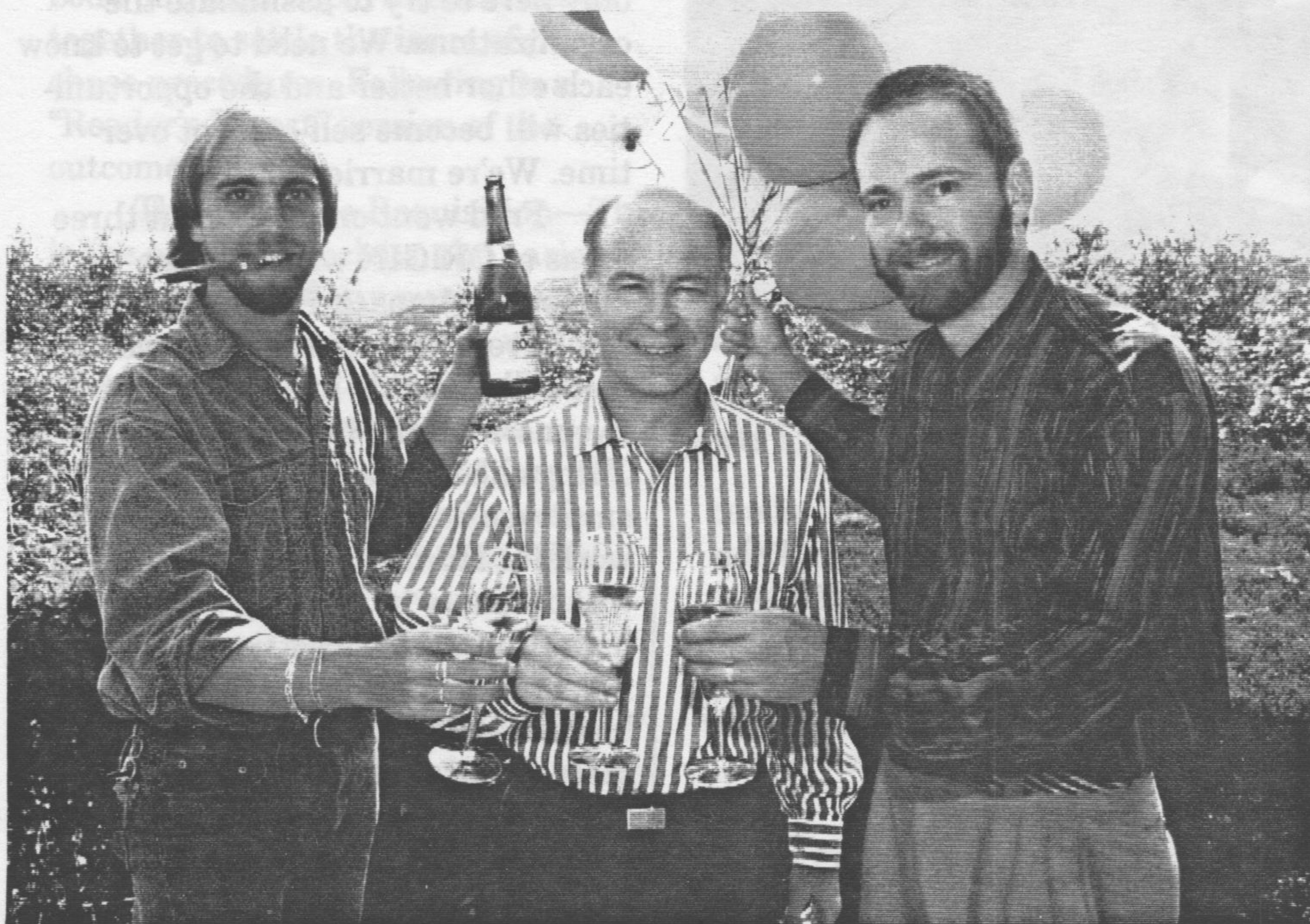


Point of ORIGIN

Volume II, No. 25

Friday, September 25, 1992

Austin, TX



Texas Toast...

Richard, Electronic Arts CFO Stan McKee and Robert hoist a glass to the new world order.

Done Deal

ORIGIN and EA Join Forces

San Mateo, CA (yeah, like I'm really there)—This morning, the single stroke of a pen consummated the royal marriage of the entertainment software industry. Richard and Robert inked the deal that finally and officially made ORIGIN a part of the big, happy EA family.

At press time, EA stock was trading at 29.75. For those of you wondering about the stock option plan, that price has limited meaning. The actual lock-in value of the options won't be established until the EA board of directors rubber-stamps the individual employee stock grants, probably in the next couple of weeks. Within 30 days of that, each employee at ORIGIN should receive some sort of confirmation of the price and amount of options awarded.

The options are only the beginning, though. Transition Titan **Fred Schmidt** just returned from EA's mother ship on the west coast and said all kinds of employee benefits are still to come. "Almost every single month, there will be some featured program. Every month, we'll have some good news and

(See "Deal" on next page)

(1)



ELECTRONIC ARTS®

Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine tabs Electronic Arts stock as favorable to double its value within 18 months. Market strategist Jim Collins says he's high on company management because "they put their goals in sharp focus, and their concepts are as organized as you can get."

On the other side of the coin, ESPN has filed a lawsuit against EA, claiming EASN (the Electronic Arts Sports Network) constitutes a trademark infringement. In an EA press release, CFO Stan McKee says, "The Electronic Arts Sports Network entertainment software products have been successfully marketed for over a year and we have had a variety of contacts with ESPN on a number of topics. We are genuinely surprised at this action."

In This Issue...

Jennie Evans gets uprooted!

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Well-urned praise...

Customer Service reps Rebecca Heidt and Michelle Lindner hold two potted plant holders sent to them as thank-you presents from a gamer in San Diego. He told them he also has a parrot which says, "Do you know where you're going, Avatar?" Okay....

On the Clock

We have a new front line of defense at the reception desk. **Andrea Brannon** is taking charge of incoming calls. In addition to her regular Friday night poker game, Andrea likes camping, hiking, and get this—bungee jumping and skydiving. Sounds like a perfect fit in this organization.

Tom Kassebaum joins the ranks of TDA. Before he came to ORIGIN, Tom worked at the U.T. Computation Center. He was already into RPGs (AD&D, GURPS, Top Secret/SI, etc.) plus Star Fleet Battles and Car Wars. Tom's living proof of the value of connections; his roommates are **Anthony Nichols** and **Kevin Potter**.

Alison Campbell is working as a Project Administrator with the Serpent Isle team. She was a veteran of Wing Commander before she joined ORIGIN and also enjoys lawn sports. If we ever start an intramural bocceball league, we already have a ringer.

Same names, new titles: **Keith Robinett** now clocks in as Senior PC Technician (new screwdriver?), **Sam Laskowski** (the most misspelled

name in Point of ORIGIN history) will be moving from the Nintendo group to join the ar-teests. **Kirk Winterrowd** can now get paid for sounding off. He's going to the audio department to work on music and sound effects for Strike.

Across the Pond

Our European brand manager, **Jennie Evans**, won't be at her lonely outpost much longer. She'll be moving to EA's offices near Heathrow just as soon as the details can be worked out. There, she'll have about 100 fellow employees. She and her husband are keeping an eye out for a house in the Windsor area, so she might have the Queen for a neighbor once in a while. Windsor Castle is the Queen's second home.

Jennie reports that Mindscape has just shipped Forge, U7/French and the CDs. Wing Commander for the Amiga is also flying after our own **Roswitha Shoemaker** provided some proofreading skills for the German text. It's being plugged into the game right now. Jennie expects it to ship in October, with the English version to follow within a couple of weeks.

...Deal

by next July, everybody will fully understand that this is a great, great, great, great relationship."

The challenge, according to Fred, is balancing the excitement level with concentration on getting products out for Christmas. He told ORIGIN managers and department heads that both companies want to avoid disruption. "We're not here to make big decisions," Fred said, "we're only here to try to assimilate the organizations. We need to get to know each other better and the opportunities will become self-evident over time. We're married for life."

Fred went on to say that three areas of ORIGIN will see some immediate impact. Financial activities have been ongoing for some time and will probably necessitate one or two more people in Accounting. Things like the aforementioned employee benefits will mean a lot of work for Human Resources. And MIS will probably be burning the midnight fluorescence getting everybody linked. Plans right now call for limited e-mail to executive management with full employee e-mail to follow sometime in the future. You'll probably see a new bulletin board as well, "EA World," which is a sort of international electronic newsletter for EA employees. Blueprints for ORIGIN's new building now call for video conferencing ability with EA to be operational by the beginning of the year.

Richard and Rob are using Texas champagne to toast the deal with everybody in California. On October 5, the top brass from EA will blow into Austin for an all-encompassing employee meeting. It will be a good chance to get to know some of the other movers and shakers from their executive management team in product development, marketing and operations. They'll give a brief presentation on EA and pass out some valuable info—things like the EA Playbook (their employee handbook) and the corporation's business plan, which outlines future strategies and objectives. Inside sources say this is a meeting that shouldn't be missed. And anyway, it's mandatory.

Quote-a System

As reported here first, U7 and Wing 2 are big winners in the Multimedia World Readers' Choice Awards. They're prominently featured in the October issue hitting newsstands right now. U7 takes Best Role-Playing Game and the editors write: "Ultima VII combines the popular sword-and-sorcery elements of adventure games with those of murder mysteries and horror thrillers."

Wing 2 picks up honors as Best Arcade Game. Multimedia World says: "With photo-realistic backgrounds, 3-D animation and digitized speech, Wing Commander II was a big hit with our readers." The editors had leaked news to Point of ORIGIN that Wing 2 had also won Best Flight Simulation, but now that the issue's out, Falcon 3.0 gets the award. When confronted, the editors couldn't seem to remember telling us anything. Reach your own conclusions. In any case, hearty congrats to those teams for racking up more prestigious honors (and publicity).

Bernie Yee gives U7 a good write-up in October's PC Games: "The Ultima series has grown from a zip-locked bag package to a 21-megabyte multimedia event...Ultima VII wraps its world in morality better than any other role-playing game to date." (We know, we know, Richard. It's supposed to be *ethics*.)

According to Bill Trotter in September's PC Entertainment, Special Ops 2 "lives up to the high standards set by its predecessors... These people are as comfortably known to us as the crew of the Enterprise and encountering them again is like meeting old friends."

ORIGIN's translation teams are getting some well-deserved accolades for the foreign language versions of U7. France's Generation 4 writes: "This monumental RPG is beyond all question the biggest game of the genre. It is rather enjoyable to see its French version so quickly on the

(See "Quote-A" on page 5)

Dear Point Man

Dear Point Man,

Is it possible that we can get Sam's Wholesale Club Cards? Some of us just can't seem to get one because we don't belong to the right organization, while others can. I mean, even if we chip in a few bucks ourselves, I believe it could be worth it. If we didn't have to chip in any money, that would be even better!

Thanks,
El Cheapo

Dear Cheapo,

Will you settle for good? Our Human Resource, **Sharon Miller**, has already been working on that one and she's come up with a way for *everyone* to have a Sam's card. (Until now, only members of the Entertainment Committee had them so they could do bulk shopping for things like cookouts and happy hours.) Sharon's set it up so each employee can get a card for \$25, with a secondary card for just \$10 more. You can pick up applications from Sharon or **Norma Vargas**. Watch the electronic BBS for full details. And remember: buying M&M's 40 pounds at a time may seem like a good idea at the time, but...

Dear Point Man

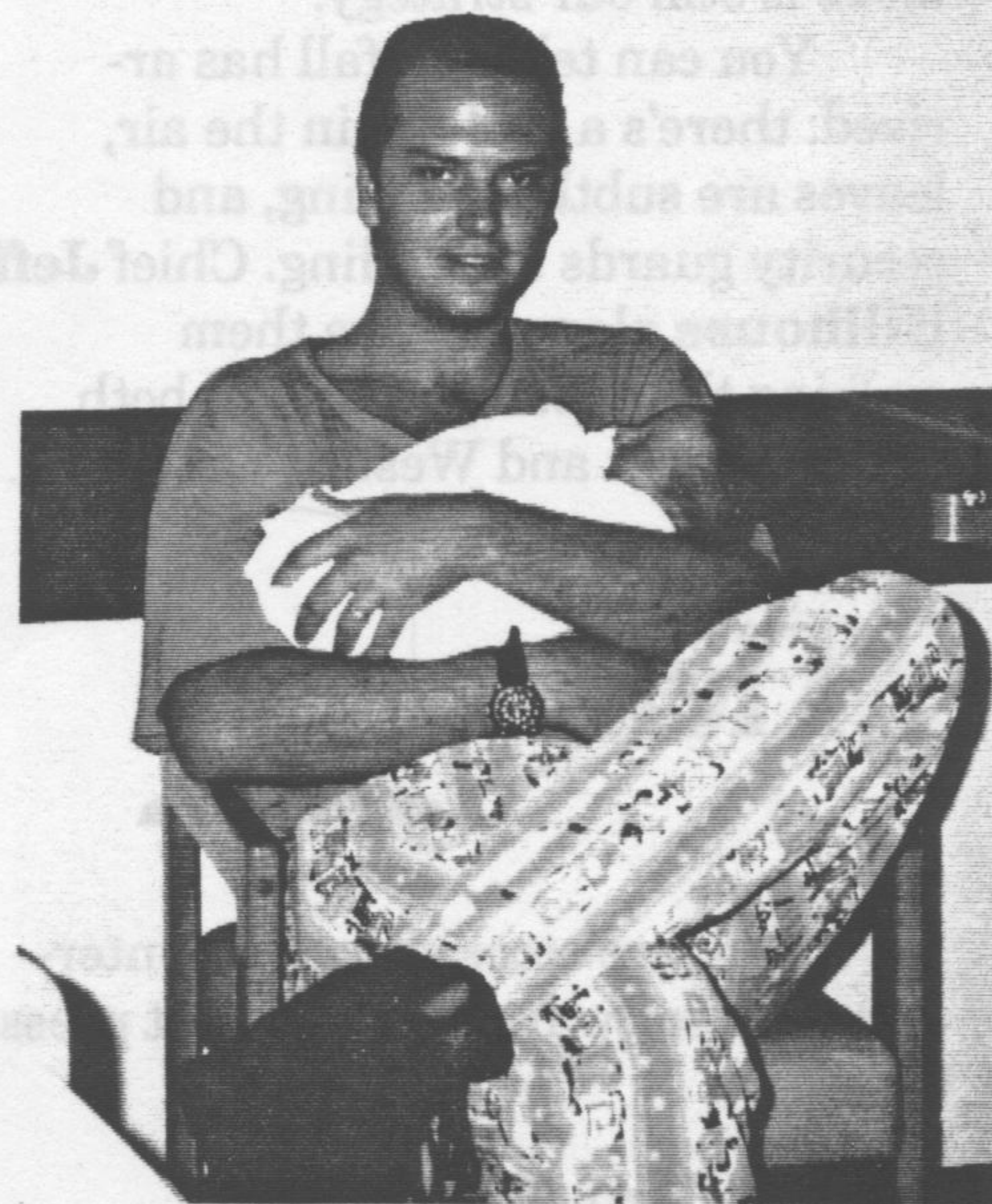
I have a concern which has been bothering me for some time now. It seems that there is no privacy at ORIGIN. Yes, there may be offices and closed doors, but whenever someone approaches my computer, they try to stare at it to see what I am doing. They read my faxes and they try to listen to my phone conversations if they are able. People ask about the mail I receive and try to get to meet the visitors that come to ORIGIN for business purposes. Maybe people

(See "Point Man" on last page)

On a Personal Note

Congrats go out to **Dan Derouen** and his lovely wife, **Liz**. On September 11 at 12:27 p.m., they had a baby boy, **Zakary Cole Derouen**. Zak was 19 3/4 inches long and weighed in at 7 lbs. 13 oz. Don proudly reports he didn't pass out during the birth.

As you know, **Denis Loubet** and **Beth Miller Loubet** tied the knot August 29. They will be celebrating their post-nuptials on Sunday with an open house from 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at 1210 Cardinal Lane in Round Rock (388-7873). Maps are posted on all of the cork bulletin boards. The newlyweds ask that you RSVP at the telephone number above.



Create new character...

Don Derouen holds the newest addition to his life, his baby son, Zak.

De-Briefly

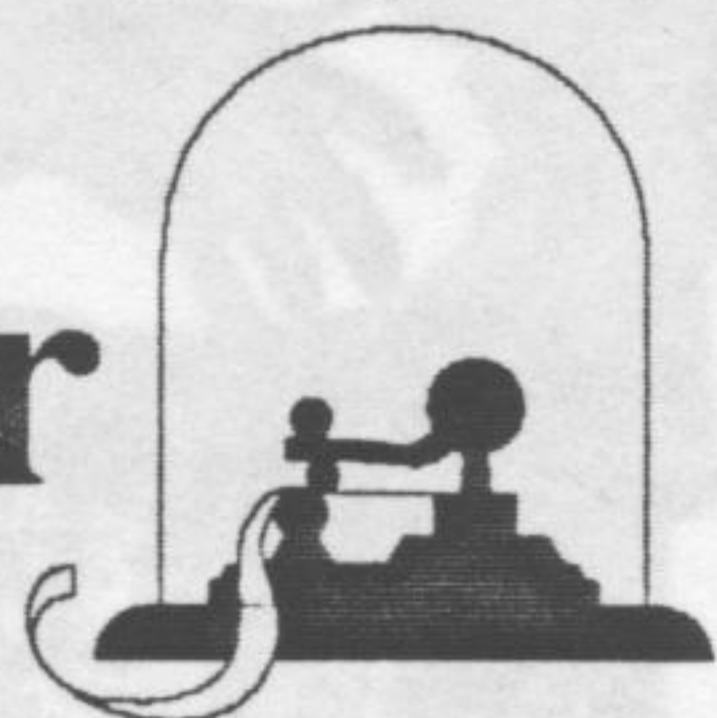
As the result of some world-class schmoozing by **Mike Harrison**—not to mention our killer products—some of ORIGIN's boxes will be featured in Intel television and print advertising. That's right, *that* Intel. We haven't been given the full scoop on exactly what the exposure will be, but even if it's just a fleeting glimpse, it's a start.

Next week, while at the Software Publishers Association Conference in Washington, DC, ORIGIN will host an informal "sound summit." The idea is to get some of the major entertainment software manufacturers together and come up with some kind of standards for sound boards. These wouldn't be design specs; they would be classifications for a board's ability that could be easily communicated to the consumer (a la "Sound Level 1" or something equally simplistic). Another benefit would be the ability to avoid using the names of specific sound board manufacturers on our SKU labels.

Construction plans for the new building are running right on schedule. The blueprints are all but finalized with the architect and now it's on to the electricians. If everything continues to go smoothly (and why wouldn't it?), power tools should fire up within a few weeks. A yuletide move is still our strategy.

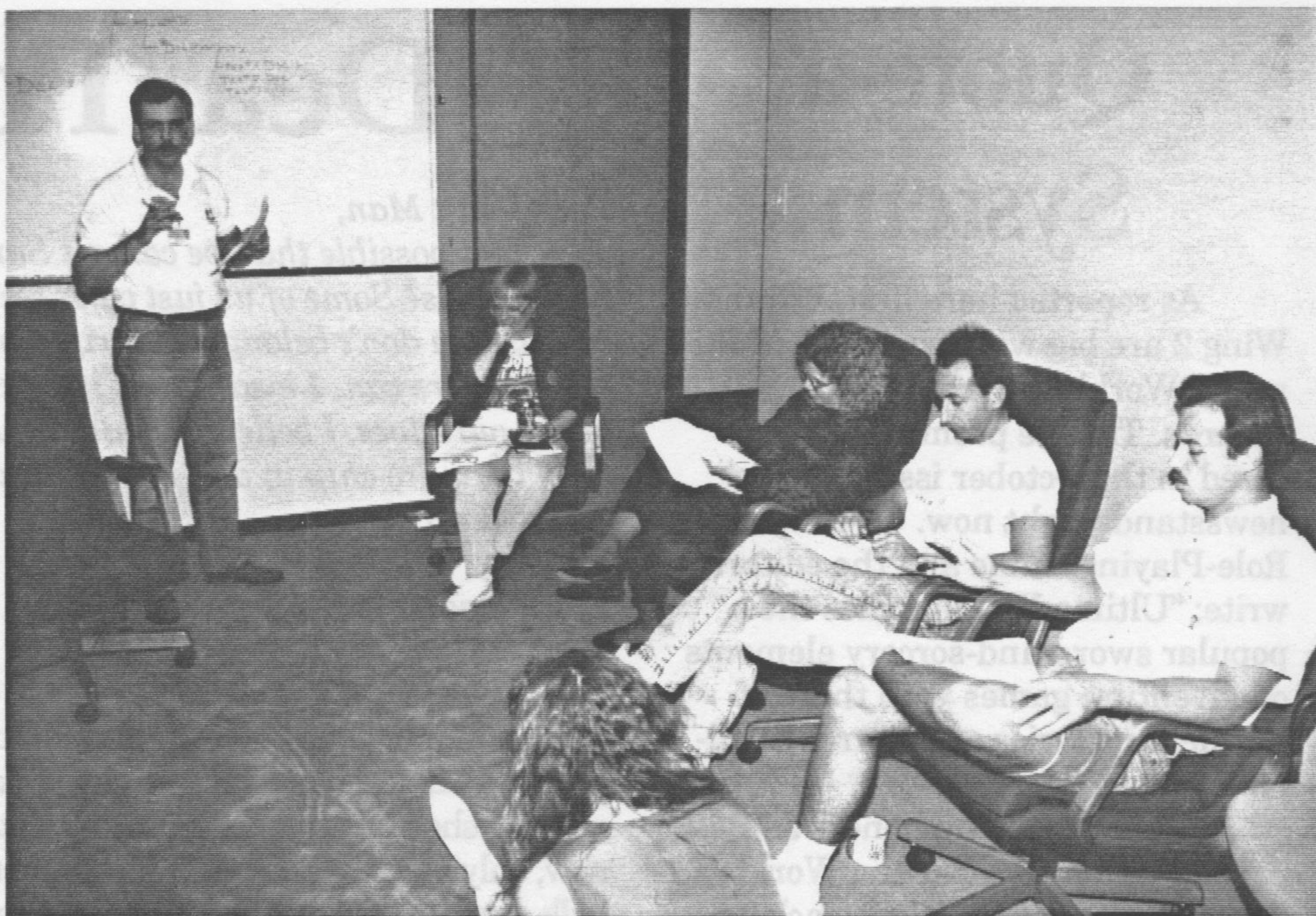
You can tell that fall has arrived: there's a cool nip in the air, leaves are subtly changing, and security guards are calling. Chief **Jeff Hillhouse** plans to have them walking the overnight beat in both ORIGIN East and West by October 1.

Ticker



Here are stock prices for entertainment software companies at press time.

Electronic Arts (ERTS)	29.75
Broderbund (BROD)	27.25
MicroProse (MPRS)	11.25
Sierra Online (SIER)	10.5



C:\Training.**

Professor Bart Hosier leads a DOS class as part of ORIGIN U.

ORIGIN University



Here's a brief rundown of planned ORIGIN U. classes.

Oct. 7—Microsoft Excel: overview with focus on formulas and templates.

Oct. 14—MS Word: basic overview with focus on importing and hot-linking (is that allowable in the workplace?) between Excel and Word applications.

Oct. 21—MS Project: for those of you with experience in Excel and Word.

Oct. 28—Continuation of MS Project (come on, you didn't think you could learn everything in one session, did you?)

Nov. 4—Intro to Project Management Theory: the "thinking" stuff, not software. This session will explore the concept and pit falls (and we're experts). This will be a good primer for anyone who wants to know what goes into designing project schedules.

Nov. 11—Even more Theory

Nov. 18—Situational Leadership: best ways to interact with other employees/departments and get the most out of performance. Not to be confused with Situational Ethics and the presidential campaign.

Other classes in the works: PC and Mac Hardware: What's Under the Hood?, Beginning Programming for Non-Programmers, and possibly Beginning Japanese. If you have any suggestions for a class, cc:Mail them to Sharon Miller. She's also looking for instructors.

(Note: The following is a requested reprint from an earlier Point of ORIGIN.)

Buy: The Way

Budget time tends to shine a bright light into dark corners of company policy. That's why everybody put their departmental heads together to settle the issue of purchase procedures. Following is a "Reader's Digest" version of the outcome:

The Purchase Requisition—This is the core, the nucleus, the basic building block of any purchase. Leave no stone unturned or blank unfilled when submitting this to your Department Head. Any employee can initiate a purchase req, but it might be a good idea to talk it over with your Department Head to see if it's likely to get past square one. That way, you don't spend a lot of time filling out unnecessary paperwork. List your name as the "requisitioner" and give a detailed description of the item(s) to be purchased, including *exact* brand/model desired, or whether a similar product will do the same job. If you shop around for the best price yourself, you'll also need to include the vendor, address, contact name and telephone number along with a few names of other places you checked in the "comments" area. Don't forget freight, delivery and payment terms (ORIGIN prefers "Net 30" invoicing). Otherwise, the company will do the shopping.

The Manager or Department Head takes it from there, checking info, assigning a G/L account # and forwarding it to the proper company Purchasing Agent. There are three of them—depending on the type of item—who make the purchase and handle the paperwork. That's all there is to it.

Of course, there are a few bureaucratic landmines out there if you stray far from this path:

- If you decide to buy something with your own money and submit an expense form for reimbursement, be

forewarned: Dallas will now automatically deny any expense form which he didn't okay in the first place as a Purchase Req. That means you'll be eating it.

- *On purchase req's, CODs are **strongly** discouraged, and not allowed at all without at least 2-day advance approval from Mark Chandler.

- *Incomplete purchase req's won't go far.

- *Any single item over \$250 or order over \$500 will need Mark's approval as well as the Department Head's.

- *All hardware and software purchases will need Robert's nod.

- *Even though you may get permission to deal with ORIGIN's travel agency for logistics, only Norma can confirm arrangements or authorize billing. Of course, this can only happen after the proper Purchase Requisition procedure (see above).

Fallout from improper procedures can be fatal: disciplinary action, no reimbursement, even possible dismissal for repeat offenders. But look at it this way, you'll be able to take your brand new 486/33 (and its payments) home with you.

NEWS.TXT

COARSEGOLD, CA—Sierra Online is warning stockholders that it probably won't meet profit goals for the second quarter due to delays in shipping its flagship game, King's Quest VI. Originally scheduled to go out the door on September 30, KQVI now looks like it will hit shelves in mid-October.

Sierra's reportedly experiencing increasing expenses, such as putting together the online, graphically-interfaced, multiplayer amusement park called "Larryland." To cover costs, Sierra offered an additional 1.5 million shares of its common stock last March at \$17.50 a share, bringing the total shares outstanding to 6.888 million.

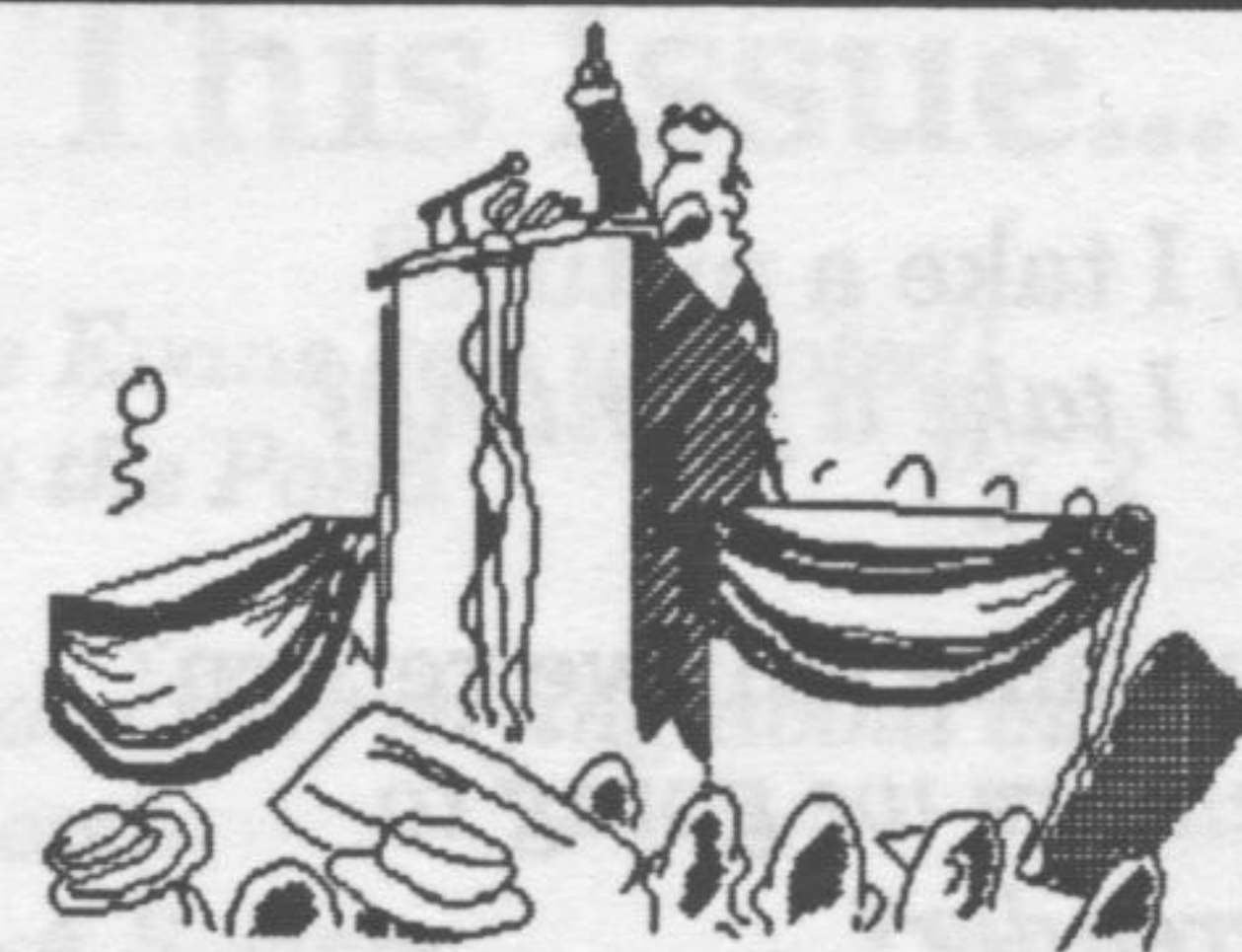
Rumors are swirling in financial circles about the sale of Disney Software. Spokepeople for Disney Software deny that the company's on the block.

...Quote-A

market. Germany's Power Play magazine says, "The translation of this game is of excellent quality. A special treat—everything in U7 got translated, even the speech. Therefore: good-bye captions!"

Both Underworld and U7 are featured prominently in an article about the best RPGs in England's PC Review. Paul Presley seems particularly taken with Underworld. "The premier first-person RPG comes, naturally enough, from the premier RPG producers—ORIGIN. Underworld is really one of the best things to hit the mainstream RPG market...and shouldn't be missed by anyone with an ounce of sense," he writes. Presley is critical of U7's stiff hardware requirements and early code problems, but he still has glowing things to say about the Ultima line: "Ever since Ultima I, there is no denying that ORIGIN has been on to a winner. The Ultima series has just gone from strength to strength with each successive title more absorbing and playable than the last."

More coverage is heading down the pike. Next week (September 28), Richard and Robert will be featured in an article in the Austin Business Journal. Later in October, Richard will be the subject on an episode of "The Eyes of Texas," a show which airs in Houston on KPRC and Austin on KVUE. When we get a firm air date, we'll pass it along.



**Register to vote
by October 4**

(or stay off of the BBS!)

Paul Lidberg has voter registration forms. Brought to you by the committee for responsible postings.



Serpent Smile...

The Entertainment Committee holds an impromptu "Crunch Mode" get-together for the Serpent Isle team. Each member got a survival kit full of candy, trail mix and paddle balls.

French Faux Pas

If you want to see the benefit of having real, live natives do our translations, check out the phrases below which Jean-Marc ran across from other companies' games. The phrase on top is what they were trying to say; the phrase below is what actually came out.

May I take a picture?
May I take a painting?

What time will we return?
When are we going to surrender?

Bullet train
A thoroughly-coached bullet.

Can we go inside? and Take me to the doctor.
My mom's education prevents me from reproducing theses here.

...Point Man

don't realize that what they are doing is rude.

If you could post something, anything, to get people to think about this issue, I would be very appreciative. I am not sure if this can be addressed as a policy or just plain courtesy.

*Thank you,
Invaded*

Dear Invaded,

I don't think anything can be done policy-wise, but hopefully your letter will serve as a reminder. Sometimes—when you work at a very outgoing and unusually friendly company—it's easy to forget that some people like to have a little space.

Dear Point Man,

I don't think ORIGIN employees see enough happy faces in their lives. Perhaps you could brighten everyone's day by printing one of those obnoxious, annoying "Have a nice day" faces in the next Point of ORIGIN.

*Thank you,
Mr. Yuck Face*

Dear Mr. Yuck Face,
Here you go! I'm always happy
(Continued)

to oblige. (To all potential lynch mob members: when you've amassed enough manpower and rope, swing by my office for Mr. Yuck Face's true identity.)



Have any questions or comments for the Point Man? Just drop them in one of the boxes on the cork bulletin boards or send them by cc:Mail to Galen Svanas. With the exception of that last letter, requested anonymity will be respected.

Just a Reminder

We're starting to work on the articles for our first consumer newsletter. If you have some talents that you'd like to donate to the cause, contact Mike Harrison.

Point of ORIGIN is looking for some story ideas dealing with what employees do off the clock, i.e., paragliding instructor, band leader, etc. If you have any ideas, pass them along to Galen Svanas.

The next Point won't come out until October 16. Look for a full blowout report from the SPA Conference in Washington, DC. We'll also check in with the 1992 Haunted Britannia Manor and wrap up the latest in the EA merger.

Point of ORIGIN is a wholly-owned and fully-controlled mouthpiece of the all-mighty Electronic Arts. Kneel before any who carry or read this publication.