Juiced.GS

Orphaned, but not abandoned

Loyal users spread word that IIGS is alive and well

By Max Jones
Juiced.GS

A frantic query has become increasingly common across the highways and byways of the Internet and heavily traveled commercial on-line services such as CompuServe.

"I've just obtained an Apple IIGS," begins the typical posting. "Can this computer do anything? Or is it worthless? What do I need to make it useful and how do I find it? PLEASE HELP!"

Thus is the plight of anxious new owners of Apple IIGS personal computers. They broach cyberspace armed with a powerful tool and only a remote idea how to use it. They come equipped with a classic and flexible piece of high-tech hardware, yet are bitten by the notion that it's an extinct species of little value.

Much to their surprise, it doesn't take long for answers to come

streaking back. They have, after all, come to the right place. They will soon begin learning valuable lessons about computer industry orphans such as the Apple II.

The quick and spirited responses they receive will come from a diverse cast of avid IIGS users from Albuquerque to Amsterdam, from Manitoba to Melbourne, who share little in common except an affection for a computer that will not die.

Joe T. Walters, a sysop in CompuServe's Micronetworked Apple User Group (MAUG) forums, has grown accustomed to such pleas. Though quiet compared to a service such as GEnie, where experienced users congregate in great numbers in the A2 Roundtable, the CompuServe Apple II forums do, because of CompuServe's status, get a steady flow of novice users.

"Here on CompuServe, we frequently see messages from new owners of used Apple II systems asking what can be done with [their computer]," says Walters, a MAUG sysop since 1988. "Fortunately, we have a number of active users in our area who tend to jump in with all sorts of information, general and specific, to help in this area."

The collective response, Walters says, will include one member sending a nicely formatted list of existing product vendors and dealers that support Apple II computers. Others

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will respond about specific hardware upgrades the new user would find of value — items such as extra RAM, SCSI cards or hard disks.

"In general," Walters says, "the new Apple II owner can find great support here."

One frequent visitor to CompuServe's Apple II forums is Jim Nichol, an electrical engineer in Cincinnati, Ohio. He enjoys discussing the computer he has studied and watched evolve through the years, and is quick to offer information from those who ask, even if the question is a sticky one from a new IIGS owner wondering about the usefulness of their computer and if it's worth investing much in it.

"I agonize over that question every time I see it," Nichol says. "First, it'd be difficult to recommend any Apple II to a new computer user, because they're no longer made. Sooner or later, the buyer may come to resent your recommendation.

"It's a little easier to give advice to someone who has already purchased a IIGS," he says. "Those people mainly need to know that they need a little more RAM and a cheap hard drive to make the system live up to its capabilities."

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But Nichol goes further than giving simple advice if a user is genuinely interested in finding what is needed to power up a IIGS. He is the user to whom Walters referred who has compiled, and constantly updates, an exhaustive list of Apple II vendors.

Rarely a week goes by that Nichol doesn't send that list to forum visitors looking for hardware or software support.

Whether a IIGS novice seeks advice and direction from CompuServe or other points in cyberspace, the message will be essentially the same: Yes, you can do plenty with a IIGS, almost anything any other computer user can do on any other platform. No, the IIGS is not worthless, especially if you're willing to invest a little money in it.

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Because GEnie is not one of the larger on-line services, novice IIGS users aren't as likely to stumble in as they are on CompuServe or the Internet's comp.sys.apple2.

If and when they do, however, they will tap into a deep well of expertise coupled with a dimension of unbridled enthusiasm and loyalty to the Apple II found nowhere else. New users will be welcomed with open arms, then find themselves immersed in spirited sessions that at times rival an old-fashioned tent revival.

Dave Grenda hangs out with the Apple II evangelists on GEnie, and has become one. His allegiance to his home computer is strong. A short discussion with Grenda would go far to quell the fears of a new owner concerned about the IIGS' usefulness.

"I've owned my IIGS since 1987 and it's still working great eight years later." Grenda says. "I've added stuff to it to equal most computers sold today. If I had bought any other computer, it would have either been sold long ago or would not have been able to be upgraded to my current IIGS capabilities.

"So unless you want to buy a new system every couple of years, then the IIGS is a very viable system for today's user."

Grenda is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force stationed at Kirtland Air Force Base near Albuquerque, N.M. He uses a 486/Windows PC at work, but says the souped-up IIGS he has at home holds its own against the vaunted "new" technology.

"Are there functions that newer computers perform that my IIGS can't? Yes, but only a very few," he says. "But do I need those functions? No. Think about it honestly. When have you actually needed to produce a full-color business brochure on your personal computer? I use my computer as a home computer, not an offset printing plant."

Grenda praises the quality and availability of IIGS software and suggests it need not bow to any software giant such as Microsoft, maker of MS-DOS, Windows 95, Word and Excel.

"Are my spreadsheets on Quick Click Calc [a IIGS application available from The Byte Works] any less accurate or useful than spreadsheets on Excel? No. In fact, for quick tasks, AppleWorks 5.1 [an integrated software package available from Quality Computers] is far better than Excel," he says.

Grenda joined other Apple II users across the country in July for the annual KansasFest in Kansas City, Mo. (See his first-person account in this issue of *Juiced.GS*) It was his first time at the conference, and he found it a valuable experience. In fact, he posted a report about his trip

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on GEnie and comp.sys.apple2 a few days after he returned home.

KansasFest was initiated six years ago as an event designed to allow users and programmers to exchange information and for vendors to show off new products. Although Resource Central, the company that had previously sponsored the event, went out of business early this year, others in the Apple II community viewed the event as so valuable that they stepped in to ensure that the tradition would continue.

This year's event at Avila College drew more than 80 people, and plans are already under way for next year's conference, scheduled for the week of July 17-21.

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As responses stream in to a new IIGS owner's pleas for help, they are laced with suggestions of hardware and software upgrades needed to allow a new user to tap into this computer's enormous potential: Add RAM, a hard drive, an accelerator, a modem, maybe even a CD-ROM drive. And specifics are accompanied by the admonition to tailor the system according to the new owner's needs and wants. Whatever that is, the new user is assured there's excellent software, old and new, available for a variety of purposes.

Still another message will ring through the postings. Contrary to what one might hear elsewhere in the computer world about the IIGS, new products are still being developed. In the past year, one company, Vitesse, released fax software. Another company, Parkhurst Micro Systems, is about to release a competing fax product. DigiSoft Innovations released a compilation CD-ROM of mostly IIGS freeware, shareware and system

software. And Animasia 3D, a sophisticated animation program by Michael Lutynski, made its debut and has been well received.

Meanwhile, the Byte Works, makers of popular IIGS programming languages and utilities, released Quick Click Morph.

But the most dramatic development came from Sequential Systems, which released its long-awaited video card, Second Sight, that allows VGA monitors to be used on the IIGS and improves graphics viewing on the standard Apple monitor.

Not only has Second Sight breathed new life into the IIGS, it has opened up new opportunities for programmers. A number of developers have reported they are working on new Second Sight compatible software.

Among those is Seven Hills Software, which has promised Second Sight-related upgrades for popular titles such as SuperConvert, a graphics conversion application, and GraphicWriter III, a desktop publishing program.

Other products, such as a IIGS version of the popular Wolfenstein 3D action game, are also possible, but have not yet been released.

All this activity cannot hide the fact that the Apple II community has had its share of bad news in the past year. Resource Central went out of business in February. Big Red Computer Club is in its final year. Quality Computers has announced II Alive, a general-interest Apple II magazine, will be published for only five more issues.

Perhaps the worst news of all came in late August when Ego Systems announced it was ceasing publication of GS+, an excellent magazine and disk publication that not only brought news, features and product reviews to IIGS users every two months for six years, but original software as well.

Bad news, however, is something Apple IIGS users have learned to live with since Apple Computer pulled the plug on the product line. Apple did provide a final upgrade of system software — 6.0.1 — two years ago, but then left the IIGS world to fend for itself.

Despite significant erosion in official and third-party support, the IIGS maintains its loyal following. A resilient base of users and programmers keeps everyone's spirits high.

Within days after the GS+ announcement, programmer Nathan Mates, a student at California Institute of Technology and a skilled IIGS programmer, released

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"Are there functions that newer computers perform that my IIGS can't? Yes, but only a very few."
— Dave Grenda

SwatterDisk, a shareware program that allows a user to create up to four RAM disks on the desktop and discard them without rebooting. He had been grooming SwatterDisk for distribution by GS+. Undaunted, he changed plans and opted for a shareware release instead. *(See Page 14.)*

Likewise, discussion on comp.sys.apple2 quickly turned from chagrin at the GS+ news to proposals for a new on-line magazine and disk publication that would be accessible on the Internet's World Wide Web.

All of the discussion underscores the fact that, for the IIGS, the beat goes on. And it gives veteran users such as Grenda a new opportunity to affirm their loyalty.

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"Why do I keep using my IIGS?" says Grenda. "Well, it does the job. My IIGS fills my computing needs, it's that simple. The computer I bought in 1987 doesn't fill my needs, but the computer I have today does.

"As my IIGS software has evolved to meet my changing needs, so has my system hardware additions met my new needs," he continues. "I have an accelerator, giving me the speed to run the applications I need at user-end speeds equal or better than most state-of-the-art computers."

Rather than jumping to another platform, many users such as Grenda are content to expand the power of their computer system, push it to its limits and beyond, then rely on each other to keep their spirits high.

"Why spend money on new things for an 'old' computer instead of buying a new state-of-the-art computer?" Grenda asks. "Because is makes sense to do so."

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Greg E. Nelson is another disciple of the Apple II computer. He teaches world geography part-time at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, Neb. He also is a teacher consultant and helps develop educational curriculum. He has been an Apple II user for more than a decade, has completed educational projects using his computers, and is working on several more.

As an educator, he has put the IIGS through its paces and knows its awesome capabilities. The IIGS was designed as an educational tool, so a new IIGS user would be wise to listen to Nelson's testimony before deciding how to proceed with their own system.

"Both the IIe and the IIGS are

Putting the IIGS to work ...

Juiced.GS asked several power users what sort of IIGS systems they've developed over the years, how they put them use, and what software helps them get the job done and have fun while doing it.

Here's what they had to say:

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GREG E. NELSON: My favorite IIGS software includes AppleWorks GS 1.1, Spectrum 2.0, AnsiTerm 2.1, HyperStudio 3.1j, DiscQuest 1.4, Quick Click Morph 1.0.1, Animasia 3-D, SuperConvert 3.01, HyperCard 1.1 and various music applications. My system includes eight meg of RAM, ZipGS accelerator, AE Sonic Blaster, Second Sight card, Color Computer Eyes, AST VisionPlus Enhanced /Allison video digitizers, Quickie scanner, hard drive, RamFAST SCSI card, Floptical drive, and CD-ROM drive.

As a teacher with 20-plus years of working with children and adults, in the classroom and in outdoor and distance education, I use my IIGS in all aspects of my profession.

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JOE T. WALTERS: I have a IIc and a IIGS, and the IIGS still gets a lot of work. It's got an accelerator, I've loaded it up with RAM, it has a 100MB Vulcan hard disk along with a RAMFast SCSI card driving two more HDs, a Floptical drive, a CD-ROM, a tape drive, and occasionally a Bernoulli cartridge drive.

Though I have since added a Mac to my home setup (it makes a decent peripheral for the Apple II, and I've heard a Macintosh can even be used as a separate computer unto itself under the right circumstances), I still use the IIGS for several things that the Mac simply can't do (at least, not without expensive add-ons).

Two examples: Programming! Cost of starting from scratch to program a Mac: astronomical. Cost on an Apple II (any model): zero. On those occasions when I need a simple piece of code to carry out a simple task, I can whip out a short Applesoft program quickly, without ever having had to shell out any bucks for developmental software. Not so on a PC or Mac. And as a musician, I have programmed accompaniments to several trumpet solos into IIGS software, and the IIGS acts as my accompanist, generating piano sounds through the sound chip. Have you priced Mac or Windows software for that sort of function lately? And that's just one of several functions I find the IIGS uniquely suited to carry out.

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JIM NICHOL: Probably my most used Apple II program is AppleWorks. I have created many forms at work over the years for displaying test results and reports. So it's simpler to just run AppleWorks on my Mac's IIe Card, rather than converting hundreds of forms. The thing I like best about the Apple IIGS is its sound capabilities. The IIGS is still the only computer that has a built-in electronic synthesizer. Other computers can emulate synthesizers to a certain extent, but the IIGS is a music synthesizer, thanks to the built-in Ensoniq chip.

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already useful systems," Nelson says. "With a little more horsepower in an accelerator card, four megabytes of RAM, and easy-to-use applications such as AppleWorks GS, Spectrum [a telecommunications program from Seven Hills Software] and DreamGrafix [a paint program], the Apple IIGS will continue to be useful and friendly well into the 21st century."

All modern computers need horsepower, Nelson says, and the IIGS, with a few enhancements, can be a cost-effective way to have fun and to increase one's productivity. He acknowledges that, unlike the hype that surrounded Microsoft's recent release of Windows 95, there's little fanfare when new Apple IIGS products are released. Still, new products are coming available all the time.

"We don't plan to take over Microsoft anytime soon, but there are roughly six million Apple IIs still around, quietly doing their job, entertaining, instructing and making folks' jobs easier," Nelson says.

And he has another message for new Apple IIGS users: Support the product market so it will continue to exist.

"Dear reader," he says, "if you haven't already done so, subscribe today to fine publications such as Shareware Solutions II and SoftDisk GS, and plan to attend KansasFest. You won't be disappointed."

Nelson continues: "Get System 6.0.1 for the IIGS and push its envelope to the max. Demand new products be made for your favorite computer, then buy the new stuff when it comes out. Pay the shareware fees, don't pirate software or grumble needlessly, and thank those who help you get on-line and help you to squash the nasty bugs. Have fun with your Apple IIGS

"We don't plan to take over Microsoft anytime soon, but there are roughly six million Apple IIs still around, quietly doing their job, entertaining, instructing and making folks' jobs easier."

— Greg E. Nelson

computer."

Like so many longtime IIGS users, Nelson practices what he preaches. Not only has he purchased most of the latest software, he is developing his own.

He is currently working on two pieces of educational software on CD-ROM with a HyperStudio front end for the IIGS, Macintosh and PC. One is called Oregon Trail, a cooperative effort of students and teachers. The other carries the working title of Nebraska Communities in Transition, which will include student contributions describing their towns' geography, history, economic status and cultural attractions.

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Most IIGS users readily admit they use other computer platforms, especially at work. It's that experience that gives them credibility when they insist their IIGS can keep pace with Macintoshes and PCs in many, many ways.

John L. Graham of Kettering, Ohio, has owned Apple IIs for years and still uses them to write astronomy programs. He is the author of Tonight's Sky GS, a shareware application available from on-line

services, major ftp sites and the Golden Orchard CD-ROM.

The Apple II, no matter what variety, has a charm other computers don't have, Graham says.

"At work I get to use the latest and greatest computers alongside my IIs that I have in my office and research lab," Graham said on a recent posting on comp.sys.apple2.

"They sure are nice to have at work, but we drug them home a couple of times and never turned them on, so they stay at work ... where they belong."

Graham has surveyed the chaotic computer market and sees no need to change — at least not now.

"I still enjoy programming and I still write astronomy software, and the IIs still get the job done," he says.

"For me, they're a lot of fun, they're paid for, and the current market offerings aren't sufficiently different or offer significantly greater capability for me to ever justify the cost of changing platforms while the market continues to obsolete itself at break-neck speed."

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Few people have been as instrumental in keeping the IIGS alive and well in today's computer market as Mike Westerfield of the Byte Works. His company, located in Albuquerque, N.M., has developed and produced a number of IIGS programming languages and software products, including the recently released Quick Click Morph.

Although he has expanded his programming business to other platforms, he has not abandoned the IIGS. It remains an important tool in his computer arsenal. And he's more than happy to explain why.

"One of the games my kids and I play sometimes is counting 'punch

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buggies', aka 'slug bugs', Volkswagen Beetles," says Westerfield. "These cars haven't been made in Germany or the U.S. for years. Yet we find a lot of them on the road.

"Why? Because they are a classic piece of engineering. They were designed to do a single job, and do it well. They are inexpensive, or were when they were new, can be repaired by any guy in a garage with tools and a book, are fuel efficient, and go 65 m.p.h. — as fast as any other car.

"In short, they work. Until the doors fall off, we'll continue to count punch buggies in Albuquerque."

The Apple IIGS, Westerfield contends, is much the same as the venerable VW. Although the market is not what it once was (see related story on this page), and product developers must be cautious with the scope of their projects, the computer itself still hums along like it's king of the road.

"The IIGS is a classic piece of engineering that does what it was designed to do well," says Westerfield. "It is inexpensive. In fact, it's a good buy even today. It's easy for the average home hobbiest to add hardware or develop software."

Westerfield says that, like many people, he runs his IIGS with the cover off so "I can check 'under the hood' and make fast hardware changes."

Connecting external devices is easier than on any other computer, he says. "It has a color desktop environment, is expandable to eight megs of RAM, has the easiest to program toolbox and operating system of any computer I've used, and has built in sound as good as all but the most recent Macs, and better than any stock PC.

"So why would anyone give up this computer?" he asks."Those who know

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Byte Works plans small projects for IIGS; nothing big on table

Mike Westerfield, the Byte Works wizard who brought the IIGS community a number of programming languages, utilities and productivity software such as Quick Click Calc and Quick Click Morph, is a fervent cheerleader for the IIGS.

But while he intends to remain loyal to the IIGS until the end, he's also realistic about the computer's marketplace for commercial software.

"I will probably continue to develop software on the Apple IIGS for years to come, but here I have to admit that times have changed," Westerfield says. "None of our recent products have done as well as we need them to. Quick Click Morph still hasn't cracked 100 sales. I expect it will, but to develop software of that caliber, we need to see sales at least in the 500-1,000 range."

A similar fate greeted his earlier software release. "Quick Click Calc," he says, "has not broken 400, and probably won't. In fact, the last program we

released that broke the 500 mark was Toolbox Programming in C, released in September of 1992."

Many IIGS users had speculated that the Quick Click series might produce the ultimate word processing program. Westerfield has admitted in on-line conversations that he's considered the possibility, but the failures of Calc and Morph to generate strong sales have dampened his enthusiasm for the project.

"Our days as a developer of large Apple IIGS applications are, regrettably, over," he says. "We are still looking at a few smaller products, and I expect to do some significant updates on existing products and release a few small ones that have been on the back burners for a long time."

While he has plans on the table in his IIGS workshop, he keeps the door cracked to further projects.

"Any other large programs will be written strictly on a hobby basis," says Westerfield. "But then, I wrote ORCA/M as a hobbiest."

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it well will still be punching its keys when the doors have fallen off the last punch buggy."

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The IIGS will observe the 10th anniversary of its creation next year, and its legions of users are poised to celebrate by continuing to prove Westerfield correct.
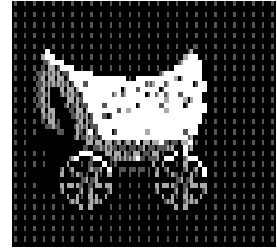
Such loyalty does not go unnoticed, even by newcomers

who are trying out the old computer for the first time. If they come away with nothing else from their queries about the capabilities and usefulness of the IIGS, it would undoubtedly be that its users are uttering more than just a slogan when they sign their messages with the words, "Apple II Forever."

"The IIGS is one of the great computers," says CompuServe sysop Walters. "I do not foresee

GIFs from HEAVEN

Familiar faces hiding out on Compton's CD

By Max Jones
Juiced.GS

A treasure chest of potential clip art and photographs, the kind that can spice up a personal or academic desktop publishing project, is well within your reach.

If you're one of the many IIGS owners who took advantage of Sequential Systems' introduction of CD-ROM software, then you probably own the discQuest Encyclopedia package, which includes Compton's New Century Encyclopedia & Reference Collection.

When DQE brought the world of encyclopedia research capabilities to the IIGS, it featured the ability to view graphics inside the program. But it did not allow those graphics to be converted or saved to a IIGS format. In fact, many of the charts and graphs you can view when running DQE aren't even available for recovery.

However, a little exploration will turn up folders on the Compton's CD-ROM that contain dozens of files that can be both viewed and converted into a format the IIGS can use.
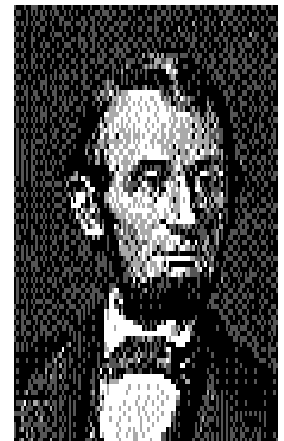
Ready for a little treasure hunt? Then let's head 'em up and move 'em out.
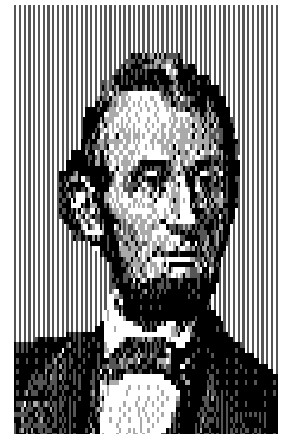
Find 'em and convert 'em

Before embarking on this excursion, you must have the proper tools. First and foremost, you'll need a graphics conversion program that will view and save GIF images, and a paint program to touch up or resize the converted image.

SuperConvert, the Seven Hills Software product by Jason Harper, is a good choice for graphics conversion, although other commercial programs such as Prism or The Graphics Exchange will do the job, as will Show Me!, a freeware new desk accessory available from commercial on-line services, the Cal Tech ftp site on the Internet, and the Golden Orchard CD-ROM.

Just so you'll know where we're headed, insert the Compton's encyclopedia disk into your CD-ROM drive and, from the Finder, open the CD-ROM icon's window by double-clicking. Scroll down until you locate the Timeline folder. That's where our treasure is hidden. Open the folder with a double-

Abe untouched ...

Abe retouched ...
A little background music puts image in a whole new light.

Graphics ... GIFs from HEAVEN

click and bask in the glory of this sea of GIFs. They are files that contain small photographs used in Compton's Timeline, a feature available to users on other platforms, but not through discQuest Encyclopedia.

Now that we know where these little jewels are hiding, launch SuperConvert, set the load format to Computer Independent/Graphics interchange format (GIF), and the save format to Apple Preferred.

Click on the load button, and navigate to the Timeline folder on your CD-ROM disk. Upon reviewing the list you'll find that most of the GIF titles don't reveal much about the contents of the file. With the exception of a couple dozen files at the end of the list in the Standard Dialogue Box, the only thing you can glean from the title is the year the GIF represents on the Compton's Timeline.

But that's a fair starting point.

For example, you will not be disappointed — Honest!! — if you choose 1865AF.GIF;1 for your first conversion. Double-click on the file name and the conversion will begin. Set your conversion format to 640 x 200, grayscale, pattern dither, and click normal remap. Before long you will be treated to a mug shot of our famous 16th president, and you can save it by clicking the save button.

As you explore the Compton's Timeline folder, you'll find that some graphics that won't be usable, either because they convert or print poorly, or you won't recognize what they represent. But these images are small, so it won't take long to work many of them into something that looks better than in their raw state.

The Lincoln graphic is among the better images in the folder. It looks decent in 640 mode (which is how you'd want it for use in a desktop publishing program such as

Nothing tricky: *Images such as this of former President Nixon are abundant in Compton's Timeline folder. But always honor the copyright so you can truly say, "I am not a crook."*

AppleWorks GS), but it displays best on the monitor in 320 mode.

Mr. Lincoln's famous mug shot can be made to look better coming out of your printer (even an Imagewriter II) by making some simple adjustments. Just go into your favorite paint program and, after making a copy of Abe's image next to the original, replace the background with a light to medium shade of gray.

[*Painter's tip:* Use fat bits mode in the tight spots around Mr. Lincoln's head. After your new background is created, make another copy next to that image and experiment with lightening up the gray tone of his face. It won't take much to brighten the image for better print results. Just keep making copies as you experiment so that you'll have your originals to go back to in case one of your experiments goes terribly wrong.]

Check out the manipulation on the previous page and see for yourself how tinkering with the background can enhance the Lincoln image.

Now, Lincoln clip art may be abundant, so you might be able to do better than the GIF manipulation to

get Abe's mug into one of your term papers or other personal projects. But FDR's image isn't as common in clip art files. Richard Nixon might be almost impossible to find. And when is the last time you saw a clip art image of Charles Lindbergh?

That's why the GIFs in Compton's Timeline folder can come in handy. They are images of historical nature, and that makes them valuable for a personal clip art library.

Please be mindful of the fact that these images are coming from a copyrighted encyclopedia disk. They should only be used for personal purposes such as term papers, not-for-profit presentations, or your own enjoyment. When you do use them, give credit to the source. They should never be bundled and redistributed.

That said, have at it, and have fun!

By the way, you'll find FDR in 1933FF.GIF;1, Nixon in 1974RF.GIF;1, and Lindbergh in 1927LF.GIF;1. And guess who you'll find in the file titled 1492CF.GIF;1? It will take some work to get this image into a form you can use, but it could be a worthwhile rainy-day project, especially if you think you'll ever need ol' Christopher Columbus' mug.

A little looking around will also bring up a range of images from the Mayflower to the Titanic, and from our founding fathers signing the Declaration of Independence to Martin Luther King Jr. marching on Selma.

The thumbnail sizes of these images are what *really* make them a valuable asset to your clip art library. Some will be easy to use, others will pose a challenge.

Even if many of these images are unsalvageable, others are jewels worth keeping, manipulating and enhancing. With a little effort and imagination, they will truly shine, as will documents that contain them. *—JGS*

KansasFest '95

The tradition continues ...

By Dave Grenda

Just when it looked like KansasFest was a thing of the past, the Apple II community rallied to make it happen ...

Up until a few months ago, there was some doubt that anyone would ever read the title of this article, because the fate of KansasFest was caught in the balance.

Over the years, KansasFest has been held at Avila College, a small, quaint college located on the south side of Kansas City, Mo. The sponsors of KansasFest have been numerous — the '94 KansasFest was sponsored by a company called ICON (previously Resource Central). The name was even changed to ICONference for that year. When ICON, which stood for International Computer OwnersNetwork, went out of business in February, it wasn't known if anyone would pick up the Apple II torch and conduct another KansasFest.

But just as the Apple II computer has "kept going, and going, and going," so has KansasFest. Through the efforts of people such as Cindy Adams, Gina Saikin, Mark Kline and others, KansasFest '95 was made a reality.

Parkhurst Micro Systems and its founder, Paul Parkhurst, became the corporate sponsor of the fest.

You might know Parkhurst Micro Systems as a company that has supported the Apple II line of computers over the years. The company is best known for AnsiTerm, an excellent telecommunications program for the Apple II.

So here's one man's story of KansasFest '95.

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Being "just a user," I wasn't sure if I should attend KansasFest. I think that feeling has kept many others from attending in the past — it had for me. But all those trepidations faded away as I communicated to some other KansasFest attendees on GEnie prior to leaving for Kansas City. During those e-mail exchanges, I learned that KansasFest was going to be one big friendly user group meeting. I found out that I wasn't the only KansasFest Rookie who was attending this year, and that the vast majority of the attendees were just average Apple II users. Like a kid on Christmas Eve, I anxiously awaited the start of a famous Apple II tradition.

I arrived at the Kansas City airport on the evening of July 26, a day prior to the official start of KansasFest. After renting a car, I drove down to KC Masterpiece. A group of people I met on GEnie had gotten together to have dinner at this infamous KansasFest hang out. Entering the restaurant was like going on a blind date. Although I had seen their names on electronic messages, I hadn't

Apple II news and views ... KansasFest '95

met any of them before. But that feeling instantly changed to one of meeting "old friends" as I was warmly greeted and started talking to everyone.

That's the spirit of KansasFest, and I think of the Apple II computer community in general as one big inclusive family. It was neat listening to Joe Kohn, Greg Templeman and many other Apple II lovers. Everyone had such unique and diverse backgrounds, but all shared a fascination with the almost unlimited capabilities of the Apple II computer. After a delicious BBQ rib meal, great conversation and finally putting some faces to names, I headed to a nearby motel for a good night's sleep.

Arriving at Avila College at 9 a.m. the next day, I checked into the dorm. Spending KansasFest in the dorm is the best way to experience this event. Not only is it cheaper, but you get to interact with everyone after hours. The rooms were clean, but Spartan. It's been 18 years since I've lived in a college dorm room, but I think the surroundings added to the total experience.

I immediately unpacked and started to visit all the other attendees' rooms to see what computer systems they had brought — and it was a diverse lot. There were dozens of IIgs computers, with every imaginable peripheral attached. There were IIcs, Macs in all flavors, PowerBooks, Newtons and even a II+. It was great to see the new Iomega Zip drive in action, how the new Second Sight VGA card looked with different monitors, and the various hard drives and CD-ROM drives available for the Apple II.

After hob-knobbing with everyone in the morning, we hit the cafeteria for some typical college dorm food. All meals were included in the price if you

stayed in the dorms, a very good deal. The food quality was OK. (You could eat all you could stand.) There was a salad bar and self-serve ice cream in the dining area after you picked up your main course. Some of the food over the fest included BBQ chicken, soft tacos, bratwurst, spaghetti, hamburgers, and various vegetables at each meal. Meal time was another avenue to meet Apple II legends like Tom Weishaar, "Burger" Bill Heineman, Roger Wagner, etc., and make new friends.

The first activity after lunch was a talk by Apple Computer's Ashley Carter, discussing some new computers due out over the next couple of months. New Performas, coming out in August, would be going

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over to RISC processors and incorporate industry standards like PIC slots. They have replaceable processors for future upgrades.

For example, you can drop in DOS Windows chips, when they become available, to run those types of applications. In September, she said to expect a slew of new PowerBooks to start coming out. You'll be able to transmit data to other PowerBooks through infrared signals.

Following that one-hour presentation, each attendee had the choice of attending one of three presentations: Talking to the Apple rep about the new computers,

learning basic soldering (entitled: "Which End is Hot"), or attending a "fireside" chat with Joe Kohn. I chose the latter.

Joe Kohn has attended six previous KansasFests and this is the third year he's given presentations. He described starting off with the Apple II when he got an Apple II+ and 100 disks of public domain software. He was in awe of what was out there. In the mid-'80s he started the Apple Users Resource Group, which lead to the Apple II Information Exchange. It was bought out by CompuServe in '89.

Joe wrote a series of articles on shareware programs for the Apple II Buyer's Guide and transitioned to the Big Red Computer Club as librarian in '83. From there, he hooked up with InCider to write shareware articles. InCider asked Joe to put together a disk containing the shareware programs his article covered. After much persuasion, Joe finally began supplying those disks to people.

He mentioned that InCider was making money each month right to the very end. But Joe guessed that the magazine wasn't making ENOUGH profit, so that's why they pulled the plug. After InCider's demise, Joe thought about writing for II Alive. But luckily for us, those plans never came together and he struck out on his own with Shareware Solutions II.

When he worked for other publications, he use to hate editors. They always changed what he wrote. But now he misses having an editor when producing SSII. Joe feels SSII is the Consumer Reports of the Apple II world. He emphasized that Apple II users should "support those who support you." In other words, don't delay buying those Apple II products you can use and paying those shareware fees, otherwise there won't be anything new in the future. Joe

has sold about 120 copies of Contacts GS — not enough for any real profit, but he was glad he made it available to the IIGS community.

Finally, Joe announced that GSymbolix (a powerful mathematics program by Henrik Gudat of Switzerland) is being released as shareware. SSII will be providing it for $15 for the first month, and half the profit will go toward a yet-to-be named non-profit organization.

The next period consisted of a demonstration of Mike Westerfield's Quick Click Morph, or Ryan Suenaga's discussion of Personal Digital Assistants & PowerBooks. I decided to see Mike's great new program.

Mike started off with a quick history behind morphing. The first Cray computer ever built didn't go to the defense department, but instead went to Hollywood movie studios to do morphing. The first morphing was done by Disney, all accomplished by hand. But since almost anything can be done on an Apple II computer, Mike brought this morphing capability to the IIGS.

The user provides a starting and ending picture to QCM. A series of reference points are then easily selected on the first and last picture. QCM then starts computing the "tween" frames — new pictures that transform the first picture into the second. Morphing time increases as the number of "tween" frames increases and the number of reference points are increased. The time to create a full morph sequence can take from several minutes to overnight. An accelerated IIgs is not required but is HIGHLY recommended.

Those "tween" pictures, when played as a PaintWorks animation, provides a smooth morph between the start and ending pictures. The visual impact of morphing cannot be overstated. Morphs can be added to HyperStudio stacks, used as a screen

saver, or any place that can use PaintWorks animations. Single frames can also be viewed to see how each "tween" picture has changed. Although 16 shades of gray is best for the IIGS, QCM supports 320/640 color pallets, custom colors, and 128/256 custom color pallets.

Mike has also developed a freeware program called Quick Click Movie — it allows the viewing of QCM animations. So with this freeware program, you can easily share your creations with friends and the world. Quick Click Morph is a very powerful and unique program. You really have to see it to appreciate its impact and ease of use.

After supper, the KansasFest '95 keynote address was given. The

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keynote speaker was the (in)famous Roger Wagner of HyperStudio fame. As usual, he gave a very animated and entertaining speech. First describing a very artistic video produced by a IIGS user in France — combining HyperStudio with a video overlay card on a IIgs. The video was done a few years ago and won critical acclaim.

Following the interesting video, Roger described his introduction to computing and the Apple II. He had a sum of money to buy either a motorcycle, a stereo, or a computer.

He thought that if he purchased the motorcycle or stereo, he would just end up spending more money on them. The computer, he thought, would be a one-time expense. He later tried selling computers door-to-door, but failed miserably.

He then wrote some small programs. Initial sales were good, but Apple computer inevitably released a free program doing the same thing a while later. He kept ahead of Apple and eventually produced HyperStudio — a revolutionary program that brought hypermedia to computers. Roger now goes around the country showing how schools and individuals can produce outstanding presentations with HyperStudio. Although Roger is concentrating on developing and marketing products for the Mac and other platforms, he's still supporting the venerable Apple II platform.

The last series of presentations that day were: Joe Kohn discussing changes to the Internet, Erick Wagner presenting how to hook up "real world" devices to the Apple, and Eric Shepherd demonstrating two of his new IIGS programs, StationKeeper and ShiftyList 2.0. I wanted to attend all three, but I ended up listening to Sheppy.

Sheppy's StationKeeper is something like a document alias. You double-click a document icon, Finder opens up the application that supports the document (AppleWorks GS, ShadowWrite, etc.) and you start working on it. Nothing special so far, but when you save the document, it's saved as a new document — you don't mess with the original. This would be good for filling out forms, etc.

ShiftyList 2.0 will be distributed on a Softdisk-GS issue. This version is a very powerful update. By holding down different key combinations during booting, you can load different groups

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of INITs, NDAs, CDAs, and CDEVs. The composition of each group is determined by the user beforehand. You can also create boot scripts. Scripts could run pictures or sounds during booting.

For example, you could display a picture and play a sound, load some INITs, display a new picture, load some NDAs/CDAs, display another picture and play a sound, and load the rest of your system — total user control. Sheppy expects ShiftyList to be out at the end of the year. He lost three months of work when his hard drive crashed. As Sheppy remarked, "apparently backups aren't for weenies."

Sheppy also has compiled a spiral bound book containing documentation for all his software. The book can be purchased for about $12. Contact him at E.Shepherd@genie.com. He is also selling a disk containing all his non-Softdisk-GS programs.

That ended the first day's formal presentations. That evening consisted of seeing what computers people had brought, seeing new software and equipment, and discussing every topic you can imagine. Roger Wagner generously ordered a couple dozen pizzas and a few cases of soda for munching late that night.

Right afterward, the infamous Bite-The-Bag contest began — a KansasFest tradition. The object is to balance on one appendage (foot, hand, etc.) and grab the top of an empty grocery bag on the floor with your teeth. It's not too hard at the start. But as the competition continues, the upper most part of the bag is slowly removed. Soon, there's nothing left but the flat bottom of the bag laying on the floor.

Oh yes, did I mention that if you aren't the first person, you get to enjoy the slobber on the bag left by the

people in front of you? The competition this year was stiff. There were over a half-dozen people still able to pick up the bag when it was nothing more than a flat piece of paper. It finally came down to who was the fastest. Russ Nielson was crowned the King of "Bite -The-Bag" with a time of 1.95 seconds!

Because everyone participates in the sleep depravation experiment called KansasFest, the dawn of the next day came way too early. For those who were sane enough to get a couple hours sleep, or insane enough to get no sleep, breakfast was available at 7 a.m.

The first sessions began at 8:45 p.m., so most could still get a few winks. Roger Wagner provided a

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discussion of using the multimedia capabilities of the IIGS, Doug Pendleton and Dave Ciotti taught the second segment on soldering, and a trio (Richard Bennett, Tim Buchheim and Nathaniel Sloan) demonstrated the new Apple IIGS front end for GEnie. I picked the GEnie software demo.

This stand-alone program is called Jasmine. It's a real-time IIGS interface for GEnie — not an off-line reader like CoPilot or GEM. You don't need a telecommunications program

like ProTerm or Spectrum. Jasmine handles everything. It requires System 6.0.1 and an error-correction modem (the internal Datalink 2400 is not, but all high-speed modems are). A hard drive is not required.

Jasmine allows third parties to write add-ons. It supports Zmodem and will support batch Ymodem file transfers. The interface is all point and click, using familiar IIGS windows, menus and dialog boxes. It's Lynx compatible, so you can access the Internet via GEnie. Jasmine is free and should be out shortly.

The next series of sessions consisted of Mike Westerfield discussing Quick Click Morph (QCM) from a programmer's viewpoint, Mark Kline and Cindy Adams discussing AppleShare networking, and Erick Wagner presenting the second part of controlling "real world" devices with a computer. Since I missed Erick's first session, and I'm not into networking, I decided to hear Mike's presentation.

Mike gave a good insight into how QCM works. A good way to understand how the program transforms a picture is to imagine the first picture being made of rubber. You take a pencil point and stick it to one of the reference points. You then drag the pencil and stretch the picture to the corresponding reference point on the ending picture. This dragging and stretching is done simultaneously for each reference point.

After lunch another series of sessions were given. Tony Diaz from Alltech Electronics showed how to build a tower case for the IIgs, Roger Wagner presented new things he's working on, and Glenn Hoffman discussed a new Apple IIGS GEnie off-line reader called PowerGuide. Since I spend a lot of time on GEnie, I thought I'd get the most from Glenn's presentation.

PowerGuide is a stand-alone

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program that does not use another modem program like Spectrum or ProTerm. It uses the familiar IIGS interface, it's all point and click with keyboard equivalents. It uses Zmodem file transfers, employs cut and paste message quoting, has an address book for e-mail messages, supports 30 GEnie RoundTables, and uses its own installer for easy installation. Although still in beta testing, it's available now and it functions well.

The next sessions were Dave Ciotti showing how to perform some simple equipment maintenance operations (change a system saver fan, clean a keyboard, etc.), Eric Shepherd demonstrating ProTerm MAC, and Greg Templeman discussing the GS Lib Programming Library. The choice for me was easy, the equipment session. Dave did an outstanding job answering questions and showing how even a novice user can fix things on an Apple IIGS.

Following those sessions, Richard Bennett gave a short recap of what Seven Hills Software is doing. SuperConvert 4.0 is about to ship — it's just waiting for documentation to be printed. The program will squash a few bugs and add Second Sight and JPEG support. The new version of GraphicWriter III should be out within a month. It'll fully support System 6.0.1 font menu and interface. The spell checker has been rewritten, text wrapping around objects has been fixed, objects can now be positioned by typing in coordinates, objects can be resized, and an extras menu has been added so third parties can write add-ons.

A banquet and roast topped off the day. The roastee was none other than Steve Disbrow of GS+ Magazine. Bill Moore, Roger Wagner, Tom Weishaar, and Joe Wankerl did a

great job putting Steve in his place. Of course, Roger went high tech, with a multimedia presentation. Tom Weishaar read a hilarious letter from "Bob Dole" talking about Steve and GS+ magazine. Joe played a funny song about Steve. Then it was Steve's turn to roast the roasters. All in all, it was a great time.

Following the banquet, people went back to the dorms for more socializing. A debug room was setup so people could get help with equipment problems. Some went to see movies, some played Trivial Pursuit, and a nerf rocket war erupted. Again, most people ended up without much sleep.

The next day was bitter sweet. People began moving out of the

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Before things concluded, there was an official announcement — a KansasFest will be held in 1996!

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dorms. KansasFest '95 was rapidly coming to a close. But after breakfast, Paul Parkhurst gave an excellent demonstration of his new NDA fax program. He created, sent, received, and printed faxes using his program. Although still in final beta testing, it still worked like a charm.

Some features demonstrated: generations of fax lists/groups (the cover page can be automatically personalized for each number on the list), multiple phone books, scheduled send, selection of cover pages, use of a dial prefix, selection of modem initialization string, and a host of others. The fax cover page capabilities were outstanding. The user has a lot of control over the data on the cover

sheet, including adding memos, graphics, headers, footers, page numbers and automatically adding names, addresses and phone numbers. The program works with Express and will be compatible with Spectrum. You can print pages from a fax and can even send a quick fax (it sends a cover page with memo).

The program is expected to ship in a couple of months with a price tag in the area of $80. There will be a discount when updating from a competitor's fax program. It was a very impressive demonstration.

Following the fax demo, people headed to a swap meet/vendor fair where attendees scooped up many bargains. Byte Works, GS+, Digisoft Innovations, and Shareware Solutions II products were all on sale. Many items were quickly sold out.

The final official function was one last lunch at the college cafeteria. Attendees reluctantly said a fond farewell. Some attendees, who were leaving Sunday, arranged to have one last dinner that night at a local restaurant. But before things concluded, there was an official announcement — a KansasFest will be held in 1996!
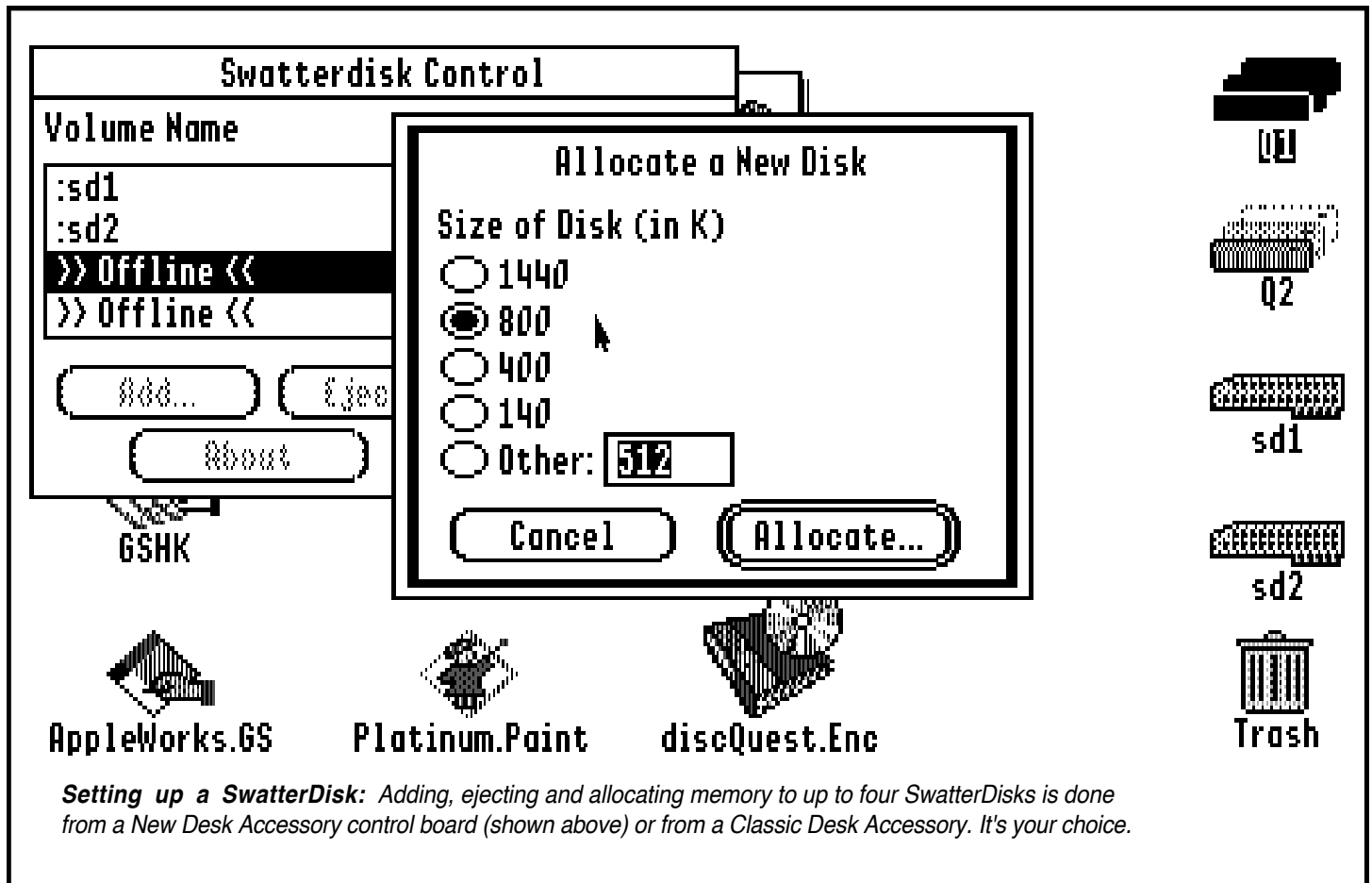
I can't emphasize enough how much fun it was to attend KansasFest. I strongly encourage all Apple II and Mac users to attend next year. You'll be warmly welcomed, fit right in, and a have a super time sharing your computer interests with others.

See you at KansasFest next year.

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Dave Grenda is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force. He is assigned to the Defense Nuclear Agency at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, N.M. He has been a cruise missile test director, a staff officer and a bombardier on B-52s during his 18 years of service.

Shareware Warrior

Setting up a SwatterDisk: *Adding, ejecting and allocating memory to up to four SwatterDisks is done from a New Desk Accessory control board (shown above) or from a Classic Desk Accessory. It's your choice.*

SwatterDisk 1.0
By Nathan Mates
Shareware ($10)

There's good news and bad news about efforts by programmer Nathan Mates to bring a cool new program to the IIGS community.

The bad news is that Mates was grooming the program for *GS+* magazine, which unfortunately ceased publication in late summer.

But the demise of *GS+* influenced Mates to go ahead and release the program immediately as shareware. And, you guessed it, that's the good news!

SwatterDisk 1.0, a combination GS/OS device driver, New Desk Accessory/Classic Desk Accessory and shell utility gives users a unique and flexible way to create and eject RAM disks without having to reboot or shutdown their systems.

Did someone just say, "What's a RAM disk?" Well, glad you asked. A RAM disk can be created by assigning a portion of your system's RAM (random access memory) to a

RAM disk, which is then created on the Finder desktop and named RAM5 (unless you change its name). It gives a user more on-line storage space by taking advantage of unused system memory. It's an especially nice feature for systems that have expanded memory capabilities but no hard drive. But it's quite useful on more elaborate systems as well.

The task of creating a RAM5 disk has been traditionally performed by using the RAM control panel under the Apple menu.

Until now.

SwatterDisk bypasses the RAM control panel and does its own thing. For the most part, it makes using a RAM disk easier than ever before.

SwatterDisk's major features are simple but powerful:

• By using the NDA or CDA, up to four RAM disks of any size between 16 and 3072 kilobytes can be instantly created (within the confines of a user's system memory, of course) on the Finder desktop.

Shareware Warrior

• When the RAM disk or RAM disks are no longer needed, they can either be dragged into the trash or ejected by using the desk accessory control center. The system memory that had been designated for RAM disk use is immediately freed for use by other programs.

ASSESSMENT: SwatterDisk 1.0 brings great new functionality to the use of RAM disks in the IIGS Finder. It is most useful for unpacking disk archives for review before deciding whether or not to copy them to a hard drive or floppy disk. (If you own the Golden Orchard CD-ROM, which contains an entire partition of disk archives, this program could be extremely valuable.) Being able to create and eject RAM disks on the fly is a powerful tool. However, it is important to note that while SwatterDisk is similar to the RAM5 disk feature in system software, it has major differences. SwatterDisks will disappear on reboot (unlike RAM5 disks), and whereas you can boot your system from a RAM5 disk, you can't from a SwatterDisk. This program is of commercial quality, so the IIGS community is fortunate to have it available at such a low price. Grab onto this one, try it out, and quickly pay the shareware fee. Tell Nathan Mates you appreciate his efforts, and to keep up the good work he has done supporting the Apple IIGS.

NOTES: SwatterDisk 1.0 requires system 6 or 6.0.1. The program is available from the Apple II archive on Cal Tech's Internet FTP site (ftp.cco.caltech.edu), and from commercial on-line services. Also, visit Nathan Mates' World Wide Web home page. It offers a number of links to Apple II resources. The address is: http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~nathan/apl2.resource.html.

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CoolWriter 2.0.2
By Rolf Braun
Freeware

There's no shortage of word processing programs for the IIGS, but many manage to find a niche by offering different combinations of usable features. The niftier the features, the more frequently the application gets used.

CoolWriter 2.0.2, released in early fall to the Cal Tech Apple II archive, is an updated version of Rolf Braun's word processing program.

The application is small and simple. CoolWriter doesn't have a flashy interface and lacks a few of the conveniences contained in other popular shareware/freeware programs such as ShadowWrite. It is functional, however, and offers a few slick features that allow it to live up to its name.

The ol' hidden doc trick: *CoolWriter comes neatly equipped with its own clutter-control feature.*

Here's what makes CoolWriter worth a try:

• A Hide Document feature in the Windows menu allows you to keep your desktop in order. To get your document back after you've hidden it, you go right back to the Windows menu and select it from the document list. Also included under the same menu bar item is a Stack Windows feature.

• A series of items under the Edit menu allows for modification of text. Included are options for dealing with Hi Bits in Merlin source code and carriage returns in Unix format, a feature to encode material (such as obscene text) so not just anyone can read it, and an Encrypt/Decrypt command for attaching passwords to documents.

• A Quizzical GS menu for those who use Softdisk GS' Q&A game program. This menu item allows you to create new quizzes and load them into Quizzical GS.

• The Direct Mail feature allows for creation of form letters and contains a script-writing technique for loading templates and merging mailing lists into the form letters.

ASSESSMENT: A handful of usable features make it worth keeping around. And you can't beat the price. For Quizzical GS addicts, or anyone with an interest in creating and managing direct mail documents, CoolWriter is a real find. The Direct Mail feature is complicated, however, and requires patience, persistence and a willingess to experiment. A thorough on-line help system (available under the Apple menu) will help work you through the Direct Mail and other program features. On an unaccelerated IIGS, characters are slow to appear on the screen as you type. The faster you type, the farther they lag behind. That sluggishness disappears when using an accelerator.

NOTES: When downloading CoolWriter, make sure you get version 2.0.2. It squashes a minor bug in version 2.0.1, which was uploaded a few weeks earlier. The program is available on Internet at ftp.cco.caltech.edu and grind.isca.uiowa.edu, as well as on-line services.

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