

Point of ORIGIN

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Friday, February 26, 1993

Austin, TX



Drawing praise....

By proclamation, the City Council made yesterday "Austin Poster Artist Day." The state legislature followed suit, proclaiming "Texas Poster Artist Day." Shown here, left to right: Dicko, Micael, Jim, Danny, Councilman Max and Bill. Not shown is Bob Frye.

EA Holds World Art Conference

Scott Russo joined a contingent from the Art Department (**Al Nelson**, **Bruce Lemons** and **Denis Loubet**) for a trip to San Mateo and the EA World Art Conference. Scott was there to renew some old and possibly advantageous friendships. The artists were there to...well, read on.

The conference was designed to bring together some of EA's global art talent—from EA/Victor in Japan, EA/UK, EA/Canada, EA/3DO and ORIGIN—for brainstorming meetings and strategic planning. Al and the gang got a chance to look at art methods and tools for SEGA cart and CD products, not to mention 3DO. They also pitched Austin as the site for a proposed new EA media facility.

Al says ORIGIN artists were held in high esteem by their counterparts, especially after a demonstration featuring Denis' animated 3D Avatar. He also noticed that the local TV news and daily papers were full of stories about

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"End-Quote"

Our press roundup has a decidedly international flavor this time around. Since most of the Euro-mags have shorter lead times, reviews tend to hit there first.

ORIGIN FX gets a nice mention in France's Generation 4, which writes: "ORIGIN FX is simply fabulous and easy to use. With all the options, even the new user can obtain impressive results." Not quite how we'd say it, but okay.

Underworld 2 continues its impressive sweep across the pond. PC Home in England gives it a 95% rating and says: "Without a doubt, the system sets the benchmark for all the rest to try and attain." Gen 4 clocks it at 94% and calls it a "must-have." Meanwhile, Strategy Plus (formerly a Brit effort, but now in Vermont) writes: "LookingGlass Technologies and ORIGIN have

(See "Quote" on page 3)

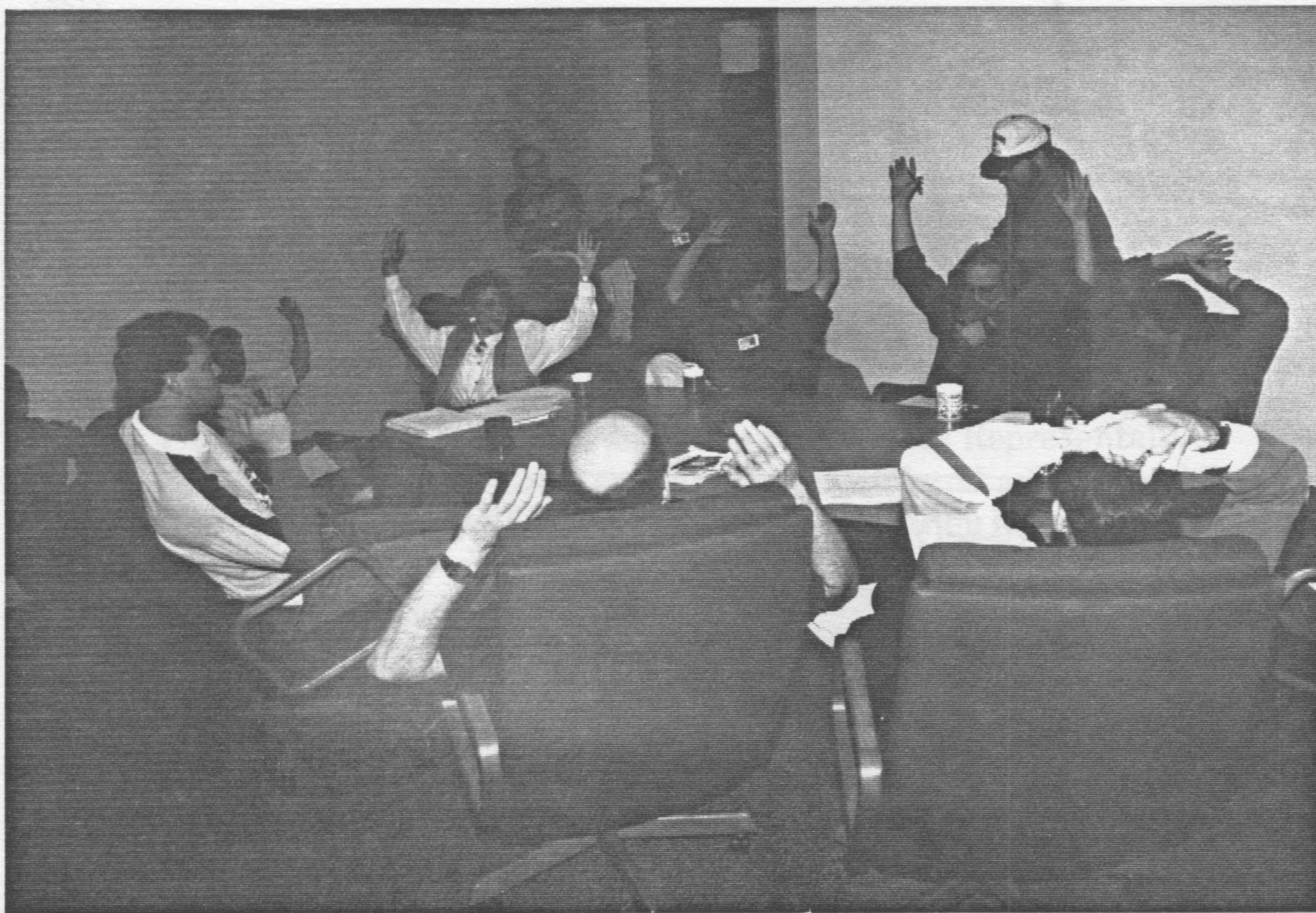
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This is a bust...

Mike Sims' "Badge Police" staged a surprise raid on the department head meeting to verify that everyone was wearing proper I.D. Kay Gilmore was the only offender. She was dutifully handcuffed and ticketed.

Room to Talk

Where you gonna go?

The much-ballyhooed contest to name the conference rooms has come to an end. Although it got off to a slow start, the entries came pouring in after a few days. Here are the winners as voted by the Entertainment Committee:

2nd Floor—"The Hollow Deck" for the room next to the Serpent Isle TDAs. Submitted by nearby resident **Brian Adams**. "Rogue's Gallery" for the wedge-shaped room near Creative Services. Actually, that one was a lock, since we plan to hang bizarre art in there and make it an optional tour stop. That name came from **Wayne Baker**.

3rd Floor—"The Stygian Abyss" (sound familiar?) for the room near Accounting, submitted by ORIGIN newcomer **Rob Corell**. The big room straight across from the elevators (where the Stock Purchase Plan meetings were held) will now be referred to as "The Schmooze Room." That idea tossed in by LB himself, **Richard**. Another newcomer, **Eddie Stringer**, came up with "The Worm Hole" for the v-shaped room linking Customer Service and Sales. And finally, the big, purple room (which is usually locked) now has its own moniker, courtesy of **Donna Mehnert**—"Detention Hall."

Each of the winners and a special friend will enjoy quality entertainment at one of Austin's famous Presidio Theaters. The Entertainment Committee wants to extend a hearty thanks to all who entered. We're sorry, but we have no lovely parting gifts for you. (Did you really want Rice-a-Roni anyway?)



Misc.

Just a reminder: When you open next week's paycheck, stifle your scream. The Employee Stock Purchase Plan payroll deductions start with that check. If it's a bigger bite than you thought, you can reduce the amount once during the plan period, but you can't up it. If you have any questions, check with **Sharon Miller**.

Andrea Brannon had a run-in with her own mortality last weekend in San Antonio. On the same night her car was burglarized, she went into a Stop-N-Go and it was knocked off. Andrea says she had a gun to her head before two crooks hoofed it with a wad of cash from the register. If there's a bright side to this story, it's that they didn't take Andrea's purse which had \$400 in it (of course, now, somebody at ORIGIN will probably mug her).

For all of you who are Disney fans (and in this great country, who isn't?), through EA, we have memberships available free of charge to the Magic Kingdom Club. Membership has its privileges. It nets you discounts when you stay on Disney properties, lower car rental rates at the resorts, reduced airfare to California and Florida and better deals on Disney-related cruises, not to mention 10% off merchandise at all the Disney Stores, including the one in Barton Creek. To sign up, get with **Beth Loubet**.

Jennie Evans has cranked up an aerobics class at EA/UK, and so far, about 20 people are sweating it out. Jen herself is reportedly holding up quite well. After all, she used to be a professional aerobics instructor before joining ORIGIN.

In the Library

Wedding Planner
Party Planner
Cribbage Master
Veil of Darkness
Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3
Planet's Edge
Shanghai 2

Conference...

Texas—things like “Austin steals away another high-tech factory from Silicon Valley,” or “Bay Area cannot compete with Austin’s low tax rate and cost of living.”

In leisure mode, Al says the EA/Canada gang had a hilarious presentation and a mighty thirst. He thinks they’d fit in well with dyed-in-the-wool ORIGINites if they could just quit saying “eh?” so much. As an added bonus, Denis, Scott and Bruce even got a chance to slip away to visit Skywalker Ranch and meet the crew at LucasArts for lunch.

Quote...

outdone the rest of the world with Underworld II. It should do for ORIGIN what Disneyland did for Anaheim.” The marks from Germany: ASM/11 out of 12, PC Games/93%, Powerplay/91%, PC Joker/91%. France’s Tilt gives UW2 18 out of 20 and the U.K.’s PC Format gives it a 93% rating, the highest ever for the mag.

CTW (Computer Trade Weekly, England’s major trade magazine for the computer industry) even writes up UW2 as the “hottest name on the PC games

“LookingGlass Technologies and ORIGIN have outdone the rest of the world with Underworld II. It should do for ORIGIN what Disneyland did for Anaheim.”

scene.” The editors go on to say, “The sequel is every bit as impressive as its predecessor and looks like being a must-purchase for many PC owners.”

Speaking of the predecessor and Europe—UW1 is up for both Best Computer Game and Best Role-Playing/Adventure Game in the European Computer Trade Show Awards. They’ll be doled out in April.

Back in the U.S., the final

Bio:

Kay Stringer

A New Dynasty

First, there were the Garriotts. Then the Sheltons. Now, Stringer is becoming a household name for the folks who write the paychecks. **Kay Stringer** is the clan matriarch who also holds the title of Human Resources Assistant. With the addition of son, **Eddie**, and daughter, **Mindy**, as full-time employees (see “Still Growing” in this issue), Kay now has her entire family under one roof again.

As HR Assistant, Kay’s in charge of recruiting, interviewing and hiring. She needed herself a few years ago when she first applied at ORIGIN. “I’m also something of an artist,” Kay explains, “and I did, at one time, get my portfolio turned down by **Denis Loubet**. I thought, ‘Well, I still want to work there, even if I have to sweep the floors.’”

Her persistence paid off when she saw the HR Assistant position advertised in the Austin American Statesman. Kay says she’s finding the same attitude in people who are applying to her for work. “It’s difficult just keeping up with the *unsolicited* resumes we get from people. To them, it’s like having a mini-Hollywood right here in Austin. They’re drooling and foaming at the mouth to get in the door.”

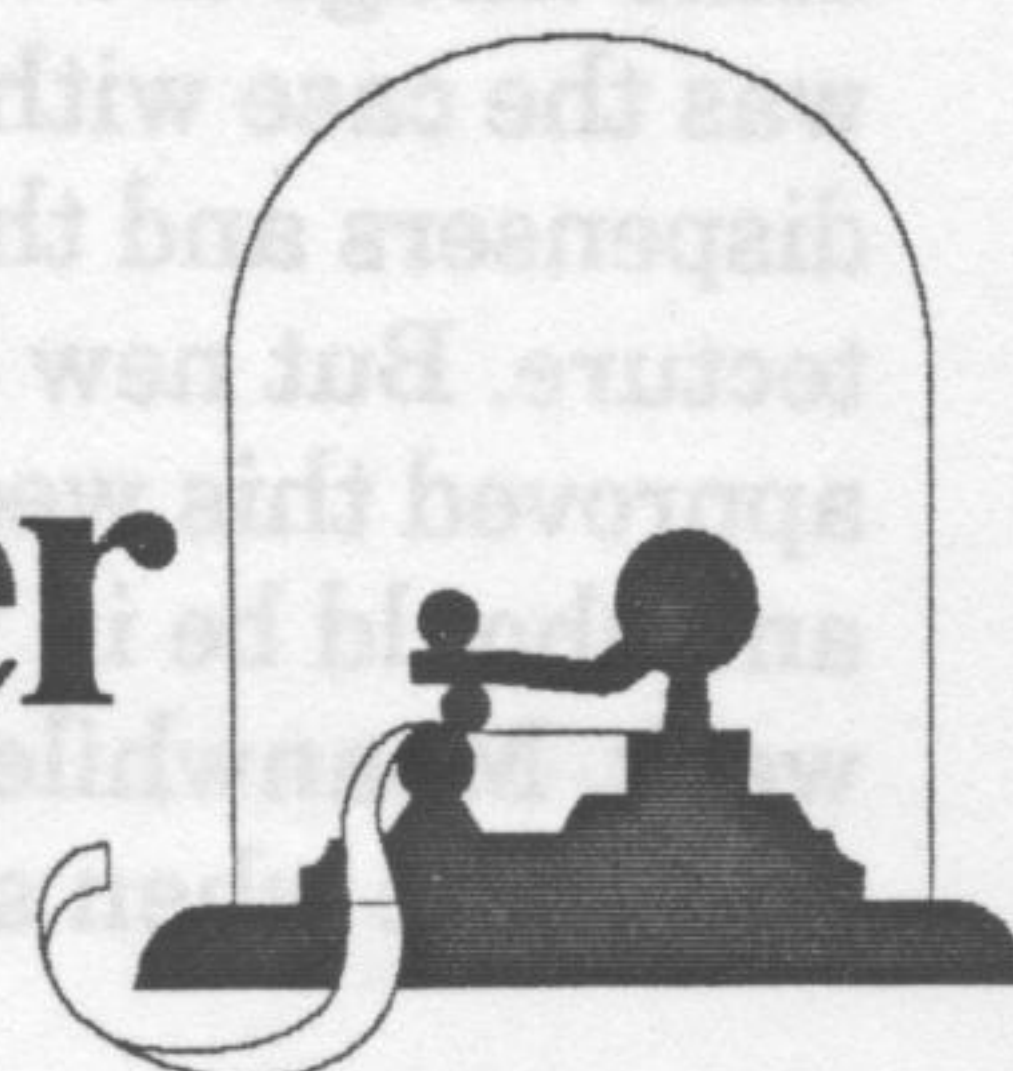
What about the pluses and minuses from having the kids at the office? “They’re always hitting me up for money, that’s a definite minus,” Kay laughs. “I don’t know. I’ve been a single parent and fairly young parent. The three of us kind of grew up and struggled together, so we kind of had to work as a team anyway.”

If you know anybody who wants to work at ORIGIN, send them Kay’s way. If she’s not in her office, check the Art Department. Dreams never die.



ballots are in for the Software Publishers Awards. By this time next week, we’ll know if Underworld beat out Shadow President, Aces of the Pacific, SimLife, Strike Eagle III, Microsoft Golf for Windows 1992 and Vistapro for Best Simulation Program. We’ll also know if U7 can edge out its arch rival, King’s Quest VI, as well as Rex Nebular, Indiana Jones/Fate of Atlantis, Dark Seed, Amazon and Star Trek/25th Anniversary for Best Fantasy Role-Playing/Adventure Program. Those awards will be presented Thursday, March 4, at the beautiful Marriott Hotel in San Diego, California. Watch the Company Notices BBS on Friday for results.

Ticker



Here are the stock prices as of press time (1:00 PM today). Don’t forget that EA stock split 2-for-1 last Friday. That’s the price reflected below.

ERTS	24.75	
SIER	10.5	-.375
MPRS	8.5	+.5
BROD	40.0	+.25

Dear Point Man,

Dear Point Man,

I understood that once we moved to the new building, we would be able to send e-mail to anyone at EA-San Mateo and vice-versa. Was I just confused, or has there been some policy change or schedule delay?

Signed,
Return to Sender

Dear Sender,

Word from Steve Morris: "We did get delayed a little bit with unexpected network problems in the new building, but the plans haven't changed. Within the next couple of weeks, we should have the ability to send mail to anyone in EA World. You'll know when it happens, because your directory will have about 800 names in it. Hopefully, in the third or fourth quarter, we'll have the ability to split up the directories by location."

Dear Point Man -

What's the deal with the bathrooms not having any soap?

Signed,
Afraid To Shake People's Hands

Dear Afraid,

In construction as in software, some things are not compatible. Such was the case with our original soap dispensers and the bathroom architecture. But new dispensers were approved this week. They're on order and should be in within the next week. Meanwhile, be content to nod and smile when saying hello.

The next two letters are being handled in tandem:

Dear Point Man,

I have a petty yet very annoying complaint. Back in the middle of December I ordered an ORIGIN game utilizing the company store/point system. I have received nearly all of the Sega cartridges I ordered, but not the one ORIGIN game. What's the deal?

and the next one:

Dear Point Man,

Why the do ORIGIN games cost 2 tokens while EA's cost 1???? And, why is it that when we order ORIGIN games we

NEVER receive them while EA games come in on time????? Why? Why? Why!!!!

Signed,
Still Waiting

Librarian "Smiles" Lewis fielded part of this:

The deal is this...our original ORIGIN orders (starting back in November) utilized a different numbering system and they were unaware of the specific orders we were requesting. As lame as this excuse is, it is the only one I've been able to drag out of them. Before the move, the argument around ORIGIN was "Why don't we just get our ORIGIN orders out of the warehouse stock?" Well, this would be the logical thing to do, BUT since the move we no longer have a general stock of our product. It is all at EA in San Mateo. I assure you I am trying my damndest to get this ridiculous problem resolved. As we stand now, the problem SHOULD be resolved. But we won't know for sure until we actually receive our ORIGIN orders. I'm truly sorry for the delays this has caused. I know that many of the orders were Christmas and birthday presents for our closest friends and relatives.

As frustrated as the rest,
Smiles

As for the cost (in points) for the games: both EA and ORIGIN games are priced according to cost of goods. According to our Mateo link, Sharon Miller, products with a \$10 cost of goods are priced at one point, those at \$15 or more are two points, and so on. You'll notice that ORIGIN products such as Forge of Virtue are one point,

(4)

while EA products like the Studio One series and even some Sega and Nintendo carts are two points.

Dear Point Man,

I was wondering how the financials for the year are shaping up. Are we doing better or worse since Richard's speeches to the masses? Did all of the steps he outlined go into effect (ie., more sales, less expenses, executive management going without salaries, etc...)? And how will this affect raises in the coming months?

Signed,
Curious

Dear Curious,

"The bottom line is: we don't know. And we probably won't know until 5:00 PM on March 25," according to Fiscal Fred Schmidt. "After missing Christmas, we knew it would come down to the fourth quarter. Then, it looked like it would come down to the last month, and now, it's apparent that it's going to be a photo-finish. Within the next week or so, we'll know whether Strike and Serpent are going to make it. If they do, we *might* be able to squeak in just under our lowest projected budget for the year." And what if they don't? "Then we'll be a *lot* lower."

"It's nobody's fault—everybody's really been working their butts off to get these products out the door, but we have to be prepared for the very real possibility that one or both will slip past March 25. It's definitely not the kind of way we wanted to end our first year with EA, but thank goodness for EA. If this had happened while we were still independent, Robert and I would be sitting down right now, having to take drastic measures to correct for cash flow."

Strike, Serpent and Privateer were all in this year's budget. Couple that with the expenses of moving into the new building and taking on even more employees (now more than 190), the fiscal hole is deep. "Raises will probably be somewhat affected, but once again, we won't know how much until March 25. We're just starting the employee evaluation process and we'll be looking at everyone on an individual basis. We want to make

(Continued on next page)



Goodbye, Norma Jean..

Friends and co-workers turned out en-masse for Norma's going away luncheon at B.B. Rover's.

Point Man...

sure we still reward those who've been good employees."

Fred says the executive management salary suspension was never approved by EA. "We offered it to show just how serious we were about bringing the numbers into line," he says. "But I think when EA looked at it compared to our possible financial shortfall, it wasn't going to have much of an impact."

Dear Point Man

You know, I don't think everyone here knows how to avoid replying to all addressees on a mail list. Maybe a "how to" on this and other high-tech mysteries would help. Like, I don't know how to get voice mail messages from a remote phone outside the building. Do you?

*Signed,
Incommunicado*

Dear Incommunicado,

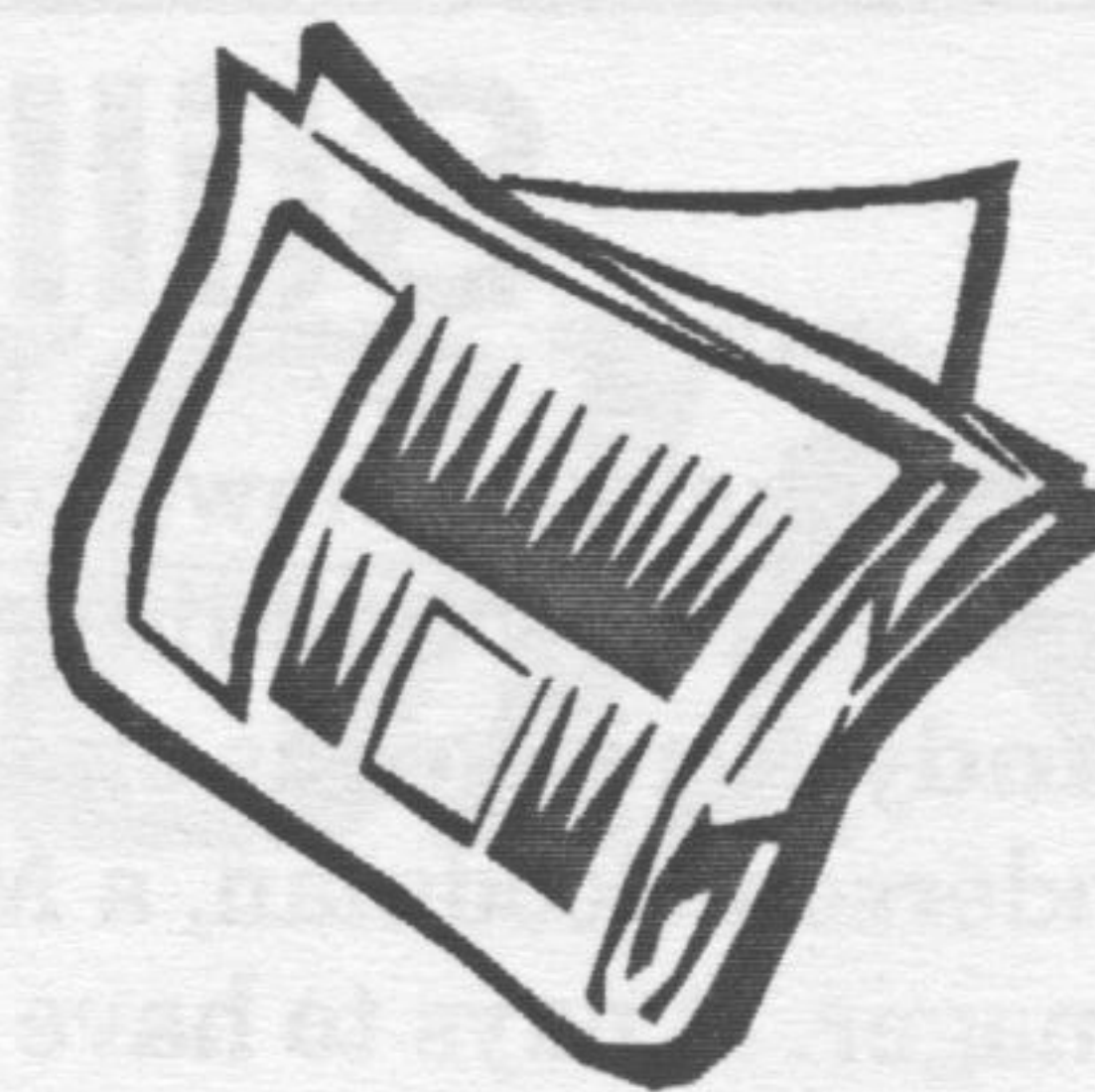
Great point; I shudder every time I see a message in my e-mail box that says "TO: BRIAN ADAMS, TO: BRUCE ADAMS, TO: JULIAN ALDEN-SALTER," etc. Nothing against those guys, but its about as personal as my yearly greeting from Ed McMahon. When you are responding to any e-mail, you get to check off whether you want to "Retain original items" and/or "Retain original addressees." If you don't retain original addressees, your response will still go back to the originator of the message; it just won't go to everybody else who received it. Just make sure you double check before hitting the "Send message?" button.

To get your voice mail remotely, dial ORIGIN's main number (335-5200). Then, instead of dialing 700 like you would from your desk, dial *7. That gets you to the same menu.

Dear Point Man,

I am proud to be an ORIGINite and want to show off! We need a display place for all our awards (the little turquoise room off the down-

(See "Point Man" on next page)



NEWS.TXT

Talk about *hot* properties: Four Los Angeles police officers are on trial, accused of violating Rodney King's civil rights. Meanwhile, Sierra On-Line has announced it will be teaming up with former L.A. police chief Daryl Gates for the next installment of the Police Quest series. It will reportedly be about a present-day LAPD detective trying to track down clues in a seemingly random slew of murders. "I want to give computer users the opportunity to see what it's like to be a cop in LA. I want to show the day-to-day pressures officers face and provide an accurate picture of the dangers and difficulties they encounter in trying to solve a crime," said Gates. (No confirmation yet as to whether the game will ship with its own special solid-steel joystick.)

Keep an extinguisher handy: Intel is slipping news to vendors that the Pentium chip will be priced between \$1,000 and \$1,200 and in limited quantity because it tends to exceed heat specifications. Only about 50,000 units may be available this year, while Intel considers whether to put out a slower (and cooler) 60MHz Pentium. Formal chip specification announcements are expected in March, with pricing and production announcements to follow in May.

Oh, yeah, we almost forgot: Microsoft is getting ready to launch DOS 6 with a lot of hype and fanfare on March 30 in a national marketing blitz. One of the biggest changes is Microsoft's data compression technology called DoubleSpace, which reportedly can degrade performance by up to 8% in some applications. Bill Gates had better just pray that it's compatible with Strike Commander, or it could bankrupt him.

Still Growing

Our ranks have now grown to more than 190 employees, but that's the benefit of a new building—we always have room to add more.

Mindy Stringer is on board as Administrative Assistant. She comes from Anderson Goodman, a MHMR Housing firm, where she was Financial Manager. It pays to have connections. At ORIGIN, she joins her mom, **Kay**, and brother, **Eddie**.

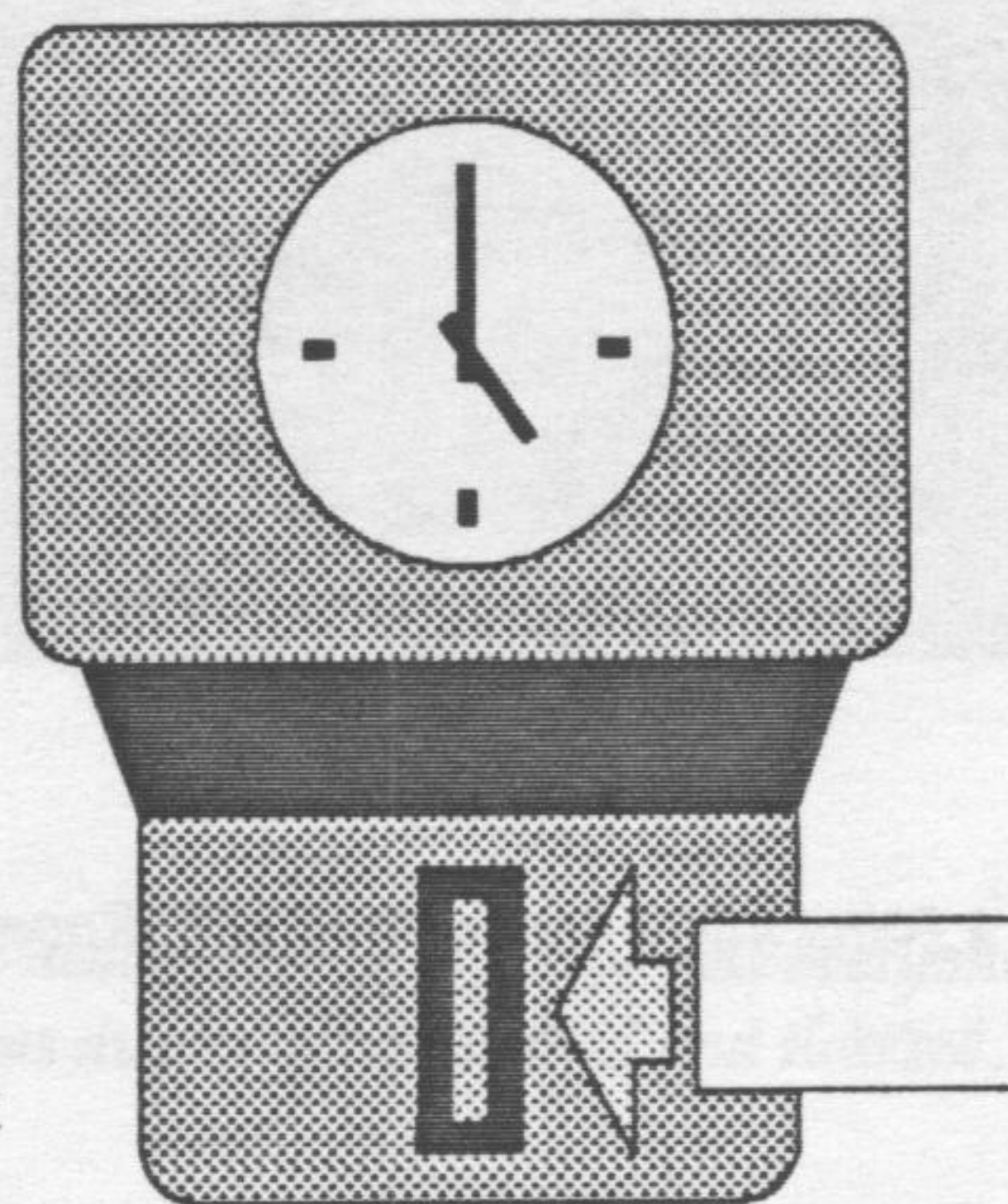
Cindy Meier just started as Human Resources Representative. Cindy's been a Human Resources Manager at MCI and a Personnel Rep. with Bank of America. Although a native Iowan, Cindy has now adopted Austin as home.

Greg Gidel is working on Wing Commander for the FM Towns machine. Originally from Illinois, Greg's a long-time EA fan (Bard's Tale) as well as Ultima player.

Dan Orzulak says he left Purdue when he found out his programming classes wouldn't be working on games (his favorites were Ultima IV and Autoduel). He also says he'd much rather spend winters in Austin; he doesn't miss the snow in Indiana.

Richard Lyle used to do robotics system monitoring with Thermal Wave. That's what led him to Austin, and now, he's cranking up on 3DO projects under **Eric Hyman**.

David Small has some deep roots here. He spent 10 years with Texas Instruments, 8 years with Tandem, and also did freelance work for IBM and Video Telecom. He says he's always wanted to program RPGs.



Point Man...

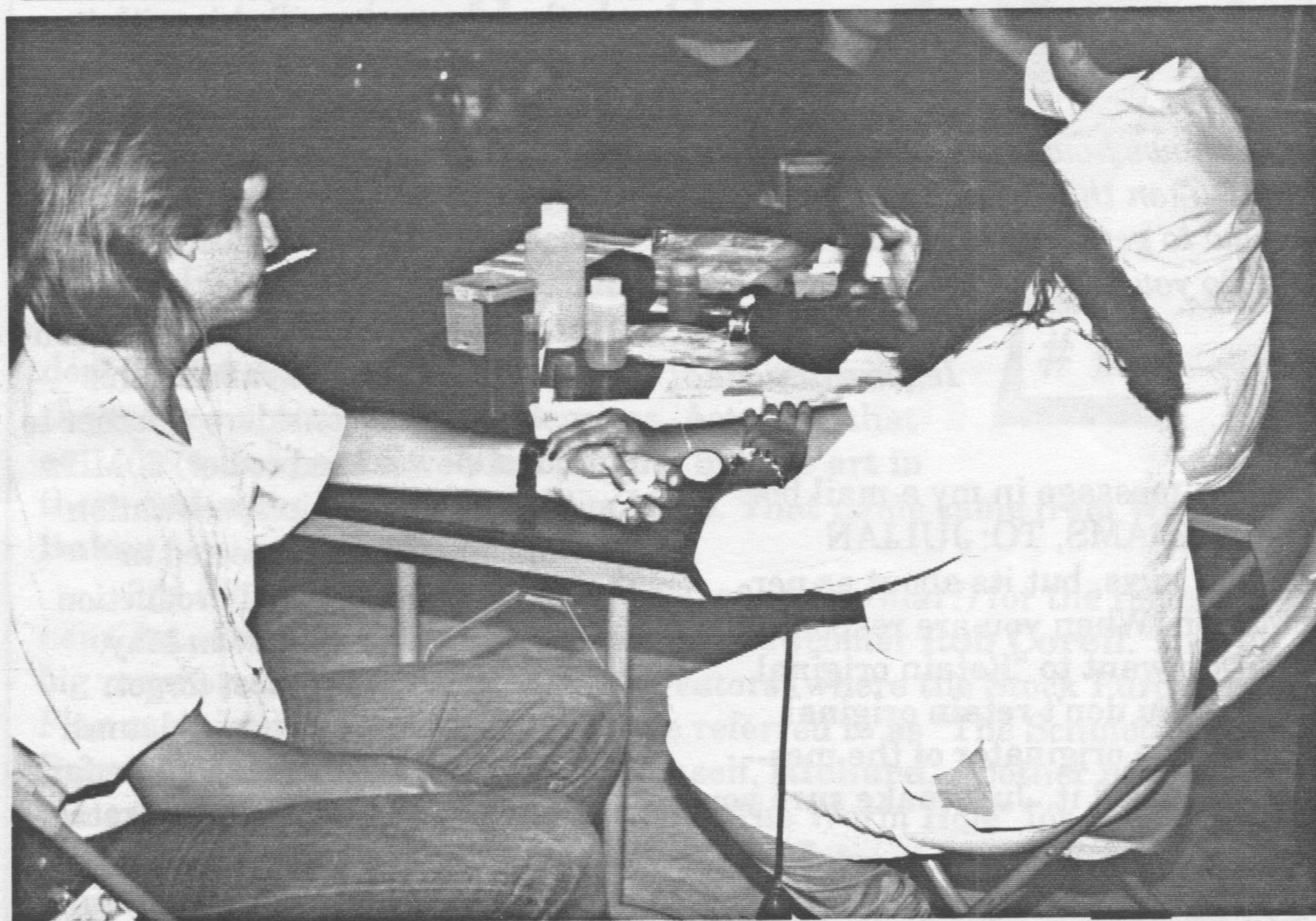
stairs lobby, maybe?)

*Signed,
Modest Person*

Dear Modest,

Plans are already in the works for just such an area. In fact, we've had a local company pricing trophy cases and locking displays for the past month. Not only do we want a place to show all our awards, we want to have a couple of other spots in the building that would make interesting tour stops—places like the Wall of Fame in Customer Service, a "Rogue's Gallery" of bizarre art from our artists, and an ORIGIN history area with Akalabeth, Wing Commander design plans, pirate copies of Ultima...things like that. We'll probably be able to move on the plans a little bit faster after Strike and Serpent ship.

Also, you might have noticed that we did get our flags (American and Texas) and we're pricing an ORIGIN flag as well. Not only that, but **Curtis** and **Jeff H.** bolted an ORIGIN sign onto the fountain this morning. The place is starting to look "lived-in" now.



Back to the well...

"Mr. Mike" McShaffry is planning to organize another blood drive like the one held at the old building last August. Much of ORIGIN's donation went to help Mary, our Breakfast Lady, repay blood credits she used during heart surgery. If you're not one of those "give-'til-it-hurts" people, you can still help by working the cantina. Watch the Company Notices BBS for details on time and place.

CGW

Reader Poll

(March, 1993)

1. Civilization (Microprose)
2. Links 386 Pro (Access)
3. Quest for Glory III (Sierra)
- Ultima Underworld (tie)
5. King's Quest VI (Sierra)
6. Wing Commander II
7. Solitaire's Journey (QQP)
8. Indiana Jones/Atlantis
(Lucas)
9. Monkey Island 2
(LucasArts)
10. Wizardry VII (Sir-Tech)
30. Ultima VII