



MCCC News



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Dallas

Amigavibes Podcast 61 Review

Released on August 1, 2017

AmigaVibes team presents a melted mix from the compos of the @party 2015 and Birdie 2015 Party.

Here is the tracklist of this podcast, and I've added my own comments, and the starting time of the track, under the track name.

- 01 Jingle by JGG
AmigaVibes (0'26)
- 02 Tek-Ti
Bad Lullaby (2'33) (birdie15)
00:26 *** A mechanical tune.
- 03 Malmén
Blue Figurine (3'43) (birdie15)
03:00 ***** A whimsical 16 bit sounding tune.
- 04 Hyperunknown
Pandemonic (3'54) (birdie15)
06:35 **** Orchestral, video game sounding music piece with Japanese-ish vocals. Voice became Chipmunkish towards the end, otherwise good.
- 05 DaverD
Day and Night, Night and Day (3'15) (@party15)
10:29 ***** Electric Guitar with game sounds.
- 06 Algar
Frantic Factory (3'59) (birdie15)
13:40 **** Frantic little song, kinda reminded of the song

"Popcorn" if you remember that tune.

- 07 MOonLight
Level Up (3'08) (birdie15)
17:44 **** Electronic vocals with this rapid electric tune.
- 08 mihion
Bossfajtn (2'31) (birdie15)
20:45 *** Heavy Electric guitar sample, with other sound samples.
- 09 subBass
Do You Feel It ? (1'42) (@party15)
23:18 *** Piano piece at first, and then a heavy beat piece. Neat stereo effects.
- 10 ChAsJaM
Saelo High (4'04) (birdie15)
25:20 *** electronic voices, mild bass piece at first and basically rave dance music.
- 11 Znurre
Tactical Retreat (3'15) (birdie15)
29:00 *** Frantic electronic piece.
- 12 nazomeita
Robot Refrigerator (2'14) (@party15)
32:20 *** Robot voice, almost 80's sounding tune.
- 13 Dad's Morning Dump
dump dump champ (3'36) (@party15)
34:30 *** And weird tune that reminded me of the soldier bit from the Nutcracker? Throw in some guitar and voices talking

about flushing? Wild stuff. A very subtle piece to end what was on average a good set.

Duration : 37'57

AmigaVibes team (JeFfR3y & Jegougou) see a Bluebird Montain @ party

...rating/descriptions/start time by Greg Goodwin (Doctor Clu)

My Early Amiga Experiences

Back in 1987 a KBS lab coworker brought his A3000 up there that he had put "Firepower" on to its hard-drive and got it working from a commandline prompt. The very colorful graphics combined with the stereo soundtrack of the tank running and running over enemy soldiers was mesmerizing. There were no roads, just open land in every direction. We could then go straight to the enemy's flag structure and capture it, then barely make it back before losing too many resources as that darn helicopter began chasing the tank, too. It was harrowing and extremely fun to play. No Microsoft PC could match that. Time just slipped away as you were trying to capture that flag while squishing running-away enemy soldiers and seeing their red blood spurting out in all directions from then being run over. And, also rescuing your freed soldiers as well. That was very dynamic, and, quite enjoyable in August of 1987. Made me want to buy one, but I couldn't afford \$3,000 then for even that machine!

Then in 1992 at the Osteopathic Hospital in Fort Worth right down from the Amiga store “Amazing Computers,” somebody brought a desktop A4000 from which they were playing a movie from the harddrive where the hd light was NOT on continuously. With a VideoToaster board. Again, something that MS PCs could not do in 1992.

I then acquired a free A2000 from a coworker and started messing around with my Amigas, never being able to duplicate that incredible “Firepower” experience on. A future Amiga Club project?

...Howard Brodale

Vampires and 40 Years

In the continuing saga of “Vampire Quest,” I am still waiting to hear back after finally sending payment for the board some time back. It’s been some time, but a drop in the bucket compared to the amount of time I’ve waited (relatively patiently) since first requesting to purchase a board, so I’ll try to maintain that patience a while longer.

In the next ironic twist, the Apollo accelerator team announced the upcoming next-gen model while I wait for the last one. In perhaps the biggest Amiga-related news in a long time (which was probably also Vampire news), the Vampire ‘V4’ boards were announced. These three new boards improve upon the previous, and all share the same base design. One is meant for the Amiga 500 and 2000 (and 600 with an optional adapter), one is for the A1200. presumably plugging into the CPU expansion slot, and the third is the ‘standalone,’ a complete system unto itself, not too surprising considering how much current Vampire cards supplant the Amiga hardware

they attach to. Time will tell exactly how well legacy compatibility will be maintained without any original hardware or Kickstart ROMs (I believe the Vampire will use an AROS-derived Kickstart replacement), but I am watching the standalone with great interest, especially if the price is reasonable.

The Apollo Vampire family of hardware finally deliver on the “enhanced classic” Amiga idea many apparently want to see, to go alongside the “pure retro” of classic hardware and emulation, and the “modernity chasing” of OS4, MorphOS, or AROS. If nothing else, these new Vampire boards should be made available through dealers such as AmigaKit, so actually getting one should be a far simpler and more definite process than I’ve been subjected to. Would anyone care to take bets on the potential of me ordering a Vampire standalone, and it beating the V600 to my home?

Continuing the chronicle of my forty years in computing (and gaming) from where I left off previously, at a point where I joined the Internet world in 1996. Connecting an Amiga to the Internet via dialup modem was a bit more challenging then than it is now, especially before the appearance of intuitive TCP/IP stacks like Miami. Regardless, I plowed ahead and set up my own web site and accompanying comic strip, known as “Sabrina Online,” which has run for over twenty years in one form or another by now. In gaming I got what would be the last brand-new game console, a Sony Playstation (1). It would join my Amiga CD-32 and Atari Jaguar—two systems purchased cheap at the end of their life-span. Still, that didn’t stop me from spending on games and expansions for both of them, which kind of defeated the purpose of buying them on clearance (from the defunct Kay-Bee toy store) or second-hand, but that seems to be a

recurring motif for me. A second-hand Sega Saturn and a clearanced Dreamcast would come later, being the last game system I would buy (or at least the last with gaming as a sole purpose).

As the new Millennium approached, I left behind the pipe dream that the Amiga would continue simply after the death of Commodore, and looked ahead to the upcoming PowerPC systems and operating systems like Amiga OS4 and MorphOS. At the time (around 2000/2001) Morph and the Pegasos II (marketed by Genesi) seemed to be more ahead of the game, so I jumped in, spending over a thousand for the G4-based motherboard (I wanted to be able to say I had a 1 Ghz Amiga-style system), and more on top for the case and supporting hardware. In some ways I was disappointed as my over-hyped expectations of Amiga compatibility were not always met by the Pegasos and its MorphOS 1.4 operating system, but I found it very useful and far more powerful than the Amiga in several ways.

Sadly, if there is one major shortcoming of the Amiga and its related successors, it’s that it was constantly lagging behind in support for Internet and web browsing standards, (or perhaps more accurately, the web grew more tailored to dominant browsers like Firefox and Internet Explorer) which became more and more apparent in the mid 2000s. As my use of the web grew, and spurred on by some minor scares and repairs with my Amiga and Morph systems, I felt the need for a system primarily for Internet usage, which turned out to be a Mac Mini G4 (only a year or two before Apple’s switch to Intel architecture). The “mostly for Internet” computer became an institution in my home after that, freeing up the Amiga and MorphOS machines for more creative and productive pursuits. The Mac led to the Lenovo laptop running a lightweight Puppy Linux

(with its window manager set up for an interface more Amiga-like than Windows-like), which was eventually replaced with an ASUS laptop running Fatdog64 Linux (same deal). Meanwhile, MorphOS moved its support from specific hardware like the Pegasos boards to several models of PowerPC Mac abandoned as Apple moved to Intel processors. I took the opportunity to get a second-hand PowerMac G5, which proved a powerful replacement for my Pegasos, and a G4 Powerbook, which I got much less use out of overall.

I could not escape the lure of mobile computing either. It began in the middle-nineties with a Psion palm-top computer. It was primitive by today's standards, not a lot more than a glorified organizer with a B&W LCD screen and interaction only via its small keyboard. I bought it at the time for its relative similarity to the Amiga, having a multitasking OS and ability to connect and share files with an Amiga. I enjoyed it quite a bit, adding a program to make Star Trek computer noises when turned on or off. I sent it in for repair when its screen was broken and received a brand new unit (at least I assume so, as wear and scuff marks on the case magically disappeared) I used it frequently until the ribbon cable connecting the screen to the other half of the clam shell case wore out. After that, I moved on to the then-new Palm (formerly Palm Pilot) device, never fully adapting to its handwriting system. At the

time I was amazed at its ability to communicate by its IR window, 'beaming' info or files to other Palm devices in its sight, which felt futuristic as hell at the time. I remember how changing batteries on the device was like handling a bomb, as you had mere seconds to change batteries or lose the memory on the system, as this was before flash memory was in common usage, requiring these devices to rely on backups to a regular computer to avoid data loss.

Later I upgraded to the Palm 'Life-Drive,' a bulkier device with a color screen, 4 gigs of storage on an internal hard drive, and WiFi Internet connectivity. Palm was doing the touch-screen smartphone thing before Apple swooped in and took over. As much fun as the various mobile devices were to me, they were more novelties than necessities. It wasn't until around 2013 that I found something stronger in the form of the Samsung Galaxy Note tablet. With it, I could do a lot of the Internet and media stuff my PCs did, and use its pen for drawing and graphics like I might do on the Amiga and Morph machines, even if I spent the majority of tablet time playing Angry Birds or YouTube videos. Nonetheless, I could see the potential, and where my computing might go in the future. On a side note, I also got the inexpensive Raspberry Pi mini-systems, versions 2 and 3. Following my game console trend, I spent more on supporting hardware than the board itself. Orig-

inally I planned multiple possible uses and operating environments for the Raspberry, but settled on the main use of travel retro game emulation, with a sideline of media player.

Looking back on forty years of computing, I can see two main trends. One is that I have a strong affinity for 'underdog' systems, or maybe just aversion to the dominating ones. This seems to come out of me being an Amiga user for such a long period. I tend to avoid the heavies, like Windows for computers and Apple for mobile devices. The other trend is my annoying tendency to throw lots of money at fleeting technology fancies, especially obvious when the base machine was bought because it was inexpensive. I've done so several times in the past, so it's hard to expect it will stop. I never quite realized how many different computer and gaming and mobile systems I've worked with in the forty years since that first Atari VCS crossed my path, and I suspect most other people would be surprised if they examined their own tech histories as well (especially if they fell for the old scam telling them they needed to upgrade every couple years). If you do look back on your own history of tech, be it computers, game machines, mobile devices, or even just electronics in general, I hope you look on it fondly, as I have.

...Eric W. Schwartz
from the AmiTech Gazette,
August 2017

September Calendar

September 5 — MCCC Chapter Meeting
7:00 PM — Grand Prairie Airport
3116 S. Great Southwest Parkway, Grand Prairie

September 5 — Board of Director's Meeting
Approximately 9:00 PM — Location TBD

September 25 — Newsletter Deadline — 8:00 AM

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