * **Keyboard Emulation of Mouse:** If you don't happen to have a working mouse plugged into the computer, it's no problem, because you can use the keyboard to emulate all mouse functions. If you hold down either Amiga key and press an arrow, the pointer will move, slowly at first, and then accelerating. It helps to have a fast key repeat set for this. Mouse button presses can be emulated by pressing an Amiga key combined with either Alt key, corresponding to the button you want to press.
 - * **Screen Cycling from the Keyboard:** You don't have to click on the screen depth gadget with the pointer to switch screens. Cycle them by pressing Left Amiga-M, for all screens, or Left Amiga-N to go directly to Workbench. (It's a bit more limited under AmigaDOS 1.3 and below). Watch out, though, because just as with the depth gadget, the last active screen
-

remains so. You have to click in the frontmost screen after cycling. Unless, of course, you obtain a commodity that automatically activates the frontmost screen, like KCommodity.

- * Key shortcuts for System Requesters!: What? Key shortcuts for requesters? Surely I must be kidding. Well, I'm not. Many people have complained for a very long time that there were no such things...and granted, they're not as easy as "Enter" for a positive action and "Escape" for cancel...but nonetheless, you can use "Left Amiga-V" and "Left Amiga-B" for the leftmost and rightmost options, respectively.
- * Embedding Carriage Return Characters in Strings I just discovered this one recently. There are a number of control characters in AmigaDOS, and Ctrl-M happens to emulate a carriage return. You can put those into any system-standard console/string gadget. (though depending on your setting in IControl, you may have to hold down the Left-Amiga key to suppress interpretation as an actual "enter" command). So you can always enter a return by holding down left Amiga, and pressing Ctrl-M. At first, you may be saying "big deal." But there's actually quite a lot you can do with that. For instance, in Term, I used to have to press a function key to which text was assigned, and then press enter, etc. But NOW I can issue a whole sequence of commands to Genie with one keystroke. Want to know if anybody I know is online? Press "F9." I'll leave it up to you to figure out what you can do with this.
- * Emulate a PC: No, I'm not advocating the purchase of the first emulator board in sight...but what I'm saying, rather, is that you can set up your system so that, without losing ANY of its Amigatude, it can be easier on experienced MS-DOS/Windows users. The biggest of these involves adding commands to your S:Shell-Startup file. For instance, in the form of "Alias [shortcut] [command]," you can alias "MD" as "MakeDir," "Del" as "Delete" (believe me, start using this one and you'll be hooked in no time!), "Erase" as "Delete," etc. In addition, you can use the FKey commodity to set up Alt-Tab to cycle screens (or Left Amiga-Tab [LCommand-Tab], given the relative positions of the Amiga keys). Or Ctrl-Tab to cycle windows on a screen (or, again, to fit more with the layout of the Amiga keyboard, Alt-Tab might be better for that). In addition, I advise you to take FULL advantage of FKey if it is available to you. There's a lot you can do with it, and it can really speed some things along.
- * Search for your files: There are a number of file search utilities available, but probably the easiest way to add such capabilities to your Shell is to add the following line to your S:Shell-Startup file: Alias Where Search from : [] all quiet file pattern
You execute it from the Shell in the form "Where [filename]," and pattern-matching is supported if you want to #? use wildcards.
- * Move files: They may say..."The Amiga has no move command!" ...and strictly speaking, they're right. But it's easy enough to add one. In fact, there are 2 easy ways to add one. First: you may write a the following script file: (there is a more involved one in the AmigaDOS manual, with error checking and the works, but if you just want a simple move command, this will do the trick)

```
.key source,destination
.bra {
.ket }
copy {source} {destination}
delete{source}
```

To use this, make sure the script bit is set (AmigaDOS 1.3 and above... otherwise use "execute") (see the "Protect" command in the AmigaDOS manual),

and simply type "Move ," inserting the real-world values in place of the variables. The other way to move files is even simpler. It's also even more obscure. To do so, simply treat the "Rename" command as a "Move" command. It works! The only hitch is that it will only move files from one place to another on a single disk. No across-device renaming allowed. Other than that, though, it's pretty useful for moving files transparently (i.e. no script necessary), and if you really want to make it seem "real," simply add a "Alias Move Rename" line to your S:Shell-Startup file.

In Conclusion...

Anyway, that does it for now. There you have a collection of some of the more useful obscure little features of the Amiga's OS that I frequently find useful from day to day. Let me know if you have any questions, would like me to clarify anything here, or have a suggestion of your own. I can certainly publish future updates to this article, as not only are there probably many things I forgot or simply neglected to mention, but there are also probably many other similarly-useful tidbits of Amiga OS knowledge floating throughout the Amiga community.

So I may one day expand upon this. In the meantime, well, just keep on computing!

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1.11 fw5

Final Writer 5...Revisited

Some clarifications and additions

Basically...

I'm glad to know I can count on our readers to keep me on my toes. Shortly after publication of the first issue, I received email messages from Nathan Morse of Columbus, Ohio, USA, and Allan Odgaard of Mayland fame (we will be taking a look at this new calendar/reminder program in an upcoming issue)

informing me that I was wrong about some things.

Seriously, though, I am very thankful to those two for taking the time to point out my oversights. It is, after all, our job to convey correct information, and it's good to see the readers raising their voices when we don't exactly do that. I thereby extend the invitation to all of you to feel free to notify us if you detect an error.

Without further ado, let's get down to business.

What Was Wrong

The following clips are from the Final Writer 5 review in Volume 1 Issue 1 (August 1996) of The Amiga Monitor:

* Multiple alignments on one line

Back, years ago, when I used WordPerfect for the Amiga, I remember frequently using left-aligned and right-aligned text on the same line in order to construct headings for school papers. Unless I have missed something obvious, I have not found any way to do this with Final Writer, or any other word processor, for that matter. I realize FW is a paragraph-oriented word processor, but it would be very convenient if it allowed multiple justifications of text on one line.

* Autoscroll Virtual Screen

Final Writer should be able to open on an autoscroll virtual screen, just as the Workbench can. It would be very convenient, especially for those of us for whom resolutions higher than 640x480 are still a dream...

What I said wasn't exactly wrong, but it did represent some glaring omissions.

How It's Done

* Multiple Alignments on One Line: This is a simple matter of choosing the right-align tab stop from Final Writer's choice of several. You can then use the Tab key to move from one to another. Still, however, my original point stands, that compared to WP, this method is somewhat indirect, and it would be easier if the user could simply select a given alignment from the Left, Center, and Right choices for different parts of a line. Just my opinion, however, I suppose.

* Autoscroll Virtual Screen: There are actually two ways to do this. The first is to adjust the virtual screen settings on your Workbench, and then open Final Writer on the Workbench. I was aware of that, but should have made my point clearer. The second method also involves setting your Workbench to the desired size, and then select the "Same as Workbench" item in the Final Writer screenmode requester. Neither method addresses the situation perfectly, however, as both can result in the colors getting messed up, which can make a visually complex program difficult, not to mention unsightly, to use. It would still be best if Final Writer allowed the user to set the screen dimensions right in the opening requester, however.

There you have it. The record has been set straight. In addition, I'd like to supplement the review with one additional complaint: Final Writer seems to have a nasty little bug that freezes the machine if you click the resize button during, or just after, opening another document once one is already open. In other words, if FW is already running and you open an additional document window (and it comes up smaller than, and offset from, the first document window), and you click the resize gadget, your Amiga is likely to freeze right then and there. No "Software Failure" requester, no "Guru Meditation" alert, just motionlessness. Until this problem gets fixed somehow, I would advise you to wait until a document is fully loaded before resizing the window, and even then, save anything important before opening another document window.

So that (seemingly!) ends the ongoing saga of The Amiga Monitor and Final Writer 5. I hope that, this time, we can put this whole affair (ahem!) behind us...and, incidentally, my recommendation for Final Writer 5 remains the same: it's one of the best things out there for Word Processing and Desktop Publishing...and it ain't too bad a text editor either...after all, you're reading this document, aren't you? ;-)

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1.12 cdrom

The Plextor 6PleX CD-ROM Drive

A FAAAAST SCSI CD-ROM drive you can use with your Amiga

Introduction

Computer users' storage needs are always changing, easily described by the single operative word "more." "More, more more more."

So this is probably part of the reason why CD-ROM drives have been such a hit over the last few years. They provide users with 600-odd megabytes of

storage per disc (and began doing so before hard disks of that size were priced anywhere near sub-astronomically), with the only drawback being that they are read-only. Of course, now that's changing, too. They have been particularly great for times when developers feel like squeezing a whole load of data onto a single volume, and the result has been very multimedia-ish games (probably why "CD-ROM" became synonymous with "Multimedia"), and to some extent, dare I say it, some really big operating systems that now come optionally on CD (not that they wouldn't have grown exponentially without that option). And this brings us up to today, when the fastest currently widely-available drives are 8 times standard CD speed, and that may even change by the time you read this.

Of course, whenever a big innovation takes the market by storm, Amiga users are quick to ask "Yeah, but can *I* use it?," and they aren't altogether unaccustomed to getting "No." as an answer (not that this is necessarily true as it is, considering the question of the Amiga's aptitude for texture-mapping from a few years back). But in the case of CD-ROM drives, once again thank the 3rd-party developers for bringing yet another product to the Amiga. Programs such as AsimCDFS made it possible to use these optical wonders, as their popularity increased, and then, lo and behold, functional support for them was actually built into the latest version of the Amiga's operating system.

"Hello, yes, what do you carry in the way of CD-ROM drives?"

I had been thinking about getting a CD-ROM drive for some time, so one day a little ways back I called Software Hut and went for the big 6X-monger 6-PleX. It wasn't cheap by any means, selling for somewhere in the neighborhood of \$300 dollars, but it seemed like the right choice. Unfortunately, the first one I received refused to eject the disc ("No, that's MY disc!") on most occasions, and then the front panel went completely dead. Software Hut graciously replaced the faulty unit with another one that, for all intents and purposes, was perfect.

Installation

Days like these I'm GLAD to own an Amiga! Setting up the drive was easy as can be. I plugged it into the SCSI port on the back of the A530 turbo, and it ran. The only delay was caused by the need to run to a local electronics store to pick up a unit-to-unit SCSI cable, because my EZ135 Drive was shouting something about "Hey, I want in too!" Er, well, you get the idea. SCSI drives generally don't include those cables because it is assumed you are buying your first SCSI device.

I ordered AsimCDFS with the drive, but thought that first I'd like to see it just plain work, so I set about configuring the Amiga OS 3.1 built-in CD0: DOSDriver. After "duh, why won't this work?" was quickly replaced by "oh, change the device tooltype to 'gvpscsi,' dummy," (no, this is for your benefit, I don't REALLY talk to myself while using the computer, hehe...) well, it worked! I popped my one CD-ROM (it PAYS to subscribe to Amiga Computing!) into the cartridge (not only is this good for protecting your CD's, but it also prevents you from assuming your drive's CD tray is a cupholder, if you're so inclined).

Test Results

The test machine, incidentally, was an A500 with GVP A530 Turbo (40Mhz

68EC030, 16-bit SCSI interface). Yep, pretty nice.

Not having used CD-ROM drives before, I wasn't exactly sure how to go about rating the drive's overall performance in a relative sense, but I can tell you that it almost kept up with the internal hard disk and EZ135 drive. SysInfo reports (hold on a second while I go find out...okay, I'm back) 916,587 bytes per second. Close to a megabyte. Very nice! The drive's technical specs say that it should manage about 900KB/sec, so we're right in range. Plus other various specifications say the following: "1/3 Stroke: 175ms; Random Access: 145ms; Random Seek: 115ms."

The package includes: the drive, a CD cartridge, software (forget that, Amigans), SCSI cable, documentation, warranty registration card, and some styrofoam (?). The docs do a good job of helping you with basic installation and operation; and the box says it's compatible with a list of just about every platform BUT AmigaDOS, but don't worry about that.

Besides using CD's, I find that this drive is nice for listening to music, of course; and I would like to report on some of the more advanced features of AsimCDFs, like CDTV and CD32 emulation, as they relate to this particular drive, but I have no such discs at this time. Sorry.

In terms of external controls, the drive has a headphone jack, volume control, play button, eject button, and emergency eject (punch out!) port. It also has separate audio-out RCA jacks on the back.

Well, that just about does it for this review, so let's summarize:

Plextor 6PleX

A Six Speed SCSI CD-ROM Drive, ~\$300

Plextor

[mailto_info@plextor.com](mailto:info@plextor.com)

<http://www.plextor.com>

ATTRIBUTES PERCENTAGE COMMENT

Installation:	95%	nice and easy; plug & PLAY
Ease of use:	94%	the drive itself is easy, and AsimCDFs helps on the software side
Compatibility:	87%	fine hardware-wise, but of course there's no Amiga software support
Performance:	95%	not the fastest CD-ROM, but very good nonetheless
Features:	98%	just about everything you'll need for everyday use
Interaction with company:	N/A	N/A

Overall Score:

93.8

A very fast CD-ROM drive, versatile, and easy to use, all from a quality brand name. Price is a bit steep, but is probably going down.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

(Required)

Amiga, SCSI Interface, AmigaDOS 3.1 or a CD filesystem like AsimCDFs

(Recommended)

AsimCDFS, decent sound system, AGA or GFX card (for full multimedia effect with graphics), 32-bit Amiga (if you want to channel audio CD data through the Amiga's sound hardware)

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1.13 mmadness

Amiga Gaming Retrospective Part 2: MarbleMadness!

An arcade classic, and an all-time Amiga favorite

Where we left off

Last month, I introduced this series by giving somewhat of a history and analysis of Amiga gaming, focusing primarily on the early years. I then said that in the coming months, I would "review" old Amiga games, so as to provide a better perspective of the way things were, how they have changed, and how, in fact, they have remained so very much the same.

I am starting off that series of older games this month with "MarbleMadness!." This game was a hit in the arcades in the mid 1980's, and was, in time, published for a variety of platforms. The Amiga was one of these, and it was rumored that that was the best version of all. The game was so addictive that, while "developing" the Amiga version, the folks at Electronic Arts acquired their own arcade machine unit in order to save on pocket change.

The Game {UI}

MarbleMadness! was published LONG ago, back in the AmigaDOS 1.2 days. Those were also the days when games had a habit of taking over the entire machine, and MarbleMadness! was no exception. It should therefore come as no surprise that it won't run under AmigaDOS 2.0 or above (unless you're in a hurry to meet the guru). That became part of the reason for me to get DKB's MultiStart II, so that I therefore now run AmigaDOS1.3 and 3.1 on the same

A500 system. That is what allows me to even continue to use older software.

The test machine was a 68000 A500, and has become a 68030 A500. MarbleMadness! is now set up to run from my hard disk (you wouldn't believe what a pain THAT was to accomplish! But it's worth it, in terms of loading speed.).

Double-clicking the big fat marble icon on the Workbench first opened an information/credits screen, and then the control screen. That itself utilized a fairly simple point-and-click GUI that allows you to set the input device and difficulty level. In addition, it includes a "GO!" button for starting the game. They recommend using a joystick, but I always found that a mouse afforded the greatest level of control and fun. (well, I never tried the trackball).

The object of the game is fairly simple: you are controlling a marble (red for player 1, blue for player 2), and you must maneuver it safely to the finish line (the "Goal"). Watch out, though, because there are a number of obstacles waiting in your way that aren't so partial to seeing you succeed. The playing field itself is a 2-dimensional representation of a 3-dimensional surface (in other words, it's a bitmap of a 3D world). The marbles are sprites with multiple frames, apparently, as there are little reflective specks moving over their surfaces.

You are faced with 6 different levels ("races") of [generally] increasing difficulty. The first is quite easy, with no enemies at all, and the last has a whole assortment of them, plus some other difficulties as well. You can't get there without passing through the "Silly Race" (#5), in which you get to wreak havoc on shrunken forms of all your enemies, plus defy gravity to boot. There are, however, new difficulties in that race.

Here are the specific things one must deal with throughout the game: (some names are "official," some are improvised)

- * Steelies: The good old black marble. Does its best to knock you over an edge, but you can knock IT over for extra points.
 - * "Slinkies:" They bounce around from end to end, trying to consume your marble. Never pushed over an edge as of yet, as far as I know.
 - * Acid Puddles: They move around, and if they get under you, you dissolve.
 - * "Wave Generator:" Neat effect. Ride a digital wave.
 - * "Ice:" You hit this, and you slide. Constant momentum, little or no control.
 - * "Elevating Tubes:" Stand on them and they'll launch you. You MAY land in the same place, or...
 - * Vacuum Cleaners: Try to suck your marble away as you go by. Resist!
 - * Suicidal Birds: They emerge from the walls and smash into the opposite ones. If you get into their path, you're gone too.
 - * "Hypothetical Bridges:" Only at the end of the Ultimate Race, these are pieces of territory that appear and disappear in sequence to make your life difficult. Includes a disguised piece of "ice" right near the end.
-

Quality In Design

This game may be old, but in some ways, it's quite impressive. Primarily, I might point out the nice physics of movement, in which a 2D surface is mapped into virtual 3D space with little lost in the translation. In addition, the gameplay is smooth, and you are accompanied by a fairly rich environment of various multimedia effects. The game runs VERY well on a 68000 machine (naturally, those were the last word when MarbleMadness! came out), but if you manage to run it on a faster processor, such as a 68030, be prepared for a special pleasant surprise.

It's a pity that this game seems to have joined the ranks of "The few...the proud...the forgotten," and that Electronic Arts has all but stopped supporting the Amiga. I think a new version of this game, optimized for faster processors and with AGA capability, would be a real hit in the Amiga gaming world. Especially if it was made OS-friendly, and came on a CD-ROM with TONS of expansion boards and other possibilities. Imagine it...you could play MarbleMadness! nonstop for days on end IN BETWEEN writing articles for your magazine...

In Conclusion:

Well, I hope that provides an interesting look back for all you veteran Amiga gamers out there, and gives a fresh new perspective for those who came in late. MarbleMadness! is an indelible part of many Amiga users' earliest computing memories, and even in this day and age of virtual reality, texture-mapping, and realistic role-playing games, it's still a lot of fun to digress for a few minutes for a quick game of MarbleMadness!.

The Amiga Gaming Retrospective will return next month with a look back at... another classic Amiga game! See you then. Here's how MarbleMadness! fits into the modern AM template:

MarbleMadness!

A port of an arcade classic, Amiga-style. ca. 1987
Electronic Arts
<http://www.ea.com>

ATTRIBUTES	PERCENTAGE	COMMENT
Installation:	N/A	Not intended for HD install. I did it, but it was NOT easy
Playability:	95%	Nicely done.
Graphics:	83%	Not just good for their age, but good in general. Not extremely complex, but nice.
Sound:	87%	Plenty of music and sound. Music sounds a bit artificial, but probably to stay true to the original version. Sound effects are very good.
Documentation:	90%	The documentation, if you can call it that, is on the inside of the box. But it's plenty.
Performance:	96%	Shows that not a great game does the microprocessor make so much as the coprocessors. 68000 version is great.
Controls:	98%	Simple. Yet adequate.

Overall Score:

91.5

Just what is a classic, you ask? MarbleMadness! definitely deserves an honored place in Amiga gaming history.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

(Required)

Amiga 500/1000/2000, 68000, AmigaDOS 1.3 or lower, Mouse, 1 Floppy Drive

(Recommended)

68020 or better for neat speedup, Multiple Input devices (EA recommended a joystick) for 2-player games, decent sound system

-By Michael Webb-

mailto:103165.3700@compuserve.com

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1.14 myst

Myst Preview

Amiga Community Bitten by Fake Preview of Broderbund Hit Title

mailto:a.becker2@genie.com

Early this month Amiga users were treated to what looked like a miracle on the Aminet. It was in the form of 20 Megs worth of files named Mystpreview. When dearchived onto your hard drive, it looked, for all intents and purposes, like a one room demo of the Broderbund puzzle game that became one of the first hit CD-ROM games. Many Amiga owners who saw this "preview," me included, began calling the company for confirmation. Most were greeted as I was by their Tech and Customer Support personnel politely denying that there were any plans to release an Amiga port of this game. We later learned that this was done by a Polish programmer using the data files directly from the Broderbund CD. He was setting out to prove how easy it is to port games of this type to the AGA amiga. This kind of game simply uses rendered still images, small animations and sounds. The main draw of the game is the solving

of numerous puzzles. The AGA Amiga can easily show these images, and accelerated Amigas can easily display the animations as well as aPC.

This certainly got the attention of Broderbund, but is it the kind of attention we want? The many calls to Broderbund could serve to show them that there is interest here for ports of the hit PC games. The calls also, however, according to Broderbund's public relations department, caused confusion since no one there knew where they were coming from. Has it gotten Broderbund to start releasing their games for the Amiga? I doubt it but only time will tell that. If they do, we can expect to see other occurrences like this. We can expect to see hoaxes like this anyway probably. I guess it is the nature of the Internet where anyone can post anything. This leaves it up to us, the consumers, to make sure that what we are looking at is in fact what it appears to be.

What did this hoax accomplish exactly? Well, it did show that this type of game can be easily ported to the Amiga. The last direct word I was able to receive, however, from Broderbund, is that they still have no plans to produce software for the Amiga. Two unconfirmed letters from sources inside Broderbund state that they are looking into the possibility due to the response. These letters were uploaded to Aminet, the same place the Myst Preview hoax was uploaded. Due to this they can not be simply accepted as real without other proof. Of course the only proof Amiga owners want is software on the shelves.

Remember the old saying while you ply the Internet: If it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

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1.15 scionspr

Almagica -Scions of a Forgotten World-

Another Chance for Amigans to Play God

[Screen Shot (Best Viewed in 256 Colors)]

The popularity of what I like to call "god games" is truly a phenomenon to behold. There is something in us that simply enjoys telling little computer generated people what to do and them having no choice but to do it. A

resurgence of this genre of game has come about by the release of the Warcraft series of CD-ROM games for the PC. This is basically Populous, Settlers and Powermonger rolled into a neat package with lots of graphics and sound to round it out. Since Warmonger has rolled up the charts, some Amiga programmers have started releasing map makers for this type of game to see if people are interested. Well, the folks at DSP have decided to one-up them and release a preview of what they expect their game to be like. All of the graphics aren't done, it's only two levels, and not all of the options are done yet. These notwithstanding, it is a promising preview.

Gameplay is easy. You click the mouse on any subject or building and a group of buttons appears on the right. From here you can tell workers to move to a certain location, startcutting down trees for lumber (an important commodity), and build buildings (what the lumber is for). You start with three buildings, three workers, and one armed guard. The object is to build up your population and army and then wipe out the other tribes. Adding the different types of buildings allows you to increase the speed of growth of your population. Members of this increased population are trained to be workers who can then be used to build more buildings or can be armed and trained to fight at the blacksmith.

Fighting is simply a matter of moving your militia around until it encounters a member of another tribe. You then click on the militia member, click on the button marked A, and then click on the target of your anger. He then does the rest.

Installation

Download Scions.LHA from the Aminet. Dearchive it. Then use the included Installer script which will take you the rest of the way. That done you have to run the setup program to select your desired screenmode.

Results/Analysis

This game is looking pretty good. It is, however, important to remember that it is a preview. It is not nearly finished yet.

Almagica: -Scions of a Forgotten World-

Preview of a Settlers-like game. No price yet.

DSP

Jimmy Westerlund

Ringvagen 15

890 42 Mellansel

Sweden

Bjorn Hagerstrom <mailto:origin@medio.mh.se>

Jimmy Westerlund <mailto:jimmy@eagle.ovik.se>

DSP's Official Web Page: www.eagle.ovik.se/~jimmy_DSP

DSP's Official Web Page: www.ind.mh.se/~ing9435_DSP

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

(Required)

AGA Chipset or CyberGraphiX card, AmigaDOS3.0, 0.5 to 1MB RAM, 68020, Hard Drive with at least 1.5 MB free

(Recommended)

Fast RAM, 68030 or better, ability to use PTrEplay.Library for music (Will not work on the Draco)

-By Anthony Becker-

mailto:a.becker2@genie.com

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1.16 helpdesk

Editors@HelpDesk

The Editorial Staff of "The Amiga Monitor" handles your questions and problems

A500 and Questions

Recently I bought a used A500 with 1.3 ROM, WB1.3, 1MB RAM. Now the system has some changes: processor 68010, ECS, ROM 2.04 and WB1.3 (it works with the 2.04 ROM, but the software-clock has problems).

I need to know:

a) Is it possible to use WB2.1 without a HD?

b) Is there a magazine related to Amiga computers in order to subscribe to it? I need addresses or e-mails of Amiga magazines in order to subscribe to one (or more) depending on what they have to offer. I need a sample issue of each of them. Some Amiga users say, that most magazines are not published anymore.

c) Some Amiga users say that a SCSI HD can not autoboot. Is this true?

Thank you, F.Chalkiadakis
Southern Illinois Univ., Carbondale

Michael Webb says:

a) Yes, absolutely. You could even run WB3.1 on that system. You should be warned, however, that many modern applications won't be too happy with 1mb RAM and no HD. The OS itself, however, will run quite fine under those circumstances. Just be ready to swap disks frequently.

b) There are/have been a number of Amiga magazines, and the only one I know of that no longer exists is AmigaWorld. Today, probably your best bet for general Amiga coverage would be Amiga Computing (UK/International) and/or Amazing Computing/Amiga (USA). Here is all the information I have regarding contacting them:

Amiga Computing

SUBSCRIPTION: 0151-357 2961

ADDRESS (England): IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Telephone: 01625 878888 Fax: 01625 850652

ADDRESS (USA): AMC Subs Dept, 460 Hillside Avenue, Hillside,
New Jersey 07205

Editorial EMail: edit@acomp.demon.co.uk

Amazing Computing/Amiga

PHONE: 1-508-678-4200, 1-800-345-3360

FAX: 1-508-675-6002

WWW: <http://www.pimpub.com>

ADDRESS: PiM Publications Inc., P.O. Box 2140, Fall River, MA 02722-2140

As far as obtaining a sample issue goes...well, I suppose you could check newsstands, or the magazine section of a local bookstore. Or you might just find somebody advertising out on the internet to sell a whole bunch of old Amiga magazines for cheap, if they no longer have any use for them.

c) Not at all. The vast majority of SCSI HD's can autoboot, and the only exceptions, in general, are those made for pre-AmigaDOS 1.3 Amigas, since the 1.3 ROM was the first to support booting from something other than a floppy disk. So yes, a SCSI HD will autoboot, as long as your Amiga has AmigaDOS 1.3 or higher.

Michael Webb

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Greg Noggle says:

a) Yes, although you will be switching disks a lot, and be careful what you put on what disk.

b) Amiga computing, Amazing Amiga

c) Some people don't know what they're talking about. Yes, a SCSI HD can be used as a autoboot drive. Use HD-Tools and check the autoboot option. the only limitation I can see here would be the controller.

Greg Noggle

Telecommunications Editor and Hardware Guru

Write us!

mailto:103165.3700@compuserve.com, and be sure to include "Editors@HelpDesk" somewhere in the message header. We can't publish all letters, but we will attempt to reply to them all.

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Feedback

The readers speak out!

Doubts Deferred

(An excerpt from a letter to the editorial staff)

...As far as I'm concerned, the Amiga will survive this tumultuous journey it's going through. And like you said, it's mainly the users and programmers that have made the Amiga such a viable system to be reckoned with, even though the WinTel people doubted that such a system would ever be noticed again.

So, I wish you the best of wishes in getting this monthly online magazine on the right track. And let all those who think the Amiga is a dead platform look behind their shoulders and feel the heat of the phoenix rising from the ashes.

Regards,
JI/\ \ (Oscar [Jimmy] Diaz)

Well said, Jim, well said. It's particularly nice to hear your simple, yet determined, declaration of faith for the Amiga. With so many people bickering, yelling, ranting, and raving about what's going on, how far we've fallen, and how there's no chance of recovery, it's refreshing to hear someone express something so central to the fundamental beliefs we've held so true for so long. You know what? I think you are right. I think the Amiga, and its users, will pull through. We've come too far for too long to simply stop here; what we've got is simply too good to just die. I'm glad to see people with your point of view, and I'm proud to represent...and serve... such dedicated individuals. What you say, and how you say it, embodies the

belief, and I think there are a lot of others out there who share it. Let's get this show on the road; it's high time to hit the big time.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Go For the POWER

I disagree that the low end amiga market should be a 030/50; leave that to the set-top box, and have the 060 in the next generation 1200 and RISC in the high end machines. If you can get a P100 for \$1500.00, I don't see why you couldn't get a 64bit 1200 with a 060/50 for \$1500.00.

Since the AGA chipset supports 8-bit color, and that is the standard for PC software, PC software could be ported over to the Amiga without any CPU limitations and run in 8-bit color.

I already have a 1200 with a 030/40. I think a 030/50 would be a waste of time getting since it's only 4 mips faster; but on the other hand a 060/50 at over 20 mips faster would be something worth getting.

The Amiga has room to grow; it just needs a Faster CPU to be competitive with the computer systems being sold today. The Amiga was willing and able to prove that four years ago. But Motorola decided that RISC was more important than CISC, held back the 060, and allowed Intel to Flood the market with pentiums which aren't that much better than an 060 which is 64/64bit, whereas a Pentium is 32/64bit.

Robin L Clifford

Motorola wasn't the only one thinking RISC was the way to go. You get technical and the 586 chip is a RISC chip with some glue to make it compatible with the lower x86 machines. It takes a 10% performance hit in the bargain. Motorola actually did a good job with the coldfire. It is very compatible with the 68000 series as much as a RISC chip can be, anyway. That was one of the design criteria.

The statement regarding graphics: the porting is not a straight port be any stretch of the imagination. To do it properly calls for an almost complete rewrite of the graphics routines. A kludgy, ugly-looking port can and has been done, but why bother? If you do that the texture-map-based games that are the current trend will make you look bad to a lot of eyes.

Graphics is what you see; if performance/efficiency was the deciding factor in things, the Amiga would be much more popular. Games are pushing the hardware envelope because that is what people are buying. Doom popularity was due to texture. We had that a long time ago. Most people don't care what is under the hood, as long as it works and look neat.

Greg Noggle
Telecommunications Editor and Hardware Guru

Well, Robin, an 060 low-end machine is all well and good. Believe me, I'd buy it in a heartbeat. I've seen what the 68060 Amiga 1200 can do up close. But let's look back. The Commodore 64 was overwhelmingly popular, and all because its price quickly dropped to around \$300-\$400. The 060 itself is around that price. However could you expect to get close to a "low-end price" by using a "high-end priced" CPU? Remember, this is supposed to be the introductory, in everyones home for Christmas model Amiga to be upgraded in the future once they are hooked on it's features. The main thing I feel is to get people in on a low price, well-featured machine to build the capital needed to make the Amigas we dream about.

As far as porting PC software over to the Amiga. See the article on the Myst Preview hoax. Seems it is sinfully easy to port games like that to the Amiga. The companies need incentive to do so, both by the owners of Amiga and its user base.

Motorola chips had consistently outperformed their Intel counterparts for reasons just like the one you cited. Of course, Motorola got saddled with Commodore and Apple using their CPUs. Since Apple decided no longer to use the CISC processors and Commodore was fading fast, it is understandable that Motorola would cease development of the line. A shame really.

Anthony Becker, Executive Editor

Without echoing what Greg and Tone said on the issue, I'll try to address some of the points you bring up.

I can see you are looking for a lot of power out of the next generation of Amigas. Naturally, we all are, but I'm trying to take a more moderate viewpoint on the subject. I, like you, am using a 40MHz 68030 right now, and taken in perspective, it seems like it packs a very reasonable level of processing power. I tend to agree that a 50MHz 68030 would be a good processor for a new low-end machine. You have to look at what you're trying to do with a machine; I run some heavy-duty programs like Final Writer, Scenery Animator, and IBrowse, and I find that my ancient ECS chips are generally more of a limitation on performance than the '030. And keep in mind that your '030 1200 is a LOT faster than the standard 1200, which is the current low-end model. If you are making Amigas, you don't want to alienate your low-end users. You pin the price of the next "low-end" Amiga at \$1500, which, IMHO, is WAY too high for a low-end system. That's more mid-range.

But my biggest objection would have to be over the idea of a 68060 in the low-end machine, and a PPC in the top-of-the-line model. I believe that splitting the range amongst different processor families would be just about the worst thing they could do; if you're going to go PowerPC, go COMPLETELY PowerPC. I believe the next Amigas should continue to use the 680x0 family of processors; porting code takes time, and considering that it's been 4 YEARS(!) since any advance took place, I think they should get new/improved Amigas out ASAP to at least revitalize the market. Therefore a line based on the 68030, 68040, and 68060 could represent some truly viable options for current Amiga users, and people from other platforms as well. Don't forget a LOT of us are still using 68000's and 68020's. Plus, as you say, a 68060 does a nice job of stacking up to the pentium, which is all the rage at this moment. A 66MHz '060 could probably keep up easily enough with a 120-150MHz Pentium, especially considering the speed and efficiency of the Amiga's OS

compared to "some other ones," and if they were desperate for producing a mega-powerful Amiga, they could either go for a multi-processor system, or allow people to implement a PPC/Alpha coprocessor.

The AGA chipset could probably keep up with or surpass most PC gfx systems in low-res 8-bit color, but if you went to hi-res (as a number of PC games are these days), AGA starts to suffer from the limitations of planar graphics. The next Amigas are going to need chunky pixel screen modes to regain the edge in graphics, and that means one of 2 things: AAA chipset or gfx board. (this, of course, is another story entirely that I'm not going to get into now). Greg's points about porting are true, but in addition, keep in mind the AGE of AGA.

I see where you're coming from in general, however; it's clear that the Amiga needs a jump in processing/graphics power from the way it is now. Just try to keep your expectations reasonable.

Michael Webb
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Write us!

Do you have something to say about the Amiga, the Amiga community, the Amiga industry, or The Amiga Monitor? Mail it to 103165.3700@compuserve.com and be sure to include "Feedback" somewhere in the message header. Note that we can't publish all the letters we receive.{UB}

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Be sure to check out the October 1996 Issue of The Amiga Monitor

What you'll see in our next issue:

- * The next edition of The Sam Report
 - * The next segment of The Amiga Gaming Retrospective
 - * Greg Noggle's Time Capsule series continues
 - * Danny Green's Internet series continues
 - * Tone reviews Everyday Organizer and UpToDate
 - * And more!
-

Look for Volume 1 Issue 3 in Early October
The Amiga Monitor: 1996, Excelsior Digital Publishing
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HomePages/MikeWebb/>

AmigaGuide Version: Anthony Becker
Amiga 1200
RexxDoesHTML2AmigaGuide by Michael Ranner
Blacks Editor v1.01 by Marco Negri

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