ALPHA MICRO USERS SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

Vol. I Number 1   February 1978

ALPHA MICRO USERS GROUP IS CREATED

That is the title of an article in the Silicone Gulch Gazette, the
official publication of the West Coast Computer Faire, with a mailing list
of 70,000.

A meeting is scheduled for 5:00 p.m., Saturday evening, March 4, 1978,
to include anyone interested in Alpha Micro. The meeting is part of the Faire
agenda and the room number will be in the published schedule. Contact
Jim Taylor (303) 449-8847 for further information.

HELP AT LAST (HOPEFULLY)

On the back page of this newsletter you will find a form that can be
used to get your problems solved. The reason for the form is to insure that
the problem coordinator will receive and respond to the writer. The more
problems that he receives, the better able he will be to respond. Solutions
to new problems will be published in the newsletter.

HOG (OPTIONAL)

If you have an ADM-3 and want to use the HOG option on the TRMDEF Command
line, you should specify an output buffer of more than 512 bytes. If you
don't, a long output such as from .TYPE will stop after 3 or 4 lines and
can be restarted by pressing RETURN.

GOSUB - RETURN

The RETURN Command without a prior GOSUB can cause the system to do
"strange things". You should be able to capture the error situation by
putting an ON ERR GO TO (Error Subroutine) in your program.

RUMOR COLUMN

A/M's new 10MB Disc Controller should be available by late February.
They will market it with the CDC Drive, but it can be purchased separately
and is compatible with some other 10MB drives on the market. The controller
board will come complete with a software library.

Are there any comments as to the value of a Fortran IV Compiler? How
about PASCAL?

Steve Elliott says that he will have a complete Alpha Basic manual and
an Alpha Basic Operating Instructions manual available by the Computer Faire.
It was written to be used by educational institutions, but he wants to share
it with AMUS members.

OPINION SOLICITING

We will occasionally be asking for your opinions on such subjects as Documentation, Hardware and Software enchancements, Source Code, etc. Please respond.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The more information that can be gathered, the more beneficial AMUS can be to its members. In future newsletters, we will be asking you if you provide or know about service in your area. Do you have software packages for sale or for free?

64K MEMORY

If you have tried without success to install 64K of memory in your Alpha Micro, you will find that the AM-200 board must have modifications as described in Tech Tip # 7A. The 2708 PROM must also be marked with Rev. D or later. The board and earlier versions of the chip do not recognize the phantom line. Of course, all you dealers knew that, didn't you.

PRINTING, DIRECT FORM BASIC

If you have a terminal and a printer, you can print using the SPOOL capability or you can go direct to the printer from Basic if you want to. If you open the printer as a file using the OPEN #1,TRM:TERMI command. The catch is that there is no Line Feed appended to data as there is when you PRINT to a Spool File. If your printer does not automatically do a Line Feed when it gets a Carriage Return, you must append to your data a CHR(10) i.e. LF.

RESERVED WORDS

If you type a line into Basic that contains a reserved word as the first characters of a variable, the lines will be completely ignored but you will not know it because there is no error message.

FRANKLIN I/O BOARD

The Franklin I/O Board uses National Semiconductor UART chips. The chips are poorly designed for low speed transmission (Serial 300 baud) and will echo double characters. Replace chips with General Instrument chip or like.

DIAG1

A/M has a memory diagnostic routine called DIAG1 which tests memory only from top of system to top of memory. Memory boards must be swapped in order to check them all. DIAG1 did not discover any errors in an IMS board that we have that was known to be bad. It did identify some errors for Dick Leach.

FORMAT SWITCH

FORMAT writes full tracks to the disk with addresses and EE Hexcodes to all data area. Format switch should be switched off because a system crash could cause the system to initiate the format function and an on line diskette could get unintentionally formatted.

FIND AND SUBSTITUTE

The Text Editor has a command Find and Substitute that is not documented. The form is: FSold word$new word$$. $ = escape key. This will only substitute the first word it encounters, not the whole file.

To Find and Substitute more than just the first occurance, enclose the function in angle brackets and start with the number of substitutions you wnat to make i.e.n<FSold word$new word$>$$.

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

If you have any items to add to the newsletter, please send them to the editor. We will print problems, solutions, games, routines, and rumors.

AMUS PROBLEM REPORT FORM

NAME _____ DATE_____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

System Configuration: AMOS Version _____._____

    Motherboard/Power Supply _____

    I/O Card(s) _____

    Memory ____K _____

    Disk Controller(s) _____

    Disk Drive(s) _____

    CRT(s) _____

    Printer(s) _____

    Other _____

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

Mail to: Jim Taylor, DPCI, P.O. Box 1723, Boulder, Colorado, 80306.