



May 2021

# The MCCC News

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

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## Monthly News and Views

The amount of news in the Amiga sphere of influence is far from zero, though like always how interesting it is will be up to the beholder. I'm hoping our Prez is able to go into greater detail, but I will touch on a handful of new developments.

It seems full embracing of the "retro" Amiga continues with more new games recently finished or on the way, such as AGA puzzle game "Folix" and self-explanatory "Wrong Way Driver," from Abyss, developer of Bubble Bobble remake "Tiny Bobble."

New/old games taking advantage of the Vampire hardware are also in work, including 'new' classic games Heimdall and Sonic the Hedgehog. A new release of the multiplatform authoring/development system "Hollywood" is available with version 9, claiming to be the biggest update in a long time, and still offering support to AmigaOS, MorphOS, AROS, Windows, Mac, and Linux.

It also appears the legal disputes over the ownership of Amiga names and trade dress may be preparing to heat up once again. I won't take sides here, other than to say it's getting to be like fighting over the ownership of a decades old hunk of weather-beaten beef jerky at this point, and it's little wonder that people like the AROS and Apollo teams are working to bring the open-source Amiga-compatible OS to a point where it could be a drop-in replacement for the OS on any Amiga

hardware.

I've spoken enough about the news, and now I shall take a page from the book of my late father (not to mention former AmiTech president) and do a little general life-ranting and rambling, which may or may not touch directly on Amiga subjects.

As we all know, this is the tax season. Thanks to the pandemic, deadlines are pushed back somewhat, though I try to adhere to the classic April 15th, in part because state and local income taxes don't always follow suit with the federal delay, and usually require info from your complete federal forms, or the forms themselves, so it all pretty much needs to be done on time anyway. Makes me wish I was one of those who could get all their taxes finished in January or around there.

This was also the first year I filed my federal taxes online, which was a new and somewhat confusing experience for me. Perhaps it has to do with my nature as an artist and therefore a visual thinker, but I prefer to have paper forms in front of me to work everything out, even if I complete the final forms digitally or online. This new experience of doing federal taxes online has bitten me in the butt somewhat, as some details and number have shifted around compared to my previous work. The upside is the automated system helped lower my overall tax liability (as a selfemployed individual, you never get refunds unless you seriously overdid estimated payments for the year), but now I need to re-apply all these changes to my state and local income taxes, which don't have quite the same online presence as federal. It's a bit of a scramble, but as of this writing, almost finished.

On another money-related note, I've been keeping my eyes peeled for those government Covid stimulus payments, both for myself and for mister Barclay. Mike's is relatively easy, as they all deposited into his checking account, but my payments were a different story, and for reasons I can't fathom, each of the three payments came to me using a different method. The first one came on a paper check, one of those infamous "Donald Trump wants his name on it" checks. I was expecting a check for the second payment, but instead I received a pre-paid debit card. It was reasonably convenient to use, though you'll probably get hit with big ATM fees if you tried to withdraw cash that way. I thought the debit card was a decent idea, figuring the already-planned third payment would simply go to the card when and if it was approved, but no. It was stated unequivocally that for any future payments, another separate card would be sent out. I still have about nine dollars left on the card as of this writing. I expected a new card for the third, possibly final, stimulus payment, but instead this time they found my bank and quietly deposited it to my checking account. I wasn't expecting that, since it never happened that way before. I just noticed there seemed to be a lot more money in the account than I expected to be there. It's just hilarious to me that three different payments, all happening within the space of a year, each took a completely different route to get to me.

I have been talking about my experiences with my new(ish) Vampire system somewhere between occasionally and non-stop in these pages since I got my stand-alone V4 system back in October. I have talked about the idea of using it to take over some to all of the duties usually given to my trusty-yet-dusty A4000T. I believe it is certainly

capable of mostly doing that at this point, the biggest missing piece being the use of SCSI devices like my all-important flatbed scanner. Regardless the best way to make use of new hardware is to actually use it, and there lies the problem.

For now, the most use I get out of the Vampire is occasionally testing it out and bringing it to meetings for demonstration. It has been similar for other newer systems I have, such as the Raspberry Pi machines and Vampirized A600. A primary reason for this is space. Like most of you, I have a limited amount of space in my home, and a limited space in the area where most of my computer systems are. As such when I have the Vampire running at home, it's in a temporary capacity, usually with a monitor teetering on the edge of a desk, and the small system and keyboard sitting on top of ANOTHER system's keyboard. I haven't yet put together the time and effort required to displace another computer—one that is not used on a regular basis—to give a more permanent spot to the Vampire. It's something I need to do though, because otherwise I'm just jerking around, and the Vampire is little more than an expensive toy that I occasionally show off to friends than the powerful Amiga tool it can be. It's just a matter of buckling down and getting it done, which I will do soon, once I'm done with my current work load, and finishing my taxes, and getting the second COVID shot, and...

...Eric Schwartz  
From the AmiTech Gazette  
Dayton, Ohio, May 2021

## YouTube Link

Amiga Demos from the Revision Demo Party 2021:

[https://youtu.be/peilP\\_GY7po](https://youtu.be/peilP_GY7po)

...From Eric Schwartz  
The AmiTech Gazette  
Dayton, Ohio, May 2021

## Fining the Robocallers

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued the largest fine in its history. Two Texas-based telemarketers are on the hook for \$225 million after making approximately **1 billion** robocalls to people across the US. They ran at least two businesses that illegally spoofed other companies to try and sell people on short-term insurance plans, claiming they were from well-known providers like Cigna.

One of the people involved in the scheme admitted to making "millions" of robocalls per day, even going so far as to go out of his way to call numbers on the Do Not Call list because he believed it would be more profitable to do so. According to the FCC, "a large portion" of the more than 23.6 million health insurance robocalls that crossed US wireless networks in 2018 came from Rising Eagle, one of the companies the two telemarketers ran.

A fine, even the biggest in the agency's history, is unlikely to rein in robocalls. In fact, there's evidence to suggest they haven't been effective at all. Two years ago, a report from The Wall Street Journal found that between 2015 and 2019, the FCC had ordered

violators of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act to pay \$208.4 million in penalties. By the end of that period, the agency had only collected \$6,790. That number may have changed in the years since the WSJ's report came out. All the same, it's not encouraging.

If there's good news, it's that the FCC isn't limiting itself to fines. In a separate announcement, the agency detailed its new anti-robocall agenda. Acting Chair Jessica Rosenworcel has established a Robocall Response Team. Made up of 51 FCC members across six offices, the team will coordinate the agency's anti-robocall efforts and develop new policies for it to put in place. It has also sent cease-and-desist letters to six companies in Canada, the UK and the US that have consistently spurned its guidelines on automated calls. If the companies don't comply with the letters, the FCC says it may instruct voice providers in the US to block all traffic from them permanently.

...By Igor Bonifacic, Engadget  
March 17th, 2021  
<https://tinyurl.com/ysyau5v>

## Cooling Datacenters

To cool datacenter servers, Microsoft turns to boiling liquid.

<https://news.microsoft.com/innovation-stories/datacenter-liquid-cooling/>

## May Meeting Streaming Link

<https://youtu.be/zGTkWVrfIZo>

May 8 Meeting — 2:00 pm — Dallas Makerspace  
1825 Monetary Ln. Carrollton, Texas 75006

MCCC 2709 Wolff Drive Arlington, Texas 76015

<http://www.amigamccc.org>

