

CURSOR

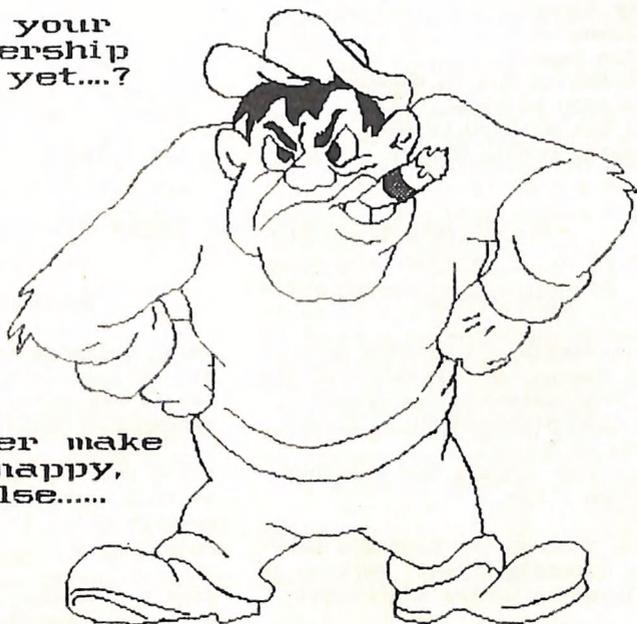
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Vol.7 No.11 July 1990

COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.

Paid your
membership
fees yet....?



Better make
it snappy,
or else.....

**Our Next Main Meeting will take place on Tuesday,
3rd July 1990, at 8 pm (Libraries & Sales at 7 pm)
at the Bardon Professional Development Centre**

CONTENTS

INFORMATION.....	2
Editor's Notes.....	6
Annual General Meeting Notice.....	7
Library News.....	10
Bytes.....	12
Mail Box.....	13
8 BITS & PIECES.....	15
8 Bit Help.....	17
Requiem for an Old Friend.....	18
C-64 Machine Language - Part 6.....	20
Customising the BB Writer.....	24
From the Management Committee.....	25
AMIGA MONITOR.....	27
My First Days with a Modem.....	29
Amiga Help.....	31
Review: DigiView 4.0.....	33
Oh Agnes!.....	37
Games on Fish.....	39
Bug Report.....	40
Graphics Bug in PageStream.....	41
A-3000 Release.....	44
I got my Hard Drive!.....	46
Amiga Public Domain Library: Fish 341 - 350.....	48

C.C.U.G. (A) - INFORMATION

MAIN MEETING

The Main Meeting is usually held on the 1st Tuesday of the Month at the Bardon Professional Development Centre, 390 Simpsons Road, Bardon, starting at 8 pm.
Library: 7pm - 8pm & 9pm - 9.30pm.
Sales: 7pm - 8pm.

Entrance through the Centre's Car-park in Carwoola Street. Parking is not allowed in Centre's grounds!

The dates for upcoming meetings are

Tuesday, 3rd July, at 8pm.
Tuesday, 7th August, at 8pm.
Tuesday, 4th September, at 8pm.

Details of this month's topic can be found in the relevant section of this newsletter.

WORKSHOP MEETING

Amiga Workshop is held on Sunday 8th of July (1pm - 4pm) in the Ithaca RSL Hall, cnr. Nash and Elizabeth St, Rosalie.

Bring your current membership card, as this workshop is strictly for members only! (i.e. no friends or relatives.)

Disk & Accessory Sales: 1pm - 3pm
Bring your own Amiga equipment.

At this meeting our full range of Public Domain Disks are available for copying. We also have a HELP support group for beginners.

For more information ring 300 3477.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

CANNON HILL: Last Saturday of the month (Noon - 12pm) in the Cannon Hill State School. Ph. Don Friswell - 343 1735 a.h.

KINGSTON: 2nd Saturday of the month (1pm - 12pm) in the Kingston High School. Phone Alan Hill - 290 0264 a.h.

PINE RIVERS: 1st Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Strathpine State High School. Ph. Barry Bean - 269 7390 a.h.

REDCLIFFE: 3rd Sunday of the month (1pm - 5pm) in the Masonic Hall, Sutton St. Ph. Dennis Underwood - 266 8991 a.h.

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

WINDSOR: 2nd Tuesday of the month (7.30pm) at 70 Swan Tce, Windsor. Ph. Rod Watson - 857 6131 a.h.

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

GOODS & SERVICES

(At Main Meeting or by Mail)

AMIGA SPECIFIC:

Public Domain Disks 3½" (Amiga - Mail Order Only): \$5.00 ea (+\$2.00 P & P for up to 5 Disks)
Commercial Library Catalogue Disk: \$4.00 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

5¼" Blank Disks: \$9.00 per 10 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

3½" Disks: \$25.00 per 10 (RPS brand) or \$15.00 per 10 (Mark II) (+ \$2.00 P & P)

3½" Disk Boxes (80 disks): \$20.00 (+ \$5.00 P & P)

3½" Disk Labels (68x68mm) 4 sheets (= 48 labels): \$1.00 (+ \$2.00 P&P)

A500 Dust Covers: \$16.00 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

Amiga Beginners Guide: \$3.00

Amiga Dos Summary: \$3.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P, either item)

C64/128 SPECIFIC:

Public Domain Disks (C-64): \$3.00 ea (+ \$2.00 P & P up to 5 Disks)

Public Dom. Cassette Tapes (C-64): \$2.00 ea (+ \$1.00 P & P Per Order)

Commercial Library Catalogue Disk: \$3.00 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

5¼" Blank Disks: \$9.00 per 10 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

1541 'Drive & Disks Testing' Disk: \$2.00 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

1541 Drive Dust Covers: \$10.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

Disk Notchers: \$8.00 (+ \$1.00 P&P)

User Port Plug (Edge Connector): \$8.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

User Port Plug Backshell: \$3.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

User Port to Centronics cable: \$35.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

36-Pin Centronics Male Plug w. Backshell \$10.00 (+\$1.00 P & P)

Public Domain Instruction Book (C64): \$5.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

Starting With Disk Drives : \$2.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

C-128 Mem. Map: \$2.00 (+ \$1.00 P&P)

Macro Assembler Book: \$5.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

64 Sound & Graphics (by G.Perry): \$5.00 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

The Write Stuff (64 Word Processor), with Manual: \$18.00

BB Speller (for Write Stuff): \$12.00

BB Talker (for Write Stuff): \$12.00 (The above 3: each \$3.00 P. & P.)

GENERAL:

Back Issues of CURSOR : \$1.50 each

Address Labels (23 x 89 mm): \$14.00 per 1000 (+ \$2.00 P & P)

Ribbons for MPS-1000, GX/LX-80

Printers: \$7.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

Ribbons for MPS-1200/1250, Citizen 120-D Printers: \$10.00 (+ \$1 P & P)

Ribbons for Riteman C or F Printers: \$12.00 (+ \$1.00 P & P)

MAILING ADDRESS

Please address all mail which is not related to *CURSOR*, including orders to:

C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.
P.O. Box 274
SPRINGWOOD QLD 4127

Cheques to: C.C.U.G. (Q) Inc.

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

Please advise our Secretary and *not* the Editor of *CURSOR*!

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Fees are as follows:

Joining Fee: \$10.00

Annual Membership Fee:

Ordinary* Membership: \$25.00
Country/Associate M'ship: \$15.00
Pensioner Membership: \$15.00
Family/Business M'ship: \$35.00

(* Within the B'ne Metropolitan Telephone District)

Library Fee: \$5.00

LENDING LIBRARY

It is a condition of use of our Book, Magazine & Software Lending Library that materials can only be borrowed for a period of 1 Month. If unable to attend the next meeting, members can either mail the borrowed material to the Group's P.O. Box (see above), or they may leave this material with their nearest Management Committee member (but please ring first!).

By following these simple rules, you assist your fellow members who may want to borrow the books or software which you are returning.

YOUR NEWSLETTER

CURSOR appears 11 times annually and is dependant on members' contributions for its content.

Address all Newsletter Mail (this includes ads for the *Bytes* column) to:

The Editor "CURSOR"
P O Box 384
ASHGROVE QLD 4060

Deadline for the August Issue is:

FRIDAY 29th JUNE!

Short articles (less than a page) and adverts for the *BYTES* column can be submitted in written or printed form, but we prefer to receive your articles on disk.

Please use *minimum* or *no* formatting in your articles. Do *not* indent paragraphs and use a *single* space after a comma, semi-colon or full stop.

If a specific page layout is required, include a printout in the desired format. Disks will be returned promptly and we pay return postage.

C64/128 Specific:

Supply your articles on a (1541) 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " disk in the following format (in order of preference):
SEQ ASCII file, SEQ PET ASCII file, The Write Stuff, SuperScript/EasyScript, PaperClip/PocketWriter files saved with the SEQ save option, SpeedScript files saved with the SS converter program, option 2, (SEQ Standard ASCII file).

Sorry, but we are unable to read or convert 1571 formatted disks, nor are we able to convert GeoWrite, FontMaster or Bank Street Writer Files.

AMIGA Specific:

Supply your articles on 3½" disk in the form of an ASCII file or a WordPerfect file with *minimum* formatting.

Alternatively, if you own a modem, you can upload articles, news, gossip, etc. to the Group's BBS (Ph.808 7694 - CURSOR File Area)

Commercial Advertising

Rate is \$30.00 per full page, per issue. This rate is for A-5 size camera-ready copy only.

Production Credits

WordPerfect 4.1.11 - PageStream 1.8
The 64 Emulator II - GP Term -
Easy Ledgers - Epson SQ-850 Printer

Opinions expressed in CURSOR are those of the Author(s), and thus not necessarily those of the C.C.U.G.(QLD) Inc. or the Editor.

Permission for reprinting by other Commodore & Amiga Computer Users Groups is granted, *provided* that both the source and author are acknowledged.

BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM: (07) 8087694

SYSOP:

Graeme Darroch - Ph. 209 1999
ASSISTANT SYSOP - AMIGA:
Tom Yallowley - Ph. 251 5845
ASSISTANT SYSOP - C64/128:
Craig Rawlins - Ph. 379 8957

Our BBS is part of the Fido Network (Node No. 3: 640/304), and can be accessed by our members at 300, 1200/75, 1200, 2400 bps and 9600 bps, using 8 data bits, 1 stop bit and no parity.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT:

Greg Perry - Ph. 366 3295

SECRETARY:

Mike Williams - Ph. 209 9084

TREASURER:

John Van Staveren - Ph. 372 3651

CHIEF LIBRARIAN:

Phil Guerny - Ph. 378 9756

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Ralph De Vries - Ph. 300 3477

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Steve Hovelroud (N.S)- Ph. 298 5128

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AMIGA COORDINATOR:

Robert Googe - Ph. 288 8863

AMIGA GURU:

Steve McNamee - Ph. 260 6327

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C64/128 PUBL. DOM. DISKS AND TAPES:

Doug Maclurkin - Ph. 358 4442

AMIGA DISKS & ACCESSORIES:

Ken Clem - Ph. 287 3698

AMIGA PUBLIC DOMAIN DISKS:

Steve Hovelroud - Ph. 298 5128

NOTE: Copying of COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE is an ILLEGAL activity and is NOT ALLOWED at our Meetings!

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EDITOR'S NOTES

IN SEARCH OF QUALITY

Have you ever walked into a strange room with the telly on, and felt the urge to 'fiddle' with the controls to improve the picture? I often have, but I've never actually had the nerve to do it!

I suppose it all goes back to my background in photography. Good photographs require certain criteria of sharpness, contrast and (in the case of colour photography) colour balance- and saturation. Hence, when I see a TV picture which doesn't meet these criteria, I want to have a go at the controls to see if a better picture can be obtained.

My first Commodore computer, the PET 4016, had no problems at all with picture quality. It offered one colour (green) on a black background and the characters were sharp! As for graphics, what were they?

I bypassed the VIC-20 with its 22 characters per line and obtained a C-64 next. All of a sudden I had colour, but where had the sharpness gone? Besides, the colours often used to 'bleed' from one into another which made it worse. With the arrival of the first Commodore colour monitors I rushed out and bought one - I now had a sharper picture (still not real sharp yet) and the colour bleeding was considerably reduced. All in all I was pleased with my investment.

Next came the C-128 which had an 80 column mode and, when used with a colour monitor, offered a total of 16 colours (actually only 8 in two densities), which were quite sharp.

Programming colour graphics in this mode was not easy, hence most of us fell back on the 40 column (C-64) mode, which of course meant 'clunky' graphics. Yet, despite it's limitations, some remarkable things were achieved in this mode by clever programmers and artists.

With the arrival of the Amiga we had all of a sudden four different graphics screens ranging from 320 x 256 to 640 x 512 pixels. In this latter mode we are at present restricted to using 16 colours, but a full size 16 colour picture can still be as large as 128 K! In addition we have the HAM mode which will allow us to have 4096 colours on the screen, but at the expense of (perceived) sharpness. Now we have the capability of digitising photographs, slides and television images, but despite considerable advances in these techniques, we are a long way from 'photographic' quality as regards sharpness, resolution and colour saturation. In part the blame can be laid at the operators of this equipment, because they lack fundamental photographic skills, but even with these skills in place we have a long way to go yet.

It's obvious that we need higher screen resolutions and the ability to use an unlimited range of colours, and that means RAM and more RAM. It will be some years yet, but eventually we should be able to create on our computers pictures of a quality which will rival photographically produced pictures. I just hope that I'll be around then to enjoy them!

Ralph De Vries

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held in our Clubrooms at the Bardon Prof. Development Centre,
390 Simpsons Road, Bardon on Tuesday 7th August 1990 at 8 pm.

Following are some excerpts from the Articles of Association:
The business to be transacted at every Annual General Meeting shall be:

- (a) the receiving of the Management Committee report and the statement of income and expenditure, assets and liabilities and mortgages, charges and securities affecting the property of the Association for the preceding financial year;
- (b) the receiving of the auditor's report upon the books and accounts for the preceding financial year;
- (c) the election of members of the Management Committee; and
- (d) the appointment of an auditor

MEMBERSHIP/OF/MANAGEMENT/COMMITTEE

(1) The Management Committee of the Association shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, all of whom shall be members of the Association, and such number of other members as the members of the Association at any general meeting may from time to time elect or appoint.

(2) At the annual general meeting of the Association, all the members of the Management Committee for the time being shall retire from office, but shall be eligible upon nomination for re-election.

(3) The election of officers and other members of the Management Committee shall take place in the following manner:-

- (a) Any two members of the Association shall be at liberty to nominate any other member to serve as an officer or other member of the Management Committee;
- (b) The nomination, which shall be in writing and signed by the member and his proposer and seconder, shall be lodged with the secretary

at least fourteen days before the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place;.

VOTING

- (4) (a) every ordinary, country, student, pensioner, or life member present shall be entitled to one vote.
- (b) every family member present shall be entitled to a maximum of two votes.
- (c) every business member present shall be entitled to a maximum of two votes.
- (d) associate and honorary members shall not be entitled to a vote.
- (5) voting shall be by a show of hands or a division of the members.
- (6) a member may vote in person or by proxy or attorney...

Following is a precis of the above in plain English:

After the reading of the President's- and Treasurer's reports there will be an election of officers for positions on the Management Committee.

These positions are:

- President - Secretary - Treasurer
- Sub-Group Coordinator (2) - Chief Librarian - Newsletter Editor

On the reverse side of this page you will find a nomination form, to be signed by the member and his proposer and seconder (all to be financial members). This form has to be in the possession of the secretary no later than Monday 23rd July 1990.

You will also find on the same page a proxy form to be used by members who are unable to attend but still would like to make their vote count at the Annual General Meeting.

COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.
P.O. Box 274 - Springwood - Q'ld - 4127

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 7th AUGUST 1990
Election of Management Committee Members for 1990 - 1991

NOMINATION FORM

POSITIONS VACANT:

PRESIDENT - SECRETARY - TREASURER
SUB-GROUP COORDINATORS (N. & S.) - CHIEF LIBRARIAN - NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I hereby nominate
for the position of
Proposed by:
Seconded by:
Signature of Nominee:

This form to be in the possession of the Secretary no later than Monday
23rd July 1990.

===== < Separate Here
Separate Here > =====

PROXY FORM

COMMODORE COMPUTER USERS GROUP (QLD) INC.

I, of
being a member of the above named association,

hereby appoint of

or failing him, of
as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the
Association, to be held on the 7th day of August 1990, and at any
adjournment thereof.

Signed this day of 1990

Signature:

This form is to be used *in favour of / *against the resolution.

*Strike out whichever is not desired.
(Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy may vote as he thinks fit.)

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- See Us for Efficient and Courteous Service
- Fast Turnaround

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C-64 PCB EXCHANGE - \$99.00
A500 PCB EXCHANGE - \$129.00
C-64 KEYBOARD EXCHANGE - \$50.00

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Reconditioned Units - Please Ring.

Special Rates for Users Group Members!

LIBRARY NEWS

by Phil Guernsey

"FAULTY" PROGRAMS

Back when we only had C64/128 software in the library, we used to receive one or two returns every month with the message "This does not load!". We didn't have much choice but to take the item out of circulation for the next month, take it home and try it out on our club's C128D. Almost always the program WOULD load! Of course this machine had a well-aligned drive and 1571 type drives stay in alignment longer than 1541 types.

Doreen Horne, one half of our previous librarian team, used to tell me the 128D "fixed" the disks. I can imagine how this seemed to be the case even if I can't see technically quite how this happened (but then I don't believe in channelers, spoon benders or other such things either).

We still receive C64/128 disks each month this way and, mostly, I can not find anything wrong with them.

Now we are also receiving Amiga disks with "This doesn't load!" messages. Again, I take them home and try them on my own Amiga and, without exception so far, they do give a disk icon, they do open a window and they do load the program. Perhaps this is due to my own system being new and having drives which are fortuitously in good alignment. This still means that I have to take the package out of circulation. In future, if this happens to a major Amiga package, I might ask the next potential borrower if they want to do the testing themselves and risk having a bad disk on their hands for a

month. At least the program will not just be sitting around my place. And it will probably be OK anyway.

The incidence of truly damaged C64/128 disks is on the increase. Some of these programs have been borrowed 20-30 times over a few years and the disk(s) as well as the packaging are showing wear. I again ask that you take special care of both. I DO NOT enjoy playing around with new envelopes, sticky tape, marking pens and library card pockets making new packages - it takes ages. Our copy of JET 2.0 for the C64 came back with a brown smudge over part of the disk surface. It doesn't load, even on our magic 1571. I've sent the replacement request card plus \$10 to the USA, but I don't know how long it will be before that comes back.

AMIGA NEWS

An update to the CygnusEd Professional text editor has been received, complete with an entirely new 232-page manual (compare 106 pages in the old version), which brings it to Version 2. The highlights listing of release 2 extends over two pages but includes unlimited undo/redo (given enough memory you can undo everything since the editing session started) and improved ARExx capability including allowing ARExx-capable compilers/assemblers to operate directly from the source code in memory allowing for "a blazingly fast development environment".

The new book for the month, with an accompanying disk, is Amiga C for Advanced Programmers, published by

Abacus. If you are trying to program the Amiga in C through Intuition to open screens, open windows and use gadgets and requesters, you could do much worse than try this book and disk. It could at least save you a lot of typing and syntax errors if you merged into your program all the calling templates for the library functions from the disk. By way of learning the system, the book describes the development of a text editor program in detail and the disk contains the complete source code for all six versions discussed.

More new software has been ordered. Details after it arrives.

C64/128 NEWS

The BASIC 8 package gives C128 owners with 80-column colour monitors a multi-colour hi-resolution graphics language with some powerful commands including 3D graphics effects. We have the original version but it has been republished by Free Spirit Software in the US and we have bought it along with another box called The Basic 8 Toolkit and a book How to Get the Most out of Basic 8 with two accompanying disks. They say this Basic 8 has been enhanced and upgraded - I hope they mean the code because I can see only a minor addition or two to the manual. The toolkit is a program that gives you a "point and click" system to create custom pointers, fonts, patterns and icons along with converting Print Shop graphics into Basic 8 files. The "book" (stapled duplicated sheets) is 80 pages long and does a much better job of explaining how to program in Basic 8 than the manual does. So have fun and @walrus to you! (If you're puzzled, all Basic 8 programs must start with the line @walrus. The rest is easy!)

SYSRES has been around since PET days but it has become cheaper lately and we have bought a copy. It describes itself accurately as the ultimate resident program manipulation system. The manual takes over 100 pages to describe all the DOS support extensions, extended editor commands and machine language monitor instructions. Programmers probably already have the equivalent of all the 33 new command words in SYSRES and the 11 DOS support commands in one utility or another, but here they are all together and in memory in such a way that only 256 bytes are lost from normal BASIC RAM. It also is compatible with BASIC extension cartridges that follow Commodore's rules and it inserts the extra commands into its own syntax table for listings and programmed keys. One unusual extension is the EXEC command which reads a file containing a series of commands which are executed as if typed at the keyboard. A program run under exec can have all its input requests entered from a file. Many utilities provide a TRACE command for the C64 but SYSRES goes further by opening two windows on the screen, one displays the values of variables as the program runs while the other displays the last five lines to have been executed. It will also dump to the printer a listing of the program as it runs with the values of any changed variables added after each line. Powerful debugging.

Now another program only for C128 owners. Colorez 128 is a set of utilities that transform 40-column graphic pictures to 16-colour 80-column RGB pictures that can be saved as BASIC 8 files or in a compressed form. The routines are machine language programs called with SYS commands so they are compatible with any type of basic extension or compiler. These programs are copyright but two versions of a "run

time module" are included which are freely distributable and allow you to sell/give away programs including transferred 80-column graphics.

A member sold us his copy of LASER GENIUS which is a welcome addition to the C64 library. Its "the complete machine code development system" with several parts. The assembler has lots of directives (including unusual ones for the C64 like .BLOCK to reserve a space in memory, .DBYTE to automatically generate two-byte constants in high/low byte order) and macro definitions. An editor is resident with the assembler and assembly is said to be at the rate of 20,000 lines per minute. There are lots of directives to support tidy printer listings and a set of DOS support commands. The disassembler is symbolic which means it uses your symbol names defined in the source for constants. A special feature of LASER GENIUS is its intelligent debugger, called "The Analyser", which is rare in C64 machine language development (unique maybe). This part of the system uses a small subset of the FORTH language to define breakpoints that cause a program trace to stop when a particular condition occurs which can be a state of the flags, values of registers, the contents of memory and if memory was written to or read from. The program instructions executed up to that point can be displayed with a TRACE command. So you can halt your program if the Y register contains 3 or if screen memory location \$0404 has just been written to and then see what happened to get there. If you can read the manual, written without any consideration for those new to machine language, and on a bright non-photocopyable orange background, then it should be very useful for constructing ML programs.

Some interesting new stuff. See you at Bardon or Rosalie.

-ooOoo-

BYTES

FOR SALE

Commodore 4040 Dual Disk Drive,
Commodore 1001 Disk Drive, IEEE
INTERFACE. \$150.00 for the lot.

Contact Peter Martin on
(07) 290 1537 (a.h.)

WANTED

I need worn out Ribbon Cartridges for the Star NX10 printer. Ribbon condition not important, but cartridge condition has to be good.

Offers to Fred Hawley, 35 Currawong Street, Bathurst NSW 2795, or Phone (063) 318 312

BYTES are computer related
adverts, which are free
to all financial members
of the C.C.U.G.(Q.) Inc.

MAIL BOX

I am rewriting this from B.BUG the Busy-Bee User Group Newsletter of The Write Stuff Group in the States. I thought the comments in these features may prove to be of interest to your many readers:

DEAD OR DYING??

By James Knauss

Just received Vol. 3, No 2, and your Editor's Column just about sums up the state of the 8 bit Commodore world. It is running on empty and just about to pass into the history books. As I have stated before, I use IBMers, but I really do like my loaded C-128 system. I make money with it, but facts are facts.

And the facts are that the C-64/128 and all the parts and add-ons from Commodore are out of production. The C-64 is a game machine and lasted longer than it should have.

Commodore never wanted to build and sell the 128D in the States; they wanted to upgrade C64 owners to the Amiga. But the lack of software and cost stopped that. In fact, all 8 bit computers are gone; Apple has given up, and the others never were in it to start with. The world is now Intel 286/386 or Apple Macs, and Apple is having problems. In short, Commodore 8 bit owners have joined the TI, PC jr., early Tandy, etc. Groups are doing rear guard actions.

My guess is that as soon as whatever C-64/128 products that are in the market stream are gone (would guess mid-year), such magazines as RUN will go. They will have to go; ads will be gone. Some software houses (Time-Works, Berkeley Softworks, etc.) are selling out direct

at very low prices. If you desire to keep and use a C-64/128, buy the software now! In short, when a computer system starts to go, time goes FAST. Remember CP/M? And how fast it left the scene. I put out a Kaypro 10 (working) for trash pick-up a couple of years ago. I did not want it and could not find anybody that did.

A number of present Commodore 8 bit owners will give up on working machines because of copy protected software that has gone bad and the software company has gone. Digital Solutions, Inc. and the pocket Series will lead this song and dance.

I have felt in the past, and still feel, that a loaded C-128 system with 1989/90 software, such as TWS, IS an excellent home, small business machine. But copy protection on productive software prevented good low-cost hard drives from being developed, and this spelled the end of the system.

With the general shakeout in the computer industry, Commodore most likely too will not make it. The Amiga is the only game they have. It is of interest, but due to the normal Commodore software support, little is around. Commodore profits over the last six months are off 80% or so and sales are down 18%.

The fat lady has not gotten up to sing yet, but she will this year. Then Commodore user groups will become part(s) and copy protection breaking software networks. And I will buy a 386 machine and keep the C-128D around as long as it will work and years from now talk about what a good machine it was for the time and how the company could not market dollar bills for six bits and get it to work.

Busy Bee Editorial comments: *I am printing this pessimistic letter for several good reasons. One is that it contains some good advice (buy software NOW), but the main reason is that I think there's a lot of truth in here, much as I hate to admit it. I myself have given up "pushing" the C-64/128. I'm still engaged in trying to get schools (and individuals) to look at the wonders of the Amiga can do and at such a low price, especially the new educational prices, which makes me want to cry when I compare them to my investment! However, unless C.B.M. does some decent advertising, really pushing not only the native Amiga capabilities, but the ability to run MS-DOS and Mac programs as well, I'm afraid Knauss is right about this machine, too. There is lots of good software, but there is very little good stuff for education, and my impression is that business related software is more or less in the same shape as C-64 offerings. The really good stuff is heavily in the realm of video production, graphics arts, and such.*

But, back to the C-64/128. With over 8 million machines out there (a far greater number than that of any of Knauss's examples of forgotten machines), they aren't going to disappear off the face of the earth immediately. My prediction is that local user groups will wither and die fast, but groups like B-BUG will flourish with renewed vigor as the active market dies. B-BUG has the great advantage of having the Busy Bee to support and improve the product that links us together.

(End of quote)

Fred Hawley - Bathurst

Thanks for your BB letter, Fred.

Some days previously I had penned my own comments on the C-64 scene (see 8 Bits & Pieces), and this letter to some extent confirms my own feelings.

With one of the BB editorial comments I disagree strongly though, when they say that *local C64 users group will wither and die rapidly, but B-Bug will go on.*

Local Users Groups will wither and die if the active C64 members become disillusioned (or change to different types of computers, which is more likely), but to say that B-Bug will survive is utter nonsense of course - when Users Groups disappear, B-Bug will disappear because they are dependant on users groups for their customers.

I totally agree with their comments on software though; if you cannot afford to upgrade to a more powerful computer system, buy software NOW, because with the imminent demise of C64 computers, retailers will stop stocking C64 software very quickly indeed - those are the realities of the market place.

However, if you can afford to upgrade to a more powerful computer system, do it NOW as well! Get what you can for your 8 bit equipment while it still has some value, and buy yourself a system which is supported by the market place, be it MS-DOS (AT or 386 based - XT is dead), Amiga or Macintosh.

I can assure you that, when in a couple of years the Amiga is in its death throes (yes, it will happen!), I'll be getting rid of my unit quick smartly; that's one lesson I've learnt during nine years of computer ownership.

Editor

3 BITS & PIECES

END OF AN ERA

Elsewhere you'll find an article by Denis Wright, entitled *Requiem for an old friend*. This is not only the end of Denis's involvement with the C64, but it also means that, as far as I'm concerned, I've lost one of the most consistent, informative and entertaining contributors to the C64 section of our newsletter.

On behalf of all our C64 members, I would like to thank Denis sincerely for that great string of articles which kept on coming during the last four or five years, with a final one to come in next month's *Cursor*.

Now, if only we could persuade Denis to get hold of an Amiga instead of all those IBMs and Macs, then we could look forward to a lot more contributions from Armidale...

END OF AN ERA - II

I have just seen the May '90 issue of both *Run* and *Compute's Gazette* and can only say that I was shocked. Most of the *Gazette* is now printed on some superior form of toilet paper which is not suitable for colour reproduction and poor old *Run* is down to 48 pages. It's pretty obvious that the end of these two publications is not far off, because advertising support and contributions are drying up.

Some days ago I saw a woman take delivery in a K-Mart store of a new C64 outfit, and asked myself if it's morally defensible to go on selling computers for which support is shrinking rapidly. Both Commodore and Apple have indicated that they will go on selling C64s and Apples, but, if technical literature and software supplies are dis-

appearing, it's only a matter of time before the computers will disappear as well.

Once that situation has been reached, it's up to Users Groups to carry on with support for these computers. Fortunately we have a first rate book- magazine- and software library for the C64, which means that we will be able to carry on for quite some time yet, *provided* that a sufficient amount of C64 owners can be found to lecture and demonstrate to newcomers. However, I fear that we may well see a repeat performance of the PET and VIC-20 saga, which both died off very quickly with the release of the C64. It's up to the existing C64 members to prove me wrong.

Editor

MAY MEETING

Ian Manion gave our members a very interesting demonstration of the *Music Shop* program, and afterwards he showed members his home made range of hardware, which included analogue joysticks and a variety of 'foreign' keyboards which Ian has managed to interface with the C-64.

JULY MEETING

Richard Dalziel, in conjunction with Brian Starkoff, will demonstrate several aspects of *GEOS* at this meeting.

HELP NEEDED

Fred Hawley, our Bathurst member, owns a Trilogic Expert Interface Cartridge, and Fred would like to know if this cartridge is compatible with the Xetec Super Graphics Gold Interface.

If any of our members out there has the answer to this question your Editor would like to hear from you, or you could drop Fred Hawley a line; his address is 35 Currawong Street, Bathurst NSW 2795.

RESET BUTTONS

A reset button is an almost essential addition to a basic C-64. It involves a minor hardware modification, which over the years, competent volunteers from among our members have carried out for their fellow members. At present, the fitting of reset buttons, and other minor modifications such as drive device-change switches, are being carried out at the Kingston Subgroup. For those who may believe that Kingston is far enough away to be on another planet, Tom Joslyn has volunteered to fit reset buttons at the Sherwood Subgroup. (Phone: 379 7637)

{NOTE: these modifications are done at your own risk! The C.C.U.G.(Q.) Inc. accepts no responsibility for any mishap to equipment! Ed.}

1571 ROM UPGRADE

Those 128 users with older 1571s or 128Ds may find that they have a 1571 ROM that (among other deficiencies) takes an interminable time to bring up a directory after a new disk is inserted. A revision 5 ROM upgrade has been around for several years, but some users avoided upgrading because their favourite disk copier would not work with the new ROM. (The current preferred general purpose disk copier, Marauder, works with the ROM upgrade.)

I recently spoke to several country members with 128s who were unaware of the upgrade. I have been told that Commodore no longer supply the upgrade ROM, but Doug Maclurkin,

our Disk Librarian, has an image of the ROM and can advise on how to upgrade.

C FOR 64?

Angus Norrie has proposed that we try to initiate a workshop or classes on the C language. (Angus is using and C-Power with his C-64). There are obvious merits in providing opportunities for our members to learn a computer language besides BASIC, if we can manage it; and C seems to have a hegemony in the computer bookshops and magazines. (I will leave an enumeration of proper merits of C to Angus, who is much more competent to do so.)

At the C-64 demo at the next Main Meeting, we will set some time aside to discuss the possibilities. It is no trouble to set up facilities, but it may be more difficult to find enough interested members to sustain such a project.

THE WRITE STUFF

We have now received our stocks of both the C-64 and C-128 versions of *The Write Stuff*, as well as the Speller program for these versions. Details of the costing of the 64 version can be found on page 3 of this newsletter. Prices for the 128 versions are as follows:

The Write Stuff C-128: \$30.00

Speller for the above: \$12.00

Postage and Packing: \$3.00 for the two items, making a grand total of \$45.00.

Would those C-128 owners, who have advised us that they wish to purchase these items, send their cheque to C.C.U.G.(Q.) Inc., P O Box 274, SPRINGWOOD QLD 4127.

QUICK BROWN BOX

We have been advised by the US Distributors that the 64 K version of the *Quick Brown Box* will cost us apr. US\$95. Add to this currency conversion as well as postage (and possibly customs charges) and we

are looking at a local price somewhere between \$130 to \$140.

If you are still interested, I'd like to hear from you.

Leigh Winsor

-ooOoo-

HELP! COLUMN

This is the *HELP!* column for users of C-64, C-128 and other 8-Bit computers. If you would like to share your experience in the fields of programming, software, hardware etc. with your fellow members, submit your name with your area of expertise to the editor. Remember: the more names, the more knowledge can be disseminated amongst our members.

NAME	Help offered with:	PHONE NUMBER
Terry Baade	Contact for M'borough/Hervey Bay Members	071 215 059
Kerry De Baar	Basic, Assembly Language	379 5617
Eddie Brook	Amateur Radio Fax & Weather Programs	349 4394
Cor Geels	SuperScript, WriteStuff, PaperClip, GEOS	263 2839
Cor Geels	C-64 Newcomers, Printers & Interfacing	263 2839
Ross Horn	CP/M Family Tree Program (P.A.T.)	395 0618
Matthew James	Basic, Logo, GEOS, WriteStuff, Games Tips	300 5443
Ron Long	SuperScript, Label Maker, Mailing Lists	075 357 139
Ivor Laggan	GEOS	273 4212
Doug MacLurkin	MicroSwift Spreadsheet, Basic	358 4442
Peter Meharg	Basic, Machine Language	376 1621
Angus Norrie	Simon's Basic	371 2945
Vic Mobbs	Contact for Sunshine Coast Members	071 941 330
Vic Mobbs	Superscript/Superbase 128	071 941 330
George Nelson	EasyScript, HAM Radio	848 2456
Craig Rawlins	Pascal, C, Machine Language, Modula-2	379 8957
Ron Rich	H'ware Interfacing for Amat. Radio Prgms	355 2623
Greg Shea	C-64 Hardware Modifications etc., Basic	345 2799
Fred Turnidge	Family Roots (genealogy), Write Stuff	063 37 1124
Denis Wright	Easy/SuperScript, CBM & Epson Printers	067 751 793
Denis Wright	C64 <---> Non-Commodore File Transfer	067 751 793

Please be considerate - these are after hours numbers, so only ring our members between the hours of 6pm and 9pm during week nights. Thank you!

REQUIEM FOR AN OLD FRIEND

by Denis Wright

Well, the old C-64 has sat idle for nearly two months - the longest break from service it has had since 1985. It still goes well and still performs all its functions, but ... she's virtually retired. Now and again the kids dig out some of the old classic games and blow the cobwebs out of the disk drive, but for all practical purposes, her days of pounded keyboard and blazing joystick are over. When I think of the hours, days - years even! - I spent learning programs, modifying them to suit, creating shonky basic routines that did the job, it's not something a bloke gives up without some sort of mental struggle. So, why's it happened?

Consider. Five years ago, my C-64 computer system (keyboard, drive, monitor and printer, etc.) cost \$1300. Given the inflation rate, that is probably equivalent to about \$2000 these days - probably more. And what can you buy with \$2000 now? The kid down the road bought for that price a brand new machine with a meg of RAM, 20 mb hard drive, a 5¼" drive AND a 3½" 9drive that will format high density disks to 1.44 megs, not to mention oodles of software. I bought for under \$1000 a few months ago a portable computer with full-sized keyboard, 640 K of RAM, IBM compatible, twin 3½" drives, and inbuilt modem AND a monitor. Round \$2000 would buy plenty of computing power in an Amiga.

Fact is, once you start using powerful machines, you just can't go back. You get spoilt. It's as simple as that. If you want to stick with your C-64, then never find out what a more powerful computer can

do. Once you get used to your computer acting as a genuine workbench or desktop - i.e., an integrated office system of word processor, desktop publisher, calculator, diary, clock, telephone, mailer, not to mention graphics or entertainment centre, then you are hooked. You come to expect all these facilities to be available immediately, and if they're not, you champ at the bit. It's certainly expecting a bit much of the old C64 to compete.

I owe a huge debt to the C-64 and always will. It deserves respect and affection, even admiration. The tricks I learnt on it have served well when trying to understand problems that afflict its smarter, flashier, sleeker, newer sisters.

The fact is that 64 k - the sort of memory you now find in a hand-held programmable calculator - limits the C-64 to one task at a time; a statement that will hardly appear to the Amiga buffs as an earth shattering revelation. You want word processing on the C-64? OK, you do that, one or (if you're lucky) two documents open, but if you want a spreadsheet or graphics program on at the same time, or want to transport data between them, or in the middle of it all use a modem or play a game of yahrtzee or call up a diary or calendar, it's a case of close it down, open it up, and so ad infinitum. Sure, GEOS made a brave attempt - it's a remarkable feat of programming, considering the sluggish performance of the 1541 drive and the matchbox of memory it had to move things around in - but recent advances have left the old lady high and dry.

And to cap it all, the new breeds of smart machines are talking to

each other in a way that seemed a dream before. I was delighted when I could use the RS 232 interface to transfer data between a C-64 and the Mac. I was even more pleased when I could transfer data from IBM to mainframe and download to Mac via modem. But now, an even greater miracle is possible. I can create files on the IBM at home and store them on a 3½" disk, and simply place that disk in a Mac drive using a file exchange program and voila! the Mac can read the disk directly, translate the files and transfer them for immediate use to Mac format.

Once again, this wizardry will not be news to many Amiga owners, for Amiga disks can likewise be read to MS-DOS format (and thence, if required to Mac and vice versa) with a suitable file transfer program and drive. But this is the real crunch point. When the powerful computers - Amigas, IBMs and Macs - with all the advantages of speed in processing and vast quantities of RAM are actually capable of reading each other's data disks in this way, how can the grand old lady of 64,000 bytes compete? She can't, and there's no point in trying these days. Had Commodore given her a fast disk drive and allowed for RAM expansion, she might have had a stay of execution, but, inevitably, the axe has fallen or is on its way. Nothing would delight the computer manufacturers more than see 6 or 7 million C-64s on some great garbage tip in the sky, their former owners lining up to buy the new generation of machines. All around the world, C-64s are being packed up in boxes and headed for garage sales, to be sold at a tenth of the price for which they were bought.

So what can the present generation of computers do, that you are missing out with on the C-64? I'm not

talking about something as exotic as the NeXT, nor some great networked system; I mean what are in homes and offices right now being used as personal computers. The key to it all is RAM and speed in processing. Oodles and oodles of it. Without them, there's little point in multi-tasking, and that's what's it about these days. Flexibility.

OK, multi-tasking has been around for yonks, but not the way you can do it in 1990. Multi-tasking has always depended for its effectiveness on RAM capability. Amigas and other popular computers can easily have enough computing power and speed to place in memory several large programs and a host of desk accessories, all instantly available. The development of Virtual Memory allows some computers to be fooled into thinking hard disk space is RAM, giving even more megabytes than Ralph's magnificent 5 mb. Hard disks can store up to a gigabyte of data. That's the equivalent of 6000 C-64 floppies!

So what's the moral of this story? There's not one really. It's a requiem for my faithful old friend, mostly - which, incidentally, has never once gone on the blink in all that time. If my fancy MS-DOS machine packs it in suddenly, I will still have a computer that can do the job. I will curse at the disk drive and swear at the heaviness of the keys but ... the old girl will always produce the goods. And anyway, I can still be tempted to load up that greatest of all old shoot-em-ups, *Raid on Bungling Bay*, and fail, yet again, to make it to the final level!

So don't be tempted, unless the price is very good and you are completely in love with the new model, to get rid of the C-64. Some day, you'll regret it. And your kids will never forgive you.

C-64 MACHINE LANGUAGE - Part 6

by Will Erdmann

In my sixth article I would like to point out some features in the design of a long program. As you can see I have broken the program up into 3 sections. These are the setup, sprite movement and the delay loop..

SETUP

```

1000 A9 93   LDA #$93
1002 20 D2 FF JSR $FFD2
1005 A2 00   LDX #$00
1007 BD 00 0F LDA $0F00,X
100A 9D 00 30 STA $3000,X
100D E8     INX
100E D0 F7   BNE $1007
1010 A2 00   LDX #$00
1012 A9 C0   LDA #$C0
1014 9D F8 07 STA $07F8,X
1017 E8     INX
1018 E0 08   CPX #$08
101A D0 F8   BNE $1014
101C A2 00   LDX #$00
101E BD 50 0F LDA $0F50,X
1021 9D 00 D0 STA $D000,X
1024 E8     INX
1025 E0 10   CPX #$10
1027 D0 F5   BNE $101E
1029 A9 08   LDA #$08
102B BD 2C D0 STA $D02C
102E A9 3F   LDA #$3F
1030 BD 17 D0 STA $D017
1033 A9 5F   LDA #$5F
1035 BD 1D D0 STA $D01D
1038 A9 FF   LDA #$FF
103A BD 15 D0 STA $D015
    
```

After you have typed in the above load "Balloon" from P.D #47 type T 3000,3040,0F00 press RETURN and copy the following hex dump at the address indicated:-

```

.:0F50 25 35 78 35 C8 35 FF 35
.:0F58 25 8B 78 8B C8 8B A0 D0
    
```

Now type G 1000 to run the program you have copied before from 1000 to 103A. This should display eight balloons of various shapes, colours and sizes on the screen.

Because A is stored in the following way-

```

LDX #$00
LDA $0F50,X
    
```

```

STA $D000,X
INX
CPX #$10
BNE $101E
    
```

the 16 numbers transferred from 0F50 are stored at 16 locations starting from D000 - D00F. Thus the sprites are given their precise horizontal and vertical positions. lines 101C - 1027

You will have noticed earlier in lines 1010 - 101A because C0 is stored in the following manner-:

```

LDX #$00
LDA #$C0
STA $07F8,X
INX
CPX #$08
BNE $1014
    
```

it is stored from 07F8 to 07FF respectively. Because C0 is stored in eight consecutive sprite pointers when the program is run the computer looks at the numbers stored at 07F8 - 07FF and multiplies them by 64. The result in each instance is 12288 or 3000 in hex (Reread the mid paragraph on page 25 of the April edition to refresh your memory). Therefore the same sprite data is used to make each sprite. This is referred to in books as cloning.

Type M D015 and press RETURN while the balloons are still there. Change the number stored at D015 (FF) to 00. Move the cursor along to the end of the hex dump and press RETURN. The balloons should have disappeared.

Now look at the following table-:

SPRITE No.	Decimal value.	Hexadecimal equivalent.
0	1 h v	01
1	2 h v	02
2	4 h v	04
3	8 h v	08
4	16 h v	10
5	32 h	20
6	64 v	40
7	128	80

With the hex dump at D015 still on the screen do the following exercises for fun and consider carefully what happens-:

1. Change the number 00 you have stored at D015 to 01. What happens when you move the cursor to the end of the hex dump and press RETURN? Does the white balloon appear on the screen?

2. Repeat step 1. Make a note which balloons re-appear and disappear when you store the following numbers into D015-: 03,02,07,04,0C.

Look at the above sprite table and consider the following explanations.

If the correct horizontal & vertical positions are already stored in the correct memory locations and the appropriate number of sprite pointers are enabled the hexadecimal equivalents of each sprite value stored in D015 determine which sprites are on the screen.

By looking at the sprite table above you will notice that sprite 0 has a decimal value of 1 (column 2) and a hexadecimal equivalent of 01 (column 3). When 01 is stored in D015 sprite 0 will appear on the screen. If you were to put 04 in D015 sprite 2 will come on the screen but sprite 0 the first sprite will be switched off. If you wanted to have sprite 0 and sprite 2 appear on the screen at the same time you would put 05 in D015 because 5 is the sum of the values of sprites 0 and 2. ($1 + 4 = 5$)

The same applies to the sprites of higher values. Sprite 7 has a value of 128 in decimal. Its hexadecimal is 80. When 81 is stored in D015 sprites 0 and 7 will appear on the screen because 81 is hexadecimal equivalent of 129 which is the sum of values of sprites 0 and 7. When 0F is placed in D015 which is equal to 15 in decimal sprite 7 will be switched off sprite 0 will remain on the screen and sprites 1,2 and 3 will appear as well. This is because 15 is equal to the sum of the values of sprites 0,1,2 and 3. ($1 + 2 + 4 + 8 = 15$)

Any number with a decimal value between 0 and 255 stored in sprite colour RAM (D027 - D02E) will determine the colour of that sprite. Because 08 is stored in D02C sprite 5 is orange. This is because the number stored in D02C determines the colour of the sixth sprite (lines 1029 - 102B). On the other hand if 08 was stored in D027 sprite 0 the first sprite would be orange.

If the number stored in D015 determines which sprites are on and which are off so do the hexadecimal equivalents of the sprite values stored in D017 and D01D determine the width and length of each sprite. In some books this is referred to as horizontal and vertical expansion.

From running the above program you will have noticed that the first five sprites are expanded in horizontal and vertical directions. If you look at the table you will see I have put h v after the appropriate value to indicate which sprites these are.

I have marked the next sprite value h to indicate that in the program I have expanded this sprite horizontally (sprite 5) but not vertically. You will notice that I have placed v after 64 which is the value of sprite 6 indicating I have expanded this sprite vertically but not horizontally.

In lines 102E - 1030 the hexadecimal of 63 (3F) is stored in D017. This is because I am expanding sprites 0,1,2,3,5 and 5 horizontally. The sum of their sprite values is 63. ($1 + 2 + 4 + 8 + 16 + 32 = 63$)

In lines 1033 - 1035 the hexadecimal of 95 (5F) is stored in D01D because I am expanding sprites 0,1,2,3,4 and 6 vertically. The sum of their sprite values is 95. ($1 + 2 + 4 + 8 + 16 + 64 = 95$).

Sprite 7, the last of the eight sprites has nothing after its sprite value because this sprite is neither expanded in a horizontal or vertical direction. I have left it alone.

Now type in the following to move the sprites. You should already know how to move the first sprite from the April edition. When you have finished typing this in type the last part of the program underneath it. You probably recognise this as the delay loop and RUN/STOP Key program I have been using since March.

But if you a keen observer you will have realised that it is used in a slightly different way than before. I will talk more about this in my next article.

SPRITE MOVEMENT

```
103D EE 00 D0 INC $D000
1040 CE 01 D0 DEC $D001
1043 EE 02 D0 INC $D002
1046 EE 04 D0 INC $D004
1049 EE 06 D0 INC $D006
104C EE 08 D0 INC $D008
104F EE 0A D0 INC $D00A
1052 EE 0C D0 INC $D00C
1055 EE 0E D0 INC $D00E
1058 20 A0 10 JSR $10A0
105B 4C 3D 10 JMP $103D
105C 00      BRK
```

DELAY LOOP

```
10A0 A0 04      LDY #$04
10A2 A2 00      LDX #$00
10A4 E8         INX
10A5 D0 FD      BNE $10A4
10A7 88         DEY
10A8 D0 FB      BNE $10A2
10AA 20 E1 FF JSR $FFE1
10AD F0 F4      BEQ $10A3
10AF 60         RTS
10B0 00         BRK
```

I had a phone call the other day from Mike Waters of Port Headland Western Australia. *Cursor* really must be read everywhere!

If any of you have any contributions to make or suggestions please write to me or to *Cursor*. I will be happy to hear from you. My address is -:

Will Erdmann, Western Avenue, MONTVILLE QLD 4560
Phone 074-429226 1 pm - 8 pm, Mon. - Wed & 8 am - 1 pm, Sat - Sun.

THE WRITE STUFF

CUSTOMISING THE BB WRITER (DOT MATRIX PRINTERS)

by Doreen Horne

If you have used the USER DEFINED sections of this file to input your own printer commands and then have forgotten what they were the next time you used the program because it was not possible to specify in the file exactly what you had defined, then help is at hand.

Using the program set out below, you can change the words USER DEFINED at the six locations in the file to anything (maximum 12 characters each) that suits your requirements.

The first step is to make a backup of your original WRITE STUFF disk - the one with the BB WRITER on it. Having done this, the following program needs to be typed in (the REMs are just to explain things as we go along):

```

5 PRINT CHR$(14): REM-switch to lower case
10 G$="TWELVE CHARS": REM-G$=the title that you wish to use in place of
USER DEFINED. It MUST have twelve characters between the inverted commas.
Use spaces at the end to pad it out if your title is not long enough.
20 X=3513:D=1: REM-the first area from locations 3513 to 3524
25 POKE X,ASC(MID$(G$,D,1))
30 X=X+1:D=D+1:IF X=3525 THEN GOTO 40
35 GOTO 25
40 H$="Underline " : REM-H$=a possible title to replace the second USER
DEFINED. You may use upper and lower case.
45 X=3530:D=1: REM-the second area from 3530 to 3541
50 POKE X,ASC(MID$(H$,D,1))
55 X=X+1:D=D+1:IF X=3542 THEN GOTO 110
60 GOTO 50
110 SYS57812"BB CUSTOM",8,1:POKE193,0:POKE194,11:POKE174,201:POKE175,21
120 SYS62957
130 END
    
```

Should you wish to use this program again at a later date, save it to any spare disk now. Do not RUN it yet.

From your backup WRITE STUFF disk load "BB CUSTOM",8,1

When loaded scratch BB CUSTOM on the backup WRITE STUFF disk, so that the amendments programmed above can be saved to the backup disk under the same file name (OPEN15,8,15,"SO:BB CUSTOM":CLOSE 15).

Now, with the backup WRITE STUFF disk in your drive, type RUN (Return). When drive activity ceases you should have a new BB CUSTOM file with your defined titles ready for the input of your printer control codes next time you access the BB CUSTOMIZER via the word processor. The above program only changes USER DEFINED in two locations.

There are six in all and they can all be changed to meet your requirements by adapting the program. The locations concerned are:

- 3513 to 3524 (CTRL 1 - g)
- 3530 to 3541 (CTRL 1 - h)
- 3564 to 3575 (CTRL 1 - k)
- 3581 to 3592 (CTRL 1 - o)
- 3598 to 3609 (CTRL 1 - p)
- 3683 to 3694 (CTRL 1 - t)

My phone number is (07) 398 7441 if there is anything in all this that needs clarifying.

-ooOoo-

FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

We would like to draw your attention to the following items which appear in this issue of *CURSOR*:

On pages 7 and 8 you will find the notice for the Annual General Meeting and Election of members of the Management Committee which, as usual, will take place during our August Main Meeting.

Included in this issue you will find a statement of your membership fees. The membership form is self explanatory, but, if you have any queries regarding your membership dues, don't hesitate to ring our Secretary, Mike Williams on (07) 2099084 (after hours!). Note that we have been able to hold membership fees at the same level as last year.

As in previous years, we ask, nay even beg you, to pay your dues by mail, as there's always a huge queue at the July Main Meeting, which makes life very tough for our overworked Secretary and Treasurer. Your cooperation will be very much appreciated.

After a lot of deliberation we decided to include a survey form. In the past, survey forms have never attracted more than a 25% return from our membership; however, we felt that by returning this form with your membership dues, you don't incur any extra postal charges, so we hope for a much higher percentage return than from previous surveys. As well, there's the added incentive that we will refund next year's membership fees to one lucky member who returns (and signs his/her name) the survey by the end of July. Once again, your cooperation will be appreciated.

AMIGANET

Ethernet network for Amigas.

- * Industry standard Ethernet architecture.
- * Networking software included.
- * True peer-peer Amiga Networking - access any screen, hard or floppy drive, serial or parallel printer attached to any Amiga in the network.
- * A500 version - ABS injection moulded case attaches to expansion port of computer.
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PRICING

It really pays to check out prices for software. As an example I quote from some adverts in the May issue of the *Australian Commodore & Amiga Review*:

WORD PERFECT: \$599 (Page 25) - \$469 (P.43) - \$299 (P.46)
 CAN DO: \$179 (P.21) - \$249.95 (P.25) - \$199 (P.39) - \$219 (P.43)
 PAGESTREAM: \$299.95 (P.25) - \$259 (P.39) - \$299 (P.43) - \$249 (P.56)
 SUPERBASE PERSONAL 2: \$199 (P.25) - \$199.95 (P.43) - \$119 (P.56)

I could give you many more instances, but these few give you a fair idea what to expect. However if you do order software by mail or telephone, do check first if you are going to get the latest version, because in most cases your upgrades will have to come from overseas. I have heard of many instances where our members ended up with older (for older read 'buggy') versions of software.

DTP

As newsletter editor I do have an interest in the subject of Desktop Publishing (as if you hadn't noticed!). There are some exciting developments coming our way in the near future, which will put the Amiga in the front rank of DTP computers. (Right now there's some pretty good stuff around, but if we are really honest with ourselves, we have to admit that the Mac and MS-Dos systems still have the edge over an Amiga system.)

If you are interested in this topic and like to find out more about it, try to get hold of a copy of the Feb.90 issue of *Amazing Computing*. You will find some good introduc-

tory articles in this issue, including an explanation of what Postscript is and does, as well as some info on the Agfa Compugraphic Font Technology which is being used by Gold Disk (latest versions of Professional Page and Pagesetter) and (if the pundits are right) is to be incorporated in Version 2.0 of the Amiga Operating System. Speaking about Pro Page and Pagesetter, we seem to have problems in Oz with distributors for these programs and PAL versions appear to be buggy - hence our club copies have not been updated as yet.

We are also about to see the release of another heavyweight program in the DTP stakes, namely *Saxon Publisher*. By all accounts this one is supposed to be more powerful than current DTP programs, so we'll wait and see.

What all this means is that Amiga owners can look forward to produce high quality printed output at a fraction of the price similar systems would cost on Macs and IBMs.

Editor

MAY MEETING

Robert Googe and Steve Hovelroud gave us a very informative talk on the use of the latest version of the *DigiView* software (version 4.0). They brought both a Black & White and a Colour video camera and digitised a variety of subjects, despite inadequate lighting conditions. As your editor had previously seen only the original software in operation, it became apparent to him that this version 4.0 is a great improvement as regards speed and final results compared with that original version of the

software. Guess that we'll have to start saving up for a video camera!

JULY MEETING

Greg Perry will demonstrate *CanDo* !

ROSALIE WORKSHOP MEETING

Details of the forthcoming meeting will from now on be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

As space at Rosalie is at a premium, this workshop meeting will be strictly for MEMBERS ONLY! We will do a spot check of members' financial status (that means we want to see your current membership card) at these meetings and non-members will be asked to leave.

PUBLIC DOMAIN DISK LIBRARIAN

For some years Mark Eckert has faithfully looked after the group's Amiga P.D. Library. However Marks's job takes him away from Brisbane on quite a few occasions, hence he was often unable to attend the Rosalie meeting. As there is even more likelihood of Mark not being in Brisbane in the near future, we were forced to find a successor. Fortunately for us Steve Hovelroud was prepared to take over the job as P.D. Librarian, and we welcome him on board.

Our sincere thanks to Mark (and his wife, Vivien) Eckert for a very good job, well done.

ST EMULATOR

We have just read about an Atari ST Emulator which has been released in West Germany at a price of 600 DM (apr \$500). It's called *Medusa*, and is supposed to fully emulate the Atari. What with C64, MS-DOS and Mac emulation, it's only a matter of time before we'll be emulating the Cray super computer!

PELHAM

Good vibes about this company. Pelham Pty Ltd is a Sydney based company which supplies RAM chips for Amiga computers at very reasonable prices.

Several of our members have purchased chips from them and by all accounts they are all quite happy with the pricing and delivery.

Bruce Wylie was particularly impressed with their service. When this company supplied him with the wrong chip type, they advised him to return them in a PostPak and the following day Bruce received his replacement chips by Express Courier - he was astounded because they had sent the replacement before having received the original batch.

This company accepts credit cards and their phone number is (02) 4270011.

VALE LIGHTSPEED?

You must have read in previous issues that our Group has purchased quite a bit of Amiga software from a US company called Lightspeed; their prices were low and their service was good. For orders over US \$100 they also had a toll free phone number which also helped to keep the costs down.

However we now find that their phones (both toll free and pay phones) are not being answered any more, so we can only assume that they have gone under, which is a pity. We will keep you informed if we find another reliable overseas supplier.

-oo0oo-

MY FIRST DAYS WITH A MODEM

by Ron Lewis

So the modems arrived and you've plugged her in. What now??? The following is not meant as an instruction set for modem use but more as an autobiography of yours truly.

I've got the Avtek connected, I've made my backup copy of GP Term as instructed; all is well. Now I read the instruction books supplied with both products. Oh no! I don't understand a word of what these intellectual masterpieces are telling me, in fact the more I read the more I'm convinced I've actually purchased a part share in the space shuttle program and the books I'm reading are really only a part of a much larger volume and I'm starting at chapter 10. I wander through the program looking at different menu items asking innate questions for which I have no answers. What the hell is all this stuff; what have I done. Three hours have passed before I've worked up the courage to actually have a go. Now Greg said he'd set it up ready to go, so take his word for it and do it. Ok! it's set for the CCUG BBS no. 808 7694; click on dial and presto CONNECTION. Lights flash on the modem and a message appears telling me that I'm a new user (I new that already) and as such should go to the file area nominated and DOWNLOAD (?) the BBS instructions. I consider this excellent advice, and take the liberty to write down all the relevant data (boy this is going to be easy). I'm actually on the board with a few restrictions to safeguard the system. Everything is in English and apart from a few weird characters that flash on the screen, it's easy to understand.

First job DOWNLOAD the instructions. O.k., where's the file area; must be there somewhere. Oh no! What have I done; I've got messages flashing on the screen so fast that only superman would have time to read them, they go on and on. Surely they can't expect me to absorb all that? After message number 87 appears and stays still long enough for me to read it, I realise that it's part of a conversation between someone and has nothing to do with me. Now which key did that and remember not to press it again. I fondle through the main menu seeking feverously the file area of which to obtain instructions, checking carefully not to press the = sign ever again. Alas, after 20 minutes of sheer terror I'm advised in English that my time has expired and thanks for calling. Strewh there must be some mistake, I did everything right (I think) perhaps in my haste I wrote down the wrong area. Yeah, that's it - toss that paper out and start again. Dial again (engaged this time) and again with the same result. New don't be discouraged, turn everything off, go inside and tell the family how wonderful your new investment is and how their sacrifice has opened up vast horizons for you. But above all don't let on that your opinion of yourself as a computer programmer has just been devastated by a modem.

Next day I try again, CONNECTION! (easy stuff) - hello! hello! I'm not classed as a new subscriber any more and I can't find that bloody message about the instruction file. Oh no, what did the wife do with that bit of paper? I do wish she wouldn't clean up so often.

With great confidence I flick on the menu bar saying START LOG. I'm not sure what to expect and really all I get is a message on top saying LOG LINE (what the hell is that) - nothing else much happens.

I answer OK to everything and wander again through the message area, which is really the only place I seem to have mastered. Stickybeaking at all of this stuff is really quite good and it is only now that I realise that all those questions you were too scared ask, are saved for here. It is very time consuming trying to read 87 messages of varying length and you guessed it - time's up. GOODBYE.

I now contemplate my next move, analysing my progress to date, which by any stretch of the imagination could only be deemed as disappointing. Being a person of extreme intelligence I come up with the thought that I should log on (meaning dial) again under a false name (brilliant) thus no-one will know it's me and any damage I may cause will be billed to this fictitious character. Well, this was a huge success, as all of the information I required, reappeared and all the friendly conversation was now nearly understandable. I wrote down the file area exactly as was produced on the screen and then continued into the system. Nothing could stop me now. With great confidence and very particular care I perused the available menu selection. Damn, there was no file area there, let alone a particular number; what was I doing wrong? I know, I'll go to every possible choice and then surely success will follow. Now logic is not always relevant with computers; this I learnt early in life when I found that zero is not nothing; it really is one but does not actually hold that value (never mind).

To cut a long storey as short as possible, after 5 different aliases I still did not have this damn instruction file that has so blatantly been recommended that I download (copy from board). In fact I still wasn't sure that if I found it that I would know how to download the darn thing anyway.

The wife was screaming that she wanted to use the phone, my ego felt deflated, and I'm sure my computer was thinking of leaving home. I pressed on the quit menu from GP Term - oh, that felt good; for the first time in nearly 5 hours I felt as though I was in control again.

What now, somehow or somewhere I'd lost nearly 300,000 bytes from a computer that is supposed to be user friendly. On examination I found that all of the screens of info for the past 5 hours had been saved to ram as a single file and through the magic of GP Term I could now look again at all of the stupid things that I did over and over again. Things started to click and it was obvious to me that START LOG meant that you needn't try to read the messages at super speed just START LOG at the stuff you want saved and END LOG when finished and read it after.

Now I've no doubt that this was explained in the instruction manual, but at that stage I thought a log was a piece of wood so anything following that I'd related to trees.

With this added knowledge and a renewed confidence in my ability I tried again, this time using my own name, but by now I'd forgotten my original password and struck minimal trouble until it flashed back to me.

On entering the board I was alarmed to see that it was talking to me in

human sentences. I mean it was actually trying to have a conversation without shorthand code, menus, or gibberish. I was to learn that it was the SYSOP (board operator). He wasn't angry or accusing, in fact I was made to feel quite welcome and, although I wasn't sure if what I typed was actually getting back to him, I was assured that I would be a registered user as soon as I hung up and that the reason I couldn't find the file area was not because of any fault of mine but simply that it does not exist until you are fully registered!

Now all (or nearly all) was starting to make sense. Tomorrow I would attack this thing with a vengeance, obtain my instructions and I'd be fully modemised. I then pulled the plug on the whole shebang, reassured my wife that although I'd tied the phone up for the best part of a day, only one call was made and all was well. I slept happy that night in the knowledge that any doubts I had in my ability to read simple instructions and access their relevance were justified and things could only improve from here on.

To Be Continued...

-oo0oo-

HELP! COLUMN

This is the *HELP!* column for users of Amiga computers. If you would like to share your experience in the fields of programming, software, hardware etc. with your fellow members, submit your name with your area of expertise to the editor. Remember: the more names, the more knowledge can be disseminated amongst our members.

Name	Help offered with:	Phone Number
Dave Apelt	<i>Vector Graphics</i>	366 4761
Ellen Appleby	<i>Using Amigas in Education</i>	369 4629
Bob Devries	<i>OS9 Operating System</i>	372 7816
Ralph De Vries	<i>Dot Matrix printers - WordPerfect</i>	300 3477
Robert Googe	<i>Video & Audio Digitising</i>	288 8863
Steve Hovelroud	<i>Audio Digitising</i>	298 5128
Gary Lloyd	<i>C Programming (Beginners)</i>	269 7818
Brendan Pratt	<i>Modems, Telecommunications, Sidecar</i>	(075) 463 317
Grant Robinson	<i>AmigaBasic</i>	359 4315
Michael Thomas	<i>Forth, Prolog, C, and Modula-2 Programming</i>	800 4511
John Van Staveren	<i>Easy Ledgers Accounting Program</i>	372 3651
David Walton	<i>Bridgeboard (IBM)</i>	(071) 834 742
Mike Williams	<i>AmigaBasic (Beginners), Sound</i>	209 9084

Please be considerate - these are after hours numbers, so only ring our members between the hours of 6pm and 9pm during week nights. Thank you!

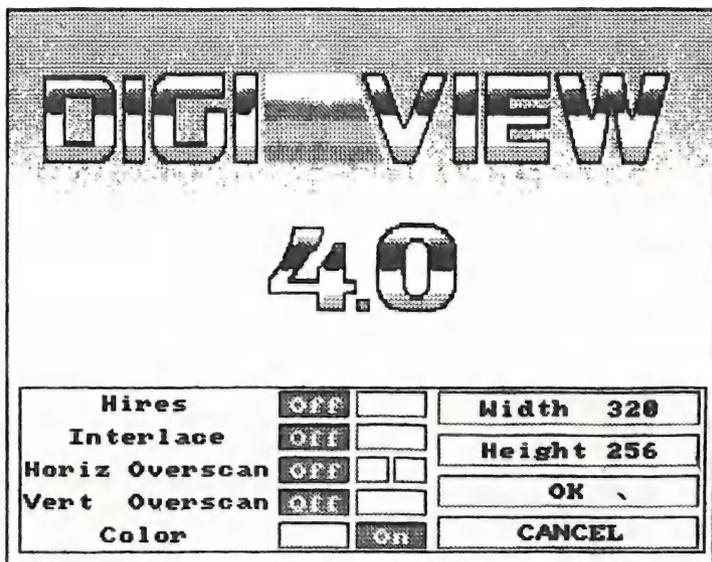
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reviewed by Robert Googe

INTRODUCTION TO DIGI-VIEW

Digi-View was one of the first hardware "add-on" products to appear for the Amiga and is one of the great survivors of the Amiga world. Initially made for the Amiga 1000, Digi-View won popular appraisal as the best and most popular hardware accessory for the Amiga at that time. Since then Digi-View has retained its popularity amongst hobbyists and professionals alike as a tool for converting visual information to Amiga graphic renditions.

SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

The Digi-View package comes as a moulded hardware add-on that plugs into the Amiga's parallel port, the software package that runs it, and a colour wheel for digitising in colour. Currently the package comes

as Digi-View Gold for the Amiga 500/2000, as the parallel port on the Amiga 1000 is physically different, an adaptor is required if you have the '1000. Currently the software supplied with the package is version 4.0 which, amongst other things, supports ARexx and a new graphics mode developed by NewTek called Dynamic Hi-Res.

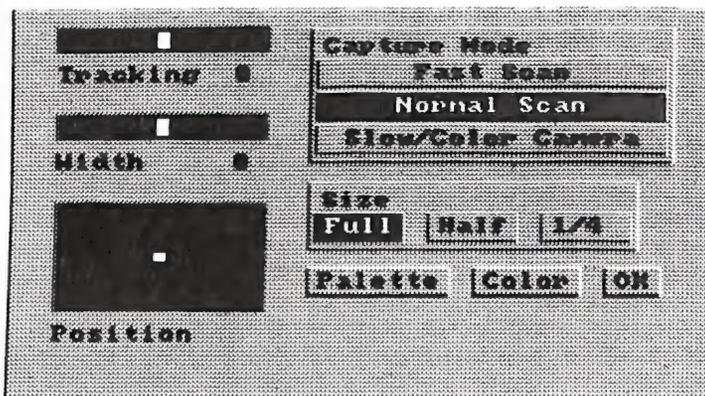
CONNECTING DIGI-VIEW

As mentioned previously, Digi-View plugs into the parallel port and is connected to a video source via an RCA coaxial cable. The video camera can be any black and white type supporting 2:1 interlace. Colour cameras are also supported and offer varied success using the average camcorder available to the general public. High end colour cameras are very good due to their high resolution and separate red,

green and blue composite outputs (this negates the use of the RGB filter wheel as you can tap into each signal in turn. If you are thinking of using a professional colour camera, then make sure that it does in fact put out the R, G & B in composite video form. The standard filter wheel that comes with the Digi-View package can be mounted on the front of the camera in any convenient position so that each of the filter segments will cover the camera lens in turn.

STEP BY STEP THROUGH THE SOFTWARE

Booting the software brings up a selection page for the user to indicate resolutions and whether colour is required or not. On selecting the appropriate environment, hitting 'OK' will start up Digi-View. The program immediately checks to see if enough memory is available for the resolution/ colour combination selected; if there is not enough free memory the program will refuse to start.



MEMORY NEEDS AND SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Digi-View will run on any Amiga computer (the A1000 requires an adaptor), from a 512k Amiga 500 to an eight mega-byte Amiga 2500. To run the software at full power, that is to be able to digitise in full overscan, in high resolution and in colour, requires one mega-byte of chip ram (the Super Agnus upgrade) and at least another mega-byte of fast ram for temporary bit-plane storage. A one megabyte Amiga 500 will be able to digitise in medium resolution in colour and in black and white in all other resolutions.

The screen initially comes up blank with a menu bar across the top. Clicking the right mouse button will display the following headings: Project, Digitise and Controls.

The Project menu contains all the usual filing commands and statistical colour analysis.

Digitise contains the digitise commands for red, green, blue and auto (If you have the motorised filter wheel). If you initially selected black and white mode, the digitise menu contains just one command.

Controls contains Control (renamed from 'Color' in previous versions), Palette, Camera, Motor Cal, Display and DigiPaint commands.

Control is for modifying number of bitplanes, brightness, contrast, etc.

Palette is for varying the colour palette of the generated graphic.

Camera is for altering the way the incoming video signal is treated, changing scan rates and screen size (1, 1/2 or full size).

Motor Cal is to calibrate the Digi-Droid.

Display is to re-display the picture using the current Control settings.

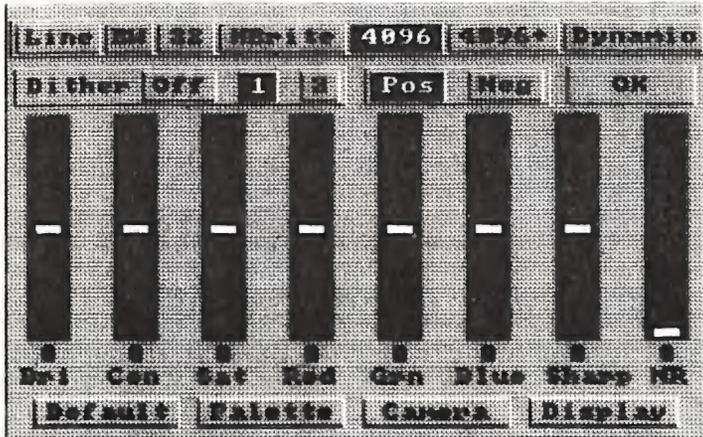
DIGITISE!

Digitising is as simple as issuing the command. To digitise in colour involves the use of the filter wheel, each colour is digitised in sequence using the appropriate colour on the filter wheel until a full complement is built up and the picture can then be displayed.

ADJUSTING FOR BEST RESULTS

There are many adjustments in the software that can enhance or degrade the digitising process.

The physical digitising process is mainly controlled by the settings in the Camera menu. One of these is Capture Mode, this controls the speed of the scan of the video signal. A Fast Scan will give you an



The DigiPaint command is a link from Digi-View to Digi-Paint. With Digi-Paint running in the background, pictures can be piped to it for brushing up before finishing; this removes the need to save the picture, close Digi-View, open Digi-Paint and load the picture into it!

idea of how the picture will look, and can be a little rough around the edges. Normal Scan is the usual setting for digitising. A third option called Slow/Colour Scan does a longer integration to cope with colour cameras, which produce a more complex signal than a black and white video source. You can

also digitise in three sizes; Full, Half or Quarter screen size. On the left of the Camera screen are three more controls: Tracking, this is useful for getting rid of 'jaggies' or timing glitches that normally as a vertical group of lines or distortion, the tracking control can shift this distortion to the right or left until it no longer appears on the picture. The Width control compresses or expands the digitising horizontally to fit your graphic requirements. And the Position control moves the digitised video around, in a limited fashion, similar to moving the screen coordinates around in Preferences.

After you have digitised the picture the colour adjustments, contrast, brightness, dithering, graphics mode, etc. can all be adjusted from the Colour menu. At first I would suggest to Display the graphic, to establish if the essential attributes of the picture need changing, then adjust the appropriate control little by little to improve the result. The resolution/bitplane modes across the top of the screen are pretty much self explanatory except for these two:

The Line Art option brings up a one bit-plane screen (i.e. pure black and white) and B&W does a sixteen grey scale picture.

OTHER GOODIES

As mentioned in my opening paragraph, Digi-View 4.0 has a few enhancements over the older version 3.0 of the software. ARexx support is now available, which means that the program can be controlled through script based files. A few good examples of these are included on the disk for time lapse, auto-digitising, etc. A list of commands are supplied to create these scripts and to control the software externally.

A new display option is available, called Dynamic HAM and Dynamic Hi-Res, in theory it enables 4096 colours to be displayed on a 640 x 512 high resolution screen. This is achieved by altering the sixteen colour palette on every horizontal line of pixels. This process uses nearly all of the Amiga's resources. To achieve this, the palette switching is controlled by the 68000 processor directly, and any touch of the keyboard or movement of the mouse will cause the picture to break up temporarily as the 68000 is "distracted".

CONCLUSION

Generally this is an easy to use software/hardware combination and, as with most Amiga software today, assumes some knowledge of AmigaDos and the Workbench. Digi-View does have other costs, a black and white camera with decent resolution is really required, home video camcorders do work but with mixed results. A copy stand with good lighting and that is strong enough to support your video camera is also needed for high quality results, I have been getting by without one so far and just get by with sticking the artwork up on the wall and using a tripod.

I would suggest that if you are interested in purchasing Digi-View, and you intend to use your home video set-up, then take your camera into the dealer and get him or her to give you a demonstration using your equipment to see that it works. At least then you will know if you need to spend an extra \$600 to get a suitable black and white camera (a good copy stand will also set you back around this amount, if you feel you need it). If your dealer wants to sell you a complete package (i.e. Digi-View, Camera, etc), I would also recommend you try it out too before buying, just

to make sure it does in reality what you think it does in your mind.

Currently Digi-View is being shipped with version 4.0 of the software and costs around \$299 (less 5% user group discount if you flash your membership card) at local dealers.

Current owners of Digi-View with earlier versions of the software can upgrade to the new version 4.0 of the software through NewTek

themselves by either telephoning them in the U.S. ('phoning before 7am here will get them at work over there) and using your credit card or buy writing them a letter requesting an upgrade. The upgrade cost is US\$39.95 which includes airmail post and packing. I telephoned my request through to NewTek on the Tuesday and it arrived by mail on the Thursday a week later, 10 days!

Happy imaging!

-ooOoo-

OH AGNES !

by Grant Robinson

This is just a short message for people whose Amiga 500 is out of warranty and who may suffer intermittent problems with Amy. The story starts a couple of years back when I arrived home with my beloved Amy. (I hope my wife doesn't read this!) I had not had her for long when she started to play up on me (The computer, not my wife). "... has a read/write error," she told me, "Use DISKDOCTOR". "Those damn cheap disks," I thought at the time. Diskdoctoring the disks I found there was no problems with the disks and upon further experimentation I found Amy would tell me a disk had a read/write error and then maybe a couple of minutes later happily read and write to the very same disk. "Strange!" I thought, but stranger was to come.

Amy's tricks grew gradually worse with performances including the "Hand with the workbench disk in it" screen without any blue colour

in the disk, or with the blue on the screen but not where the disk is, or an incomplete screen, (and many more). Finally when I turned her on one day, she went straight into a Guru Meditation - no disk in the drive or anything.

A visit to the people who are now Parcom proved very enlightening. No sooner had the technician whipped of the cover, pressed all the chips into their sockets properly and tested it when all was OK! "The Fat Agnes chip doesn't sit in its socket very well," he told me. "It's just because of its shape." Five minutes while-you-wait service and I was a very happy man again.

All has been pretty well since then with an occasional slap for Amy when Agnes doesn't seem quite right. But one weekend recently when I was installing some ram into my A590 she struck again. The problem is that when your not a real

techie type and you've just done some intricate tampering with your machine, if your machine subsequently doesn't work you tend to lay blame with yourself. Having installed the ram chips I booted up Amy with the ram test software disk and ran the test. "No fast ram to test!" was the result. A call to Steve Hovelroud for help. I'd read of his trials and tribulations with his A590 in Cursor. He suggested that I pull all the ram chips out and start again, but insert them 512k at a time and test them without re-attaching the hard drive. That's when I found I had bent one pin on one of the chips and I was to blame. Following Steve's suggestion I re-inserted the chips testing as I went along until I had my 2 meg installed and tested OK. Hooray! So I re-assembled the hard drive and rebooted - nothing. No insert workbench disk screen, just a blank white one. Three fingered salute (Ctrl-A-A) - same again. I tried to boot from a disk in DF0: - same again. Three fingered salute - a green screen! Looking up a past issue of Cursor I found out that meant I had an error in chip ram.

So I opened up Amy to check on her internal condition. Pressed on all the chips and rebooted - green screen. "Must be something wrong with those new ram chips," I thought. I removed half of the chips I had installed and rebooted

- it booted OK! Having installed and tested the remaining ram (again!) I re-assembled the hard drive (again!) and rebooted (again!) - thank heavens, it ALL worked!

Looking back I realise the following -

1. The bent chip pin caused my "No fast ram" problem.
2. Agnes was the problem causing a blank screen on booting. Attaching the A590 to the A500 had upset her.
3. Agnes was also the cause of the green screen on booting.
4. Much of my time was expended looking elsewhere to solve the problems when I should have suspected Agnes in the first place.

It was this last realisation that prompted me to put all this into print as I'd hate for anyone to experience the same frustrations.

So, if your Amy starts playing up inconsistently, you may well save yourself some time, bother and frustration by simply giving Agnes a nudge (or Amy a light slap) to put her properly in her place. It costs nothing, takes less than two seconds to complete, is good exercise and may relieve tension too!

-ooOoo-

GAMES ON FISH

by Joseph Armstrong

I am going to mention three games but the intent is to stick with just one of them. Some of you might be fortunate enough to have Fred Fish's disk #336. If so then you are in luck for it contains three gems, all written by a Swede by the name of Anders Bjerin.

These are, in turn, "Car", Sys" and "MiniBlaster". They are all superbly well thought out, well written and well presented. I am going to concentrate on "MiniBlaster".

Well, you always wanted a decent shoot-em-up game eh? Look no further. Anders has presented us lucky Amigans with a terrific little helicopter simulation, complete with rotor, missiles and sound. After loading, one is presented with a small (multitasking - I know I played it while I uploaded it to several Bulletin Boards) playfield that sits in the upper left corner of the WorkBench screen. One is given the choice of configuring the keyboard to suit movement or to use the joystick in port two.

The object is to fly over various obstacles and terrain, most of which would make even Sir Edmund Hillary pale in contemplation. As one moves across the playfield, missile silos come into view and of course one must destroy them before one is destroyed. A launch from the chopper comes complete with recorded sound of a streaking missile. Should the missile strike, the reward of a rolling explosion is heard. Need I add that the chopper can be heard above the din at all times. The chopper can be moved forward, backward and up and down. This forward movement can be useful to entice an anti aircraft missile

from its silo and as it wings upward on a pillar of flame, one simply moves back a little and kills it. Not as easy as it sounds.

The next step is the number of levels. There are five in all, of increasing difficulty. The level is saved to disk on exit so that if one makes it to level two, a choice can be made of playing either one or two next time. This counts in turn for levels three, four and five.

An extra neat touch is the inclusion of a "Level Editor". It allows one to make ones own terrain and position bases where ever the heart desires. A rather clever little twist is the fact that one is rewarded for ones efforts by being able to edit only those levels that have been completed. These can be saved to disk for later use. The editor is extremely simple to use and once more, appears to be planned out beforehand.

The game multitasks beautifully, has run at all times without flaw or any evidence of bugs, crashing etc. It has obviously been well researched and debugged. The author has very generously included these three games in the public domain and does not ask for a shareware contribution. I might add that they appear to be of a better standard than a lot of shareware around. I was up till 6.30 am from 8.30pm of the previous evening and I was absolutely riveted. I think the least anyone could do would be to send a letter to Anders and tell him what one thinks.

I hope that those of you who read this will be prompted to jump in and try "Mini_Blaster".

BUG REPORT

by Ron Lewis

It's been found that a BUG exists in TRUCKIN.ON, causing a crash if untidy mouse work is executed in the Truck Selling section. To rectify:-

- * Load Game as normal.
- * When main game appears use the MENU to return to AMIGA BASIC.
- * Using Menu, NEW the program and then load MAIN1
- * List "selltrucks" and make the following changes:-

selltrucks:

```

WINDOW OUTPUT 4
IF win4x<>15 THEN fontset "selltruck",13
PALETTE 0, 0,0,0:etc.
etc.
etc.
sss:
COLOR 7,2:PRINT "( TRUCK DEMAND )";
etc.
etc.
LOCATE 5,1:x%=0:randy%=0
FOR t%=0 TO 4
y%=LEN(tname$(PLAYER%,t%))
IF y%>0 THEN GOSUB nprint ELSE t%=4
x%=x%+1:y%=0
NEXT
***** ADD HERE *****
tchoice%=52+(13*x%)
*****
x1%=0:x2%=139:y1%=53:ystep%=13:gap%=1:no.but%=x%
ctruck:
GOSUB exscreen
***** ADD IN HERE *****
IF y%>tchoice% AND y%<182 THEN ctruck
*****
IF y%>182 THEN kbutt
etc.- etc. etcetera!

```

- * Save the Program under the same name "MAIN1" and carry on Truckin.

Sorry for the inconvenience.....

-ooOoo-

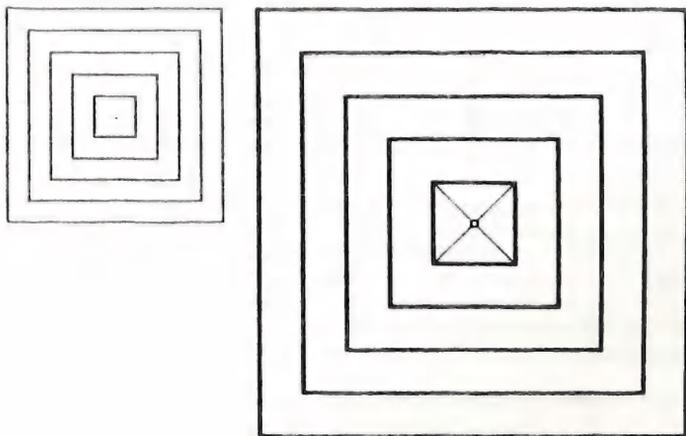
GRAPHICS BUG IN PAGESTREAM

by Ralph De Vries

Although the latest version (1.8) of *PageStream* is a substantial improvement on its predecessors (see my comments and Tom McRae's review in the May issue), several annoying bugs remain, particularly as regards the importing and printing of graphics.

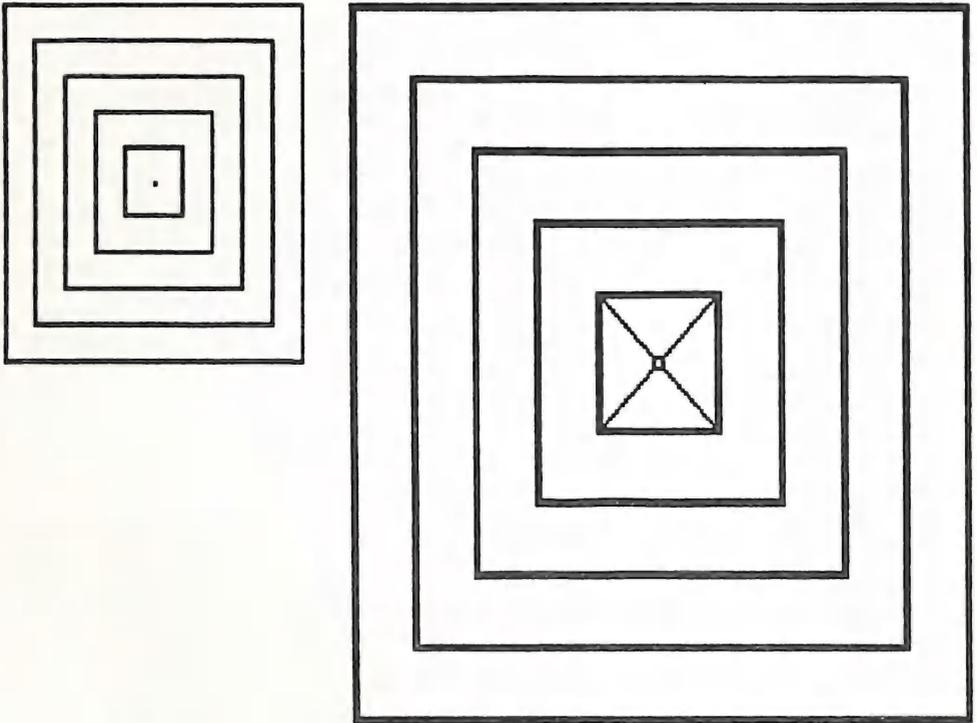
For best results I always use clip art in the Amiga's high resolution mode (640 x 512), as this reduces the 'jaggies'. Importing a full page of hi-res graphics into *PageStream* is a painfully slow process. I was wondering if I could reduce the time taken to import a graphics page by first converting the relevant illustration into a brush (using *DPaint*) and then import the brush rather than the full size graphics. However, when I tried to import the brush, the program didn't like it and I got a visit from the guru. This put paid to a good idea!

More annoying though is what *PageStream* does to your graphics. The following two squares were produced using *DPaint* in the hi-res mode and printed out using the same program:



Note that these two squares have printed out as *squares*, i.e. the proportions of my original artwork have not changed. (By the way, feel free to copy my original artwork, I've put it in the Public Domain so that all my fellow Amigans can enjoy my creation!)

Next I imported this test drawing into PageStream and printed it out with the following result:

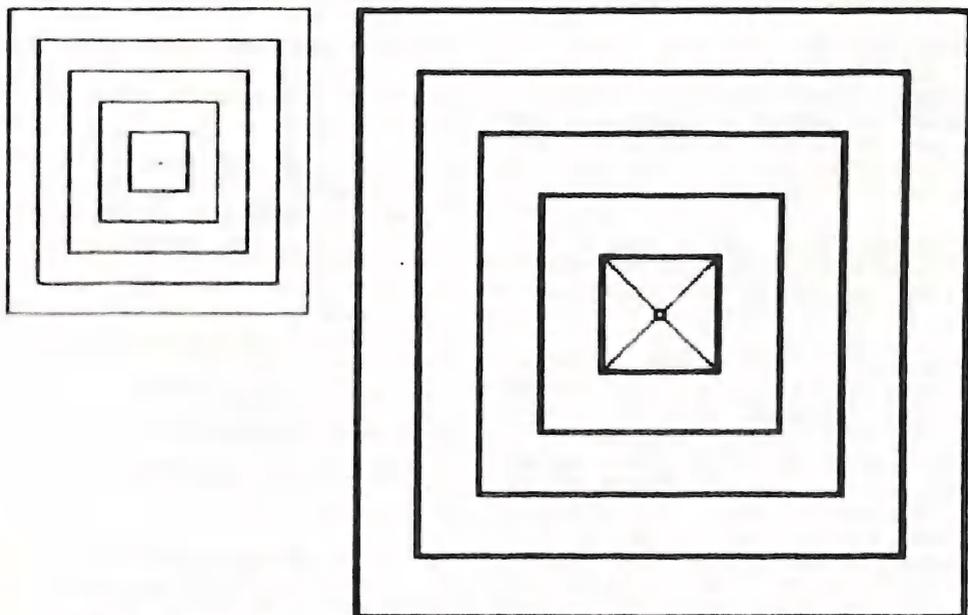


Now it doesn't take an expert eye to see that something has happened to our original square masterpiece. To at least partially restore the balance of the original, you could now use one of the centre sizing squares to more or less 're-square' the picture, but this is rather a make-shift arrangement and not easily repeatable. Instead go the OBJECT MENU and use the EDIT COORDINATES option. If you haven't altered the size of the original imported graphic you will see the following requester:

Edit Coordinates			
Left Edge :	0.0020 mm	Top Edge :	9.6831 mm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Right Edge :	23.2675 m	Bottom Edge :	183.5563
<input type="checkbox"/> Width :	23.4646 m	Height :	95.8732 m
<input type="checkbox"/> % of Width :	99	% of Height :	99
Screen Angle :	---	<input type="checkbox"/> Separable	
Screen Frequency :	---	<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical	
<input type="button" value="OK"/>		<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	

Note that, for some obscure reason, % of Width and Height appear as 99% Somewhere along the line PageStream swallowed up the remaining 1%.

By trial and error I worked out that when I entered the figure 84 in the "% of Height" box, the proportions of the original artwork were restored, as can be seen in the following printout:



We have now ended up with a, more or less, 'square' square, although the observant reader may well have noticed that these squares are about 40% larger than the printout of the original DPaint picture. However the main object has been achieved, which was to restore the original proportions of our artwork.

It should be noted though that these calculations are based on the use of a 24 pin printer, printing at a density of 180 x 180 dots per inch.

If you have a 9 pin printer, or use low resolution or medium resolution pictures, you may well find that your proportions are radically different from mine. In that case you should follow the above example and print out a square picture generated by a paint program, and use this as the basis for testing out your graphics in PageStream. Once you have achieved a reasonably satisfactory result, make a note of the coordinates and file them away for future usage.

Happy printing!

A-3000 RELEASE

Following is an edited version of Commodore's US Release Notes for the Amiga 3000, which took place on 24th April 1990 in New York -

COMMODORE BUSINESS MACHINES UNVEILS NEW AMIGAVISION AUTHORING SYSTEM

New York City, New York [APRIL 24] - Commodore Business Machines President Harold Copperman strengthened the company's leadership position in the multimedia market by introducing powerful multimedia authoring software.

The new system can be used to create innovative applications ranging from complex business presentations to daily courseware.

Commodore Vice President of Marketing C. Lloyd Mahaffey said the new software system, called AmigaVision, significantly expands the multimedia market by providing an easy-to-use and affordable method for business, education, government and consumer users to develop new applications by creatively combining graphics, text, video and audio components. Shipping is expected to begin in May.

The announcement was made as part of a live multimedia presentation at the Palladium. The company also introduced the latest in its Amiga family of personal computers, the Amiga 3000, and a full line of networking products.

Previously the domain of programmer-level professional users, multimedia can now be a tool for creative teachers, presentation professionals, computer-based trainers, instruction specialists as well as exhibit and display professionals. AmigaVision does not require previous programming experience and is operable through an intuitive user interface.

Mahaffey said the Amiga is the only computer that was originally designed as a multimedia class machine.

David Archambault, director of business markets, said AmigaVision takes full advantage of the Amiga's built-in graphics, video and music capabilities.

The system uses the Amiga's native multitasking capability to allow users to run programs simultaneously. Unlike other authoring systems, AmigaVision is a non-intrusive environment which allows applications to run without the AmigaVision menus being visible, he said.

Enhanced design capabilities allow for immediate on-screen preview while the presentation program is running. This allows the user to create unique user interface elements quickly and with ease.

AmigaVision provides a flow-chart type iconic interface programming environment featuring a single control screen/menu. The Amiga operating system's AREXX communications protocol support allows applications to interact with programs on the same or other networked machines.

The system will be bundled with all Amiga 2000 and 3000 series machines. For existing owners, AmigaVision is available at Authorised Commodore Amiga Resellers for a suggested retail price of \$149.

Mahaffey said AmigaVision is a key component of Commodore's product marketing strategy for the Amiga family. While professional users comprise the majority of multimedia-related markets today, future plans call for penetration into the consumer market as home users begin to discover the benefits of multimedia.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - EXPECTED
SHIP DATE: JULY 1990

COMMODORE EXTENDS POPULAR AMIGA
PRODUCT LINE; INTRODUCES TALENTED
AMIGA 3000 AT "MULTIMEDIA LIVE"

NEW YORK, NY -- April 24, 1990 -- Commodore Business Machines President Harold Copperman and his aggressive management team today dramatically defined multimedia as the company introduced the latest in its popular line of Amiga personal computers at a live multimedia demonstration at the Palladium. The powerful and elegant new Amiga (R) 3000 brings enhanced performance capabilities and a new AmigaDOS (TM) 2.0 operating system to the company's line of multimedia products.

"The 3000 marks the first step in Commodore's new Amiga product marketing strategy and reinforces our serious bid to capture greater market share within the business, government and higher education markets," said Commodore Vice President of Marketing C. Lloyd Mahaffey. "We've delivered an incredibly competitive hardware system featuring lower cost, higher performance and added communications capabilities."

Mahaffey said key product features include a 16 or 25 Mhz, 68030 Motorola processor, a 68881 or 68882 math coprocessor, a true 32-bit architecture, 2 MB of memory standard (with an address space of over one

gigabyte) and, as in all Amigas, true multitasking capability. The standard Amiga 3000 comes with a 40 MB hard drive and a 3.5-inch floppy disk drive and features a SCSI interface for added communication capability. Commodore also offers a 100 MB configuration.

Suggested retail price is \$3,299 for the 16 Mhz version, \$3,999 for the 25 Mhz version and \$4,499 for the 100 MB version. Shipments are expected to begin in July. Demonstration units are available at participating Authorized Commodore Amiga Reseller locations.

Commodore Director of Product Marketing Walt Simpson said the price/performance of the A3000 results from the effective integration of the Amiga's three custom chips with five new custom gate arrays which serve a variety of functions including bus arbitration, RAM memory handling, SCSI device handling and video enhancing.

The Amiga 3000 also features a new operating system, AmigaDOS 2.0, which significantly enhances the look and functionality of the platform, Simpson said. Besides the new look, standards have been created for all system utilities, icons, requesters and gadgets to permit ease-of-use by both users and programmers, he said.

In addition, Commodore announced the inclusion of the AREXX (TM) interprocess communication protocol and programming language. The integration of AREXX into the AmigaDOS operating system will facilitate the control of external programs from within any application supporting AREXX, Simpson said. This feature, coupled with Commodore's new AmigaVision (TM) authoring system, creates a powerful multitasking environment for the creation of multimedia presentations.

Along with the A3000 announcement, Commodore introduced a number of strategic software and peripheral products, including:

- * AmigaVision authoring system;
- * Networking products providing connectivity with Arcnet, Novell (R) NetWare, Ethernet, TCP/IP and NFS standards;
- * Monitors, including 2024 high

resolution monochrome and 1950 color multiscan

- * Commodore Amiga 10 Stereo Audio Compact Speakers.

Commodore further announced an AmigaDOS 2.0 enhancer kit for A2000 series machines to be available in September. Availability of a 2.0 enhancer kit for A500 series machines will be announced at a future date.

{Ed: So far the American report. At the time of writing there's no official word on an Australian release, nor on Australian pricing, although rumours on pricing have appeared on Oz bulletin boards; I shall not repeat them here. As for Version 2.0 (formerly Version 1.4) of the Amiga Operating System, don't expect that one before late 1990 or some time in 1991 - the version shown in the USA on the A-3000 is only a Beta test version, so it's early days yet.}

-ooOoo-

I GOT MY HARD DRIVE!

by Ron Lewis

Mothers Day was fast approaching and I still hadn't worked out what I'd get my faithful companion. It has become an institution at our place that we would not succumb to media pressure when choosing presents and would only purchase items which would prove useful to us as a unit.

Although this seemed a good idea at its conception, it has in practice tended to favour Cathy, as she is the main user of useful utensils around our house. Motor Mowers, battery operated drills, compost bins, lawn edgers, etc. are of little use to me, so you can see my dilemma when faced with the prospect of ordering another impracti-

cal present to honour my commitment as a husband.

The thought crossed my mind that she still does not have an electric saw and her ability with the hand saw does seem to lack prowess. We aren't exactly flushed with funds and most of our building requirements are finished so the saw was out and the only other thing that we could possibly need was a HARD DRIVE.

Now for those of you, who, like Cathy, think a HARD DRIVE is related to Motor Racing or Golf, let me assure you that up until 6 months ago, so did I! It appears that unless you mix with the right people

or work in an office environment, keeping track of computer progress tends to be rather difficult and as a result many of us have been left behind. Now at the risk of sounding ancient, I can recall the times not so long ago, when I'd put my tape in the faithful(?) tape deck and then have Tea, to return later to play or use the particular program that I'd chosen. I knew that Disc Drives were available and offered a far safer and speedier means of storing data, so eventually I'd saved enough bottle tops to acquire one of these speed machines. This purchase enhanced my programming ability tenfold and seemed to be accepted by the family as a very good investment and as such became an accepted hardware attachment to be included whenever a computer upgrade was made.

When I made the big move to Amiga it was natural that I'd need a disc drive, so any thoughts of extravagance were easily calmed by simple discussion. I mention this solely for the readers understanding that for me to purchase a hard drive for mothers day would require an extremely convincing argument that it would be good value and a better choice than either an electric saw or a concrete mixer. Now I knew that it would be difficult arguing that the speed enhancement on its own would sway the debate, because I've got all day 7 days a week anyway, so I thought it best to concentrate on the convenience side of it. A phone call to our Secretary for advice inadvertently clinched the deal. I was left with the impression that he had Solitaire Royale on his Hard Drive and as this was the only game Cathy uses on my Amy, I explained that with a Hard Drive I wouldn't have to shut down the computer and change discs every time she wanted to play. This was a winner and it was decided to order an extra meg. of memory for myself.

This could be inserted in the hard drive on purchase thus saving us heaps(?) later on. For the un-initiated of you to these wonderful little toys, a Hard Drive acts as a VERY FAST disc drive, and when I say FAST I mean Fast!. The one I bought for Cathy was called an A590 and plugs into the left hand side of the computer. The price of these units seems to be negotiable and seems to depend largely on who and when you inquire - my quotes ranged from \$1199 - \$950 so it pays to shop around.

I struck my usual problems with instruction books with this purchase as well, cos, I find it difficult reading from back to front as practised by Commodore and started reading from the front. (It seems I'll never learn.)

The man at the shop informed me that it was ready to go and only needed connecting. I said that I certainly hoped so, as I felt it pointless paying so much for something that wasn't ready. (Anyone who gave the piece of tin and plastic the right to choose.) I didn't realise until two days later his real meaning, and during that time cursed my impatience and Cath's new Hard Drive. What the man meant by saying it was ready, was that the drive had been formatted and had W/Bench & Extras installed. It was only a matter of running the install Hard Drive program on the floppy disc provided, alter my startup-sequence and I'd be away.

Now this sounds like the sort of stuff Simple Simon could handle, but being the independent cuss that I am and ignoring all of my preconceptions about instructions, I made the mistake of reading the dreaded book. All was well until I reached about 3/4 of the way into the book; it was here that things started to fall apart. It mentions a great

feature called PARTITIONING. This is a means of separating sections of the disc thus allowing for a more orderly placement of programs into the relevant areas. I considered this to be right up my alley, here I could partition it for WORK, GAMES (Solitaire Royale), and Programming.

I mention that the disc has room for about 20 ordinary floppies, so to me, setting up relevant areas was a natural form of housekeeping. Now it could be, that one only sees what one wants to see, but I swear I could find nothing in the partitioning instructions that referenced the fact that to continue with this hair-brained scheme would result in the destruction of any file that looked like finding a resting place on Cathy's new Hard Drive. Perhaps I'm just paranoid, but I fail to see how even Commodore could place the instructions for such a service AFTER the section on installation.

Knowing full well that any goose who read books from front to back would be justifying their stupidity by wiping all of the installation files which they had just spent half an hour putting on the disc in the previous chapter. I might add

at this stage that the above premise did enter my mind but considered that if that was the case I could then turn the pages back two chapters and start from scratch. The end result of this intimidation by Commodore was that I spent two days getting my computer to recognise that Cathy's new Hard Drive was now a member of the family and it was my wish that we should all work in harmony.

I'm happy to say that despite the early hiccups, a close relationship has been born and all of OUR hardware now hums in appreciation of their new and happy home. I can certainly recommend a Hard Drive as an excellent add-on for the computer buff, but be warned, not all programs are adaptable to hard drives, so unless you use your computer for constructive purposes and are not put off by a constant whirring noise of the fan, best you buy the electric saw.

A DESPERATE PLEA! Has anyone successfully put the game Solitaire Royale onto a Hard Drive? If it is possible could you please let me know how its done (before Fathers Day). Address all correspondence on this matter to:- Ron Lewis...C/o SEEYUSUCKER NURSING HOME Siberia.

-ooOoo-

AMIGA PUBLIC DOMAIN LIBRARY

Fish Disk # 341

P2C - is a tool for translating Pascal programs into C. It handles the following Pascal dialects: HP Pascal, Turbo/UCSD Pascal, DEC VAX Pascal, Oregon Software Pascal/2, Macintosh Programmer's Workshop Pascal, Sun/Berkeley Pascal. Modula-2 syntax is also supported. Most

reasonable Pascal programs are converted into fully functional C which will compile and run with no further modifications.

Fish Disk # 342

IE - This is an icon editor which can create and modify icons up to 640x200 pixels in size (also dual

render). It can set stack size, position of icon (also free-floating), default tool, 10 tool types and control over opened window. It can also generate the C source code behind the icon for program inclusion. Version 1.0, binary only.

SKsh - A ksh-like shell for the Amiga. Ver. 1.4, update to v. 1.3 on disk 309. New features include a "tiny" version, a working case construct, support for resident commands, smaller and faster external commands, and more.

Softfont - Converts portrait soft fonts for HP LaserJet compatible laser printers to landscape format. update to the version on disk 327.

Fish Disk # 343

SnakePit - Simple, yet addictive game in which you must get the snake (you) off of the screen.

SoftSpan - BBS program. Intuitive, command-line based menu system with message bases, up/down loads, file credit system, help system, etc.

StockBroker - Program that helps you follow the recent table of exchange from one or more share(s). But of course you must tell the Amiga the recent table of exchange every day. Requires AmigaBASIC.

Fish Disk # 344

Keyboard - Functions to translate RAWKEY Intuition messages into usable keycodes. Translation into Modula-2 of C source on disk 291.

RKMCompanion - A two disk set of material created by Commodore for use with the 1.3 revision of the Amiga ROM Kernel Reference Manual, Libraries and Devices, published by Addison-Wesley. Almost 300 files, including C source code examples and executables, have been packed into two lharc archives, one for each disk of the two disk set. These examples are not public domain, but may be used and distributed under the conditions speci-

fied in the copyrights. Author: Commodore Business Machines, Inc.

Fish Disk # 345

CRobots - Game based on computer programming. Version 2.3w, update to v. 2.2w on disk 331.

Du - Prints number of disc blocks used in selected files or directories. Modified from original version on disk 48 to make output more readable, and handle ^C exit.

GetImage - Enhanced version of "gi" from disk 14. It now looks for the GRAB marker, in the brush file, instead of assuming that it is at a specific place, sets up the Plane-Pick value in the Image structure, and deletes any unused bitplanes to save memory and disk space.

MemFrag - Displays number of memory chunks/sizes to show memory fragmentation. Chunks are displayed as 2**N bytes which is a rough guide but still useful. Enhanced version of "Frag" from disk 69.

Roses - Program that draws sine roses. Implements an algorithm given in the article "A Rose is a Rose ..." by Peter M. Maurer in American Mathematical Monthly, Vol 94, No. 7, 1987, p 631.

Unshar - Program extracts files from Unix shar archives. Version 1.3, update to version on disk 287.

VcEd - Voice (Tone) Editor for the Yamaha 4 Operator series synthesizers.

X2X - Cross converts between Motorola/Intel/Tektronix ASCII-hex files. These files are typically used for down-line-loading into EPROMS, or for transmission where binary files cause chaos. Handles S1, S2, S3, INTEL (inc USBA records), Tektronix (inc extended).

Fish Disk # 346

Az - A nice little text editor that is fast, simple to use, and very Amiga'ized. Version 1.50, an update to v. 1.40 on disk 228, with lots

of new features, bug fixes, and other improvements.

CassEti - Cassette tape label printer.

FME - Patch to AllocMem() to allow badly designed programs which request fast mem without necessity to be run on 512K machines.

GoWB - Very small (296 bytes) and effective replacement for the well known "LoadWB" and "EndCLI" command pair.

PacketSupport - A link library, for use with Lattice C, providing a few functions to handle DOS packet postage.

PatchNTSC - OS fix to allow the growing number of PAL display programs to be run on NTSC machines.

TextPaint - Second major release of the Ansi editor. All major bugs have been fixed, and a bunch of new options have been added, e.g. possibility to reload ansi files or CLI modules, 4 color option, optimized keyboard layout, new drawing modes, right mouse button support (like DeluxePaint) and much more.

Timetest - Working example to show the time() and gmtime() functions of the Lattice C support library.

WBD - Possibly the smallest utility to set the workbench screen to any depth.

Fish Disk # 347

Cursor - A 3-pass BASIC Compiler for BASIC programs written in AmigaBASIC, does not yet support all of the BASIC commands but is able to compile itself.

Drip - Arcade style game with 15 floors (levels). You must move along the pipes of each floor and rush them to advance to the next level.

Fish Disk # 348

ColorReq - Describes the update to the color.library and has an example program, with source, that demonstrates its use.

DisEditor - Demo of the Dissidents Shareware text editor.

DisSecretary - This program can be used to file information in a "file cabinet" type environment.

FileIO - Contains updated files for version 1.6 of the dissidents requester library.

ILBMLib - Contains updated files for the dissidents ilbm.library on disk 237, with new lib features and a new library.

InstallLibs - Program to copy files to the LIBS: dir of a boot disk.

SAMP - An.IFF sampled sound format designed for professional music use.

Fish Disk # 349

MED - A music editor much like SoundTracker. Version 2.00, an update to v. 1.12 on disk 255.

Fish Disk # 350

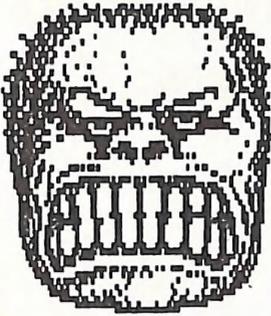
Icons - Large variety of icons for many uses, of practically every description.

MemMometer - Program that opens a narrow window and graphically displays your memory usage like a gauge.

Stitchery - This shareware program loads in IFF images and creates charted patterns from them for use in counted cross-stitch and other forms of needlework.

TrackUtils - Two utilities that deal with disk tracks. TCopy copies one or more tracks from one disk to another, and is useful for copying part of a floppy disk into RAD: during bootup. TFile creates a dummy file which "marks" a specified range of tracks, preventing AmigaDOS from using them and allowing them to be used for raw trackdisk data.

-ooOoo-



SECRETARY



TREASURER

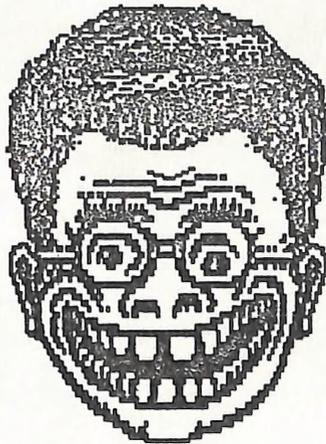
Dear Members,

*Have you ever seen such a pair of
unhappy faces?*

*We, of the Management
Committee, have to put up
with so much unhappiness
every year at membership
renewal time!*

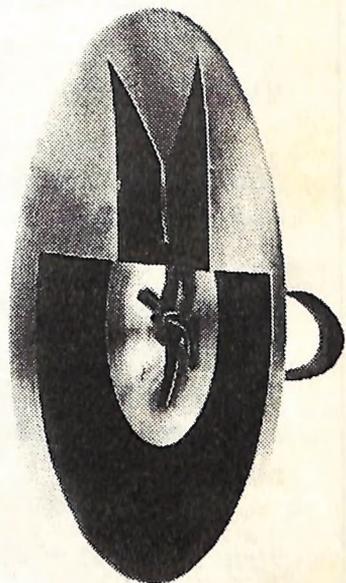
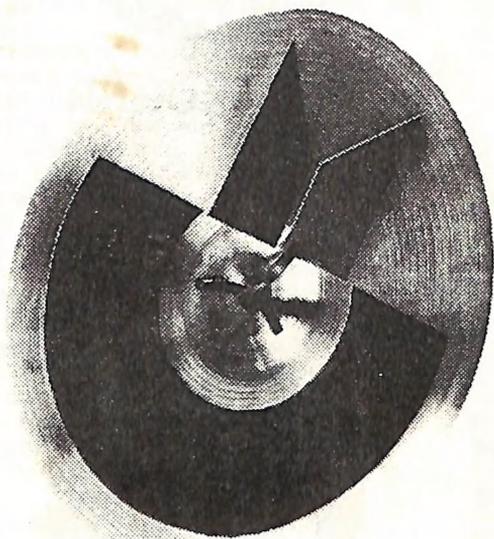
*Help them out of their misery
by paying next year's dues
as soon as possible !*

Yours, very gratefully



EDITOR

The Number One Symbol in Computers. Commodore.



C= commodore
COMPUTER
Keeping up with you.