

Point of ORIGIN

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Austin, TX



Bustin through...

Everybody did a "ribbon-busting" at the last Happy Hour and got a tour of the new building.

Notes from La-La Land

Half of the sales staff's in Los Angeles right now, greasing the skids for a new marketing venture. This Fall, Wing Commander and Ultima VI will hit a new low: \$29.95. It's part of a master plan to get into the mass-market, places like Montgomery Wards, Best Buy, etc. Actually, those are two of the retailers represented at the Merisel conference. Merisel is a major distributor which also supplies places like Electronic Boutique, Bizmart and Circuit City to name a few.

"Whether it's by accident or by design, I think we're hitting this thing right on the nose," Global Games Dealer **Marten Davies** said on the phone. "I think the market's ready for some strong titles at a lower price, especially with the price of computers coming down. You have people out there buying 386s and 486s and they can't afford or don't want to spend \$80 on a game."

This is by no means a new trend. Lately, the market's been flooded with

(See "La La" on page 3)

Special Ops 2 Taking Off

So far, so good for Special Ops 2. Sales have been very active. In fact, Babbage's just turned (put in a second order) for 900 units. Software, Etc and Electronic Boutique are pulling out their checkbooks again, too. With the re-orders, a total of about 19,000 units have moved into the channel. Congrats to the Special Ops 2 team!

Potpourri

Mr. Mike McShaffrey won't be happy until everybody's pale and nauseous. That's why he spearheaded the effort to get the "Blood Bus" to make a stop at Wild Basin Office Park. It will be here August 7, from 9 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon. The *entire* QA Department's signed up. "Once **Andrew Hoffman** signed up, the rest of them fell like a house of cards," Mike says. Donations go to Brackenridge Children's Hospital. There's still time to get on the list: just talk with Mr. Mike or the equally-bloodthirsty **Wayne Baker** and **Donna Mehnert**.

Pretty soon, Music Master **Dana Glover** will need a secretary to handle all of his fan mail. It's starting with a respectable trickle from a guy who wants the score to Wing 2 and Special Ops 1. "I've got a program that can print it out, but to tell the truth, I've never used it

(see "Potpourri on last page)

Press Here

Here are some of the clips and quotes from the last few weeks:

Ultima VII

"A massive world to explore, full-screen views and murder-happy opponents make Ultima VII an invigorating change from the too-cute fantasy games of the past."

OMNI

"Game-wise, Ultima VII is the biggest, most compulsive hunk of action and adventure around."

PC Format (England)

"When you see the quality of this game, it is hard to imagine the people at ORIGIN can come up with two more (better than this) to complete the trilogy."

Illawarra Mercury (Australia)

Underworld

"These are the most impressive dungeons I've seen."

Atlanta Constitution

Austin American Statesman

"Judging it by today's standards, Underworld doesn't have an equal. It really is the best of the bunch and everything else that comes along will no doubt be judged by it."

PC Review (England)

Wing Commander II

"Not only does this game demonstrate the capabilities of multimedia PC's, it's helping to drive sales of them."

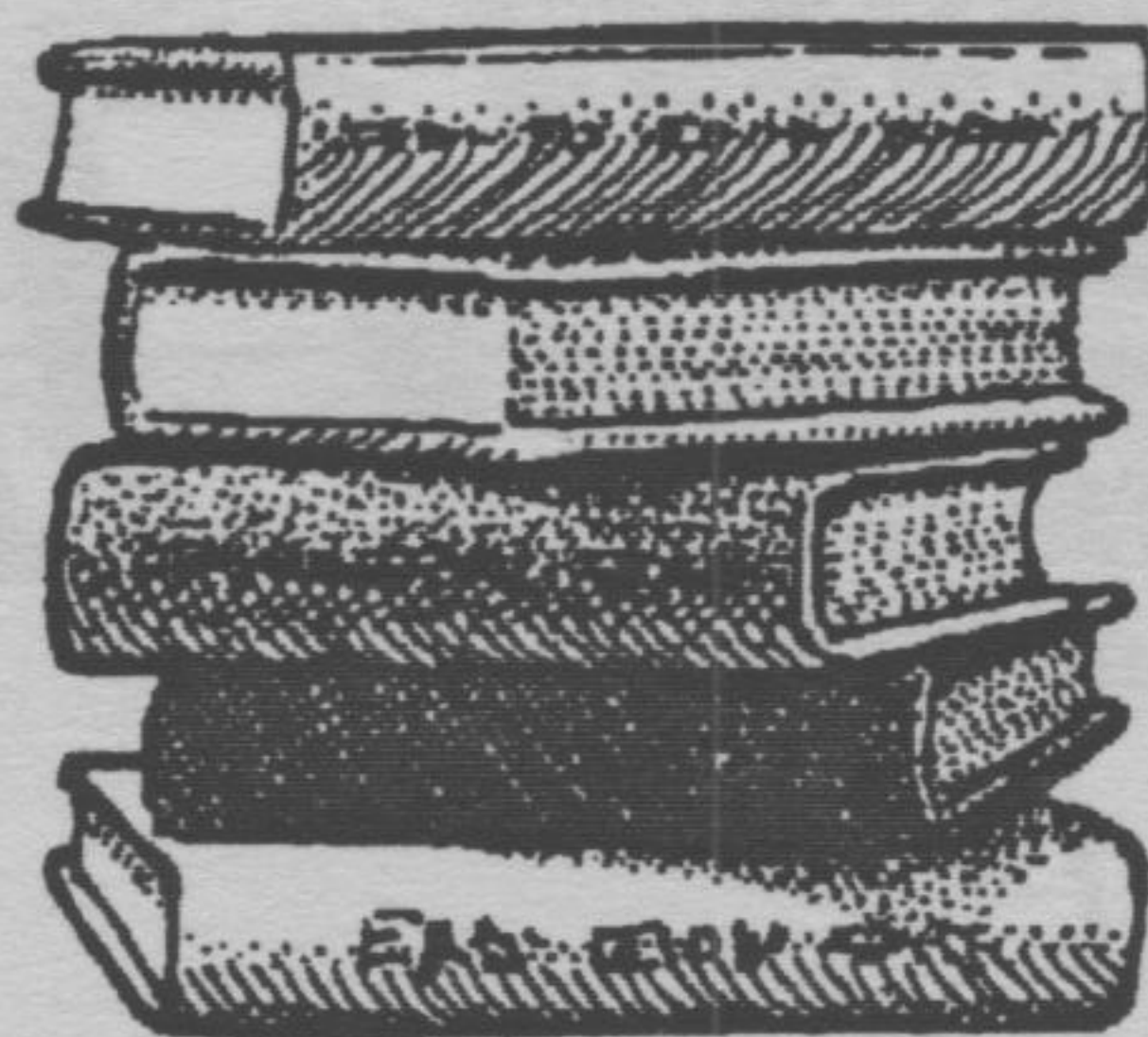
Computer Shopper

Wing Commander II/French

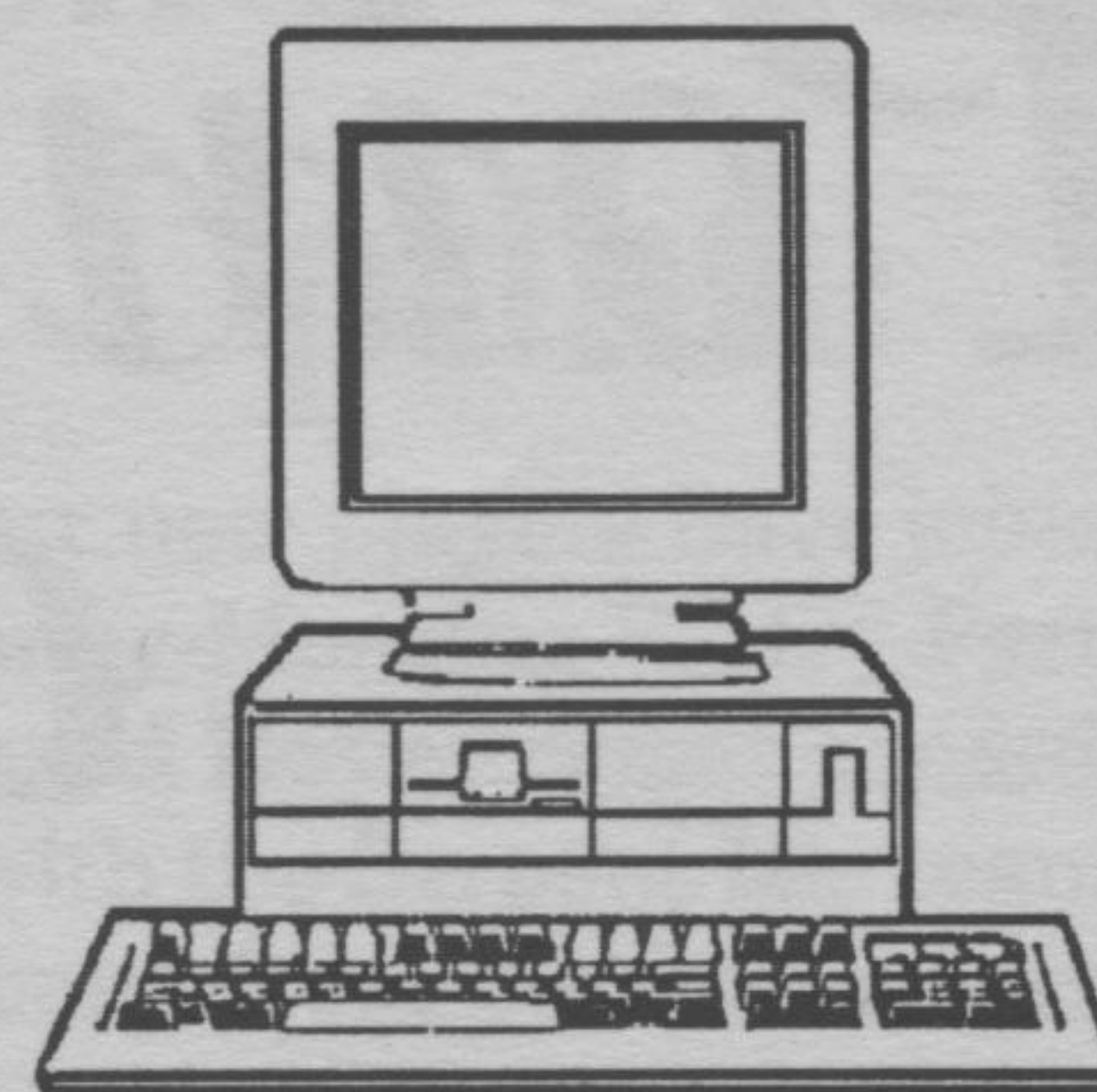
"Thanks to an extremely faithful translation (thumbs up to the translator who perfectly masters French insults!), we're finally able to fully enjoy this super-sublime game."

Joystick (France)

Catch these reviews in the Library as well as others from Italy, Finland and Germany (if you can read them).



Check It Out



The ORIGIN Library's still growing by leaps and bounds. Here's a sampling of the newest additions.

On-disk magazines:

Game Bytes Issue #2

PC Entertainer Magazine November 12th Issue (2 disks)

Applications/Programming:

4 Copies of SuperStor Data Compression Software

One Copy of C++ for those who wish to run through the C++ Tutorial

Games:

4-D Boxing/IBM (Electronic Arts)

Links The Challenge of Golf/IBM and Amiga (Access)

Bountiful Golf Course/IBM and Amiga (Access)

Barton Creek Golf Course (Access)

Hyatt Dorado Beach Golf Course (Access)

Troon North Golf Course (Access)

Firestone Country Club Golf Course (Access)

Bay Hill Golf Course (Access)

Pinehurst Golf Course (Access)

Mean Streets (Access)

Rise of the Dragon (Dynamix)

Crime Wave (Access)

King's Quest V (Sierra)

The Colonel's Bequest: A Laura Bow Mystery (Sierra)

Treasures of the Savage Frontier (SSI)

Tony La Russa's Ultimate Baseball (SSI)

Conflict: Korea (SSI).

Eye of the Beholder II (SSI)

Carrier Strike South Pacific 1942-44 (SSI)

Western Front The Liberation of Europe 1944-1945 (SSI)

Space 1889 (Paragon)

Nighthawk F-117A (Microprose)

Gunship 2000 (Microprose)

Railroad Tycoon (Microprose)

Hyperspeed (Microprose)

Knights of the Sky (Microprose)

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (Lucas)

Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain (Lucas)

Special thanks go out to **Martin Galway, James Nance** and **Carolyn Cutler** for providing the videotape of "History of Computers: The Machine That Changed the World" from PBS. The six-part series is still missing episode #3, so if you know anyone who has it on tape, get in touch with **Collection Czar Mary Margaret Ipser**.

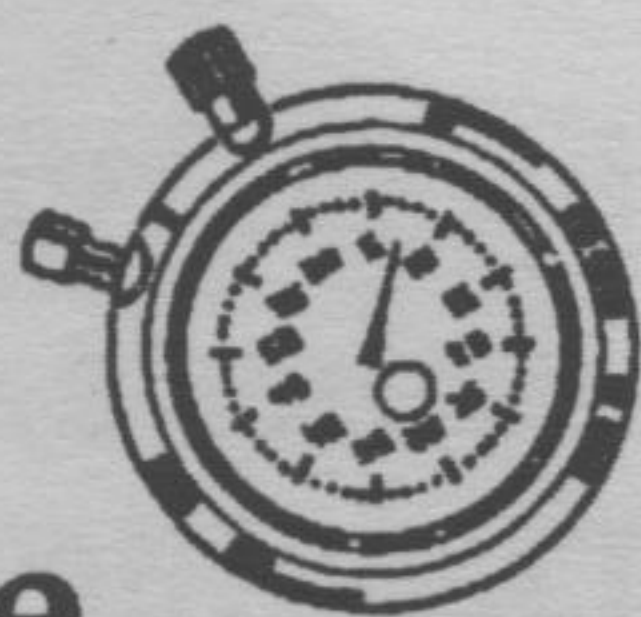
...La La

compilations like Lost Treasures of Infocom and scaled-down versions of games like the King's Quest series. In many cases, these are nothing more than expanded demos, meant to whet the gamer's appetite and get him (or her) to buy the full-blown product. They're sold at ridiculously-low prices, even dropping below the \$10 mark.

Earlier this week, Tandy Titan (and all-around Nice Guy) **Karl Kabler** hit the Price Club Show at the Anaheim Convention Center. Basically, the PCS is a consumer show, but it's only open to Price Club members, both businesses and individuals. "It was a great show," Karl said. "There were about 15,000 people there. To give you an idea, last year, we pioneered the show; we were the only software company to be there. This year, piggy-backed on our success was Disney, Broderbund, My Software, Microsoft and The Learning Company. It shows that the West Coast group, at least, is serious about moving into the mass market computer and software business."

In other sales news, Bundling Boss **Anita Lockamy** inked a deal for a minimum 10,000 units of Ultima VI. Personal Computer Solutions plans to put together a "Fun Pack" which includes U6, a Gravis Pad (like a joystick) and three other games. The idea is to get the packs into outlets like Wal-Mart, Sam's and Target, which means the order could balloon to 40,000 by Christmas. Bundles sell at a reduced price, but they're not too shabby nonetheless. Anita's also been running up the international phone bill, signing on KPS Video Express in Hong Kong and possibly ISB Trade in Israel. It could even lead to our products being translated into Hebrew. Oy vey, Avatar!

Only 202
days left
before the
next CES!



Tick!
Tick!
Tick!

Bio:

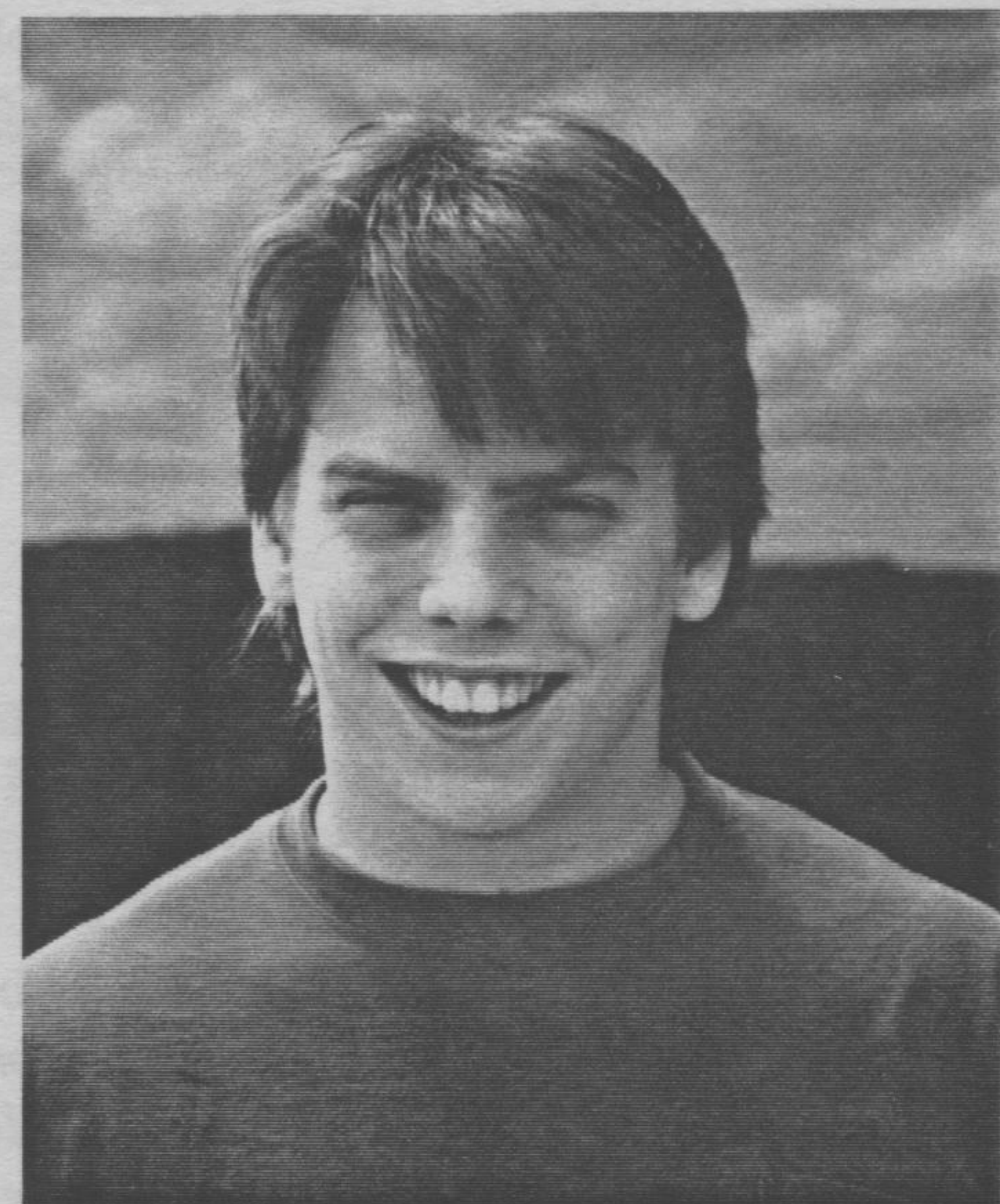
Scott Shelton The Dynasty Grows

There are more Sheltons than Garriotts around here. Brothers **Scott, Pat and Jeff** are on the payroll. At one time, two of their wives clocked in and brought the total to five! Scott takes the spotlight this week, though, because of his promotion from QA Project Leader to QA Test Supervisor.

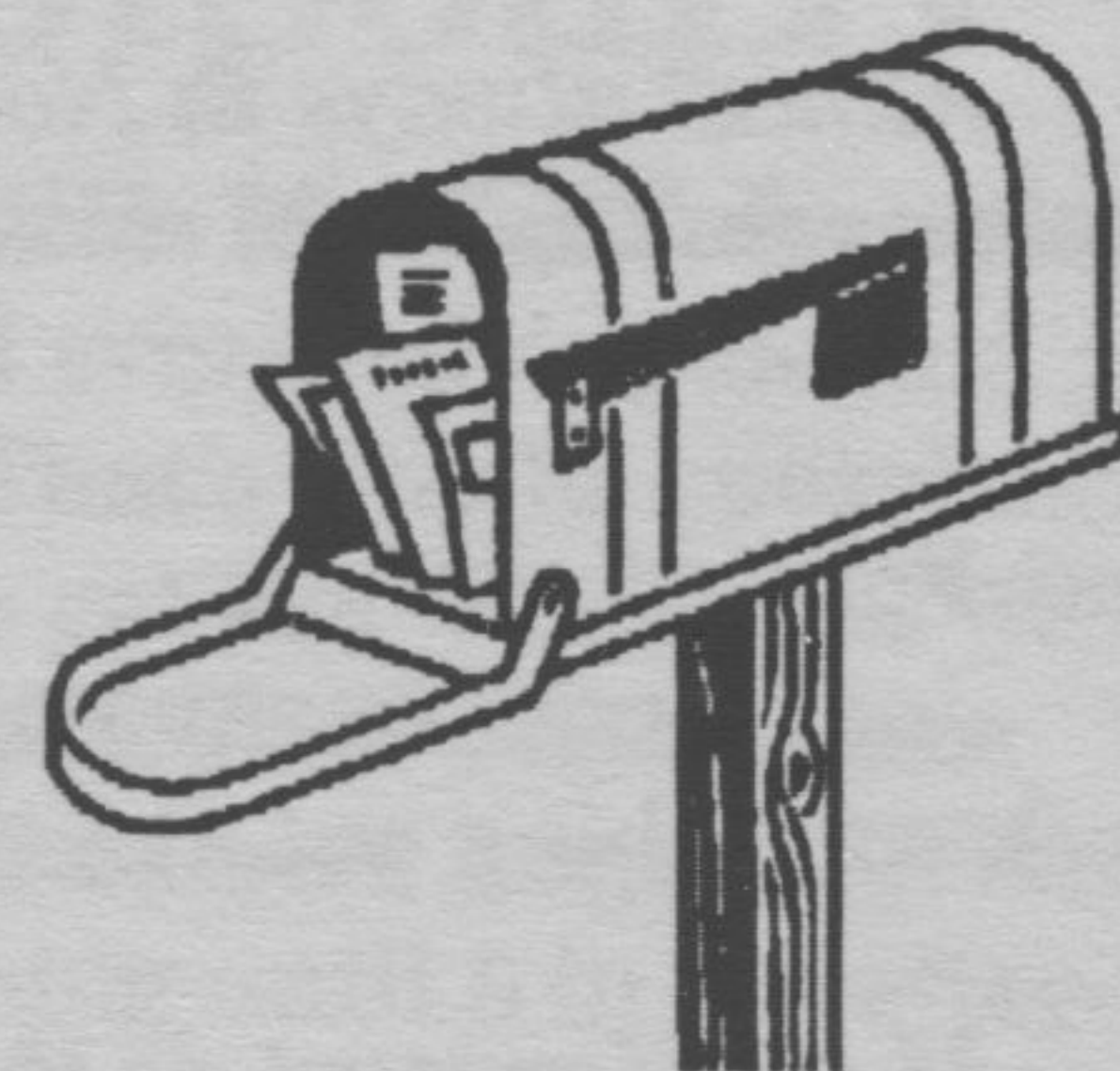
That means he'll be responsible for monitoring test cycles, helping to create checklists, training, evaluations and working with Product Development.

Scott's away-from-work interests have an edge. "I like rock and roll music," he says, "something with a hard beat. And action movies—violent movies actually—although I'm getting into animated movies now." When he gets home, there's nothing like the total escape of his 486, where he loads up sports games. "They're my favorite. I wish we'd do some of them here."

Scott's also heavy into video games (natch!) and *real* sports, especially basketball, baseball and football. Typically Texan, he's a fan of the Spurs and the Cowboys. If you need player stats or a history lesson of the QA Department, Scott's the guy to see. We wish him the best of luck in his new position.



Dear Point Man



Dear Point Man:

I sure would like to know why EA (Electronic Arts) people were wandering around our building this week with the President and V.P. Everyone I asked...had no idea why EA was here. My friend at EA knew, but she couldn't tell me.

As your beacon of truth, I took the question to Fred himself. As he explains it, EA and ORIGIN have been talking about some joint ventures in Sega/Genesis development. Although the two companies haven't done a lot of cooperative projects in the recent past, talks started in earnest early this year and have been very positive. There's even some chance that the companies might work together on a totally new gaming platform, shown to Richard and Robert under deep cover and non-disclosure at June CES in Chicago. That platform would have deep-pocketed backing from a major corporation in the United States and a different corporation in Japan. Suffice it to say that not much more will be forthcoming about that venture, at least in the foreseeable future. I'll keep you posted as I get more info.

(more fascinating questions on the next page)

Dear Point Man:

We do such a wonderful job of collecting cans for **Thomas Blom** during the week. Why don't we have a trash can for soda cans at Happy Hours and cookouts? There certainly are a lot of cans.

We have started doing the recycling thing at cookouts. As a result of your letter, Thomas will be trying to put together another receptacle that Kay can store in ORIGIN West's warehouse.

Dear Point Man:

Why is our weekend really a week beginning? This unfortunate choice of starting day for the weekly pay period denies us the ability to make up for time loss during the week.

*"Nobody's ever asked us that before, and really, there's no answer," according to chief Legume Enumerator **Mark Chandler**. Mark says that most corporations begin the week on Saturday, just for bookkeeping purposes. "To change it now would be very expensive. A lot of our accounting software and automated tasks are geared for this setup." He can even recall the nightmare period when ORIGIN employees in New Hampshire and Austin were paid on different days. As for lost time, Fred says, "We usually look at a longer-term time period anyway. As long as everyone gets in their minimum 80 hours during the two-week payroll period, then there's usually no problem. So the only time frame that could run someone into a potential no-makeup roadblock is right at the very end of a payroll period. Also, if you know that you need some time off in the coming week for a doctor's appointment or some other reason, you can work some of the weekend prior to it."*

Dear Point Man:

What is the news on the 401K matching money? When does the company make its contribution?

Almost always in November, when the taxes are due. (And some more products finally ship. -Fred)

Dear Point Man:

Just a note to say how much I enjoy using the Library at ORIGIN East. I check something out at least once a week.

Mary Margaret, is that your handwriting? But seriously folks (ba-doom...BISH), M&M has been stocking up on books and games faster than anyone thought possible and deserves the credit and gratitude.

...Potpourri

before," Dana said. Meanwhile, we'll try to slide the fan one of the few remaining ORIGIN soundtrack CDs.

The U7 team will be putting everything on the line again on July 8. This time, it's a conference on CompuServe. Look for a copy of it in the Library soon after.

Blossoming Beauty **Kay Gilmore** can't have her baby until she has an ORIGIN-style baby shower (as Donna puts it, the kind

where everybody drinks beer and falls down, except the mother-to-be). It's slated for next Friday, June 26 after work at Pinatas. Gifts are optional. Let Donna know if you can make it so she can warn the restaurant.

The last company picnic was reportedly a huge success. The next will be Sunday, August 16, at Westlake Beach. It has water volleyball, a boat dock and lots of shade. The regular cast of characters will make the rounds to coordinate this

Donut Count Update

Four new players have joined the Monday-Morning Pastry Party.

David Beyer comes aboard as a TDA with the Serpent Isle team. David comes from the frozen north in Minnesota and brings eight years of gaming experience with him. When asked why he wanted to join ORIGIN, David said, "I want to have a hand in making the best computer games on the market." Good answer.

Dee Starnes starts drawing a paycheck June 29. He'll be doing some part-time duty in QA checking out Ultima V/Nintendo. Aside from a fanatic obsession with gaming, Dee had Mary Margaret, Mr. Mike McShaffry and Ken Demarest as references. He's also the Assistant Manager over at the Lincoln Theater. That could come in handy...

Jason Yenawine is with the Strike team, working on artificial intelligence for the enemy pilots. Jason plans to wrap up his last couple of semesters for a BS in computer science degree at U.T. next Fall and Spring, unless Strike starts to run behind. (Gee, what do you think about the chances of *that* happening?)

Erin Roberts, who made the summer shift famous, is now here full time with Strike as Project Administrator. Erin graduated from the university in Wales with a degree in geography and decided Austin's where he wanted to plant his roots along with his loving brother, **Chris**.

gala event.

The next Happy Hour will be on *Thursday*, July 2, in front of ORIGIN West. The company will be closed Friday, July 3, in observance of Richard's party the next day.

Don't forget
Father's
Day this
Sunday!

