

The

# INFORMER

A summary of information and support for Amiga users

\$2<sup>50</sup>

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## Great Speed At A Low Price

### GVP-M Introduces A New Line Of Accelerator Cards

As you may have noticed, prices for Amiga accelerators are dropping and October will see a new accelerator option hit the Amiga market. This accelerator is developed by long time Amiga supporters Memory World and GVP-M. The two companies did some planning and designing and came up with an accelerator that everyone will like.

The result is a 68040/40 MHz board for the A500 (yes, that's right, the A500). It is designed to be user-upgradable to the 68060 processor. The board is housed externally in a GVP 530 casing and attaches to the A500 side expansion port. The unit does not have a pass-thru slot, but this shouldn't pose too many problems since there is space inside the housing to mount a hard drive. A standard A500 power supply (45 Watt) is adequate

to drive the 040 processor together with most newer hard drives, but if you mount an older more power hungry hard drive, you may need a more powerful supply. There are 2 slots for standard 72-pin Simms RAM chips, with no limit on the amount of RAM you can install. Also included is an on-board SCSI-II controller that allows internal or external support. This controller uses the tried and true 32-Bit Motorola specific 53C710 SCSI Chip. Any necessary upgrades to the SCSI controller software will be available direct or on-line from GVP-M.

Also available from GVP-M in October will be a card for the A2000 that has the same stats as the above board, minus the external housing, that will install internally into the A2000's CPU expansion slot. The retail price for either board will be

under US \$400.

Similar 040 boards for the A3000 and A4000 should be available after Christmas, and an A1200 board will follow shortly thereafter. These accelerators will carry the GVP-M name and will be distributed by GVP-M and sold through most Amiga dealers.

#### Memory World

3392 Progress Dr., Suite B  
Bensalem, PA 19020-5899  
Voice: 215-244-7930

Email: [memory@memoryworld.com](mailto:memory@memoryworld.com)

URL: [www.memoryworld.com](http://www.memoryworld.com)

#### GVP-M

3392 Progress Dr., Suite J  
Bensalem, PA 19020-5899  
Voice: 215-633-7711

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## VIScorp Purchase Still Pending

As of September 20, VIScorp has not yet signed the final agreement to purchase the Amiga from Escom. While the binding letter of agreement is still in effect, the final legal nitty-gritty is still causing major headaches and delays. The original deal was to have handed over the Amiga to VIScorp on August 19. This was extended 30 days to September 19. On September 18, VIScorp's Communications Manager, Jason Compton, released a message saying the deal is not final yet but is expected to be completed shortly.

Once VIScorp has the Amiga firmly in hand, they can begin to implement their plans. Until that time, it is very difficult

to form agreements and contracts with other companies wanting to work with the Amiga. The lack of a final deal has not prevented VIScorp from getting the wheels moving, but just not as fast as they would like.

According to public statements by VIScorp officials, the upgrade from the 68000 Motorola chip to a RISC-based system is definite, but it has not yet been determined which RISC chip will be used for future Amigas. However, an Architecture Design Group (ADG) has been formed which will make this determination. This group will also create the stan-

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**From the Editor's Desk:**

**Greetings,**

Welcome to Issue 4. It's hard to believe that I've been at this for nearly 10 months already. Time sure does fly when you're working hard, err, ah, having fun. :) Issue 4 has a few changes that I think will bring you more information and services.

The most obvious change is that we've grown to 16 pages. I expect page content to increase even further as the staff at The Informer continues to gather information and find its place in the Amiga community.

In a past issue, I mentioned "we are not here to endorse or review products." I must now change that statement to say, "we are not here to endorse products, but we will review them." Due to popular demand, we are now reviewing commercial and shareware products.

Issue 4 brings more content by adding new sections such as; Commercial & Shareware Reviews, New Companies, and Workbench Extras. Our new Enhancements section will be headed by the latest staff member, Brad Webb. We are honored to have his company. Brad brings with him a long history of Amiga journalism. Some might remember Brad from the now defunct JumpDisk magazine where he authored the OS tutorial column. Brad will be telling you ways to get the most from the Amiga OS in his Workbench Extras column which will appear in every issue.

Also of interest is our new Web page ([www1.mhv.net/~eldritch](http://www1.mhv.net/~eldritch)). We post some of The Informer's content to our Homepage about two weeks after the print edition is sent to subscribers. Here you will find many articles from The Informer and lots of handy links to connect you to various resources.

A note about advertising--the lifeblood of any publication--without it, The Informer wouldn't exist. While adverts are of interest to readers, I know you don't want to see too much, so I'll keep them to a minimum. I promise you will always get much more editorial content than advertising.

That's all for this issue. Keep on sending your comments. We listen to everything you say and your input helps mold the future of The Informer.

*Fletcher Haug*, Editor

**VIScorp** con't from page 1

dards and protocols of the future operating system and platform. These standards will have to be followed by any company buying the license to produce Amiga computers. This will prevent a fracturing of the already too small Amiga user base. Licenses will be liberally handed out to any company that has sound marketing plans and who follow the Amiga standards set out by the ADG.

VIScorp, states VP of Business Development Dave Rosen, is using a California networking company to run a internet server. This server will have on-line documentation on all development information. They will build this server to meet the needs of the community, and developer support should be a central part of this service. In addition, there are plans to begin an internet mailing list to keep subscribers abreast of the latest VIScorp news, information and ideas.

VIScorp plans to sell, rent or lease their set-top devices to cable companies who will install them in homes. Through this network, a developer's work can be distributed through the internet and therefore be available to owners of VIScorp's set-top boxes. This provides the developer with a means to publish and distribute material--that is secure and protected--through the internet and channel it directly to people who own Amiga OS based set-top boxes. It is important to

note that this network will serve both the Amiga desk top computer and set-top box. Since both these systems use the same Amiga OS, new programs should work on either platform.

It is interesting to note that there were two other companies besides VIScorp bidding for the Amiga during its sale; PIOS and a Chinese company called New Star. New Star bought and owns the Chinese distribution license for the 020, 030 and 040 Amigas from Escom at the same time VIScorp acquired their license to the Amiga technology. There is a spirit of cooperation between New Star and VIScorp. The companies have met and are aware of each other's respective goals.

The Amiga community has waited a long time for things to get straightened out with the Amiga, and hopes are high for VIScorp to do just that. Further delays to the final agreement are stretching the patience of many Amigans to breaking and can do no good. However, Amigans must try to understand the complexity of buying an international company that's in bankruptcy. It is not an easy task by any means. VIScorp gives us much to be encouraged about. Let's hope they can conclude this agreement quickly and finally begin to move forward, and prove to the Amiga community they really mean business.

**Set-tops will be marketed to the masses in cooperation with our technology partners . . . or directly by cable companies or TV manufacturers, depending on how licensing goes.**

*-Jason Compton, Communications Manager for VIScorp*



**The INFORMER Prize Drawings**

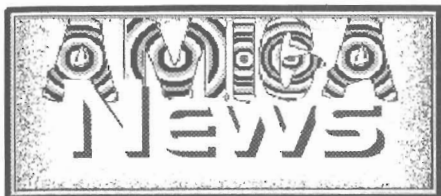
Each Issue of The Informer will feature a random prize drawing for an Amiga product (software, hardware, book, etc.) and subscribers are automatically entered to win for the duration of their subscription. [No purchase necessary. If not subscribing, send one postcard for each drawing with your name, address, phone number, Email address and date to: The Informer, PO Box 21, Newburgh, NY 12551-0021. Postcard must be titled "Free Informer Prize Drawing Entry" and received at least two weeks before each drawing. Drawings held bimonthly.]

**Congratulations to Gene Rodgers, the Winner of the \$100 Credit from Safe Harbor Computers!!**



**Issue 4's WINNER will receive: DiskSalv 4 -AND- a "Connect Your Amiga!" book provided by IAM**





## QuikPak On The Move With Portable A4000

At a meeting of The Amiga Atlanta Users Group, Jason Compton reported that QuikPak is developing a new Amiga motherboard for an industry-standard OEM portable computer case. In doing this, QuikPak will put a portable A4000-class machine on the market. According to QuikPak's projections, the new Amiga portable should be available by February 1997.

The design of this new motherboard is based on 040/060 technology with a socket to accept either chip, as well as the capability to use up to 128 Mb of RAM directly. It will have a color LCD capable of Amiga video modes. Functionally, it will be very much like an A4000T with video slots, Zorro slots, etc., making it a fully portable video editing station based on Amiga technology. The unit will run on AC power only. The estimated retail cost will be around US \$3,000.

The intended market for this portable is for users who can benefit from having an Amiga they can take with them, such as Amiga software and hardware companies who are looking for ways to demonstrate their product without bundling up their

test machines. When equipped with Toaster/Flyer, VLab Motion, Broadcaster Elite, etc., the portable will be one of the first, if not THE first, truly portable digital editing stations.

**QuikPak**  
1000 Forge Ave.  
Norristown, PA 19403  
Voice: 610-666-8080  
FAX: 610-6668086  
Email: quikpak@aol.com



## AC's Guide Makes Comeback This Fall

The long awaited Amazing Computing Guide is nearly here. Since its inception, Amazing Computing magazine (AC) has published a comprehensive guide to all North American Developers. Even in these difficult times, AC is still managing to bring the Amiga community this vital resource.

AC's Guide will definitely be available in the Fall of 1996, possibly as early as October, according to Managing Editor, Don Hicks. The Guide's production is an ongoing process and every day more is added to the contents. It has been a painstaking ordeal getting the current information on Amiga developers since many have changed hands repeatedly or have seemingly just dropped from the scene.

The staff at AC is pushing to get

*continued on page 4*

The Informer is a publication of  
Eldritch Enterprises  
Editor: Fletcher Haug  
Design & Copyedit: Betty Haug  
Netsetter: C. Davis Sprague  
OS Enhancements: Brad Webb

**Mission:** To provide an accurate and reliable resource of information pertaining to all things Amiga, and to connect readers with developers, their products and the Amiga community at large.

The Informer is printed six times a year. All inquiries should be directed to:

The Informer, PO Box 21,  
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The Informer is produced entirely on Amiga computers! The equipment used:  
Amiga 1200, dkb 030/50/50 32 Mb RAM  
Amiga 2000, 2630/28/28 9 Mb RAM

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HP Scanjet IIP scanner  
Epson Stylus Color printer  
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Final Writer 5.0  
Termite 1.2  
Termite TCP  
IBrowse 1.02  
Link-It! 1.0  
Directory Opus 4  
LHa, Html-Text, etc.

Any dealer or distributor who wishes to include The Informer in their mailings to Amiga customers will receive recognition in a special section of the newsletter. Over 4,700 issues are currently sent out with each printing. If you are interested in taking advantage of this offer, please contact Eldritch Enterprises at the address on this page.

Rate for six issues is (US) \$12 USA, \$15 Canada, and \$18 all others for first class mail delivery. Personal checks from USA only, all others in Money Orders or Bank Checks drawn from USA banks only and made out to Eldritch Enterprises. We are not responsible for cash sent through the mail. Subscription Form provided - See Page 15.

Special Thanks to Turtle Lightning for including The Informer in their promotional mailings.

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## Nova Design Shares Some Thoughts With The Informer

One of the current leading Amiga software developers is Nova Design, Inc. Nova's recently released ImageFX v2.6 won the praise of reviewers, respect from graphics and video artists and is considered one of the Amiga's gem applications. With the eminent release of Nova's Aladdin 4D version 5, I thought it would be interesting to ask Kermit Woodall, at Nova Design, a few questions.

**Informer (I):** When do you expect to release Nova Design's revamped Aladdin 4D version 5?

**Kermit Woodall (KW):** We're on track for a fall/winter 1996 release. It's getting very close now and we're all very excited and looking forward to it!

**(I):** What enhancements will you be making to Aladdin 4D?

**(KW):** It's our tradition not to pre-announce features on our products significantly before shipping them. I can say that we've done several key enhancements with Aladdin 4D, namely: we've removed the dongle from the package which frees up the second mouse/joystick port; we've done an amazing overhaul of the interface to bring it up to current Amiga design standards with lots of nice improvements; and, finally we've been adding a good deal of new features and new options to the package. Typical of Nova Design upgrades--it's a BIG upgrade!

**(I):** The Amiga has a large selection of fine 3D programs. What will Aladdin 4D version 5 (A4Dv5) offer that will make it

stand out above the rest?

**(KW):** Unlike other consumer priced 3D software, Aladdin 4D has a powerful interface and professional features, at an incredible price. Aladdin 4D has also been known for it's unique 3D gasses, hierarchical spline based motion paths, animated procedural textures, and built-in particle system.

**(I):** Have the sales and upgrades of ImageFX 2.6 met your expectations?

**(KW):** We're consistently one of the top five selling Amiga software titles in our markets. Sales have continued to exceed our expectations--we continually prove that if you support, upgrade, and market your product you can do well on the Amiga!

**(I):** Will we see an ImageFX 3.0?

**(KW):** Definitely! There is no release date set as yet, and of course we have no announcements for features, but I can say that ImageFX 3.0 will again lead the standards for image processing and special effects. You will be seeing features added that you won't find anywhere else on any platform.

**(I):** There are many 3rd party Hooks and Modules written for ImageFX. Which, if any, do you recommend?

**(KW):** Batch Factory from Visual Inspirations is a must have. It provides the coolest set of scripts for animating ImageFX effects and creates many new effects by combining, through ARexx, many existing ImageFX effects.

**(I):** Do you have plans to port Nova Design software to other platforms?

**(KW):** We don't plan to port ImageFX to

any other platform, despite enormous call for us to do so, because it would almost certainly distract us from our Amiga projects.

**(I):** What are your impressions of VIScorp and those in VIScorp management that you have met?

**(KW):** VIScorp, in our opinion, seem to be headed on a sensible path that will benefit their company and the Amiga community. They've continued the manufacture and sales of the Amiga 4000 tower that Amiga Technologies was selling, and have a professional and open approach to the 'cloning' of the Amiga technology that will help the Amiga continue.

**(I):** What would you say to an Amiga user who is considering moving to another platform?

**(KW):** To someone leaving the Amiga, I say good luck. You're leaving behind a lot of things you took for granted. A thoroughly integrated scripting language (ARexx) that was almost universally supported across all Amiga applications, batch processing, inexpensive solutions, and an efficient operating system with low overhead. To someone adding other platforms to their studio or office I say, remember that no computer is an island, and there are some applications that are hard to find Amiga equivalents for. Other platforms have their uses and users.

**Nova Design, Inc.**

1910 Byrd Ave., Suite 214

Richmond, VA 23230

Voice: 804-282-5868

URL: <http://www.novadesign.com>



## AC's Guide con't from page 3

European developers involved with this edition of the AC Guide, says Mr. Hicks, and the inclusion of European developers will make the AC Guide a truly international publication. Mr. Hicks feels confident that this Guide will be very appealing to the Europeans, especially now that VIScorp [almost] owns the Amiga. "VIScorp's acquisition of the Amiga should shift the Europeans eyes to this continent," says Hicks. "The Guide is in production and is very close to print. We want to be out in October, but this is dependent on the European response and

the speed of advertisers." Every effort is being made to contact all developers by phone to ensure an accurate accounting.

Mr. Hicks stresses that he hopes the AC Guide will help encourage new programmers to work on the Amiga, which is still by far the easiest and most versatile platform on which to program. Indeed, a guide that lists all the developers and products supporting the Amiga should go a long way to encourage people to stick with the Amiga.

AC's Guide will contain at least 250 pages of information--the same size it has

always been--and will remain the largest Amiga publication available. When released, it can be obtained through news stands, by subscription or direct from PiM Publications, Inc.

Contact Amazing Computing for further information.

**PiM Publications, Inc.**

PO Box 2140

Fall River, MA 02722-2140

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## VIScorp Logo Contest

VIScorp is running a contest to design their new corporate logo and they would like it designed by an Amigan using an Amiga computer. The logo will appear on all VIScorp's corporate information packages, memos, correspondence, etc. They want to show the world that they are more than just a set-top technology company with three capital letters in their name. They want to tell everyone that they own the Amiga and use it in everything they do.

The specifications for the new logo are as follows.

1) The Logo MUST be provided in a form that will show up in NTSC and PAL broadcast video (avoid white backgrounds, etc.). They recommend, but do not insist upon, a battleship-grey background at 10% screen.

2) The Logo MUST be provided in a form that will be color-separable and printable.

3) The Logo MUST incorporate the Amiga double checkmark in the "V" of VIScorp.

4) The Logo SHOULD incorporate the Amiga rainbow color stripes (as found on Amiga OS manuals, etc.) in the "o" of VIScorp. If you wish, you may ALSO submit a design with the Amiga boing ball as the "o," but the rainbow "o" should take precedence.

5) The Logo MUST be designed on an Amiga.

6) The entries are to be submitted to VIScorp. Disks can be provided in any format.

VIScorp wants to see your vision for the future Logo so it's time to fire up your graphics program and show them what you can do. The winner will receive VIScorp's undying gratitude and recognition on the inside flap of their official corporate information packet. All entries will become the property of VIScorp.

### VIScorp

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## Amiga Shows

### The Midwest Amiga Expo:

October 19th and 20th, Columbus, Ohio.  
Sponsored by The Amiga Central Ohio Network.  
Email: ronnb@btsoft.cmhnet.org or  
dpearce@freenet.columbus.ohio.us  
Phone: 614-728-1358 (weekdays) or  
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### Amiga Fest '96:

November 29, 30 and December 1 in Toronto,  
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Voice: 1-800-847-3315 or 519-393-6270

Fax: 519-393-6233

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### World Of Amiga:

December 13, 14 & 15 in Toronto Canada.  
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Or, maybe you bought a used piece of  
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of interest: <http://www.interlog.com/~gscott/Technical.html>

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## Legendary Design Technologies, Inc.

Legendary Design Technologies, Inc. has been supporting the Amiga since 1989. Legendary started as a game company developing a game for the Amiga called "Dark Tower." It was of the Dungeon Master genre--which explains the sword in their logo--and it started looking pretty good with music, graphics, and a map editor completed. However, everyone involved with the Dark Tower project started going their separate ways. In 1992 Syd Bolton, the president of Legendary Design, started developing the program Address It!, and from there brought the company to where it is today.

Operating out of Canada (with an office in the USA), Legendary Design Technologies, Inc. offers a variety of software and hardware products to the Amiga user. Many of their software programs cater to small Amiga-using business owners who need to keep things organized and tidy for themselves and the Tax Man. Legendary Design develops and distributes a large variety of products as follows:

**Link It!:** Connect a PC and Amiga, Amiga and Amiga or a PC and PC together over a serial or parallel cable. Does file transfers and file conversions as you copy. Easy to set up and use; you can copy files between machines while you work on other applications.

**Address It!:** Mailing list management. Print labels, roster, envelopes, and more. Extremely easy to set up and use.

**Invoice It!:** Small business management. Print invoices, statements, quotations, etc. Store a database of common items, produce a custom invoice layout, charge interest on overdue accounts, and more.

**dataTAX:** Tax preparation and planning tool. Print out your tax return, sign it and send it in! Produced and updated yearly to remain current. Available for Canadian and US tax returns.

**dataTAX Forms CD:** CD-ROM that contains virtually every tax form for both Canada and the US on one CD.

**Maximum MODS CD:** Contains over 4,200 music mod files that play for over 241 hours (10 days). No duplicates! Includes an easy-to-use interface.

**SFX #1 and SFX #2:** High quality sound effects for video production. Produced by Sound Ideas, the world's largest producer of commercially available sound effects. Even Lucas uses Sound Ideas!

**ProPics CD-ROM:** 120 High quality, high resolution, royalty-free photographs included in several formats, including Toaster Framestore. Includes full color preview booklet.

**AmiPC Power Mouse:** Use a PC serial mouse on your Amiga! Works with most trackballs, mice, and other pointing devices.

**Down Home Christmas:** Produced yearly. Contains a game, graphics, music, sound and animation related to Christmas.

**SCSI 4000:** Hardware product that gives you an external SCSI connector when used with a Warp Accelerator or other device that has an internal SCSI option.

**JET For Flyer:** Drive/power supply box for the Flyer. Available in two models. Call for more details.



Always remaining commitment to the Amiga platform, Legendary Design Technologies, Inc. is working on a number of exciting new projects for future release. These include:

A version 2.0 upgrade to Invoice It! which will be available later this year and includes: improved file format; automatic timed backup of files; a utility to copy all related files to a disk or another hard drive; full ARexx support; use of the display database for more and higher resolutions; renaming of screen fields; ability to change screen colors; printed invoices graphics; and, much more.

An upgrade to version 2.0 of Address It!, slated for release in early 1997, which will include: bar codes support; graphics handling; better font control; ARexx interface; more flags; call display support, and more.

Work is also underway for a low cost, 24-Bit Amiga-specific scanner, and, development of remote Amiga/PC/MAC computing software. This remote computing software is quite exciting. Imagine calling a friend's PC from your Amiga, and once connected, you would actually see your friend's screen and be able to interact with his PC--enter keystrokes,

move the mouse, etc. Think of the customer support possibilities this would bring! Neither of these projects have a firm release date at this time.

Along with providing continued support for the Amiga with new products and upgrades, Legendary often provides user groups with product donations and information. Showing his dedication to the Amiga, President Syd Bolton had this to say: "Legendary has stuck with the Amiga for a long time and will continue to do so. We appreciate the support of our users and hope that everyone understands how hard it is for us to remain with the Amiga. But we believe in the machine and the people who support it. Long live the Amiga!" Well said Syd!

Legendary Design products can be purchased from most dealers or directly from Legendary. All new product announcements are posted on their web page. Dealers in the US who wish to carry Legendary Design products can contact Micro-Pace (217-356-1884).

**Legendary Design Technologies, Inc.**

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URL: <http://www.io.org/~legend>



## New Company

### Phillips PD

A new Amiga Public Domain company has formed called Phillips PD. They offer virus-free Amiga Public Domain software including Assassins, Fred Fish, Euro Demos, etc., for only 99¢ a disk.

In addition, prizes such as multimedia speakers, surge suppressor, Amiga repair tool kit, liquid wrist rest, and Phillips PD tee-shirts are being awarded in an upcoming drawing. Write or call for further information.

**Phillips PD**

P.O. Box 31

Savanna, IL 61074-0031

Voice: 815-273-3241 M-W-F 6pm-8pm CST



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## Commercial

### Zorro 3 I200 Boards

Eagle Computers GmbH, of Germany has confirmed that the Zorro 3 daughter-board for the Amiga 1200 is finally being shipped. Orders for these boards can be placed with CeV Designs. The boards can be purchased with or without a Tower case assembly. The Tower case includes 7 Zorro 2 or 3 Slots, 5 PC ISA Slots, 2 Video Slots and a CPU Slot. There is some confusion as to whether the Tower will include Zorro 2 or Zorro 3 Slots, so contact CeV for details. CeV will place orders monthly to Eagle Computers, and delivery may take 6-8 weeks. Contact CeV for further information.

#### CeV Design

11 Spring Street  
Reading, MA 01867-2640  
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Email: cev.shore.net

### AQCVID

From: Omnilink Corp

Omnilink Corporation announces their first foray into Amiga hardware development with the AQCVID. This is a unique hardware/software interface for Connectix Corp.'s QuickCam digital camera. It allows the PC (parallel) version of the QuickCam to be connected to any Amiga.

The AQCVID is designed to work with all ECS/AGA Amigas, and includes CyberGraphX support. File formats currently include IFF, ANIM5, and ANIM7. Users also have the option of time lapse with exposure control. Internet users have an overwrite previous file function, useful for real-time net video updates. An AREXX commodity is also supplied to allow control of the QuickCam by other external applications.

16-Bit audio sampling/playback support is tentatively planned for 16-Bit Amiga audio expansion cards, as is CDXL

(animation with sound). AQCVID support is also tentatively planned for the recently released QuickCam model that has up to 640x480 screen resolution and 24-Bit color. Omnilink is committed to maintain AQCVID compatibility with any new Amiga models introduced in the future.

The release date of the AQCVID is October 1996, with an introductory MSRP of US \$59.99. Developers and Amiga users are encouraged to contact Omnilink for more information.

Requirements: Any Amiga (except the 1000), Hard drive, 1 Meg Chip RAM, OS v3.1

#### Omnilink

Email: support@olnk.com  
URL: www.olnk.com/  
Connectix Corp.  
URL: www.connectix.com

### Monument Designer v2 and v2F

From: ProDAD

The Monument Designer v2 titling program offers a wide range of graphic possibilities, even picture composition. Graphic elements can be created as free, single objects, so that the use of graphics formats, anti-aliasing, and manipulation is no longer a problem. Spotlights and other light sources can be set, fading is super smooth, and even transparency quality is perfect. You can also create jitter-free, endlessly scrolling titles! There are too many features to list, so call your dealer for more details.

For Vlab Motion owners, there is Monument Designer 2F. In addition to the features of version 2, version 2F allows real-time preview on digital video and Alpha channel, as well as on the video signal.

Monument Designer sets the new standard in video titling and is distributed in the US by Safe Harbor Computers. The MSRP is US \$249.99. Dealer inquiries are welcome.

#### Safe Harbor Computers

Voice: 414-548-8120  
Dealer inquiry: 1-800-544-6599 ext.13  
URL: www.sharbor.com

## Shareware

### Chris's Button Strip (CBS) v2.0

From: Christopher Schnurr

Email: cjs@icbl.hw.ac.uk

Description: CBS is a set of three button strips for Final Writer which cover most aspects of HTML editing. When using Final Writer's user extendable menus and

button strips, a number of AREXX scripts have been written to allow both point-n-click and keyboard shortcuts for the most used HTML web designing codes. It features: what-you-see-is-what-you-get editing; keyboard and menu shortcuts; intelligent cursor and code positioning; automatic list and table generation; transparent saves to ASCII.html; use of HTML 3.0 templates; full documentation in HTML format; plus much more.

Requirements: Final Writer R3 or above, OS2.04 + (AREXX), 217K disk space

Availability:

URL: www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/~cjs/cbs/index.html

Aminet: text/misc/cbsv16.lha



**Informer Question: When VISCorp has control of the Amiga, what do you think should be their first priority?**

#### Syd Bolton of Legendary Design

Regaining the confidence of the existing Amiga user base HAS to take priority. Before VISCorp can look to a whole new customer base for support, they have to keep the current customers happy. The Amiga has always had a loyal following and it would be a crime to let this slip away. It's important also that they bring new Amiga technology to the forefront and do it cheaply--the way the Amiga 1000 did in 1985. Obviously, it's difficult to lose money on hardware but obviously Escom's approach didn't work either.

#### Kermit Woodall of Nova Design

Their first priority? Sign the ownership papers of course? (laughs) Seriously, what we would like to see is production, or the promotion of someone else producing, a PowerPC based Amiga as well as up-to-date Amiga C compilers. Even an Amiga with a 68060 chip could theoretically be competitive with a Pentium PC's speed - but our compilers are a bit out of date now. With PowerPC's coming we're going to see the need for a C compiler that can optimize for all the current chips efficiently.

#### Joe Rosenberg, Amiga Product Manager, Softwood, Inc.

There are a lot of things that VISCorp needs to do, but possibly the most important is to prove to current and potential users that they are serious about the Amiga as a computer. I don't know what they would need to do but they will have to 'knock the socks off' a lot of people.

*Disclaimer: This opinion is my own and not necessarily shared by Softwood, Inc. and their employees.*





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## WorkBench Extras

By Brad Webb

Welcome to the first edition of the Workbench Extras column! I'm very pleased to be a part of this new addition to The Informer and am looking forward to helping you get more from your Amiga. In this column we'll be looking at the Amiga's operating system and how you can use it to your best advantage, and at utilities and programs to enhance the Amiga's built in capabilities.

Why an emphasis on the operating system? Because the OS defines the limits of what your computer can do. It is the cornerstone on which the computer system is built. If your operating system supports true multitasking, as does the Amiga's, then that is a capability you can expect to use often.

The Amiga's operating system is arguably still the most advanced available on a small computer, at least at the fundamental level. In the 11 years since its inception, Amiga OS has grown and matured, something newer operating systems have yet to accomplish. However, along the way the failing support of Commodore and the confused circumstances since have left gaps in what we might call the second layer of the OS. There are capabilities that should have been included, but weren't. Fortunately, the Amiga programming community has long been accustomed to filling the gaps.

We'll be looking mostly at Amiga OS 3.1 in this column, but much of what we cover will apply to versions from 2.04 forward. I'm sorry if you're still using 1.3. It was great when it came out, but to use it now is to cripple your computer's capabilities, and we just don't have the space to cover everything. Update as soon as you can--you'll not regret it!

In this inaugural column, I want to introduce you to what I consider the two most indispensable additions you can make to the Amiga's OS. In fact, it's

inconceivable to me that something like the second of these programs wasn't added to the operating system years ago. You'll see what I mean soon.

The first program I want to recommend is Arq, which is short for "Animated Requesters." "Great," you might think, "why do I need my requesters animated?" Actually, you don't, but you really can benefit from the other features of Arq. The animations are nifty, also.

Arq is a reasonably sized program, about 38K in its latest (1.83) version. What it does is add capabilities to the Amiga's requesters that should have been there all along. If you're not sure what requesters are, they're the little windows that the operating system opens when it wants to ask or inform you of something. For example, if you try to copy a file to a floppy disk that is write protected, the operating system will open a requester and state "Volume <name> is write protected," where <name> is the name of the disk you're attempting to copy to. You can then click on either the Retry or Cancel buttons in the requester.

So what does Arq bring to this scenario? First, it adds a small animation of a write protect tab sliding up and down to remind you of what it's talking about. Minor, but nice. Better yet, it puts the requesters in the center of the screen where it's easy to get at. Most importantly of all, it replaces the Amiga's esoteric keyboard equivalents with something that really makes sense. Using the standard Amiga requesters, you could either click on the Retry gadget in the requester or press the Left Amiga and B keys simultaneously. If you wish to cancel instead, you can of course click on Cancel or use Left Amiga and V. I've yet to meet anyone who finds these key combinations intuitive. With Arq, you can press the Escape key as an alternative to clicking on Cancel, or press the Return or Enter keys as alternatives to Retry. Even I can remember that. This combination of features--a better position for most requesters, the use of Escape and Return keys in place of esoteric key combinations, and the little animations that often emphasize what's going on--make Arq a gem r.o Amiga should be without. In addition, there are some other minor features you may want to explore on your own.

*continued on page 12*

# Apollo

Wci Distribution is proud to release for the first time in North America the Apollo line of accelerators for the Amiga. These high-performance accelerators have a proven track record in Europe where they have been available for several months. The Apollo combines high-speed and stability with a truly aggressive price - making it one of the hottest new products for the Amiga in years. The Apollo line caters to nearly all Amigas, providing them with, in some cases, a thirty-fold increase in speed over that of a stock machine, while maintaining a price low enough to turn the heads of even the most frugal Amiga users. Check out the speed increase . . .

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**WB Extras** con't from page 10

Installation is simplicity itself. You first unarchive the file to any convenient location on your Amiga's disks, or to the Ram disk if you'd like. Next, drag the Arq icon into the Amiga's WBStartup drawer. That's it. (Arq only works under Amiga OS 2.04 and up.) Put the documentation file anywhere convenient.

Arq 1.83 can be found at any Aminet

site [util/cdity/Arq1\_83.lha], on Aminet CD's, many BBS's and in public domain disk collections. Your local computer club is another good place to look. It is absolutely free. I've used Arq in its various incarnations for years with no problem whatsoever.

You'll also need a copy of LHa, the most used file compressor/decompressor

on the Amiga. This can also be obtained from the sources listed. Keep a copy around—you'll need it for many of the programs we'll be discussing.

Oh, the second indispensable program? That would be ToolsDaemon, or a program similar to it. We'll have to deal with this next time. I'm already looking forward to it!



By C. Davis Sprague

**News Via The Internet**

What's the news? The news is--USENET news. On the Internet, one of the first methods of contact developed after Email was news. Internet news refers to a hierarchical bulletin board type system that is shared through news servers. These news servers are sites devoted to keeping an updated list of postings which are organized into newsgroups. The terminology of USENET news is fairly easy to gather.

There are currently some 15,000 newsgroups. Each has a topic, which is briefly annotated in the newsgroup heading. These headings are considered the name of each group. The most enigmatic part of the naming structure tends to be the first word. Initially, these were limited to "comp." (called "comp dot"), "news.", "rec.", "sci.", "soc.", "talk." and "misc.". However, as the hierarchy grew, it was often hard to get special interests to either allow a new group to be formed, or to find a good place for it under the old labels.

Consequently, the alternative newsgroup hierarchies were born. The father of all of these is "alt." Under "alt." you can find such varied subgroups as alt.binaries.pictures.fractals, and alt.babs.bunny.boink.boink.boink.

Having conquered the hierarchy of the group name, there is still the level of

threads to discuss. A thread is a group of articles, all with the same title, that comprise an initial article and a series of responses. It's generally considered to be good form to be as concise as possible, especially considering that the news server has to hold several gigabytes of "news." Excessive quoting from elsewhere within a thread, and outright character assault (called flaming), is poor etiquette in most groups. Private comments are usually handled by Email, and most people who post articles in newsgroups leave valid Email addresses for this purpose.

Of all the groups you may want to find regarding the Amiga, most start with either "comp.sys.amiga." or "alt.amiga." Of these, comp.sys.amiga. (c.s.a.) is generally the most posted and the most useful.

Amiga newsgroups of general interest might be *c.s.a.hardware*, where you can ask or answer hardware related questions, and *c.s.a.marketplace* where you can sell Amiga hardware, or get some relatively fantastic bargains on second hand Amigas. I owe the system I'm writing on to *c.s.a.marketplace*, as well as some additional hardware used on other Amigas in our household. This is not to say that all who post to *c.s.a.marketplace* are reputable. This is definitely a 'buyer beware' market, but in general business is conducted amicably.

There are also special interest Amiga groups like *c.s.a.graphics*, *c.s.a.audio*, and *c.s.a.multimedia*. Furthermore, for the net-savvy Amigan it always pays to read *c.s.a.network* which covers everything from LAN's in your living room, to bug reports on browsers. Finally, there are the much more specialized groups like *alt.amiga.uucp* and *alt.amiga.uucp.patches*, which, if you're not running UNIX on

your Amiga, won't be of interest to you.

Well, that's the news in general. USENET is like the rest of the Internet in that it is a veritable gold mine of information on literally any topic, with only a vague map. It's well worth the digging though. So here's hoping all your "news." is good news.



**PD Pick**

**Newsreaders**

So you wanna read some news, huh? Well, that's just tough. That was the response up until lately at least for the non-UNIX versed Amiga community. Why? Because news servers use the Network News Transfer Protocol (NNTP) and until lately, the only way to access these servers was with Unix or GNU ported programs.

Two such programs are "tin" and "nn." "Tin" is probably the most used text-based newsreader on the Internet. The problem is that it takes hours to set up and get running. It also takes a lot of memory and CPU time to run. "Nn" isn't as big as "tin" and doesn't take as much to configure. However, "nn" still requires a working knowledge of CLI programing to get running. Although these two programs have been the mainstay of the Internet, they are arduous to set up, especially for the casual user. That is not to say it isn't worth the effort to set up one of these programs, it's just difficult.

These two programs are options for CLI based program users, but what about the casual point-n-click user. First, it's important to get some information from your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Any

*continued on page 13*

## Newsreaders con't from page 12

newsreader program will require you to configure them to connect with a news server. Most servers have an address of the form nntp.yourdomain.com or news.yourdomain.com, where yourdomain.com is what follows the @ in your Email address. You may also need the address of your SMTP server and, additionally, you may need your Email address, user ID, and password. All of this information should be available from your ISP.

Assuming you have either AmiTCP, TermiteTCP, Miami,mlink or some other TCP/IP stack running, we now come to the state of the art in newsreaders. Understand that these are all beta versions, and may crash, or behave erratically, but by and large they are stable enough to consider using.

The first contender is KNews. This small executable (only around 10K) requires an environmental variable KNEWSERVER to be set to the name of your NNTP server. To do this open a shell and type "setenv KNEWSERVER=your.servers.name." After this, "cd" to the directory you want the news files to appear in, and run KNews from the CLI. A large window should appear, and if you

type the name of a newsgroup in the text gadget, it will find out how many articles there are in that group. You can set sliders to determine how many of them you want to

scan. Then click on the get subjects gadget and it will download and list the subjects of the articles. This basic program will not thread the articles, but if you select a series of them it will download them to a text file. This program does not let you post news, and all the text articles are concatenated into one large file, but it does have two very nice features. First, it is streamlined, so it is faster than its com-

petition. Second, if you download a binary that is UUencoded from a newsgroup (and this is the standard way non-text items such as graphics are posted) it is recognized and UUdecoded on the fly. This makes KNews the optimal program for downloading. It makes an excellent front end for getting information you know exists on USENET.

The second program to consider is NewsAgent. NewsAgent has the same basic set up and installs easily. It also allows some basic filtering options specifically dealing with article size and subject line text. It does the same sort of thing, getting the article subjects, etc., but it also allows you to decide whether to UUdecode an article, save it or use the internal display program. If you use the internal display, the program will put up a screen that has the news item, and if your server accepts posting, you can reply to a thread. The author rigged it so the unregistered version blocks some newsgroups and puts up a requestor periodically during downloads, but the version on Aminet is certainly functional enough to tell if this program is to your liking.

NewsAgent is not dependant on the Magic User Interface libraries, so it goes to reason there must be a MUI

newsreader out there. Enter mNews, the MUI newsreader. MNews has all the features of the above programs--except for the filtering in NewsAgent--and further, has the ability

to reply to a post via Email. Both NewsAgent and mNews require use of an external text editor (ed or memacs will do fine), but only mNews allows posting and the use of Email in replying. MNews also allows UUdecoding, but it saves a temporary file before decoding, which on a memory limited system would be a drawback. During very large downloads that I tested it with, it would occasionally



## AWeb-II Review

By C. Davis Sprague

The face of the web is changing, or at least the face of the web browsers. If you can recall Issue 1 of The Informer, I wrote about the available beta releases of the browsers at that time, and contrasted them with AMosaic, which was in its final stages. Much has changed. There are now two commercially released web browsers. In this article I will review the first of these released for commercial distribution, AWeb-II.

AWeb-II is a powerful, stylish and well thought out web browser. It installs easily with the provided installer script, with a minimum of net savvy required. I found the lack of printed documentation somewhat of a drawback, because I couldn't study it away from my computer, and

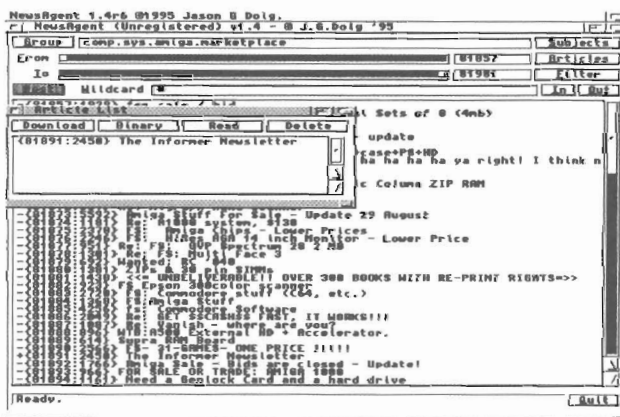
*continued on page 14*

appear to write to restricted memory and crash my system, so this program is still a little buggy and can hog memory. Still, it has another feature that is very pleasing. If you press the Load gadget on the Groups page, it will download to a file the name of every newsgroup on the NNTP server. From this list you can subscribe to the groups you choose.

So that's what's up in Amiga NNTP newsreaders. The ongoing development of these programs into usable interfaces, with things like base 64 decoding, and built in PGP calls, as well as advanced filtering, is in the hands of the shareware designers. Pick your program, use your program since there are no current commercial products available in this category. Here's to more good news.

The following programs are available on Aminet at:

comm/news/mNews1.0b.lha  
comm/news/KNews.lha  
comm/tcp/NewsAgent14.lha



Using NewsAgent you can choose to decode, display, read, or save the selected file.

**Surf Squirrel** 100

**Amiga Computing 7/96** 93%

"SCSI mounter & the new CD Prefs make adding new devices even more straightforward. With a new tougher case & interface you will never regret purchasing a Surf Squirrel."

**Amiga Format 8/96** 92%

"Not only is it faster, but it also opens up the door to more efficient Internet exploration. The Surf Squirrel is an impressive piece of equipment."

**CU Amiga 7/96** 92%

"The Surf Squirrel is a brilliant expansion device for the A1200. Excellent SCSI capability, well thought out documentation and support software."

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"Not only does the Surf Squirrel give you a fast, flexible and expandable link with external hardware, it can also make surfing the Internet a lot more pleasurable, productive & less expensive."

**ImageFX 2.6**

**CU Amiga 7/96** 93%

"This latest upgrade has taken it another rung up the ladder so that it's now snapping at the heels of the likes of Photoshop on the Mac. The best image processor for your Amiga."

**Amiga Shopper 9/96** 94%

"Not only is it easier to use than most graphics programs on foreign platforms, it is continually being made more powerful...When it comes to processing graphics, ImageFX is the business."

**Video Toaster User 7/96** \*\*\*\*

"It is now a necessity for anyone working in Amiga-based digital video. If you don't have it, get it...This program offers power unavailable in any other Amiga image processing program."

**Amiga Format 10/96** 80%

"Second to none in terms of the sheer quantity of its features...ImageFX is the archetypal flawed genius. It just needs an interface rework to be perfect."

**Monument Designer v2**

**Amiga Shopper 9/96** 92%

"If you've been dreaming of a powerful and easy-to-use titling package with brilliant output quality, then your dream has finally come true."

**Amiga Format 9/96** 91%

"...Has it all - a wide variety of powerful tools & a simple interface...this is the Amiga's premier titling package."

**AWeb-II con't from page 13**

because AWeb-II comes configured to load this information as a local web page each time it starts. However, the documentation is excellent with abundant working examples built into the HTML text. Other manufacturers should take an example from this well written, concise and practical hyper-text document.

It should be noted that AWeb-II has avoided the use of MUI, and uses external datatypes for image viewing. By avoiding MUI, the actual window is less configured, but in AWeb-II's case this creates a larger hypertext viewing space. It also means you don't have to install MUI on your hard drive (about 1.3 Mb on my system), and it boots a little faster. Although, if you don't disable the documentation autoloading in AWeb-II, you lose this advantage. The use of datatypes (and some other system-dependent functions) means that AWeb-II requires AmigaOS 3.0 or greater. This means that it will upgrade along with new datatypes releases, and will be able to handle any datatype you have installed on your system. It also means that there will be no progressive image loading, because datatypes are not available that take advantage of this option yet, and some of the datatypes require intensive and slow processing. The remaining requirements are several Class Act files, that are included.

The graphic interface itself is very stylish, if not enigmatic. There are two rows of gadgets in the upper right corner of the screen. They are very artistic, but until you've used them it's a little difficult to remember what each icon means. The remaining upper two bands of the window are the navigation and status bars, and give information about the page you're on and the system activity.

The menus are arranged in an orderly

fashion, and give easy control to almost all the browser's more detailed functions. Some options not available with other browsers to date are the "save authorizations" option under the cache menu, and the extensive ARExx menu. The former allows you to save a cache of passwords for password protected web pages.

These are sent transparently when you re-enter a password protected page, which speeds things up quite a bit. The ARExx menu comes preconfigured to install AmiFTP and Voodoo as

FTP and Email clients. It also comes pre-configured to run an included HTML stripper called HTTX, which takes the current page and converts it to readable ASCII, with a number of converting options. This is a very functional addition to the program.

The overall speed of the program appears the same as its competition (Ibrowse) in non-graphic mode (where pictures are not downloaded). AWeb-II offers a well thought out feature giving the option to only download clickable imagemaps, which the competition lacks. When operating in graphics mode, it is slower, owing to the speed of the datatypes used, and the lack of progressive image decoding and loading that the datatypes do not offer. This is more a fault of the system than a fault of the browser, and on an unaccelerated machine may not matter because the main competition uses MUI which can be taxing on the system resources itself.

AWeb-II also introduces a new extension URL called "x-aweb," that allows AWeb-II to use hotlists of other browsers, as well as to call shell and ARExx programs from a web page. This means that you could actually run many of your computer's functions from a local web page. Quite ingenious, though it takes a bit of effort to think of its utility.



Not relying on MUI, AWeb-II displays a large viewing area, and loads it quickly too.

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## AWeb-II con't from page 14

Now for the bells and whistles. Besides the authorization caching and extension URL functions, AWeb-II offers a Network window. This window shows the status of your downloading and internal processing of pages and images as it goes on. From this page you can cancel individual image downloads--for example if they're so large that it would take several minutes to download--and also get an idea of how long the download takes compared to image processing by the program and datatypes. This may sound boring, but it turns out to vastly beat twiddling my thumbs waiting for the images to appear on a page. AWeb-II also comes with a second external program, HTML Heaven that adds gadgets/menus to any ARExx supporting text editor. This combines with AWeb-II to become an excellent HTML

editing suite. HTML Heaven has the added bonus of not requiring that you learn a new text editor to edit HTML. Overall, again I think a great deal of insight went into this package.

Another fancy feature has to do with the ability of AWeb-II to recover from poorly written HTML. AWeb-II actually has several levels of compliance with HTML 3.2 code that are selectable. This option is sorely needed in other browsers. AWeb-II also has primitive frames support, in that it generates a page with the frame's information of the page you request. This is far from true frames support, but I believe more is planned.

A word about stability. I only found one page that could crash AWeb-II so far. It was an example of poorly written HTML, and had several lines of code that were essentially illegible--some calling for images that were probably not images. It

is possible that the datatypes caused the crash, and not the browser. No disk errors were noted after the crash, and the system rebooted without difficulty. So, at least on my A1200/030, it is very stable.

That's the state of AWeb-II in its current version 2.0. I believe that the key to its design is that everything was thought out in detail. This is a very solid program. What I would like to see from the next version of AWeb-II is integration of a cache browser, better frames support, and possibly the independent development of datatypes that would display progressive JPEG, GIF and PNG formats as they download, along with displaying animated GIF's. All in all, this is an excellent effort, and worthy of the Amiga community's support.

For more information on Aweb, visit <http://huizen.dds.nl/~aweb/>



If you operate or know of an Amiga BBS, URL or FTP site, or wish to have your user group mentioned, send the information to The Informer so we can share it with others.

### Internet Sites

<http://www.netrover.com/~timt/amicheats.html>

List of game cheats. Everything from A to Z.

<http://www.datatv.com>

Design And Television Animation homepage. Amiga designed packages for TV and the Web.

<http://home.eznet.net/~wingell/ibrowse/>

Get all the latest IBrowse "plugins" and instructions on how to use them.

<http://www.hisoft.co.uk>

HiSoft's homepage. Makers of the Surf Squirrel and distributors of IBrowse.

<http://www.sharbor.com/amiga/update/index.htm>

Amiga Update. On-line magazine by Brad Webb.

<http://204.182.116.208/Pages/Homepage/main.html>

Culture Shock's homepage. Specializing in internet services, multi-media authoring and community education. Featuring on-line ARExx scripts

<http://www.alberts.com>

Albert's Amby (Shareware Store). Search for anything Amiga. Their motto, "Find It, Try It, Buy It."

<http://www.uga.umd.edu/~walrus/Amiga.html>

Intro, description & history of the Amiga, with lots of software links.

[http://www.xs4all.nl/~blahh/RAW/RAW\\_Main.html](http://www.xs4all.nl/~blahh/RAW/RAW_Main.html)

On-line magazine, Raw, from the Netherlands. Interesting info.

<http://www.icpug.org.uk>

Independent Computer Products Users Group (ICPUG). Non-profit organization run by volunteers aiming to support most home computers, especially Amigas. Loads of links.

<http://www.sns.com/~expsys/>

Get info on Expansion Systems' controllers, SCSI devices, closures, etc., and related software.

### Newsgroups

[comp.sys.amiga.advocacy](http://comp.sys.amiga.advocacy)

Rational and reasons for using the Amiga.

[comp.sys.amiga.emulations](http://comp.sys.amiga.emulations)

Various hardware & software emulators.

[comp.sys.amiga.cd32](http://comp.sys.amiga.cd32)

Discussions for using the CD32.

[comp.sys.amiga.datacomm](http://comp.sys.amiga.datacomm)

Ways and means of transferring data.

[comp.sys.amiga.misc](http://comp.sys.amiga.misc)

Discussions of topics not pertaining to another Amiga group.

[comp.sys.amiga.reviews](http://comp.sys.amiga.reviews)

Product reviews by Amiga users (moderated).

[comp.sys.amiga.announce](http://comp.sys.amiga.announce)

Announcements about Amiga products (moderated).

(For more Newsgroups see Site Seeing article, page 12)

### Dealers

Alex Electronics

916-872-3722

Paradise, CA

Email: [alex@ecst.scuchico.edu](mailto:alex@ecst.scuchico.edu)

BBS: 916-872-3711

<http://www.km-cd/~alex/>

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- National Amiga** 905-845-1949  
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- The Lively Computer** 619-589-9455  
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