



# ExpNews

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 3, March 1996

## New Advisors!

### Calendar of Events:

March 30	Scout Show
January 3-12, 97	10MegaVenture
July 28-Aug5 1997	BSA Jamboree

### Happy Birthday

Mar 24 1975	Andrew P. Drake
Mar 30	Scout Show
Apr 6 1975,	Roy Niedzielski
May 9 1963,	Steve Weller

### We are sorry:-)

*James D. Corder*

We heard from some of our Australian Friends that our February issue of the ExpNews did not make it down under. They requested that we re-send that issue. Therefore, it is enclosed with the March issue.

### Congratulations

*James D. Corder*

Mr. Drake & Mr. Niedzielski both turn 21. Therefore, due to their exceptional work with our unit, they will be offered to become Associated Advisors of Explorer Post 369!

### Welcome to Solaris

*Andy P. Drake*

Ok, I'll admit it, I erased my machine. Well, maybe erased is too strong a word. Slightly overwrote the boot block might be a more apt description. In the end, it really meant the same thing, and that was to reload Solaris 2.5. I went ahead and began to get everything ready for the operation.

Over the course of an afternoon, I assembled what I needed to make the project go. My University supplied me with the media (hey, my tuition dollars at work!), while the CD-ROM drive I bought came from a refurbishing firm in California that sells used Sun equipment. Once I had these two ingredients, I was ready to go, or so I thought. As a side note, Sun compatible CDROM drives are different from those in every day service; they utilize 512 byte blocks in order to be bootable, unlike being organized along the 1024/2048 byte segments in regular CDROM drives. Luckily, Toshiba, Sony, and Hitachi all make drives that will work with various amounts of hardware/kernel hacking, and even better, my Toshiba came with everything pre-set. It looked like a green light from here.

Unfortunately, cabling turned out to be my snafu, as the box I wanted to use was loaned out to another Explorer (who

shall remain nameless to protect the rights of the accused) for use as a Tape Backup. This meant a little hardware hacking of my own. Using an external enclosure from an older Macintosh hard drive and borrowing the cable off of my NeXT CDROM drive, I got the system hooked together only to get "Hex error on device 6", whatever that meant. I didn't know for sure, and I double checked everything for tight connections or misaligned pins. Nope, everything was correct. After a bit of playing, I figured that perhaps the NeXT CDROM cable was wired specifically for the NeXT, which left my only alternative to get the machine going was to yank the external 2.1 gig drive I had in my work-

### The Explorer Code

As an Explorer-

I believe that American's Strength lies in her trust in God and in the courage and strength of her people

I will, therefore, be faithful in my religious duties and will maintain a personal sense of honor in my own life.

I will treasure my American heritage and will do all I can to preserve and enrich it.

I will recognize the dignity and worth of my fellowmen and will use fair play and goodwill in dealing with them.

I will acquire the exploring attitude that seeks the truth in all things and adventure on the frontiers of our changing world.

ing enclosure, and replace it temporarily with the CDROM drive. Theoretically, I could always add the drive back on the system later, I hoped.

Sure enough, once the NeXT cable was removed and the case substituted, the drive fired up and no more "hex errors" were reported. Once I figured out the easy syntax for booting the machine off cdrom (hint: boot cdrom at the > prompt), it was relatively clear sailing from there. Admittedly, I should have formatted the internal drive to improve reliability and prevent errors from cropping up, but I went ahead and installed Solaris over the old beta 2.5 I was running at the time of my unfortunate incident with the boot block.

Configuring the Solaris installation is fairly straightforward, as the old problem of generating a format.dat for every drive manually is no longer required. The main part is deciding which packages to install that pertain to your specific application. For example, the standard end user installations do not install the UUCP packages or PPP networking needed for me to connect with my University. Some custom configuration and fine tuning of the OS is essential, as most will find the basic factory install scripts of server or end user configurations completely inadequate. After configuration choices comes resolving conflicts, as many packages are dependant on each other for support, and sometimes you can't install one without

installing the other. From personal experience, I found the Solaris solution much more straightforward to deal with than the Silicon Graphics upgrades I performed in my last job, as SGI used an arcane, highly confusing, nested system for installation. Often on the IRIX machines, I found myself making installations without error resolution, only to find out later that packages were terribly disjointed. In the end and like the Sun, many prefer to simply format the drive and do a fresh install over a blank drive, rather than a pure upgrade. Sometimes this is more trouble than it's worth, but in difficult cases, is sometimes necessary to make the installation go correctly.

Once the machine has been loaded, and you've eaten a four course meal while it was doing so (remember we're installing anywhere from 150mb to 375+mb, with additional drive formatting time, etc.), you are ready for system configuration, which naturally varies from installation to installation. For me, this meant reinstalling all of my networking variables, and making sure my machine would reintegrate itself with the rest of the Explorer network if it had to. I also began the process of installing PPP, which is a subject unto itself for another article.

In all, once the cable problems had been resolved, Solaris was a treat to work with. The installation went much better than I frankly thought, though I went back and added a few things I initially

left off, like man pages for example, due to space constraints. Oh, and I changed the name of the machine back to my previous name, Riley. Yep, newly reinstalled Riley and Rover (my AMIX machine) now share a network together. And they say UNIX is difficult to deal with!

### **The first system made uniquely for the IntraNet**

*Sun Micro Systems*

#### **SUN AIMS FAIRLY CHEAP JAVASTATION 1 AT THE CORPORATE INTRANET MARKET**

(March 20th 1996) Sun Microsystems Inc. this week promised the world's first prototype of a network computer, but the network it was referring to was the Intranet, and the machine is not the cheap Internet access device that had been expected. Priced at anything from \$750 but more like \$1,500, the JavaStation 1, as it is known at the moment will be out in around eight months with a microSparc II processor at its heart, until the UltraJava processors are available next year.

It will have between 8Mb and 64Mb of RAM, 1Mb of Video RAM, a 15" or 17" colour monitor and a keyboard and mouse as standard. The Java Virtual Machine operating system - code-named Kona, and written from scratch in Java - is on the client in ROM, as is the browser. Sun predictably enough included its HotJava offering. The follow-up JavaStation 1+ will probably have a new box design, possibly including a disk drive.

Sun UK Network Business Division director Martyn Lambert said a floppy drive was the main security risk inherent in a personal computer, but added that JavaStation customers could have a floppy drive if they wanted one. The next version will also have built-in loudspeakers and the operating system and browser in Flash ROM, as well as the higher-performance Java processor. The Java server will likely be a Netra variant.



**We have come a long way!**

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## Your First Computer Part 4

Andy Drake

At this time, a small Los Gatos, California company called Hi-Toro was beginning to stir up rumors of a "super killer" game machine. In reality, it was to be a super killer home computer, but with limited finances, debt to the ceiling, it looked increasingly unlikely that Hi-Toro, later called Amiga Incorporated, would ever get off the ground. What was at stake? Quite simply, the Macintosh done right. Amiga engineers, the ones who had designed the technically superior Atari 800XL, Epyx/Atari Lynx, and now 3DO game system, were busy building the 16 bit, Motorola 68000 machine to take on Apple. Amiga, even in prototype stage, supported a full 4096 colors, 4 channel stereo sound, advanced video data manipulation ability and an easy to use, graphical interface very similar to the Mac, only with the option of a command line interface for power users. Initially equipped with 256k, double the Mac's 128k, Amiga was later shipped with 512k from the get go. This was powerful stuff. Perhaps the best part about it was the OS, a completely preemptively multitasking, micro-kernal OS designed to be a slimmed down conglomeration of UNIX, with the best of the 8bit and DOS worlds thrown in for good measure. Plus, it used C, the programming language that would make it supremely programable. Which is why Atari wanted it.

Thus entered perhaps one of the wierdest parts of the home computer war, the computer war in the warped zone. The story goes like this. Amiga Incorporated was running out of cash to finish the design and implementaion of the first Amiga, the A1000. Knowing that Atari would be needing a new generation machine, the former Atari employees soon found Atari receptive to the idea of some kind of a deal. Atari agreed to finance Amiga for another 30 days (to the tune of \$500,000), at which time either Amiga would pay up or Atari would get the machine lock stock and barrel. After the 30 days were up and it became clear that the A1000 would



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**Andy P.  
Drake  
Takes it  
easy at a  
Post  
Meeting!**

require more work to get it to the production stage, Atari demanded a settlement. Jack Tramiel began negotiating with Amiga with the following technique; whenever Amiga would offer a stock price to sell out, Atari would lower it's price, even if Amiga was simply meeting the previous offer. Every time, Atari would lower its bid on the hopes that Amiga would be pressed to the wall. And they were. Things were getting so close, the egneiners at Amiga weren't even sure they'd be able to stay past their rent agreement date. Then Commodore came knocking.

Knowing that Amiga was hot stuff, and it, not Atari had the resources to tap it, Commodore made a counter offer for Amiga. Agreeing to pay off the \$500,000 Atari loan even before negotiations were to begin, Commodore eventually paid \$4.25 a share for Amiga, and agreed to fund development far beyond the production of this machine, and into what would become the A2000 machine. Atari, needless to say, was furious. After a lost court suit, Atari had to reconcile the idea that it would have to come up with a machine of its own, and it did come up with a Mac competitor, even before the final Amiga A1000 prototype had been completed.

What Atari did was search the industry for parts. It literally went around Silicon

Valley, buying technology -- the 68000 came from Motorola, the GEM Operating System came from Digital Research, the floppy drives from Sony, the sound chip from Yamaha, the keyboards from Fujitsu. Very little was custom, as the timetable and costs wouldn't permit it. The result, the Atari 520ST, shipped with 512k, a 512 color pallate, upgraded sound, 3.5 inch floppy (of 360k, later of 720k), and a windowing, relatively easy to use environment that was patterned after the Mac. More importantly, it was reasonably priced, well under the \$2000 price barrier, and in some cases, under \$1000. Inherintly the machine had problems, with graphics in high resolutions being in monochrome only, and slow software support from a community that was questioning Atari's commitment. The one ace in the hole that Atari had was MIDI, the digital interface that made plugging in synthesizers and all sorts of electronic musial instruments much easier. Quickly, Atari took a commanding role in this market, and until recently, was the leading machine for doing musical compositions.

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### Quote of the Month

*Learn to listen.  
Opportunity knocks very softly.*

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## ACT Cuboree: Shaping our Future

Sarah Jones Part 2  
sarah.jones@sawasdi.apana.org.au

We were continually on the go and there was always something to do. We had three activity bases to do during the day as well as the night activities and one before we headed of to our first session each morning. This was were they really pushed the camp dance and the song which was "No Limit" by 2 Unlimited. It was done so often that we even saw a cub doing it in his sleep while at Merbien on the trip home.

The culmination of the Cuboree was the making of the time capsale on Monday Night. All Activity Bases had gathered a selection of Cubs from the zone they were linked with and the Cubs were asked to put something from that activity base into the time capsule. This is to be reopened in 9 years time at the Cuboree in 2005.

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### Our Principals:

- 1) Honor before all else.
- 2) The difference between a winner and a loser is that the winner tried one more time.
- 3) K.I.S.M.I.F.

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### Our Creed:

*Exploring: Enthusiasm, Energy, & Excellence.*

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### Post Finances

Explorer Post 369 has -\$390.00.

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### Up-an-Coming Post Expenses

12/01/96 Post Charter \$30.00  
12/01/96 Post Insurance \$85.00

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### Explorer Post 369:

Explorer Post 369 was chartered on December 31, 1994 to the Reformation Luthern Church.

Explorer Post 369 specializes in UNIX for Programmers while emphasizing a deep theme of Engineering Computer Information & Science

Membership in Explorer Post 369 is open to young men and women between the ages of 14 [and in high school] and not yet 20. Annual Membership fees are \$15.00.

*The views in this NewsLetter are strictly those of Explorer Post 369 and they do not necessarily represents the views or opinions of the Reformation Luthern Church or the Boy Scouts of America and/or the Simon Kenton Council.*

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Remember to add [.columbus.oh.us] to the end of the freenet accounts!!!



**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

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