



SACRAMENTO
AMIGA
COMPUTER
CLUB

Founded 1986

As President of the Sacramento Amiga Computer Club I regret to inform the membership that the August General Membership Meeting has been cancelled. This action was made necessary when the County Board of Supervisors changed their schedule at the last minute and told us that we could not have the room. The Board of Directors and myself decided at the last Board of Directors Meeting to cancel this month's meeting due to a lack of time to find and schedule another room and notify all the members of the change.

SACC has NEVER had to cancel one of it's meetings before and we obviously do not want to see this happen again. So I am currently in search of another place to have the meetings since it appears that the County Board of Supervisors meeting chambers is too volatile a meeting place for SACC. We are currently looking into some other places that charge a small fee for use of their rooms. While I would obviously prefer it be free, if a fee is involved, it should assure us that we do not get bumped ever again.

The September meeting will still be at the County Board of Supervisors Chambers. An announcement will be made at that time to our new meeting place, as well as it being printed here, posted on the BBS, and announced on the SACC hotline.

I thank you in advance for your understanding in this situation.

Ron Finlayson

The General Meeting Will
Canceled!
Be On August 5th.

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From The Editor

Well it's that time of the month again..(sigh) Sometimes I have to convince myself that taking over this job as Editor was worth it. It seems that each month as the deadline nears I find myself torn between two options. Should I start calling people and advertisers for those promised articles (and feel like I'm begging) or just wait it out and see what comes in. I know when I volunteered I had some work ahead of me to reach my goals. Last month I did what I basically wanted to do by reaching 24 pages and getting it to you on time, and I made sure there was a diverse amount of reading material that most everybody would enjoy. I have also enjoyed learning Desktop publishing and each month as I learn more I apply that to the next newsletter, hopefully increasing its quality and appearance.

How do you expect this Newsletter to continue growing or for that matter stay where it's at without MEMBER participation? When it's late or there is something you weren't happy about, you were right there complaining, if not to yourself, then openly at the meetings or to other friends. This club has over 300 members and yet only 2% of the members write articles for the *Amigazette*. While I much appreciate a continuing monthly article, I don't feel it's right for a select group of people to be the consistent contributors of the *Amigazette*. Come on people! I know you've paid your \$24 dollars in dues, but who said you could just sit back and be entertained? The whole premise and for that matter the founding of this club was based on people who volunteer! Some people have problems with volunteering or standing up in front of a group; what better way to contribute then writing an article for the *Amigazette* and putting some of your knowledge or expertise back into the club.

Think back, has SACC helped you out in anyway in the last few months? Has a member helped you or answered a question to some problem you were having? Has anything in the *Amigazette* been useful

or remotely entertaining these last few issues? Do you have a Amiga Wordprocessing package like *WordPerfect*, *Scribble*, *Textcraft*, *Notepad* or *ED(Gotcha!)*? If you answered YES to any of these questions then it's time to Volunteer and write an article for YOUR newsletter, the *Amigazette*.

Now some more good news. The *Amigazette* has gone national! Several copies are being distributed to several developers and pretty soon to Amiga User Groups around the country, mostly in hopes of getting a few advertisements but also to put SACC on the map as a growing Amiga User Group. I have even sent a letter to *Amazing Computing* about the *Amigazette* asking for other User Groups to send us their newsletters in hopes of increasing our repertoire of our favorite computer. If *Amazing Computing* reprints my letter look for future issues with articles from User Groups far and near, and maybe even some of us select members that write for the *Amigazette* will get national recognition too.

President Ramblings by Ron Finlayson

VICE PRESIDENT DANIEL AREY STEPS DOWN....

A sad announcement to start off with Dan is stepping down as our club Vice President. Dan has spent many an hour trying to sway those busy developers that we all know and love to take a break and come talk to the our club. It is a job I can well appreciate since I once held that office and had the same frustrations. Dan has found that recent events in his personal life and club events are conflicting, and since he is deeply concerned about the quality of our club and it's meetings he is stepping down. HOWEVER, this does not mean that he will simply vanish into null device. Quite the contrary, Dan will continue to be an active force in the club. So, next time you see Dan let him know you appreciated his efforts!

NEW VICE PRESIDENT APPOINTED....

Since the Vice President is a VERY important role in the club I have wasted no time in appointing a new Vice President, Jim DeFord. Jim's appointment was confirmed at the July Board Meeting. Many of you already know Jim from his work as a past club newsletter editor, his work as a Board of Director, and most recently for his work in the Desk Top Publishing SIG. Please, join me in welcoming him to his new responsibilities.

" GET ACQUAINTED DAYS "

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System 200 Rack Stereo 12-1229	Reg \$299.95	Only \$199.95
Universal IR Remote Control 15-1901	Reg \$99.95	Only \$69.95
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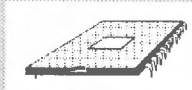
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CAN WE TALK?

VOLCANO, CA -- This town gets all it's water from an old gold mine. Water collects in the mine shaft--just like a big well--and flows into the "Cleveland Tunnel" (part of the old mine). From there it runs downhill to be collected in the town's storage tank, and gravity, again, takes it from the tank into the village's supply lines. The water is clear, sweet, cheap and has been dependable for a very long time: those of us living a bit out of town, having to drill and maintain our own wells, have always been a little envious. Now "they" are working to reopen the mine. Excavation and blasting have threatened the water supply. An agreement, involving pumping, was arrived at--but disputes arose. The mine operators have now shut off the flow of water. Volcano's tank is less than half full. Emergency rationing is in place. There is a report that a landowner, approaching the mine to discuss the matter, has been threatened with a firearm. Hoo-boy: range war over water. It's the sodbusters agin' the minin' company, to be fought with wet lawyers at fifty paces.

Just as a dispute over the sharing of resources can throw social systems into disarray, so can such disputes create problems for computer operating systems. Those that multitask are particularly vulnerable, so avoiding such hazards makes programing for the Amiga a special challenge. Not all commercial programs cooperate with each other as they should, and PD/shareware efforts seem even more prone to occasional problems. I really believe that the high quality of the non-commercial software available for the Amiga is one of the machine's great assets: but we have to expect to encounter (and to hopefully work around) a glitch now and then.

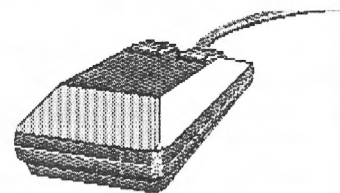
A common symptom of misbehaving Amiga software is receipt of a "System Request" notifying

you of a "software error". This is rather like receiving a letter consisting wholly of a large, black spot (you did read Treasure Island?): you are doomed. The request notice offers two gadgets on which to click: "Retry", which seems never to accomplish anything, and "Cancel",

which locks up everything but the reboot keys. (Thanks, Commodore.) I have heard that the "Cancel" gadget was intended to remove the offending program, leaving any other tasks (programs) functioning, but that the programmer assigned to the job left Commodore before finishing and no one picked up after him. True or not, there is a program, "GOMF!", that does perform this function. GOMF! is available either as PD or in a more powerful, commercial version: either one highly recommended.

Not all failures of software intercommunication are so dramatic, or fatal. Last month I talked about using UG (Utility Gadgets, a shareware program) to add a "menu" to the Workbench screen. That menu now gives me point-and-click WB access to such utilities as a file manager, calculator, quick disk-copy program, etc. One item I did not include among the menu items was some form of CLI access. The omission was intentional, and for a very simple reason: I'd started using "POPCLI" (another shareware program, it brings up a CLI whenever "left-Amiga/Esc" is pressed) in the "startup-sequence": very handy, and it obviated the need for a "CLI" menu item. But something strange started happening: files were "disappearing".

Not really disappearing, because they existed and I knew they existed, but I was getting "error 205" (object not found) and "unknown command" messages. This happened only when using a CLI that had been brought up *via* POPCLI and, eventually, it dawned on me that the invisible files (commands, programs or utilities) were always ones I'd set up to be found through the PATH command. That is, they were in directories I'd added to the PATH list. I entered "PATH" from



Ram@Home
Continued Next Page

Ram@Home *Continued*

a POPCLI-invoked CLI and was surprised to find that, although I had established (through the "startup-sequence") a six-item PATH list, only a two-item list was presented: "Current Directory" and "C:" (AmigaDOS's default list). A small but annoying example of one task not fully checking with others: POPCLI sets itself up without asking "what's on the current PATH list?".

Once a POPCLI CLI window has been opened, that window can be used to modify the PATH list in any way you want, but that obviously doesn't contribute to the goal of an interface that provides quick, easy, and almost automated access to a variety of tools. My solution, somewhat regrettably, is to stop using POPCLI. (Now I have to find a separate screen-blanker utility that works as well as the one

included in POPCLI!) Instead, I've used Utility Gadgets to add a "CLI" menu item to my Workbench screen. Invoked, it simply runs a NEWCLI command: the CLI window that's generated this way properly reflects the current PATH list.

None of this is intended as severe criticism of POPCLI: it's a good utility that works very well indeed for most people in most applications. But it has impressed me with the difficulties involved in getting several tasks to smoothly and perfectly share information and resources. Multitasking offers an incredible degree of flexibility and power, but it also offers uncountable opportunities for miscommunication. The more things going on at one time, the greater the chance that someone will speak out of turn, fail to ask an important question, or ignore a request. Although I would now find it tough to work without multitasking, I will occasionally remind myself to "Keep It Simple, Stupid".

At last Electronic Arts has shipped the long awaited F/A-18

F/A-18 Interceptor *by Dan Kelly*

Interceptor game. There has been (and you can ask any knowledgeable computer software dealer) ALOT of rumors and hype surrounding the release of this game. After viewing and using the game for the past month I must say that all of it is absolutely TRUE. There has never been a flight/combat simulator of this caliber for this (or any other) computer. EA has managed to incorporate into this game all of the excitement and joy of flying an F18 and unloading a barrage of missiles on enemy MIG fighters. This is in my opinion one of the greatest games I have ever seen for the Amiga or any other computer. It utilizes all of the A500's available 512k of memory and adds features for those users that have more than that.

Super sound effects and graphics superior to Jet, Flight Simulator II or any

other flight game this author has encountered are just some of the things that make this program irresistible. Some others are the ability to see the inside and outside of your plane from about twenty different viewpoints to eject from your jet at any time or altitude and the ability to land your F18 on the flight deck of the USS Enterprise (CVN65) or an enemy submersible carrier.

F/A-18 Interceptor is now available at most Amiga software dealers for \$35 - \$45 and is copyable into RAM: (if you have 1.5 megs or more) or onto a Hard Disk. This game/simulator is definitely worth the small price attached to it.

Overall rating: A+

SPECIAL FEATURES



By Pete Marquess



Animation Workshop

Get involved in a group project. Share your talents with others.

Audio SIG

The group is meeting at The Computer Shop. A variety of music applications will be demonstrated, although the group will focus primarily on Perfect Sound.

Beginner's Workshop

A great place to get started. Learn the basics about your machine.

Desktop Publishing

Learn all about Pagesetter and Professional Page.

Graphics SIG

Keep up with the fast paced release of graphics software for the Amiga.

Grass Valley SIG

Those of you who live in the Auburn - Grass Valley Area should plan to attend the next meeting.

MIDI SIG

It's a great place to go if your music interest on the Amiga goes beyond sound sampling.

Programming SIG

This group is the combined effort of the C SIG and the OS programming SIG. Contact Scott Lee for more info.

Telecom SIG

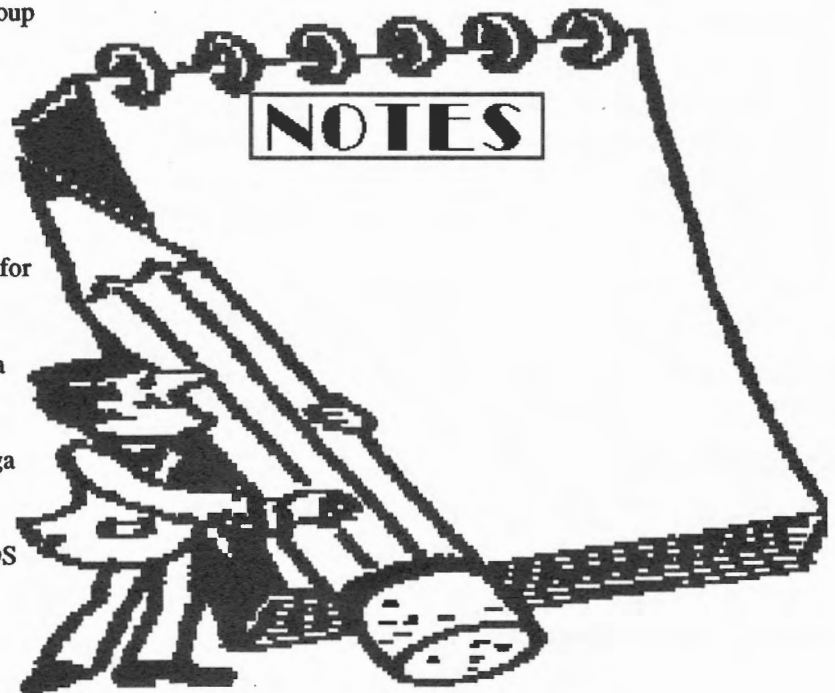
If you need some help with your modem or you're interested in modem games, check this group out.

Video SIG

Robert Guerin has volunteered to start up the Video SIG.

WordPerfect SIG

A workshop will be meeting the fourth Thursday each month at The Computer Shop.



SIG LEADERS

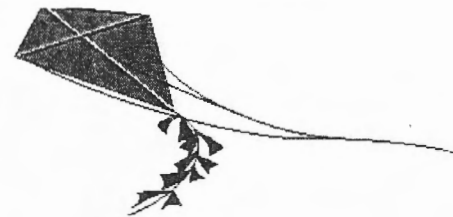
Animation Workshop	David Coombs	823-2903	The Computer Shop
Audio SIG	Sean Minot	481-2570	The Computer Shop
Beginner's Workshop	Pete Marquess	991-0415	Sylvan Oaks Library
Desktop Publishing	Cindie Smith	338-2000	Put's Electronics
Graphics SIG	David Coombs	823-2903	The Computer Shop
Grass Valley SIG	David Banidimere	292-3769	Home Federal Savings, Grass Valley
MIDI SIG	Dennis Hayes	635-6420	Contact leader for info on meeting place.
Programming SIG	Scott Lee	363-6170	Fair Oaks - Orangevale Library
Telecom SIG	Ron Finlayson	726-3709	8701 B Auburn Oaks, Citrus Heights
Video SIG	Robert Guerin	721-3137	No meeting place scheduled at this time.
WordPerfect SIG	Mike	332-2500	The Computer Shop

If you have an interest in joining, creating, or leading a SIG contact me or David Coombs.

For more info on Club Activities call the SACC Info Line at 991-0220



September 1988



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Graphics SIG.	7	8 Newsletter Article Deadline BOARD MEETING	9	10 Library Outing at Computer Time
11	12	13 MIDI SIG.	14 Desktop Publishing SIG.	15 Audio SIG.	16	17 Beginner's Workshop 10a.m.
18	19 Programming SIG.	20 Telecom SIG.	21	22 WordPerfect SIG.	23	24 Grass Valley SIG. 1p.m.
25	26	27 SACC GENERAL MEETING	28	29	30	



Note: Unless otherwise stated, all meeting times are 7p.m.

July's General Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by Pres. Ron Finlayson. Minutes of last meeting read by Sec. Bob Griffith. Treasurer's Report read by Linda Marquess, we have a balance of \$2150.88. S.I.G. News and announcements by SIG Coordinator Pete Marquess. Announcements by Pres. Ron Finlayson included:



- Extensions of Commodore's Partners Program
- New Microsoft Basic
- New S.A.C.C. Hotline... Phone # 991-0220 (Club news and announcements)
- Library outing for August at Candy Computer Aug. 13 (11:00-5:00)

Pres. Ron Finlayson announced the resignation of Vice President Daniel Arey for personal reasons. Ron Finlayson appointed Jim DeFord, with the approval of the Board of Directors, to finish out Dan's term of office.

Pres. Ron Finlayson presented the new Commodore Amiga promotional video. Break and distribution of this month's club disk. There was no raffle due to the absence of Rick Busch. David Combs and Dan Arey demonstrated the new Video Effects 3-D. Pres. Ron Finlayson demonstrated Western Games (Magic Bytes) and Winter Challenge. Daniel Arey closed out the evening with the demonstration of Bard's Tale II.

Meeting called to a halt at 9:15 pm, by Pres. Ron Finlayson.

Didn't you always love the silly slapstick comedy of the Three Stooges? Now you can join in that

3 Stooges Review by Dan Kelly

fun with that terrible threesome. Guide Moe, Larry, and Curly through their unending search for money to save an orphanage from its financial woes and ultimately marry the widow's three daughters. Numerous screens are available to try and raise the funds to pay off the evil banker. From throwing pies in the country club to running around after a renegade nurse picking up hospital supplies to engaging in a boxing match with a killer opponent are some of the ways to get money on some of the screens. Finding money bags, wallets, answering trivia questions, going up against the banker, and doing battle with

Clams from Hell are some of the other choices that you make during the game and

all the screens you see are from the original Stooze movies. Digitized sounds, pictures, and smooth scrolling screens highlight this enjoyable program. Great fun from the outset, this program loses some of its flair after continued play but I believe it is worth the \$35 - \$40 price tag it incorporates. By the way it is also copyable onto hard disk or into RAM: for those of you that have 1 meg or more but you will need the key disk when you start the game.

Overall rating: B+

*Bard's Tale II
The Destiny Knight
Review by Rudi Cilibrasi*

This game is one of the many adventure-role playing games out for the Amiga. Your goal? To reunite the seven segments of the Destiny Wand and defeat the evil Archmage Lagoth Zanta, thereby restoring peace to the Realm of the Bard, and becoming the Destiny Knight.

To start, you must create a group of characters. Then, you must go out into your starting city, Tangramayne, exploring it and destroying monsters in order to get experience points for your group. When your characters get enough experience points, they may progress in level, which gives them added power. Once you have established your characters, then your only hint is, "Seek the Sage and ask him about 'The Tombs'". And so you are sent on your way to becoming the Destiny Knight.

This game has many improvements over the original Bard's Tale. In the original, many people complained about the terrible save feature, but that has been rectified, for in this one you may save your game almost anywhere. Also, now a group may consist of however many "specials" (monsters within the party) you want. There are also new monsters, with much more power than in the original. And with seven cities to explore, several dungeons, crypts, tombs, and a wilderness in between, this game seems to be immensely large. Another important improvement is the addition of an Archmage class, with several new ultra-powerful spells to gain.

Another exciting feature in this game is the addition of a new sort of puzzle, the Death Snares. They are little rooms, where no magic works, and you have a limited amount of time to complete it or perish. Many hints about the Death Snares, and how to solve them, can be found if one but looks throughout the dungeons.

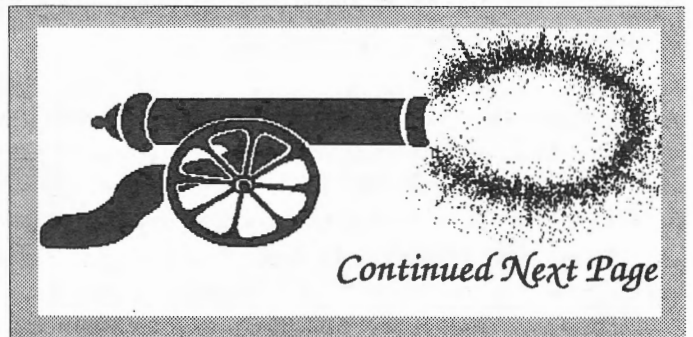
Needless to say, I am enjoying this game. I would recommend it not only to Bard's Tale I players, but also to people without experience in Bard's Tale, for the manual is so well-written that it explains everything. Hence, anyone who has adventuring spirit should check this game out.

*A Review of the
Lattice C Compiler
By Steve E. Riley*

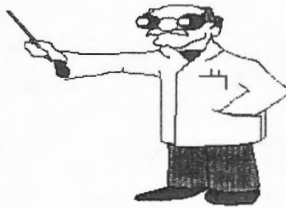
When I bought my Amiga a few years ago, there was only one C compiler available, Lattice C. It was released before the Amiga was available so that software could be written for the Amiga and be ready to be released with the first Amigas available to the public. With a list price of \$149, I looked over the compiler carefully before purchasing it.

The first thing I checked into was the price of updates. I don't like paying a significant amount of the purchase price for updates and found out the previous update was \$10 or \$15 which seemed very reasonable. I went ahead and purchased the compiler from ComputerLand since no mail order places sold the compiler at the time. The first thing I noticed was that I had an old update; version 3.03 was out, yet I had 3.02. I sent in the registration card to Commodore, figuring they would notify me or send me the latest update. After several months, of course I got no reply. I sent a letter to Commodore and one to Lattice, not sure which was responsible, since Commodore was reselling the compiler at the time I bought it. Again, no response from Commodore (which is what we have all come to expect in the years since then), but Lattice said they could update me to version 3.10 (yes, this all took so long that yet another update was out!) for \$75. Well, this seemed awfully expensive to me and I found out why. The new compiler contained some UNIX like text utilities that Lattice sold separately, which was now included in the price of the compiler. The utilities sold for, you guessed it, \$75. I did not want the utilities but was forced to pay for them anyway.

Back to the review, I had been writing an astronomical program that used graphics and animation. The program was coming along quite well.



Lattice C Review Continued



The compiler worked fine despite my having only one floppy and 512K of RAM. I was having very little problems with system calls or the C itself.

I received version 3.10 which came with a very impressive looking new manual and set of floppies. It also contained the very depressive (for my wallet) manual for the text utilities which I have never had any need to use. I was happy to see they had a BBS where you could call for help, updates, and various other activities. I called up and became a certified user, but never used it much because I got a new job and house about that time so it was several months before I used the Amiga much.

After things settled down, I started in again on my program only to find out it would compile but not run under version 3.10. It would start to run then receive visits from the famous GURU. Testing again with the old 3.03 version, the program ran fine (the parts that were written, it was (and is) not finished). About that time version 4.00 was out for the formidable price of \$45 for the update, again very expensive. I bought it on the hopes my 3.10 problems would be solved and my program development could again get under way.

With the 4.00 package came again another very impressive looking manual, although nothing was to be seen or heard of the text utilities. Apparently they were dropped from the package. One very positive thing about the 4.00 manual, it doesn't stink nearly as badly as the 3.10 manual. I don't know what kind of paper they used with 3.10, but the odor when flipping thru the pages is nearly unbearable. It still smells even after more than a year!

My program still wouldn't run with the 4.00 version and after \$120 worth of updates, I didn't want to go back to developing under 3.03. I called the Lattice BBS for help. They had somehow lost my registered user status and I needed to complete the questionnaire again and would become a registered user within 24 hours. Well, they wouldn't let me become a

registered user for almost two months because of a serial number problem. I found this very irritating given that I was already registered. When I finally got on, I left a message for the general users of the board, figuring that I didn't want to bother the Lattice people with what was probably a very simple question (I assumed there must be some easy answer to this problem). When I got back on a week later to check my responses, I was disappointed to learn I had none; and no wonder as my original message had been deleted! I went ahead and filled out a regular bug questionnaire, at the end of which it stated I would get a response within a "few days". After several weeks, I still had no response and filled out another bug sheet asking what was going on with my first bug sheet? I received an angry response back stating that here she (A Lattice Employee) was working on the weekend on my bug because I was so impatient! I don't think it is too unreasonable to be a little impatient after waiting a total of three months for something that was supposed to take a few days.

It has been about eight months now and the only response I have received was another smart alec retort. Absolutely no help was given to me. I would like to add I mentioned to them I would be writing a review on their product and then waited three more months so they could come up with an answer or response.

I am sorry that this is not the review I would liked to have given (about \$350 sorry!). I have hardly used the compiler at all because it is not upward compatible with older versions. You will notice on several public domain programs that they were "updated to compile with 4.00" or "will compile with 3.10". As a software developer myself, I know it is very nasty not to be upward compatible, customers do not like it.

All I can say is that it seems that the compiler has generally gotten better, since I have not been able to use it I am only guessing. The documentation certainly has gotten much better. The cost of updates, upward compatibility problems, and their BBS problems make the compiler useless. I have used a large number of different compilers over the years and have only seen one that was worse than Lattice, most have been very nice to work with. I cannot afford to switch to the Manx compiler, so I am stuck with an unusable product. I certainly cannot recommend the Lattice C Compiler

Candy Computer

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Dragon Tales

by
Robert S. Brown



I have great news for those of you who have played BARD'S TALE on your Amiga, BARD'S TALE II, THE DESTINY KNIGHT has been released!

The plot of the game is basically the same one as in Bard's Tale: save everyone from the clutches of the evil wizard. But Bard's Tale II is much more than a sequel. It's a fine wine which has gained depth and power through age. This program is the best example of improvement through refinement I have ever seen in a role-playing game. Enough of this small talk, strap on your sword and grab a torch. Now you are ready to follow me into an exploration of this latest adventure for the Amiga.

Since the people of INTERPLAY PRODUCTIONS and ELECTRONIC ARTS were trusting enough not to write protect this program, the first thing I did was make a back up of the original. Next I made a Character Disk and promptly transferred a group of level eight adventures from the Bard's Tale I character disk to this newly created character disk.

You begin your adventure in the guild of the capital city of Tangramayne. Here you assemble your group of up to six adventurers and embark on a search for seven lost fragments of the Destiny Wand. With this complete wand you might stand a chance of defeating the all powerful and all evil archmage Lagoth Zanta. The search for these wand fragments will take you across the forest and meadows of the Realm, among the streets and buildings of six cities, and through twenty-five levels of mazes. The Realm is on a 32 x 47 grid, the cities are on 16 x 16 grids, and the mazes are on 22 x 22 grids. The cities now have banks and casinos in addition to the Energy Emporiums, Adventure's Guilds, Inns, Review Boards, Shoppes, and Temples found in Bard's Tale I. To make it easier on beginning adventurers a complete map of Tangramayne is included with the manual.

Along with the larger area to explore comes a larger group of gruesome monsters and ghastly undead to vanquish. And once again the art and spot animation of the graphics is superb. To help defeat these hordes of monsters a much more powerful collection of spells are at the fingertips of your magic users, some capable of inflicting up to 800 "bone-crushing" points of damage. One spell is so powerful that it could not be written down in the spell book and must be learned by the spell caster through diligence. Magic items can also be found by thorough explorers. The number of charges these items have is identified by a number to the right of the listed name. As far as comprehending what an item does, use it once to find out, but don't point it at a friend while doing so.

Well we have talked about how the game is bigger than its predecessor, but what about those refinements? How about being able to save the game while still in a maze? Yep, now you can save that game before you go down those stairs to

the next level. Which is something I highly recommend, because you never know when you will stumble upon a Snare of Death. What is a Snare of Death you ask? It is a real time puzzle which guards each of the seven fragments of the Destiny Wand. Once you enter a Snare of Death you must solve it within a time limit or be snared.

Another improvement is in the handling of the special members: monsters which volunteer to fight with your group. Now a special member can carry up to eight items just like regular members. Also these special members are saved to disk just like regular members. Best of all, special members now fight as if they were a true member of your team. In Bard's Tale I you had no control over the actions of a special member. Quite a few times I would have a red dragon as a special member who when confronted with 396 berserkers would chose to claw one rather than breath fire and fry many. This would leave 395 now extremely angered berserkers with 395 extremely sharp swords! Well that no longer seems to be the case. Now you can count on your special member to go after the strongest of the enemies with appropriate force. Barbecued berserker anyone?!

I've saved the best improvement for last: the addition of ranged combat. This one addition has completely changed the combat system. Enemy monsters are now arranged from 10 feet to 90 feet during combat. Hand weapons are only effective up to 10 feet. This means that new ranged weapons are now available, such as, spears, hand axes, and bows with arrows. In addition magic is also ranged. This means that different spells have variable effects which are dependent on the distance over which they are cast and how resistant to magic the target is to the spell being employed. Ranged combat has introduced a need for fighting strategy to a degree previously found only in war games. For the first time I am finding myself needing to use all of the magic spells available to me. Now a group of monsters will soften your group up a bit with a volley of spears before they engage you with hand weapons. Enemy magic users will stand back and make you come to them while at the same time they pound you with every spell they know. This makes the use of defensive spells a must, and the use of offensive spells at the proper place and time a skill needed to survive.

If this game sounds a little tougher than your average role-playing game, it's because it is! But a diligent beginner or novice can have just as much, if not more fun than a veteran



Forge on to
Next Page

dungeon buster. To help a novice adventurer out I'm going to give a few tips and suggestions on how to attack this game.

First you should create a well balanced fighting team of six. At least two of these heroes need to be magic users, one a magician, and the other a conjurer. Also you need a bard. He can help protect your group with added armor and he can help your magic users regain spell points. While you have level one and two characters be sure to heal any wounds as soon as possible and only fight in the town and only during daylight (it is always morning when you exit the inn). Be sure you save your characters to disk as soon as they gain a level!!! When they reach level five you can begin exploring the Starter Dungeon located on the town map. You should be able to survive level 1 and 2 without much trouble, but starting with level 3 the going gets tougher very quickly. I wouldn't even try level 4 without experienced level 13 characters. If you get tired of waiting on level 3 for your characters to get strong enough to survive level 4 then go and explore the countryside and the other five towns. If you stumble upon the dungeon out in the country, do not enter it. I went in with level 15 fighters backed up with sixth spell level sorcerers and got pounded on my first encounter by a single monster. I made it back out, but only because he had forgotten to invite friends!

While you are traveling around improving your swordsmanship be sure to keep detailed maps and a list of all clues that you uncover. Be sure to leave no stone unturned while exploring. If you don't explore thoroughly you might miss a key piece of information or that special something needed to complete the game. Be sure to use the spell "Scry Site" when you first enter a level of a maze. This spell will give you your present location in a maze. An example would be something like this: "you are 2 levels down, 3 squares north, and 20 squares east of the entry stairs." The entry stairs are 0,0 in location, which means they are located on the square on the bottom and all the way left of your 22 x 22 grid map. The opposite corner would be 21,21 or 21 squares north by 21 squares east. It is very important that you make your maps using this coordinate system because some of the clues given are based on your mapping in this way. For example, the clue needed to gain access to level 4 of the Starter Dungeon is dependant on your mapping level 3 in this manner. Even though I did map using this coordinate system I still had trouble with this riddle. The reason was because I don't draw one sided walls the same way that the programmer does. If you also have trouble in discovering this password, here is the word encoded "zxdf". Look at the end of this article for the key to learn the needed password. I encoded the word so that people who want to solve the riddle for themselves won't have their challenge spoiled. I hope that these tips help even novice players to enjoy this excellent role-playing game.

Well it's time for my wizard to rate this program. To help you decide whether or not to add an adventure game to your collection I have added two more areas to the list of ratings. Firstly, I have added skill level, which is a measure of how challenging the game is to complete. Secondly, I will tell you what type of protection the program uses for those of you

who have hard disks you wish to use.

Scale 1-10, one being very poor and ten being so good that it sets a new standard in that area (in the opinion of my wizard and I).

Skill Level	Advanced
Protection	None
Graphics	9
Sound Effects	8
Documentation	8
Animation	9.5
Playing Satisfaction	9
Other (Combat System)	10

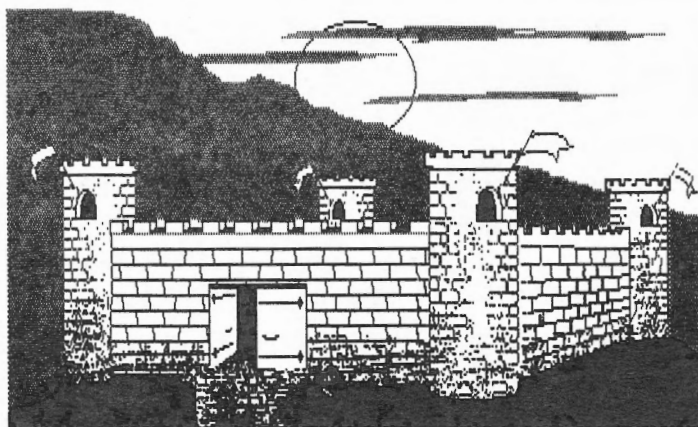
As you can tell I really like The Destiny Knight. I highly recommend this game for anyone who wants to be captivated for the next three to five months. The combat system is excellent and the spot animation is so lifelike that I never get tired of admiring the skill and hard work that went into its creation. This game is a must for role-playing fans! My wizard has one question for Interplay Productions. When is Bard's Tale III going to be released for the Amiga!!!!

For those of you who are interested in what is up and coming for the Amiga adventurer, I have compiled this list of games which have been promised to be coming to your local software dealer.

Ultima IV	3rd quarter 1988
Ultima V	1st quarter 1989
Land of Legends	3rd quarter 1988
Questron II	Now
Dungeon Master	3rd quarter 1988
Pool of Radiance	1st quarter 1989
Heroes of the Lance	3rd quarter 1988
Wizard Wars	4th quarter 1988
First Expedition	Coming
Enlightenment	3rd quarter 1988
Bard's Tale III	???

Well that does it for this month, next month I will share my adventures in the newly released Questron II. Meanwhile, where is that first wand fragment? (Wiz says to ask the Sage.)

Key to the code: F = S, X = A, D = S, and Z = P



Editor's Note: Hats off to Dennis Hayes who as far as I know is the first SIG leader to publish a newsletter, what follows is the first page of that newsletter.

MIDI SIG

for the members of the Sacramento Amiga Computer Club

August 1988

SIG Leader: Dennis Hayes

Welcome to the MIDI sig newsletter!

Although I don't plan to do this every month I thought it would be fun once in a while. I want to communicate some ideas and thoughts with the people and/or musicians that are interested in the MIDI aspect of the Amiga.

Any contributions to this newsletter or the running of the sig are not only appreciated but necessary for us to grow and prosper.

Thanks,
Dennis

FIRST MEETING A BIG SUCCESS

The first meeting of the newly formed MIDI SIG was held on July 7th in Rancho Cordova. We had a very good turn out with people coming from as far away as Woodland and Davis.

In addition to donut holes and Hawaiian Punch (courtesy of AlohaFonts - who else?) we looked at a couple of pieces of Amiga music software.

The first program was Dynamic Studio 1.2 from New Wave Software. It is a combination sequencer (real time recording), note editor, and drum machine. The drum machine uses samples on the Amiga to produce the sounds. Lists for \$199.

We took a brief look at Dr T's KCS. More on KCS at a future meeting. We checked out both of these programs using a MIDIable Yamaha PSR-6300.

We had a chance to preview a great piece of music from Jack Cannon entitled Piano Rhapsody. Jack wrote, arranged, and sequenced the tune. He used DMCS and a Roland MT-32 to put the song on tape. Nicely done Jack!

Some more taped MIDI music came to us from Steve Meikle of Woodland. Steve uses samplers and the drums sound turned my head around.

MEETING SEPTEMBER 13th

The next meeting of the MIDI SIG will be on September 13th.

Call Dennis at 635-6420 in the evening or at Computertime 969-4111 or 723-4000 for more information.

MIDI SIG LOOKING....

for alternate places to meet. If you would like to volunteer your home, store, office, or studio please contact Dennis.

*Ramblings about
Communications
by Ron Finlayson*

I hope this is to be a regular column for me. But I will see what kind of response I get and see where to go from there. I could go several different directions but I thought I would start by answering some of the most asked questions when it comes to telecommunications and specifically the club BBS, the Amiga Link!

First for those new to the BBS world who are currently using the club BBS I would like to pass on some etiquette for leaving messages. This is not to say that I am having any problems with new users (I am not) just some tips for those just starting or those who have just started.

MESSAGE TIPS

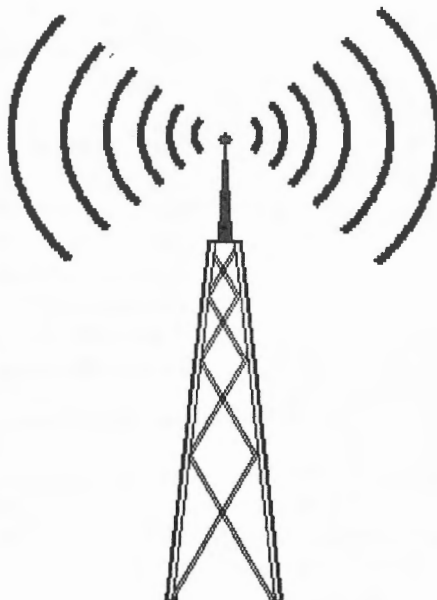
The BBS world is one where people try and express their emotions and meaning in words. This is not an easy task with people interpreting your messages as they THINK you meant them. Perhaps the biggest mistake new BBS users do when leaving messages is to type their message all in capitals. Using capitals in a BBS message usually means yelling, or extreme over emphasis. So it is wise to stick to standard capitalization rules of English unless you intend for people to read them as you are yelling. In an effort to better get across the emotional aspect of a letter there are several little character strings recognized in telecommunications. You probably have seen these and had no idea as to what they were. Rotate the following characters in your mind 90 degrees to the left. You should see a face. here are some examples:

- :-) Smiley face.
- :> Smirking or laughing face.
- ;-) A wink and a smile
- :(Unhappy
- :< Very hostile.

There are many more but I think you get the idea right? :-)

A FEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.....

What exactly is a BBS?



The acronym BBS stands for "Bulletin Board System". Basically, a BBS is a program running on a personal computer that allows people to call in with their computer and leave messages and share program files. BBS's of old were very unsophisticated, however today the BBS systems have become VERY powerful providing many services to it's callers. It is a place to talk about various issues, leave private notes to your friends, and download/upload the latest in hot Public Domain and Shareware software.

What does UPLOADING and DOWNLOADING mean? And what is the difference?

The term uploading and downloading is used to describe the act of transferring programs, pictures, or text from the BBS you are calling to your computer for your use. This is perhaps one of the biggest benefits of telecommunications, and also one of the biggest sources of trouble for new users. The difference between UPLOADING/DOWNLOADING can be best be described using an analogy. Picture the BBS that you are communicating with sitting on top of a hill. Therefore if you get a file from the BBS it came DOWN the hill so it is DOWNloading. Conversely if you send a file it must go UP the hill so it is UPloading.

What are PROTOCOLS? What do they do?

SIMPLISTIC:

They catch and correct any errors during the transmission of a file.

TECHNICALLY:

A protocol is a terminal program algorithm that cuts the file to be sent or received into what is known as "blocks". Packets are a set number of bytes the actual file that is being sent along with a couple of bytes that contain a checksum of the block. A checksum is a numeric sum of the bytes found in the block. What does all this mean? Well, when a block is received by the receiving end the protocol on the receiver's end calculates a checksum based on the data that he received. If the checksum the receiver has calculated matches that of the one sent by the sender than the block is a good block. The receiver then tells the sender that he got the block of information just fine, and go ahead and send the next one. If that checksum does not match the checksum that was sent for the block by the sender, then an error has occurred and the data received has been corrupted. The bad block is then discarded and the receiver notes the error and tells the sender to resend the last block as he got it bad.



*Continued on
Next Page*



*Ramblings on
Communication
(Continued)*

What this does for you is to guarantee that the file that you get on your machine is EXACTLY the

same as the file that was on the sender's machine byte for byte.

How will I know a PROTOCOL when I see it?

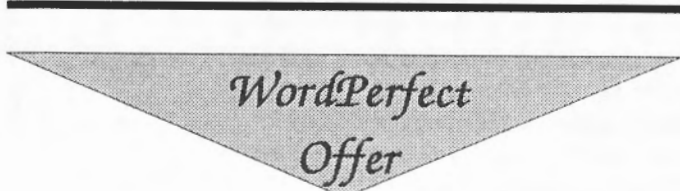
The most popular protocol of all time is XMODEM. You will find it on virtually every BBS, or pay service in existence. It sends 128 bytes of data per block with a 1 byte checksum. It is 99.9991% accurate and I have personally yet to see it fail. Almost all terminal programs also provide XMODEM as one of the download options. This is not to say that XMODEM is the best, it has simply been around the longest and therefore is a quasi standard in the telecommunications market and is mentioned here because it is most likely the protocol you will find on your own terminal program.

How would I go about downloading a file from the Amiga Link! BBS?

This procedure varies depending on the terminal program that you are using. Since ACCESS 3.0A is available in the club library, and has one of the better user interfaces available I will use it as my example here. Load ACCESS and dial the Amiga Link! BBS. (I assume that you can get this far, if not please come to the next telecommunication SIG meeting) After finding the file you want to download in the file section, select the "D" for "Download a File". The BBS will then ask you for which protocol you wish to use, select "X" to select the "XMODEM" protocol. The BBS will then ask for the file name of the file you wish to download. Spelling is of the utmost of importance here since if you spell it wrong the BBS will tell you that it cannot find the file, and will ask you again for the name of the file. If you can't remember just hit the enter key with no name and the BBS will abort the process and take you back to the file menu, where you can select "L" to "List the files" to get the correct spelling. Once you have the protocol selected and have got the right file name entered the BBS will tell you to begin your receive operations. At this point use the mouse pointer to click on the XDOWN box located on the bottom strip of your screen. You will then be presented with a standard Amiga File requestor window. Simply select the device (disk, ram, etc..) that you want the file to go to and then type the name of the file in the blank provided. When you have done that hit return on the file name, and VIOLA! At the bottom of the screen you will see a constantly updated one line message about the status of the transfer. When the file has been successfully sent you should here a beep, the status line will disappear and the BBS will resend the File Menu back to you along with a successful completion message. You now should have an EXACT copy of the file that was on the BBS on your machine. Pretty nifty huh? The only thing I can think of to warn you about in the above process is to not waste too much time entering the file name into the Amiga file requestor window, as the BBS will only wait about 30 seconds before it

assumes that you changed your mind and aborts the transfer, so be quick!

If any of the above was too technical for you please come to the next Telecommunications SIG meeting and I will be more than happy to explain to walk you through the process, and answer any questions you may have. Please, feel free to leave questions about how to do something on the BBS as a Comment to the Sysop, and I will try and help you. However it is really hard to explain in a message what can be shown in a second. Remember a picture is worth a thousand words.



**WORDPERFECT ANNOUNCES
USER GROUP DISCOUNTS!**

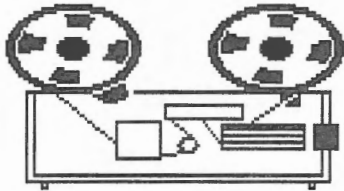
You say you've outgrown your Amiga wordprocessor but the powerful alternatives are priced out of your reach? WordPerfect has some great news for you!

Until September 15, 1988 SACC members are eligible to purchase WordPerfect for only \$155, a savings of \$174 off the list price. Orders are placed direct to WordPerfect using the special order form provided for the promotion. Your form must be stamped by SACC in order to receive this discount.

Forms are available at authorized Amiga dealers around Sacramento. For more information on this special offer contact WordPerfect at (800)321-4566. Don't wait...this special offer ends September 15th!!



The next Library outing will be on September 10th at Computer Time



AMIGEN VS. SUPERGEN

Do You Have to Spend \$800 for Genlock?

by Dave Bloch
Media Resources Coordinator
Consumnes River College

Over the past few months, several magazines have featured articles about Desktop Video using the Amiga. They all carry one happy theme, that the Amiga's graphics capabilities really shine when used as part of a video production system. And that's really good news for all of us.

In July and August, the staff of the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation worked with me to set up critical technical evaluations of the two most popular Amiga genlock units, the \$180 AmiGen (from Mimetics Corporation, Cupertino, CA) and \$800 SuperGen (from Digital Creations, Sacramento, CA). We connected both units to a waveform monitor and vectorscope (special-purpose oscilloscopes used to measure video signals), and tested them with a variety of input signals and Amiga-generated graphics.

Our goals for these tests were:

1) To confirm informal reports that the SuperGen was indeed capable of meeting professional standards of

video level, stability and timing;

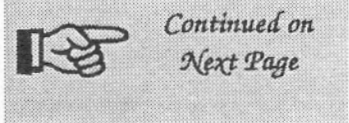
2) To determine whether we could recommend purchase of the inexpensive AmiGen for professional or educational use.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

Yes, it is; and No, we can't.

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

The keys to using the Amiga in a video environment are NTSC encoding and genlock. Since the ill-conceived Commodore genlock died a natural death, several manufacturers have begun



Look What's New

Games!

- Better Dead Than Alien
- Black Lamp
- Carrier Command
- Casino Fever
- Fire & Forget
- Mike The Dragon
- Star Glider II
- Superstar Ice Hockey

Productivity Programs

- AREXX
- A Talk Plus
- Fine Print

NEW from Dr. T's

Dr. T's MIDI Recording Studio

This program is KCS's little brother. It is an eight track MIDI recording studio with many of the same features as KCS at about 1/4 of the price.

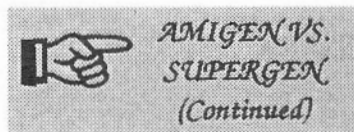
CT Price \$59.95

The Critics Choice

This powerful combination of database, spreadsheet, and wordprocessor is now available as one complete unit. Critics Choice includes Microfiche Filer, MaxiPlan 500, and Kind Words. Together these three programs have a MSRP of \$350 but as a unit they list for \$249.95.

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723-4000
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3 Blocks East of Sunrise



marketing their own genlock boxes. Some of the recent magazine articles have reviewed different units, and the

July issue of *Amazing Computing* had a fine story with side-by-side color pictures for comparison.

The AC article, and the others, are fine for the home user, but may be misleading for anyone else. The video professional has to have much more specific information about video and color levels, stability, adjustability, and synchronization. A picture that looks fine when you show it directly on your home TV will turn fuzzy, have inaccurate colors, or fall apart altogether when recorded, duplicated and broadcast. This is the information we obtained through our tests.

With no video signal on it's input side, the SuperGen provided video and synchronization signals that matched our broadcast-grade signal generator almost exactly. When we used that same signal generator to feed the video input, the video and synchronization signals passed through the SuperGen with absolutely no degradation (the unit, said SCCF engineer Gordon Zanotti, is "perfectly transparent").

We had no trouble connecting the SuperGen up to the Key input of the studio video switcher, enabling us to use that switcher's full range of effects. SuperGen also worked well in a "downstream" mode; that is, placing it in the video line between two VCR's for overlaying graphics during the editing process (this is how most home users would use it).

Overall, the SuperGen appears to be well suited for use in a professional, or even broadcast, video production environment.

The AmiGen, on the other hand, had serious problems throughout our tests. Video levels (that is, "brightness") of the computer graphics were very low, and there is no way to adjust them. (The internal brightness and tint adjustments affect only the external video signal.) The horizontal sync pulse, which should be set at -40 on the waveform monitor, read -50; again, with no adjustment possible. Timing, waveform and level of the color burst signal also did not meet specifications.

The most serious problem with the AmiGen, in our view, was the degradation it caused in the external video signal. A unit of this kind, which many users will probably leave permanently connected to their VCR's whether they are using it or not, has to be transparent--that is, it should do nothing to the signal passing through it. The "perfect" video and synchronization signals from our signal generator came out of the AmiGen with greatly distorted levels and reduced sharpness. Home users of the AmiGen should NOT leave the unit permanently connected between their VCR's--wire it in ONLY when titles or graphics are

actually being added.

For professional users needing a genlock to install with a studio switcher, note that the AmiGen does not have a Key Output. It therefore may be used only in a downstream configuration.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The author of the *Amazing Computing* article states, "The (AmiGen's) image conforms to standards and can be used for broadcast." According to our tests, this is absolutely not the case. In fact, we would not recommend AmiGen for anything beyond the most non-critical home uses, and even then, only if the unit is disconnected whenever it is not in use. If you are an Amiga owner who wants to try your hand at adding titles to your vacation tapes and you only have \$180, the AmiGen will do that job acceptably.

For anyone doing serious video work, the SuperGen is the only choice between these two units. It provides true broadcast-quality synchronization, and is fully compatible with studio switchers.

(Thanks to Randy Van Dalsen and Gordon Zanotti of the Sacramento Community Cable Foundation, and to Dennis Hayes at Computertime, for making these tests possible.)



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(916)722-1133 or (916)648-1554 1200/2400 24 Hrs.
Sysop: Ron Finlayson

Other Local Bulletin Boards:
AMIGA Express
(916)635-5749 6PM - 11PM ONLY

Another AMIGA BBS
(916)682-1740 3/12/2400 24 Hrs.

Bear's Byte
(916)722-7423 300/1200 24 Hrs.
Sysop: Woodie Bear

Instant Guru
(916)457-7176 1200/2400 24 Hrs.
Sysops: AL Harrington & Ed Gibson

Nebula-2
(916)351-6482 1200/2400
5PM - 8PM Weekdays 24Hrs. WeekendsOnly
Sysop: Bob Pauwee

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1/4 Page	3.5"x 5"	\$15.00
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If you have any questions about placing an ad, please call the Editor. Full payment should accompany your order made payable to SACC. Your ad and payment should be sent to (unless otherwise arranged):

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P.O. Box 19784
Sacramento, Ca 95819-0784
ATTN: AmigaZette Editor

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Ad location (at this time) is on a *First-come-First-served* basis. Place your ad early for the best locations.

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