

## Half of 2003 Gone ...Still Waiting

It is hard to believe that half of 2003 has completely gone. I guess I expected more by now. While a good portion of the world kept an eye on a war, money woes, new diseases, and petroleum, a small group of people, which gets smaller with the passing of time, continue to keep their eyes looking for something on the Amiga. We have had some perks in the news arena, but most of the time it is waiting for anything to come our way. To start off 2003 right, I got to see first hand, the AmigaOne — the official new Amiga. While it is nice to see the new hardware, without a new operating system it loses some of that excitement quite quickly. I did see it running AmigaOS 3.9 on top of Linux, which is not a good way to show off a new computer. Only after AmigaOS 4.0 arrives will we truly see it work correctly.

In June, I got to see the Pegasos in action, and it was much more exciting, as it actually has an operating system, MorphOS, to drive the hardware. Though MorphOS is a bit rough around the edges and is far from finished, it is still impressive. Just as impressive is the announcement of an improved Pegasos, Pegasos II, with even more performance and abilities. Combining it with a new and improved MorphOS should be worth seeing by any Amiga fan. As it stands now the MorphOS/Pegasos people have the lead. The Amiga team seems to be having problems. The loss of their headquarters and the subsequent auctioning off of everything therein seems to cast a shadow over their integrity. The continued delays and silence about what is happening doesn't do much for confidence. The rumors and stories of management shakeups with no response also darken things for them. One small improvement... they took the new AmigaOS on tour. I would really like to see it first hand, or even if from a distance. Just show me something!!!

My own Amiga has made gains and improvements in 2003 that help keep the platform going for me 'til something better

comes along. A couple of years ago I bought a device called Punchinello MkII. This allows hooking up a PC serial mouse to the Amiga. I bought it and set it aside, as I was quite happy with my input device at the time and only bought it as a "just in case" sort of thing. Early this year, my input device began to falter. It was actually showing signs of wearing out. I began a search for a serial mouse with a scroller, which the Punchinello MkII supports. A friend gave me a plain ordinary serial mouse, which worked fine, but I wanted the scroller, or wheel as in wheel mouse. After searching many places, and being told many times that they had never seen one, I began to wonder if they existed. One day, while looking through the paper, I came across some advice for finding hard-to-find items. Go to eBay and look. If it exists and is for sale, there is a good chance you will find it there. I checked, and I found a page full of them, new and still in their packages! I ordered one and in a few days I had it in my hands. Plugging it into the adaptor gets you the basic mouse functions you might need for early startup functions, but software needs to be installed for the wheel to work. I found that I needed a software update as well, when the wheel had trouble functioning right. A little email work and the update arrived. The Internet sure does come in handy! If you have yet to use a wheel mouse to scroll through long pages on the Internet, you are missing out. Once you use it, you will continue to use it for everything. It even works better on the Amiga than the PC, as it offers horizontal and vertical scrolling. The wheel also works as a third mouse button. I set it up to move from one screen to another. No

matter where the mouse pointer is, I just double click the wheel, and I move to the next screen. This is great for saving on hand movements. If you are wondering, they now have an adaptor for PS-2. The Punchinello MkII is the best upgrade I have performed on my Amiga in a while, and it is completely external.

Software upgrades have slowed down, but occasionally something comes along that brightens things up for me. I have been into digital photography for a while, as well as enjoying all sorts of images one can find with the computer on the Internet. One problem has been the increasing resolution of the images. This causes two problems for the Amiga. Higher resolution images take more processing time, and they need bigger screen resolutions, or more processing to make them fit a screen size that you have. I have a PowerPC, but finding software to take full advantage of it to display images, has been a slow but steady process. The first program to come along, ShowPPC, certainly sped up handling of images, plus it carries many tools for manipulating images. It has so many that it is almost a necessity for easily making changes to the images. I like ShowPPC and recommend that anyone with a PowerPC, even the new machines, take a look at it. It is lacking two things, that I wished for every time I thought about using ShowPPC. It lacks an easy-to-use slideshow, and automatic downsizing. ShowPPC does have a slideshow ability, but you practically have to set it up yourself, and tell it everything to do, before it will do a slideshow. Automatic downsizing has become very important, as the resolution and megapixel count increase on digital cameras. The

images are getting bigger than the screensize my Amiga could support! With ShowPPC, I would load an image, then choose from menu resize to screen size. I kept thinking why can't this be automatic? Then along come PicShow, early this year. PicShow took care of those two problems as well as offering many other features on its own. If it ever gets some of ShowPPC's tools, it will rule. If you are wondering, yes I still use both, but PicShow is my default viewer and slideshow program. The slideshow feature is just what I always wanted. It shows just the images on the screen, or you can leave the mouse pointer visible and the title of the image on the screen. It will also perform upsizing, if you want a smaller image to fill the screen. Quite by accident I discovered another PicShow perk. The wheel on my mouse allows me to move through images, back and forth with ease. Going from image one to two is a bit slow, but after that it speeds up nicely. It loads up a designated amount of images ahead of time, and

scrolling through them is unbelievably fast. If you have 68040/68060, a version is provided as well as a WarpUp and PowerUP PowerPC version. This means it is virtually ready for the AmigaOne or Pegasos as well. The author has been upgrading it almost weekly since I discovered the program. I recommend you take a look at it.

PageStream continues to improve or be updated. PageStream has become a very rock-solid product, and gives me a creative use for my Amiga that is hard to live without. I recently found myself exposed to Pagemaker, and I am really surprised at how much it seems to be lacking in simple intuitive usage. Things that make sense and are present on PageStream are completely missing in Pagemaker. I feel sorry for the users of Pagemaker. They have no idea what they are missing.

What has to be one of the most used pieces of software on my machine, has been updated several times in 2003. Diskmaster in its present form, 2.5rc23, is a long

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## August Calendar

August 11 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter  
7:30 pm — University Center, Pedernales Room  
W. First St. & S. West St., Arlington

August 11 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting  
Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Fridays  
Cooper Street just south of I-20, Arlington

August 21 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter  
7:30 pm — Junkins Building, SMU  
Dyer and Airline Extension Rd., Dallas

August 23 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

way from when it was a commercial product from the early days of the Amiga. Rudolf Riedel acquired the rights to Diskmaster in 1997 and has made numerous improvements to the code over the years. His experiments and coping with OS changes have certainly made Diskmaster part of my Amiga. If you understand how to make a script work and use the built in commands correctly, you can make Diskmaster do just about anything you need on a regular basis. Mr. Riedel's improvements have added many needed features to improve ease of use, and I hope he can continue. A PowerPC version would be nice to have, but not a necessity. I have noticed that AmigaOne/Pegasos demonstrations have featured Diskmaster, particularly where speed is important.

So while I await the coming of the Amiga of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, I continue to drag my 20<sup>th</sup> Century Amiga along through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and still manage to enjoy it.  
...Johnny C. Kitchens