

# BYTES & PIECES

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## FUTURE OF THE GROUP DECIDED

The continuation of the AGM resolved the immediate future of the Group. Cindy Campbell has agreed to stay on as interim President, while I have agreed to remain Vice President for the time being. Brian Haas has agreed to be Secretary and Public Officer, Charles Hunt has agreed to another term as Treasurer, and the Ordinary Committee Members are Luke Solak, Kevin Burgess, Sid Davis and Bill Ryan.

Once the interim Committee was elected, the meeting proceeded to approve the revised Rules of the Association, which, among other things, allow us to reduce the number of Ordinary Committee Members.

The new Committee then had its first meeting and decided to have one meeting a month instead of two with the chairing of the meetings being rotated, rather than being left to the President.

For 14 October the Committee decided to arrange a follow-up to the session on drive imaging etc. For 11 November the Committee decided to approach Les Courcha to do a follow-up session on converting LPs to CDs. For 9 December, Ted Martin has volunteered to demonstrate some software that he has found useful.

The Committee scheduled its next meeting for 7 October 2003.

Among the matters that the new Committee have decided to address are a Committee restructure, tighter financial controls and a membership drive. The possibility of daylight meetings to attract those who no longer drive at night will also be considered.

Paul Turvey has been invited to that meeting to discuss his ideas. If you have ideas for the future development of the Group, you are hereby invited to attend also. The meeting will be at our new Secretary's home, 44 Tower Road, New Town. Some off-street parking is available opposite his home and he suggests you use it, rather than leaving your car out on the street.

It is hoped that the restructure and recruitment drive will eventually make it possible for Cindy and I to step down, clearing the way for people with new, vibrant ideas that will get the Group moving forward again.

## AMD CPU SURPRISE

After a delay of several months, AMD released their new Athlon 64 CPU on 24 September. However, they also sprung a surprise by releasing a high performance Athlon 64 FX-51. The "51" part of the designation is the model number.

The Athlon 64 has a 753 pin socket, the FX a 940 pin socket, and next year a revised FX will be released with a 939 pin socket. No longer will AMD be able to criticise Intel's plethora of CPU/motherboard combinations!

The FX needs the less common **registered** DDR RAM, while the Athlon 64 uses the ordinary unbuffered variety. It is also priced at a considerable premium, but tests show that it is faster than Intel's 3.2 GHz Pentium 4 in most benchmarks. Bear in mind that the published results are from running 32-bit applications. The CPU will run applications even faster when Windows 64 and 64-bit applications become available.

The Athlon 64 FX series is the first of a family of FX-series processors. The FX can be thought of as a cut-down Opteron. It sports many of the features of the Opteron, including a 128-bit wide memory controller on-die, a 940-pin package and the requirement to use registered (buffered) memory.

The key differences from the Opteron is that the 128-bit memory controller supports two channels of DDR400 memory and only a single, non-coherent HyperTransport link, instead of the three links used by the Opteron line. The initial model 51 clocks in at 2.2GHz. The FX CPU die consists of 105.9 million transistors, for an overall die size of 197 square millimeters.

Interestingly, future versions of the FX will be built into a 939 pin package, capable of supporting unbuffered DDR memory. The timeframe for these new parts is a bit vague, but likely to occur only after the desktop Hammer undergoes a process shrink to 90nm.

Built into both Athlon 64 variants are 128KB of L1 cache and a whopping 1MB of L2 cache. The cache uses an exclusive caching policy, meaning that data in the L1 cache isn't replicated in the L2 cache.

The Athlon 64 is no slouch either. However, it runs at 2.0 Ghz and is given a 3200+ designation, continuing AMD's controversial comparative speed rating system..

Other claims made by AMD for the new Athlons include:

- *Up to 6.4GB/sec memory bandwidth for breakthrough performance and extraordinary cinematic computing experiences*
- *HyperTransport™ technology enabling increased bandwidth and reduced I/O bottlenecks for increased system performance and better multitasking*
- *The largest on-die cache memory system (1152KB total effective cache) for desktop PCs, greatly improving instruction throughput and performance for large memory workloads*

AMD appears to have staked the future of the company on the success of these processors, reasoning that many businesses will want to move to 64-bit computing. However, AMD argues that they will prefer to upgrade the hardware first and the software later, spreading the cost over a longer period. The Intel Itanium approach requires both hardware and software to be upgraded simultaneously and AMD could carve a share of the market with their approach. It will be interesting to see what happens.

<http://www.amd.com>

<http://www.amdmb.com/article-display.php?ArticleID=260&PageID=1>

## EDITOR GETS IT WRONG

The link I gave you recently for SpamAssassin will get you SpamAssassin all right – the Perl source code, which you must then compile! Sorry about that! Try this one instead:

<http://saproxy.bloomba.com/moreinfo.php>

SAProxy is based on SpamAssassin and is available unsupported for free, or supported for \$USD6.50. While you are there, take a look at Bloomba, a new heavy-duty email client. Not for Auntie, this one is for people who spend a couple of hours a day dealing with high volumes of email and SAProxy integrates with it to give them a total email solution. For more information on Bloomba, download the datasheet:

[http://www.bloomba.com/press/bloomba\\_datasheet.pdf](http://www.bloomba.com/press/bloomba_datasheet.pdf)

To be honest, I haven't tried Bloomba yet, but it does look interesting. If you beat me to it, let me know what you think of it.

## PCAUTHORITY GETS IT WRONG?

*PC Authority* is running a quiz which it calls "Big Brain". Recently they asked a question about Intel's 486DX-100 and, I believe, the answer they gave was wrong:

Q: What speed front side bus did Intel's 486DX4-100 use?

A: 25MHz

From <http://cma.zdnet.com/book/upgraderepair/ch06/ch06.htm#Heading3>

*A processor rated for a given speed always functions at any of the lower speeds. A 100MHz-rated 486DX4 chip, for example, runs at 75MHz if it is plugged into a 25MHz motherboard. Note that the DX2/OverDrive processors operate internally at two times the motherboard clock rate, whereas the DX4 processors operate at two, two-and-a-half, or three times the motherboard clock rate. Table 6.5 shows the different speed combinations that can result from using the DX2 or DX4 processors with different motherboard clock speeds.*

**Table 6.5 Intel DX2 and DX4 Operating Speeds versus Motherboard Clock Speeds**

<b>Motherboard Clock Speed</b>	<b>16MHz</b>	<b>20MHz</b>	<b>25MHz</b>	<b>33MHz</b>	<b>40MHz</b>	<b>50MHz</b>
<i>DX2 processor</i>	32MHz	40MHz	50MHz	66MHz	80MHz	N/A
<i>DX4 (2x mode) speed</i>	32MHz	40MHz	50MHz	66MHz	80MHz	100MHz
<i>DX4 (2.5x mode) speed</i>	40MHz	50MHz	63MHz	83MHz	100MHz	N/A
<i>DX4 (3x mode) speed</i>	48MHz	60MHz	75MHz	100MHz	120MHz	N/A

As you can see, the so-called DX4 was really a "DX3" (a fact that various magazines commented on at the time of its release) and needed a 33MHz FSB to run at 100MHz. I pointed this out to *PC Authority*, and they replied that they were checking their sources.

Still, if you want a bit of fun, complete with ambiguous and obscure questions and the occasional wrong answer, try their Big Brain quiz.

<http://secure.itnews.com.au/bigbrain/register.asp>

## DVD SCREENING OF "REVOLUTION OS"

I have received an advice from TasLUG concerning their planned screening of "Revolution OS". It sounds inviting:

*This is a reminder to one and all to make an appearance if you care to watch a DVD screening of the outstanding film Revolution OS. Revolution OS is a documentary about the Linux, Open-Source and Free Software movements from the perspective of some of the leading lights therein. Cyber Trekker (the named unnamed) and TasLUG present for your edification and enjoyment this documentary of the millennium.*

*Hear Linus Torvalds, the illustrious creator of the Linux kernel, pronounce Linux the way he intended it to be pronounced. Learn that OS doesn't always mean OS. Be astounded by the concept of the cathedral and the bazaar. Hear and see much more as the story unfolds. Be amazed and perhaps surprised. Above all, both learn and enjoy.*

*We look forward to the presence of you all, including our northern confreres, if you intend to come as you initially indicated. Perhaps even our fellow computer enthusiasts of all descriptions from other computer groups around Tassie may be interested to attend this opportunity of a lifetime screening in the company of Tasmanian Linux enthusiasts. Spread the word so it can be heard.*

## How's THAT AGAIN?

"As of tomorrow, employees will only be able to access the building using individual security cards. Pictures will be taken next Wednesday and employees will receive their cards in two weeks." (Fred Dales at Microsoft Corp. in Redmond, WA.)

"What I need is a list of specific unknown problems we will encounter." (Lykes Lines Shipping)

"E-mail is not to be used to pass on information or data. It should be used only for company business." (Accounting manager, Electric Boat Company)

"This project is so important, we can't let things that are more important interfere with it." (Advertising/Marketing manager, United Parcel Service)

"Doing it right is no excuse for not meeting the schedule."

"No-one will believe you solved this problem in one day! We've been working on it for months. Now, go act busy for a few weeks and I'll let you know when it's time to tell them." (R&D supervisor, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing/3M Corp.)

"My boss spent the entire weekend retyping a 25-page proposal that only needed corrections. She claims the disk I gave her was damaged and she couldn't edit it. The disk I gave her was write-protected." (CIO of Dell Computers)

Quote from the Boss: "Teamwork is a lot of people doing what I say." (Marketing executive, Citrix Corporation)

My sister passed away and her funeral was scheduled for Monday. When I told my Boss, he said she died on purpose so that I would have to miss work on the busiest day of the year. He then asked if we could change her burial to Friday. He said, "That would be better for me." (Shipping executive, FTD Florists)

## BUY BUY

Gowans have some HP Vectra Pentium II/350 with 256MB of RAM for \$133.20.

They also have some HP E-Vectra 111/667 mini-towers with 8 GB hard drives for \$222.00.

They're available Monday to Thursday, 9 am – 5 pm at 33 Main Road, Moonah. Enquiries: Phone 6278 1600.

If you need a monitor to go with your new purchase, Peter Campbell (62344691) can supply **new** LG 15" (3-yr warranty) for \$120.

Have you noticed any bargains around town? Email [editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au) with the details for inclusion in the first available *Bytes & Pieces* so that all members can take advantage of them. Or, maybe, you have some items you wish to sell. There's no charge to advertise them in this newsletter.