

A summary of information and support for Amiga users

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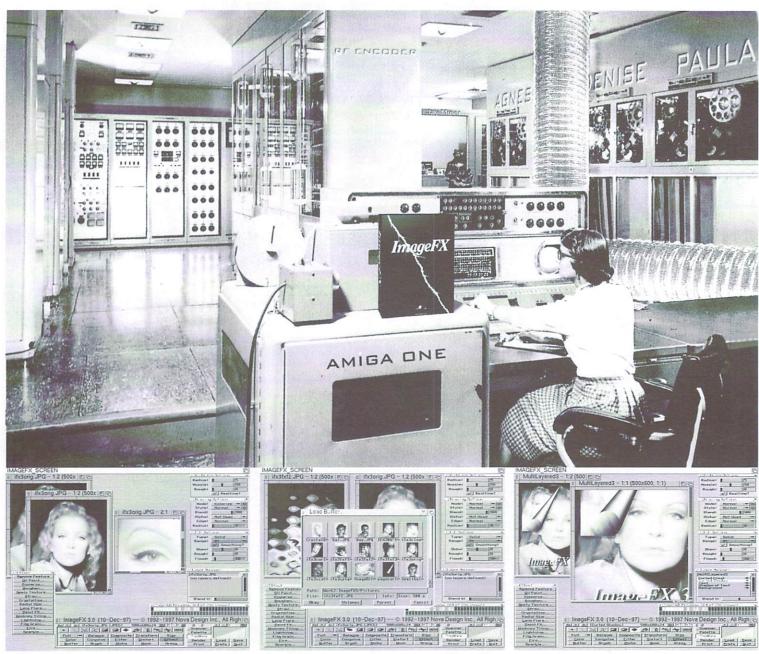
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# Been a while since you upgraded?

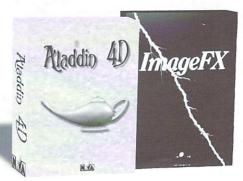


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Mission: To provide an accurate and reliable resource of information pertaining to all things Amiga®, and to connect readers with developers, their products and the Amiga community at large.

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#### From the Editor's Desk:

Welcome to our special Holiday Issue. We've packed this issue with product reviews just in time for your holiday shopping. So when you're finding



gifts for your loved ones this year, remember to pick yourself up a few Amiga products too.

It's been tough being an Amigan this last year. Since the Gateway purchase, it has been one hell of a roller coaster ride. The last five months have been the toughest. Since the WoA show last May, Amiga Inc. has been silent and little information has come our way.

The announcements about CU Amiga and AmigaNews magazines closing hit us hard. These publications were a vital source of information to thousands of Amigans and their closing cast a depressive pall over the community. Seemingly, the Amiga market was dying all around us while Amiga Inc. sat back and said nothing.

I understand that Amiga Inc. had nothing concrete to say and therefore remained silent. But there are many things Amiga Inc. could and should be doing to help prevent further erosion of this already tenuous market.

Amiga Inc. has professed time and time again that the community, the developers and the dealers are their greatest assets. Why then have they apparently done so little to support the market? There are many simple things they can do to bolster the market without revealing their strategic plans or partners.

First and foremost, Amiga Inc. needs to build confidence. Without telling users it is okay to buy current products, people won't invest in the Amiga. Not once has Amiga Inc. acknowledged the efforts of good products like the BoXeR motherboard, Phase5 PowerUP boards, or the many Amiga clones now available. Without these acknowledgments, people are hesitant to buy anything and developers are wary of investing time and resources into continued development. Without continued sales or new products to sell, dealers will not stay in business. Every lost dealer, publication or developer is a serious blow to Amiga's health. By verbally supporting current developer efforts and products Amiga Inc. would give a big boost to the market.

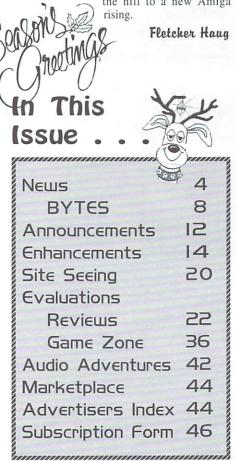
Another thing Amiga Inc. needs to do is get the community involved. They could do things like sponsor a web-based competition of Amiga artwork, an Amiga created MOD contest, or achievement awards for the best new programs; all judged by the community. They should maintain an up-to-date listing of all the current Amiga dealers and usergroups and make available the OS 3.x developers reference manuals. There should also be listings and links to all Amiga shows worldwide, not just some of them. Putting forth small efforts like these would go a long way in establishing the perception that Amiga Inc. really does support and care about the community. If they only state their support, without backing it with actions, the community will perceive it as nothing more than lip service.

Now that I got that rant out of the way, I can report that Amiga Inc. is starting to get on the ball. Just days before this issue went to print, we got word that a 3.5 upgrade will definitely happen. This is a good first step and it addresses many of my concerns, but they must not let the momentum this announcement creates fade away.

Perhaps the most important part of this upgrade is support for PowerPC co-processor boards. This should signal to users that an upgrade to a Phase5 PowerUP board is justifiable and productive. We also learned that an OS partner will likely be chosen by the Cologne show in Germany. Likewise, there will be some major new projects and postings on the Amiga Inc. website. These are all very encouraging signs and by far the most we've heard concerning the Amiga in months.

I believe that this is the beginning of a new phase at Amiga Inc. Their hands will soon be untied and they will be able to finally implement the plans they have established. It is literally just in time, because I really don't think the Amiga market could survive much longer without some action from Amiga Inc. Let's hope that we have finally crossed the

desert valley and are now climbing the hill to a new Amiga



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# Rising From The Valley

#### By Brad Webb

W ou can't be blamed if you're afraid the Amiga world is dying. When you look about, much of what you've seen to date has been bleak. As I write this, two major magazines have recently died-CU Amiga in Britain and AmigaNews in France. Several software development programs have been abandoned. Others are in hiatus, including major players like SoftWood. Even hardware is in question. There are no A4000s coming from QuikPak due to its legal problems. In fact, there are no Amiga computers being made at all.

When you look more closely things seem a bit different, so a balanced view of the Amiga community and market is needed. This effort is necessary due to the activities-or rather the lack of activities-of Amiga Inc. They have been silent too much, and when they do speak, it is often confusing. This fact helped form the current situation I just described. As a careful observer of the scene stated to me recently, "They don't have a voice and they don't have an image." At this point in the Amiga's history, they need both.

While no Amigas are rolling off assembly lines, there are clones being produced. The fact that companies have taken out licenses to make them says good things about the market's long term viability. Good software is still written, supported and offered for sale. New programs like Tornado 3D, Wildfire and ProStation are as good as any being written today. At the time of CU Amiga's death, an informal survey of Amiga developers in Britain showed most still firmly committed to creating product for Amigas.

Amiga Inc. itself is actually doing things. They are beginning to communicate with the users, which should give them the "voice and image" they've been lacking. They are working on their plan for the next generation. There are some positive signs, but the welljustified fear of many Amiga observers is that while we aren't dead yet, we can't go on this way much longer. Whatever Amiga Inc. is doing, it better be good and show some results soon.

I recently talked with Bill McEwen, Amiga Inc.'s Director of Marketing, to help us better understand the overall picture. I began by asking about the status of the "Classic" operating system upgrade, version 3.5. According to Bill, Amiga OS 3.5 will definitely be made available (see side bar). The official announcement about Classic 3.5 should be released at the MAE in Columbus. There is more good operating system news. I



also learned that Amiga OS 4.0, now called Developer OS5, is still on schedule for November and should be shown at the Cologne show in Germany as planned.

I asked about the kernel, the core piece of the operating system. It seems that Amiga Inc. has given conflicting stories about this most important piece of software, indicating at one point that it would be purchased from a third party supplier, and then that it would be a rewritten version of the Amiga's kernel, Exec. The most recent story is a return to purchasing the kernel. Here's what McEwen had to say: "We have never stated that the Kernel would be Exec in OS5. We stated in the slide show in Sacramento that the Exec is the best today. For our purposes in moving forward we will require a change to the Kernel. If we try to take on the tasks ourselves of writing the new OS from the ground up it would take at least two more years. By taking on a partner, we should be able to cut at least 12 months out of the schedule."

Most would agree that an approach which moves the new operating system forward faster is the way to go. However, the operating system partner is still not chosen and there is concern whether or not an operational Developer OS5 system will make its first showing at Cologne. As it is, the Classic Card Amiga emulator, also scheduled for Cologne, will not be ready, due to problems stemming from the failure to settle the OS partner issue as planned. It's also likely that this delay in

> finding an OS partner will push back the public availability of Developer OS5 machines.

> An area where Amiga Inc. has recently made notable improvements is with their website communication. After initially launching well designed, professional web pages, they were left to languish with few updates. However, over the last few weeks the website has received more emphasis from Amiga Inc. and is showing signs that it could become a good source of information. Mr. McEwen assured me that the site will continue to be well managed, with improvements in information content and letters from both him and Managing Director Jeff Schindler. We

can only hope that the content of the site contains more substantial information in the future.

Amiga Inc. plans to use their website as an electronic information publication, and will work with existing electronic media to get information out to the community. This is a good idea, and one that we will be keeping an eye on with interest. Print publications such as this one need to be included in this effort as well, of course. There is still a large percentage of the Amiga community not connected to the Internet, and it would be unwise to ignore this segment of the community.

It's very important for Amiga Inc. to be as open and honest with the Amiga community as possible within the constraints of business. Key here is to let people know that if some-

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thing isn't being talked about openly, it's due to business reasons, not the desire to do something "sneaky." It's unfair for the legacy of Commodore's management to be a burden to Amiga Inc., but it's a fact that the bad experiences of the past have Amigans very sensitive to corporate misbehavior, real or perceived.

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Amiga Inc. needs to manage both the reality of problems in the Amiga community, and the perception. They've not done well on the perception part yet, and that's hurting almost as much as the real problems. Business veterans know perception can be more important than reality. It's good to see Amiga Inc. beginning to communicate better with the community, and trying to ensure that the perception we have is based on facts, rather than speculation, but they still have a long way to go.

I brought up the obvious decline in Amiga developers and publications. Bill's reply was similar to those seen from other Amiga Inc. representatives, most notably the comments posted to the Internet by Program Manager Fleecy Moss. "It hurts," said Fleecy. "These are good people who have been hanging on for years, and they have been dedicated to seeing Amiga once again be revived. We at Amiga Inc. are very frustrated at the speed that we are moving forward. We would like to see us much farther ahead of where we are, but the reality is we are not there yet. The plans are in place, and we need to finish the final details to make this happen. While it looks like we are very far behind, the truth is that we are really only four months old, and we are all working very hard to make this successful for everyone involved." As we talked, there could be no doubting Bill's sincerity, and I am convinced this sentiment holds for all of Amiga Inc.'s staff.

When Gateway first bought Amiga, it had no intention of launching an Amiga subsidiary to revive the computer. The fact they have done this is in many ways surprising from a business perspective, and one we can be thankful for. As for the speed with which they are moving, we can certainly complain about some particulars. However, worse would be rushing and not doing things right. Amiga Inc. must maintain the proper balance. They seem to be trying hard to do that. However, once dates are announced, they have to be met.

Bill stated the near future includes some "great plans" for the Cologne show, and also for the Midwest Amiga Exposition during October in Columbus, Ohio. We hope these plans come to fruition, and the word "great" isn't just hyperbole. Once again, finalizing an agreement with an OS partner shows its importance. Gateway won't release Amiga Inc. to autonomously continue with the rest of its plan until an OS partner is finalized.

The announced dates for results are approaching fast. If OS partnership isn't in place between the time I write this and you read it, then there's a much slimmer chance of success. From what I've been able to determine, the agreement can still happen in time. The type of Amiga that's being discussed in general terms by Amiga Inc. sounds exactly like what is needed to revive the market, and much more than we could have hoped for a year or two ago. If the first pieces fall into place as scheduled, the rest of the plan has a very good chance of success.

The situation for us all is difficult and barely manageable. We need to see Amiga Inc. take concrete steps in the right direction that shore up and bring confidence back to the Amiga market. As for the Amiga community's relationship with Amiga Inc., it looks like the honeymoon is over. What we're hoping happens next is that we can settle down to a good, long marriage.

It's definite and bulletproof: There will be an OS 3.5 upgrade. We can only give you a few details of 3.5 now, but expect a full rundown in the next issue. So far, this is what we know will be contained in the upgrade.

CD Filing System: unlike that found in OS 3.1, this will properly handle all types of CD formats.

**Retargetable Graphics and Retargetable** Audio (RTG & RTA): software for handling existing Graphics and Audio cards will be built into the OS.

Support for PowerPC co-processors: this will allow developers to write enhanced code for programs that use PowerUP accelerators. Internet ready: TCP stack, and all internet clients will be ready to run out of the box.

Improved interface: the old drab Workbench will be replaced with a modern and slick look.

Support for large hard drives: hard drives of any size will be fully supported.

Enhanced Shell: all of AmigaDOS will be reviewed, fixed, enhanced and improved.

The upgrade is software only and will only be available on CDROM. This is not just a bundle of software hacks, but rather an integrated and complete OS upgrade that will install completely with a point and click process. It will sell for under US \$75 and it is expected to be available by the Gateway Amiga Show in St. Louis (March 1999).

The minimum system requirements will be a 68020, hard drive, CDROM drive, 4 Mb 

#### OS 3.5 Upgrade

RAM, and OS 3.1 ROMs. The recommended system is a 68030, 8 Mb RAM, plus all the above. The best performance will be seen on a 68040+, with a graphics card, sound card, and a PowerUP PPC co-processor board.

By placing such heavy emphasis on Open Standards (RTG and RTA) it is clear that Amiga Inc. wants to make as smooth a transition as possible from the Classic Amiga to Amiga OS5. Including support for RTG and RTA in the OS core encourages developers to write applications that use these Open Standards, thereby making it much more likely these applications will work on the upcoming Classic Emulator. This emulator will be included with all future OS5 machines so it would be wise for developers to maintain compatibility with these Open Standards and begin supporting them now.

PowerPC (PPC) co-processor board support acknowledges the efforts of Phase5 and signals that their products are important to Amiga Inc. and the current market. It is important to note that no part of OS 3.5 will be optimized for PPC, and Amiga Inc. will not port any part of the OS to PPC. Supporting PPC boards in the core OS will simplify the installation of these boards and provide some enhancements that will make the PowerUp boards more stable and a bit faster.

ARexx will certainly be included in the release, and there is talk that we may even see an improved version of ARexx. Likewise, Amiga Inc. is talking with Carl Sassenrath to

determine if his new messaging language, REBOL, will be included in the upgrade. There will also be numerous other enhancements and additions included with this upgrade, but the details of these features have not been revealed at this time.

The upgrade's release on CDROM is sure to raise a few concerns as some users still don't have CD players. However, users must realize that Amiga Inc. has to set a minimum system requirement. Everything is moving to CD and it is becoming more and more necessary for every user to upgrade. CDs are very affordable and easy to connect. Many programs are available only on CD and to be without one is truly limiting. There is also legitimate concern that floppies can be pirated much easier then CDs.

By producing this upgrade, Amiga Inc. has taken a major step to revitalize the Amiga market and restore confidence. It shows they are listening to the community and that their attention is not just focused on the long term goal of OS5, but also on the existing user base. It acknowledges and rewards the work of developers, encourages future development, and gives users the confidence they need to upgrade. It will be a long time until we can buy the Amiga OS5 system. With Amiga Inc.'s support, users can now justifiably upgrade their systems to current Amiga standards with graphics, audio and accelerator cards.

#### New Developments From Haage & Partner

#### By Paul Morabito

Q uickly establishing themselves as the premier European Amiga developers, Haage & Partner continue their innovation by releasing StormMESA, a 3D system almost completely compatible with OpenGL (industry standard 3D library), and an as yet unnamed PPC 68k emulator that achieves outstanding results.

StormMESA, now at version 2.0, is a port of MESA, a multiplatform 3D library that is based on the industry standard OpenGL API (Application Programming Interface). Released as a set of link-libraries in 68k and PPC versions, StormMESA provides previously unseen 3D performance to the Amiga. Only a few demos highlighting the power of MESA are available at the moment, but it is hoped other developers will use the MESA 3D libraries for their games and applications. Because MESA was released under the GPL license, StormMESA and all developer documentation is available for free. StormMESA 68k requires a 68040 with FPU and lots of RAM while the PPC version will run on any PPC processor. Both are available for download at www.haagepartner.com.

Included with the Storm Developer Survival Kit (see "Announcements" in this issue) will be the first public appearance of the PPC 68k emulator. Developed by Sam Jordan at Haage & Partner, it aims to one day be used in a "PowerAmiga," totally removing the necessity for costly and increasingly rare 68000 processors. Still only in beta, the emulator is said to be capable of reaching the performance level of a 68040@45Mhz on a PPC 604e. According to Mr. Jordan, further speed improvements are possible with the implementation of a Just-In-Time assembler. The emulator works by first copying the PPC software to RAM. It then resets the PPC, boots up a special version of WarpOS, creates an emulator task, and then completely boots the Amiga. Compatibility with Amiga software including troublesome old games is said to be excellent.

Haage & Partner recently released a status update of Merapi, their Amiga port of Sun Microsystem's Java. The project has not been cancelled, but a release date has still not been determined. The developers didn't realize how much work would be involved in porting a high quality JIT (Just In Time Java compiler) to the Amiga. As it stands the program

properly translates most Java bytecode into native machine code. According to developer Jeroen Vermeulen, "It loads, links, and verifies class files for correctness and security (in fact this part has already uncovered a great deal of bugs in Sun's own JDK). It has GUI elements very similar to the Amiga's native look and feel, complete with an Amiga-like menu system (a replacement was needed because of certain limitations imposed on standard Amiga menus)." Due to these delays the developers decided on an incremental release. "The first releases may not incorporate all of the advanced functionality of the standard Java libraries that many users do not need in day-to-day usage, or which serve a cosmetic rather than a functional purpose," said Vermeulen. These will be added at a later date allowing the developers to concentrate on the quality and stability of the first releases.

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#### Games Going Strong

he Amiga game scene shows no sign of letting up and here's a brief look at what we can soon expect.

Alive Media Soft re-released Blade on CD and it includes a rendered intro, a full source code, and graphics and demos of upcoming Alive titles. It is available for around US \$15. Digital Images is working on Space Station 3000, a game in which you manage a space station by buying, selling and even hiring and firing employees. A demo is due soon. Digital Images is also rumored to be planning Amiga ports of Tomb Raider 3 and WipeOut 2097 among other top rated PC titles. Hurricane Software is developing Virtual Ball Fighters, a Tetris-like puzzler. The game will fully support GFX cards and a PC version will be released. No release date has been announced. Virtual Grand Prix originally called Alien F1. is similar to the PC game Nascar and is nearing completion. It promises 15fps on an 030/50Mhz. The author is hopeful for an October release. Crystal Software signed ReNaissance Software, a budding new Amiga

#### By Paul Morabito

development company that is working on no less than 6 titles including everything from racing games to RPG's. Swiss company CineTech has released the English version of the mega-adventure Sixth Sense Investigations on CD. German APC&TCP is working on a new adventure titled Daydream, not due until early 1999. PURE Design released a second data disk for Flyin' High, published by APC&TCP. Gunbee F-99, another APC&TCP release, is now complete and will also be released very soon. In Gunbee you take control of a well armed bee who must fight through five different worlds. A demo is available at http://computer. freepage.de/fullspeed/gunbee.lha. Putty Squad will finally be released over two years after it was completed by original developers System 3. It will be published by Alive Media Soft. German developers Eternity introduced a new email-based fantasy game called Tales of Tamar. Using email to log moves with the game controlling Eternity server, multiple players compete to establish and expand their

realms in a quest to become emperor of all the land. You can get all the details from http://eternity.amiga-software.com. And finally, The World Foundry is continuing to polish the enormous space trading game Explorer 2260. This game will be published by Epic and will support advanced features and the PowerPC chip. The release date has yet to be announced.



#### Ooops . . . Corrections

In the issue 15 review of AWeb II v 3.1, it states that AWeb requires either a keystroke or a 3-button mouse to use pop-up menus. This is incorrect. The user can configure AWeb to use the right mouse button for pop-up menus from the GUI settings, so a 3button mouse is not required.



The Dog Days of Summer seemingly had nothing new to report concerning activity in the ICOA. However, towards the end of August things picked up when Fleecy Moss (fleecy@netreach.net) suggested that methods to combat software piracy should be developed. Fueled by an anonymous posting from a member of the maligned pirating group Digital Corruption, members began floating ideas on how to curtail the lecherous actions of groups like these that still plague the Amiga market. Mario Saitti (saittim@cytanet.com) was chosen to head the Piracy workgroup and has expressed the strongest interest in combating this problem.

### Amiga Events

#### InfoMedia 98

October 3-4, Antwerp Belgium. The biggest computer show in Belgium. Consisting of two halls; one for PC and one for Amiga and other systems. While most in North America won't make this event, it shows that the Amiga still draws good attention in Europe. Visit http://titan.glo.be/waasland/ infomedia98 for more info.

#### AmigaFest 98

October 24th - 25th, Melbourne Australia. The Amiga continues to survive Downunder. Sponsored by Australian Amiga Gazette magazine, this show expects to draw over 2,000 Amiga users over the course of the event. There will be four A1200HD Magic Packs given away along with many other prizes. Learn more at www.acay.com.au/~aag.

#### Computer98

November 13-15, 1998, Exhibition Grounds, Colgne, Germany. This is the biggest Amiga event in the world, attracting tens of thousands of Amiga users. Major Amiga-NG announcements are expected along with further information on the Development System. Visit www.computer98.de for full details. Email contact: austeller@computer98.de

#### Amiga 99

Gateway Computer Show March 12-14, 1999, Henry VIII Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri. Growing every year, this well organized event promises all the best with larger venues, more dealers, exciting classes, a banquet and door prizes. Get all the latest at www.amiga-stl.com.

#### World Of Amiga Show 1999

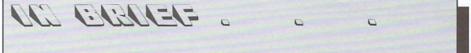
WOA is confirmed and will take place in the UK. Work is well underway, although the date and venue has yet to be confirmed. This event will play a major role in the rejuvenation of the Amiga. For more information on the show, contact Peter Brameld at p.brameld@ukonline.co.uk. A website is already in place at www.infinitefrontiers.mcmail.com. Options to be explored include consumer education, legal enforcement, hardware/software solutions, and others. The fact that Digital Corruption took it upon themselves to issue a warning to the ICOA shows that they already feel the heat being applied.

By Fabian Jimenez

Another important group is the Programming Model Workgroup. This group has submitted some proposals to Dr. Havemose of Amiga Inc. Along with the Installer, Interface, and Total Amiga Solution workgroups, one can see that the ICOA is serious in providing input for the future Amiga OS 5.0. A volunteer is being sought to lead the workgroup that will explore extending the Autoconfig standard to a more universal level.

The ICOA website is undergoing some renovation. ICOA members that wish to help in its creation and maintenance are asked to email Gary Peake at gpeake@wt.net. Enhancements to the site will include "secure" HTML discussion boards. There may also be an ICOA CD issued at the Cologne show. For further information, visit the ICOA website at http://www.amiganet.org/icoa.





Scala Inc. announced the relaunch of Scala MM400 multimedia and video titling software. Software Hut, Weird Science, and Randomize, will be selling it at a reduced price. Ateo Concepts released software updates for the AteoBus and their Pixel64 A1200 graphics card. In addition, an AteoBus-compatible high-speed parallel and serial board and multi I/O board will soon be available. Visit www.ateo-concepts.com for full details. CeV Design now offers Ateo Concepts products for their line of Micronik and RBM tower expansions systems. CeV offers many options to tower your A500, A1200, A3000, and A4000 Computer. Visit www.shore.net/~cev/cev.html or call 781-942-0209. The September 2, 1998 issue of Business Week reports on NewTek, Tim Jenison, and the past and future of the Video Toaster. Filled with references to the Amiga, the article makes an insightful read. Haage & Partner's Easy Writer has changed its name. It is now called Amiga Writer and the English version should be available now. Visit www.haage-partner.com for all the latest. Schatztruhe continue to give us the best of Aminet with Aminet 26. This one includes a full version of XI Paint 4.0, the high quality 24-bit paint program. Check Schatztruhe out at www.schatztruhe.de. AmigaUniverse, a cool web-based Amiga resource, has a US Mirror site. Check it out at http://linux.tc3net.com/tecno/. AsimWare redesigned their website to include news, online ordering, employment opportunities and more. Have a look at www.asimware.com. Randomize continues to add more products to its AmigaWares clothing line. Check them out at www.amigawares.com. The Amiga Lost Lambs website is bringing together Amiga users. Join the database and do searches by region, state and country. Visit http://welcome.to/LostAmigaLambs for a look. RamJam, the company porting the Opera web browser to the Amiga, report Opera is expected to be ready by early 1999 at the latest. To learn more, visit www.operasoftware.com. Prolific Amiga developers PerSuaSiVe SoftWorX joined reg.net, an online registration service that accepts all forms of payment on behalf of the author. To register a PerSuaSiVe product visit www.reg.net. HiSoft released IBrowse 1.22 which offers bug-free printing, improved JPEG decoding, improved MiamiSSL handling and better RTG support. Get the update patch from www.hisoft.co.uk. Weird Science Ltd. is distributing all Alive Mediasoft game titles. Non-UK customers can now easily purchase Alive titles by credit card. Visit www.weirdscience.co.uk for game descriptions, demos and screenshots. Version 2.1 of MasterISO is now available and adds support for 20 additional CD writers. Registered users can get the update from www.asimware.com. WFMH released an English language tutor called *Electronic Teacher 5.0*. Visit www.amiga.com.pl/eteacher/tutor to learn all the features of this powerful leaning tool. GoldED Studio 5 CD is a complete editing environment that includes GoldED 5, Webworld (HTML add-on), Roget's Thesaurus, Joyce (spell checker) and more. Visit http://members.tripod.com/~golded/golded.html for a detailed description. A full version of GoldED 4 can be found exclusively on the Amy Resource CDROM Volume 10, along with tons of GoldED add-ons. For more information visit www.amyresource.it. Village Tronic has redesigned and reduced the price of their Ariadne Ethernet card for Zorro-II Amigas. Called the Ariadne-II, it will only lack the extra parallel port of its predecessor. Get all the stats at www.villagetronic.com. Epic Marketing released Sequencer One V1.5, a music recording, editing and replay program; Hit Kit, a drum track and bass line creator; Sample Series, a collection of over 200 sound samples; and a 3D Sound Box that can improve sound quality. Visit www.epicmarketing.ltd.net for full details.

A joint project between Team AMIGA and the Amiga Community Liaison Group (ACLG) has seen the creation of a new IRC channel with the intent of providing a source of help for frustrated Amigans, and also as a general area for Amiga related chatter. Many prominent Amigans have pledged support including Dave Haynie and Joe Torre. The Amiga help channel is phase one in a three phase plan which aims to provide the ultimate web/BBS based Amiga information source. The channel name is #Team\*AMiGA and is available on all BeyondIRC servers including babylon.beyondirc.net.

JForth developers Mike Haas and Phil Burk released their programming language as freeware. Originally launched more then six years ago and priced at US \$179, JForth was one of the leading Forth implementations usable on any platform. Forth never quite reached the popularity of C but has cemented a solid base due to its simplicity and power. JForth represents a full Forth implementation for the Amiga sporting many powerful features. JForth, with full documentation, is available for download from http://www.softsynth.com/jforth. In the first 24 hours nearly 2000 copies were downloaded, causing the server to overload and crash. Ah, those loyal Amigans!

ClickBOOM released a demo of the eagerly awaited Napalm, a future-based Warcraft/Command & Conquer game. The 6.5 Mb demo gives the gameplayer 10 minutes to destroy an enemy base. something that appears relatively easy until attempted. Although short, the demo highlights the high quality of the game and the stunning graphics and sound effects including digitized speech. Napalm promises to further push the Amiga, requiring a minimum of 16 Mb RAM (an 8 Mb version is under consideration), a 68020 (060 recommended) and a 2x CDROM. Those who preorder the game go into a drawing for US \$1,000. The demo can be downloaded from www.clickboom.com.

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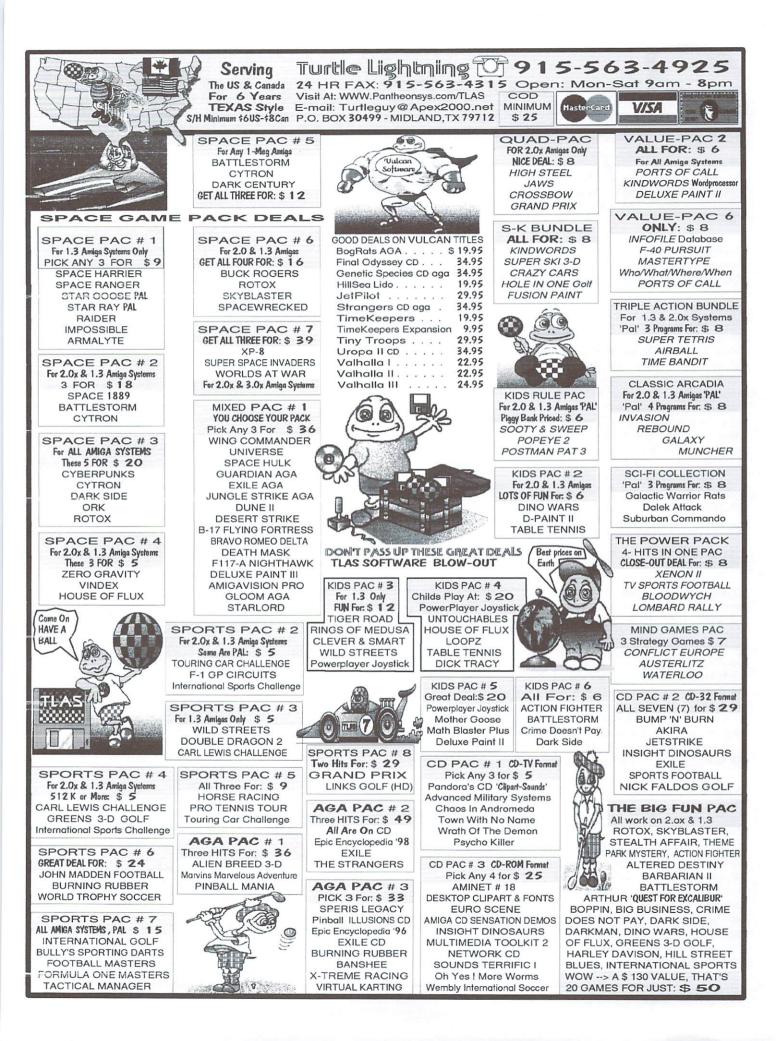
Joe Torre, Amiga Inc.'s resident hardware guru, has left the company. Amiga Inc. hasn't yet publicly announced the reason for his departure, but it is believed to be due to Amiga Inc. strategically moving away from hardware and focusing mainly on developing AmigaOS 5 software. Mr. Torre was one of the public faces of Amiga Inc. and his enthusiasm and advocacy for the Amiga will be sorely missed.



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WIZARD MOUSE 560 DPI22.95Golden Image PENMOUSE9.95POWERPLAYER JOYSTICK6.95THE BUG JOYSTICK YALM SIZE17.95JUPITER JOYSTICK 'SUCTION BASE'18.95QUICKJOY II TURBO JOYSTICK21.95Competition Pro Mini JOYSTICK20.95ZIPSTICK SUPERPRO JOYSTICK20.95CURISER TURBO JOYSTICK19.95SPEEDKING ANALOG JOYSTICK24.95GRAVIS ADVANCED JOYSTICK24.95CD-32 JOYPAD For cd-32 games14.95Competition Pro GamePad27.95Alpha Data CRYSTAL TRACKBALL27.95Parallel Port Joystick Adp/Adds 219.95PC/AMIGA Analog Joystick Adapter19.95Joystick Y-Splitter '2 in 1 port'11.95	21SEALANCE (SUB)222YAHTZEE Times 3324WHEEL OF FORTUNE344DOWNHILL SKI355ZERG (D&D ADV)362DRIP (Arcade Action)470MISSLE Times 3671MECHFIGHT678PETERS QUEST680PAC MAN, SUNMAZE796GAMES GALORE #2796GAMES GALORE #2796GAMES GALORE #2796BLACKJACK8137BLACKJACK8162VIDEO POKER8190MORIA (D&D)8191KINGDOM AT WAR6245CHECKERS & SLOT CARSDi276CAR & MINIBLAST1282SYS (ARCADE ACTION)1	200       STATES/MATH         38       WORD SEARCH         45       COMPUTER TUTOR         50       DESERT STORM         99       BIBLE PROSPER         95       MATH DISK         69       MATCH/MATH +         72       DINOSAURS         83       COLOR THE ALPHABET         11       BIRDS & MAMMALS         19       ASTRONOMY         101       CHEMISTRY I         53       NIGHT MATH ATTACK         56       AMIGA DOS TUTOR 2.0x         192       PAINT IT         93       PICTURE MATH         51,652,653       BIBLE SEARCH         sk#       HOME & OFFICE:         16       SPREADSHEETS (4)         51       TEXT PLUS Wordprocessor	<ul> <li>429 Compression Tools</li> <li>472 MULTIDOS &amp; Sid 2</li> <li>496 LAZYBENCH</li> <li>606 A1200 FIXES</li> <li>671 KICK_1.3 INSTALL</li> <li>716 Screen Blankers</li> <li>767 A1200 HACKS</li> <li>821 DISKSALVAGE 2</li> <li>903 VIRUS Z II</li> <li>905 NEWICONS</li> <li>913 SCREEN Blankers</li> <li>922, 923 Term V_4.2</li> <li>949 Zip &amp; UnZip</li> <li>973 MrBackUp Pro</li> <li>999 Cannon Drivers Forthe 600,800,4000 series printers</li> <li>1048 MUI 3.3 (2.0x sys)</li> <li>PD Software: We make no warranty on PD soft-</li> </ul>
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Announcements A

The descriptions and opinions stated in this column are not necessarily those of The Informer. We are not responsible for the validity of these announcements.

#### Adiboo

From: Alive Media Software Email: stevenalive@innotts.co.uk

Alive Media Software will soon release the first of many planned educational titles for the Amiga. Adiboo is an exact port of the Macintosh program of the same name. It ships on two CDROMs and aims at children between the ages of 4 and 8 years old. Adiboo is fully expandable with future add-ins already planned. The program comes packaged in a big gift box containing both CDs, a full color manual, and a free activity book and coloring crayons. It requires 68040 or PPC, 8 Mb RAM, Hard drive and CDROM. Adiboo runs in 256 colors on a 640 x 480 screen and offers graphic card support. A price for Adiboo has not yet been set.

#### Amiga Survival Kit

From: Paxtron URL: www.paxtron.com

Paxtron released the Amiga Survival Kit, a hardware kit containing various Amiga chips and parts. Paxtron claims 90% of Amiga problems can be solved with this kit. Kits for the A500, A1200, A2000, A3000T, A4000 and C64 have been released, each containing slight variations in the package. Generally the kit contains diagnostic software, a replacement battery, Kickstart ROMs, replacement CIAs and, in the A3000s case, a new Buster chip. Prices and components vary substantially between kits with the A2000 kit costing US \$136, and the A1200 kit cost US \$239.

#### Amiga Web Miner From: Global Posse Software Email: amicom@nfinity.com

Amiga Web Miner (AWM) takes the work out of surfing the net and automatically gathers the information from the internet that you want and need. Once this information is gathered AWM presents it as an HTML webpage with optional readable text. This information can be automatically emailed to any address, uploaded to your web server, or saved to your hard drive (or any combination thereof). The output can be read with any text or HTML viewing program. It can be run automatically by an AmigaDOS script (such as "user-startup") or by a program such as Jim Hines' "EZCron." AWM also supports an unlimited number of users, can be maintained remotely via email commands (with optional add-on module), and it can check multiple websites multiple times daily. AWM is available for US \$30 and requires a recent version of AWeb and Miami, and optionally YAM and AmFTP. Purchasers will get unlimited free updates via email and may recommend enhancements for the next update. To order or ask questions, send an email with "AWM Order Information" in the subject.

#### ImageFX 3.2

From: Nova Design URL: www.novadesign.com

Nova Design released version 3.2 of their image processing software ImageFX. This is mainly a maintenance update which claims to have virtually eliminated all the reported problems in previous releases. There are new features as well, including support for more BMP and JPEG image file subformats and support for images made in the Brilliance paint program. Minor updates have been made to the IMP batch processor as well as new commands being added to the ARexx interface. Support for scanners has been improved and for those with drawing tablets, the airbrush tool is now pressure sensitive. The patch is available free from ftp://ftp.nova design.com/pub/imagefx/Official\_Upgrades. Non net-connected Amigans can receive the update on floppy disk for US \$5.

#### LightROM 6 and Rexecute

From: Weird Science

URL: www.weirdscience.co.uk

Weird Science released LightROM 6, a four CD set containing high quality scenes and objects for LightWave. The set includes a massive collection of object and scene files, including: Dean Scott's "ABomb-ROM," a LightWave scene file of an atomic bomb exploding that uses over 550 Mb of image maps; PuppetMaster LightWave files, imagemaps, seamless textures and demos of PolyTrans, NuGraf & World Construction Set version 3; and, a Desktop Video collection with over 550 Desktop Video images. LightROM 6 is available now for around US \$45.

Also from Weird Science is Rexecute, a compiler for ARexx scripts. The compiler promises to be full featured and includes a comprehensive online help system said to get even a neophyte programming in ARexx quickly. The program ships on one disk, includes a hard disk installer and has on-disk documentation. Rexecute is available now directly from Weird Science for about US \$30.

#### New Products from Randomize From: Randomize

URL: www.randomize.com

Randomize Computers announced the release of the Genesis, a super powered Amiga clone. Featuring AmigaOS 3.1, 68060 50 MHz, 32 Mb RAM, 24-bit Retargetable 2 Mb Graphics Board providing 800x600 in 24-bit, 4.3 Gb IDE hard drive, 32x IDE CDROM and a High Density Floppy drive (PC & Mac compatible). The Genesis is SVGA/VGA monitor compatible and comes complete with a copy of Personal Paint 7.1. Optional extras include a PPC card, additional RAM, and a SCSI controller. Prices start at US \$1,760.

Randomize now distributes Individual Computers' products which include Catweasel PC Floppy Drive controller, the Buddha Multi-IDE Controller, the 4-way IDE adapter IDE-Fix'97, and two soon to be released products, Atlantis, an external audio module, and KickFlash, an erasable ROM Switcher.

Randomize also released Multivision, an external flicker fixer and scan doubler for all Amiga computers. The unit connects to the Amiga's RGB port and automatically "doubles" the scan rate of all native Amiga display modes so they can be viewed on any inexpensive SVGA/VGA monitor. The Flicker fixer version doubles the scan rate and removes the "flicker" from the display.

#### NetConnect 2

From: Active Technologies URL: www.active-net.co.uk/

Active Technologies finally released the long awaited NetConnect 2. The package provides a full suite of high quality Internet tools and programs. These include AmiTCP-Genesis (brand new TCP/IP stack), Microdot-II, Voyager, AmIRC, AmFTP, AmTalk,

AmTelnet, AmTerm, NetInfo, X-Arc (Winzip style archive management tool) and the Contact Manager which is a centralized address book that stores all your user information, websites, ftp servers and chat channels. Of most interest to those looking to get connected to the net is the Genesis Wizard, which promises to have you online in minutes, pain free. NetConnect 2 is available now for about US \$90.

#### PageStream 4.0

From: SoftLogik URL: www.softlogik.com

Almost three years after the release of PageStream 3.0, SoftLogik has announced version 4.0 for the Amiga. Due in December, SoftLogik promise this release won't be plagued with crippling bugs and missing features that made version 3.0 an initial disappointment. The new version is largely composed of implemented user requests as well as PDF (Adobe Acrobat) export, HTML import/export, native indexing, drag and drop text, table of contents, lasso select and much more. While the final release will not be ready until December, advance purchasers are entitled to all beta versions as well as the final release. PageStream 4 will ship on CDROM. Upgrades from previous versions are available for between US \$75 and \$95. No final price has yet been announced on the retail version

#### Storm DSK

From: Haage & Partner URL: www.haage-partner.com

Haage & Partner keep showing their commitment to quality Amiga development software by releasing the Amiga Developer Survival Kit. Included in the package is both 68k and PPC versions of Storm C 3.0, Storm-PowerASM 3.0, StormWizard 2.2, Storm-MESA 3.0, Warp3D, WarpUP 3.1 and the Amiga Developer CD. A beta version of the new PowerPC 68k emulator is included as well as a huge array of sample source files highlighting the power of the included packages. A CDROM with English manual and extended online docs is provided. The package is available in two forms: Commercial and Private. Only the Commercial version can be used to produce commercial or shareware software. The Private edition (for personal use only) can be upgraded to the Commercial version at any time. The Storm DSK is due for release by the end of September. The Commercial edition will cost around US \$400 and the Private edition about US \$300. Upgrades and cross-grades from other Storm products are available.

#### Studio Professional V2.2 From: Schatztruhe

URL: www.schatztruhe.de

Schatztruhe released Studio Professional 2.2. Studio Professional has long been regarded as one of the Amiga's best printing utilities. It allows Amiga users to get the most from their modern printers, something the Amiga's standard drivers and printer subsystem lack. The latest version includes improved drivers, a utility to print images, support for a huge range of image formats, ARexx interface and the inclusion of a Color Management System (CMS), ensuring the colors printed match the colors on your screen. The program ships on CDROM and requires Workbench 2.04 and 1.5 Mb RAM or greater. Studio Professional is available for approximately US \$40.

#### Tornado3D 2.0 Upgrade From: Eyelight Email: info@tornado3d.com URL: www.tornado3d.com

Evelight released the 2.0 "professional" update to Tornado3D, their high quality 3D rendering software. To show their gratitude to purchasers of previous versions of Tornado, the 2.0 update is free to all registered users. New features include bones and muscles, Golem scripting language, hair generator, furry and soft particles, improved animation control and a cleanup and optimization of the GUI. PPC rendering has also been optimized and is now between 6 to 9 times quicker than rendering on a 68060. The free update is available directly from the Eyelight website while copies of Tornado 2.0 are for sale for approximately US \$245.



# Let an ImageFX Master SUPER CHARGE your brain!

### Vol. 3: ageFX 3.0

Rev-up for ImageFX 3.0! This tape gets you up and running with the new features in 3.0, plus Cinemorph, scanning, printing and more!

Now YOU can use ImageFX like a pro! Each Catalyzer video leads you through fantastic projects from start to finish using ImageFX. Work along with the tape using material on the included floppy disk! Your teacher is Bohus Blahut, the creator of the ImageFX demo video. Bohus shows you new techniques and new ways of thinking that you WILL apply to your creative work over and over. What are you waiting for? Get Catalyzed!

Introducing Catalyzer Volume 1: animate lightning and other effects, text tricks, "PLUS" mastering AutoFX & IMP

Volume 2-Compositing:

alpha channels, rotoscoping, green screens, cool modes

-Plug-Ins for ImageFX-check our website for the latest releases!

**Power-Up Tutorial Videos** for ImageFX

GATALYZER

"If you own ImageFX, you've GOT TO own these tapes. Bohus makes it look so easy, you wonder why you never figured it out for your-self." - Jeff White, Visual Inspirations

"I look at the scads of features in ImageFX, and just sigh. After spending a little time with Catalyzer I and 2, getting from A to B is much easier - and I might just try going to C and D, too." - Steve Braker, Worthwhile Films

"PanCanvas is the first tool on the Amiga that allows me to do true animation type camera moves. The speed, flexibility and ease of use allows me to set up a move in seconds and let the Amiga do the rest." - Rusty Mills, Supervising Producer, Warner Bros. Animation

PanCanvas is a motion-control plug-in for ImageFX. Sweep the virtual camera over still images to create dramatic "documentary style" sequences! Download the demo version from our website!

Videos are only \$39.95 ea.+\$5.95 s&h. PanCanvas is \$35.95 + \$3.95 s&h. Visa, MC accepted. Include exp. date and signature or check payable to: Legacy Maker, Inc., PO Box 60711, Chicago, IL 60660, or call us at 773.465.5158. IL residents add 8% sales tax. www.legacymakerinc.com

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By Brad Webb

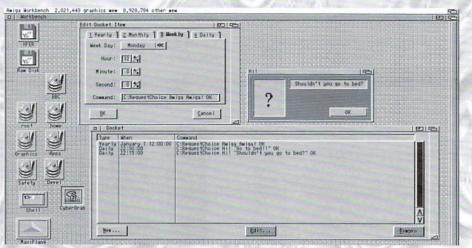
A utomating and scheduling tasks on an Amiga can be a struggle. It would be nice to perform backups at specific times; login to your mail server to check for new mail at night, when the server would be quicker; or remind you when it's time to shut the machine down and head for bed. While scripts can handle these chores, they're cumbersome compared to what's available on operating systems like Unix. Fortunately, the always creative Amiga community has come up with some good answers to this need.

Most of these solutions are based on the "cron" program from Unix. Cron-style programs typically maintain a scheduled list of tasks you want the computer to perform. Of the many such programs for the Amiga, a good general purpose example is Docket by Steven Solie.

Docket has a simple GUI yet enough flexibility to meet most people's needs. Docket allows you to schedule events on a yearly, monthly, weekly or daily basis. It provides click-on gadgets for all timing needs, and a type-in box for entering the command or program you want to run. The scheduled events are visible in the program's main window, from which you can remove or edit existing events, or call up the scheduling window to create new ones.

While Docket's excellent AmigaGuide format documentation points out it's not designed as a reminder program, clear guidelines are provided on how to use it for this purpose. The AmigaOS 3.x command RequestChoice is in fact the default entry for new tasks. By scheduling this command for a time you need to be reminded of something, the cron program becomes a simple but effective reminder program.

When scheduling a new task, you need only edit the "Amiga!" portion of the default command and it's ready to go. The only tricky part is remembering to enclose the text in double quotes if it contains any spaces. The default command even adds an "OK" gadget to the resulting requester so Amiga Automation with Docket



You can sure tell that Brad has been working way too hard if he needs his Amiga to tell him when to sleep! The good thing is that Docket will wake him up and tell him when to eat too!

you can click it off after reading the reminder. The requester will pop up on whatever screen is active at the time of the scheduled event (see the illustration for examples of commands.)

Of course, you can use RequestChoice with most other cron programs. Depending on your needs, one of these many other programs might be more suitable to you. For instance, if you need to schedule an event hourly, Docket's smallest time period of "daily" would require 24 entries! For this sort of flexibility, you might want to consider CyberCron.

CyberCron gives you the full scheduling flexibility of the Unix cron program. It does require learning a fairly cryptic scheduling syntax to prepare your schedules in an editor rather than a GUI. However, it's not that hard to master, and there's little it won't be able to handle. CyberCron even offers some handy extensions to the Unix cron format, and comes with good documentation in AmigaGuide format to get you up and running.

Good software will usually suggest practical uses to your subconscious. Docket goes one step further by providing suggestions in the documentation, such as deleting all files from T: daily, synchronizing the Amiga's clock to an atomic clock monthly, and reminding you of birthdays yearly. The author of Docket is "now planning on adding more fun tasks such as displaying the daily Dilbert® cartoon every morning."

You'll have to decide for yourself if you have tasks that would benefit from automation, but I'd be very surprised if you don't. Most people I know can benefit from reminders now and then.

Docket's current revision is 2.0. It should run on any Amiga with OS 3.0 (Version 39) or better, and requires Class Act 2.0 or better. Docket is available on Aminet as util/cdity/Docket.lha. ClassAct classes can be obtained at www.Finale-Dev.com/ download.html. CyberCron 1.5 (Aminet: util/time/ CyberCron15.lha) dates back to 1992, and should run on any Amiga with OS 2.04 or better.







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#### Solutions for everybody

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#### Technical Data CYBERSTORM PPC Accelerator Board:

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Companion CPU	68040/68060 25-50 MHz
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#### System Essentials Part 2

We continue this issue by discussing some must-have utilities that enhance the operating system and increase the efficiency of everyday Amiga use. As always, this software has been tested and determined to be system friendly through extended periods of use.

#### A Watchful Eye

One of the common difficulties with installing software is that it does not always work the first time you try it. Sometimes the problem is caused by a missing or misplaced library, font or other necessary file. Unfortunately, most programs assume that everything is where it should be and do not bother to tell you if that is not the case. Many times the program will not start, or in worse cases the program causes a system crash. These problems can be extremely difficult, if at all possible, to track down. But, there is help available. Eddy (Aminet:util/ Carroll's SnoopDos moni/SnoopDos30.lha) is a must have for every Amiga user. SnoopDos works by installing a patch that monitors various system and AmigaDOS function calls. With SnoopDos on the watch, you will be told what an application is looking for, where it expects to find it and a lot of other possibly important information. Too much information? No need to worry, because SnoopDos can be told what function calls to monitor.

#### Requesters

Over the years, developers have tried to improve on the Amiga requesters-each creating alternative libraries of functions with different enhancements. One of the more popular is the *reqtools.library* (Aminet:util/libs/Req ToolsUsr.lha) now developed by Magnus Holmgren, which provides impressive replacements for file, font, palette, volume, screen mode, query, string, and number requesters. A preferences editor is included that allows configuration of various requester options. Because developers of other applications each chose to use their favorite requesters, applications have become inconsistently interfaced. To remedy this, the ReqTools archive includes *RTPatch*, now developed by Dave Jones, designed to watch for calls to other requesters and substitute the ReqTools requesters instead.

#### **Keeping Time**

Everyone keeps some kind of schedule, though perhaps some more relaxed than others, so a good clock would be useful. Ideally, the clock should appear on the currently active screen, so that we do not have to keep jumping screens to see what time it is. Some applications, such as Directory Opus, include an optional clock of their own. One possibility would be to enable these clock options in each program, but that would really be a waste of CPU time. Why have multiple tasks all doing the same thing when we could just have one? There must be a better solution. Unlike most clock programs, of which there are many, Thomas Igracki's ScreenClock (Aminet:util/time/Screen Clock.lha) is able to display itself on the frontmost screen, so you can always find the time at a glance. You do not have to worry about it covering up other important information, because it adds itself into the right end of the title bar. It is fully configurable and includes options for date and CPU usage as well. A nice alternative, or even a companion, to the visual clock is a talking clock. The simplest being one that uses the Amiga's built-in speech resources. TimeSpeak (Aminet:util/time/TimeSpeak.lha) is such a program, and in addition to telling you the current time, it will also tell you the date-if vou ask it nicely.

If you have a program that you think should be considered for this column send an email to caught@youngmonkey.ca. Please, do not send programs unless requested.







Esvaluations



Wildfire

W ildfire is a professional animation processor. It allows you to sequence animations, adding 3D effects and transitions. Wildfire is unique among Amiga applications in two ways: It supports the PowerPC processor, and introduces an interface style formerly seen only on high-end computer graphics workstations.

Wildfire has many features-so many that it may overwhelm the user at first. Its power is in the way it allows you to manipulate animations and still images, adding effects,

transitions and framesynchronized sounds. Many of the 3D and warping effects are on par with those created on high-end Silicon Graphics Flint or Flame workstations costing up to \$200,000! Such systems are heavily used in the film industry to create the stunning effects seen in many modern films, such as folding video cubes, perspective transforms, warping, twisting and twirling sequences, etc. The eye candy that Wildfire produces is simply amazing, and new operators are being added and enhanced all the time thanks to the open architecture and third-party plug-ins.

When Wildfire was initially released, many thought it was just another image processing package similar to ImageFX. In fact, Wildfire is very different from

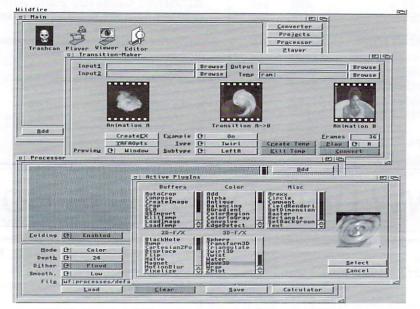
22

ImageFX and any other current image processing program. Andreas Maschke, Wildfire's creator, has raised the bar on what's expected with Amiga graphics software. Wildfire supports many animation formats including the standard Amiga IFF- Informer rating scale: A: Excellent. Nearly flawless product. B: Above average. Minor complaints or flaws.

C: Average. Passable, but needs some improvement. D: Below average. Major complaints or flaws. F: Not recommended. Of little use or value.

ANIM and the new YAFA format. The YAFA format is faster than IFF-ANIM, supports sound, and may be played on lower-end Amigas using a freely-distributable YAFA player (Aminet:gfx/show/yp.lha).

The interface might surprise some users. It is not laid out like any other Amiga application. Wildfire uses icons and a layered storyboard approach. While not necessarily StyleGuide compliant, the interface is designed intelligently. For example, the animation operators are all together, as are the file conversion operators. Due to these differences, be prepared to invest some time to fully grasp how to use all the tools effectively; there is a steep learning curve. This



Wildfire offers powerful features that can create animation effects that mimic those created on top-end systems. Couple this software with a PowerPC board, and you'll increase your production times four-fold.

investment will pay off, though, when you create your first animation.

Most of Wildfire's effects are very computationally intense and it pays to own a PowerPC card. With a fast PowerPC, you will get real-time or near real-time feedback on most effects. This is important because you can more easily keep the creative flow going if you are not constantly waiting for the computer to catch up. Wildfire will work on Amigas without a PowerPC but will be much slower. A wave 3D operation took 68.48 seconds per frame on a 50 MHz 68060, but only 17.34 seconds on a 200 MHz PowerPC. With animations of several hundred or thousand frames, the time saved with a PowerPC can be substantial.

Wildfire can be switch between 68K and PPC via a menu selection in the program. The switch is transparent to the user and created no bottlenecks that I could see and the speed difference is strikingly obvious. Many users have complained about this apparent

68K/PowerPC task switching problem in some PPC applications. In the case of Wildfire, this problem did not appear. The task switching issue has been debated on many Usenet postings by people that often don't even have PPC cards, and I think it has been overblown.

It's refreshing to see a new developer embrace the PowerPC in their initial release of a software package when so many have adopted a 'wait and see' attitude. While we all know that Amiga Inc. is working on a new Super Amiga, there are Amiga users today that need improved speed and flexibility and a PowerPC can provide just that.

I was very impressed with Wildfire and recommend it highly. It is very stable and did not crash or hang on my system during extensive testing. The only thing I found lacking was

Video Toaster/Flyer support. I would like to see special ARexx hooks (beyond the full ARexx command set included) or even special operators or plug-ins to tightly integrate the two. As it stands, they can be made

to work together with some ingenuity. This alone is why I rate Wildfire a B+ and not an A.

Wildfire is available from many Amiga dealers or direct from Nova Design (www.novadesign.com) for around US \$200 (\$150 for the non-PowerPC version). The current 4.xx version has undergone extensive refinement in Germany, and updates are constantly available via the Internet (the wildfire home page, www.oberland.com/amiga/ wildfire, is in German). Nova Design has professionally packaged it for American customers and included a nice box and comprehensive manual. The documentation is in pleasingly clear and concise English.

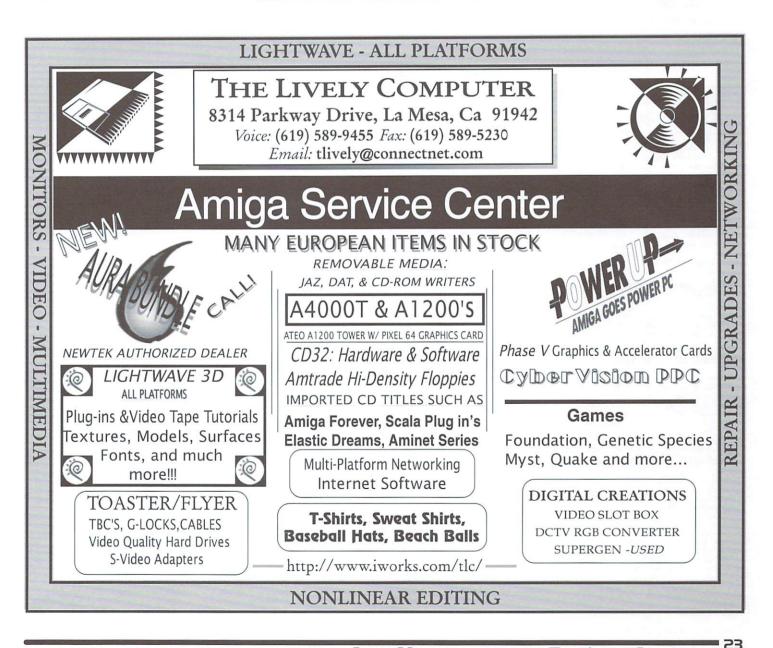
Wildfire is available in two versions and both are CDROM only. The PowerPC version (tested) requires a PowerPC processor, OS 3.1, CDROM drive, Hard drive, and 8 Mb RAM. A GFX card using CyberGraphX is preferred but not required. It was tested on an A4000T PowerPC 200MHz/060 50MHz, with 64 Mb of RAM. The 68k version requires an 020 CPU or better. A demo version is available on Aminet as biz/demo/WildfirePPC.lha.

Rating: B+



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## EZ-VGA ScanDoubler/FlickerFixer

hile the Amiga's native video output (NTSC and PAL) is great for video work, it has always posed a problem for those wishing to find an affordable monitor. Nearly all monitors today are VGA/SVGA and therefore need only scan down to a horizontal rate of 30 kHz. Since the Amiga normally scans at 15.75 kHz, it becomes necessary to buy a special multiscan monitor that supported the 15.75 kHz scan rate, and these are very expensive. Through monitor driver software AGA Amigas are afforded some display modes that can utilize VGA monitors, but any program that displays only in the native NTSC or PAL modes (like most games) cannot be displayed.

Realizing there was a great need to bring affordable VGA monitors to Amiga users, there has recently been a wealth of ScanDoublers/FlickerFixers available. One such device is the EZ-VGA from Eyetech of England. The Eyetech EZ-VGA converts all 15.x kHz modes to standard 31.5 kHz VGA modes and supports full 24-bit color in all non-15.x kHz modes. It claims to work with genlock devices (we did not test this statement), work on all Amiga models, and is completely external so you don't have to open up your Amiga to install it.

The EZ-VGA plugs into the 23-pin video port of any Amiga. It is about 4" long, 2" wide and 1" thick. There is a 23-pin socket on one end (video in) and a 15-pin plug on the other (video out). Installation is as simple as plugging the EZ-VGA into your Amiga and plugging your VGA monitor into the EZ-VGA. There are several versions of the EZ- VGA, some with just a ScanDoubler only and those with a ScanDoubler/FlickerFixer. We reviewed the later version and that is what I recommend you purchase. However, there is an easy option to upgrade if you chose to purchase just the ScanDoubler version.

The small but adequate manual suggests that AGA users install the VGAonly monitor driver. This can be done by opening your system:storage/monitors drawer and dragging the VGAonly driver to your System:devs/ monitors drawer. You should do this for all the monitor drivers you plan on using for display.

I hooked the EZ-VGA to a ViewSonic E771 17" monitor, turned on the system and got a rock solid, flicker-free display in NTSC Hires laced mode. I then ran various programs and found that everyone display fine, including all games. Games that displayed in NTSC Hires laced looked fabulous without the flicker.

Of note is the fact that DoubleNTSC or DoublePAL laced modes still produce flicker. This is because the signal output of these modes is not 15.x kHz and therefore bypasses the flicker fixer. The flicker fixer only corrects flicker from native 15.x video outputs. All the 29.x kHz modes (DBLNTSC, DBLPAL, etc.) displayed fine, but if used in laced modes they still produce flicker. The only mode that didn't display was the Super72 mode which displays at 24.62 kHz. This mode bypasses the ScanDoubler and is too low a rate to be displayable by most VGA monitors, which generally scan down to only 30 kHz (although our monitor did display 29.x kHz output modes). I found Multiscan:Productivity to be the perfect all around display.

The EZ-VGA was tested on an A1200 (with an external 230 watt power supply) and an A2000 ECS machine. All the limited display modes of the A2000 worked perfectly.

There are a couple things I didn't like about the EZ-VGA, but they are minor. It really isn't that nice looking in its silver case and the workmanship is less then journeyman quality. It also got very hot to the touch in operation, but this didn't seem to have any adverse effect on the test system. Aside from that, the EZ-VGA is a wonderful device and is highly recommended for anyone wanting to get a good, inexpensive VGA monitor running perfectly on their Amiga system. This product deserves an A rating.

A North American distributor for Eyetech products has not yet been established, but you can order the EZ-VGA directly from Eyetech. Their order number is +44 164-271-3185 (you must frist dial your long distance carriers out of country code). Hours are 9-6 M-F and 10-2 Sat. (They are 5 hours ahead of EST.) You can also email (info@eyetech.co.uk) or Fax (+44 164-271-3634) and request a FaxBack Form for easy ordering anytime by Fax. The EZ-VGA FlickerFixer/ScanDoubler cost about US \$168, the ScanDoubler-only version costs about US \$105 and a FlickerFixer upgrade cost about US \$69. Visit www.eyetech.co.uk for complete details.

Rating: A

By Fletcher Haug

### FontMachine 3

F ontMachine 3 is written by the ClassX programming team and is designed to make it easier for users to create their own color fonts. Color fonts are popular for use in video, World Wide Web pages, desktop publishing, Scala presentations, etc. FontMachine is not designed to create new font styles-it converts existing bit-mapped fonts into color fonts.

Installation is straightforward using the standard Installer. After the installation, however, I ran into a snag. FontMachine asks for a User ID number and password, neither of which are included with the software. To get them, you send the registration card to

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ClassX in Italy, and they respond with this information. For those of us in the US, this could amount to a several week delay before being able to use FontMachine.

The 75-page manual states that the first version of FontMachine was heavily pirated and the current version requires the original install disk to be inserted every time the program is started, but this did not appear to be the case. The install disk was never requested and the protection scheme consisted of the aboveoutlined UID and password requirement. I would much rather have dealt with the method outlined in the manual. I tried FontMachine anyway without the UID and password and it worked fine until I rendered my first font. The word "FontMachine" was appended to the bottom of random characters in the set, thereby making them useless.

The included example fonts demonstrated an impressive array of the different effects FontMachine can create. FontMachine comes with a good number of professional largescale bitmap fonts and professional-quality textures. FontMachine will render 256-color fonts with an AGA machine, and the 16-color fonts appeared quite usable on my ECS machine.

A neat feature allows the user to save all or continued on page 28

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THE SEES!	<ul> <li>Includes the HTML-Heaven web page authoring toolkit.</li> <li>The v3.1 update patch for v3.0 customers will be available directly from our AWeb page.</li> <li>v2.x to v3.x upgrades are also available directly from AmiTrix. See our AWeb page for more info!</li> </ul>	Amiga-Link & Envoy 2.00 The peer-to-peer networking system for all Amigas! • Uses external floppy port, connects up to 20 Amigas • File and Printer sharing, removable device support • Faster, more reliable than parallel / serial networks • GUI interface, SANA-II driver, works with TCP/IP • Includes RG-58 cable, BNC connectors/terminators • AmigaLink requires WB1.3, Envoy requires WB2.x

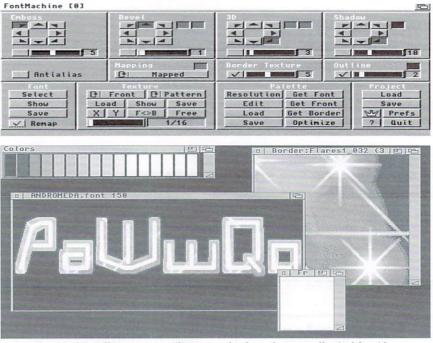


#### FontMachine con't from page 26

part of a font set (i.e. standard characters, international characters, etc.) and to apply custom textures (e.g. framegrabs) to the fonts. Using AmigaOS 3.0 or higher, the program allows any graphic to be used as a texture as long as it has a supporting datatype. Textures may also be programmed. The user selects a palette and a few other parameters, and FontMachine computes a texture. These parameters can be programmed via text files.

FontMachine has a preferences section in which the user sets the desired screenmode, automatic/manual rendering upon each change, the texture remap quality and whether or not to close the Workbench.

I tried a few of the included ARexx scripts and was pleased with the power of the command set, though the lack of user-friendliness left me feeling slightly frustrated at first. It took me the better part of an hour to figure out how to get a few of the scripts to work correctly. An especially powerful script for webmasters converts an animated brush to an animated texture on a font, saving it as an animated GIF. A number of animated brushes are included for use with this and other scripts. You can see the results of my attempts www.nfinity.com/~amicom/amiga at omaha.html. FontMachine's power, ease of use and quality of results would rate it a B+, but the installation fiasco drops it to a C+

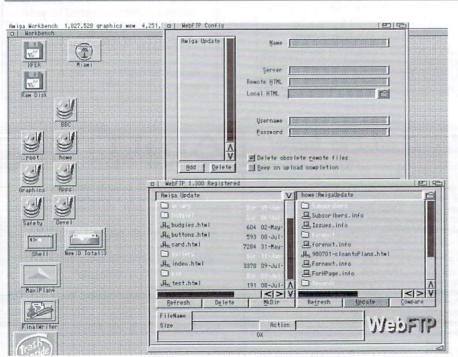


FontMachine allows you to easily create color fonts that are well suited for video or websites. You can use practically any graphic or pattern as a texture on your fonts, allowing for some stunning output.

overall. FontMachine was reviewed on an ECS A3000 running OS3.1, 68040/25 MHz CPU, 2 Mb Chip and 8 Mb Fast RAM. It is distributed by Haage & Partner of Germany and is available from many Amiga dealers for about US \$75.

Function and Power: B+ Overall Rating: C+

By Bohdan Lechnowsky



Take most of the tedious work out of maintaining your website with WebFTP. With a few clicks and selections, you can easily and safely add and delete files from your host server. Webmasters take note!

WebFTP

t's rare to find a program so easy to use that once you're familiar with it, you almost forget it's there. WebFTP, from Finale Development, is such a program. WebFTP is a World Wide Web (WWW) site maintenance program. It facilitates near-automatic updating of your web site from a local directory on your Amiga's hard drive. The program connects to your Internet Service Provider (ISP), compares files and updates the server to match your local directory.

The advantages of preparing your website locally are many. You are able to use programs and tools you're familiar with, avoid worries about maintaining a connection with your server (not to mention telephone time), and have your site completely prepared and tested before being released to the general public. Additionally, WebFTP's 'all at once' approach minimizes the chances of interrupting a visitor by updating a file being viewed.

WebFTP is easy to install and set up. You tell it how to find and log in to your ISP account, and the local directory on your Amiga where your pages are stored. As installed, the default setting "delete on server" is enabled. This means that WebFTP will automatically delete any file it finds in your server account that it

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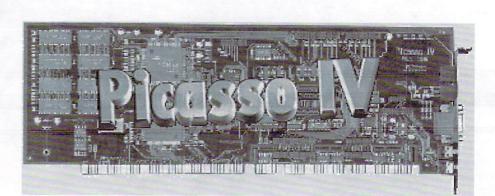
### Picasso IV Long-Term Report

recently added a Picasso IV graphics board to my trusty A3000, based largely on the reports I'd read claiming this was the best graphics board ever to grace the Amiga market. After using it for several months, I can now offer some "after the novelty wears off" opinions.

Once the Picasso IV hardware and software are installed, they provide your Amiga with an entire suite of new graphics modes which function as if they were native to the Amiga. This approach works amazingly well. There's no way to tell they weren't built-in when your Amiga was born. These modes can be used with any program which allows you to select a screen mode, meaning virtually all programs can take advantage of them. I'll mention that the Picasso IV does not provide AGA emulation, but it was not intended to do so.

I found the board and its Picasso96 software to be among the most stable and useful products I've ever had in my Amiga, with perhaps one exception (more on that below). They have essentially made my A3000 into a new computer.

I have only encountered one problem, but it's one that could bother many Amigans. When I was using version 1.2 of IBrowse, the Amiga's most popular web browser, it consistently crashed when run on my Picasso board.



The latest version, 1.22, is more stable but still causes some problems. By comparison, IBrowse works perfectly on my A3000 with a Retina Z2 board, and the A4000 and A1200 AGA machines I also checked. To confuse things, AWeb II works perfectly on the Picasso board. It's only the combination of the Picasso and IBrowse that has problems, usually resulting in a crash with credit being given to the Picasso software's internal image decoder. These things can often be due to a particular machine's configuration, so not everyone will experience these problems.

The board has many features, including some that make it a real multimedia system. These include the ability to input CD audio; there's a PCI expansion buss; it's rated 95% Cybergraphics compatible; it has a built in flicker fixer; it supports up to 1280 x1024 pixels in 24-bit and 1600 x1200 in 16 bit; and boasts 4 Mb of fast EDO RAM.

Despite the problem with IBrowse, this

board might well be considered a required update for any non-AGA Amiga with a video slot. Owners of AGA machines who want to go beyond HAM8 would also do well to install one. This hardware, even with the IBrowse incompatibility, rates a solid A.

Rating: A

By Brad Webb

When preparing graphics for use on web pages, use ADPro, ImageFX or something similar to reduce the number of colors as low as you can go. Images with fewer colors are smaller in file size, load faster, and are more likely to display correctly on other computers.

#### W∈bFTP con't from page 28

does not find in the local directory. There may well be files you don't want deleted from the server in this way, so you can change that setting and have WebFTP ask before deletion. I learned quickly to change that setting though it may work well for others.

WebFTP compares files in three ways. First is a case sensitive file name comparison, then the dates are examined. If necessary, the final check is of file size. WebFTP takes time of creation into account, and even compensates for time zones in case your server is in a different zone from your Amiga.

There are some other features of WebFTP worth noting. In the WebFTP window, you can select a file on the server or Amiga, and by double-clicking it bring up a small menu. The remote file menu offers View, Delete, Rename, chmod, Touch, Ignore, and Info commands, and the local file menu has just View, Delete, Ignore and Info. View will display the file using Multiview. Chmod is a Unix command to set permissions on the server files and must be supported by your ISP to work. Touch sets the file date, and Info displays further information about the file. The ignore option deserves special note, as it can serve as a workaround to the "delete on server" setting mentioned previously, and can (for example) prevent Amiga icon files from being uploaded to the server.

WebFTP is available from most Amiga dealers, with a suggested retail price of US \$35.

The current revision is 1.310 and will run on all Amigas. The documentation is in AmigaGuide format and is sparse, not explaining all functions as well as might be wished.

This is a specialized tool that website maintainers really shouldn't be without, despite the minor limitations noted. I rate it a solid B, missing an A largely because of the level of documentation and because I felt the safeguards could be somewhat stronger.

Rating: B

By Brad Webb

## Pablo II: Picasso IV Video Encoder

f you're one of the many who purchased a Picasso IV board with the expectation of a fabulous VGA display, you're probably quite pleased. However, if you expected to output that display to video, you're probably not quite so pleased. To do this you need to purchase a video encoder daughterboard for the Picasso, called Pablo II.

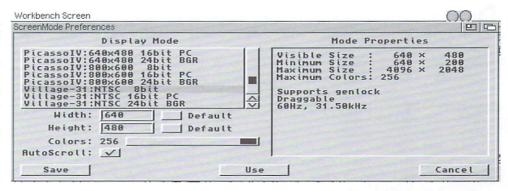
For just over US \$200, you'll receive the Pablo daughterboard, a bound manual, software, and a Y/C to composite video adapter. The manual is in German and English with reasonably clear and understandable directions and explanations, although I would have liked more pictures and diagrams. The software installation and configuration sections were particularly useful, although incomplete. I was also impressed with the troubleshooting section, despite its brevity. Reading this section before installation helped me to avoid several (but not all) problems.

Installation of the hardware was simple. Although Picasso IV has a number of "male" insert connectors, mating them with the Pablo connectors is very obvious. In fact, I didn't even have to remove the Picasso to install the Pablo, though I did pull it out later, remove the Pablo, and reinstall it just to evaluate the process. There were no jumpers, switches or special procedures involved with my A4000 desktop with a modified HighFlyer expansion system. If you can take the cover off your computer, you can install the Pablo II in about 15 minutes.

After installing hardware, software, and rebooting, I immediately went to my prefs drawer, double-clicked the Pablo icon and then clicked each of the two test displays. After closing the test displays, I clicked the "Display Offset" gadget, and used the test screen to adjust the vertical and horizontal positioning.

I connected a video monitor to the Y/C output of the Picasso, expecting to see video and got. . . Nothing! I rebooted. Still nothing! I opened the Pablo prefs and clicked on the test bars. I had nice color bars on my video monitor (which are generated by the Pablo encoder), but still no video. After a few hours of "playing" with the Pablo II prefs program, the Picasso 96 program and my screen prefs, it was back to the manuals. I discovered my Picasso software was version 1.24. The Pablo manual said you must have at least version 1.27. I located version 1.36 on Aminet (the latest then available), installed it, but still no video. Thinking the problem might be a faulty board, I exchanged it for a new one, but this still resulted in no video.

Over the next few days I poured over the



If you have the Picasso IV graphics card and need to record video, the Pablo II is a good buy. Getting the software configured is the hard part, but after reading this review, you'll be fine.

manuals, looking for something I'd missed. Village Tronic had little advice to offer. I believed it to be a software problem (for no real reason) and experimented with different combinations of the Picasso 96 program and the Amiga screen prefs. The manual said the user must select NTSC in the prefs menu, with PicassoIV:NTSC in the Picasso 96 preferences, but that didn't work. After crashing, freezing and simply not working with over a dozen combinations, I selected "Village-31:NTSC 8bit" on both programs. Eureka! Video! Nearly 3 weeks after I originally installed the Pablo II, I had it working. Much frustration could have been avoided by a simple statement in the manual that users MUST select "Village-31:NTSC 8bit" on both Picasso 96 and screen preferences.

After all that, how's the picture? Pretty good, considering. If you don't mind con-

figuring all your programs to 640x480 (with no overscan), the output is certainly acceptable. If you're using the Y/C or the composite video out, be sure to enable the "RGB loads." I selected the 3 lines of "flicker filter" and found it to be an acceptable display on video. It's certainly not broadcast quality, and it has some serious limitations, but for US \$200, it is still the best bang for the buck if you are using the Picasso IV and need to record to video.

You can find the Pablo II from most full service Amiga dealers. Visit the Village Tronic website at www.villagetronic.com for further info.

Rating: B

By Mel Strait



# Digital Quill

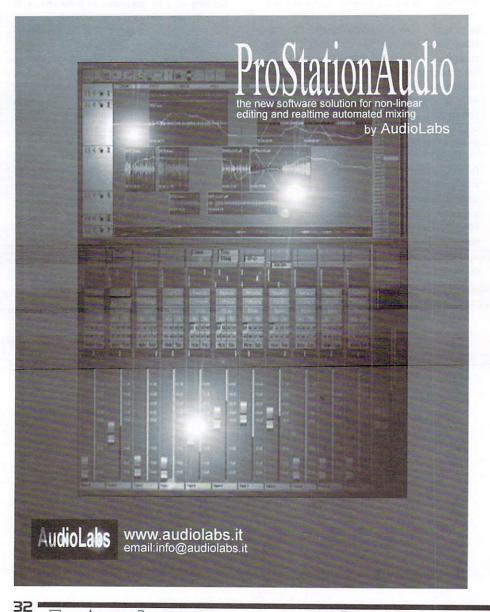
**D** igital Quill is the latest commercial text editor to appear for the Amiga. Written by Timothy J. Aston and published by Finale Development, Digital Quill (DQ) comes in a shrink wrapped manual with the single floppy neatly inserted in the center. Promising fast text handling and an ARexx interface, with support for Modula 2, SAS and DICE C compilers, my first impression was that CygnusEd may finally have some solid competition in the commercial text editor arena.

Like a lot of Amiga users, I have religiously used CygnusEd for what seems an eternity and for everything from editing my startup sequence to full-on C coding. As DQ is aimed at this market, I will make the odd comparison to CygnusEd.

After a painless installation using the standard Commodore Installer, the program opens on the Workbench public screen and presents the main DQ screen. On-screen controls are neatly organized and very well thought out, situated where you would expect things to be. To the average user (or one unaccustomed to text

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Offering power features, context-sensitive help, full ARexx support, undos, and a friendly interface, Digital Quill is a serious option for users needing a text editor. It excells as a general purpose editor or as a code-banging tool!



editors), DQ's excellent interface will prove a very welcome feature, and should encourage most to dive into the 'power-user' features often left untouched in more complex editors.

Context-sensitive help is always available and menu options are easily accessed. Macros may be recorded, thus removing the need for users to learn ARexx. Of most importance to programmers are the text editing and compiling facilities available. Full clipboard support, fast text finding, multiple level undos, bookmarking, autoindenting, true tabs, bracket matching and fence posting are all supported. Bracket matching in my experience is very welcome. It involves matching opening brackets with closing brackets and can save a frustrated programmer lots of time in solving syntax and run-time errors.

I tested the SAS C support and was quite pleased. There were no problems though it wasn't as feature-laden as other editors such as CygnusED and GoldED. CygnusED, due to it being available for over ten years, has spawned a cottage industry around scripts. Should DQ prove popular, the very complete ARexx interface should allow for similar third-party support.

Digital Quill allows many options to be configured. The screen on which DQ opens may be easily set to a custom or any public screen. DQ allows user-definable undo levels and clipboard size, and an autosave feature is available. Buried away in the Settings/Environment menu is the very useful Show Hex command, which allows DQ to show the Hex code of the character under the cursor. I am, however, disappointed that the toolbar cannot be configured beyond selection of large or small buttons.

The manual provided with DQ is well laid out but a bit plain in areas. It includes a quick-start tutorial and full explanations (with examples) of the command line arguments and Workbench

## Soundprobe II

When it comes to audio sampling and waveform editing software, Amiga musicians have been left wanting for far too long. Good tools are essential for working with digital audio and, until recently, quality applications have been hard to find.

David O'Reilly set out to change that and has successfully created a system-friendly application with professional features and modular design that allows for easy future expansion. Soundprobe has had quite a history, having already gone through several reincarnations (SuperSound, Megalosound, and Danae) as well as a few upgrades. The result of David's efforts thus far is Soundprobe II.

For those of you considering an upgrade from

the previous release, Soundprobe II has lots new to offer, including new and improved digital effects, a project mixer, enhanced GUI (faster, font sensitivity, x/y scaling, better organized menus), preset sampling rates, lowlevel AHI routines, enhanced keyboard control, improved graphing, extended coordinate input (allowing simple calculations and defined variables), plus cosmetic changes and bug fixes. Most importantly though, is the addition of an ARexx port which allows extensive control of almost all aspects of Soundprobe.

Direct sampling and playback support is included for the Aura, Clarity16 and Megalosound samplers as well as other generic PCMCIA and parallel port hardware (Audio *continued on page 34* 



tooltypes available to the program-something not always found in commercial Amiga software documentation. There is an in-depth and very thorough description of every menu option and requester with labeled screenshots where applicable. Almost half the manual is consumed with documentation of the ARexxbased macro language. A full list and comprehensive description of every available command is provided, along with sample scripts on the disk. A small but handy glossary and index keep the manual useful. The manual looks to have been written by Mr. Aston himself and I find it hard to knock. though it could have used a more general run down of the program and its features.

I had only a few minor gripes about DQ. A drag and drop or AppIcon option would speed file loading, and a moveable (dockable) toolbar would make the interface even friendlier. Also, DQ changes the mouse pointer to a fairly standard cursor-like icon when dragged over the text area, which sometimes appeared oversized and possibly corrupted on my 640x480 screen (though this may be the fault of my system and the many nasty hacks I have running).

I was quite impressed with Digital Quill. While not offering the raw power and speed of CygnusED, it has many advantages for the average user including context-sensitive help and a generally more friendly interface. DQ excels as a general purpose text editor, but for coding I still lean towards CygnusED. I rate Digital Quill a hardy A-.

Digital Quill is compatible with all Amigas with 1 Mb of RAM and Workbench 2.1+, and is 100% RTG compatible. The version reviewed was 37.146. A demo of DQ is available on Aminet as text/edit/QuillDemo.lha. Visit Finale Development at www.Finale-Dev.com. The full commercial package is available through Amiga dealers for around US \$40.

Rating: A-

By Paul Morabito

à,

Save time by not using your word processor to print that ASCII text file you just downloaded. Use the Shell command COPY FILENAME.TXT PRT: instead.

## Games Master System

ears ago, the Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit allowed a programmer to create simple games by editing graphics blocks and setting up patterns for enemy attack. Since then, a great number of products have appeared to assist in the creation of games. Most of these products were rather inflexible and geared toward a specific type of game, which resulted in a tiresome homogeneity among the results.

GMS, the Games Master System, takes an entirely different approach. GMS is a library system designed not to create games, but to take

the hassle out of creating games. This distinction is a subtle but important one. The Amiga OS has many built-in program routines aimed to help programmers, but ironically not games programmers. It is this gap that GMS' author, Paul Manias, has attempted to fill.

Normally, when programming a game, it's necessary to break the project down into smaller and smaller levels of detail. Programmers find that certain fundamental bits of code have to be written over and over again and as you can imagine, this can take an extraordinary amount of time. GMS in this sense is a set of pre-existing fundamental bits of program with every conceivable function that might be useful to a games programmer built in. Using GMS, you can focus on programming your game and rely on the GMS routines to simplify and handle many detailed tasks such as setting up doublebuffered screens, scrolling, sprite printing, joystick control, etc.

Examples are supplied in C, 68k Assembler and E. I used E v3.2e and had no problem at all compiling the demo programs. I grew more

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#### Soundprobe con't from page 33

Master/Engineer, DSS8(+), Stereo Master, etc.). When used with these supported devices, Soundprobe allows real-time digital audio effects processing (even with a 68030 CPU).

Other hardware is supported through AHI (Delfina, Maestro Pro, Tocatta, etc.), but realtime effects are not possible. Output can also be produced through the Amiga's built-in audio hardware, with several 8, 12 and 14-bit implementations. All the standard sound formats are supported.

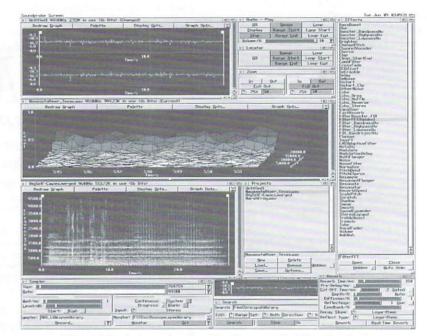
Soundprobe includes numerous input monitoring methods such as 2D/3D Spectrum Analyzers, Color Multiscopes, etc. With a sufficiently fast system, multiple monitors may be used simultaneously.

One of the best features of Soundprobe is its variety of graphing modes. For the majority of editing, you will likely use the standard 2DTimeGraph. For more specific frequency oriented work, the 2D and 3D FrequencyGraphs are useful. It is even possible to see the same waveform in multiple sizeable windows with different graph modes.

Soundprobe includes an extensive selection of more than 30 digital effects from Blur to Wah Wah. The monitors and graphs work well and the digital effects are accurate and reasonably fast. As always with this kind of application, a fast system with lots of memory is a big plus.

Previous versions of Soundprobe had problems with AHI implementation, but a new low-level driver seems to have fixed things. I tested the program with a Maestro Pro digital audio card via AHI at 44.1 kHz, and while I did encounter some problems with recording, monitoring and general playback were stable.

Support from the author is tremendous; he replied to my questions and concerns very



The modular design and system-friendly approach of Soundprobe II, coupled with the powerful digital effects, full ARexx port, and sound card suport will be music to the ears of audioheads.

quickly. David is very open to suggestions and should be commended for his aim to please. I am convinced that he added the ARexx port solely at my request (Thanks, Dave). From past experience with HiSOFT, I'm sure that they will be just as helpful.

The only comparable software is Stefan Kost's SoundFX (shareware). The main difference is that Soundprobe has recording capability where SoundFX is for waveform editing/processing only. SoundFX has more extensive import/export capability and better integrated ARexx, but lacks some of the more up-to-date (and colorful) features of Soundprobe. For now, I continue to use both.

I highly recommend Soundprobe and give it

an A- as there is room for improvement and the fixing of minor bugs. For more information, visit the Soundprobe website at www.york.ac.uk/~djor100/sprobe.htm or HiSOFT's Soundprobe product page at www.hisoft.co.uk/soundprobe/.

Soundprobe II is distributed by HiSOFT Systems and should sell for around US \$50. Call your favorite dealer for availability. Upgrades for Soundprobe 1.x users should be available for roughly US \$12.

Rating: A-



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By dhomas trenn

ambitious as the evening went on, so I wrote a simple scrolling starfield with several parallax layers. From start to finish, the task took only half an hour and as a programmer, I am rusty and hesitant!

GMS makes experimentation exceptionally easy. To make my program run in low resolution rather than high resolution, I only had to change a few lines of code. I later discovered that even this minimum effort wasn't necessary as GMS allows the end user to select the preferred screen settings (amongst other things) entirely independent of the programmed settings.

GMS is a huge improvement over the tools available when I first started programming. The libraries are used in a different way than the standard Amiga libraries and whether this is a good thing is entirely up to your personal tastes. Personally I found it nicer to use, but only after careful scrutiny of the pleasingly extensive documentation.

GMS will not make you a games writer overnight. Lots of effort and plenty of design work are still required to write a fun, engaging and challenging game. GMS will aid the process by allowing you to concentrate on writing the bits that matter. With point-andclick game designers and full assembler coding from scratch on opposite ends of the difficulty scale, GMS sits squarely in the middle. As such it represents an ideal balance between flexibility and difficulty.

GMS is distributed in two archives, one with the user files and the other containing the developer files. Both may be obtained from Aminet (dev/misc/gms\_user.lha and dev/misc/gms\_dev.lha, respectively) or directly from the GMS website (http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~pmanias/). Shareware distribution of games created with GMS requires a license, with the cost starting

Arrange Those Icons! Arrange the icons in any drawer alphabetically by: 1) Open the drawer and select all the icons (Right-Amiga-A). 2) Select UnSnapShot from the Icons menu or type Right-Amiga-U. 3) Close and reopen the drawer. 4) Select Clean Up from the Windows menu. 5) Select SnapShot/All from the Window menu.

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Web Hosting and Development Amiga Internet Software Firewall Systems Web Commerce Electronic Media Buying www.pantheonsys.com (440) 353WEB2 at \$20. Freeware games do not require such a license. The user files must be installed before a GMS-created game may be run, much like MUI applications. The unregistered user archive is freely redistributable, and may therefore be included in game distribution.

Paul Manias is continually updating the product, and has informed me that version 2.0 is now available, superceding the 1.0 version reviewed. The user archive shareware fee of US \$20 provides an unrestricted version of the preferences program and emailed updates.

If and when I finally get around to writing that dream game I've been promising myself, I won't even consider using anything else. This program deserves an A rating.

Rating: A

By Steve Hammond



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## Quake

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uake is the long awaited and highly anticipated mother of all Doom beaters from ID Software, PXL computers and clickBOOM. Ouake is one monster of a game. In Quake, you are a soldier assigned to locate and destroy an interdimensional enemy codenamed Quake. He has been using a slipgate to transport his evil soldiers and monsters into your bases to cause death and destruction. You will be armed with many powerful weapons such as grenades, rockets, nail guns, shotguns, and even a weapon that shoots an electrical lightning bolt, but in the end you'll still need to rely upon quick thinking and problem solving to get the job done.

My first impression upon running Quake was that the 3D graphics really do make you feel as if you've been transported to another world. I was particularly impressed by the gloomy thick dark cloud cover ominously moving overhead, the beautifully detailed stained glass windows, an amazingly realistic underwater effect, large wooden doors with intricate carved designs, and very scary lifelike monsters.

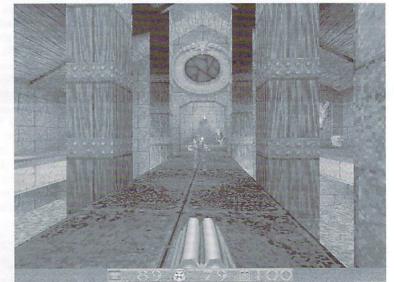
Ouake has high quality sound effects (even without a sound card), and you will actually find yourself relying on them to determine what perils lie ahead, and to distinguish between your foes by what type of grunt, groan, or growl they make. Quake has a mesmerizing CD audio soundtrack that is sometimes better left off because it can be distracting. The integration of graphics, audio, and gameplay is seamless.

Configurations of gameplay controls are nearly limitless-you can set them up any way you like in the options screen. Many people play Quake with a combination of the keyboard and mouse, using the mouse to look around just as you do with your eyes and head. Quake also has a slew of ways to play it; there's the regular game where you battle the multiple enemies, network play where you take on human opponents, and Internet play where you battle online.

Quake comes with a nice poster with all the installation instructions and general information on the back. I would rather have had a booklet, but the poster was sufficient and the on-disk documentation more than made up the slack. With my review copy, I also received ID's official guide to Quake. This 208-page

book is loaded with beneficial tips and tricks and is worth the \$10 price just for the cheat codes and stepby-step instructions provided.

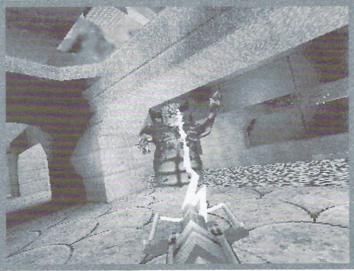
Installation was as simple as double clicking the install icon and didn't take as long as expected, considering it takes up 60 Mb of hard disk space.



Before crossing this bridge, you'll have to toast that rifle-toting grunt and the chainsaw-wielding ogre. If things get too hot, you can make an escape off the bridge into the water below, but more trouble awaits you there too!

I was a little disappointed that at least some of the game couldn't run from the CDROM, but Quake is ported from the PC, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

The first time I ran Quake on my 68060/50 MHz A1200, the frame rate was so choppy it was barely playable. After some research and trial and error, I found the perfect combination to get the smoothest frame rate out of Quake. First, you need either the latest version of Cyberpatcher (for phase5 acclerators) or OxyPatcher (for other accelerators). You can download the latest version of Cyberpatcher on the Phase5 webpage (www.phase5.de). Second, you need QuakePatch by Ian Greenway (available on Amiga Format cover CDROM #29 August 98). First run Cyberpatcher, then QuakePatch, then run Quake. With these patches, the game truly becomes a thing of beauty. I noticed a several frames per second increase in speed,



This fireball-throwing demon is one tough bugger! You'll need more than a lightning gun to defeat him. Chances are you'll be face down on the floor before he is !!

and smooth animation even with a full screen display. Rumors speak of a 68060specific version of Quake so emailed clickBOOM for information, but have received no response as of yet.

In order for the CD soundtrack to play, I had to edit the provided qnolan startup script, adding the name of my SCSI device and the CDROM's SCSI

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OSSUE DG

# Big Red Adventure

The Big Red Adventure is a point-andclick graphic adventure game, combining colorful, comic-book style graphics with healthy doses of object collecting, character interaction and puzzle solving. The whole mix is liberally seasoned with corny, pun-laden humor. Big Red Adventure, like so many Amiga games these days, is a decidedly European effort. It was originally authored for the PC by the Italian programming team Dynabyte, and then published for the Amiga by England's Power Computing (www.powerc.com).

Big Red Adventure is mainly set in a parody of post-communist Russia, where capitalism reigns and everybody is just out to make a ruble (honestly or otherwise). But as the clever animated introduction points out, there are shadowy old-regime types longing to plunge Russia back into the Communist dark ages. Uncovering their schemes is one of the sub-plots of this sprawling game.

You control one of three characters: Doug Nuts (who thinks up these names?!), a computer geek and petty thief; Dino Fagoli, a burly and not-overly-bright boxer, and Donna Fatale (perhaps a cousin of Natasha Fatale of "Rocky and Bullwinkle" fame?), a womanwith-a-past. Each of these characters is



Big Red is full of gorgeous Hanna-Barbera style graphics and pun-laden tounge-in-cheek humor. Dig deeper and you will find an easy interface, balanced puzzle-solving and a captivating storyline. A must for adverture lovers.

featured in one of the first three sections of the game; in the fourth, they all come together. You can play the first three sections in any order, even moving to a different section if you get stuck.

The game comes with a printed manual, but play is so simple that you'll hardly need it. Everything is mouse controlled. A left click moves your character to the cursor position on the screen. A right click brings up a small floating window containing action buttons (Open/Close, Pick Up Object, Speak, and Examine), and buttons representing your inventory of objects. Some objects may be combined (e.g., camera plus film) to function in

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ID number. I wasn't terribly surprised by this, as I've had to do something similar to get the CD audio working on other titles.

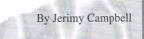
I was slightly annoyed by how slowly the game loaded initially and very annoyed by how slowly saved games loaded. One saving grace is the fact that it does a very precise job of saving every little detail and believe me, there's a lot to save on these huge levels.

I realize that many people's systems just aren't going to be able to handle Quake's intensive storage, processor, memory, and graphics demands. Quake is one of the most enthralling games I've ever played and may very well prompt you to beef up your machine. If you want to get an idea of how Quake might run on your system, download QuakePlayer from the clickBOOM website (www.clickboom.com).

I found that Quake was not very Chip RAM hungry and multitasked extremely well, but upon execution gobbled up about 35 Mb of my Fast RAM. Quake will not run without a math co-processor (FPU) and the minimum system requirements are a 68020 CPU with FPU, 8 Mb RAM, AGA or graphics card, and 60 Mb of hard drive space. I recommend a 68060 CPU and 16 Mb RAM. Quake was tested on an A1200 with 68060/50 MHz CPU, 3.0 OS, 50 Mb RAM, and 32X CDROM drive. Quake retails for around US \$50, and is available from just about any Amiga retailer.

The phrase 'playing Quake' doesn't do this game justice. You experience it, and if you're not careful, become its slave. I give Quake an A+ rating. You too should become a part of the Quake universe and experience it for yourself!

Rating: A+



new ways. As in other games of this genre, whenever you get to a new location, it's wise to pass your cursor over the entire screen to see what objects can be acted upon (as indicated by a word popping up next to the cursor). The rule of thumb is: If you can pick it up, do so. You never know what you might need to solve a puzzle later on. The puzzles are pretty nicely balanced between "too easy" and "sadistically hard."

"Eye candy" fans will not be disappointed here. Many of the graphics, especially the location backgrounds, are gorgeous. I would guess they were hand painted and then scanned. The characters are drawn in a nice, pseudo-Hanna-Barbera style, although some pointlessly ugly, racist stereotypes do crop up, like Asian characters with buck teeth and speaking in mangled English. Simple spot animations are well utilized and often very amusing. I especially liked the waitress on roller skates who whooshes in and out of the scene at "MacRomanov's Fat Food." As indicated by this pun, the level of humor throughout the game isn't exactly on par with Oscar Wilde, but will elicit an occasional smile nonetheless.

Each scene has its own looping stereo music track which can thankfully be turned off when desired. There are lots of nice spot sound effects, too. I had only one disappointment with the sound: The game takes up "only" 32 Mb on the CD. With around 600 Mb of unused space, sampled speech for the dialogue sections would have been quite nice.

The game runs on any AGA Amiga with a CDROM drive, and as usual, the faster the better. A small installation script sets the game language and creates a directory for saved games on the hard drive. You may save at any time using a standard file requester,

continued on page 38

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#### Big Red con't from page 37

thereby allowing helpfully descriptive names for your saved positions. The game multitasks nicely within the Amiga OS and even runs happily in NTSC.

There are some glitches and caveats, however. Though not mentioned in the printed manual, you may need to use IControl in Workbench Prefs to turn off Mode Promotion to keep the game from running in a tiny window about onethird your screen size. On my system (an A1200 with 68030/50 MHz CPU and 32 Mb Fast RAM), I did experience random gurus, although this problem may be peculiar to something in my set up. Multitasking with the game running sometimes caused the music to continue to play after quitting the game. The game also had an annoying habit of leaving its CD icon on the Workbench (using AsimCDFS) after ejecting the CD.

Overall, I give Big Red Adventure a rating of

# Virtual Karting 2

**W** irtual Karting 2 (VK2) from programmer Fabio Bizzetti is the latest incarnation of his go-kart racing simulation. The long wait between the release of Virtual Karting and Virtual Karting 2 was due to a change of publishers. Virtual Karting 2 is licensed by Islonia Entertainment and distributed by Epic Marketing.

If you're a driving game enthusiast, then I think you'll enjoy the extreme challenge of VK2's realistic gameplay. The casual driving game player will probably appreciate the provided cheat mode. The cheat mode gives your kart more power, improved gearing, and better traction, which can make the game fun for even a small child–all at the expense of realism, of course.

You can play VK2 in either 2D or 3D modes; 2D mode is an overhead view that zooms out as you speed up, and I found it to be rather boring compared to the realistic feel of the 3D view. The manual recommends playing the game on a large screen television rather than a monitor. The graphics look better on a television because a good monitor reveals in detail the rather ordered dithering method used. When battling for first or second position, though, you really don't notice it much. VK2 has realistic sound and an impressive 50 frames per second even on an unexpanded A1200.

This is a tough game, and if you want to get a decent qualifying position you have to drive very aggressively and cut every corner possi-

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B due to the slight bugginess and sophomoric, occasionally ugly humor. It's so absorbing and huge, though, it is a purchase to consider for the serious adventure games fan. It is available through Amiga dealers for around US \$30.

Rating: B



By Steve Folberg

Reduce the size of your saved Final Writer files by un-checking all the 'Save With Each Document' options on the I/O tab of the Project/Preferences menu.

ble. When in a race, you'll find yourself actually drafting to speed up and knocking your opponents out of your way to pass them.

Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of Virtual Karting 2: First, use the options screen to set up the display detail level, shifting mode, and control device (digital joystick, analog joystick, or mouse) to your liking. Next, use the joystick (or cursor keys) to scroll the track selection screen, which at first seems to only list three tracks (six are available, though three are just carried over from the previous release). Finally, you will find the difficulty level to be much lower on the carry-over tracks than the new tracks.

The most significant improvements to the game since its first release are better graphics, added tracks and greatly improved stability. The game comes on CDROM and will run completely from the CD, or may be installed to the hard drive. The CDROM includes small multimedia presentations and demos of other Islonia titles. While these extras are nice, I felt the CD space could have been better filled with more than six racing circuits, a CD-audio soundtrack, and maybe an entertaining intro animation. These are things I've come to expect from CDROM titles. I'd also hoped to see a 1x1 pixel mode and a two-player option.

I had great fun playing this game, and that's what games are all about, so it gets a B rating. Virtual Karting 2 requires an AGA Amiga with 2 Mb RAM, and was tested on an A1200 with 68060 CPU and 50 Mb RAM. It is available from many Amiga dealers and sells for around US \$25.

Rating: B

A-Z of Amiga Games

-Z of Amiga Games is a CDROM containing a cross-referenced, fully indexed HTML database of Amiga-based games. It was produced on a small scale, as it's a recordable CDROM with good looking, if obviously low-budget, packaging.

Upon inserting and double clicking the CD, I was presented with an empty window. The Show All Files command was necessary to reveal the starting Amiga.htm file. As the entire database is HTML-based, you'll have to scrounge up some browser software-none is included on the CDROM.

The information in the database is reasonably complete, with major indices and included information extensively crossreferenced. By clicking on a letter, the appropriate page of games is displayed. Also included is an index of publishers and the games they produced. Other indices include games by type and by author. All indices are cross-linked so it is easy to jump from one game description to another.

Once a game title is clicked on, a page will be displayed showing the following information: Compatibility, Release date, Suggested retail price, Publisher, Ratings (from various publications if available), Program type classification, and Comments. These fields often include a cross-link for easy referencing. If there are cheats, level codes, advertisements, inlays, solutions, maps, screenshots or playing

continued on page 40

By Jerimy Campbell



# Towerhawk



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# Shadow Of The Third Moon

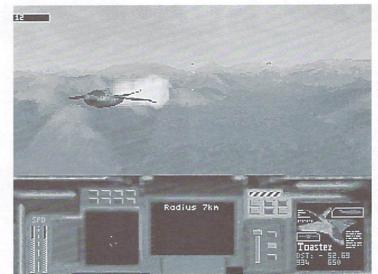
S hadow of the Third Moon is a flight and battle simulator from Black Blade software Design and Titan Computer. It is somewhat unique in its use of a 3D Terrain Imaging System. Black Blade has optimized the landscape-generation engine (voxel engine) for 68030, 68040, and 68060 CPUs to ensure smooth operation with any processor.

The mission objectives in Shadow of the Third Moon are straight forward, with scenarios that involve blowing up tanks with air to ground missiles, air to air combat (dogfighting), elimination of stationary targets, etc. The real differences between this flight simulator and others are the unique 3D terrain and the alien setting. Your craft is a Star Warslike fighter and your main weapon blasts pulses of energy complete with sound effects. The feeling of flight seemed very realistic to me, and was reminiscent of the game WINGS (one of my all time favorites). The dogfights were very stimulating and challenging. You really have to pay attention to your surroundings and not become distracted by the delightful CD audio soundtrack to remain among the living.

One thing that really stood out for me was the vividness of explosions combined with smoke and haze. There's nothing like the feeling of shooting down an opponent and watching him crash and burn into the side of a mountain as you laugh manically. Ah, such pleasure!

After the initial exhilaration of flying around eliminating the enemy, I began to uncover features of the game simply not covered in the manual. I was able to figure out several of the menus and keys through trial and error,

but am still totally in the dark about some of them. I emailed Titan Computer about these omission but have not as yet received a reply. While their website (www.Titan Computer.de) did vield an updated executable file, it too came with sparse instructions. This update offers bug fixes



Realistic flight, vivid explosions, Voxel 3D Terrain Imaging System, and CPU-optimized programming give Shadow of the 3rd Moon a unique feel.

and smoother animation on 68060-equipped machines, but I could discern no significant differences.

Digging deeper into the manual, I found further inconsistencies and omissions. For example, the manual covers some 'in game' options, but neglects to mention which key activates the 'in game' options screen! Trial and error found this one to be the escape key, oddly enough. Fortunately, there are only a few keys that will likely be used in regular play, and these are documented reasonably well.

This fragmented documentation and lack of proper support certainly affected the rating of this innovative piece of programming. I really enjoyed playing this game but until I get a more detailed description of certain controls, I rate it a C-. There is no excuse for such poor support and mechanics.

Shadow of the Third Moon requires OS 3.0,

68030/25 MHz CPU, 4 Mb Fast RAM, CDROM, 13 Mb hard drive space, and AGA or a graphics card, with 1 Mb Chip RAM required for audio. I recommend OS 3.1, 68040/25 MHz or faster CPU, 8 Mb Fast RAM, 4X CDROM, and a graphics card. I tested the game on an A1200 with 68060/50 MHz CPU, 50 Mb Fast RAM and a 32X CDROM drive.

I'd like to give special thanks to Gudrun Lively of The Lively Computer (www.iworks.com/tlc) for providing the review copy of this game. Shadow of the Third Moon is available through most dealers for around US \$40.

Rating: C-

By Jerimy Campbell

#### A-Z con't from page 38

tips available for that title, links to those items are also included on the page. A fair number of titles (actually most of them) have at least one of the extra items mentioned above. Moving around the database is straightforward enough with the provided navigation buttons, though there is no built-in search capacity.

There are lots of interesting bits of trivia to be found on this CD. For example, MicroProse released their last Amiga title in 1995, and had five releases in that year. They released 47 Amiga titles between 1988 and 1995, with the first being Navcom 6. One of the first games I looked for was Lemmings, and I found a wealth of information along with plenty of graphics. Looking further I found new and old titles to be included, though the quantity of information included with each varied greatly.

To the die-hard gamer, this CD is probably worth getting for the few cheat codes and playing tips included. If you only occasionally play games, it may still be a good buy, especially if you easily get frustrated or are impatience with games. The HTML browsing method is quite capable and flexible, but of course is not usable for those with older versions of the OS (which don't support browser software). I rate this CD an A-.

A-Z of Amiga is created by C.E. Lister. It is previewable through the Ad Astra website at www.adastrauk.com. It sells for US \$35 including shipping and complete ordering information is available on the website. You can also contact them at: Dept OL, Ad Astra Publishing, PO Box 90, Leeds LS11 BXU, England.

Rating: A-

By Bohdan Lechnowsky



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By Robert B. Pigford

### **Getting MODern**

ow that we have that Amiga physically hooked up, let's get some cool sound flowing from it. In this installment, we'll continue our focus on using the Amiga's built-in audio capabilities.

A MOD is a self-contained music module. A MOD file contains both the information on what to play and the audio samples that become actual sound. Because the samples are stored inside the MOD file itself, a MOD sounds the same regardless of the playback platform. MODs created on Amigas (we'll get into PC-based MODs later on) are usually designed to play on any Amiga with audio capability-that's the four-channel, 8-bit, stereo output we discussed in a previous column.

So let's hear something. One of the simplest ways to hear a MOD file is to load up a handy Aminet CD, open the Guides drawer, and fire up the Mods guide. The AmigaGuide presentation gives easy click-and-play access to all the MOD files on the CD, using DeliTracker (mus/play/DeliTracker227.lha) for the playback.

A player program is a necessary part of the equation. The player is the interpreter-it takes the highly compressed MOD file, sorts the

Rob has been a composer and student of the musical and recording arts for 18 years, and runs RBProductions, a recording & audio production studio in Connecticut. Email Rob with Amiga audio topics and questions you'd like to see addressed at cyrano@calweb.com. You can visit the RBProductions website at http://www.calweb.com/~cyrano.

audio samples from the song information, and plays the song. While there seem to be as many MOD players as there are MOD formats (peruse the /mods/play directory on Aminet for a sampling), I recommend DeliTracker. It supports numerous MOD formats and provides a host of options and features to personalize your MOD listening experience. Directory Opus can play some formats of MODs using its internal player, though the only way I've found to make it stop playing is to quit Opus.

ren

After listening to a few MODs you should have a feel for the variety of music being written and programmed by Amiga musicians worldwide. The somewhat rigid timing structure of MODs makes them particularly suited for Techno or other dance styles of music, but many creative artists have pushed the limits of their tracking software and published some stunning tracks.

As MODs are completely sample-based, many include sound bites from other media, like movies and television. This might lead you to think of using a MOD to score your next home video production. So long as precise timing and video synchronization are not important, and you can deal with 8-bit audio, go right ahead. Used as simple background music, MODs can add a certain ambiance to your home videos. Be aware, though, that most MOD trackers do not have the ability to synchronize to industry-standard timing formats like MIDI Time Code (MTC) or SMPTE. Usually, MOD files are freely redistributable for private listening pleasure, but use in any published or commercial work requires permission of the author-just like with any other music.

Like so many other things, MODs were originally invented on the Amiga and have migrated to other platforms. In the early days

### What is a Sample?

A sample is a sequence of digitized audio data. Audible sound is analog (made up of smooth continuous waves), and is converted to digital (ones and zeros) in the process of sampling. The computer identifies the coordinates of the analog wave several thousand times per second. Upon playback, the computer converts the digital information back into analog and routes it to the Amiga's audio ports. Any sound may be sampled and played back, thus giving your Amiga the ability to recreate any sound you like.

#### Common MOD Styles

A quick look at the Aminet MOD listings shows several styles. They're briefly explained here, but the best way to understand the differences is to listen to some. Pop: in the style of today's popular music. Rock: characterized by 4/4 with a heavy backbeat. Similar to what's played on the radio. Funk: sometimes polyrhythmic, always grooving. Chip: all the sounds generated by the Amiga. No samples are used, which gives

them a very synthesized sound. Demo: similar to the audio portion of the still popular hard-coded animation/sound Amiga demos.

Slow: slow, melodic sound. These are some-

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times considered the most 'musical' or 'prettiest' of MODs.

Synth: sounds are reminiscent of old analog synthesizers. Very retro.

Techno: typically straight driving time with reasonably melodic melodies. Very modern sounding.

Trance: driving, straight drum beats and repetitive, throbbing melodies try to hypnotize the listener.

Jungle: Deep, half-time bass lines and complex breakbeats (drum loops).

Hardcore: Complex, high-impact breakbeats combined with equally intense melodies. Almost punk-like, which makes the music seem angry.

### What is a Tracker?

A tracker is a program used to compose MODs. Named for their use of multiple tracks, or channels, trackers comes in several flavors. Trackers are not to be confused with sequencers, which typically control external sound modules through MIDI. Trackers are commonly list-based, meaning they use a text list of the notes to be played rather than classical notation. Once a song has been completed using internal sound samples, the tracker converts it into the compressed MOD format for distribution.

-

of MODs, ProTracker was the software to have for tracking, and MODs are still prepared with it even now. Once the PC people picked up on the absolute coolness of the MOD format, PC trackers were born. The only significant difference between Amiga and PC MODs is the software used to generate them. PC MODs are generally playable on the Amiga by using a player that supports the format. Two of the more popular PC MOD formats, FastTracker and ImpulseTracker, are playable with DeliTracker.

In addition to Aminet, which contains an entire directory structure (/mods/#?) dedicated to MOD files, several CDROMs are available, containing thousands of MODs. From Epic Marketing's *Sounds Terrific* series, to the Fred Fish published *da capo* CD, to the colossal

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DeliTracker is a great choice for playing MODs. It supports many MOD formats through plug-ins, including those created on PCs, and takes up little space.

multi-platform four-CD MODS *Anthology* from Schatztruhe, there's no shortage of MOD files out there.

What differentiates a good MOD file from a

bad one? Well, all the same things that separate good music from bad music, and there's no accounting for taste. Happy listening!



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THE AMIGA DEFORMER

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Visual FX Volumes Suggested Retail \$199.95 each Sale Price: \$129.95 each

SET UP http://www.vionline.com With the impressive front-end capabilities of VisualFX, you can begin turning out top notch images and animation sequences

NOW! No previous ImageFX experience is needed! For those of you who are already familiar with ImageFX, you have the option to change any of our default settings to meet your needs. Whether you're a beginner or a highly experienced videographer, either way Visual FX will give your interactive and video productions all the sharp quality you've come to expect from ImageFX. Visual FX is also perfect for using with the NewTek Flyer, VLAB Motion Board, Draco, PAR, etc.

Visual FX offers volumes of transitions and Special FX templates. For those using nonlinear editing systems, the transition volumes are designed specifically for creating transitions between video clips, and the Special FX templates provide fast and easy access to a number of high quality special video effects which are easily modified and manipulated for your needs.

Each volume comes with 20 effects, each of which has a full 30 frame preview animation attached to it so you will know exactly what the effect will look like. All you have to do is select what images, sequences, or Flyer Clips you want to use, and Visual FX will do the rest. Our requesters actually open up right on the ImageFX screen and walk you through each step. The user interface is also designed to allow easy setup of multiple effects for automated batch processing.

#### Volume One FX Descriptions

Fade Image Expand-Flip-Shrink Liquid Stretch Punch Earth Quake Straw Effect & Hockney Tile Image Corner Pivot Slide Process A > B Zoom Step & Pinch

Shrink-Flip-Expand **Ripple Wave Distort** Pinch Mosaic Swirl Image Swing Image Film Grain-Rough-Displace Fade To Color Or Texture Slide Bar Fire Effect

Volume Two FX Descriptions Growing Peep Hole Fade With Operator Clock Wipe Pivot Off & Fade In Pull Off Split Zoom In & Out Paint Brush Swirl & Recede Corner Expand X & Y Flip

#### Volume Three FX Descriptions

Scrolling Background Quadruple Display Vignette Picture Template Fancy Letter Box Lens Flare Multi Image Composite Moving Spot Lights Blue & Green Glint Burning Image

#### **Volume Four FX Descriptions**

Record User Input Magnifying Glass Bullet Build Picture In Picture ChromaKey or CineMatte Moving Brush & Shadow Rack Focus Camera Zoom Perspective Slant Dual Window

Move On Axis Rotate & Move Flip Off - Flip On Pivot Off & Swing On Quadrant Fade Object Change

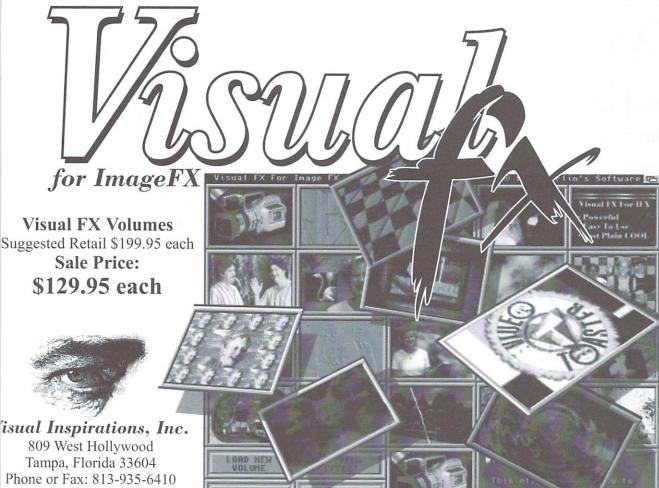
Picture On Picture Board Game Oval Cut Out Multi Layer Composite Cut Out Overlay Composite Texture Dream Sequence Blue Print Alpha Channel Composite

Antique Charcoal & Wood Painting Effects Split Screen Composite Polaroid Picture Flip & Mirror Emboss Light Source Move Checker Board Rear View Mirror Lightning Strike Rain Drops

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Bubbles Spin & Fade Mosaic Swirl Split Crawl







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