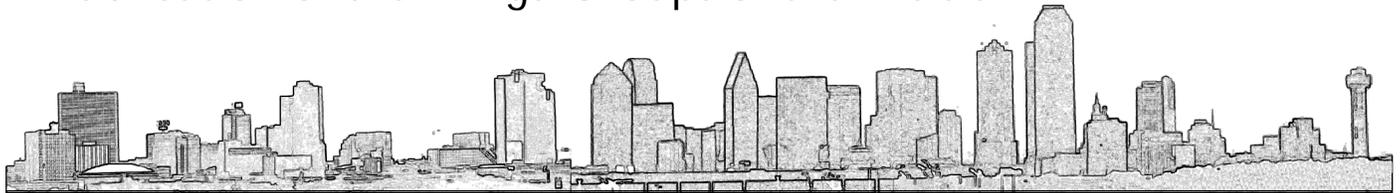


The AGM Connection

A Publication of the Amiga Groups of the MCCC



Fort Worth

April 1999

Dallas

UGN Meets Amiga from Wayne Hunt, UGN Director

17 March, 1999

To elaborate, or at least help Steven with the points he had, I was asked at the last minute to assemble no more than 12 people to meet face-to-face with Jim Collas "sometime Saturday afternoon" to represent the User Groups (and users) out there. This occurred at roughly 10:00pm Friday night.

8:00 Saturday morning, we had the UGN representative breakfast which lasted until about 9:30 or so, then found out from our liason, Darreck Lisle, that it was to happen at 11am that morning. I made the invitation to the attendees there, then literally RAN around the hall and show floor searching out each and every user group president and UGN representative I could find to attend the meeting. If anyone wasn't included, it was not for lack of trying, it's simply the fact that I didn't run across you before I had found 12 other people. As for the rest, here's what happened.

After hauling our own chairs from the King James conference room, we all squeezed into Mr. Collas' suite to be greeted by Mr. Collas with "do you have any questions for us?" Oh boy was that ever an understatement! What followed was almost one and a half hours (overlapping the UGN luncheon) of feedback and discussion on several relevant subjects to include:

The Community

The Amiga staff there pointed out to us that they really would like to involve themselves fully in the existing community and in fact, become a part of it rather than simply "the company." JimC (who did most of the talking) pointed out to us that he's aware that Gateway has been "screwing up" and underestimating the Amiga community and they want to make amends by becoming not only the company, but "part of the community as well."

It was pointed out to the Amiga management that the public needs more news of every kind to come from the company. Not just "these are the specs and dates" type news, but all of it. It was suggested that:

1. they look into the production of a biweekly or monthly mailing to all of the User Groups which would contain giveaway trinkets and news updates. (similar to Gateway's "Prairie News" newsletter)
2. if they really want to start participating in the community, they might consider actively participating (when possible) in things like the UGN Mailing list.
3. let us know the personality details of the crew to make them a part of the community. Let us know who's hired and their background, etc.
4. include as news when AI goes out and talks to major third party companies
5. It was suggested by several representatives (not me) that Amiga needs to really get on the ball as far as website updates and that they:
 - make the .com a suitable, professional site
 - use the .net site for network services such as free web services to UG's and free e-mail to all (ala gateway.net)
 - use the UGN's .org site for all outgoing news to users and groups which didn't fit on the .com site.
6. Mr. Collas stressed that they (Gateway) had underestimated the need to support the current machines and market and he firmly pledged that "the classic machines aren't going away for at least another two or three years." Now, he didn't offer specifics other than the fact that they would continue (or in the minds of some attendees, start) supporting and developing for the "Classic Amiga line" even after the new machines were introduced.
7. We (the UGN) need to get our contact information verified and updated in the database so that each User Group could be contacted directly from Amiga with pertinent mailings, etc. It was also recommended that EACH user group update their own records and include the address information of each user, past and present for a private database which Amiga would use to let people know that "something wonderful is happening" and to keep an eye on the Amiga.

Developers and Dealers

We discussed several points of relevance where keeping developers involved was concerned. Jim >

Collas said they would (or would consider) a "sponsored development" (for lack of better terms) program whereby Amiga could be petitioned by established developers for financial assistance to complete a project or upgrade in return for some percentage.

There were also various pointers about keeping dealers involved and perhaps Amiga organizing discounts on products for Amiga User Groups through every available, relevant dealer (not just Amiga dealers, but major players such as Yamaha {speakers}, 3Com {modems and network cards}, and others.)

Overall, most every point was designed to help every other part of the community (Amiga, user groups, developers, and vendors) bring in both memberships and interest. It is also designed to stop the slow decline of interest in User Groups and the Amiga in general.

For the first time, as many there will attest, we really felt like Amiga was actually listening and very, VERY interested in what we had to say. During the meeting, >

we got the distinct impression that we were hearing Jim Collas thinking out loud and that a lot of the feedback we provided came as a profound surprise to them. A lot of "we should do this" and such. Later Sunday, I was approached by a management member who stated that he was told to "be sure this stuff happens" so I am actually psyched and waiting for stuff to happen.

Current Status

The current status is that we (the UGN and Amiga.org) are working towards reaching a formal agreement with Amiga to handle and be recognized as the central location for Amiga Organizations as per number 5 above (the ICOA voted to move their website to Amiga.org Friday at the show). The mailings (#1 above) aren't expected to actually start until mid April, which will give the UGN time to get its ducks in a row.

We need to start assembling and submitting user information to them ASAP. :

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<http://www.startext.com/np/agm/>

April Calendar

- Apr 13 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — Bell Helicopter Training Facility
Trinity at Norwood, Hurst
- Apr 13 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Friday's
Loop 820 & Bedford Euless Road
- Apr 15 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — SMU Building
Collins Blvd. & International Pkwy, Richardson
- Apr 24 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

Amiga is also in the midst of moving their offices from South Dakota to San Diego which has all the staff tied up at the moment with logistics. Once the Agreement is reached to use Amiga.org for organizations, changes will start occurring and we will start seeing a lot more news items flowing from Amiga as they've designated a staff member specifically to disseminating news to the community.

Feedback is welcomed,

Wayne Hunt
Executive Director, User Group Network
<http://ugn.amiga.org>
"Users Helping Users"

Don't forget to check out the AGM web site for more info — especially Johnny Kitchens' show report.