

CURSOR

Registered by Australia Post
Publication No. QBG 3958

Vol.4 No.7 - MARCH 1988

NEWSLETTER of the COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.

M E N U

Meetings - Where and When	2
Editor's Notes	3
Random Bits	5
Mutterings	6
Goods & Services	9
Back to Basics	10
1571 Rom Upgrades	11
Empty	13
Games Column	14
Reviews: W.L. Routines for C64/C128	16
C-128 Data File Programming	17
48-Column to 80-Column Bit-Map Copier	19
Bytes	21
Diary for 1988	21
Mail Box	22
Directory	23

MEETINGS - WHERE & WHEN

MAIN MEETING: *MONDAY 7th March 1988* in the Bardon Prof. Dev. Ctr. 390 Simpsons Rd. Bardon. Entrance through Car Park in Carwoola St. Doors open 7pm (library), Meeting starts at 8pm sharp.

*** Ken Charters: BEGINNERS CORNER ***
+++ John Van Staveren: SUPERBASE 64 +++
*** Graham Robinson: SWIFTCALC 128 ***

C-64 & C-128 WORKSHOP: *Sunday 13th March 1988* (1pm - 5pm) in the Guidance Officers Training Ctr., Bayswater St. Milton. Bring your own computer equipment! Public Domain Disks available for copying. NOTE: FOR MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Colin Shipley - 366 2511 a.h.

AMIGA WORKSHOP: *Sunday 13th March 1988* (1pm - 5pm) in the Ithaca R.S.L. Hall, cnr. Nash & Elizabeth Sts., Rosalie. Bring your own computer! Public Domain Disks available for copying.... MEMBERS ONLY! Ph. Bruce Wylie - 359 9779 a.h.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL 4th Sat. of the month (12noon - 9pm) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Robert Hedi - 395 3606 a.h.

CAPALABA 3rd Sat. of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Capalaba State Prim. School (Redl. Educ. Centre) Ph. David Adams - 396 8501 a.h.

KINGSTON 2nd Fri. of the month (7pm - 10pm) in the Kingston State School. Ph. Peter Martin - 290 1537 a.h.

PINE RIVERS 1st Sun. of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine High School. Ph. Bruce Wylie - 359 9779 a.h.

SHERWOOD 2nd Fri. of the month (7.30pm) in the Gracev. State School Ph. Leigh Winsor - 379 2405 a.h. / Philip Parkin - 818 1172 a.h.

WAVELL HEIGHTS 2nd Tue. of the month (7.15pm - 9.45pm) in the Wavell St. Hi. Sch., Childers St. Entr. Ph. Cor Geels - 263 2839

SUNSHINE COAST meets regularly. For meeting times, dates, places: Ph. Harvey Riddle - 071/ 421036 or Ph. Vic Mobbs - 071 / 941330

MARYBOROUGH/HERVEY BAY 4th Mon. of the month (7pm - 10 pm) in the Sunbury St. School, Alice St. Ph. Terry Baade - 071 / 215059 a.h.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

PRIMARY EDUCATION SUB-GROUP: 3rd Tue. of the month (7.30pm) in the Aspley State School. Ph. Bill Weeks - 3412623 a.h.

PLUS/4 SUPPORT GROUP: - Clarence Stock is acting as support coordinator for Plus/4 owners. Ph. 397 8894 a.h.

COPYING OF COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE IS NOT ALLOWED AT OUR MEETINGS!

Do you want to form a Sub-Group in your District?
Contact Terry Steer (Ph. 808 2424 a.h.) for details.

-oo0oo-

EDITOR'S NOTES

JOTTINGS

Congratulations to our printer, Terry Steer, for the nice job he has done on the last edition of CURSOR; in particular the new brown front cover. That green cover was a bit of an eyesore!

Word Perfect, the word processor used for this and the previous edition, is still giving me lots of problems, particularly when printing out the newsletter. For no apparent reason it will leave several lines blank and then carry on printing again. This in turn means that all top and bottom margins are out of kilter, which forces you to abandon printing, which in turn results in lots of cursing and wasting of paper. As I mentioned in this month's talk, it really is developing in a love/hate relationship!

A very warm welcome to Michael Thomas, Brian Parker and Robert Googe for their contributions to this issue of CURSOR. It's amazing how much hidden talent lurks in the back blocks of Amy land. Brian has also contributed a program to our P.D. library called "Zorklook", which allows you to take a 'peek' at the data files of the "Zork" programs. Well, maybe it is cheating a bit, but those adventure games can be terribly frustrating, and "Zorklook" might well give you a few extra hours of sleep!

Fred Fish is still doing miracles for the micro-floppy industry. In this issue you will find listings of Fish disks No.s 111 - 128! I have condensed the listings to the bare minimum to conserve space. At this rate we will all go broke buying blank disks to keep up with the flood, but I'm not complaining! On page 15 I have devoted some special attention to the ARP project - potentially one of the most exciting projects for the Amiga in 1988. I hope that some of our more knowledgeable "C" people (hint, hint, Steve and others!) will be able to devote some time to this project and give us a de-tailed account of its implications.

Isn't it strange that Commodore provided the Amiga with four voices and two sound channels and yet only fitted one measly loud-speaker into their monitors? Yet there's a grille in the right side of our monitors ready to fit the second speaker. Was this another cost cutting measure? Who, amongst our more technically inclined members, would be prepared to modify our monitors with a small second amplifier and speaker to give us real stereo sound? Assuming that the cost of this modification is within reasonable bounds I'm sure that quite a few members would have their monitors modified. Come to think about it, as both Robert Googe and Brian Parker are 'into' this audio thing, they should get their heads together and come up with a good (and cheap!) modification.

We have now at our disposal a fairly good range of Data Base programs and Spread Sheets. What we now require is one or more members who are prepared to stand up and give us a talk on their use. We have quite a few members who would dearly like to know more about these topics. How about it you DB and SS users? Do share your experiences with your fellow members!

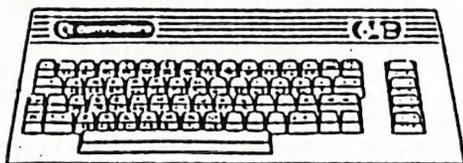
Ralph De Vries

commodore COMPUTER

PARCOM PTY. LTD.

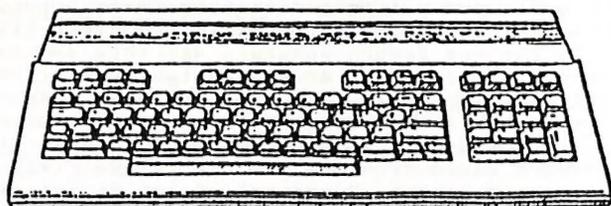
WHITES HILL SHOPPING VILLAGE
SAMUEL STREET - CAMP HILL - 4152
Ph. (07) - 395 2211

363 BAYSWATER ROAD
GARbutt - TOWNSVILLE - 4814
Ph. (077) - 794 800



SERVICE CONTRACTS NOW AVAILABLE

FROM \$50.00 PER ANNUM



OFFICIAL
WARRANTY
SERVICE CENTRE



=====

PROFESSIONAL
REPAIRS AND
PRODUCT SUPPORT

=====

FAST TURNAROUND

ALL WORK CARRIES OUR 90-DAY WARRANTY!
SEE US FOR EFFICIENT AND COURTEOUS SERVICE!
SPECIAL RATES FOR USER GROUP MEMBERS!

=====

RANDOM BITS

MAIN MEETING (2nd February)

The first meeting of 1988 went off with a bang. Particularly in the library and shop areas there was hardly room to move. It was particularly interesting to note that more and more Amiga owners are starting to realise that we now have two meetings each month.

After the preliminary speeches by the President and Secretary it was your newsletter editor's turn to lead our Amiga contingent to Room S1, where he attempted to give an overview of WordPerfect. In the process he managed to crash Bruce Wylie's Amiga without really trying.... there must be a moral to that, as I've found WP one of the most stable products around. In a talk lasting about an hour one could barely touch upon the main features of such a powerful program, but I hope that at least I have given my audience some idea of both the power and pitfalls of WP.

As an afterthought we would like to mention that our beloved coordinator pranced around the Bardon centre showing off his new Amiga T-shirt. It was a subtle bit of marketing on his part, as he was taking orders for these T-shirts (\$15.00 ea, available in sizes small, medium and large). If you are interested give Steve a ring on 262 1127, after 5pm.

MARCH MAIN MEETING

Because we are unable to hire the Bardon Centre on our 'regular' meeting day the March Meeting will be on MONDAY 7th MARCH. <-----

TO OWNERS OF EPSON GX-80 PRINTERS

C64 or C128 owners who have upgraded to the Amiga and own an Epson GX-80 printer DO NOT have to sell this printer to be able to interface it with their new computers, according to Con Kolivas in the Jan. edition of the "AMIGA WORKBENCH". By spending \$75 on an Epson Printer Interface Cartridge #8620 (+ \$25 for a printer cable) they can turn their lowly GX-80 into an LX-80 printer and thus acquire all those extra features like elite font, italics, underline and super/subscripts. Apparently the interface comes with a good manual as well, so by spending apprx. \$100 you can have your printer up- and running on your Amiga.

NEW PROTON PRODUCTS

We have been advised by Proton Micro-Electronics that they now manufacture EXTERNAL memory expansion modules for the A 500.

Following is a list of these products with their recommended retail prices:

512K Memory Expansion Module.....	\$459.00
1MEG ,, ,, ,,	\$625.00
2MEG ,, ,, ,,	\$989.00
Real Time Clock.....	\$95.00
512K to 1MEG Upgrade.....	\$169.00
1MEG to 2MEG Upgrade.....	\$414.00

Also available now is the Auto Configuration Module for the A 1000 memory boards at a R.R.P. of \$50.00.

LPD WRITER

We have not seen this reasonably new word processor for Amy, but we would suggest that you leave well alone. According to reviews in "Amazing Computing" and "Amiga World" the manufacturers of this product use a particularly nasty form of software protection which precludes the possibility of making backup copies or installing the program on a hard disk. One of the reviewers tried to install the floppy disk accelerator program on his copy of LPD Writer and his disk packed it in after this installation! Recently we had to withdraw several programs from our 8-bit lending library, because of similar problems with copy protection which caused disk crashes. Yes, you guessed it; they were produced by the same company!

A NEW 3,5" DISK DRIVE

Coming in about 8 weeks time.... a CBM compatible 3,5" drive, including a 23 Pin socket, thus allowing daisy-chaining. Very compact and will probably sell to members for about \$350.00.

THE VIRUS

Most members have heard by now all about the virus (see Paul Gunther's article in the Nov.'87 issue of Cursor), but some interesting new facts have come to light. During December there started to circulate several copies of so-called 'Virus Killers'. These virus killer programs originated in Europe where the original virus apparently was 'developed'. We have since heard (sorry, we are unable to prove or disprove this rumour) that one of these programs actually introduces another strain of the 'virus' into your system!

Under the circumstances we would suggest that you ONLY use the virus checker which has been sanctioned by Commodore called VCHECK. This can be found on one of our latest Fish Disks (No. 126), and could easily be installed into the C directory of your workbench disk. This virus checker will not only check your disks for the presence of the virus, but even more importantly it will check the Amiga's memory for the presence of the virus. The documentation supplied with the program tells you exactly what to do, so every Amiga owner should make it his or her first priority to get a copy of this program.

TO ALL NEW AMIGA OWNERS: If all this sounds like so much hot air, let us assure you that this is deadly serious. We have found that in most cases the virus is distributed during workshops etc. by members who are unaware of its presence. Once the virus is found on one of your disks it will be transferred to your computer's memory, where in turn it will infect other disks. In the case of commercial programs the final result may well be an unusable program. Hence it pays to check Amy's memory regularly for the presence of the virus.

We have also heard of several cases where the virus found its way into computer dealer premises, both in and around Brisbane, as well as in North Queensland. Now these dealers wouldn't be engaged in illegal software copying activities, would they....???

GOODS & SERVICES

BLANK DISKS 5,25" (DS / DD) - \$10.00 per 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)
BLANK DISKS 3,5" (DS / DD) - \$30.00 per 10 (+ \$2.00 Postage)
PUB. DOM. DISKS 3,5" - \$6.00 ea. (+ \$2.00 Post. for up to 5 Disks)
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (hold 40) - \$15.00 ea (+ \$5.00 Post.)
DISK BOXES for 3,5" disks (hold 80) - \$20.00 ea (+ \$5.00 Post.)

"AMIGA DOS SUMMARY" - \$3.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)
"AMIGA BEGINNERS GUIDE" (CLI etc.) - \$2.50 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)
"BBS INSTRUCTION BOOK" - \$3.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)
AMIGA SPECIAL PRINTER CABLE (A500 & A2000) - \$25.00.
ADDRESS LABELS (23 x 89 mm) - \$14.00 per 1000.
RIBBONS for MPS-1000, GX/LX-80 PRINTERS \$9.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)
RIBBONS for MPS-1200/1250, CIT.120-D - \$12.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)
RIBBONS for Riteman C or F PRINTERS - \$12.00 ea (+ \$1.00 Postage)

ADDRESS all orders to P.O. Box 274 - Springwood - QLD - 4127
Cheques to be made out to: C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.

MONITOR ADJUSTMENTS

Harvey Riddle will do a focus adjustment to your 1081 monitor at our Rosalie Workshop Meeting at a cost of \$5.00. If more drastic surgery is called for there will be additional charges. Consult Harvey at our workshop or phone him on (071) 421036.

-oo0oo-

HARDWARE HACKS

by Brian Parker

PAL VIDEO MODIFICATION

This article describes a hardware modification to version 1.3 Amigas (which have a PAL AGNUS chip but NTSC composite video circuitry) which will give full PAL composite video. This is most useful for recording the Amiga output on video.

PARTS LIST- 33pF, 56pF, 10pF and two 220pF ceramic capacitors.
.001uF greencap.
9.8-60pF trimmer capacitor (or anything around 30pF).
47K 1/4 watt resistor.
4.433619 MHz PAL xtal.
(optionally, a 28.37516 MHz oscillator from a Commodore repair centre).

PROCEDURE-

Disassemble the machine. Locate the MC1377 chip at the top left corner (looking from the front). Cut the tracks leading to pins 1 and 17 on the underside of the board, and disconnect pin 20 from earth by cutting the tracks on the component side of the board.

(N.B. It is connected to earth on both the inside and outside of the pin. Cut the inner track by levering a small screwdriver across it several times).

Replace C45 with the 33pF ceramic, and replace C54 with the 56pF
Now connect the other components as follows-

- 1) A 220 pF across pins 17 & 18.
- 2) A 220 pF " " 15 & 18.
- 3) A 47K resistor across pins 1 & 16.
- 4) A .001 uF greencap from pin 1 to the adjacent earth plane.
- 5) Solder the 10 pF ceramic across the trimmer capacitor then solder one end of the trimmer to pin 15.
- 6) Solder the crystal from pin 17 to the other end of the trimmer.
- 7) Solder a wire from the can of the xtal to a nearby earth.

When doing the above, try to keep the component lead lengths as short as possible. If you are not into free-form modern sculpture, you could probably de-solder the MC1377 and mount the whole lot on a bit of vero board, with connections to the original IC position.

Once this is completed, partially reassemble the machine - leaving the top shield off. Turn it on, connected via a suitable cable to the composite input your monitor. Let the machine warm up, then adjust the trimmer until the interference lines (seen most prominently at the border of orange and blue) are stationary and minimized. Then complete reassembly.

One last modification is needed to bring the machine up to full PAL standard. This is to replace the main oscillator with a 28.37516 MHz version. As this is only 1% different to the NTSC clock, it would probably only need to be changed if something like genlock was used.

Modification For A1000 To Switch Out 7KHz Audio Filter

by Brian Parker

When sound is digitally sampled, frequencies up to 1/2 the sampling rate can be stored faithfully. On playback, frequencies above that should be filtered out to stop aliasing distortion (beat frequencies due to the sampling frequency). (There should also be an input filter when the sound is being digitized). The Amiga can playback sounds sampled up to 29 kHz, which should correspond to a potential frequency response of up to 15 kHz which is almost hi-fi (human hearing is up to 20 kHz). Unfortunately, rather than having a low-pass filter which is variable to 1/2 the sampling rate, the Amiga has a compromise in that it has a fixed filter at 7 kHz cutoff.

This means that sounds sampled at less than 7 kHz are limited in their frequency range to SAMPLING RATE-7 kHz, to stop distortion, rather than the potential SAMPLING RATE/2. Worse, however, is the fact that there is no advantage in sampling sounds at greater than 14 kHz as the extra frequency response won't get through. This means that music programs (such as DMCS) which sample their instruments at 29 kHz are being limited by this arrangement. The following hardware mod. switches out the 7kHz filter under software control, for use when playing back sounds sampled at the maximal

rate. (Although ideally a 15 kHz filter should be switched into its place, in practice frequencies above 15 kHz aren't noticeable).

The front panel LED controls whether the filter is on or off. I think that this is compatible with the descriptions I have heard of the A500 and A2000, but it may not be. Optionally, a switch can be added to control the filter manually as well.

PARTS LIST: 4066 quad analogue switch, 74LS04 hex inverter, two 47K 1/4 watt resistors, hookup wire, optionally a SPDT centre off switch.

PROCEDURE:

!!!!!!! N.B. THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION IS FOR V1.3 AMIGAS WITH THE DAUGHTER BOARD. THE COMPONENTS ARE NUMBERED DIFFERENTLY IN V1.4 PAL AMIGAS !!!!!!!

Disassemble the machine. Remove the daughter board. Splay out the pins on the two IC's except the power supply pins. Piggyback the two IC's onto U4H by soldering the power supply pins (Put the 74LS04 under the 4066). Cut the two tracks leading to the +ve sides of C64 and C66. Solder together pins 5 & 5 of the 4066 and 'LS04. Do the same with pins 6 & 6. Join pins 2 & 3 of the 4066. Join pins 9 & 10 of the 4066. Join pins 5 & 12 of the 4066. Join pins 6 and 13 of the 4066. Solder one 47K resistor between pins 14 and 13 of the 4066. Solder the other 47K between pins 12 & 14 of the 4066. Join the +ve side of C66 to pin 2 of the 4066. Join the +ve side of C64 to pin 9 of the 4066. Join pin 14 of the TL084 (U5G) to pin 4 of 4066. Join pin 1 of TL084 to pin 1 of 4066. Join pin 8 of TL084 to pin 11 of 4066. Join pin 7 of TL084 to pin 8 of 4066. If the switch isn't used, join pin 5 of 4066 to pin 9 of U6K (1488). Otherwise, mount the switch on the back of the machine & connect pin 5 of the 4066 to the centre pin of the switch, & connect one of the remaining pins on the switch to a nearby ground. Join pin 9 of U6K to the remaining pin on the switch. Reassemble the machine.

TURNING THE FILTER ON & OFF:

To switch out the filter, a small routine is used to dim the front LED which activates the circuit. Another routine is used to turn the filter back on. The routine to switch out the filter can be put in the startup-sequence of music programs which use 29kHz digitized sound. (N.B. the filter should not be switched out for programs using submaximally digitised sounds, otherwise severe aliasing distortion will occur). The default condition on boot-up is that the filter is switched in as normal.

If the switch has been used, centre position turns the filter off, up turns the filter on, and down connects the filter for software control. (Depending on how your switch is arranged).

To try out the difference attainable, run the following Amiga-BASIC routine with the filter alternately switched in & out:

```
loop:
sound 15000,77,255,0
goto loop
```

BUILDING AN AUDIO DIGITIZER FOR YOUR AMIGA 1000

by Robert Googe

This is just a short article on an audio digitizer I have built for my Amiga 1000 for less than \$40! (Note: This will not work with the 500 or 2000 without an external power supply for the sampler because of pin-out differences on the parallel port). This design is basically a modified version of a circuit given in the National Semiconductor Linear Data Book and applied to software available for the Amiga. There are two sources of software that can be used to run this digitizer - one is shareware and available through public domain on Fish or Amicus disks, this is the Perfect Sound software and was designed to work with the Perfect Sound Digitizer (I'll assume you're using this software). The other is a sound sampling/editing suite from Aegis Development called Audiomaster (at A#87 from Computer View - Bundamba), which is designed to run the myriad of samplers that work off the parallel port (as this one does).

Before I continue I must stress that, although this is a reasonably straight forward piece of hardware, you should have a bit of electronics and soldering experience up your sleeve before you attempt to build it (you may be able to con, er, persuade a suitably qualified friend into building it for you). Any wrong wiring of either the circuit or the parallel plug may DAMAGE your Amiga so take care!

This circuit uses the National Semiconductor ADC0802 (\$20 from Dick Smith) or ADC0804 analogue to digital converter chip (there are other AD080x chips in the range but these are the two most commonly available - do NOT use the ADC0800 chip as it requires different supply voltages, etc) and an LM324 quad op-amp IC.

I built my prototype on a piece of vero-board with the DB25 socket soldered straight on the end, so that the whole thing plugs into the Amiga's parallel port with a lead going off to the audio source.

Circuit Operation:

Reading this section may get a little rough for some but those of you who want to have a go should be able to construct the sampler without fully understanding the internal workings I'm about to describe.

This sampler records only the left channel (i.e. records in mono) through a signal sent on the SEL line (DB25 pin 13). If for some reason you want to record on the right channel then wire up POUT (DB25 pin 12) instead. Actually it is quite simple to make a stereo sampler, which I may describe to you at a later date.

Only two op-amps are used of the four available, one is used to set the $V_{ref}/2$ (half the reference voltage) and the other is used to act as a times 10 amplifier for the audio input. The A-D chip has basically three sections. The first section accepts the analog (audio) input and holds it at that level for one sample period. The next section successively approximates the digital word equivalent

to that analog voltage and feeds it to a digital-analog converter and then to a comparator which compares the digital with the analog on the input. This happens a number of times until the generated digital word is a correct representation of the analog voltage at the input. At this point the third stage then decides to pass it to the data pins of the chip (and the parallel port). There are a few other functions involved but this is basically how the chip does the job. There are a few more points that should be mentioned before I continue. The speed or rate at which these conversions take place is critical to being able to sample sound with any degree of quality. To operate correctly the whole process works to a master clock rate. In my circuit this clock rate is around 1.4 MHz (Mega-Hertz or million cycles per second). The A-D converter requires around 60 of these clock cycles to process one sample voltage. So the sample rate (or number of samples able to be taken in one second) is 1,400,000 divided by 60 - around 23,000. This sample rate is 23 kHz. To prevent aliasing distortion (that is the sampling frequency mixing with your sampled sound and creating a rasping effect to the final product) the maximum sampled frequency (your audio signal) must be less than half the sampling frequency (generated in the A-D chip - 23kHz). That gives you around 11-12kHz which is quite adequate as the standard Amiga 1000 will only play back up to 7kHz tops without hardware modifications.

Now I am certain I have confused quite a few of you who hopefully haven't given it away as being too hard - I assure you it isn't and is well worth the effort.

As I have said, I constructed my sampler on a piece of veroboard which, I must admit, is pushing a few things to the limit (mainly trying to get the clock frequency high enough!) but with careful soldering and clean construction techniques this should work quite acceptably.

Setting Up The Sampler:

After building the sampler you will need to set up the reference and quiescent (no signal) input voltages. Normally the Vref/2 voltage is internally set at 2.5V (half supply voltage) but I have provided a forced adjustment for this (RV2) so you may set it to any voltage range you like - for standard speaker input to the sampler (i.e. audio input comes from an external speaker of a cassette player) you should set this to around 1V (measured at pin 9 of the A-D chip).

After connecting the sampler, power up the Amiga and load up the Perfect Sound software. Select 'Monitor Signal Levels' from the pull down menu. You should see two sets of three - three digit numbers at the bottom of the screen. The last set of three should read 255 each (right channel), the first set will read some number between 000 and 150 (left channel). By adjusting RV1 set these digits to read 127. The first number is the average digital representation of the input (average signal level), the second is the minimum (or lowest signal) and the last is the maximum (highest [peak] signal level), and when you record a signal this maximum should only read 255 occasionally. Now the digitizer is ready to use - connect up an audio source, adjust your volume control, select 'Record Left Channel' and away you go!

If you have any further questions you can usually catch up with me at the Workshop meeting (Ithaca RSL Hall).

DISK LIBRARY

Fish Disk 111

AmyLoad A graphical monitor of cpu, blitter, and memory use.
AssignDev Assigns multiple names to a given device.
Gauge Displays memory usage in a vertical bar graph.
HeliosMouse Another "sunmouse" type program. Version 1.1, an update to disk 94.
Labels Alphabetic and numeric ordered cross reference lists of defined system constants.
Mandel Another mandelbrot generator program, with bits and pieces of code from C. Heath and R.J. Mical. Incl.source.
PopLife A PopCLI type thingie that instead plays life all over your screen. Includes source.

Fish Disk 112

BeachBirds J.Tunnell's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
Bully Mike Meyer's entry for the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
DropShadow Dropshadow version 2, rev 0.
HagenDemos Joel Hagen's Badge Killer Demo contest entries. "RGB" and "Focus". RGB was the overall winner of the contest. It requires a one meg Amiga to run. Binary only.
Viacom Latest version of viacom for use in conjunction with the WaveBench demo. Binary only.
WaveBench Bryce Nesbitt's Badge Killer Demo Contest entry.

Fish Disk 113

AmiCron A simple Unix "cron" type program.
Dme Version 1.28f of Matt Dillon's text editor.
DosDev Example DOS device driver in Manx C. Version 1.10.
M2Amiga Demo version of the final product M2Amiga. A fast single pass Modula-2 compiler.
NolconPos Clears the position info of any of your icons to allow WorkBench to pick a reasonable place for the icon again.

Fish Disk 114

CDecl English to C (and vice versa) translator for C declarations. An absolute must for anyone except possibly the most hardcore C guru. Includes source.
Vt100 Version 2.7 of Dave's vt100 terminal emulator
WBLander This entry from the Badge Killer Demo Contest is a special version of the WBLander program from disk 100.

Fish Disk 115

Killer Robert Wilt's entry in the Badge Killer Demo Contest. Requires at least one meg of memory to run.
Marketroid Leo Schwab's entry for the Badge Killer Demo Contest.

Fish Disk 116

Movies Eric Graham & Ken Offer's entry in the Badge Killer Demo Contest.

Fish Disk 117

AMUC_Demo A really neat horizontal scrolling demo that is a
2400 x 200 pixel 32 color IFF picture. Binary only.
Exp_Demo Demo version of Express Paint 1.1. Binary only.

Fish Disk 118

Empire Peter Langston's Empire game, written in Draco.
HAMmmm Phil Burk's entry for the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
Stars Hobie Orris's entry for the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
WireDemo Matt Dillon's entry for the Badge Killer Demo Contest.

Fish Disk 119

MicroEMACS Version 3.9e of D.Lawrence's variant of Dave Conroy's
microemacs. Update to the version released on disk 93.

Fish Disk 120

Amoeba Clone of Space Invaders. Highly recommended!
BackGammon A graphical Backgammon game.
Bankn A complete checkbook system.
EgyptianRun Cute little "road race + hazards" type game.
IconImage Replace an old icon image with a new image, without
affecting icon type, drawer data, etc.

Fish Disk 121

BasicStrip An AmigaBASIC program that helps to convert programs
written in other forms of Basic to AmigaBASIC.
DataPlot A shareware plotting program written in AmigaBASIC.
Plot A shareware 3-D graphing prg. written in AmigaBASIC.
Stairs AmigaBASIC Sound Demo program.
Uedit Version 2.3 of this nice shareware editor.
WBColors Program to change the Workbench colors to a pre-
determined color set.

Fish Disk 122

Asteriods Nicely done "blast the asteroids" type game.
Iff2Pcs An puzzle program that takes any IFF file containing
up to 16 colors, and breaks it up into squares to make a
puzzle which the user can then piece back together again.
Names Program to manage a membership mailing list.
Pr Utility to print listings in different formats.
PushOver A neat little board strategy game, in AmigaBASIC.
PuzzlePro Create a puzzle from IFF picture, which the user can
then piece back together again. Written in AmigaBASIC.

Fish Disk 123

Arp ARP stands for "AmigaDOS Replacement Project", and is
an effort led by Charlie Heath to replace the current DOS
commands in a compatible fashion.
Car This animation is one of Allen Hastings's entries to
the Badge Killer Demo Contest.

Fish Disk 124

Icons Some sample animated icons. Author: L. Pfost
Tarot An AmigaBASIC program written by the author as an
 exercise for learning BASIC. Author: L.Pfost

Fish Disk 125

ElGato K. Sullivan's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
 Requires Sonix to use.

Fish Disk 126

Colour A program to manipulate the colors of specific named
 screens, saving their current color sets to data files.
Dance John Olsen's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
HBHill K. Sullivan's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
Iconify Subroutine to create an icon on the Amiga screen that
 can be subsequently dragged around, and double-clicked on.
OnlyAmiga I.S. Hans's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
Suplib The support library needed to rebuild various programs
 of Matt Dillon's from the source, incl. DME, DTERM, etc.
VCheck Version 1.2 of the virus detection program from
 Commodore Amiga Technical Support. This version will test
 for the presence of a virus in memory, or specific disks.

Fish Disk 127

Bounce S. Hansel's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
Nemesis M. Riley's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.
Ripples A. Hastings's entry to the Badge Killer Demo Contest.

Fish Disk 128

Dis A 68000 disassembler, written in 68000 assembler.
DropCloth Lets you place a pattern, a 2 bitplane IFF image or a
 combination of a pattern and image, into the W.B. backdrop.
LedClock Clock program, for interlaced screens only.
MRBackUp A hard disk backup utility, that does a file by file
 copy to standard AmigaDOS floppy disks.
Paint A simple screen painting program, written in web.
PrtDriver For the Toshiba "3 in one" printer in its Qume mode.
SDBackUp A hard disk backup utility. CLI interface only.
Sed A clone of the Unix sed (Stream Editor) program.
wKeys A "hot-keys" program that binds keyboard function
 keys to window manipulation functions.

About Fish Disk 123

This disk contains ARP which stands for the AmigaDOS Replacement Project. ARP is an effort led by Charlie Heath of Microsmiths, Inc. and many other well known American Software developers to give us a range of better, faster, more efficient and reliable DOS commands, yet retain compatibility with existing commands. The first results of their efforts can be found on this disk and contain some 26 DOS replacement commands, complete with very substantial documentation, which covers the reasons why the project was set up, installation, usage and syntax of the new commands and many other topics.

Following are some extracts from this documentation:

Why is ARP better?

In brief ARP replacement programs are typically much smaller and much faster than their AmigaDOS equivalents. It is not unusual to find ARP programs which are less than half the size of the program they are intended to replace. This translates immediately into disk space and memory savings for you, both precious commodities on the Amiga. In addition ARP programs often have enhanced features, and can do things the original DOS programs simply can't. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they conform to clearly defined Amiga system standards for Amiga software, so developers don't have to handle a lot of special cases, which will help all Amiga software.

I never use the CLI, why should I care about ARP?

If you truly never use the CLI, then the impact of ARP will be less apparent to you. But you will realize big savings in memory and disk space. In addition, with a more standard software environment for developers, software reliability will increase, and as software becomes easier to write for the Amiga, prices of software will be less than they would be in a difficult development environment.

How much is it going to cost me?

It will cost you the duplication of a disk. Many busy programmers worked hard on ARP, donating large amounts of their time in an effort to make the Amiga a better place to work and play. The emphasis here is on improving the Amiga environment, so that future software will work better, not on separating you from your money.

Can I give it away?

You sure can, and we encourage you to distribute it as widely as possible.

I am a developer, can I include it on my commercial disks?

Yes, you can and should. All we ask of commercial users of ARP is that if you use any portion of the arp.library in your software (and we hope you will), please include the rest of the ARP replacement programs as well.

(The disk includes special information for programmers etc.)

So far the official documentation. By installing the first batch of replacement DOS commands we managed to save 22 blocks of disk space - not a bad effort! Most commands accept a similar syntax now - this particularly affects items like multiple file handling, wild cards (the * is back as a wild card character - hooray!), etc. No doubt there will be some 'bugs', but as this is an ongoing project these will in time be upgraded, as well as important other commands added. We have noticed some discrepancies between the actual commands in the c: directory and their description in the Docs: directory. Watch out for a cp (copy) command. It does not seem to be documented (or completed) yet. In the meantime give ARP a go - it deserves to succeed and we think it will, and with flying colours.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

by Michael Thomas

This article is intended to impart some of my experiences with and impressions of various public domain programs and the Amiga itself over my first month of Amiga usage.

The main reasons for which I require a computer are scientific word processing and programming. Until recently my main machine was an Osborne 1, which I still use and intend to keep. The Amiga hardware far outstrips the Osborne in terms of speed, memory capacity and graphics capability. Unfortunately the Amiga is not portable, hence the need for the older machine.

From a programming point of view, the Amiga operating system is easy to interface with. The accompanying FORTH program was my first programming effort on the Amiga. The floating point routines interface was finished in but a few hours thanks to the elegance of the operating system.

On the down side, I find the graphics interface to be clumsy, although I feel that this may be due to my own inexperience.

Public domain programs I have used and found helpful are:

- * dirutil v4 - generally indispensable, although not as well endowed with features as the CP/M program "SWEEP".
- * microemacs v1.1 - the best programming editor I have used. I hope to pick up a later version with its own extension language.
- * kermit - the version I have appears to be a very early one, with a bug in the SEND function. I hope to obtain a better version soon. All my Osborne source code was transferred to Amiga by this one.
- * xliisp 1.6 - a good way to play around with LISP and object oriented programming. Not always tolerant of clumsy beginners though.
- * ff - a quick way to format basic documents; I find Scribble2! to be a hopeless word processor. Ff requires some practice, and is best used with a set of command files for different tasks.
- * mvp-forth - a solid FORTH-79 implementation, with some good basic features. I hope to find a FORTH-83 dialect though, as a lot of my work has been done in that dialect.

The accompanying program listing provides a set of floating point routines for MVP-FORTH (Fish disk 9). It is not in block format in order to save space for the newsletter. Anyone interested in obtaining the source on disk may contact me on (07) 800 4511. As I am a geologist I am not always in town, so please leave a message.

LISTING 1.

MVP FORTH-Amiga Floating point library interface
Requires that mvpamiga.ext be loaded first.

```
\ Exec interface -- lib calling
CREATE MATHBASE 0 , 0 ,
CREATE TRANSBASE 0 , 0 ,
CREATE IEEEBASE 0 , 0 ,

: MATH: ( -- <LVO> \ compile an MATH call )
  compile LIBRARY: MATHBase , LVO, ; immediate

: TRANS: ( -- <LVO> \ compile a trans call )
  compile LIBRARY: transBase , LVO, ; immediate

: ieee: ( -- <LVO> \ compile a ieee call )
  compile LIBRARY: ieeeBase , LVO, ; immediate

: gfx: ( -- <LVO> \ compile a gfx call )
  compile LIBRARY: gfxBase , LVO, ; immediate

\ open maths libraries
: OpenMathsLibraries \ -- ; open desired libraries
  " mathffp.library" 0 openlibrary mathbase 2!
  " mathtrans.library" 0 openlibrary transbase 2!
  " mathieeedoubbas.library" 0 openlibrary ieeebase 2! ;

: d0< 0 0 d< ;      : d0> 0 0 d> ;

\ maths operators
: fix >rd 0 math: ffe2 result ;
: float >rd0 math: ffdc result ;
: fcmp >rd 0 >rd 1 math: ffd6 result ;
: f= fcmp d0= if true else false then ;
: f> fcmp d0> if true else false then ;
: f< fcmp d0< if true else false then ;
: f0= 0 0 f= ;
: fabs >rd 0 math: ffca result ;
: fneg >rd 0 math: ffc4 result ;
: f+ >rd 0 >rd 1 math: ffbe result ;
: f- >rd 1 >rd 0 math: ffb8 result ;
: f* >rd 0 >rd 1 math: ffb2 result ;
: f/ >rd 1 >rd 0 math: ffac result ;

\ transcendental functions etc
: fatan >rd 0 trans: ffe2 result ;
: fsin >rd 0 trans: ffdc result ;
: fcos >rd 0 trans: ffd6 result ;
: ftan >rd 0 trans: ffd0 result ;
: fsincos >rd 0 trans: ffca result ;
: fsinh >rd 0 trans: ffc4 result ;
: fcosh >rd 0 trans: ffbe result ;
: ftanh >rd 0 trans: ffb8 result ;
: fexp >rd 0 trans: ffb2 result ;
: flog >rd 0 trans: ffac result ;
: fpow >rd 0 trans: ffa6 result ;
: fsqrt >rd 0 trans: ffa0 result ;
```

```

: fasin >rd 0 trans: ff8e result ;
: facos >rd 0 trans: ff88 result ;
: flog10 >rd 0 trans: ff7e result ;

```

```

\ ancillaries
: fconstant create , , does> 2@ ;
: fvariable create 0 , 0 , ;
: f@ 2@ ; : f! 2! ;
: fdup 2dup ; : fswap 2swap ;
: f>= f< not ; : f<= f> not ;
: f0> 0 0 f> ; : f0< 0 0 f< ;

```

\ The words from here to "f." are heavily modified versions of code
 \ originally written by Peter Milford, Physics Department, U of Q

variable places variable expon 3 places ! 3 expon !

```

10. float fconstant f10 1. float fconstant f1
-1. float fconstant -f1 3. float fconstant f3

```

```

: ulim f1 places @ 1+ 0 do f10 f* loop ;
: llim f1 places @ 0 do f10 f* loop ;
: fscl
  places @ expon !
  begin fdup ulim f>= while 1 expon +! f10 f/ repeat
  begin fdup llim f< while -1 expon +! f10 f* repeat ;

```

```

: fprint
  fix <# places @ 0 do # loop ascii . hold # #> type
  ascii E emit expon @ dup 0< if
    negate ascii -
    else ascii + then
  emit 0 <# # # #> type space ;

```

```

: f. ( fpn --)
  fdup f0= if
    space ." 0." places @ 0 do ascii 0 emit loop
    ." E+00" 2drop
  else fdup f0< if
    fabs ascii - emit
    else space then
  fscl fprint then ;

```

```

\ formatted fp io
: f.r ( fn width --)
  1- 7 max ( Minimum field width for fpn)
  12 min ( Maximum field width for fpn)
  places @ >r 6 - places !
  f. r> places ! ;

```

-oo0oo-

ORDER YOUR AMIGA T-SHIRT NOW!

For a mere \$15.00 you can tell all your IBM and Mac friends that you are a discriminating computer owner! Available in Small, Medium and Large sizes. Contact Steve McNamee on 262 1127 (after hours) for further details.

REVIEWS

[Books which have recently been purchased for our library will as a matter of course be first reviewed by one of our members. If you would like to be a reviewer contact me for details. Ed.]

COMPUTE'S AMIGA APPLICATIONS

(Our copy from B.C.F. Bookstores)

by Jim Vick

I must confess I had a deal of trouble trying to decide upon a category in which to place this book. It's not an educational book that tries to teach the user something about basic programming, nor is it the type of book that someone would buy if they were interested in acquiring a collection of Amiga software.

This book is a collection of software of various kinds that a user could type in if he or she were that way inclined, with categories that include Games, Education, Household Helpers, Business, etc. That in itself is o.k., except that with the amount of good public domain software about, I think that if I was looking for a particular program, I would be doing a bit of research in that area rather than pay thirty eight odd dollars for this book and then having to sit down and type in the programs!

In my humble opinion I feel the book would have been of much more use if it had been aimed more at the educational aspect with perhaps fewer program listings, but with a full explanation of what each program was doing and how the programmer arrived at the solution to each problem. In this way the buyer of the book could then learn a little about Basic Programming and still get a few decent programs along the way because, from what I was able to gather from reading the book, I would think that some of the programs could be fairly useful.

My reasons for coming to this conclusion are that, as I said before, with the amount of public domain software about I could not see myself sitting down to type these programs in (some of them are in excess of twenty pages!), unless I felt that I was going to learn something in the process, and to be of educational value this book would need far more detailed explanations of program structure to be of any real use.

To summarise I guess I would have to say I do not think the book is of real value for its cost, and if I was going to spend that kind of money I would be more inclined to buy a box of disks for thirty dollars and go to one of our workshop meetings and get a collection of public domain software. But who knows, perhaps there is someone out there who likes the idea of typing in programs!

-ooOoo-

COMPUTE'S FIRST BOOK OF AMIGA

(Our copy from B.C.F. Bookstores)

by Bruce Wylie

This book is broken up into 5 distinct segments.

1: Recreation

These are games that have been extracted from the "COMPUTE" Magazine. Some are good, some not so good. They are all written in Basic and are helpful in learning how to use the BASIC language as well as the computer keyboard (Some are awfully long!) and when all has been typed in and debugged, the games are frequently a disappointment. I typed in UFO Invasion, Tightrope, Tug-o-war, Biker Dave and I had previously typed in Pyramid Power from the magazine.

The programs appear to have a few minor bugs (apart from the ones I managed to invent!) but these are soon remedied with some patience.

2: Education

Pioneer appears to be a reasonable program if you know some American history and geography and is one of the few new programs. The others are Switchbox, Amiga Puzzle, Hex War, Chain Reaction and Hickory Dickory Dock - all previously published in the magazine.

3: Basic Programming

Amiga Math Graphics is the only new program and appears to be very interesting. The other articles are interesting and informative if you have not seen them before.

4: Beyond Basic

All of these have been taken from various issues of Compute. ED, the Amigados editor, Amigados Batch files, Printers, and programming in Modula 2.

5: Telecommunications

This is all about MODEMS and if you are desperate enough to need a terminal program there is one here - how good it is I cannot tell. If I decided to use a Terminal program I feel I would go to the Public Domain disks or wait until a good commercial one was available (I believe one is well on the way), but then my interests lie elsewhere.

In summary the book could be useful but I feel is vastly overpriced, with too much use of previously published material. If you are a regular reader or subscriber to COMPUTE, don't bother to buy this book - there are a few new programs, but not enough to warrant the purchase price of \$38.95.

--ooOoo--

Printer Review: - Epson LQ-850

by Lex Hinckley

When a total rationalisation of one's computer equipment takes place, it is probable that the search for a suitable printer can take some time and effort. Such was the case for me when I reduced my equipment from two printers (a daisy-wheel and a dot matrix) to one printer. My search was over when I discovered the Epson LQ-850.

This find was at the Computer show last November from which I purchased my printer at a special price of under \$1,000.00. This is my fifth Epson printer so being forearmed with a little product knowledge I was able to seek out the improved features of the model.

The Letter Quality print from the 24 pin head was so crisp that it had most examiners fooled into believing they were looking at Daisy-wheel print. As the nearest acceptable printer driver that I had was the LQ-800 from an Amicus disk, I put this to work and this has been totally suitable for my WP applications although I am led to believe that a driver for the LQ-850 is not too far away with the added advantage of being able to suitably use all the 24 pin capabilities.

This printer weighs in at 9Kg which is heavier than previous dot-matrix printers I have owned due to the improved paper handling features incorporated. Continuous paper is permanently held in the printer with only a lever to be flicked to change to cut sheet paper. An optional cut sheet feeder and additional pull tractor are available. The physical dimensions are around the same as the previous "80-800" series.

Print speed is up to 88 cps for letter quality and a flying 264 cps for draft quality. Pitch is double width, normal and condensed in 10 and 12 pitch, double and normal in 15 pitch as well as proportional pitch which overrides all other settings and prints only in LQ. Fonts that come as standard are draft, and in LQ, Roman and Sans Serif with expansion slots for an additional two of four possible fonts.

The test mode for the printer includes a printout of the dip switch settings, listing the different possible dip switch configurations with the actual settings printed in bold. The two banks of switches are easily accessible from the rear. The front panel has ON LINE, FORM FEED, LINE FEED, and LOAD/EJECT with fine paper adjustments possible with multipart selected. Separate switches also select the font, pitch and condensed modes.

The instruction manual is presented in three volumes which is very convenient once familiar with the conventions used and the presentation is up to the usual high Epson standard.

On the following two pages we have reproduced a series of sample fonts, printed out on a 1:1 scale. I stress that this is only a portion of the total range of sizes and types available.

Roman Font L.Q. 10 cpi:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.

Roman Font L.Q. 12 cpi:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.

Roman Font L.Q. 15 cpi:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.

Roman Font L.Q. PROPORTIONAL PRINT:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE
LAZY DOG
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE
LAZY DOG
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE

Draft Mode - 10 cpi:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.

Sans Serif Font L.Q. 12 cpi:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.

Sans Serif Font L.Q. 15 cpi:

the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.
the quick brown fox jumps right over the lazy dog.
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS RIGHT OVER THE LAZY DOG.

Roman Font L.Q. Horizontally Enlarged:

the quick brown fox jumps
the quick brown fox jumps

Roman Font L.Q. Horizontally & Vertically Enlarged:

the quick brown fox jumps
THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS
the quick brown fox jumps

MAIL BOX

I would like to refer you to Mr. Ivor Black's letter and your subsequent reply concerning the reliability of both the Amiga and its authorized agents published in the February edition of Cursor.

Concerning the Commodore agents, it is interesting to note that the same edition of Cursor included an article by Jim Vick in which he intimated that one of the dealers virtually lied to him about the best price available on an Amiga to CCUG members. This is not the first occurrence of such behaviour. My younger brother faced similar tactics when he purchased his Amiga. He purchased his at the reasonable price of \$1495, yet the very next day a friend of his was unable to get the same price from the same dealer. The same thing happened earlier this year with half-meg expansions. In one day there was a price discrimination of one hundred dollars. Please forgive me for saying, but I am glad it at last happened to someone on the CCUG staff. Perhaps now we will become a little more aware of the tactics of some of the Commodore dealers. Certainly there is no longer any discount on hardware for CCUG members.

Forget the Commodore dealers, go to the chain stores. "Sorry, we don't have Amigas in stock. No, we haven't had the monitor for quite some time. We plug our Amiga into a portable television." So much for enhanced graphics. "We don't seem to sell many Amigas. They are not very popular."

How is the Amiga's reliability? Let us look at some case studies starting with my machine(s):

Andrew: first machine had head alignment problems, it rendered disks unreadable. Second machine doesn't get out of the shop, the power doesn't come through. Third machine gets home. A day later its power light is flashing like a permanent guru. By the fourth machine I was frantic. I ended up with a demonstration model with very little compensation. Naturally, the dealer is also frantic but he blames me (he forgets, one machine didn't get out of the shop). My first NEC drive also had head alignment problems but the second one seems to be working.

Rohan: first machine's disk drive completely collapsed. Second one seems fine.

Paul: now on his third mouse in six months.

Doug: lives in Cairns and he too is on his third Amiga.

The list goes on and on.

In summary: Dealers do seem unreliable with price but, to be fair, my dealer at Ipswich did exchange my machines when the poor fellow obviously thought that it was all my fault. Chain stores are not a viable alternative. CCUG members receive no discount on hardware. Amigas seem very unreliable. Perhaps Commodore Australia could explain the failure of so many machines. I feel sorry for Ivor and

I believe his problems are real. Your unsympathetic reply seems typical of what the dealers think: it must be the user. At least now, Ivor will know he is not alone.

Andrew Cumberland

I re-read my so-called 'unsympathetic reply', and would suggest that you do the same. No, I'm definitely NOT on the side of the dealers - in fact, if I printed what I really thought of some dealers, I'd probably be sued for libel. However I have learnt over the years that there may be two sides to a (repair) story. If this makes my reply unsympathetic, well so be it.

Your letter basically refers to several topics, not necessarily related to Ivor's letter, so let us start at the beginning.

Jim Vick did not write that the dealer in question lied to him. They were not prepared to give him a discount, so Jim took his business elsewhere. Your remarks about different prices being quoted are probably quite true, but if I buy a jar of Nescafé as a special on Saturday and come back on Monday to find that the special is no longer available, there's not much point in me ranting and raving about it. The moral is that the dealer can set his own prices, like it or not (mind you, I'd probably avoid this dealer at all cost!).

I agree that chain stores should be a last resort, yet quite a few of our members have had both good prices and reasonable service, so who are we to argue?

Your next point raised is about Amiga reliability. I see from our group's database that you own an A-500. There do seem to be more problems with this model than with the A-1000. (My A-1000 and 1020 external drive haven't missed a beat in 14 months of solid use). Considering that the A-1000 was originally about twice the price of the A-500 it is quite conceivable that some corners have been cut in the manufacturing of the A-500. As an aside, you will probably be pleased to know that Jim Vick's A-500 also broke down after a few weeks of use. Jim told me however that PARCOM did a very speedy and satisfactory repair job.

So, what can I say about your experiences? Perhaps it is a question of "you get what you pay for". Don't forget that we are basically buying a home computer at (relatively) low prices. (Compare the prices of a Mac for instance.) Yes, I realise that that's not an excuse for shoddy workmanship, so my suggestion is that you write to CBM about your experiences in purchasing your Amiga (and so should everybody else with similar experiences). You probably won't get a reply, but if CBM gets enough complaints they may smarten up their quality control.

Once more I would like to stress that we, the management committee, are on the side of our members and NOT on the side of CBM, dealers or service centres. If you feel that you have a genuine grievance and cannot get anywhere with your complaint, contact a member of your committee and, if at all possible, we will try to find a solution to your problem.

DIRECTORY

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President	GREG PERRY	Ph.366 3295
Secretary	NORM CHAMBERS	Ph.341 5651
Treasurer	JOHN VAN STAVEREN	Ph.372 3651
Technical Coordinator	GREG SHEA	Ph.345 2799
Sub-Group Coordinator	TERRY STEER	Ph.808 2424
Newsletter Editor	RALPH DE VRIES	Ph.300 3477

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

C-64/128 Coordinator	JON KALKMAN	Ph.345 8290
Amiga Contact	BRUCE WYLIE	Ph.359 9779
Plus/4 Contact	CLARENCE STOCK	Ph.397 8894
Vic-20 Contact	BARRY WILSON	Ph.399 6204
Education Officer	BILL WEEKS	Ph.341 2823

"CURSOR" NEWSLETTER

Editor	RALPH DE VRIES	Ph.300 3477
Associate Editor	JON KALKMAN	Ph.345 8290
Associate Editor	JIM VICK	Ph.345 1878
Art & Design Advisor	LINDSAY WHIPP	Ph.356 8374

LIBRARIES & SALES

Lending Library [Software, Books, Magazines]:		
	DOREEN HORNE	Ph.398 7441
	ALLAN HORNE	Ph.398 7441
Sales - Disks & Acc.:	LEIGH WINSOR	Ph.379 2405
P.D. Disks & Tapes:	MARK ECKERT	Ph.891 5268
	VIVIAN ECKERT	Ph.891 5268

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM - Phone Number: (07) 344 1833

Sysop	GREG SHEA	Ph.345 2799
-------	-----------	-------------

Address all Newsletter Mail to:

The Editor, "CURSOR", P.O. BOX 384, ASHGROVE, QLD, 4060

Deadline for CURSOR material is the FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH!

Address all other mail (including Library Material) to:
C.C.U.G. (Qld) Inc., P.O. BOX 274, SPRINGWOOD, QLD, 4127

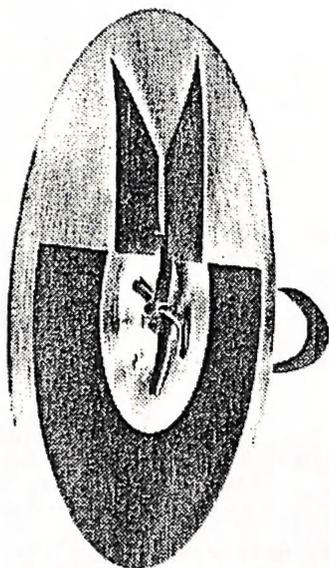
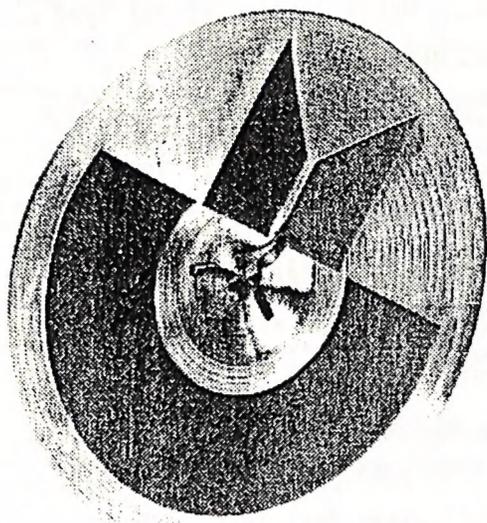
If unable to return library material, members may also leave this with their nearest management committee member (ring first!).

Opinions expressed in CURSOR are those of the Author(s), and not necessarily those of the C.C.U.G.(QLD) Inc. or the Editorial Staff. Permission for reprinting by other Commodore Computer Users Groups is granted, provided that both source and author are acknowledged.

Published by: COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.
P.O. Box 274, Springwood, Qld, 4127

Printed by: BANA SERVICES
36 Nerine St., Kingston, Qld, 4114.

The Number One Symbol in Computers. Commodore.



C= commodore
COMPUTER
Keeping up with you.
