Using My Computers

I've mentioned now and again that I have a wide range of machines that I use on a regular basis, largely for different preferences and applications. My Pegasos 2 running MorphOS is my primary graphics machine. I might be able to get more ability or performance out of other systems I have, but there's a level of familiarity and comfort with the tools involved here, My Amiga 4000 takes up some of the slack from the Pegasos, mainly running the Amiga software that doesn't run properly (or at all) through the Amiga compatibility of MorphOS. I also have the Mac Mini and the Linux Laptop, both of which are primarily Internet machines with some occasional productivity here and there. Since getting the laptop, it has taken the lion's share of web browsing work, while the Mac does more creative work, usually centered around specific applications like iMovie or Comic Life, and stuff I can't currently do (at least not easily) using the Pegasos or Amiga.

How much each individual machine gets used depends on what work needs to be done, and the convenience involved. For a while the Amiga was falling out of favor relative to my other machines, even though I still needed to do work that required it. The reason for this was a paradigm shift. In times past, the floppy disk was the standard for moving files between machines (sure, I could try networking machines together, but I didn't), but it's harder and harder to find a machine with a floppy drive anymore. People often cite things such as the Zip disk, or

CD-Recorders as "floppy disk killers," but in my opinion the true murderer, or at least the final nail in the coffin, is the USB flash drive, being smaller, faster, larger capacity, and more reliable than the average floppy disk. It's also an extremely convenient way to move files between machines – except my USB-free Amiga. As a result, the Amiga wasn't used as much as it could have been, since shuttling files on and off the machine required a different, less convenient method than my other machines, like Zip disks or e-mailing files to myself. Later, I was able to procure a Deneb USB card for my Amiga, which opened things up and leveled the playing field again. Each machine gets its own rightful slice of my time, as it should be. I'm sure they're all happy about that.

By the way, the newsletter is being put together using the Amiga, in case you'd like to know.

…by Eric Schwartz
from the AmiTech-Dayton Gazette, April 2009

Ban Community Broadband?

Media Minutes, May 1, 2009
<http://www.freepress.net/files/ MM 5-1-09-Transcript.doc>

Wilson, North Carolina, is a small city of 47,000, located TK miles east of Raleigh. It grew up with the tobacco industry at the turn of the 20th century. And while tobacco remains, the boom years are in the past, and the city is looking ahead to the new information economy.

Internet service for Wilson had been slow and unreliable. So in 2006, the city built a fiber-optic ring that connected city facilities like City Hall, parks and recreation and town offices to super-fast broadband. After requests from local businesses, the City Council voted to expand the fiber network to the entire city. Brian Bowman is the public affairs manager for the City of Wilson.

> Brian Bowman: We went to Time Warner and to Embarq and said, we would love for you to build a fiber-to-the-premise network in Wilson. Embarq said they wanted to work with us to partner on that. Turned out it didn't work out because we couldn't meet that middle ground for both of us to work out. And Time Warner just said, "No, we're not going to do that right now." So we said, "Ok, we'll do it ourselves."

Wilson's network, called Greenlight, is up and running, with connections up to 100 megabits per second – which makes it among the fastest service available in the country. The city offers triple-play package of TV, phone and Internet for $99 per month, every month. That beats Time Warner Cable's package that has fewer channels, slower upload speeds and costs 40 percent more at the start.

After less than a year in business, Greenlight has already signed up more than 3,000 customers. And that apparently has made Time Warner Cable, Embarq and AT&T very nervous. They've backed a new bill in the North Carolina state legislature that would ban the use of certain municipal funds to finance

and maintain a broadband network and would cut off local communities from receiving money for broadband from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Brian Bowman: If this bill had been law when we started, Greenlight would not exist today. It simply sandbags the cities where it's not possible or practical to do it. That's the effect of the bill.

The bill's sponsors are clearly taking their marching orders from the cable and phone companies. Bowman describes a recent hearing.

Brian Bowman: You know who's in the room with you, and it is a handful of private-sector providers who seem to be the ones who were talking in the hallways to the sponsors. We saw a person from Time Warner, in fact, hand a note to one of the sponsors during the meeting, and the sponsor then spoke up, so all you know officially is who the sponsors are, but, you know, you can see what's happening in the room.

Bowman says that Wilson is one of those cities that doesn't have the population density that makes it attractive to private industry.

Brian Bowman: If profit was going to be the motive, we were going to be waiting, potentially, decades to get this critical service,

which we believe our businesses need. And right now, we're doing it ourselves, we're having good results, and this law would essentially keep other cities in North Carolina from being able to do the same thing.

New WinUAE Release

The latest version of WinUAE has been released. Following is a partial list of changes and enhancements.

- Very popular request: automatic display scaling/window resizing! (not compatible with all programs) Option in Filter-panel.
- PAL/NTSC vertical size change emulated in filter modes.
- Transparent clipboard sharing between Amiga clipboard.device and Windows clipboard, both Amiga to Windows and Windows to Amiga supported. Text and images supported. HAM6/8 automatically converted to 24-bit image, EHB converted to 64-colour image. Images with less than 256 colours converted to standard IFF, higher color images converted to 24-bit IFF. Text converted to plain text, formatting possible in future.
- "Interlace fixer," interlaced screens are now rock solid, all interlace artifacts will be gone. (This feature isn't the same as scandoubler or flickerfixer and is not compatible with most games.)

- VirtualPC VHD dynamic harddisk image support (Dynamic = empty hardfile is very small, size grows automatically when more data gets written.)
- Custom chipset emulation updates, horizontally mixed lores and hires modes work and more (for example Disposable Hero titlescreen is finally perfect, Oops Up ray colour issue)
- SuperHires supported in lores and filtered lores modes.
- 320x256, 640x512, 800x600, 1024x768 and 1280x1024 always added to RTG mode list (320x200 and 320x240 were already available previously)
- Full drawing tablet support. (must be wintab compatible)
- Parallel port joystick adapter configuration added to Gameports panel (Much easier and quicker than using Input panel configuration)
- Input device type (mouse, digital joystick, analog joystick, lightpen etc.) selection added to Gameports panel. (Less need for complex Input panel configuration)
- WinUAE is now unicode Windows application, added full unicode support to configuration files. (backwards compatibility still maintained)
- Added support for Windows Recent Documents/Windows 7 Jump Lists.

June Calendar

June 1 — Amiga-By-The-Loop Chapter
    7:00 pm — South Grand Prairie Library
    760 Bardin Road, Grand Prairie

June 1 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
    Approx 9:15 pm — Location TBD

June 27 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

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