FEBRUARY

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COLLABORATORS

REVISION HISTORY

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                 "One Step Above Excellence"

        Dark Unicorn Dispatch Newsletter - Feburary Edition
     "An Entertaining and Informative Look Into The Amiga and CD32."
                      In The AMIGAGUIDE Format!

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1.2 toc

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         The Editor's Page
                  - Editorial and Welcome
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1.3 intro

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

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

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

  CEI withdrew their 'cash and carry' offer (missed deadline again?)
and submitted a smaller one. CBM UK's Chinese backers were rumored to
have pulled their financial support from them, causing them to miss their
bid opportunity. Then, magically, they came up with the cash to once
again submit a bid. This bidding 'ping pong' is certainly getting old,
isn't it? The greed of the creditors and the seemly nonchalance of the
oversight committee is starting to get on everyone's nerves, including the
bidders. Then, when both parties were once again ready to put the bids on
the table, rumor popped out that UK once again couldn't make funds appear,
putting everything on hold again. Now, the latest that has floated down
from the nets is that the creditors somehow found a way to get both the
Bahamian AND U.S. courts involved in this dispute, allowing the creditors

to review CBM's business practices over the whole last YEAR. Now, tell me
what you all think of THAT? Hmmm...A LONG wait? Yeah, sound like it to
me, too. Imagine; CBM's dead clammy hand reaching out from the grave to
try and strangle the LAST little bit of life left from the Amiga.

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

   On the other side of the world, AMAZING COMPUTING/AMIGA is back in
publication after missing a print deadline due to holding out for CBM
liquidation news (I am told). As usual, the magazine seems to lack in the
interest field again. I thought Amiga World was getting slow...Sheeze!
Then, the most depressing part of the whole issue, ROOMERS, can just go
right in the trashcan. It is hard enough to keep up morale in the Amiga
community as a developer when you have a major Amiga publication spouting
out to you that the Amiga is basically dead and there is no hope; that
the CD32 is basically dead and there is no hope; that there will not be
any real Amigas anymore, etc. etc. I will be honest with out all; if
anyone from Amazing is reading this, GET RID OF THAT COLUMN and put
something in there a little more factual. ROOMERS is far too depressing
and the last thing you need is some potential Amiga developer reading
that, taking it as gospel and not even entering the Amiga market. We
don't need that. Use the column space to review more PD and put some more
screen snapshots in the mag. When I read game reviews, I really want to
see screen shots, not pictures of the box. Maybe it is just me...

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

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

                           - Shane R. Monroe
                             Dark Unicorn Productions

1.4   coming

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

Dark Unicorn Productions - Update

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

   FLEET COMMANDER (Shane R. Monroe) - Not much to say other than I have
been impossibly busy. The project still has a green flag but let's just

say that I got an offer I couldn't refuse and will be developing a
different title for the CD32 for the next couple weeks. I will return to
Fleet Commander soon. Never fear!

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

                        Commercial Software - Update

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

AMIGA ECS/AGA (Available NOW!)

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

CD32 (Available NOW!)

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

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

   * Sensible Software is leaving the Amiga due to the high levels of piracy
that are abound on the platform. They said that for every legal copy

bought, there are at least 20 that are pirated. Well, everyone was warned
about it and now it is starting to happen. Pass the word, not the disk,
folks.

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

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

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

   * Rumor through the mill; Electronic Arts bought the software division
of LUCAS ARTS, makers of the popular X-WING and TIE FIGHTER for those
DOS-BOXES. What does that mean for the Amiga? Who knows? Last word was
that Lucas Arts was getting back into the Amiga... Hmmm...

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

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

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

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

1.5 shareware

                              Shareware Update

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

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

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

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

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

1.6   software

                          SIMON THE SORCERER (AdventureSoft)
                                    Amiga/AGA/CD32

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

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

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

   The game is quite frustrating for many reasons (does this mean it is also
playable?) First, you have to check every nook and cranny of the screen
to make sure that there isn't something there you need to take. You can

go to the same area a hundred times and STILL miss the rock with a note
under it. Almost every object you can 'see' with the pointer is going to
be necessary later. Many things you can't take or use without having
another object first.

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

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

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

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

1.7   hardware

THE COMPETITION PRO CD32 JOYPAD

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

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

   The controller is layed out like a combination of a Sega controller
and a CD32 joypad. The thumbpad (or D pad) is solid construction and

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

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

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

1.8 cd32

                              The CD32 Corner

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

ALIEN BREED: TOWER ASSAULT - TEAM 17

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

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

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

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

   The game is the standard overhead view a la GAUNTLET (remember that game?
That was COOL! "Elf; is about to DIE!") and the graphics and sound are
considerably better than the earlier incarnations of the game. The game

is totally HUGE! You will get lost quick if you don't start keeping track
of your position.

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

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

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

   Even if you took away the awesome intro, this game would STILL be worth
it. As it stands, this is probably the cleanest shootemup of its kind on
ANY platform. The only reason you SHOULDN'T get this title is if you
cannot display PAL. The game will change automatically to PAL (although
the intro animation is in NTSC; figure that?) Team 17 is the company to
watch on the CD32...

ARCADE POOL - Team 17

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

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

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

   Overall, well worth the cash. If you have the floppy version though, you

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

LITIL DIVIL - Gremlin Interactive

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

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

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

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

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

   You have a health bar that gets depleted as you get smacked by traps or
fail to complete room puzzles. As would be suspected of this game, the
deaths are a riot too. There are three that I have seen and each of them
are inflicted by this little golem fat guy that doesn't like a lot of

publicity in his torture chamber. From getting shut in a spike riddled
iron maiden to being stretched mercilessly on the rack, you will be almost
happy you died.

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

SUPER STARDUST - Team 17/Bloodhouse

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

MICROCOSM - Psygnosis

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

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

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

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

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

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

VIDEO CREATOR -

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

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

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

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

   It is all very cool, but there are a lot of restrictions you should be
aware of before you naff out your cash. First, the program is PAL and
therefore is timed for european systems. Although you CAN run the program
in NTSC and even record the results to an NTSC VCR, there are a couple of
inherent problems. First, the bottom inch of the video is cut off, but
usually doesn't detract from the video effect. Second, most of the menu
items you will have to work with (and the status bar) are all on the
bottom of the edit screens (which are also cut off) making creation even
MORE of an experiment until you are used to it. Third, and most
important, the videos are created by VC to be the length of the song as
indicated by the CD track record. Since PAL is a slightly faster system,

your videos will get cut short if you allow VC to do the job. A 3:00 song
may only get a 2:54 video created. If you have a PAL displayable monitor,
you can get around this by creating the video in PAL, then saving it, then
reloading it in NTSC, tweeking the time, then play/record it. Which leads
to the next problem.

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

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

1.9 amos

                          Programming in AMOS - Part 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

INITIALIZATION/VARIABLE DECLARATION

INTRO/MENU

MAIN PROGRAM

SUBROUTINE 1

SUBROUTINE 2

SUBROUTINE xxxx

END OF PROGGY STUFF

   This is how most programmers work. Usually the INITIALIZATION, MAIN
PROGRAM and a couple of the SUBROUTINES are put together first, each
growing as the program grows in complexity. Then more SUBROUTINES are
added, then the INTRO/MENU and END OF PROGGY stuff is actually coded last.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

   STRING (or TEXT) Variable – For simplicity, let's say it can hold any
printable character or symbol you can select with the keyboard. The
variable must be followed by the dollar sign ($) often called a 'string'
by programmers. Examples are: A$="HELLO":AMIGA$="#1 COMPUTER!":Z$="<-=
Excellent! =->" and so on. You get the idea. String variables (in AMOS
anyway) can be added and subtracted (quite a handy feature). For example:
FIRST$="SHANE " LAST$="MONROE" NAME$=FIRST$+LAST$. You may also
subtract like this: A$="HELLO THERE"-"E" This would render A$="HLLO
THR". Neat eh?

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

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

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

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

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

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

```
HIGH_SCORE=10000, however, WOULD be legal.
```

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

1.10   whererwe

      You can reach Dark Unicorn Productions in numerous ways.

      * U.S. MAIL
              Member's Name
              c/o Dark Unicorn Productions
              110 S. Cranford Rd. #6F
              Goose Creek, SC 29445

      * INTERNET
              Shane Monroe   - s.monroe1@genie.geis.com
              Seumas McNally - j.mcnally1@genie.geis.com
              John Graham   - virtuality@bix.com
              Michael Welch   - m.welch@genie.geis.com
              Troy Toulou   - t.toulou@genie.geis.com

      * GEnie
              Shane Monroe   - S.Monroe1
              Seumas McNally - J.McNally1
              Kit Felice   - K.Felice
              Michael Welch   - M.Welch

      * BIX
              John Graham   - virtuality@bix.com

      * Tombstone BBS - (803) 863-0313

              Shane Monroe   - WYATT EARP
              John Graham   - VIRTUALITY
              Seumas McNally - LONGBOW
              Troy Toulou   - SPYDER
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