

# Point of

# ORIGIN

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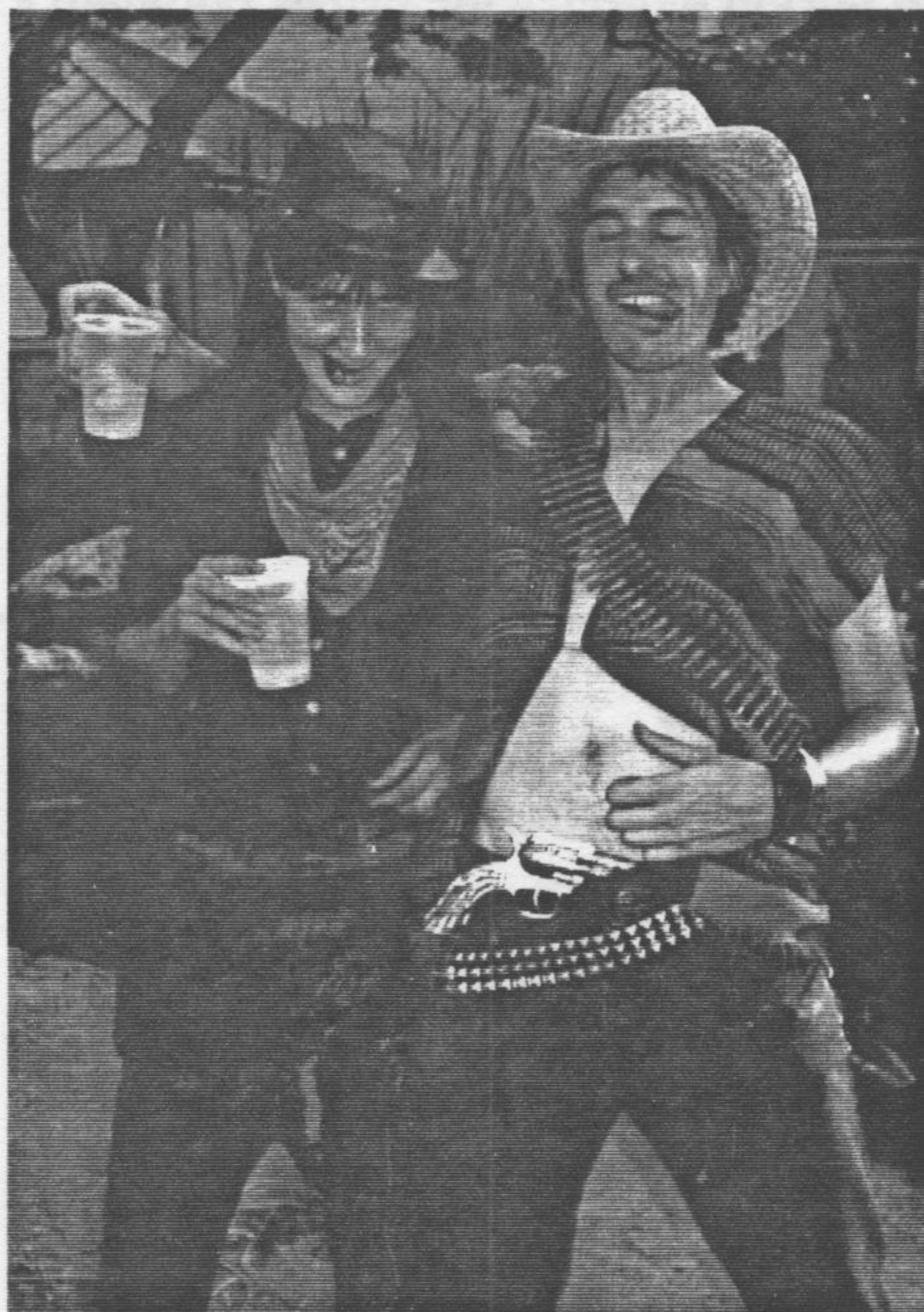
Austin, TX

## Boats, Blood and Burgers

The design is complete and construction's beginning on ORIGIN's entry into the Great Raft Race set for August 1st. The crew's motto should be "We Create Islands," because that's the plan. When finished, the raft should sport its own steamy volcano along with headhunters and terrified safari members. Hmmmm, I wonder if any of this has to do with a recent vacation? In any case, the raft passenger list is almost full but the gang needs more people to make up the support staff. Boat-building takes place 7-22, 7-29, 7-30 and 7-31 at Richard's house. If you're interested, report to Captain **Curtis Wood**.

The Bloodmobile will be rolling up to ORIGIN on August 7th, between 9:00-5:00. The maniacal **Mike McShaffry** has been seeing red for some time now. He and his corpuscular partners **Donna Mehnert** and **Wayne Baker** will be skulking around for donors. They'll also be signing people up at Happy Hour. Get a jump on things—start looking for those veins now.

The Entertainment Committee has slated the next company picnic for August 16th at Westlake Beach. That place has volleyball, a beach (natch), and picnic benches in the shade. ORIGIN will be providing hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks. Someone from the EC will be around at the beginning of August to make arrangements for other food and guests.



### *The (Really) Wild West...*

*Dicko Mather and his girlfriend, Gretchen, visually sum up Richard's 4th of July bash. For the story and more pictures, see back page.*

## Notes from Abroad

Believe it or not, Wing Commander/Amiga is on the way. Mindscape hired Nick Pelling to do the conversion and it's almost complete. For a time, the project looked shaky when Nick suddenly contracted viral encephalitis, but he's recovered and the plan is to release the game late this Fall. It will probably be a limited release here in the States since only two North American distributors and a small array of retailers still carry Amiga software.

Fortunately, the same condition is not true across the Atlantic, where

*(See "Abroad" on page 2)*

## Global Conquest

### Translation Team Maps ORIGIN Invasion

The international computer gaming market is a strange place. If you don't believe it, just pick up a copy of *Tilt* (France), *Mikro Bitti* (Finland) or *Power Play* (Germany) sometime. Smack dab in the middle of the text will be English: game titles, screen text, sometimes even advertising.

The fact is, until recently, players in those countries had to have a decent command of the English language if they wanted to enjoy American games. But that's starting to change. "Our competition is getting much tougher in the domain," according to the smooth talking **Jean-Marc Chemla**, ORIGIN's senior translator, "especially as local companies (overseas) come up with games. So we need to be there if we want to be players."

That realization is what launched ORIGIN's foray into foreign-language versions of our games. Right now, the translation team consists of Jean-Marc handling all of the duties a la Francaise, with **Kirsten Vaughan**, **Mark Grunert** and **Roswitha Shoemake** taking over Germany. Multi-cultural

*(See "Conquest" on page 3)*





## NEWS.TXT

Novato, CA—Software Toolworks is reporting a loss of approximately \$15.4 million for its fiscal fourth quarter ending June 30th. According to the company, factors for the loss included the bankruptcy filing of DAK Industries (which owes Toolworks \$2.5 million), settlement costs from litigation filed by shareholders (\$3.2 million), estimated sales returns and price protection claims (\$2.3 million), television production/advertising expenses (\$1.2 million) and lower gross margins on the sale of Nintendo products. The company's bankers have extended Toolwork's working capital line of credit through December, 1993.

Hunt Valley, MD—MicroProse has announced that a decision to "focus on long-term quality and financial success over short-term results" will delay the introduction of certain products: Darklands (a fantasy role-playing game), B-17 Flying Fortress (a flight simulator) and Mantis (an outer-space adventure game). According to company officials, the three products are nearly complete but lack certain key attributes of a MicroProse game. "We have delayed these products in order to include these features and to complete the MicroProse high quality assurance process," said CEO and Chairman, Bill Stealey. *[Ed.note: Fred says, "Sure, Bill, whatever you say. Basically, it just means that you are running very late on these product releases. (Where have you heard that before?) But when you're a public company, you have to phrase such news in a more tactful manner. Unfortunately, even the best PR 'tact' has its limits. MicroProse stock took a huge tumble on the news.]*

San Francisco, CA—Borland International introduced a 32-bit

version of its C++ development system at Microsoft's Professional Developers' Conference. Borland C++ for Win32s and Windows NT features a 32-bit ANSI optimizing compiler, Windows-hosted development environment, Object Windows support of Borland's application framework, Turbo Debugger, 32-bit assembler and the Borland Resource Workshop.

Santa Clara, CA—Intel Corp. Vice-President Frank Gill acquired 41,999 shares of Intel stock through an option exercise for prices between \$27.17 and \$29.38 per share. On the same day, he sold them on the open market for \$54 per share, making more than \$1 million on the deal. *[Ed.note: Here, Fred says, is an example of the obvious advantage of being a public company (versus the news from Toolworks and MicroProse).]*

## Abroad...

Brit Brand Boss **Jennie Evans** has scored a huge coup. She landed a 20,000 unit order for Wing/Amiga/German for November. No doubt she'll now suffer the same psychological disorders as our own sales staff watching their Strike order for Tandy make its successful Xmas landing.

Some of the higher-ups from Mindscape will be here next week for a visit. Geoff Shine, Director of Operations, and Anne Jacobs, UK Director of Marketing, get into town Sunday night. They'll hang around for a couple of days checking out our QA, Operations and Marketing setups. The Welcome wagon—**Jeff Hillhouse, Mike Harrison and Jeff Shelton**—will be picking them up and taking them around.

## In The Library

The Library finally got a DATABASE! Mary Margaret is currently in the process of inputting all of the information. Soon, everyone will be able to see what is in the library from their own machines. You will be able to see if what you are looking for is in, make a request for it if it is not, or send the librarian a note on how much you are enjoying the library.

### Games:

Star Control (Accolade)  
Geoworks Pro  
Geoworks Font Library  
Geoworks Art Library  
Geoworks Escape Game Pack  
Pools of Darkness (SSI)  
Eye of the Beholder (SSI)  
Eye of the Beholder Cluebook  
Deluxe Indiana Jones: Fate of Atlantis (Lucas)  
Grandma and Me/CD Rom for the Mac (Broderbund)  
Rocketeer (Disney)  
Disney Animation Studio (Disney)  
Epic (Ocean)  
Battle Command Heavyweight Action (Ocean)

Elf/Amiga (Ocean)  
A-Train (Maxis)  
Where in the World is Carmen  
Sandiego/CD Rom (Broderbund)  
Battlechess (Interplay)  
Out of this World (Interplay)  
Monty Python's Flying Circus (Virgin)  
Dune (Virgin)

### Books/Magazines:

Quest for Clues: The Book of Orbs (3 Copies)  
Compute Magazine's Entertainment Software Showcase Video (2 copies)  
Funk & Wagnall's Standard Handbook of Synonyms, Antonyms and Prepositions (donated by Mike Sims)  
First issue of Inside Microsoft Windows magazine  
First issue of Inside Quickbasic magazine  
YLEM Newsletter: Artists Using Science and Technology

*In the current issue of Newsweek, Elvis Presley is described as "the Avatar of sexual revolution."*



# Dear Point Man

Dear Point Man:

With all of the recent talk about our drug and alcohol policy, I was wondering, is ORIGIN planning to do any drug testing of its employees?

*"Nope, none, not a bit," according to Drug Czar Sharon Miller, "we've made our policy clear and we trust that employees will follow it." FYI: Sharon says that a new federal law goes into effect soon which prohibits pre-screening for employment, too.*

*(The next two letters are sort of related)*

Dear Point Man:

I recently heard a rumor (oooh, those darn rumors!) that the position of Librarian (that **Mary Margaret** is so capably filling) is going to be disbanded. What a crazy thing to do! Remember the old ORIGIN Library? People checked things out and *never* returned them. The shelves were in such disorder, and so useless, that the entire thing was eventually packed in boxes and given up. Let's not let this happen again!

Signed,

A Frequent Library User

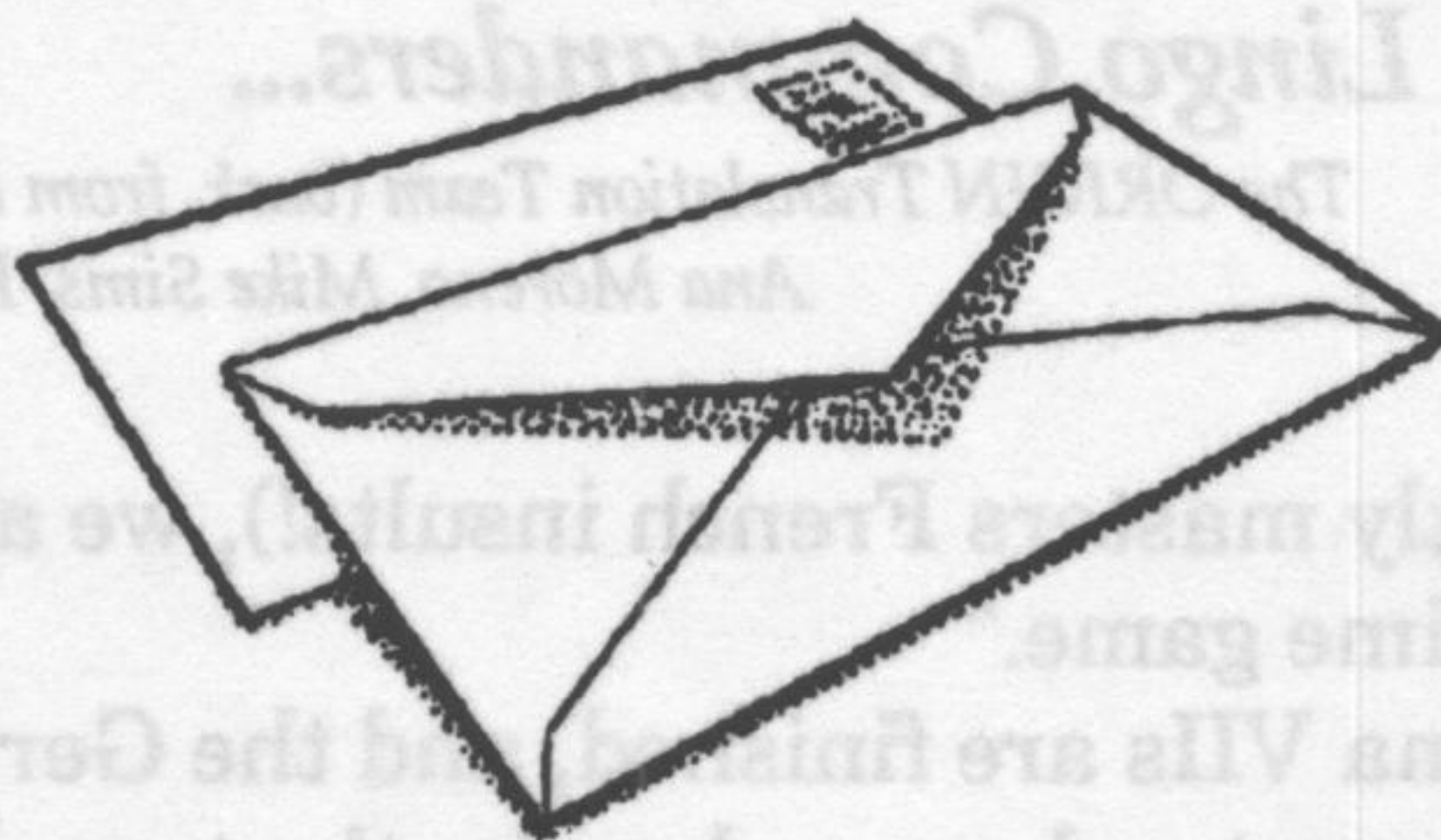
Dear Point Man:

I plan to donate my large collection of science magazines to the ORIGIN Library, but I am afraid that the Library will fall apart after Mary Margaret leaves. Will my hard-built collection go into a storeroom, walk away one magazine at a time, or will I have to take it back home? What about all of the other materials in the Library? Will ORIGIN employees have access to them (without walking into some guy's office)?

Signed,

An Avid Library User

*Alas, according to Sharon, the specific position of Librarian is being phased out. Mary Margaret's done a great job, but the position was "experimental." M&M will be staying on through August 21st, getting things in final order and cataloging everything in a database. What happens after that? Management's talking about the possibility of a part-time Librarian who would open the Library in the afternoons only. Norma Vargas will be taking over the software-swap program.*



## Ink...

and trickling in for Strike (CES). Overall, comments on both U7 and UW have been overwhelmingly positive, although U7's taking some hits for bugs. In *Computer Gaming World*, Scorpia writes about U7: "The graphics are far better in every respect. Overall, the visual presentation of the world is a first-class job." In *PC Entertainment*, Neil Randall says: "Underworld provides the best first-person perspective I've seen yet—better even than most flight simulators." In that same issue, the editors talked about the Strike demo: "The stunning graphics and animation sequences are like nothing we've seen before. Strike Commander is a technological leap beyond Wing Commander." Because there are so many articles, we can't possibly keep up posting all of them in both buildings. Wayne Baker has notebooks for each product with all their reviews in his office downstairs in ORIGIN West. Come by if you'd like to see more. We'll try to get copies of the notebooks to the Library in ORIGIN East as soon as possible.

In the current *Computer Gaming World*, Underworld enters the Readers' Poll in the #2 slot, trailing Civilization by only .03 and bumping Wing 2 to #3. Underworld easily takes over the top spot in the role-playing category, clobbering Eye of the Beholder II, which had reigned supreme for the last four polls. Inside sources at the mag say tabulations

*(More on next page)*

**Anthony Nichols** is now a newlywed. He married **Diana Espinosa** in a mid-sized ceremony a week ago last Sunday. The happy couple is now setting up house in the same place they've lived together for the last two years. Congrats!

Belated wedding wishes to **Joel Manners** and his wife, **Christie**, married June 6th. (I was so interested in the bachelor party that I forgot about the wedding date. Sorry about that.)

**Alan Gardner** is married to his work, and July 7th he celebrated

his 5-year anniversary with ORIGIN. Does that mean it's time for a meal and a pen, Robert?

Artist extraordinaire **Denis Loubet** will be getting some well-deserved recognition in an upcoming issue of *Electronic Games*. The mag's doing a feature called "Cover Art Gallery" and the writer says Denis' Underworld cover is his favorite of all time. Nice job, Denis.

No slouches in their own right, **Micael Priest**, **Danny Garrett** and **Dicko Mather** are three of the artists who also made their marks on

history with their posters for places like the Armadillo World Headquarters. They're among 50 different rock-and-roll poster artists featured in a show at Lubbock and Leave It, on Brazos between 4th and 5th Street, through the end of the month. See for yourself why these guys are Austin legends.





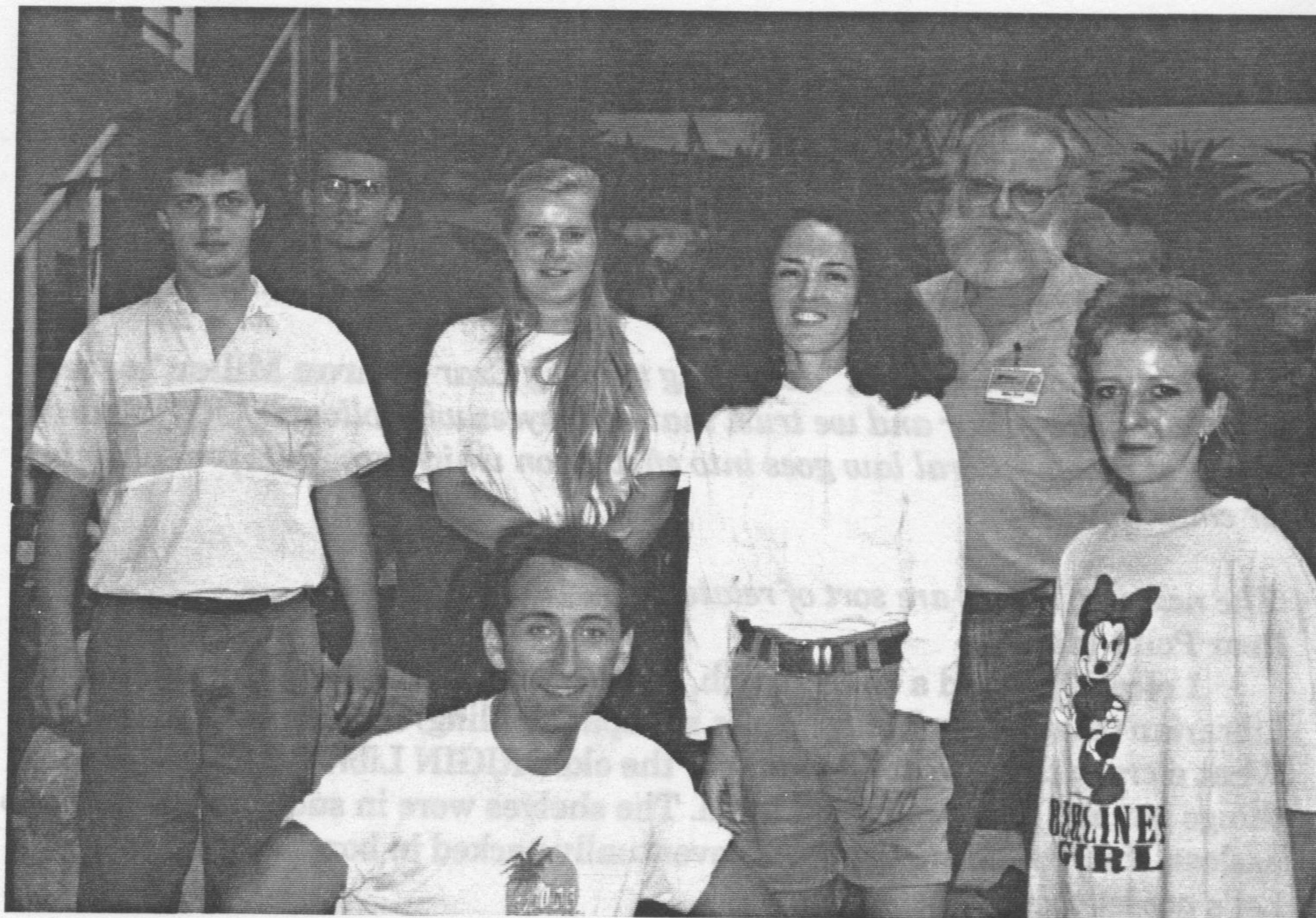
## Conquest...

computer programmer **Todd Hartmann** takes care of the technology link, and Production Assistant **Ana Moreno** is the glue which keeps things together and the force which keeps them moving ahead.

All of them work under the Saint Nick-like eye of Writer Manager **Mike Sims**, who says the team is "a great group of people who work great together." Everyone agrees that the team's biggest challenge is trying to keep the flavor of a game throughout the translation. Imagine how tough it would be to come up with the cultural equivalent of "I iced that furball."

Bland translations have been the bane of American games in the past, but the French version of *Wing 2* is already getting some rave reviews. *Joystick* magazine writes: "Thanks to an extremely faithful translation (thumbs up to the translator who perfectly masters French insults!), we are finally able to fully enjoy this super-sublime game."

Both the French and German *Ultima VII*s are finished, and the German version got the nod for first testing. If you get a chance, drop by the translation team's new digs upstairs in ORIGIN East and take a look. You haven't really lived until you hear the Guardian's dire warning in other languages. What's next for the ORIGIN U.N.? Hard to say at this point, but if the market develops enough, who knows? The Avatar may even *habla Espanol* someday.



## Lingo Commanders...

The ORIGIN Translation Team (back, from left to right): Todd Hartmann, Mark Grunert, Kirsten Vaughan, Ana Moreno, Mike Sims, Roswitha Shoemake, (front) Jean-Marc Chemla

## BBored?

There seems to be a growing contingency of anti-BBS people at ORIGIN, due to the voluminous postings. If you count yourself among them, make sure you at least check the Company Notices and Policy Statements areas from time to time so you can keep up with the nuts and bolts of employment life.

## + Plus and Minus -

Add two new TDAs to the phone extension list. Both of them will be working on the Strike team. **Robert Irving** comes from the U.T. Computer Center's Microcomputer Lab where he was a supervisor. A long-time *Ultima* fan, he'd already played I-IV before he even interviewed here. His hobbies include writing sci-fi, horror and fantasy short stories.

**Tim Ray** has been a Contributing Editor to *Autoduel Quarterly* (put out by Steve Jackson Games) as well as an assistant strength and conditioning trainer at U.T. He did a few stints as a set dresser, working on films like *Lonesome Dove*, *Red-Headed Stranger*, *DOA* and *Ned Blessing*. And get this: his hobby is

studying current and experimental weapons systems. Easy to see why he's tabbed for Strike. Best of luck to both guys.

On the minus side, when August 1st rolls around, wordsmith and ivory tickler **Raymond Benson** will become a Yankee. He's decided to take a position in Maryland at MicroProse "for a s...tload of money." He'll be helping to design a line of new products, namely some animated graphic adventures. His contributions in a myriad of areas will be missed as we wish him a fond farewell. To mark the somber occasion, the Writers' Corner BBS actually reached 0 messages. I had to take a picture of my screen.

## In Ink

According to the *People* magazine reporter, the profile of Richard has gone to print and could come out any issue. It actually appeared on their in-house story list for the current issue, but got bumped for a profile of Bill Clinton's family. Can you believe it? Anyway, with H. Ross Perot dropping out, we may have to wait a little longer. Keep watching.

The gaming press lead times are finally catching up with the products. Reviews have been pouring in for *Underworld*, they're starting to appear in greater numbers for *U7*

(See "Ink" on next page)



already show UW moving to #1 next month, with U7 debuting in the top 15! Congrats to those teams. The September issue also reportedly has a killer U7 review which says it's the best Ultima ever. Charles Ardai writes: "Gamers who stay away from Ultima VII, thinking they know what it's all about, will be missing something wonderful."

ORIGIN figures prominently in the Reader's Choice Award nominations in *MPC World*. Wing 2 is up in two categories. It's competing against Stellar 7 (Sierra) and Commander Keen (I think that's right; they tell me it's from Apogee Software) for Best Arcade/Action Game. It's also in the Flight Simulator category against Falcon 3.0 and Flight Sim v4. Meanwhile, U7's facing off against King's Quest V and Might & Magic III for Best Role-Playing Game. The winners will be announced in the October issue, which will also see the mag's name change to *Multimedia World*.

## COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

1. Civilization (MicroProse)
2. **Ultima Underworld**
3. **Wing Commander II**
4. Chessmaster 3000 (Software Toolworks)
5. Eye of the Beholder II (SSI)
6. Monkey Island 2 (Lucas)
7. Red Baron (Dynamix)
8. The Perfect General (QQP)
9. Populous II
10. Falcon 3.0 (Spectrum Holobyte)
11. Links (Access)
12. Might & Magic III (New World)
13. Secret of Monkey Island (Lucas)
14. Warlords (SSG)
15. Lemmings (Psygnosis)
16. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe (Lucas)
17. Conquests of the Longbow (Sierra)
18. Eye of the Beholder (SSI)
19. Castle of Dr. Brain (Sierra)
20. Wings (Cinemaware)
- Planet's Edge (New World)

# What they're saying...

## Special Operations 2

"In short, a good little scenario, very pleasant, which enables us to wait for Strike Commander."

*Gen 4 (France)*

## Strike Commander

"The stunning graphics and animation looked like nothing we've seen before."

*PC Entertainment*

## Ultima Underworld

"I'd give Underworld 'must-have' status. What a relief to see CRPGs take such great leaps in design!"

*Strategy Plus*

"Playing Ultima Underworld (or any Ultima game, for that matter) is like reading a good book—an experience that far from merely disposing of your spare time, actually leaves you spiritually enriched."

*Computing Now! (Canada)*

"I have seen the future of role-playing games, and it is Ultima Underworld."

*Popcom (Japan)*

## Ultima VII

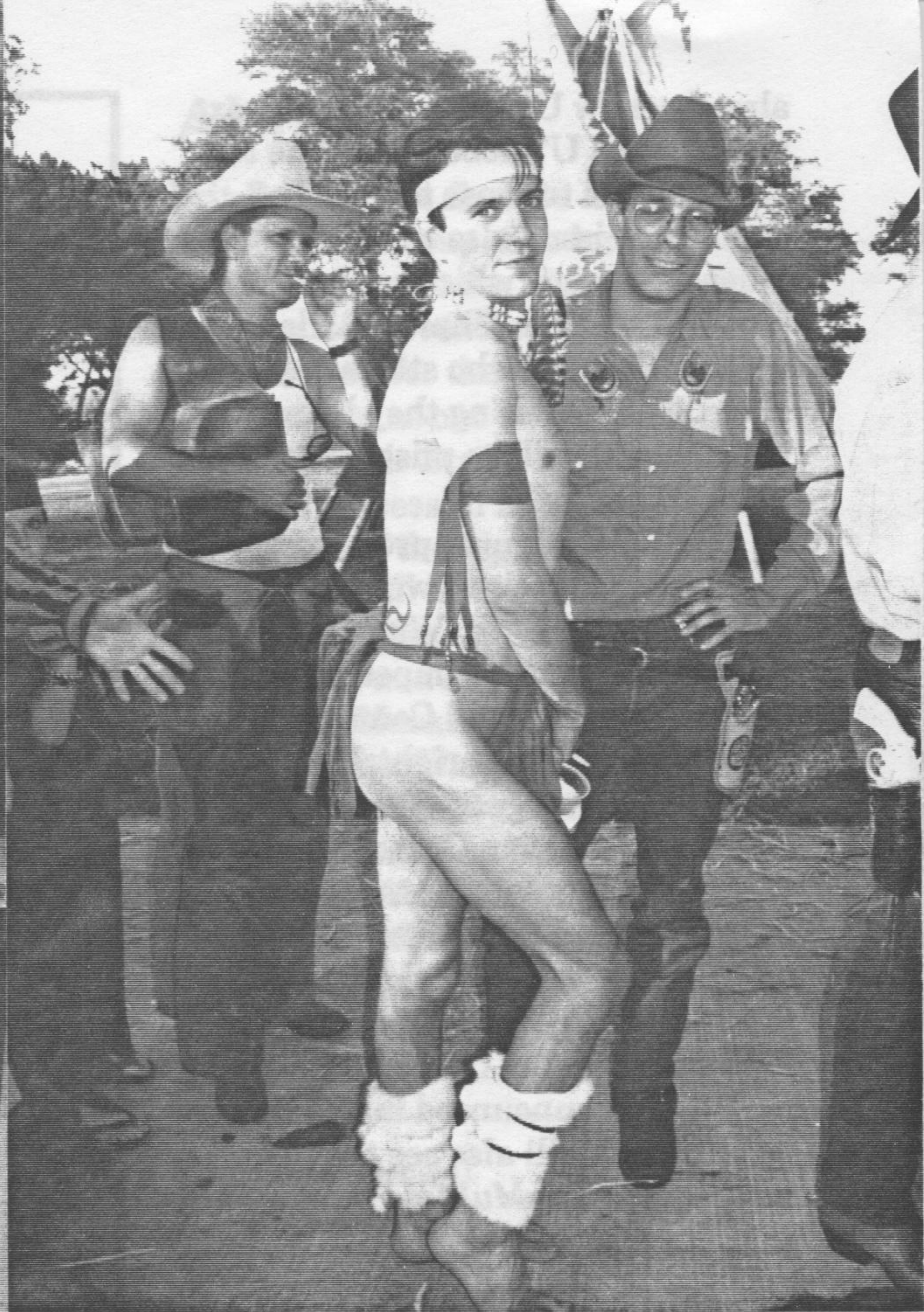
"Overall, the visual presentation of the world is a first-class job."

*Computer Gaming World*

"...Unquestionably, a groundbreaking release."

*PC Entertainment*





## Happy Birthday, Richard

The Big Bang Theory was proven true on the 4th of July at Britannia Manor—at least when it comes to parties. Richard lined up every type of explosion possible for his birthday bash, from guns to cannons to fireworks. The chuck wagon from the Salt Lick was chock full of fine barbecue.

Special credit should be given to the members of the Society for Creative Anachronisms (SCA), who really brought the flavor of the Old West with them. And who knows how history would have been changed if early cowboys had come face to face with the tribe of Indians at the party?

The legendary fireworks display lived up to its thrill-a-minute reputation, and we can happily report that all fingers, limbs and children are accounted for. As one party-goer, I think I can speak for all who were there when I offer Richard a heartfelt thanks for a truly great time.