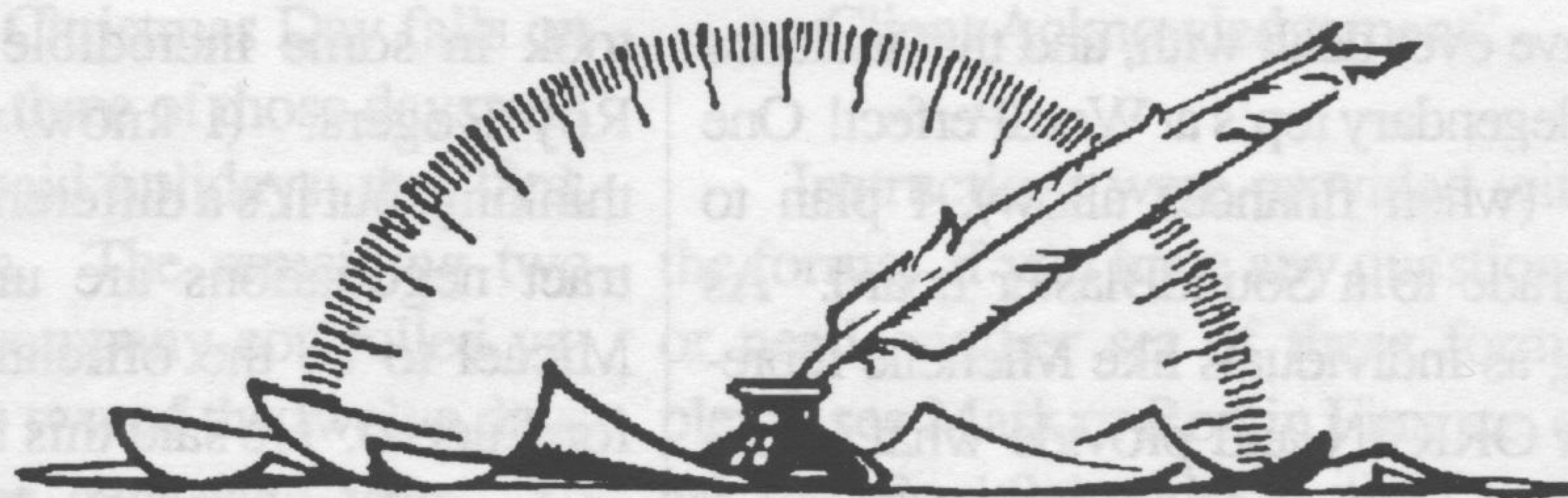


POINT OF ORIGIN



Point Motto: We Create Words

Vol. I No. 5♦♦

Friday, October 25, 1991

♦♦ Austin, Texas

Viva Las COMDEX!

Marten and Karl are still schmoozing it up in Vegas and report that everything is going "fabulously." They apparently threw their collective weight around to get an aisle position on the SoundBlaster booth and it's been paying off; the area's constantly crowded with people wanting to know who we are and where to buy our products.

Michael Firth, who runs the "Top Gun" school in California, saw the Strike demo and told Marten, "That terrain is 100% accurate. I

didn't know you guys had flown Alaska."

Our own top brass won't go into specifics (you know, that top-secret, hush-hush, delicate negotiations kind of stuff), but they say COMDEX might result in 1 or 2 "significant" new accounts coming on board..

Marten also got some other good news. *Wing Commander II* debuted at #8 on Merisel's Entertainment Top-10. That's the first time we've ever made their charts and considering that Merisel's a big-time hardware distributor in the business channel, it could mean big-time orders just in time for Christmas.

Back to (Almost) Normal

"The 24-hour work cycle has outlived its productivity." That is the decree from Dallas, who's making some changes in PD to nurture the U7 team as it hurtles toward Beta.

He says the changes are designed to provide a little organization and quiet within the chaos and to boost the U7 team to improved efficiency. With the exception of a few TDA's,

all employees are required to start the day by 10:00 am and call it a day by midnight. The lounge is being returned to its former glory (as a lounge, that is, without beds).

Dallas is also implementing some sound ordinances that would rival Mueller Airport. Everybody with a stereo will be required to close his or her door and those wanting to talk will have to do it inside the offices. Dallas wants to be able to shoot a cannon down the hallway—with a silencer, of course—and not hit anybody. Those needing anything from the U7 team should go to Dallas or Richard first.



Black Thursday

Just a reminder: next Thursday is Halloween and the Entertainment Committee wants you to go all out. The regular Wednesday cookout will be moved to Thursday next week and there's also going to be a costume contest. Anything goes, and the winner will get a \$30 gift certificate to Toys-R-Us. That august awards ceremony will take place Friday during Happy Hour.

On the same note, the Entertainment Committee's looking for more members. That way, people involved in labor-intense projects—and you know who you are—can have some time away from the committee without resigning. Any takers should see Kay.

Our "Best of the Quest Award" this issue has to go to Michelle Lindner, who helped a guy who was having trouble with *Wing II* in Chula Vista, California. He wrote Robert a letter which reads: "Michelle was undoubtedly the most helpful and sincere Customer Service Representative

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I have ever dealt with, and that includes the legendary rep's at WordPerfect! One day (when finances allow), I plan to upgrade to a SoundBlaster board. As long as individuals like Michelle represent ORIGIN and provide what I consider to be the utmost in customer service, I am sure that I can upgrade without fear."

Nice job, Michelle! Now hang onto this copy of Point of ORIGIN 'til raise time.

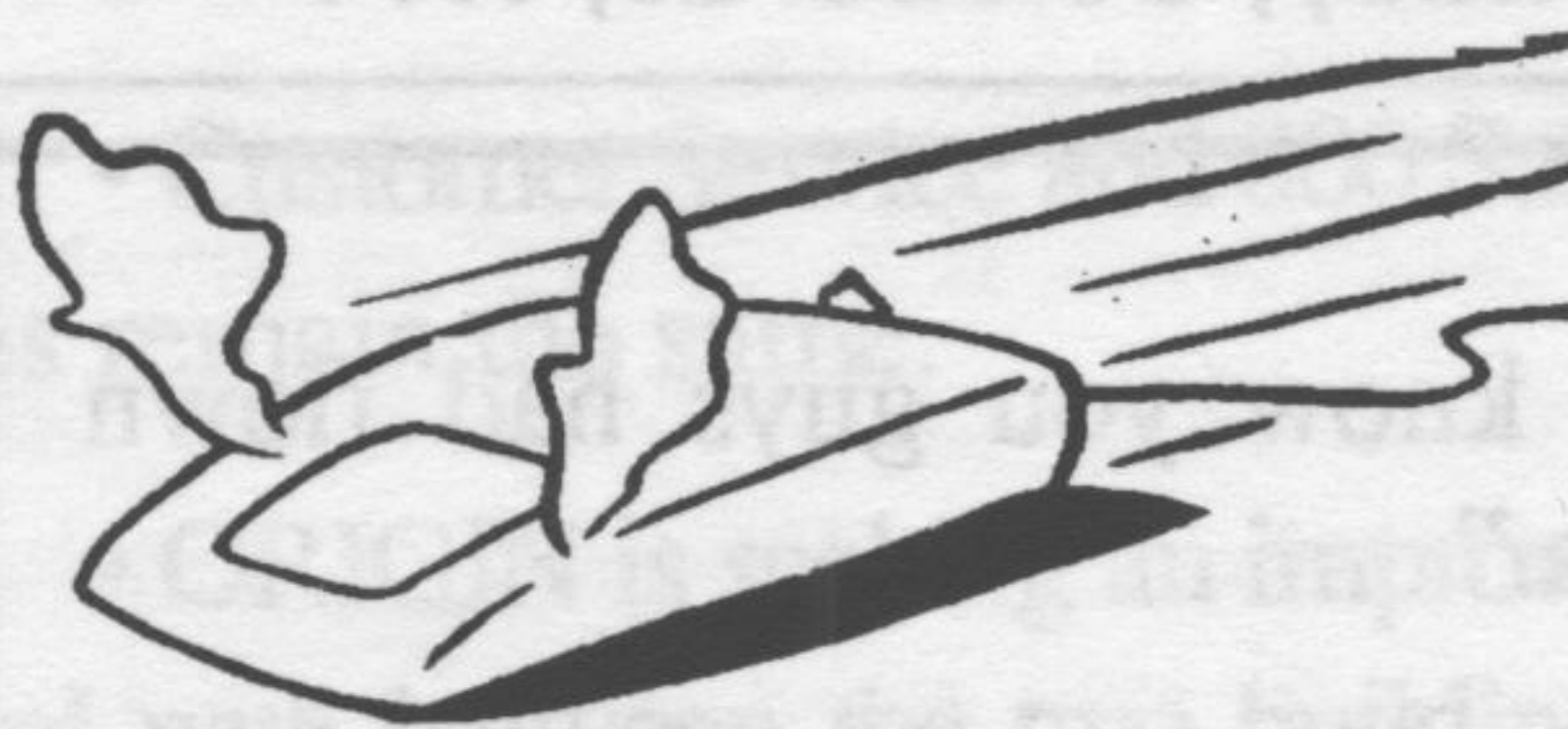
...But I Know What I Like.

Lots of journalistic fodder from the Art Department. First of all, it has a new Director: Al Nelson, aka Perry Mason. Al's former job was producing computer graphics for court cases. He's also been with River City Productions and ACTV. Al made ORIGIN history as being the first employee to list someone named "Dicko" as a reference.

Those with a penchant for cinema verité should check out *Scary Movie*, showing at the Village Cinema. Art Director for the movie was none other than Danny Garrett, seasoned veteran of Lone Star celluloid. He saw a print of the film back in February. "But I was sick back then and really don't remember much of it," he says. "Whether it's that or finally seeing it on the big screen, I don't know, but it's really impressive.

Talk about your cultural milestone: Micael Priest blew out his 40th birthday with a bash that started at La Zona Rosa and moved to Antone's. That's where about half of the Art Department and some special guests

took in some incredible blues from Roy Rogers. (I know what you're thinking, but it's a different guy.) Contract negotiations are underway for Micael to be the official spokesman for Cuervo. He said this birthday was so much fun, he thinks he'll have another next year.



The Inside Scoop

The electronic grapevine carries news that there's been a major mutiny aboard the U.S.S. Sierra. It seems that the Sierra's Head of Programming has jumped ship and, along with the former Chief Financial Officer, raised the sail of a new company, Sunami Media. To date, 20 to 30 Sierra artists, writers and programmers have reportedly followed, including Jim Walls, creator of the popular *Police Quest*. Call it ironic or call it tactical, but Sunami also has one of Sierra's ex-lawyers on retainer.

Taken stock of MicroProse lately? It's much easier now, because MicroProse went public on October 3rd with an initial offering of 2-million shares at \$9 each. So far, the high's hit 10.87. Going public opens wide the balance books for public scrutiny. For instance:

Year	Net Income
1987	\$1 million
1988	-\$1.4 million
1989	-\$0.3 million
1990	-\$0.6 million

One bit of good news: MP's filing lists no long-term debt.

Author! Author!

No gamer's bookshelf will be complete without *Wing Commander I & II: The Ultimate Strategy Guide*, written by our own Creative Services Manager Pro-Tem Mike Harrison. It's ORIGIN's first venture with Prima Publishing. "It's the best looking publication we've ever done," says Publications Manager David Ladyman.

Mike says the biggest challenge was writing on a project in progress. "I had to weave this fiction into the book, which I'd never done before," he explains. "There were several characters I was working on (with *Wing II*) who were killed off, so I had to go back in and re-work that. With the *Wing Commander* series, it's tough to write about the outcome of the story, because nobody knows exactly what the outcome will be. Still, it was a great project for me because I'd worked with ORIGIN for three years and I knew all the people."

The book's chocked full of tactics and tips, even pictures of the product teams and an interview with Chris. The timing couldn't be better, either. *Wing Commander II* is still soaring at software stores and *Special Operations* is about to hit the shelves. If you don't have a complimentary copy of the book yet, check with Wayne. And, of course, recommend that all your friends, family, neighbors and pets shell out \$18.95 for theirs.

**Having a party or special occasion?
There's always room for one more!
Make sure the Point Man (Galen)
knows so we can get some pictures in
this rag!**

Help Wanted

Here are the positions we're still looking to fill:

Programmer Manager
Programmer/Librarian
Programmers
PC Technician
Novell LAN Technician
Science Fiction Writer
Writer/Director
Creative Services Manager

A Letter from the Freditor

HEADS-UP ON HOLIDAYS

Here are the official business closing dates for ORIGIN during the upcoming holiday periods so that employees can plan ahead. Hopefully, most of us can take advantage of this well-deserved time off. However, some folks may still have to work during some of this time to finish products, prepare for January CES, etc. Those cases will be handled on a department-by-department basis and hopefully, some alternate arrangements can be made for people "caught in the crunch."

Thanksgiving: Thursday & Friday, November 28-29 (2 holiday days)

Christmas Week: Monday through Friday, December 23-27 (3 holiday days, 2 mandatory vacation days)

(Note: We traditionally close for one entire week at Christmas. This

year, because Christmas Day falls on a Wednesday, three of those days will be company-paid holidays: the 23rd, 24th and 25th. The remaining two days are the company-controlled vacation days — two of the twelve days each employee gets each year. So please make sure you "save" two of your current vacation days for this purpose — it can be the vacation day you accrue on October 31 and November 30 — otherwise, it is treated as unpaid time off. Only employees who join us in October thru December can be "advanced" the needed one or two days for immediate "repayment" as the days are earned in the first two months of employment.)

New Year's: Wednesday, January 1st (1 holiday day).

401(k) PLAN UPDATE

Individual 401(k) accounts have now been established through QUADS for all participating employees. Unfortunately, we did not do a thorough enough job obtaining all essential data on each participant (i.e.: addresses, phone numbers, etc.), so a bit more paperwork is required on most folks in order to get fully rolling.

If you still have the set of QUADS forms that were distributed with Robert Garriott's September 5th memo regarding 401(k) investment options, that's what we need completed ASAP. This applies to *all* Plan participants, even if you intend to leave all of your funds in the FDIC-insured money market account.

The three forms to complete are:

- "Section 401(k) Plan Joinder Agreement" (2 pages)
- "Client Statement Of Acknowledgement & Release"
- "Mutual Fund Asset Transfer And

Client Acknowledgement"

Instructions were provided with the forms. If you have any questions, or need another set of these forms, please see Mark or Ron in Finance, or ask me (Fred Schmidt).

If you intend to leave your funds in the money market account, you must indicate this under "Standing Instructions" in the "Investment Designation" section of the Joinder Agreement by writing: "FDIC-insured money market account at a QUADS-determined bank," unless you wish to specify a particular bank or other type of account or elect to move into any of the many other investment options offered through the QUADS system.

New employees are all eligible to participate in the 401(k) Savings Plan after 90 days of employment. Remember: this is one of the finest ways you can possibly save money for your future! Not only is it tax-deferred until you withdraw it, and gaining healthy returns through your investment elections, but ORIGIN will also be matching your contributions each year! This fiscal year, the company expects to match your salary deferrals by 25% to 50% up to a total of 6% of your salary amount. For complete information on the plan, please talk with Fred, Mark or Robert Garriott.

MOVIN' UP THE HILL

The migration of the Publishing Group has finally begun as ORIGIN makes room for an expanding Product Development Group. The transition to 206 Wild Basin Road will continue over the next two weeks as delays in phone lines and network in-

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stallation at the new location slow progress.

ORIGIN now has three suites in the building next door. The mini-warehouse will continue operating out of its present location at Suite 107. Down the hall, Suite 106 will house the entire Marketing Department, as well as about a dozen Product Development personnel (either the Nintendo or FM-Towns group). Up one floor, in Suite 207, you can find Customer Service, Operations, Sales, Finance, and Robert and Fred. The new digs are still going to be tight with a projected 41 people located there when all is said and done.

Additionally, back here at 110 W.B., we plan to convert ORIGIN's current main-entrance lobby into additional office space in early November, thus maxing out every square inch of our available office space. Granted, it's not an ideal situation being crammed together and spread across five suites in two buildings. But we're all such good pals, no doubt we'll muddle through this period just fine until we can reconsolidate the whole company again in about a year in more suitable quarters. Hang in there!

In answer to the most-asked questions:

- For the external world, there will be NO CHANGE in any of the basic company-contact information. The main 5490 phone number and 3825 fax number will remain the same, as will our mailing address. So no new business cards or letterhead will be required. Those phones will be answered over in the 206 W.B. building, where Reception will be based.

- Product Development will be getting a new, unlisted, main telephone number which will connect callers with the present automated answering system. Norma Vargas, who is tak-

ing over the duties of Michelle Caddell, will answer and direct any calls that are not self-directed to specific extensions. Norma will also greet and sign-in visitors to Product Development. The new "main entrance" for the whole of the P.D. department will be the door nearest to Jeff Wilson's office on the lower floor.

- Customer Service and 800 Sales lines remain the same.

- ORIGIN is seeking an improved travel path between the two buildings. Unless a staircase of some kind can be installed next to the wall, we ask all employees and their guests to please walk AROUND the stone wall. It's only a few extra paces. Climbing that wall is very dangerous and we don't want to see anyone getting injured. Again, for the hard-of-reading: DON'T CLIMB THE WALL!

(Ed's Note: I think the message here is: Don't climb the wall)

Front & Center

Lonely souls who wander the building may have noticed that there's a new face at the reception desk. She's Christy Wells.

Christy's been on-line with ORIGIN since the 17th. She says she took some computer courses in high school but they were basically about working on a computer. Those aren't the questions she's getting on the phones. "I have people calling talking about RAM and memory requirements," she says. "I'm trying to learn as much as I can about those things."

Christy says she's enjoying her new position and plans to start ACC in the fall. First and foremost on her signup list: more computer classes.

**In the next issue:
CES News**

Rank and File

SPA Top-10 (August, 1991)

1. AD&D: Gateway to the Savage Frontier (SSI)
 2. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (Lucasfilm)
 3. Castles (Interplay)
 4. King's Quest V (Sierra)
 5. Jetfighter II (Velocity)
 6. **Wing Commander**
 7. Chuck Yeager's Combat Air Trainer (Electronic Arts)
 8. SimCity (Maxis)
 9. Links (Access)
 10. Links/Pinehurst (Access)
- (22) **Wing Commander Secret Missions**

Software, Etc.

Top-5 (for September, 1991)

1. **Wing Commander II** (3.5 vers.)
 2. **Wing Commander II** (5.25. vers.)
 3. **Wing Commander II: Speech Pak**
 4. King's Quest Triple Pack (Sierra)
 5. Gunship 2000 (Microprose)
- (Editor's Note: Software, Etc. says Speech Pak 3.5 would have taken the #4 spot, but they ran out of stock and ORIGIN did, too!)