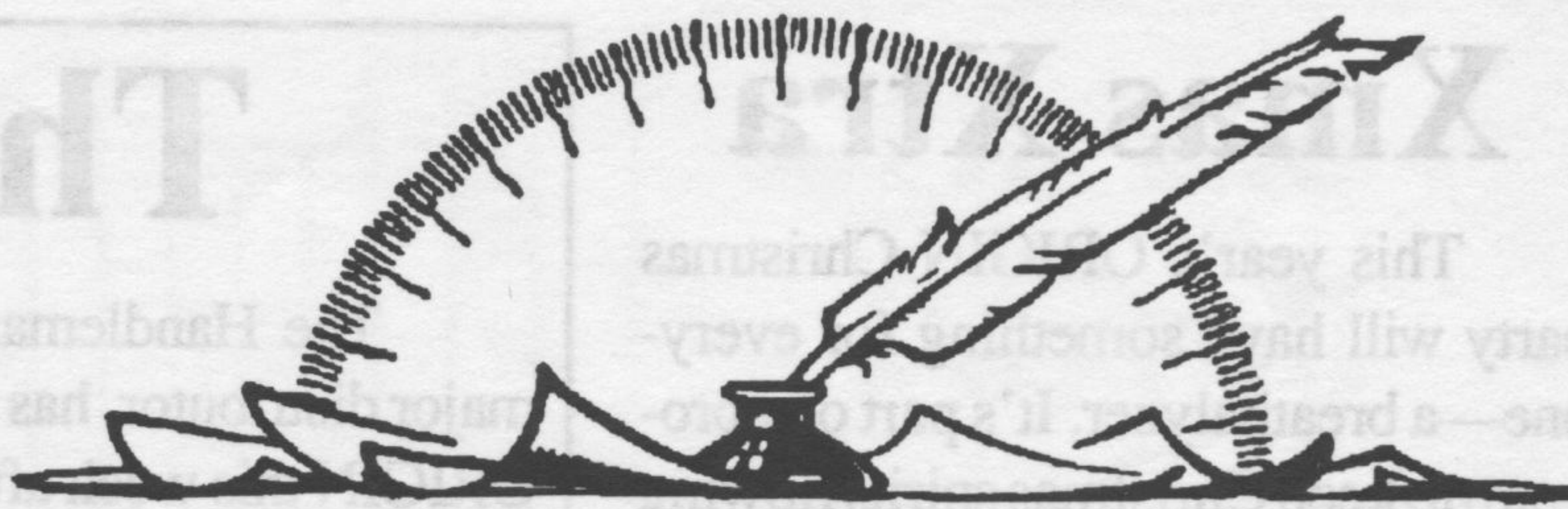


POINT OF ORIGIN



Hey, at least it's free.

Vol. I No. 6♦♦

Friday, November 22, 1991

♦♦ Austin, Texas

Dallas Does San Fran

San Francisco—Dallas jetted to sunny California last week where he was a featured speaker at a Fujitsu conference. "It was primarily an introduction to the FM Towns and why you might want to develop on it," he says. "(Fujitsu) has really made a big push to get *Ultima VI* finished on the FM Towns because they're premiering it in this current season over in Japan. It's kind of their premier product." Dallas noted that Fujitsu's spent more than \$100,000 in the last couple of months to bring programmers to ORIGIN and crank *U6* through to completion.

After the conference, Dallas swung over to Software Toolworks for a sight-seeing/fact-finding tour and to talk about the CD-ROM projects they're doing, like *Wing/U6*. He says he was pleasantly surprised at what he found. "I felt right at home there. It's about the same size as ORIGIN. They

tended to dress the same way. They were all very cordial, very uncorporate."

Dallas took particular notice of the office setup at Toolworks. Most of them have four people in an office, sectioned off with cubicles. "That was the style they wanted to do," he says. "They have much smaller teams than we do. They don't do monolithic projects like we do. Their teams are anywhere from one to five people, so they like to have the whole team in one room. For teams our size, they know it wouldn't work (as do we). We just try to get ours all at one end of the hallway."

Dallas also got a look at the Miracle, a keyboard that teaches you to play piano. Originally connected to Nintendo, now it connects to a PC and Toolworks is developing versions for Mac and Amiga. ORIGIN has a Miracle in-house that Dallas hopes to have up and running as soon as he gets the speakers fixed.

Priest Punctured at Pint Party

Micael Priest knows the pitfalls of DWI (darting while intoxicated). At last week's Pint Nite at the Dog & Duck Pub, a regular hangout for the Art Department, Micael was pegged in the

temple by a wayward dart from a questionably sober patron (and *not* an artist, if you can believe it). After the howls of laughter from his compassionate co-workers subsided, Micael plucked the dart and saw his doctor the following day for a tetanus shot.



Talkin' Turkey

Kay and the Entertainment Committee are planning a Thanksgiving feast for next week's cook-out. It's going to be a true, old-fashioned potluck lunch in the atrium at ORIGIN West from 11:30 until 2:00. It doesn't matter what you bring, as long as you bring *something*. EC'ers will be making the rounds Monday to finalize the menu. This will also be a chance for those who haven't seen ORIGIN West to look around.

As reported here last issue, the regular Wednesday cookouts will be somewhat sporadic over the next few months due to the weather, but we will try to have at least one a month.

Just a reminder: Kay's still looking for new volunteers on the Entertainment Committee—particularly from Product Development—in order to maintain the balance of the committee and make sure the needs of P.D.'s growing personnel battalion are being answered

Xmas Xtra

This year's ORIGIN Christmas party will have something for everyone—a breathalyzer. It's part of a program to keep Christmas spirits flowing but keep employees safe at the same time.

If you're going to drink, you'll be asked to turn over your car keys and have your hand stamped. If, at the end of the evening, you've had one too many and nobody else is sober enough to give you a ride, ORIGIN will pick up the cab fare to take you home, and even pick up the tab for another cab the next morning in case you need to pick up your car.

"We want this to be a fun party and we want to have an open bar," Fred says, "but along with that comes company responsibilities." He added that this was the best option to making the party non-alcoholic.

Industry Standards

Flight Deck Software is on the lookout for virus-ridden disks in its IFT-PRO instrument trainer. The company's reportedly being hassled by someone who calls himself (or herself) the Dark Avenger. Symptoms of the infection are corrupted and cross-linked files. Flight Deck officials think the virus arrived on a returned disk on or about November 6th. Since that time, a strict scanning program's been implemented. A company spokeswoman told me, "It's not as big as we thought it was. Only a couple of people have caught it so far."

Disney's Computer Software Division has unveiled a sound-reproduction peripheral for PCs and workstations. Developed with partners Electronic Speech Systems and Phoenix

The Big Score

The Handleman Company, a major distributor, has signed on with ORIGIN this week after 5 months of negotiations. "They have about 4,000 storefronts that they service," Marten says. All are large chains of mass-merchantretailers (Sears, Target, etc.) and office supply store chains (like Office Depot).

Handleman's initial order is for about 1680 pieces of *Wing 2* and about

630 pieces of *U7*, the majority of which will be going into Sears Brand Central stores. Future plans call for expansions into Handleman's other retail chains.

Marten says *Wing 2* is still holding its own, but *Special Ops* could spark it up. He thinks we could get a second round of sell-through activity before Christmas, even in a soft consumer spending market.

Technologies, the Sound Source will reportedly cost less than \$40 and provide AM-radio-quality sound.

For the fashion-conscious programmer, NEC is designing what would have to be called "hard-wear," computers that fit around your neck or on your sleeve. Actually, the target users would be anybody who doesn't have access to a desk, like inventory managers. Also in the works: hands-free telephones for skiers in 1993.

For more on these articles, check one of the conveniently located Point bulletin boards around ORIGIN East and West.

Charting the World

Tilt Magazine (France) gives *Wing 2* 19 out of a possible 20 points.

On *Generation 4's* "Hit Parade" in Germany, *Wing2* is #1 on the PC chart.

ASM Magazine (Germany) rates *Wing 2* "Prima". On the German "Hitline" for MS-DOS, *Wing* is #4 and *Wing 2* is #6. *ASM* has also named *U7* as January's "Game of the Month." (Ed note: *Eva Hoogh* with *ASM* is one of the journalists who came here a few weeks ago for the *U7* preview. She says

the vote was unanimous.)

Germany sends us two other awards via a users' group known as Deutsche Abenteuer Spiel Auszeichnung (DASA). It named *Ultima VI* "Best Computer Role-Playing Game of 1990" and honored *Wing Commander* as "Best Computer Strategy-Simulation Game of 1990." Wow! First the Berlin Wall, and then all this...

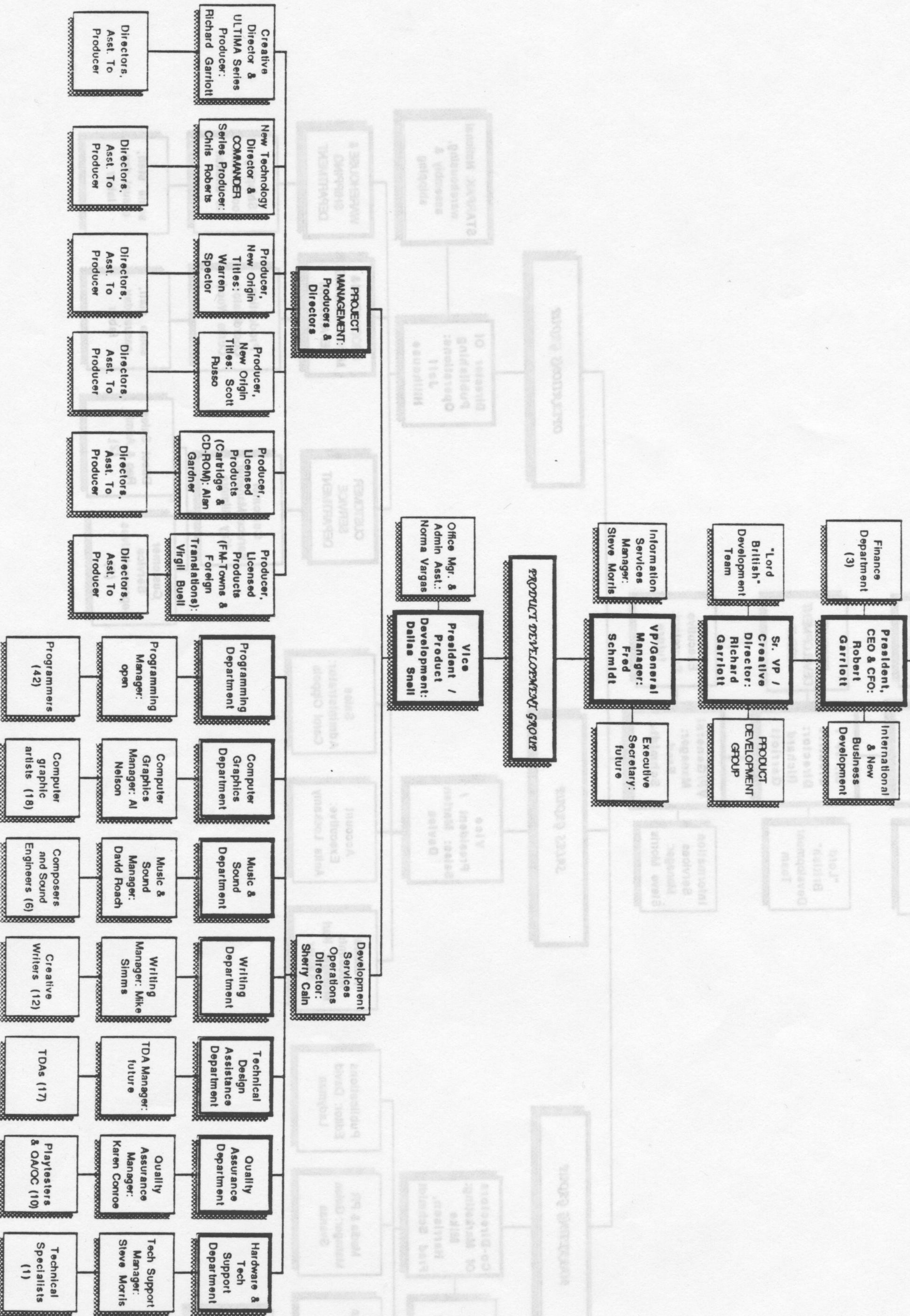
Go With the Flow

You'll notice a little something extra in this week's Point. It's an organizational flow chart. ORIGIN's almost growing too fast to track, so these charts (and more in the future) are designed to give everyone "the big picture." You'll notice some positions are noted as future positions. If you have any questions, don't ask me; I'm still trying to get through it. But department heads can probably explain it.

You'll notice that in the Sales and Marketing Departments, duties of the Marketing Director will be shared by Fred and Mike Harrison, at least until February. Craig Miller will be picking up the lion's share of creative design and Curtis Wood will handle printing.

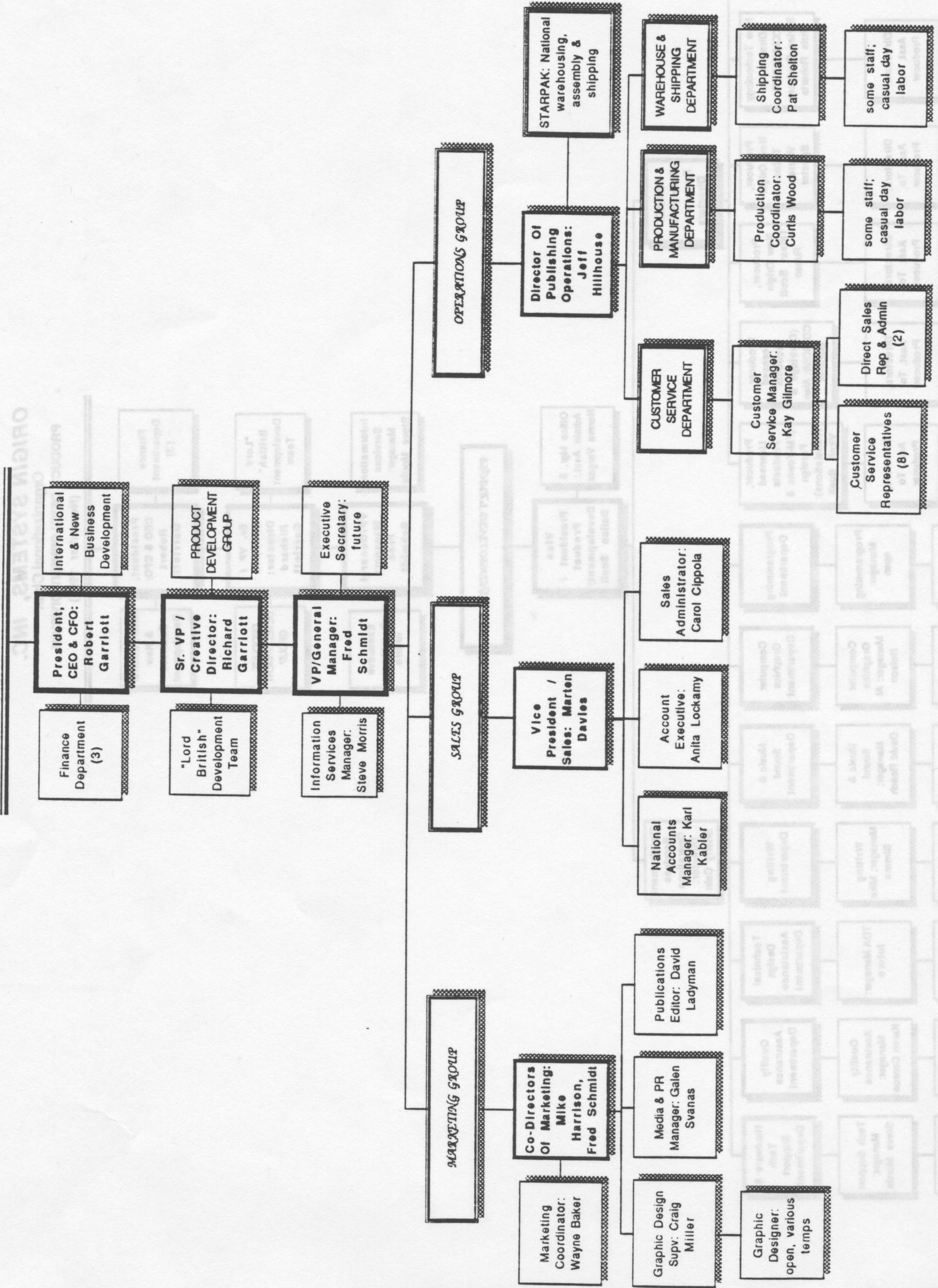
ORIGIN SYSTEMS, INC.

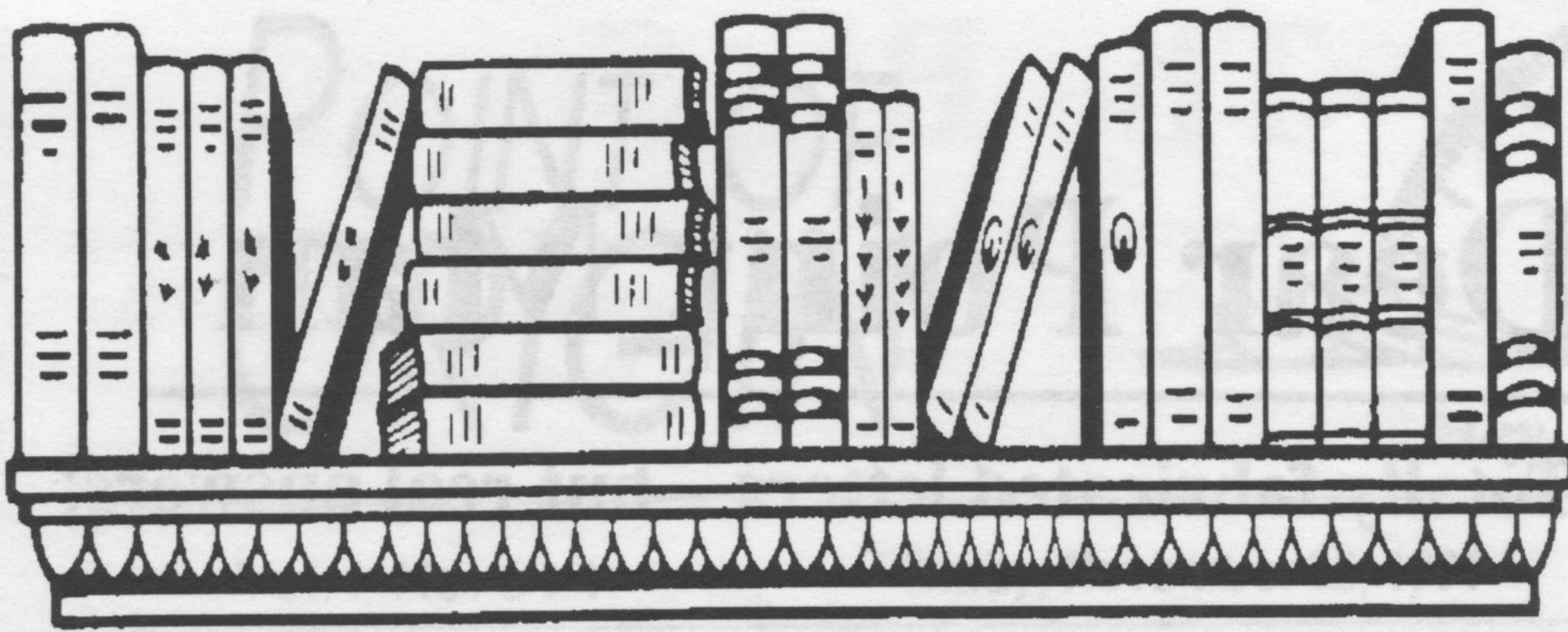
Organizational Chart
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
(November 1991)



ORIGIN SYSTEMS, INC.

Organizational Chart
PUBLISHING DIVISION
(November 1991)





Read All About It

Christina Erskine, one of the international press people here to preview U7, has finished her piece for *PC Review* in England. She had quite a few compliments but stopped short of giving an overall rating, since the game was still in playtesting. Look for the article on the bulletin board (for board locations, see "Dear Point Man").

OMNI Editor Keith Ferrell called to say that *Wing 2* will be featured prominently in a 2-pager on "hot" flight simulators in the December issue. Gregg Keizer, the freelancer who wrote the article, calls it a "Top Gun 2001." Keith says "congratulations to all on yet another sensational product!"

There's a new flight simulator

newsletter out, appropriately called *Simulations!* It's published by Shay Addams of *QuestBusters* fame. In the premier issue, Bernie Yee's review of *Wing 2* was positive but not glowing. Look for copies on the boards.

PC Sources will be joining *PC Consumer* reviewing Mike Harrison's *Wing Commander* book. It's selling so well that it's gone into a second printing.

In case you didn't hear at last week's Social Hour, *Wing Commander* lost its #1 spot on the *Computer Gaming World* Top-100 Chart—to *Wing 2*! Assistant Editor Alan Emrich says the Reader Survey rating of 10.91 (out of a possible 12) may be a new record. Kudos to both project teams.

Play It Again

Lots of news from Quality Assurance. First and foremost is the official signoff of *Special Operations*, which sailed through playtesting and out the door this week. It's slated to ship on Monday.

"I don't remember how many bugs there were, but there weren't many," Sherry said. "That really says a lot, not only for the *Special Ops* team, but for the *Wing 2* team, too. It shows their game really holds together well."

The Sales staff sends its heartfelt thanks to QA for doubling its efforts to keep *Special Ops* moving in time for Thanksgiving.

Playtesters are reportedly having a good time with *Underworld* right now. It's listed as a strong Alpha, but is expected to go Beta soon. A video demo of *Underworld* is together for the Sales and Public Relations channels. If you'd like to see it, there's a copy in the downstairs break room of ORIGIN East.

Word is that the U7 team is de-

On the Payroll

New Sound Director David Roach knows just about every angle of the music and recording scenes; he even plays keyboards with Dan del Santo's band. Another candidate for the ORIGIN Orchestra???

Producer Scott Russo joins us after a long stint with Disney film and t.v. divisions. He's part of a package deal which includes programmer Heather Barclay, who worked with LucasFilm Games and will be doing Super NES here.

Michael Simms is the new Writer/TDA Manager. His resume also lists a hitch as a Russian linguist with the "U.S. Naval Security Group, Top Secret Clearance, duties classified." Maybe after a few beers...

We have two more in the Programming Department: Jim Martin is online as our new Librarian and Rick Johnson will be handling the Windows duties on *Next Frontier*, our first project designed for that environment. Meanwhile, the search is still on for their boss, a Programmer Manager.

bugging and adjusting right and left, and the game is getting better and faster every day. Other than that, QA has its RAMs full with U6/Amiga, U6/FM Towns and all the CD-ROM projects—plenty to look forward to after a short week next week.



(more on back)



Dear Point Man

Totally fabricated letters—but real answers!

Dear Point Man,

I have the most seniority in my department; I've been with ORIGIN since August. Every day, eager, new employees ask me about those dusty cardboard boxes near the copying machine and printer in ORIGIN East and near the time clock in ORIGIN West, but I don't know what to say. What are those things anyway?

*Signed,
Bugged in Beta*

Dear Bugged,

Good question and good timing, because those are the original Point of ORIGIN suggestion boxes, abandoned long ago by ancient editors. But a massive restoration project is underway to put those boxes back into use. If you have any story ideas, pictures, opinions—even articles—drop them in. That way, more people can get involved in the newsletter and I won't have to invent corny formats like this anymore.

Dear Point Man,

In your last newsletter, you said you're looking for names for the hero in the new Wing Commander book. HA! Fat chance! No way am I going to focus all my creative energies without some sort of reward. Catch my drift? What's in it for me?

*Signed,
Name Withheld*

Dear No-Name,

Okay, okay., here's the deal: each person who submits a winning name and/or call sign will get to name a character in the computer version of Wing 3. (What did you expect, royalties?)

Dear Point Man,

It just occurred to me that next Friday is payday, but I'm going to be hundreds of miles away for Thanksgiving. Should I plan on dinner at the Door of Faith Mission?

*Signed,
Thankful but Broke*

Dear Broke,

Don't worry. Mark in Accounting says next week, payday will be moved up to Wednesday, so pick out the Butterball and head on down the road. And, as Tom Bodett would say, we'll leave the light on for ya.

(Believe it or not, here are two actual cards dropped in the Point boxes. Don't be too impressed; I think they're from the same person.)

How about running excerpts from the FPO's and/or fact sheets on upcoming projects so everyone can keep abreast of what's new and upcoming?

Plans are already in the works to

deal with that. We're setting up two areas in ORIGIN East: one of them will be outside Richard's office downstairs, the other will double as the picture board near the copying machine upstairs. ORIGIN West will have its board downstairs by the time clock. We'll be hanging articles, reviews, awards and advertising, too. If you run across something that we haven't posted yet, let me (Galen) or Wayne know so we can put it up.

I hear rumors that we're buying a building on 183. What's the real story?

To paraphrase Mark Twain, "Rumors of our moving again have been greatly exaggerated." A building on 183 is just one of several being considered throughout Austin. According to Fred, there's even a chance (a long shot, but possible) that we will build our own facility. About the only thing certain right now is the decision deadline: next Spring or Summer; our lease is good here until February of 1993. As soon as I pick up any cold, hard facts, I'll pass them along.

(See there, the Point suggestion boxes still work.)

**have a great
Thanksgiving!**