



June 2021

# The MCCC News

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

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## Latest Amiga News

Welcome to another of those magical months. For me it's a time to get some more of my work projects up and running, now that April is over and I've taken care of things like income taxes, and I'm all hopped up on Covid vaccine and ready to lick some door handles.

We'll be continuing our string of meetings at Prez. Mike Barclay's place for now (the "same place, same time" for the last year or so), but if disease rates continue to fall and enough people get their shots like good troopers, hopefully we'll get back to meeting at the library within the next handful of months.

I might bring my Vampire V4 to the next meeting if there's enough demand, but I'm thinking of turning the meeting over to some workshopping for the Prez, either playing with the PiMiga system on his Raspberry Pi, or helping to get his copy of Final Writer 97 running without problems. Until then, I shall leave you with, in lieu of my usual rambling rantings and Vampire adventures, a few tidbits of Amiga news instead.

On the Vampire subject, there was a new core release 6 for the V4 released in April, available either as a .JIC file where you flash the Vampire system by hooking it to a PC using a 'USB Blaster,' or as a more convenient .EXE file where you can update the core by running it on the V4 itself. The new core is a mix of enhancements, compatibility improvements, and bug

fixes, though I don't have the exact details for which and what.

Along with that is a new version of the AROS-based 'Apollo OS' distro to set you up with a full OS experience and a lot of compatible software. I tried it out on my system, and it works fine, though my "Worms Directors Cut" test does the same as previous Apollo OS version, with the keyboard not working in-game, where it does work on the Amiga OS-based Coffin R58.

Continuing the game talk, there is a semi-highprofile new release by Graeme Cowie AKA McGeezer, who produced the recent arcade ports Bomb Jack Beer Edition and Rygar. This one is Turbo Sprint, a near-perfect port of the 1986 Atari arcade game Super Sprint, itself an enhanced version of their 'Sprint' arcade racing games from the 1970s (and basis for the "Indy 500" game on the Atari 2600 VCS).

AGA-only Amiga "Turbo Sprint" follows its arcade counterpart allowing up to four players racing simultaneously with a mix of joystick and keyboard controls, or a parallel port multi-player adapter. What's notable is to match the arcade graphics, it uses the Amiga's hi-res interlaced screen mode, which makes for a pretty display, but be aware of the issues using interlaced screen modes can cause.

Driving the cars using digital joystick control is rather challenging from what I've seen, so it's unfortunate mouse control or some form of analog steering doesn't appear to be supported. It's available to buy in a digital download form now, with a physical boxed version forthcoming. To learn more or buy the game, go to <https://mcgeezer.itch.io/turbo-sprint>.

Finally, more on the general retro computing and gaming side of things, there is a new entry in the 'RetroTINK' line of video scan converters: the RetroTINK 5X. There are a lot of scan converters out there, from cheap Chinese mass-produced boxes to pricey and powerful ones that offer every option under the sun. The new 5X leans more toward the latter, weighing in at a hefty \$275 to purchase, even including a small remote to control its options. Like other RetroTINK products, it's geared toward producing a quality picture with minimal setup and settings-fiddling, and the lowest possible latency so gamers won't have to put up with display lag (not from the converter anyway)

The device has inputs for composite/component (shared), S-video, or SCART, and outputs to HDMI at resolutions from 480P to 1440P. If you have an NTSC or PAL Amiga or game console(s) that you would like to display on your big flatscreen, and aren't averse to spending some money, you could do worse than the 5X or RetroTINK's other scan-converters at [www.retrotink.com](http://www.retrotink.com).

I hope you all have a good and healthy month, and I hope to see you at the meeting.

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

## YouTube Links

10MARC: Review of Amiga Turbo Sprint

[https://youtu.be/iLV\\_wSrs5zI](https://youtu.be/iLV_wSrs5zI)

The Amiga Show - April 1986  
(feat. Aegis Animator)

<https://youtu.be/PwXa1UWXXN0>

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

## C64 Smartwatch with BASIC

**I**'m Lusting After This Custom Commodore 64 Smartwatch That Lets You Code in BASIC Right on Your Wrist.

I assumed there was very little I couldn't do with my Apple Watch given it has its own well-stocked app store, but Nick Bild has shown me the error of my ways with this delightful Commodore 64-themed C64 Watch that not only has a retro-inspired watch face but a built-in BASIC interpreter too for coding on the go.

Bild's C64 Watch looks as polished as the myriad of other smartwatches currently on the market, but that's because instead of starting from scratch and building all of the hardware components themselves, they started with a Lilygo TTGO T-Watch 2020: a capable but affordable wearable you can buy from Tindie for about \$45. After a year, Bild realized the watch had gone mostly unused due to a lack of appealing software, so they took it upon themselves to make it the perfect

wearable, and the C64 Watch was born.



A custom watch face emulates the Commodore 64's classic home screen, with the time displayed in large letters using a matching pixelated font. It's basic, but in more ways than one because the C64 Watch also includes a built-in BASIC interpreter: a modified version of TinyBasic Plus. Coding can be done right on the watch itself using its incredibly tiny on-screen keyboard, but according to Bild it's an awful experience. As a workaround, the watch can be connected to a computer using a USB sync cable, as demonstrated in the video above, allowing its BASIC

interpreter to be used with a proper, full-sized keyboard.

*[Editor's note: Readers of this newsletter can click here:*

<https://youtu.be/XGAHCkhrV2w>  
*to view the YouTube video.]*

Bild has provided all the source files for their C64 Watch for download through GitHub, but you'll need to provide the watch hardware yourself. In its current form, it will probably only appeal to die-hard fans who grew up or cut their coding teeth on the vintage computer, but Bild is contemplating adding more features eventually, including adding an emulator to actually play C64 games on the watch and making it interface with a computer over wifi so the USB sync cable can be ditched.

...Andrew Liszewski

<https://gizmodo.com/im-lusting-after-this-custom-commodore-64-smart-watch-th-1847025059>



June 12 Meeting — Dallas Makerspace

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