MCCC News

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Chuck Peddle Remembered

Chuck Peddle, one of the most important engineers of the early home computing era, has died from pancreatic cancer at the age of 82. He's best known as the lead designer for MOS Technology's 6502, a low-cost processor (just $25 in 1975) that found its way into first-wave home computers like the Apple II and Commodore PET. Variants of that core design found their way into influential consoles like the Atari 2600 and NES. If you have nostalgia for the days when 8-bit computers were cutting edge, you likely owe a debt of gratitude to Peddle.

The 6502 almost didn't happen. Peddle wanted to design his more affordable chip at Motorola, which was struggling to sell its 6800 CPU design kits for a then-costly $300. When Motorola was unresponsive to the proposal (it saw the proposal as internal competition), Peddle and six team members jumped to MOS Technology. Even after the 6502 shipped, it was in danger -- Motorola sued months later to try and halt sales, forcing MOS to settle in 1976. Commodore swooped in to

buy MOS soon after, making Peddle its chief engineer and changing the computing landscape with the $495 PET.

Peddle left the MOS team in 1980 and worked on lower-key projects like Sirius Systems Technology's Victor PC and removable hard drives that were precursors to external drives and USB sticks. By then, though, his legacy was well-established. He helped democratize computing by making home PCs affordable. And to some extent, he ushered in the notion of ubiquitous computing, where technology spread everywhere instead of sitting in monolithic servers. In that sense, smartphones and connected homes have roots in the ideas Peddle formulated 45 years ago.

…https://www.engadget.com/2019/12/25/chuck-peddle-cpu-pioneer-dies/

What About Some Updated Amiga Software

Welcome back! It's a new year, one that makes efficient use of only "2" and "0." Will the new year be better than the last? It's not exactly looking like it so far, given the national events we already know will be on the way over the coming months. It might be a tall expectation in the Amiga community as well, seeing how hardware and software developers have given the platform a bit

more of a kick over the last year or two than we've seen in a good while, whether the first appearance of the standalone Vampire system or a new release of MorphOS with the potential for an X64 version to come.

It seems people are energized about the Amiga and its relatives more than in a long time, almost as if the community suddenly embraced its retro-hobbyist-enthusiast nature full-force, and stopped caring (or at least caring less) about who has a 'true' Amiga and who doesn't, whether 68K legacy or OS4 or Vampire or MorphOS or emulation. Perhaps I'm over-simplifying things and not seeing the cracks in the facade, but regardless it's the feel I've been getting lately.

With 2020 being the 35th birthday of the Amiga, or at least the release year of the A1000, I'm hoping to up my personal level of Amiga-ness this year and pop out a related creative project or two. I'm already using my Twitter account to post highlights and historical Amiga tidbits, under the hashtag #Amiga35Years . The year is just beginning, so I'm in prehistory as of this writing, covering the Consumer Electronics Show of 1984 and the Amiga "Lorraine" prototype shown there with the first Boing Ball demonstration. Hopefully 12 months is enough to cover most of Amiga history. We shall see.

This month's meeting shall be held at the usual time and place, and I

hope most of you can make it there. I hope to revisit the subject of Amiga emulation via the Raspberry Pi system. I've run into a few videos online which (I believe) gave me a few insights on what I might have been doing wrong previously, so hopefully the results will be better this time, assuming I can find the time to do the prep work I need to do. We might even have dueling emulations this month, as our Prez might bring in his own Pi system (a partial hand-me-down) with the same goal in mind. Be there or be square!

With all this talk of new developments for old and new Amiga-and-related systems, I can't help but think how the software side of things is often neglected. It's understandable, as much in this community is done by individuals and small groups working projects in what available free time they have away from their 'day job,' so new software tends to be smaller utilities, relatively easy ports from other systems, with the occasional 'passion project' thrown in.

There have been a few attempts to update older software—the buyout and updates for Personal Paint come to mind, such as they are. Sadly, the vast majority of Amiga software, especially in the productivity arena, falls under 'abandon-ware', even if we still use it to this day. I'd be ecstatic to see updates of these programs that take advantage of developments such as advanced

graphics, or audio, or the CPU power afforded by a PowerPC or Intel/AMD or Vampire080. Part of the problem is that rights to old software is still held by the rights-holders, be they individuals or software companies, either of which might not be in existence today, and source code for the software might no longer be available as well. Pipedream as it may be, I can't help but wish for those behind classic Amiga graphic, animation, or audio software to release their source code, and encourage the community to take the baton and run with it. Imagine a new version of Deluxe Paint or MovieSetter running at full speed in HD resolutions.

To give a more specific example, I'd wish for Newtek, who still exists for now, to release the code for the last Amiga version of Lightwave 3D, so it could be ported to PowerPC or another native code for a speed boost, use RTG high-resolution screens without using outside mode-promotion software, maybe add some openGL display support for something beyond a wireframe preview. Newtek might not be interested in doing so, as Lightwave is still active software on other platforms, though with the revisions they've had over the years, I'd imagine there's not that much code in common with version 5 anymore. Still, a person can dream, even pipedream.

With this being the Amiga's 35th birthday, perhaps we can work that

little bit harder, and those remaining rights-holders and code-hoarders might be that little bit more charitable. Or perhaps I can eat a can of beans and fly to the moon. Either way, SOMETHING will happen in 2020, that much is certain.

...Eric Schwartz
From the AmiTech Gazette,
January 2020

YouTube Links
For the Month

10MARC — 2019 Amiga Hardware Year in Review
https://youtu.be/grsSNuiRmoI

12 Alternative OSes You Can Use in 2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATwT4DwoXnM

...Thanks to Eric Schwartz
From the AmiTech Gazette,
January 2020

February Calendar

February 8 — MCCC Meeting
    2:00 PM — Burleson Public Library
    248 SW Johnson Ave., Burleson

February 8 — Board of Director's Meeting
    Approximately 4:00 PM — Location TBD

March 1 — Newsletter Deadline — 8:00 AM

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