

Newsletter

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MARCH

1981

ALPHA MICRO USERS SOCIETY
934 B Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 449-6917

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AMUS office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., mountain time. Our overworked secretary is Sharon Greene who is happy to assist you with any question you might have about AMUS, or the Alpha Micro Computer. If she doesn't know the answer to your question, she will try to direct you to someone who does.

The AMUS Newsletter is published monthly by AMUS, 934-B Pearl Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302. Subscription rates are \$10.00 per year. Each member representative receives a one year subscription, the cost of which is included in the annual dues.

Additional copies and back issues of the newsletter may be ordered from Sharon Greene. Bug fixes, articles, letters, reviews of software and information about Alpha Micro applications are happily accepted. Material must be received by the 20th of the month for inclusion in the following month's edition.

Each member is allotted one free page of advertising in the newsletter each year; further advertising is at the rate of \$50.00 per page with a minimum of 1/4 page. Ads must be camera-ready, black and white copy and be accompanied by the appropriate fee. Send all advertising to the editor at 1401 E. Bridge Street, Brighton, CO 80601.

The Alpha Micro Users Society Network is a computer system meant to give members access to information and other Alpha Micro users with similar interests. It consists of an Alpha Micro computer with a Hawk disk drive, a 300 baud modem, a 1200 baud modem, and 160K of memory. AMUS members are given an individual account and password on the Network so that they may receive personal electronic mail. Contact Sharon Greene for your account and password. Many thanks to Alpha Micro Systems of Irvine, California; North America Title Co. of Houston, Texas; and the Byte Shop of Reno, Nevada who have donated equipment and software to the Network.

AMUS has a library of programs which have been donated by members for distribution to other members. Programs are available either through the AMUS Network, or, if you prefer, we can make floppy or Hawk cartridge copies and mail them to you. Orders may be placed through Sharon Greene.

Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Boulder, Colorado 80302.

from the president

FROM THE PRESIDENT The AMUS convention held in Miami during the week of January 18-24 attracted over 150 members who attended a jam packed schedule of demonstrations, seminars, and ad hoc meetings late into the night. Courses were given on Alpha Accounting, Alpha Assembler, Time management, Structured programming, financial modeling, COBOL, APL, Fortran, Telecommunications, Educational uses of the Alpha Micro, and more. If there were any complaints about the convention, they were about too many things to do. Bill and Angela Miller, who did all of the planning for the convention, arranged to have three systems at the convention, so there was plenty of hands on time for demonstrations of software packages. Some of the main packages that were shown were: DRAVAC's ANDI data base management system and TSASS, their Time sharing and accounting system, along with their utility programs. Commwest demonstrated FORTHought, a sophisticated financial modeling program, and SYNDX, their relational data base system. Bob Salita brought his APL and FORTRAN compilers, ABSORT also showed a FORTRAN '77 compiler. ANGUSGLOW from England demonstrated their COBOL compiler, and ECCSYS corporation unveiled Software Helmer, a programming tool that writes file handling programs. Larry White gave extensive demonstrations about communicating between computers with his telecommunications packages, and showed some of his utility programs, and Guruprem Khalsa demonstrated Khalsa's Word Processing system. Bob Fowler demonstrated his programming utilities and gave out a great amount of information about programming in assembly language. Jim Rae demonstrated his SuperVUE which got ovations during his presentation, and Bill Miller exhibited his CARS, Collegiate Accounting and Recordkeeping System.

wednesday evening. Richard Wilcox of Alpha Micro spoke at the banquet and introduced Alpha Micro's new Vice President of Marketing, Lloyd Lokka. Bob Fowler entertained everyone with two piano pieces, and DRAVAC donated several software packages which were given away as door prizes.

During the periods when nothing was happening during the conference (mostly from 11:00 PM to 3:00 AM) several software houses got together and formed a new organization called Omnisoft which will help prevent the pirating of software through the use of a hardware security system called Omnilock, and provide other services needed by software authors such as pooling efforts on the creation of licensing agreements. They have a press release elsewhere in this newsletter that you will want to read if you have anything to do with the development or marketing of software.

I visited with Lloyd Lokka at the convention, and again two weeks later at Alpha Micro in Irvine. Lloyd seems to be the right person for the job, and we believe that under his guidance the marketing department at Alpha Micro should become more responsive and effective. We're looking forward to better communications and relations with Alpha Micro through Lloyd.

while I was in L.A. I also visited SCAMUS, the Southern California AMUS group and enjoyed meeting with the folks out there. SCAMUS is one of the more active local AMUS groups with more than 50 members now, and it's obvious that they enjoy getting together once a month to exchange ideas and problems, and to find out what's up with the other Alpha Micro owners in the area. At AMUS we are happy to do whatever we can to help get local chapters organized and to help keep them going strong. We can offer the lists of AMUS members in any region, do mailings for you, provide space in the AMUS newsletter for a column dedicated to your chapter, or help out in any other way that you might think of. If you would like to get a local chapter organized, please let us know.

We recently had a hawk head crash which resulted in a new fixed platter, new heads, and a total realignment. It's nice to be up again on a totally refurbished drive, but one of the fallout problems that we inherited was that none of the cartridges created on the 'new' disk drive could be read by the other two hawk drives. The reason is that the heads tend to drift inward. Since this happens very gradually over a long period of time all of the backups that you make will work fine, the trouble becomes apparent when you try to swap cartridges with other drives. We can only recommend that periodic maintenance be performed, and that you periodically check against a disk that you know to be true. If you are on the Alpha Micro update service, the cartridges sent out should be fairly standard, so if you're not having any trouble reading them, you should be in reasonable condition. The moral of the story is to keep up your preventative maintenance.

There are a couple of items that have been making their way around the Alpha Micro world that probably need to be discussed. They are what the value and costs of software are, and the sale of hardware from sources other than Alpha Micro Dealers.

Software: The value of software is determined by how much effort went into the work in the development stage, and how much money it can save when it is used. Software is also very deceiving in that a program that is 50 or 40 lines long can be written in half an hour. A program that is three or four hundred lines long might take a week, and a program that is three or four thousand lines long may take many months to complete. The effort needed to produce and maintain complex programs is exponential and therefore the cost of such software is an exponential amount above the costs of small programs. Also, the smallest program may have no documentation, and need no support, but the largest program will necessitate a volume of user documentation, a volume of programmer information, and will demand that the program get regular software support. Users have asked us why we have free programs in the AMUS library, but some people can charge several thousand dollars for other software. The reason is that most of the programs in the AMUS library are a few pages long, while the programs that are being

more

sold on the market are several thousand lines long. When you're deciding whether or not to purchase a software package, the salient point is whether or not it will do the job for you, and whether or not it can save you money. The creator of the product and the distributors have set the price based on their own criteria, and it is unfair for potential customers to demand that the price be lowered since all the package is is a copy, or to attempt to pirate a copy from a friend. Buckaneers will not find many friends here at AMUS since most of us are involved in the creation of software ourselves and make our living by selling ideas that were put into code with hard work.

We have recently been inundated by offers of inexpensive hardware including memory, terminals, and disks. The disks are both used Hawks, and Hawks with Konan controllers which are considerably less expensive than the Alpha Micro AM-500 boards. We're all for free enterprise and healthy competition, but as end users, you should be aware of the responsibility that you are taking upon yourself when you purchase hardware from sources other than AM dealers. Naturally your dealer won't be receptive to maintaining equipment that he/she did not sell you. Also, especially in the case of older equipment, parts and service are going to be hard to come by. If you are buying an older Hawk, be sure that it can hook up with the Alpha Micro. The disk must be able to handle 408 sectors. Some of the older models will only handle up to 403 sectors per track. Usually you're in pretty good shape if the serial number on the Hawk is greater than 500.

In the case of the Konan controllers, you should be aware of the fact that Alpha Micro makes changes to the disk driver software with nearly every new release, and in many cases this means that changes must also be made to the driver for the Konan. If you are going to purchase a Konan controller, you should have some kind of guarantee from the person you purchase the device from that the software will be maintained as new releases come out. If you can handle the process of keeping up with releases and hardware maintenance, the Konan/Hawk system is a good bargain.

If you plan to purchase a used system from someone, you should be aware of the fact that Alpha Micro records the serial numbers of each board sold by each dealer. Boards returned for repair can only be returned by an authorized Alpha Micro dealer. When a board is returned to Alpha Micro for repairs, the first thing they do is check to see that the board being returned was in fact sold by the dealer who returned it. If not, they will refuse to work on the board. This makes it very difficult to get service on used equipment. If you do purchase used equipment, you should verify that your dealer is willing to write a letter to Alpha Micro stating that he understands that you have purchased the used hardware and that the dealer agrees to provide maintenance. Alpha Micro will then add the serial numbers of your equipment to the list of items sold by that dealer.

We have also established a policy now at AMUS that we will strongly discourage the publishing of prices for hardware and software unless it is something of the classified ads variety. The reason we are doing this is because we have gotten a lot of flack from dealers who have had clients purchase equipment from someone four states away and then expected the dealer to make it work right. We have also had problems when publishing prices because some items were meant for dealers eyes only, but sent to us represented as end user prices. This specifically happened in last January's newsletter with Piicion memory boards. We ran a classified ad that said Piicion would sell memory boards directly to end users at the dealer's price which is definitely not the case. We're not sure where the ad came from, but we talked to Chris Bailey at Piicion, whose name appeared on the ad, and he assured us that he did not provide the information, and that if an end user approaches Piicion the price is going to be the same price that a dealer will offer. We apologize for any problems that this might have caused, and intend to at least temporarily solve the problem by referring people to the source instead of trying to be the source ourselves. If you as members of AMUS have an opinion about how the matter should be treated, we would be happy to hear your ideas.

AMUS is happy to provide information about how to find people selling used equipment, and any equipment that works on the Alpha Micro. We just want you to be aware of potential problems. The trade off you have to consider is less money now for the items, versus more money later for maintenance and repair.

Now that we've explained why you shouldn't buy used hardware, we would like to announce that AMUS has a couple of items that it would like to unload. The first is a DECwriter LA-36 that is a fine workhorse and has never failed. It's just too slow for our needs. When we had 500 members it could pump out the mailing list labels in an hour or two, but now it takes most of the day. If you have need of a good 300 band printer, then we'll entertain any reasonable offer in the \$900 range. Also, we have an Anderson Jacobson printer that is an IBM Selectric that works with RS-232 ASCII. We purchased it for \$1200 and rarely use it now. It has one problem in that when it does a carriage return, it doesn't line up quite right vertically until the second character is struck. We asked the IBM typewriter maintenance folks what could be done and they said \$300 would fix it right. Considering that you would have to put \$300 into the machine, we would be happy to let it go for \$400. If you're interested in either printer, please let Sharon Greene know at the AMUS office.

Agos ago we asked if anybody had built a program that would allow the information on one terminal to be broadcast to a group of other terminals. This would be most helpful for classroom demonstrations. We're still asking. If you know of such a program,

and more

please let us know. We believe, that priced reasonably, there would be a demand for this program among schools and even many businesses. John Waycott at BKS has a program that lets the system operator send one line to all the terminals, but it only works for one line, and the line only gets delivered if the person at the terminal is logged in. We need a basic take-over-the-terminal type program.

Jeff Gordon who is with the Navy installation in San Diego wants to write an assembler language subroutine callable from BASIC that will change the baud rate for a job. If anyone is willing to write up such a routine, or has already written one, please contact Jeff, and AMUS. We also think that this would be a handy item to have around. You can contact Jeff Gordon at the Navy Personnel Research & Development Center, San Diego, Calif 92122.

Fred Watterson of Associated Computer Consultants in Clinton, Illinois has volunteered to begin organization of another AMUS conference to be held in the Chicago area the week of July 27th. If you would like to speak, demonstrate, chair a panel discussion, or otherwise participate, please check in with him. Fred is anxious to hear ideas about how panel discussions, dissertations, demonstrations, and general meetings should be handled, so if you have ideas about how you would like to have the conference organized, please contact him at: Associated Computer Consultants, 111 S. Monroe, Clinton, IL 65102. (217) 935-8872

Tim with Micro Pathways would like to know if anyone has ever interfaced an AM210 with Shugarts SA801 floppy drives. He talked to Alpha Micro and they said to their knowledge it has never been done, nor would they consider doing it. You can find Tim at: Micro Pathways, 21102 Lorain Ave., Fairview Park, OH 44216. (216) 535-8864

AMUS just received a copy of the Alpha Micro Benchmark Report published by the Association of Computer Users. The tests done on the Alpha Micro were conducted by the University of Colorado Business Research Division

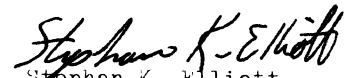
Several programs were run and timed on the Alpha Micro and the timings for the programs along with the comments of the testers, and the comments of users that were interviewed by phone were compiled into the final report. The report concludes that "the Alpha Micro system is a reliable piece of hardware whose strong suit is powerful, well-designed system software."

We found the reports to be complete and fair. There is always some controversy about the fairness of benchmark programs since there is always some difference in the architecture of the machines being tested.

and changes usually have to be made to the programs from machine to machine due to programming languages, but, in this report, timing is not the total consideration. The report also includes comments on documentation, user satisfaction, and the utility of the language (AlphaBASIC) used in the report. We recommend that dealers become acquainted with the report, since it is a good 'third party' reference to the Alpha Micro.

The Benchmark Report does not compare the Alpha Micro with other machines, but articles published by Hillel Segal, president of ACU, in Computerworld show the "standings" of machines priced in the same range as the Alpha Micro. The Alpha Micro usually "placed" second or third in most of the tests, and, when you take into consideration the prices of the machines, the Alpha looks pretty good. We will publish some excerpts and timings from the report in the next Newsletter.

If you would like the complete benchmark report, you can contact the Association of Computer Users (ACU) at Post Office Box 9003, Boulder, Colorado 80501. Membership in ACU costs \$50 per year, there is an additional charge for the report.


Stephan K. Elliott
President, AMUS

Please let AMUS know as soon as possible of any address changes. We spend a lot of YOUR money mailing this newsletter. If one is undeliverable, the Post Office is kind enough to send it back to us, and we pay postage BOTH WAYS.

Please help us conserve by notifying us of any changes !!!

H O O R A Y ! ! !

AMUS membership has finally reached the 1000 mark. Thanks to all involved and for all your hard work.



17881 Sky Park North
P.O. Box 18347
Irvine, California 92713

(714) 957-1404
TWX 910-595-2666

February 4, 1981

Pat Sietsinger
DUNN-MOORE AND ASSOCIATES
1401 Bridge
Brighton, CO 80601

Dear Pat,

The following are some general comments on items in the January issue of the AMUS Newsletter:

1. With regard to Lee Besing's letter on the CHR\$ function of ALPHABASIC: as I am sure others have noted, the effect this command has on the terminal screen is determined more by the terminal than by the CHR\$ function. A look in the manual provided with the terminal should provide a list of the various functions available and the correct ASCII code to perform them.
2. The bug in RUN which John Kjellman refers to (Page 9) has to do with the initialization of RUN's impure area during a CHAIN operation. This bug has been corrected for AMOS Version 4.5, but unfortunately, a patch is not available.
3. On page 12, Joseph Gaffney asks for information about a clock/calendar board for his Alpha. We offer such a board in the form of the AM-120 Auxiliary I/O Controller Board. Not only does it have a battery backed-up clock/calendar, but it also contains two serial ports, a set of parallel ports, power-fail detection circuitry, and memory error circuitry. It is designed so that when it is used with an AM-100 it will upgrade the system with many of the features of the AM-100/T. Software is supplied with the board. More information is available from your dealer or from our Marketing Department.
4. For the assembler freaks out there, there is a way to avoid the "quirk" of FSPEC that Bob Fowler mentions on page 14 (his bug #6). FSPEC can be supplied an "illegal" extension (rather than a legitimate one like .ZZZ) such as:

FSPEC DDB,<\$\$\$>

This flagging of a default extension works because the assembler does no checking on the validity of the second parameter supplied to FSPEC. Checking is done by FSPEC on the file specification fed to it. Had VUE been coded this way, for instance, you would have the added versatility of using .ZZZ as an extension (assuming, of course, you had a reason to!).

That's all for this time, hope that this information is useful.

Sincerely,



Jeff Kreider
Software Support Supervisor

JK/cv

We have developed a terminal driver especially for Alpha users using the H19 terminal. This driver performs character code conversions required by the H19. This driver was especially designed with the VUE editor in mind. The function keys and keypad keys are defined as ALPHAVUE commands. The following commands are defined:

● KEYPAD FUNCTIONS:

- 1 - Insert Line
- 2 - Cursor Down
- 3 - Delete Line
- 4 - Cursor Left
- 5 - Cursor Home
- 6 - Cursor Right
- 7 - Incharmode
- 8 - Cursor Up
- 9 - Delete Char

● FUNCTION KEYS DEFINITION:

- F1 - Next Word
- F2 - Last Word
- F3 - Delete Word
- F4 - Concatenate
- F5 - Center Cursor
- ERASE - Delete to EOL
- BLUE - Page Up
- RED - Page Down
- WHITE - Endpage

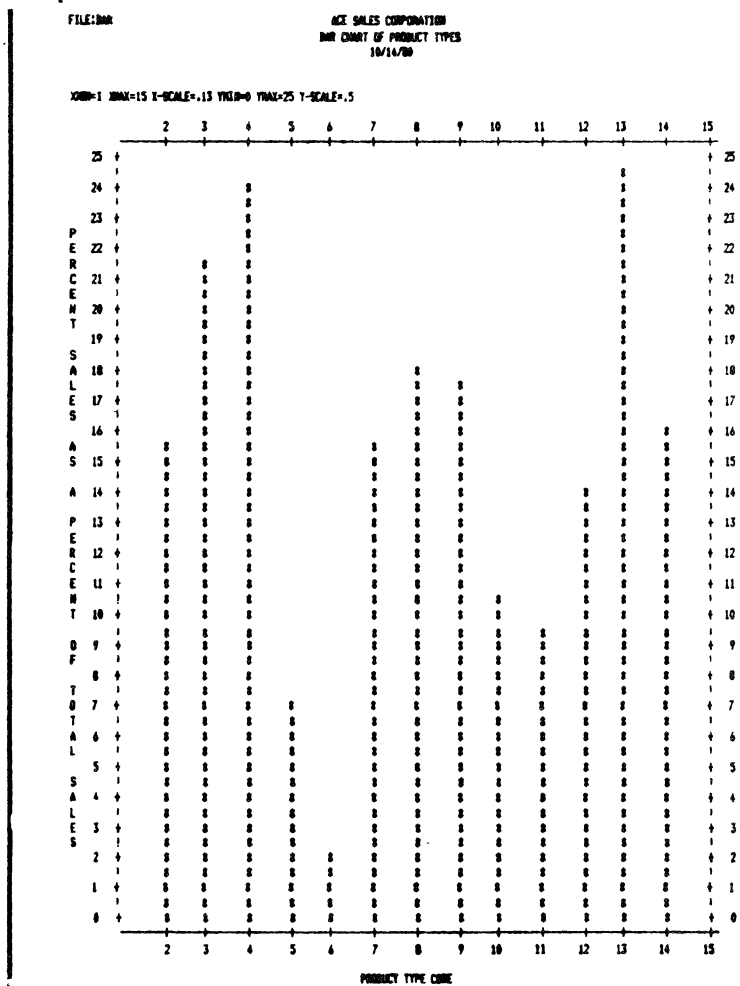
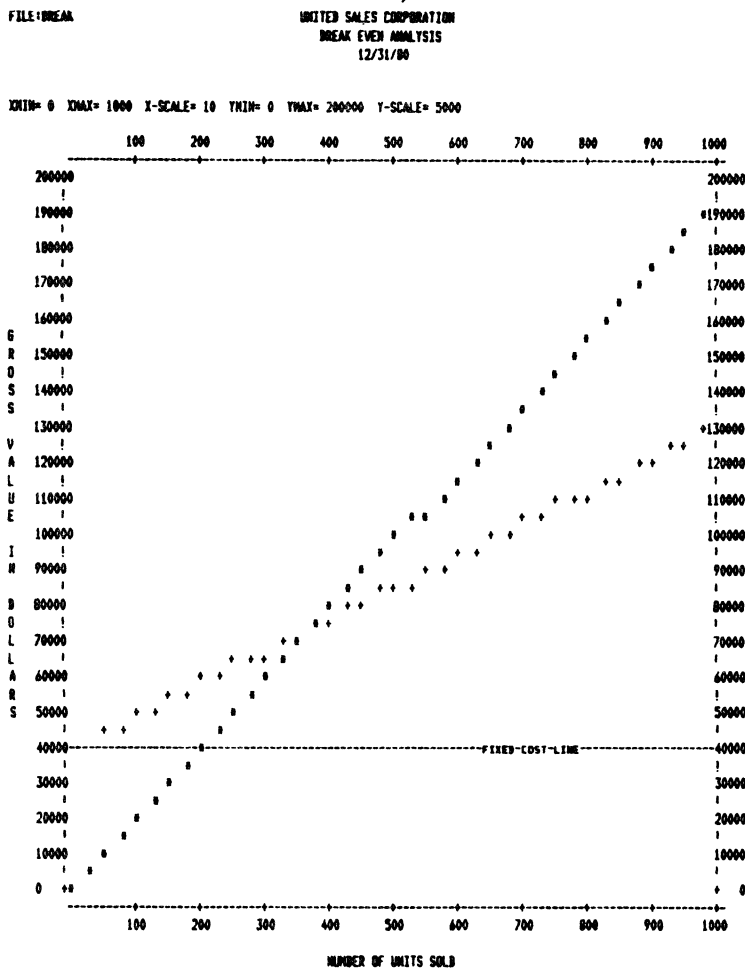
The functions of the normal keypad characters are not lost. They are available as shifted keypad keys. The 25th line is employed to display the functions of the function keys in reverse video. This driver is available on floppy with complete documentation for \$100.00. Other arrangements are available for users without floppy capability. To place an order or for further information contact: CONTEMPORARY CYBERNETICS GROUP, 1204 Willow Green Drive, Newport News, Virginia 23602, (804) 599-4749.

PLOT

A General Purpose Plotting Package

PLOT is a program which will plot a file of X, Y data points using a standard computer printer. It allows the user to select the following options:

- Specify horizontal and vertical axis
- Title all axes with multiple lines of text
- Control the scale of the plot
- Remove the printer distortion (6 or 8 L.P.I./10 OR 16.5 C.P.I.)
- Print values on each line of the plot
- Specify special characters to be used in the plot
- Control the tick marks and increments
- Specify the maximum and minimum X and Y values
- Plot X values on Y-axis and plot Y values on X-axis



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Letters

George O. Young III
Sierra Computer Co.
617 Mark NE
Albuquerque, NM 87123

I am disconcerted over the recent vacillations in the AMUS policy on advertisements in the Newsletter. I don't disagree with those who felt its pages were being inundated with product announcements and such under the old policy, but frankly I was counting on my last letter to "get the word out" through the Newsletter about AM-FORIH. The policy changes in mid-stream, as it were, upset my plans. I'm grateful that you did include the brief note in the Oct/Nov issue; thank you.

As for the new policy as stated in the January Newsletter, I support it as a compromise between no free opportunity for AMUS members to communicate regarding their products and the Newsletter becoming just a means of advertising. But I think in place of the "free advertising" of the past, the editor must find other sources and topics for articles, notes, etc. to make AMUS and its Newsletter really worth the (ever-escalating) dues. If this cannot be accomplished, then I urge you to provide free space for AMUS members to talk about their products. It is better than an empty Newsletter.

Along these lines, I suggest some guidelines be published on the topics, content, and editorial quality of items for the Newsletter. In my last letter I provided some information on relative speed and space utilization for a benchmark program run in Alpha-BASIC, AM-FORIH, and on some other popular microcomputers. I realize that it was embedded in a product advertisement, but I think in light of your decision to not publish the advertisement, the information is still of sufficient interest to the AMUS membership to be extracted and published. (Some such information did get included in the NOTES from Mr. Fowler in the January Newsletter.) Attached is a copy of the complete benchmark information related to my last letter. Please consider including all or parts of it in a future Newsletter.

As an added thought, I want to comment on the Network. Maybe I am in the minority, but I cannot yet justify (or afford) a MODEM to utilize the network and therefore rely heavily on the Newsletter as the main communications medium. What percentage of the AMUS membership do in fact use the network? If it is not really large, then the Newsletter MUST be emphasized in every way.

In accordance with the new policy, I have enclosed a one-half page product announcement from Sierra Computer Co. for Version B of AM-FORIH. I wish to use it as one-half of the annual allotment for free advertising provided each member.

Let me say in closing that I intend only to provide a constructive critique of AMUS. Besides having the best of the small computer systems (because of its hardware flexibility and the unbeatable operating system and software), I am associated with the best of the user's organizations. The leadership of AMUS, with at least the tacit support of the membership, have set an example for others to follow in building a sound working environment and marketplace for computer systems in this class. Let's keep up the good work.

George O. Young III

MAINFRAMES - WATCH OUT ! ! !

The new mainframes Alpha Micro has been producing have more than just a pretty face. They are designed to prevent a problem I had last week.

As with most of us, I'm a board changer. For one reason or another, my boards are always getting moved from one slot to another. While I knew there was a need for careful hands when pulling boards, I did not know I should be checking the bus each time.

It seems that simple metal fatigue gets to the pins in the bus after a period of time, even if you're not doing a bunch of board switching. A pin can be physically pulled out of the bus, or worse, partially pulled out and short to the opposite side of the bus. This is what happened to me.

I pulled a board and did not notice that pin 2 had shorted across to pin 52. When I turned the power back on, the bus shorted and created havoc in my mainframe. The AM-300 was actually smoking!

The voltage regulators on the AM-300 and AM-100 were gone, along with various chips, and other thingamabobs I can't even pronounce. Thank God for maintenance contracts.

My paranoia determined that this could only happen to me - not true. A dealer in the midwest had experienced the same problem only the week before.

Moral of the story - check the bus carefully for anything (dirt, staples, or shorts) anytime you pull a board. DON'T turn the machine back on until you are sure that bus is o.k.

Anyone who would like more information on what happened, feel free to give me a call. I would love to prevent someone from that horrible feeling of watching your whole computer go up in smoke. By the way, I was back up and running in 24 hours.

Pat

WISHING WELL

Jon Levinson
(305) 771-8133

Jon is looking for a Hotel Accounting & Reservations package suitable for three hotels and 600 rooms.

Jon is also looking for the following Alpha Accounting fixes:

General Ledger - Year end compression and P & L and B/S Comparatives

Accounts Payable - Partial payments or prepaid check omissions on register

Martin Gutteridge
P. O. Box 1
Mangrove Bay, Bermuda
(809) 292-3610

Anyone have a package for contractor's work, specifically air conditioning?

Dick Moule
(213) 557-1770

Wants to exchange information on Bit-Pad routines.

Allen Porterfield
P. O. Box 2044
Covina, CA 91722
(213) 331-2619

Need contact with user having used an AM-100 to "front end" with a Modcomp or other 16-bit "Mini".

Ann Copeland
Signal Construction
Jupiter, FL
(305) 746-8636

Need package for job costing, estimating, material allocation and inventory control. Heavy electrical construction.

Roy Cook
Panhandle Data Processing
2304 Mullan Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Would like to talk to someone who is selling on-line time. Interested in your hardware configuration and experiences with it and in typical on-line rate structures.

Dorsey Evans, Jr.
1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, D. C. 20036
(202) 659-4343

Who knows something about acoustic noise suppression on the Hawk and Phoenix ?

Who has interfaced the Alpha Micro to the outside world through the AM-300? i.e., lights on and off, motors on and off, door locks open and close, etc. How do you do it ? What drivers to you use ?

Please send information to the AMUS newsletter.

p.s. This was from an unknown inquirer. Will publish any responses. Editor.

Alan V. Rushton
P. O. Box F-715
Freeport, Grand Bahama

Does anyone know how to:

- a) Read and write in double density, single side on Persci 277
- b) Boot on the same drive in double density



alpha peripherals, inc.

We are pleased to offer the following items of interest to A.M.U.S. members:

California Computer Systems Model 2016 S-100 IEEE-696 16Kb memory board kits, ALPHA MICROSYSTEMS compatible bank select, 450ns 2114 type static memory, 5 units.

Alpha Peripherals Model 106 S-100 IEEE-696 ALPHA MICROSYSTEMS compatible 128K to 1Mb memory system, 16K banks, minimum 2 card set, controller will drive up to 8 array cards, with error detect and correct (EDAC) on lowest 128Kb. 128Kb 2 card set, EDAC controller option, 128K add'l. memory array card. 6-8 week delivery, call for information.

AM-500 compatible CDC-9427H 10 Meg disk drive subsystem (HAWK), drive is used with 30 day parts warrantee, with new Konan KNX-500 disk controller, pedestal and cabling, tested on A-M system.

CDC-9427H HAWK 10 Meg hard disk drives, used condition with 30 day parts only warrantee, pedestal mtg., tested on A-M system.

Call for price information on all above equipment.

303-458-1200
3749 WOLFF ST., UNIT 9
DENVER, COLORADO 80212

Design, Engineering and Manufacture, and Supplier of A-M and IEEE-696 S-100 Compatible Products

datalab inc.
617 E. University, Suite 250
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 U.S.A.
313-995-0663

proof/it: A Spelling Error Detection/Correction Package

General Description:

proof/ittm is a set of programs that compares all words in a text file with those in one or more dictionaries. If a word is not found in any specified dictionary, the user is asked if the word is correctly spelled. If it is, the word can be added automatically to a selected dictionary. If it is not, a correctly spelled word can be directly substituted for the incorrectly spelled word in the text file and placed in a dictionary. **TXTFMT** and **form/ittm** commands are ignored.

Features:

Screen-oriented: The active line of text is always displayed and the word being compared is accented in bright mode. If a comparison fails, the terminal bell will sound, and a status line appears in bright mode asking if the word is spelled correctly. Options can then be selected from the menu that is always present on the top half of the screen.

Uses multiple dictionaries: Six different dictionaries can be used with one text file. A master dictionary is provided (its size depends on the storage medium, see below). Secondary dictionaries can contain specialized words. A secondary dictionary can be the master dictionary (e.g. a dictionary of names and places might be used exclusively in proofing a mailing list). File locking allows simultaneous use of common dictionaries by multiple users. Dictionary words are stored in an exceptionally compact form and accessed via **WAMtm** (Word Access Method), an extremely high speed procedure written in MACRO assembler specifically for **proof/it**.

Corrects a text file: Correctly spelled words can be substituted directly into the text file. A further edit is not required to change misspelled words!

Expands dictionaries automatically: Any identified word can be added to a dictionary at any time automatically. Any further occurrences of this word will be recognized as correctly spelled.

Complete maintenance program: This program is used to create new dictionaries, merge dictionaries, change words in dictionaries, etc. An alphabetized secondary dictionary can be displayed or printed for examination.

Pricing:

proof/it: Complete package including manual and software on floppy diskette with over 10,000 word dictionary, \$125. Software on 5 megabyte hard disk pack with over 30,000 word dictionary, add \$100. Manual only, \$10. Package runs on Alpha Micro AM-100* computer with 32K user memory and mass storage unit.

*Alpha Micro and AM-100 are trademarks of Alpha Microsystems.

Innovative computer software artists

datalab inc.
617 E. University, Suite 250
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 U.S.A.
313-995-0663

build/it: A Programmer's Menu Design Package

General Description:

build/ittm is a set of programs and files that allows a programmer to create menus and screen formats. These menus and screen formats can then be executed automatically from within AlphaBASIC* programs.

Using **build/it** a programmer can rapidly design professionally formatted, screen-oriented programs that are easy to use. The menus and screen formats can include permanent messages, status messages, and a variety of inputs - specified by textual prompts and dot sequences - at any desired place on the screen. Items to be selected, active lines, etc. can be enhanced in bright mode while the remainder of the screen remains in dim mode.

Features:

Simple to use: All that is required for an AlphaBASIC program to use the screen subroutines are a few variable declarations and GOSUB's! The subroutines control all input and output to and from the terminal. They are written in AlphaBASIC and source code is provided.

Visual screen building: All screen images are entered into screen table files through a screen building program that is easy to learn and use. Text strings can be entered, and then moved anywhere by moving the cursor with use of a specially designated "keypad". During editing the screen image always appears as it would if accessed by an AlphaBASIC program.

Full input/output control: A text string can be specified as permanent, as a status message, or as an input specification. Activated inputs turn bright for easy identification. Multiple text lines can be used for each input. Status messages appear at the bottom of the screen and can be followed by an input field. Full formatted input is used everywhere; otype is impossible!

Sample Files: Several sample files are provided. These include a sample AlphaBASIC program using the subroutines; several sample menus; and a sample command file that can automatically execute the AlphaBASIC program.

Pricing:

build/it: Complete package including manual and software on floppy diskette, \$125. Manual only, \$10. Software on 5 megabyte hard disk pack, add \$100. Package runs on Alpha Micro AM-100* computer with 32K user memory and mass storage unit.

*Alpha Micro, AM-100 and AlphaBASIC are trademarks of Alpha Microsystems.

Innovative computer software artists

datalab inc.
617 E. University, Suite 250
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104 U.S.A.
313-995-0663

back/it: A System Backup Package

General Description:

back/ittm is a set of three programs that will backup, restore and list all files that have changed since the last backup. Files are backed up on a compatible user-selected medium (e.g. floppy diskette, hard disk, tape). The ID number of the medium(s) that contain a file can be readily identified and the file restored at any time. It is essentially impossible to make a mistake with this package. Simplicity of use means that a system can be backed up more often with less effort, and at lower cost. This is especially important with large disk storage units, e.g. the Phoenix** drive. All programs are reentrant and written in assembler.

Features:

Only changed files are backed up: A complete device scan determines which files have changed since the last backup. Only those files are backed up. A backup interrupted with a Control-C can later be resumed without backing up the same files again!

Easy file restore: When files are backed up, their location and current date are stored. When a file is restored, the exact location is already known; no fumbling with disks to find out where it is! **back/it** can provide an inexpensive system for keeping permanent copies of all files. Further, if **back/it** finds a file, that file has been backed up and can be erased.

All output mediums are identified: Whenever a new output medium is used, it is checked to see if it has been used before. If not, it is initialized uniquely for backups, and is assigned a number. Then **back/it** can assure that the correct output medium is used!

No file is too large: If a file is backed up that is larger than space available on the output medium, as much as possible will be written to the current medium, then a new medium will be requested.

Screen-oriented: For easy use, the backup and restoration procedures are fully screen-oriented. The status of the backup is always fully displayed.

Pricing:

back/it: Complete package including manual and software on floppy diskette, \$125. Manual only, \$10. Software on 5 megabyte hard disk pack, add \$100. Package runs on Alpha Micro AM-100* computer with 32K user memory and mass storage unit.

* Alpha Micro and AM-100 are trademarks of Alpha Microsystems.

**Phoenix is a registered trademark of Control Data Corp.



NORTH AMERICA TITLE SERVICES

2223 West Loop South • Houston, Texas 77027
713 871-1402 • 713 667-3021

IBM DATA EXCHANGE SOFTWARE

With this package you can dump data files or program files to/from your Alpha Micro formatted disks (either hard disks or floppies) from/to an IBM 3740 format floppy disk.

ASCII from/to EBCDIC translations are automatically performed. Any length record from 1 to 128 characters can be transferred.

Included are seven assembly language subroutines called from a user AlphaBasic program. These subroutines allow you to open an IBM floppy for input or output and read and write data. These subroutines are used with a basic program which controls the Alpha Micro file structure and any record reformatting.

This system is easy to use with over 30 installations. Some customization of the basic programs provided is needed to fit your application.

Price is \$400.00. All orders must be prepaid or COD. To order or request a the documentation package write or call today. Make your checks payable to North America Title Company.

!!!!!! ATTENTION REMOTE ALPHA MICRO USERS - AUTO-BOOT IS HERE !!!!!!!

AUTO-BOOT is designed from any modem or remote terminal connected to the Alpha Micro with a RS-232 serial connection. AUTO-BOOT listens for the break key from the terminal and will reset the system after giving a 1 minute audible alarm. We have tested AUTO-BOOT with Vadec modems and MI**2 modems. It is currently in use with several other modems.

Price is \$175.00 each. All orders must be prepaid or COD. To order or request more information write or call today. Make your checks payable to Products Diversified, Inc.

COMPLETE DEC VT100 TERMINAL DRIVER AVAILABLE

The new DEC VT100 family of terminals is now supported on the Alpha Micro. We have available an excellent driver which provides you easy access to all of the terminal attributes of this terminal. This driver will also work with any DEC VT100 look alikes such as the Visual 100 terminal.

We believe that 132 column terminals are tremendous tools for many applications and programs. Here is your chance to interface one to your Alpha Micro.

Price is \$75.00. All orders must be prepaid or COD. Special dealer prices available. To order or request more information write or call today. Make your checks payable to Products Diversified, Inc.

Eugene C. Platt
4834 Jason
Houston, Texas 77096
(713) 666-8166

Charles Williams
2223 West Loop South B-35
Houston, Texas 77027
(713)871-1402

///-----\\\

/// FoxWare Systems \\

/// Alpha Micro Utilities \\

///-----\\\

FoxWare Systems Corporation announces three new utilities packages containing invaluable tools for Alpha Microsystems programmers. Included is a major new capability for accepting text into a BASIC program, a simple but extremely versatile universal menu generator and a varied package of new subroutines and programs.

INVUE (INPUT + VUE) is an assembly-language subroutine which replaces the INPUT statement in a BASIC program . . . but with a big difference -- INVUE honors 18 of the text editing commands familiar to VUE users! INVUE also displays prompt lines and dynamically checks each entered character against a variety of criteria in an extremely flexible manner. Simplify your BASIC programs dramatically and give the poor keyboard operator a powerful and familiar data entry environment at the same time!

The COMENU (Common MENU) System is a set of easy-to-use programs which allows the creation, running and effortless documentation of customized user menus. Unrestricted inter-linking of menus is allowed, and direct access to the HELP function is provided. Create and document a menu in less than five minutes!

Other utilities include a variety of text handling and processing subroutines, handy routines for drawing lines and boxes fast and a collection of aids to make the neglected programmer's life easier and more productive. Sources for BASIC programs are always provided; liberally-commented MACRO sources available for most assembly-language programs and subroutines.

Send for price list and receive a free listing of SMSORT.BAS -- a fast array sorting subroutine you'll use often! Complete documentation (50+ pages) only \$5.00. Dealer inquiries invited.

///=====\\\

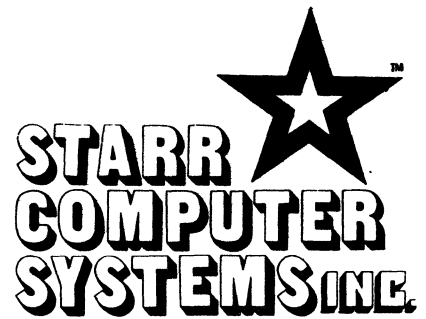
/// FoxWare Systems Corporation \\

/// 17925-G Sky Park Circle \\

/// Irvine, CA 92714 \\

/// (714) 957-9332 \\

///=====\\\



6126 Melissa Lane • Omaha, Nebraska 68152 • (402)571-1722



Dear **ISAM USERS:**

It has come to our attention that some ISAM users have been having trouble using ISAM in a multi-user/multi-key environment. We can help!

Starr Computer Systems, Inc. has been using ISAM extensively for over two years. In that time we have developed some AlphaBasic routines to add, change, and delete single or multiple key ISAM records with multiple users accessing the same files. These routines **NEVER MISS**. Your ISAM files will **NEVER** get scrambled if you use these routines.

These routines **REPORT ALL ERRORS**. All non-zero ISAM ERF function return codes, as well as non-zero FLOCK return codes are trapped.

SAVE TIME AND MONEY! Get the benefit of our experience with ISAM, without having to "learn by hard experience" yourself.

For only \$99.95, we will send you a listing of a sample program containing our AlphaBasic ISAM routines, with sample add, change, and delete code.

We also provide ISAM consulting on an hourly basis.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Starr

Richard J. Starr
President



????????????????????? WHAT THE HECK IS SABTEG ??????????????????????

Hey, Guys! Since a few of you bought my SABTEG program, I can afford to pay the outrageous price this rag charges for another ad! (I can't make a living this way--but it's fun to see my name in print.)

Basically, it is a file management device which permits you to label your directory so that people other than the original programmer may find programs/subroutines that they need without having to bother the author, or dig into the program/subroutine itself to see what it does.

If you have only a few major programs, and do not do much programming or file additions, I would suggest that this is not for you. However, if you or others access many non-familiar programs, files, subroutines, etc., an ANNOTATED DIRECTORY would be a great help.

I use it to keep track of the 70 or so major programs I am working on and have started a subroutine file where I put all my reuseable subroutines. Naturally, the recognizable permutations of 8 characters is limited, so the one-line explanations are a great help (can be modified to several lines).

→ → → Ever "lose" a program or subroutine because you couldn't remember the name?? ← ← ←
Ever do a DIR *.BAS/W and then wish you could remember what they all do?????
Are you the only one who knows what all those six-digit names mean?????????

WOULD YOU LIKE A DIRECTORY ORGANIZER WHICH WOULD EXHIBIT EXPLANATORY LABELS ?

THIS IS IT ! (\$25 for floppy source)

By typing ****GETBAS**** you:

1. Massage your DIRECTORY bringing any new programs into alphabetical order.
2. Merge your newly alphabetized file with an existing ANNOTATED file.
3. Print out an alphabetized ANNOTATED DIRECTORY.
(new programs will stand out as unlabeled) unless (see 4)
New programs/subroutines appear in alphabetical order ready to be labeled
Old labels remain or can be modified/eliminated using VUE.
4. If you use a standard line # or line in all your basic programs which includes your program name and description, it will read your program and print that first line with name and description in the ANNOTATED DIRECTORY, thus saving you the trouble of re-describing it and updating descriptions on modified files as they change over time.
5. Files which have been erased are dropped from the annotated list.

YOU CAN ALSO ANNOTATE YOUR COMMAND FILES AND YOUR DATA FILES

So type ****GETDAT**** or ****GETCMD**** and those files will be massaged and similar files ****ALPDAT**** and ****ALPCMD**** will be produced ready to label.

If you don't use line numbers and want to enable automatic annotation instead of looking for line #9 like I do, look for your file name (wherever you hide it), and use that successful compare to print the line.

ALSO, included for your amusement is a sample program (very short) which demonstrates one of the more unique features of your Alpha Micro. It can examine keyboard input as it is entered (key by key) thus limiting possible errors and frustrating deliberate sabotage.

NOTE that YOU DO NOT NEED TO PRESS RETURN to access/control the computer . . . making displays nearly instantaneous and much more professional

TRY IT . . . YOU'LL LIKE IT !

If you don't know or can't find out how to do similar magic, send \$25 and one Wheaties Box-top to me and I will send you the Boschen short course in single-step replete with useful examples, dull witticisms, misspellings and possibly more advertising. Hank Boschen--
1107 - 12th Street, Boulder, CO 80302

CLASSIFIED

** Alpha Accounting Users **

Menu driven utility programs are now available to assist you in analyzing and recovering damaged accounting data files. Errors handled include bad control values; illegal data types in key fields (letters where numbers should be, and so on); duplicate, hidden or out of order records; and all index file errors including missing files. Makes all records accessible to the normal accounting programs - even recovers inadvertent deletions.

In addition to error checking, all control block parameters are available for modification - you can, for example, switch the general ledger interface flags without reinitializing your system. Audit trail integrity is preserved, however, by not permitting dollar amount changes. These utilities are not modified Alpha Accounting programs. They do not fix any accounting program bugs, nor do they replace any accounting functions. They do complement the accounting system by providing presently unavailable functions. Covers major files in accounts receivable, payable, and payroll. Prices available upon request.

Ryan Consulting
25021 La Cresta Dr., #A
Dana Point, CA 92629
(714) 493-0306

* * * * *

CUSTOM SOFTWARE SERVICES

Whether your needs are for a single program, a complex system, or modifications to existing programs, I can help you at a reasonable cost.

Please write or phone me concerning your needs. You will be glad you did.

R. Joseph Ward
234 Grandridge Court
Ventura, CA 93003
(805) 642-4258

* * * * *

USED EQUIPMENT

AM 1030-01

Hawk Drive, Chasis, 64k Piceon (2), AM500, AM100, AM300, 7 Hawk disk packs. For more information, call:

John Dalton
(512) 682-7945

* * * * *

DOCUMENTATION TRANSLATION

William Behn translates all documentation and system output to French and is beginning a Spanish version.

Computer Boutique
149 Ave. de Wagram
75017 Paris
Tel. 754.94.33

* * * * *

USED EQUIPMENT

Teletype Model 40 300 lpm printer with Full ASCII, in cabinet, RS-232 serial interface.

Microbyte Computer Systems
2626 Union Avenue
San Jose, CA 95124
(408) 377-4685

* * * * *

HELP WANTED

Honolulu Alpha Micro Dealer is looking for a hardware/software person with a degree in Electronics Engineering or equivalent. Please send resume to:

Chuck Portwood
P.P.C.C.
2600 S. King, #207
Honolulu, HI 96826
(808) 955-0739

* * * * *

DATA BASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Create simple information systems in minutes with REDBAL(tm) relational DBMS. Enter, sort, merge, select and print data. Offers report generator, variable-length string and paragraph fields, AlphaBASIC copy facility, extensive documentation. Over 50 installations worldwide. Source code and manual on AMS diskette \$175. Manual \$25. See full-page description in Aug or Sept 1980 Newsletter.

American Business Data Systems
890 Osos
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805-543-5487

* * * * *

USED EQUIPMENT

Alpha Micro Computer System

AM100, 64k, Soroc 120 CRT, AM200, AM300, Wangco/Orbis 87 Dual Disk Drive, TI810 Printer.

Optional Software - Accounts Receivable, General Ledger, Mailing Labels, Check Register, Payroll, Work-In-Progress

Two years old, Excellent Condition

b.c.s. Computer Systems
739 1/2 Franklin Street
Pella, Iowa 50219
(515) 628-9295

WANTED

Looking for AM-100 or AM-100T processor boards, new or used.

Alex Begin
Birmingham Data Systems
7335 Deep Run
Birmingham, MI 48010
(313) 642-7512

DIABLO & NEC DRIVERS

Dunn, Moore & Associates has drivers for the NEC and Diablo printers, which, coupled with our print utilities, greatly enhance the word processing capabilities of the Alpha Micro. Full 1200 baud bi-directional printing with underlining, super-scripting, subscripting and special character sets are enabled, along with page selection in lengthy documents.

Pat Seitsinger
Dunn, Moore & Associates
1401 E. Bridge
Brighton, CO 80601
(303) 659-1335

ATTENTION A-M OWNERS

Business Products Services, the computer maintenance specialists, is now offering service in the Denver area, as well as Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona.

SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS.

As a member of the Alpha-Serv Network, we offer:

- Highly trained professional technicians.
Competitive prices.
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2 hour response time guaranteed.
Regular periodic maintenance.
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Time & material service.

For more information, call:

Denver, 303-659-9031
Phoenix, 602-966-1192
Tucson, 602-623-9018

From the editor.....

You may notice a considerable difference in the quality of my type this month. That's because it's typed (on one of THOSE machines), and AMOS has me so spoiled I can't type anymore.

SO....letters, and all the various assundry other things I usually type for this thing will be postponed until my disk drive is off the sickie list.

The March newsletter will contain ballots for next year's Board of Directors and Officers. Be sure to get your ballot in and counted.

On another note, the AMUS Staff would like to begin publishing information which will be useful to our end users. All this technical baloney is nice, but there are lots of things you people are curious about and would like more information on. If you will please just drop me a note, I'll either write (or find someone to write) up something for the newsletter.

Thank you to all the nice people who send me camera-ready ads and letters. It sure makes my job easier. Anyone who wishes to submit articles, letters, etc., in print-ready format, please use a linesize of 45 with a 10 characters per inch printer. Justify the right margin, send it to me, and it's ready to print.

Please remember that anything printed in this newsletter is not necessarily the opinion of AMUS, even when it comes from me. An advertised product is not endorsed by AMUS, nor have we been in a position to test the product.

Now that you understand that, I'm going to express an opinion and a word of caution. As we all know, Alpha Micro makes a good computer and designs interfaces which allows the use of peripherals such as disk drives, terminals, printers, etc. They test this equipment thoroughly and support you if it doesn't work (through your dealer, of course). Anyone who attempts to hook anything else to an Alpha Micro is asking for the results they will surely get.

I'm not going to be specific, but I hear horror stories every day from people who have attempted to "hink up" a system. The results have been disastrous! The system doesn't work, and there is no one to support them.

Please make sure you are dealing with reputable people and that the equipment they are selling you is supported by Alpha Micro.

Now, I'll get off my soap box. Have a good month, and keep the letters coming.

Pat

In some organizations, the unexpected not only happens, it turns up almost on schedule, like clockwork.

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Omnisoft, an international association of established software vendors, has formed to promote member's products and to provide its members with a number of unique services.

A unique software encryption board, Omnilock, will be used with all member software to insure that unauthorized use or duplication of software will not occur. The use of Omnilock will also be made available to other software developers using the Alpha Micro computer.

The members of Omnisoft are committed to producing machine independant software products. Members of Omnisoft are also developing software standards which will allow data to be created and exchanged among any of the member products.

Omnisoft members curently provide Data Base Management systems, Telecommunications systems, Word processing systems, financial modeling, software development tools, timesharing billing and security systems, and languages (APL, COBOL, FORTH, FORTRAN (()).

Founding members of Omnisoft are: Absoft in Birmingham, MI Anguslow, Ltd. of London, England; CompuWest in Los Angeles, CA; Dravac, Ltd. in Mahwah, NJ; ECCSYS Corporation in Boulder, CO; Larry White Computer Services in Pasadena, CA; Khalsa Research Corporation in Pasadena, CA; Micro Concepts in Fullerton, CA; and Softworks, Limited in Chicago, IL.

Omnisoft will host a hospitality suite at the NCC in Chicago next May.

For additional information concerning Omnisoft member's produces, or the Omnilock protection board, contact Omnisoft International Headquarters, 812 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90211, or phone (213) 557-1770

ALPHA MICRO USERS SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill out as much information as possible.

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Business Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Circle one: Own Lease Thinking

Check all applicable: Dealer ___ OEM ___

User: Corporate ___ Individual ___

Describe equipment: _____

AMUS may use my name for mailing lists ___

Make checks payable to AMUS

Annual dues are \$35.00 per member.

For more information call Sharon Greene at 303/449-6917 or write AMUS.

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