ALPHA MICRO USERS SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Vol. I Number 2   March 1978

     The first meeting of the Alpha Micro Users Society was held at the Second Annual West Coast Computer Faire in San Jose on Saturday, March 4th as part of the proceedings of the faire. Over 100 people showed up for the organizational meeting. AMUS president, Jim Taylor gave the crowd information about what AMUS was, and what the organization intended to do. Twenty folks stepped forward to fork over their $25. membership fee and sign up on the spot, and many more memberships are expected to arrive in the mail in the near future. The business part of the meeting concluded, Jim turned the meeting over to John French and Dick Wilcox who answered questions and solicited ideas from members of the audience for more than 1½ hours.

     A recap of the recording of that session will be made and some of the more significant questions and answers will be published. Some of the enhancements to AMOS we can expect in the next release (AMOS 3.3) are:
     Variable passing ability through a COMMON XCALL
     PASCAL
     Chaining to a command file from BASIC.

     Later releases have plans for:

     ISAM in BASIC
     MUMPS
     FORTRAN (September or so)
     FORTH
     10 Megabyte disk system (4-5 weeks from now)
     Business software packages converted from MCBA DIBOL
     including: General Ledger, A/R, A/P, Payroll and Order
     entry
     Interrupt driven disk I/O

MEMBERSHIP IN AMUS

     We are sending this newsletter and the next to all the names we have of Alpha Micro owners and dealers, but after that, only members will receive AMUS information. If you want to be kept up to date on one of the fastest moving computers in the country, you need to sign up now! Use the form in the attached brochure and don't miss any of the action.

COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER

Several dealers and others have expressed an interest in having several copies of the AMUS newsletter for their customers and potential customers. All you need to do is tell us how many copies you need. AMUS will have to charge 15¢ per extra copy of the newslettr which is not much when you think about a 13¢ stamp and printing.

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

AMUS will be publishing everything it finds about the Alpha Micro System. If you have software you wish to share, sell, or license, let us know. If you have problems, fixes, or suggestions for future releases, write. We already have articles planned for the next newsletter on how to build peripheral drivers, and a program for renumbering BASIC programs, but for information on software and the configurations that you users are running, we need to hear from you. We also need to see an example or two that we can distribute of software licensing contracts. If you have such a document that we can share among AMUS members as an example, please send AMUS a copy.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER

Information that you want in the next newsletter must reach us by April 10th. Send your ideas, articles, and information to: AMUS PO Box 1723, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

PROBLEMS & FIXES

PLAGUED BY ERROR 10's & 20's?

An error 10 on a disk usually means a checksum error. It is possible to correct the error with DSKDDT. Let's say you got:
        ERROR 10 DSK1:RECORD 23
        Just type:
        DSKDDT DSK1: 23
        You'll get the eight tries at reading the record with a barrage of the error messages and DSKDDT will stop. Type an 'E' and DSKDDT will correct the error and return you to monitor.

MORE ABOUT DSKDDT

Alpha Micro hasn't published any documentation on this function yet. The following is what we know, if you have any additions, let us know.

DSKDDT DSKn: xx   will read in octal record number xx

```
sub functions:
     E = write record back to disk (corrects checksum)
     O = set record to octal ones
     Z = set record to octal zeros
   nnn/ = examine memory in octal
     CR = change examined memory if O or Z has been set
     LF = same as CR plus display next loaction
up arrow = same as LF except display previous location ( )
```

ERROR 20's

These seem to be a Persci disk drive malady. Two different users have sent in two different fixes for this problem. One person found that adjusting resistor R-13 on the phase locked double f data seperator board works. This is a 200K ohm frequency adjust trimpot that points down from the board. The other user found that using the trimpot R3 on the Lamp Amplifier board got rid of the errors.

ERROR MESSAGES ON I/O

Error numbers are extracts of the binary error messages generated by the 1771 chip on the AM200 board. These are supposed to be described on the FD 1771 data sheet. We have not seen this sheet, if you have, please send us a copy so that we can publish it and the error code descriptions.

HILBERT MATRIX BENCHMARK

The Hilbert Matrix is an excellent benchmark to compare speed and accuracy of different computers.

Rayner Rosich or Arvada, Colorado has run both BASIC and FORTRAN versions of this matrix on a number of machines, and has compiled a comparison table that he will publish in the near future.

We have copies of the programs and the comparison charts available for your use. Rayner would appreciate information from anyone running the benchmark on any computers. Contact AMUS if you would like the information and the program.

WHAT THE BIG PRINT GIVETH THE SMALL PRINT TAKETH AWAY DEPT.

DYSTAT will only run if you have a VDM terminal

If you want to run more than 64K of memory you must be using the IMS 16K boards. Don't forget to disable the top 1K on the board that goes from 49-64K. That is where the PROM loads itself during startup.

DIABLO HYTYPE DRIVER

Dr. Gary Allen has written a driver for the Diablo Hytype printer. It should be published in the next release, but if you're in a hurry, contact him directly at PO Box 22343, Louisville, Kentucky 40222.

MONITOR

Has anybody got information on the monitor? Alpha Micro hasn't published any documentation on it yet.

MACRO

Some assembler programs get hung up in MACRO on phase 4. If yours does, use an EXTERN statement with no arguments to prevent the MACRO call from entering phase 4. Then use the LINK command to finish up the processing.

SEQUENTIAL GOTCHA

If a sequential file is opened for INPUT in BASIC, you can write to that file (or so it seems) with a PRINT statement. No error message appears even though the file is not ready to accept data. The data goes to the buffer in your partition and can be read out on subsequent INPUT statements, but it never reached the file. This might be handy for testing, but if you're not careful...gotcha!

ANOTHER EDITOR COMMAND

Last newsletter we told you about the FS text editing command. A talk with Mike Roach of Alpha Micro reveals yet another. This is the FN command. It will find and substitute for the whole file. The format is the same as the FS command: FNoldword$newword$$ ($ is the escape key). These are similar to the S and N commands documented in the Text Editor section of the AMOS manual.

AMUS PROBLEM REPORT FORM

NAME _____ DATE_____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

System Configuration: AMOS Version ____.____

    MOTHERBOARD/POWER SYPPLY _____

    I/O CARD(S) _____

    MEMORY _____K _____

    DISK CONTROLLER(S) _____

    DISK DRIVE(S) _____

    CRT(S) _____

    PRINTER(S) _____

    OTHER _____

Describe the problem. Please be as specific as possible about
the circumstances including any attempted corrections. Please
include printouts or examples whenever possible.

Mail to: AMUS c/o Jim Taylor, PO Box 1723, Boulder, Colo. 80306

PRINTING TO SPOOL FROM BASIC

You can define the printer as a file within BASIC using OPEN #1,TRM:TERMI command, but as we told you in the last letter, you have to be sure to append a line feed to the data. Also (this from Mike Roach at Alpha Micro) the driver (TRM in this case) must be in either SYSTEM or in the user's memory (preferably in SYSTEM). Add the driver to your SYSTEM.INI before the final SYSTEM command.

AMUS INFORMATION

If you need more newsletter, brochures, or information please fill out the order form and return it to AMUS,c/o Jim Taylor, PO Box 1723, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

_____ Copies of the AMUS Brochure..free

_____ Copies of the Current Newsletter @15¢ each

_____ Copies of back issues of the Newsletter @15¢ each

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ADDRESS _____

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ENCLOSED $_____.__

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