



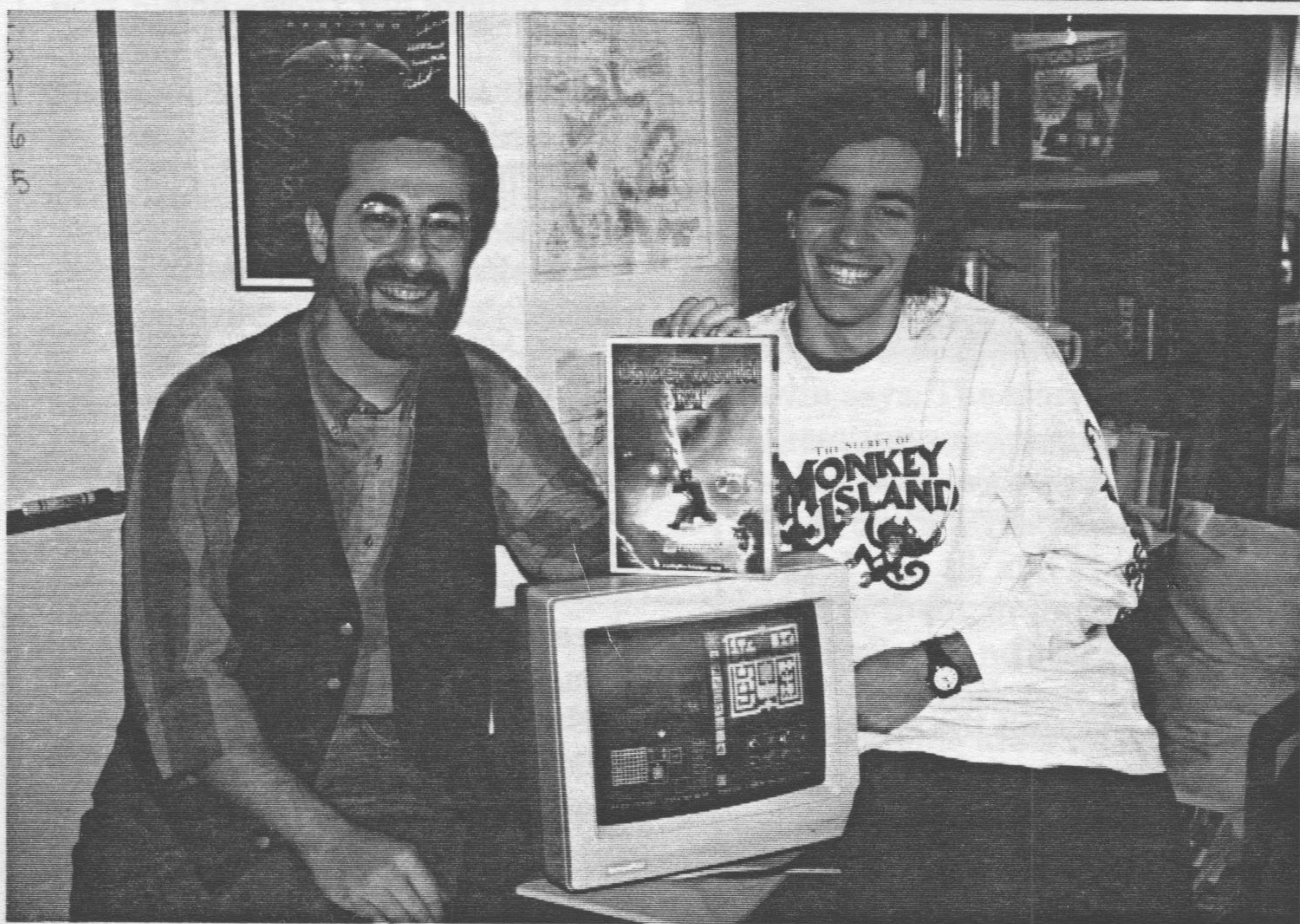
Point  
of

# ORIGIN

Volume II, No. 30

Friday, December 18, 1992

Austin, TX



*Close, but no cigar...*

*Warren Spector and Doug Church, dazed but undaunted, put some finishing touches on Underworld*

## 3, 2, 1..., 1..., 1...

### Christmas launch window closes

Short of hiring elves as extra playtesters, ORIGIN tried just about everything possible to get some products on the shelves for Christmas. Even though FX shipped earlier this week, it likely won't make it to most stores until the mistletoe has come down and you're ready to return that Salad Shooter.

Underworld II looked to have a fighting chance until late last week when a couple of pesky glitches suddenly surfaced. But the effort really showed the mettle of the team, especially QA, which was getting new versions of UW2 daily and putting them through non-stop round-the-clock playthroughs. "I've been here for four years and our QA staff just keeps getting better and better," said Warren Spector. "They really did a number on this game." Doug Church agreed: "They've been totally behind putting in the extra work to make sure that when it's released, it's as close to bug-free as software possibly can be."

The new extended testing schedule calls for UW2 to sign off by December

*(See "Launch" on next page)*

(1)

## Press-tige

The Christmas season usually brings a bounty of gifts and reviewers are no exception. The first comes from Dennis Lynch with the Chicago Tribune, who has named Underworld as Game of the Year. His full article is scheduled for publication in late January. Dennis also reviewed U7 in the November 27 issue, saying, "This stunning game has the terrific graphics and great sound that players have come to expect from ORIGIN, and it also has a level of social consciousness that is too often lacking from other role-playing games."

Another present is labeled "Do not open 'til CES." The word from PC Entertainment is that ORIGIN has won a "Best of 1992" award. The odds right now are riding on Underworld to be named for Best Technical Achievement. As soon as the editors drop off a trophy, we'll pass the news along.

*(See "Press" on page 3)*

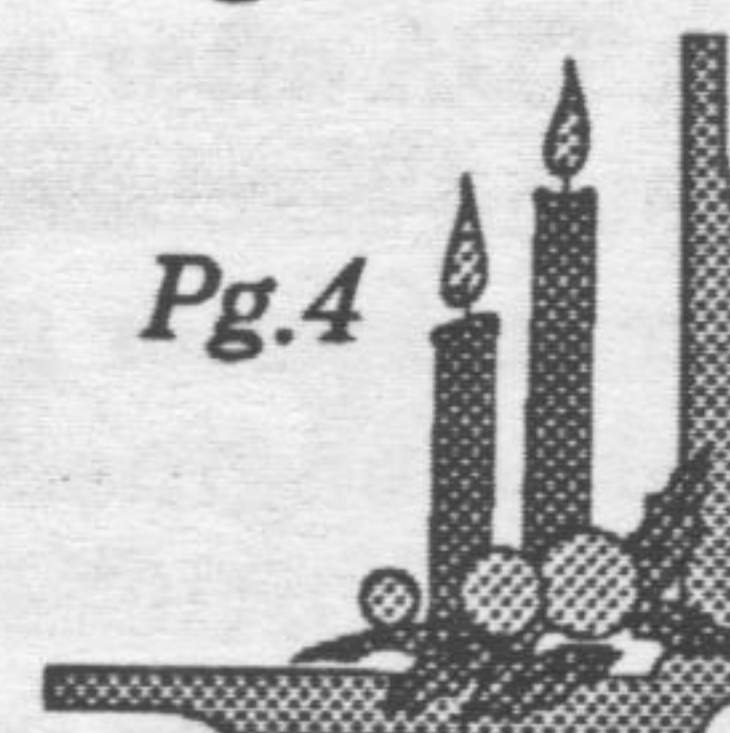


## In the Holiday Point...

More than you ever knew about  
Kevin Potter  
*Bio* Pg. 3

The latest from Wall Street  
*Ticker* Pg. 3

Get ready to move  
*Bugging Out* Pg. 4







## All decked out...

Billy Cain, his sister, Donna, and Stephen Powers were dressed to the 9's for ORIGIN's Christmas party. Award winners were Paul Isaac for Prod. Dev. MVP, Jeff Everett for Prod. Dev. Rookie of the Year, Jennie Evans for Publishing Rookie of the Year, Galen Soanas for Publishing MVP and Steve Morris for Unsung Hero.

## Up & Away

Kudos go out to **Chuck Zock**, who's leaving the ranks of Customer Service for a foray into TDAville. He'll be joining the Serpent crowd in crunch mode, then moving on to the Aurthurian Legends project.

ORIGIN has lost the winner of the 1991 "Most Damn Demanding Employee" award. **Anita Lockamy** has latched onto a position as Regional Sales Manager with Maxis (the "Sim-" gang). She'll be staying in Austin, though, and working out of her home. Congrats!

**Kay Stringer** is the one to call if someone's looking for a job with ORIGIN. She'll be helping the resourceful **Sharon Miller** line up interviews for all applicants. Kay's on loan from Western Temps, as is her son, **Eddie**, who's working in Customer Service.

**Phil Wattenbarger** climbs aboard the Privateer mother ship as TDA after a stint in retailing at Sound Exchange. Phil says a love for computer gaming and "a half-baked engineering career" brought him to ORIGIN's door. We'll take 'em any way we can get 'em.

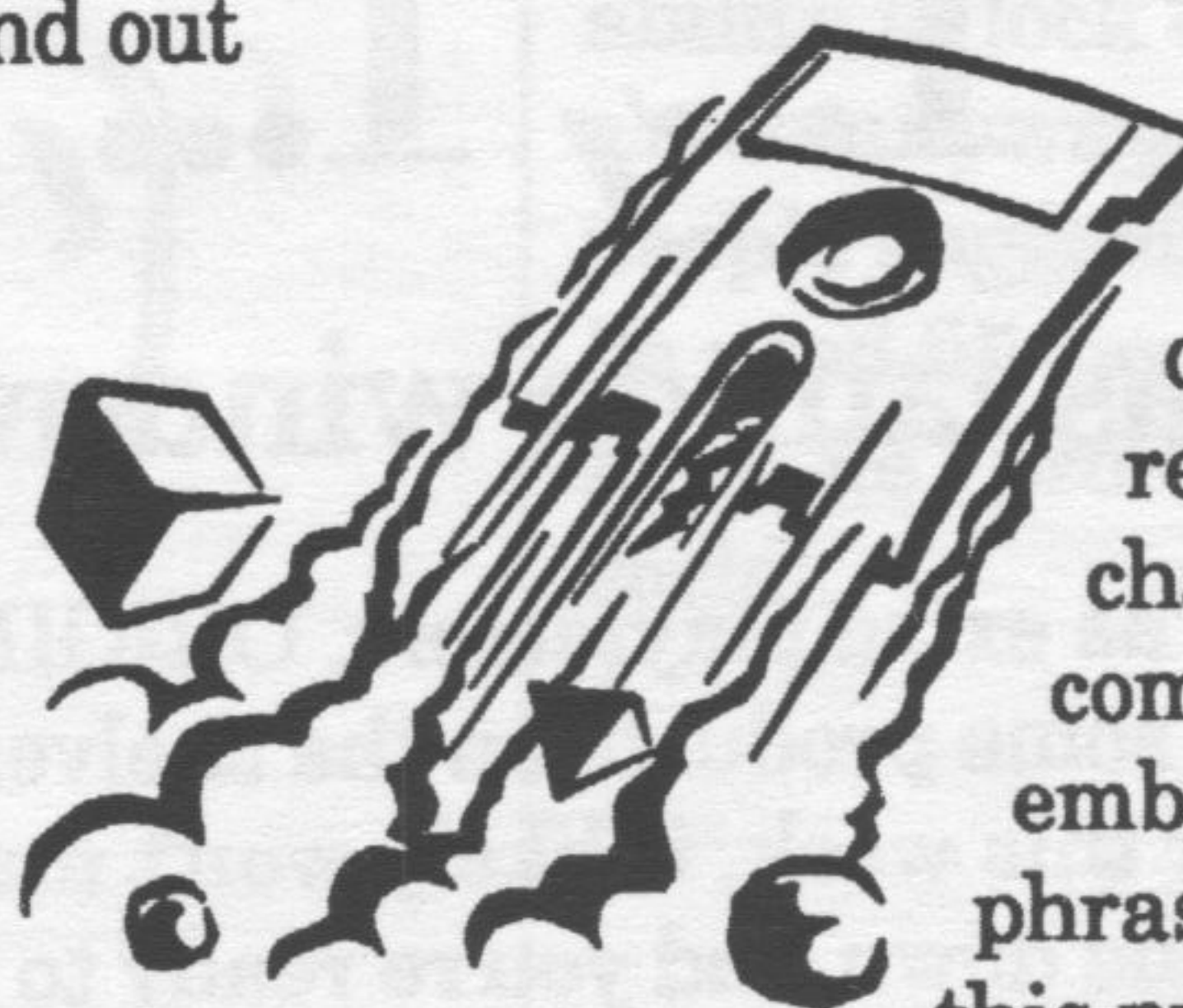
## ...Launch

28. That will shift the entire sales and marketing machine into a different gear. "If there's an up side," **Fred Schmidt** said, "it's that we'll finally get to try something we've always talked about—actually launching a product at CES. The ideal situation would be to have the game ship Day One of the show and at the same time, to hand out copies left and right to everyone in Vegas."

Both UW2 and FX are slated as part of a post-Christmas blitz. "I want to send a free copy of FX to every single retail store in the

country—every Egghead, every Computerland, every Electronics Boutique—I don't care if we have to send out two or three thousand units," Fred said. "The channel just doesn't realize yet how good this product is. But I know when they see it, they're going to want it, and so will their customers!"

**Wayne Baker** and I (Galen) will also be working with the FX



## Try & Top This

Here is a sampling of the quotes that sales clerks will be trying to outdo...

"A groundbreaking fantasy role-playing game ...Ultima Underworld allows you to explore a virtual world, above and below ground, in a realistic fashion that has only been seen previously with this much detail in movies and nightmares."

PC Magazine, November 24, 1992

"This landmark role-playing game is the finest dungeon ever produced ...The gloomy lighting, simulating the use of a torch, enhances the effect of actually being in this dank, dangerous place. You can practically smell it."

Games Magazine, December, 1992

"It seems ORIGIN and Blue Sky have been tapping into our dreams, because this game is nearly perfect ...Ultima Underworld is the premier dungeon game ever made, period. Excellent, without equal!"

Computer Game Review, February, 1992

"The entire experience is a visual quantum leap above the competition. Underworld is a technological groundbreaker. It's the first real advance, rather than being a simple refinement."

PC Entertainment Gamer's Guide, Spring, 1992

development team to see if there's some kind of "teaser" module or self-running demo that we can upload to the online services to give consumers a first-hand sampling of this tasty morsel.

Meanwhile, UW2's launch should tie in well to an already planned UW sales promotion. It's a tongue-in-cheek contest called "Top the Critics" aimed at sales clerks in the stores. We've pulled some of the most gushing (but true) quotes about UW1 from reviewers and we're challenging the clerks to come up with a more embarrassingly ridiculous phrase to tout the wonders of this product. (See above.)

There's still some sand left in the budgetary hourglass; the fiscal year doesn't end until March 27. That means PD's big challenge is to get even more product out the door, namely Strike and Serpent. Who knows...maybe Christmas can come more than once a year. Look out, Mr. Easter Bunny, **Commander Roberts** is coming in close for a strafing (we hope and pray).



## Misc.

Most-Remote Employee **Diane Corcoran** may be getting a little something extra in her stocking this Christmas. She's just a couple of weeks away from delivering her second baby.

If you have a big plans next week while the company is shut down, here's a word of advice: don't blow your paycheck all at once. The next payday won't roll around until January 8, 1993.

Interested in some post-holiday exercise (of options, that is)? In a future issue of Point of ORIGIN, we'll explain the procedure step-by-step so you'll be armed to take Wall Street. Meanwhile, if you're toying with the idea of exercising some of those options *during* the holidays, get with Mark Chandler or Sharon Miller. They've set up a special holiday battle plan, since OSI and EA are closed at different times.

## ...Press

PC Entertainment delivered one gift a little early—an advance copy of the Strike preview. Editor Stephen Poole came down in October to take a look around and visit Richard's haunted house. Apparently, he left impressed. "We're happy to report that Strike Commander, like many of the finer things in life, was worth waiting for," he writes. "It boasts some of the most convincing graphics and animation ever seen in a flight simulator. The total effect is one of unsurpassed realism. Waiting these many months to become immersed in Chris Roberts' latest masterpiece has been frustrating. Now, however, gamers will learn a lesson that the people at ORIGIN already knew: patience is indeed a virtue."

Joyeux Noel from Joystick in France, which unwraps U7/French in its December issue. The reviewer writes: "The nicest of RPG is finally available in French. I salute the tremendous work of **Jean-Marc Chemla** and **Betty Peltier-Weber** of ORIGIN, who must have spent sleepless nights buried in hermetic dictionaries to offer us such a pure

## Bio:

### Kevin Potter

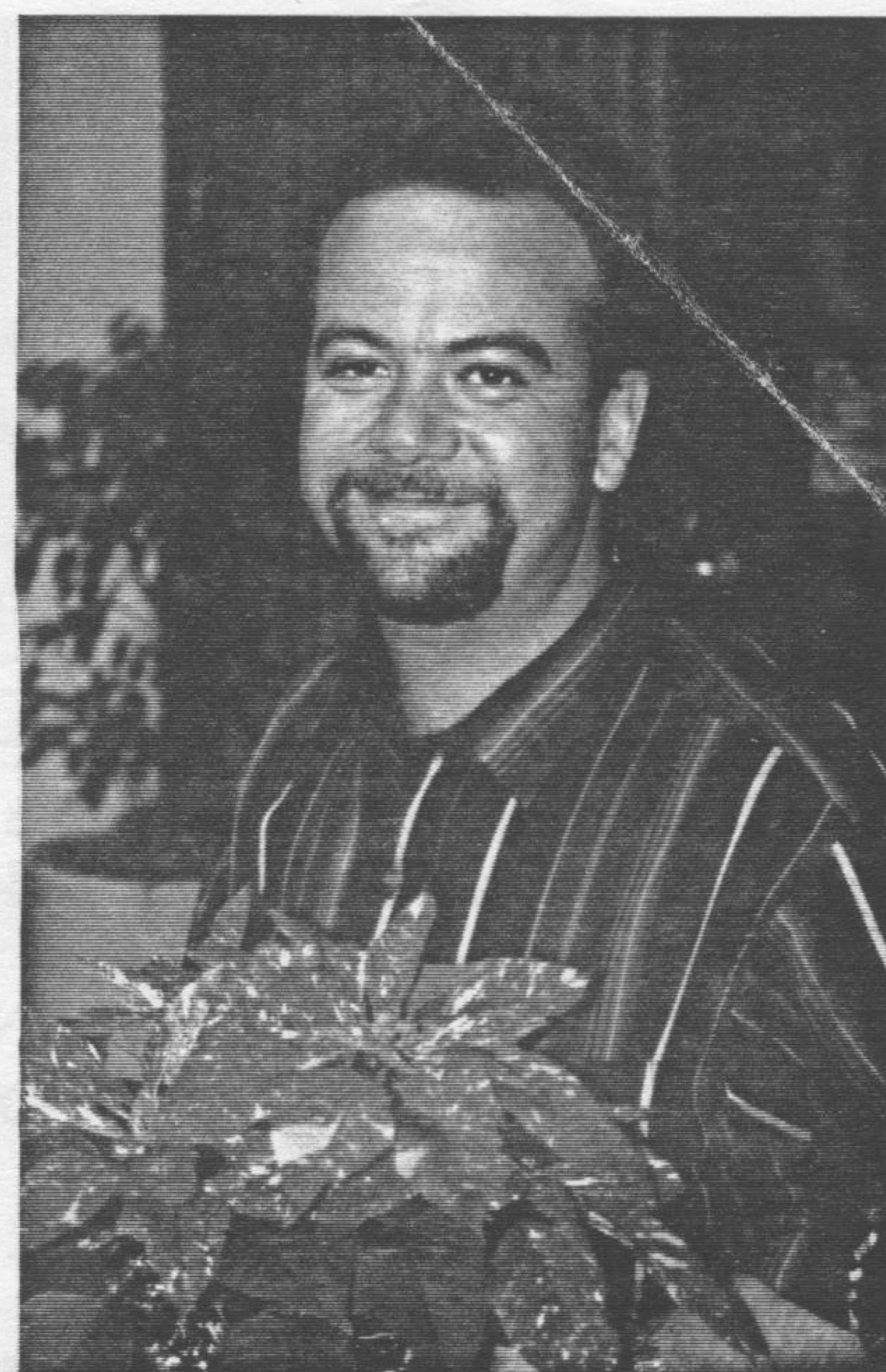
#### Fast Track to Management

Just two years ago, **Kevin Potter** was lobbying hard to join ORIGIN's QA Department. That led to a job as a tester, then on to TDA, and now, he's been named TDA Manager. "Fools, I'll destroy them all!" he laughs as he talks about his trip up the ladder.

"It's been really fast. I've been really happy. It just goes to show you, as I've been telling the TDAs, just when you think that nobody's really paying attention and you're slipping through the cracks, you realize they really are watching you," Kevin says. The story leading up to Kevin's joining ORIGIN is just as interesting as what's happened since. He grew up in Anchorage, Alaska, playing and writing music. When he was a senior in high school, his family moved to the other end of the climate spectrum—Hawaii. "I hated it. I ran away. I was 16, and I just took my guitars and stuffed all my clothes up inside of them, in the holes. When my parents went to work, I got on a jet, went back to Anchorage and finished high school.

"I look back now and I was really stupid. I was going to be the next Elvis. Parents are a lot smarter as you get older, aren't they?" Kevin's music career did take off, though, and soon, he moved to Manhattan and was opening for acts like J.J. Cale and Jesse Colin Young. But a yearning for reliable income and a college degree led him to Texas, where he studied computer science and read a Texas Monthly article about ORIGIN. He was hooked.

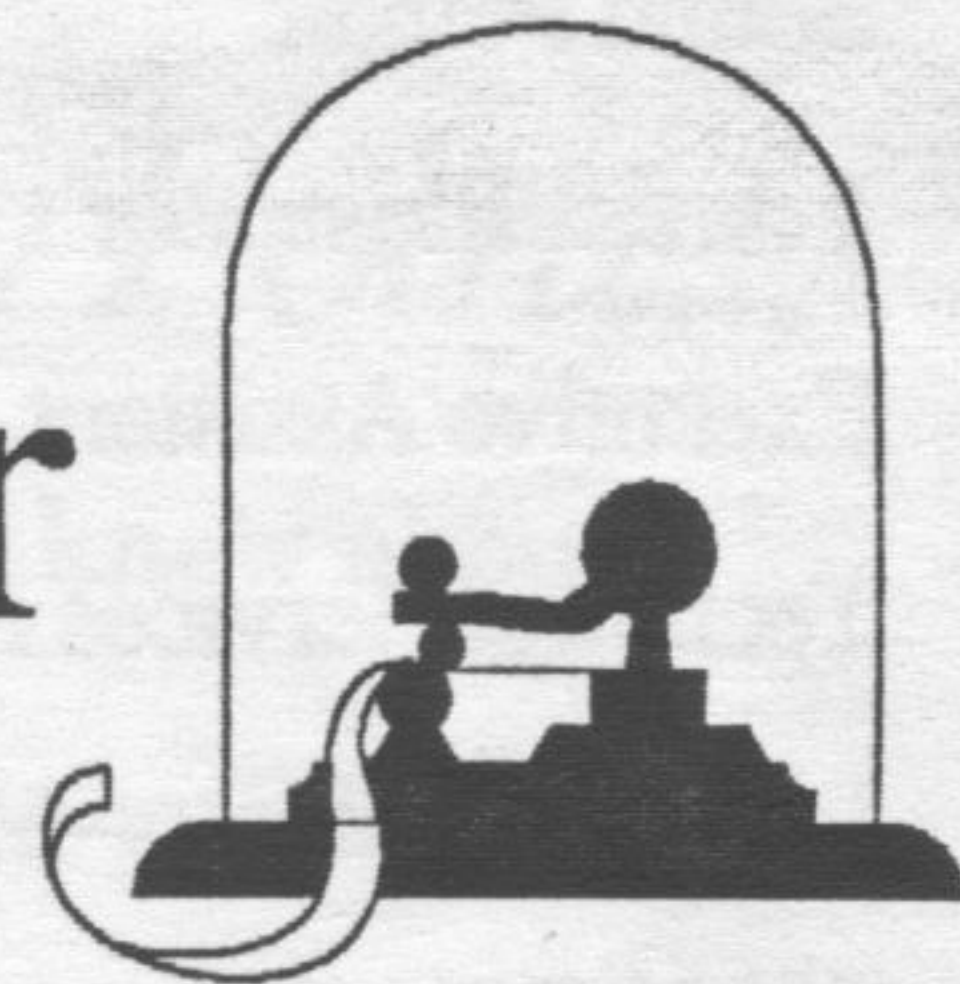
In the newly created position of TDA Manager, Kevin will oversee the "paperwork, counseling and career paths" of everybody in that department. "I think the TDA's role has really grown," Kevin says. "It used to be just one TDA and you were an assistant to somebody. Now, it's five to six TDAs on a project and they're doing pretty much all the integration of everything. I think (Writer Manager) **Mike Sims** is responsible for bringing a lot of respectability to that department, just like (QA Manager) **Jeff Shelton** is for QA." Sounds like Kevin knows he's following in some big footsteps. We wish him the best of luck.



translation. It is a 'must-buy'!"

Underworld was also in the lineup for RPG/Adventure Game of the Year last night at Britain's posh software industry year-end awards dinner (dubbed the "InDin"). Although it lost to Indiana Jones 4 (Lucas), EA/UK took home the trophy for Software Publisher of the Year for the second year in a row. Jennie Evans reports that all involved partied with champagne and food throughout the night.

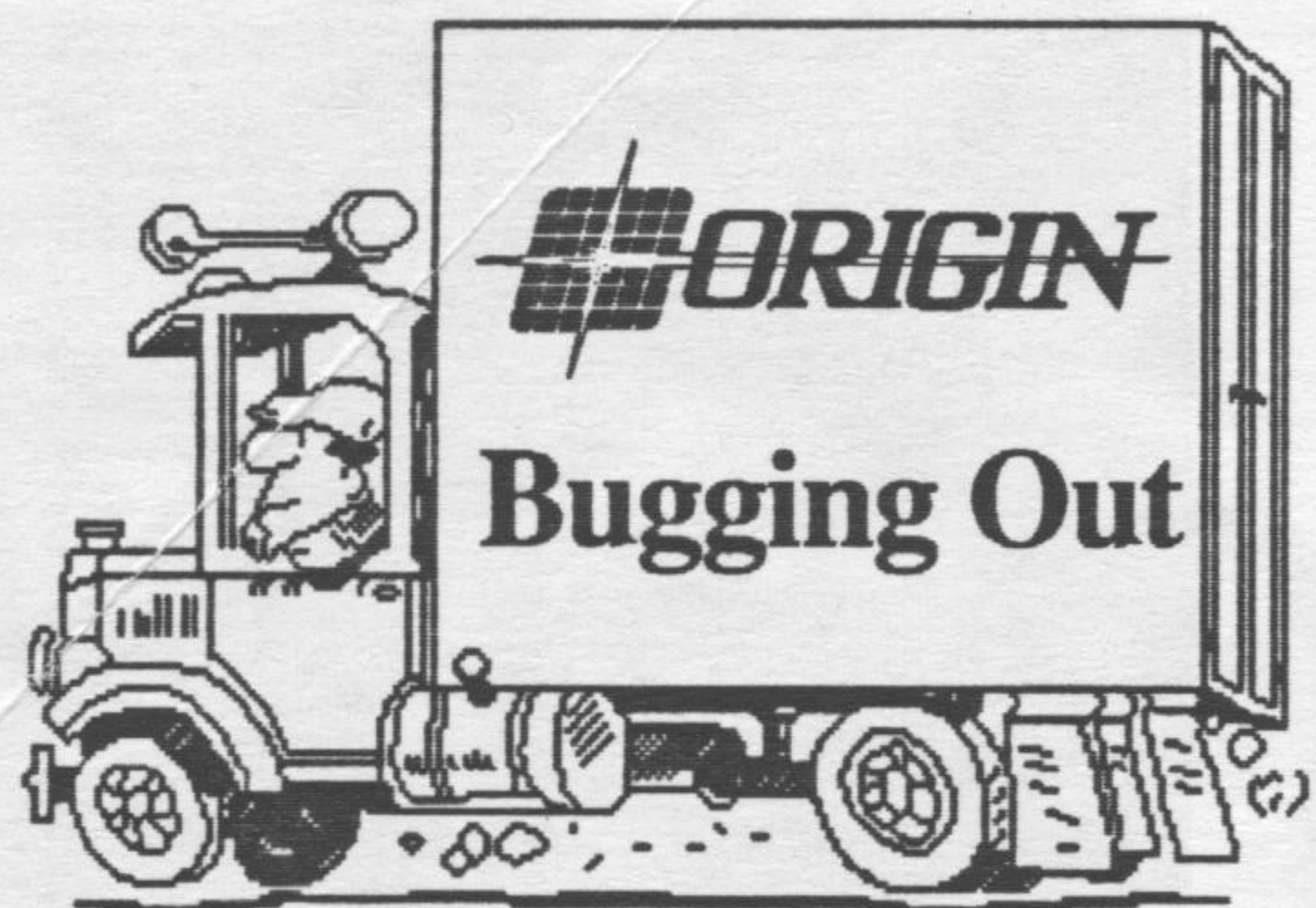
## Ticker



Stock prices as of noon (Austin time).

ERTS	38.625	+.125
BROD	44.5	+2.0
SIER	15.0	+.75
MPRS	10.625	-1.125





Plans are being finalized for the move to 12940 Research Blvd. According to **Jeff "Bekins" Hillhouse**, everybody will switch over to ORIGIN North during the weekend of January 8, 9, and 10, if the current plan and construction wrap-up schedule hold together over the next few weeks.

Full details are forthcoming, but here's a thumbnail sketch. You'll pack up your desks, bookcases, etc., before that weekend. Boxes will be provided around the Monday before, so you'll have several days to sort through junk in between doing real work. Then, you'll be issued a special secret office decoder code, like "Purple 316." That's what the movers will use to get your valuable cargo to its new destination. "What about computers?" you ask. We're using a moving firm that specializes in high-tech moves—that's all they do.

**Jeff and Curtis "Mayflower"**

Wood will be handing out specific instructions (how to pack your stuff, what to do with wall hangings, etc.) when we return from Xmas break, so hold your questions for now.

The idea is to get most of ORIGIN West out of here on Friday. On Saturday, the network in ORIGIN East will shut down and all of that machinery will go with hopes of being back up and running late Sunday. The Strike and Serpent teams will get priority tech support.

If all goes as planned (and why wouldn't it?), ORIGIN North will officially open for business Monday, January 11, 1993. Things are likely to be a little hectic and disorganized for the first few weeks in the new digs, so we are discouraging a whole lot of unnecessary visitor and guest traffic, especially touring throughout the floors. We're toying with maybe having a private "family and friends" open house on some Friday Happy Hour or evening, probably in late January or early February. Then we'll stage a more formal V.I.P. "Grand Opening" for suppliers, press and area bigwigs sometime in March or April—perhaps to coincide with an EA corporate board of directors meeting (once we know if we can afford it, and if we have any positive new product and financial news to report).

## Help Wanted

2 to 3 reps in Customer Service

C, C++, and assembly language programmers

Sound Manager

Sound Person

1 Artist/Illustrator

Executive Assistant

Technical Services Manager-MIS

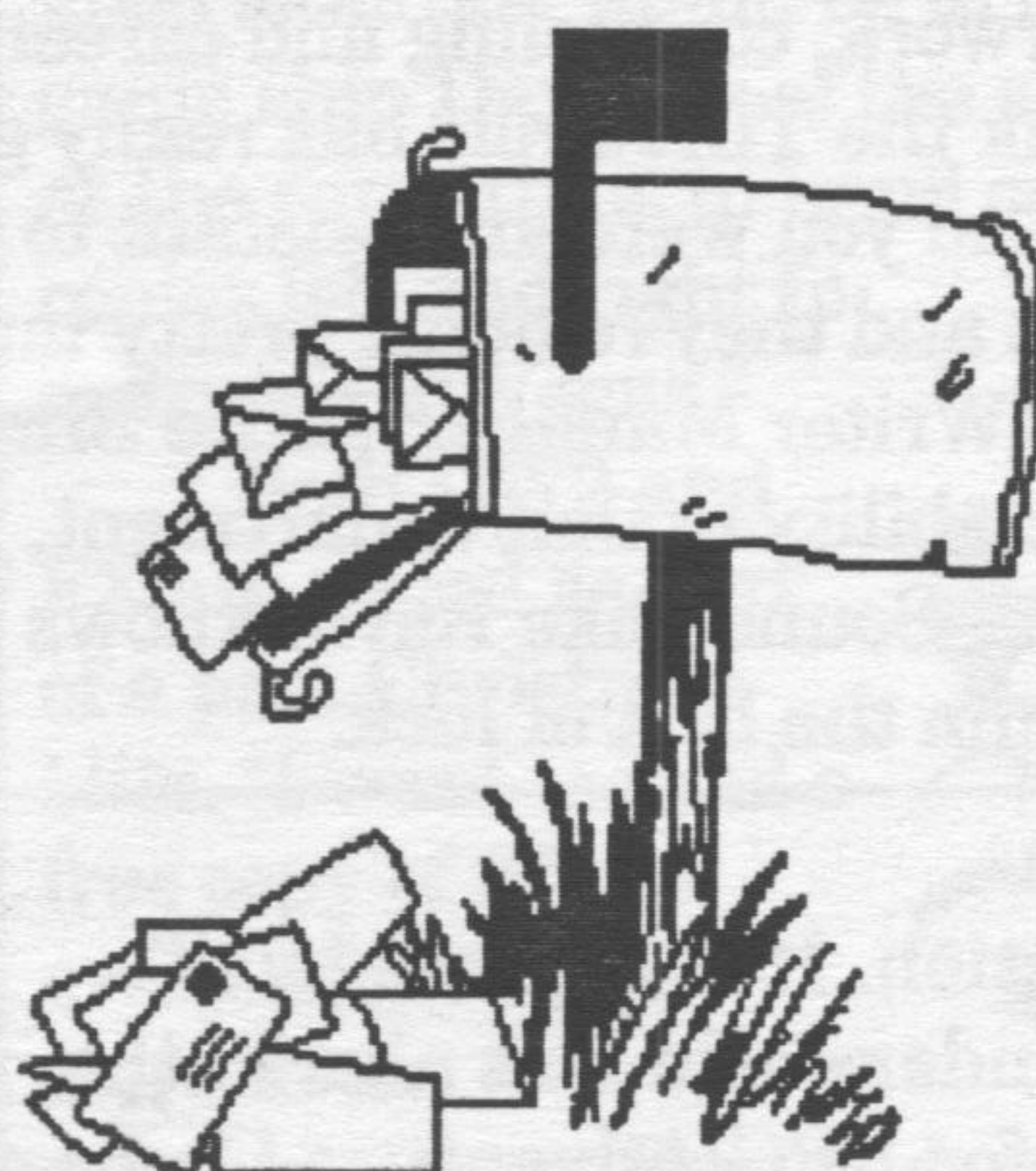
LAN Coordinator-MIS

68000 Sega Programmers (actually, we only need a few)

Programmer Manager

Technical Liaison (programming)

Human Resources Assistant



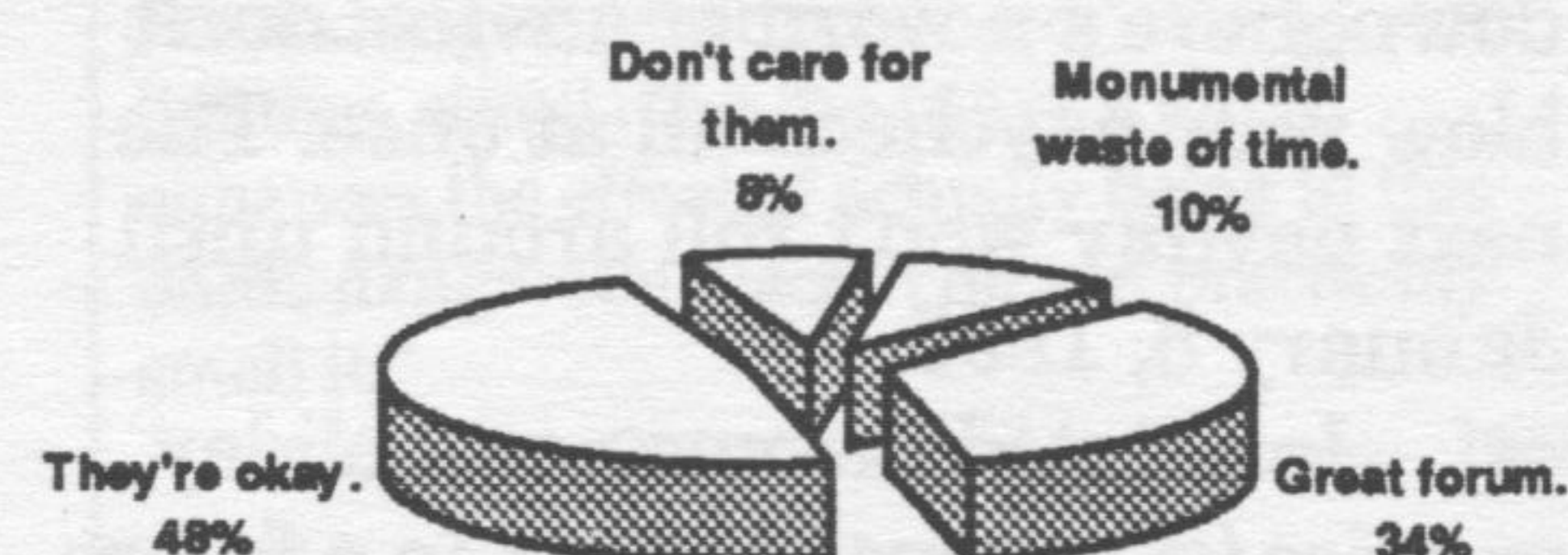
## Alright, already!

After taking such a beating in the last issue, I've received just one "Dear Point Man" letter (which will be answered in the next issue).

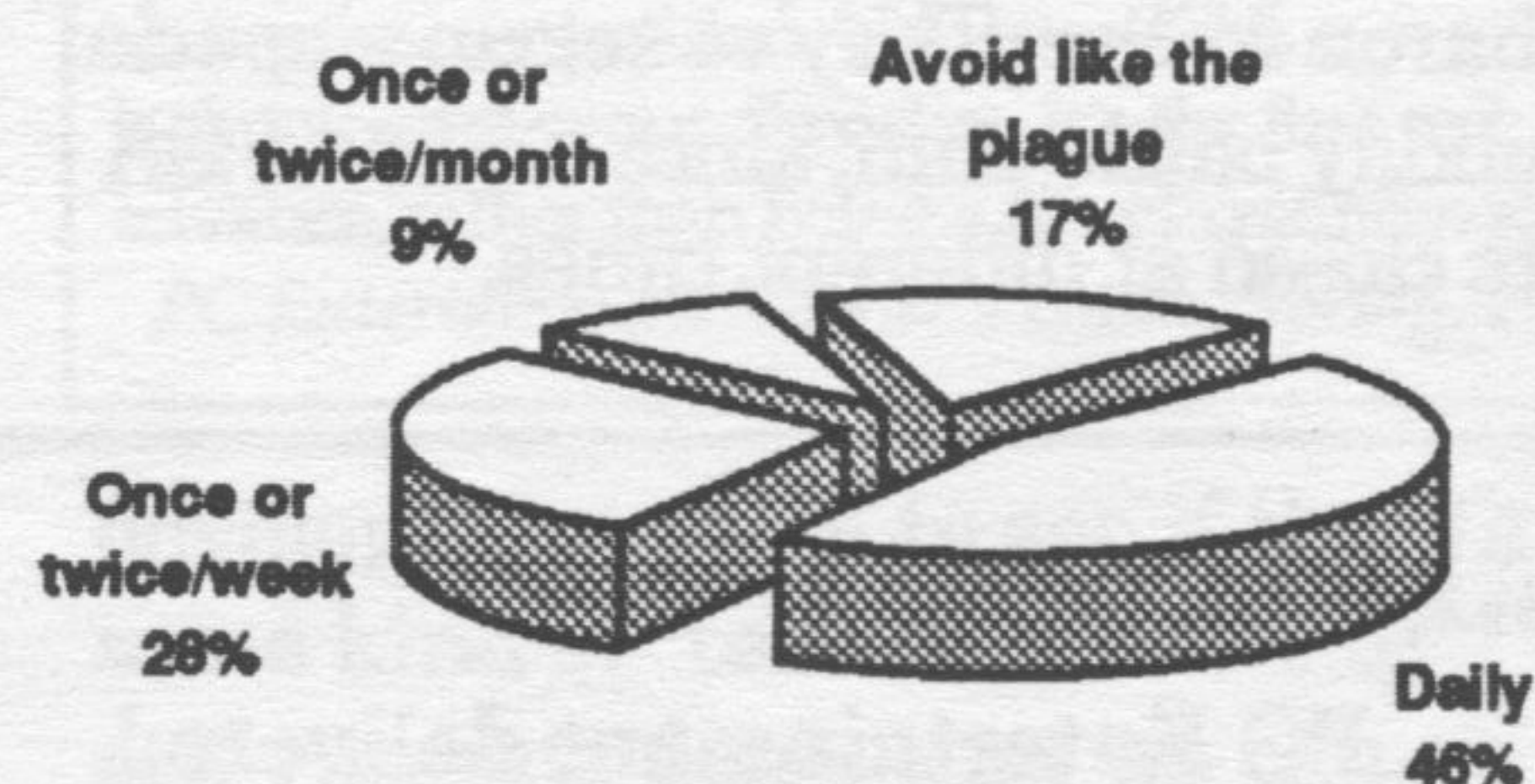
Remember: if you don't complain, don't complain!

# Pulse Check

How do you feel about the electronic bulletin boards?



How many times do you log on/read BBS messages?



The overwhelming suggestion was to consolidate many of the boards per Prem's suggestion on the Watering Hole. Several said they thought limited access times (off the clock) would be appropriate for boards like Soap Box, while others wanted the ability to lock out boards they never check anyway. Across the spectrum, people suggested that the boards not be used for personal attacks of any kind, i.e., professional, political or social.



# Happy Holidays!