

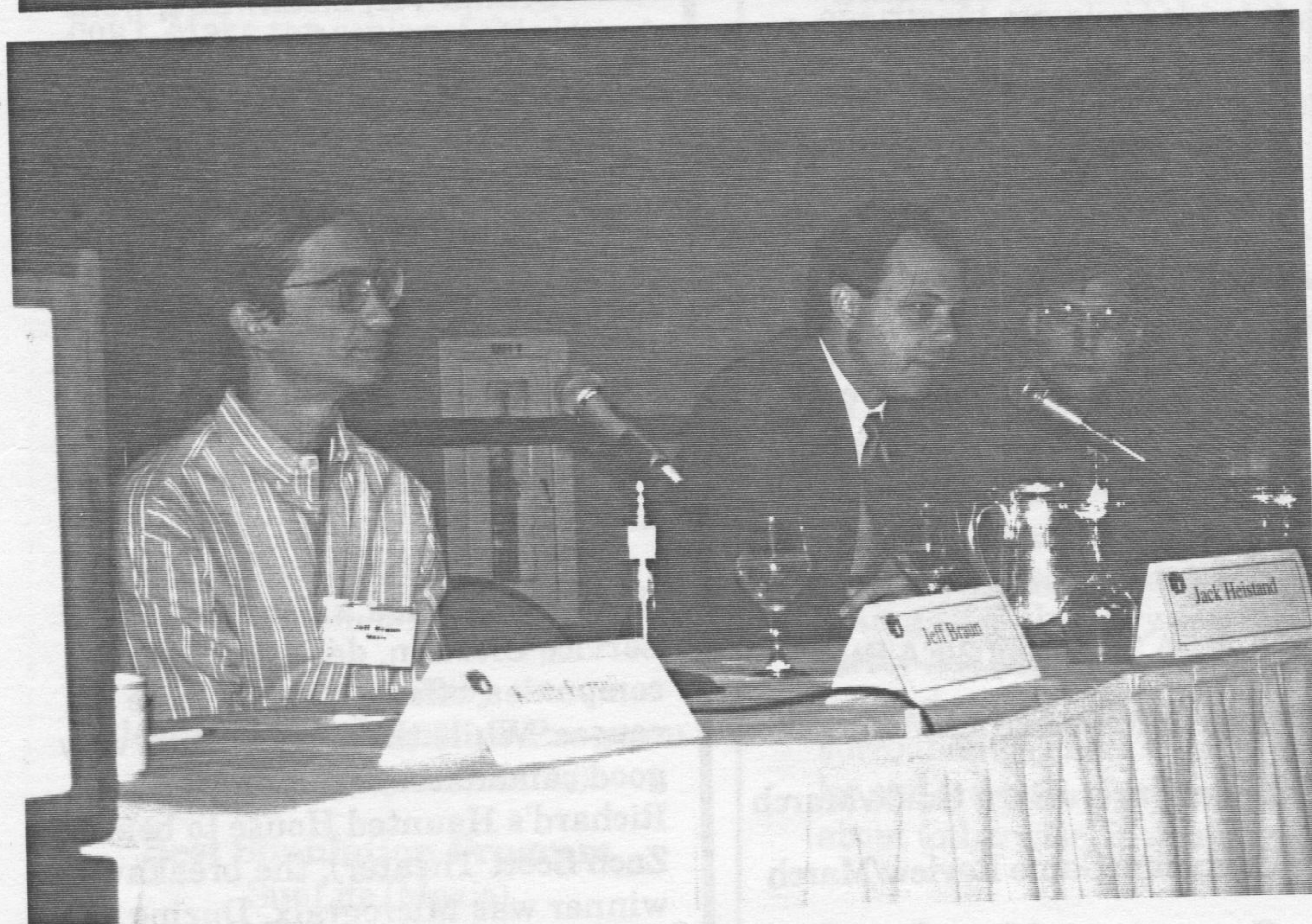
Point of ORIGIN

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SPECIAL S.P.A. ISSUE



Future shock...

Maxis president Jeff Braun, EA Marketing Veep Jack Heistand and 3DO Sales & Marketing Veep Rob Faber ponder the state of the consumer software industry.

Always a Bridesmaid

Welcome to San Diego, a sparkling city nestled comfortably along the southern California coast and peppered with paradoxes: sailboats against a backdrop of battleships, transients against a backdrop of opulence, and ORIGIN against the backdrop of an SPA Awards ceremony.

That's right, once again ORIGIN thought: "This year has to be different. Certainly we'll get *something*." But, like Susan Lucci and the Day-



time Emmys, it was not to be; ORIGIN's perfect no-win record is still intact. At least this year, the Software Publishers Association finally came up with a name for its award—the Codie. The idea is that behind every great program, there's great code. (That should give you some kind of idea how the evening began.)

Underworld was in the running
(See "Bridesmaid" on page 2)

(1)

Views From the Top

One great thing about the SPA Symposium is that it draws some of the best and brightest in software to a place where they can ponder and predict the course of the future. This get-together was no exception and it offered distinctly different views from business and entertainment stand-points.

The keynote plenary address came from Phillipe Kahn, CEO of Borland International. His speech, though, sounded more like a warm-up for Borland stockholders later this year. You could hear the Wrath of Kahn when he reflected on being beaten to the punch by Microsoft's

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NEWS.TXT

NO, REALLY, TRUST US: A couple of hackers who used to break into computer systems say they have designed VinCrypt, a data encryption system superior to those used by the country's top security agencies. That claim will be hard to prove since the designers refuse to allow cryptographic experts to examine the algorithm. Passing the source code around "will compromise the security of the data," according to co-developer Ian Murphy, who claims that the government-approved Data Encryption Standard and RSA Data Security encryption package are insecure because their algorithms have been submitted to the National Security Agency. Critics claim there could be a hidden back door for the hacker community. One security manager said, "It's like letting the hawks guard the henhouse."

ON SECOND THOUGHT: Dell Computer Corp. has cancelled its long-awaited 4-million share stock offering which would have generated more than \$200 million. Company officials deny the withdrawal has anything to do with an ongoing audit by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The SEC launched an investigation after allegations that Dell had doctored its books to hide losses on foreign currency trades. Instead, the company's citing unfavorable market conditions. Dell stock was trading at \$50 last December; it had fallen to \$36 recently. After the offering was tabled, it dropped another 17% to \$30.

YOU DON'T PUT ON SUPERMAN'S CAPE: And you don't mess around with Bill. Microsoft has returned legal fire against Stac Electronics over its patent infringement lawsuit. *Jab!* Not only is Microsoft denying it copied Stac's data compression technique, it's

(more)

asking a U.S. District Court in Los Angeles to declare Stac's patent invalid and unenforceable. *Right hook!* Microsoft also wants Stacker removed from store shelves and has filed a countersuit against Stac for: infringement of a Microsoft patent, breach of contract and civil conspiracy to commit fraud. *Body blow, body blow!* On the advice of lawyers, Microsoft has already removed the MaxCompress portion of DOS 6 because of the Stac lawsuit.

In the Library

Falcon 3.0 Operation
Fighting Tiger/Spectrum Holobyte
The Summoning/SSI
Veil of Darkness/SSI
Shang Hai 2/Activision
Planet's Edge/New World
Spaceward Ho!/New World
Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3/Bethesda
Engines of Creation...the coming era of nanotechnology
PGA Tour Golf 2/EA Sega
Tegel's Mercenaries/Mindcraft
Game Players Sega Guide/March
Computer Game Review/March
Generation 4/French Magazine
V for Victory: Market Garden
Time Line/Symantec
Great Naval Battles
America in the Atlantic
Best of Spectrum Holobyte
Vol.1/CD
ORIGIN Music CD
Battle Chess CD-ROM Edition
Barbarian/Psygnosis
Jet Fighter 2/Velocity
Spectre/Velocity

...Bridesmaid

for Best Simulation, but for the fourth year in a row, Maxis beat a path to the podium with Sim*.* (this year, it was SimLife). Other unread acceptance speeches: Shadow President/D.C. True, Aces of the Pacific/Dynamix, Strike Eagle III/MicroProse, Golf for Windows/Microsoft and Vistapro/Virtual Reality Labs. The Vistapro game designer is John Hinckley, so he apparently didn't get any boost from name recognition. According to trade press reports, Maxis is now working on SimFarm, so we can save the entrance fee next year.

Ultima VII, meanwhile, went head-to-head with its arch rival, the King's Quest series. Stomachs tensed, then jaws dropped when the winner was announced—Dark Seed from Cyberdreams. Great cover art, but a great game? The rest of the nominees enjoyed the open bar: Amazon-Guardians of Eden/Access, Star Trek-25th Anniversary/Interplay, Indiana Jones-Fate of Atlantis/LucasArts and Rex Nebular/MicroProse.

For the first time this year, the SPA awarded a Community Service Citation, designed to honor companies' efforts toward noble causes. While there were some very good candidates (including Richard's Haunted House to benefit Zach Scott Theater), the breakaway winner was Micrografx. During Fall COMDEX, Micrografx sponsored a chili cookoff and nationally televised techno-concert, with \$500,000 in proceeds going to the foundation for the Recovery of Missing Children.

Even though ORIGIN didn't pick up any trophies, we do have some of our own to give out for the Best and Worst Awards Campaigns. A record 521 products from 182 companies were nominated this year. They had to pass through two, separate ballotings from the SPA's 1025 voting members. Some of the companies with entirely too much money to spend in a fiscal year go all out to win. For example, take Intuit, creators of the now

(More on next page)

award-winning Quicken. In a pre-ballot mailing, Intuit offered to make a \$25 donation to a computer-related charity in the name of the voting SPA member. Oh, yeah, and don't forget to vote for your favorite product in the Best Consumer Program and Best Personal Productivity categories.

MicroProse was even more flagrant, attaching a \$1 bill to every one of its mailings (you can do the math). Our favorite, on the other hand, comes from a company just up the road in De Soto, Texas, called Future Trends. It took a decidedly different tact, sending out a typewritten chain letter on plain paper. It read: "SPA members who vote for astronomy and sound programs find fame and fortune. Those who don't, don't. Make ten copies of this letter and immediately send it to ten of your SPA friends."

And the Winners Are...

1993 SPA Awards

Best Action/Arcade Program
Wolfenstein 3-D (Apogee)

**Best Fantasy
Role-Playing/Adventure Program**
Dark Seed (Cyberdreams)

Best Simulation Program
SimLife (Maxis)

Best Sports Program
Links 386 Pro (Access)

Best Strategy Program
A-Train (Maxis)

**Best Personal
Creativity Program**
Morph (Gryphon)

Best Consumer Program
Critics' Choice
Stunt Island (Disney)

Best Programming Tool
Borland C++ and Applications
Frameworks 3.1 (Borland)

Best Utility
Stacker for Windows and DOS (Stac)

Dear Point Man,

Dear Point Man,

It has come to our attention that there have been some incidents involving snipers and gunmen. Could you enlighten us as to the status of these incidents and the veracity of the reports?

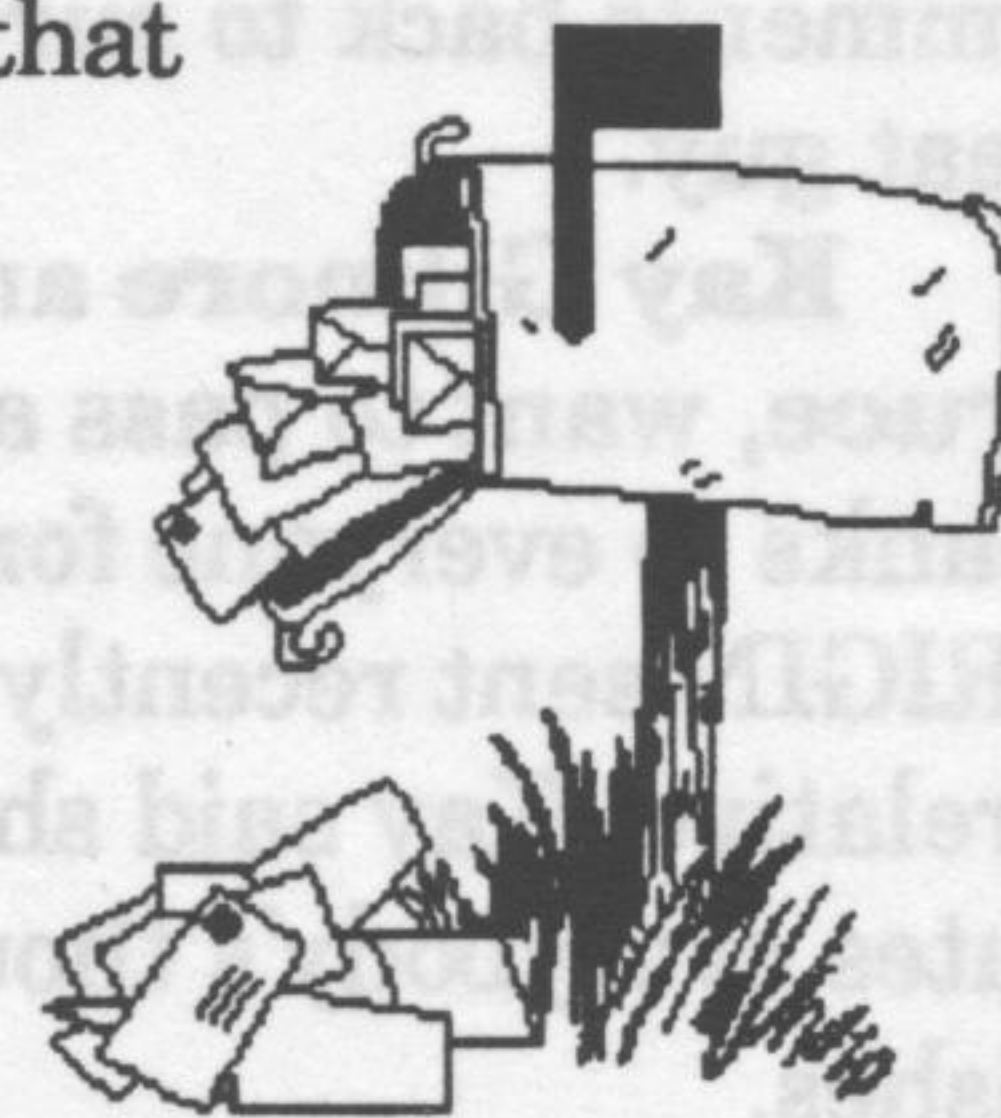
Signed,
A.P. Leadbody, Regional Sales Rep.
ACME Flak Jackets

Dear Leadbody,

You are right, sir. There has been only one incident of erratic small-caliber gunfire—believed to be an air-powered pellet gun from the chip it left in the window—hitting the Art Department. **Micael Priest** was in the vicinity, but the general attitude is that Micael has outlived everybody who would want to kill him. Investigators believe the culprit was someone who used to live on the back side of the apartment complex behind the building and who was showing off his/her firearms. That suspect has since re-located, we've been told. (According to Charter Management, the building's caretaker before we moved in here, a total of 54 windows had been shot during the last three or four years.)

The other incident took place at the back door of the building very late one night. An unknown man outside reportedly showed the security guard that he had a gun and demanded to be let in. The guard refused (good move on his part), and called police. The man took off before officers could get here, but a report was filed and there are rumors that there might be a suspect in that case. **Jeff Hillhouse** plans to follow up on that. We'll keep you posted.

Meanwhile, **Robert** (Garriott, of course) is taking all of this very seriously where employee safety and peace-of-mind are involved. He has ordered stepped-up surveillance of our immediate surroundings, more lighting around the parking lot and a couple of other maneuvers we can't talk about (otherwise, it wouldn't be *security*, would it?)



Dear Point Man,

Are they ever going to fix our phones? What's the problem? We all have phones, but none of the jacks work. Is anyone working on the problem and can they give us any idea about when we can expect the remedy?

Signed,
Failure to Communicate

Dear Failure, (that's a nice way to address someone, isn't it?)

That particular problem falls under the sizable jurisdiction of **Jeff Hillhouse**. Jeff says that about six to twelve jacks are inoperable right now, but it's because we're waiting on hardware. "Our system requires expansion cards, sort of like you'd put in a PC," Jeff explains. "But you have to remember, we're working with AT&T, which basically means we'll get them when we get them. I put them on order right away, but I was told they were on backorder, just like everything else I've ordered from AT&T. We'll try to get the problem fixed as soon as we possibly can."

(Yet one more fascinating letter on the last page)

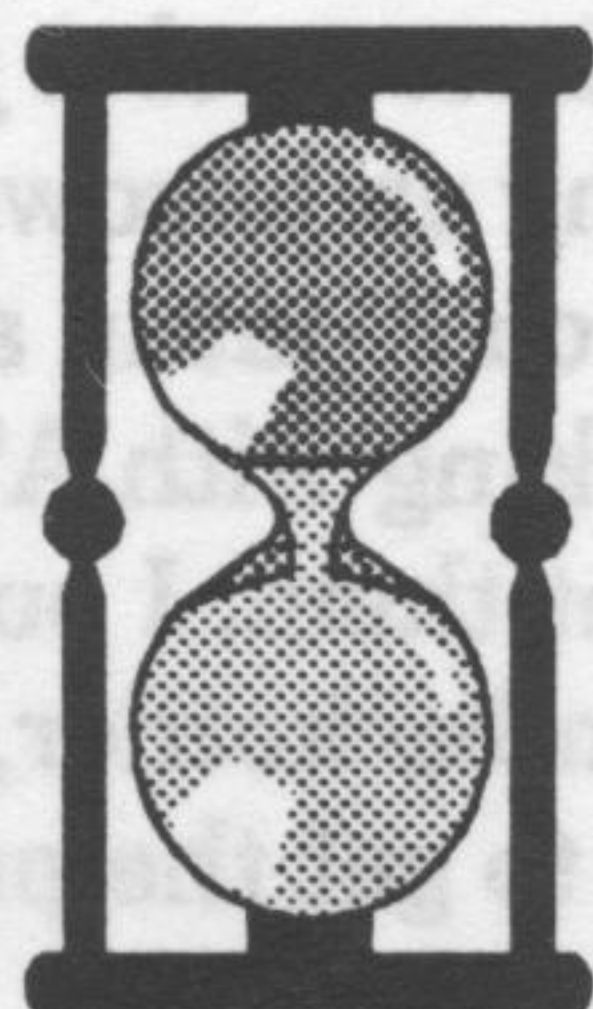
Richard Lyle and David Small have been with ORIGIN for a couple of weeks now, but they probably still get lost on the way to their offices. That's because they hadn't been here two days before they were shipped off to EA/SM for intensive 3DO training. Both of them should be back here wandering the halls next week.

Charles Cafrelli blasted a message to Babylon 5 and its creator/director/writer, Michael Straczynski, via CompuServe. Charles told him how much a lot of people at ORIGIN enjoyed the television show (and also passed along some of our artists' suggestions concerning bumps in the bitmaps). Straczynski sent Charles an e-mail reply: "Do you realize how many hours of my life I have wasted in front of Wing Commander, Wing Commander II and the various Secret Missions modules? I hate all of you! Feh! Seriously, though, I'm glad y'all approve. I'll definitely relay the comments back to our design people." Neat guy.

Kay Gilmore and her husband, **Bruce**, want to pass along a note of thanks to everyone for the plant ORIGIN sent recently when they lost a relative. Kay said she really appreciates everybody's thoughts and wishes.

It was only a matter of time. Now that ORIGIN is part of the all-encompassing-but-oh-so-cozy EA family, Point of ORIGIN is poised to go global. EA wants to create a worldwide company newsletter and draw some of the articles for it from this very publication. Don't worry, though; we'll continue to publish our little rag right here and subscription rates will remain the same.

**The fiscal
year ends
March 25.**



...Views

release of the Access database. "They were shaking us like a tree, just to see what was left when they were through shaking," Kahn said. "Finding out that your major competitor is spending millions to introduce a product at \$99—one-eighth the price of your product—sends a jolt through your company. Actually, a jolt is putting it mildly." Kahn said the Borland strategy is to produce the best "breed of products and provide the best value." He said he still thinks that Borland's Windows databases can wrestle one-third to one-half of the market from Microsoft.

The Kahn forecast: increasing Windows with DOS dissipating during the next few years. He characterized the lowering of prices by major software vendors this way: "This is a standardization war in corporations, this is not exactly a pricing war. The goal of lowering prices is to get customers to try new software and to standardize on it."

Standardization was the common thread which ran through the panelists during the ever-popular "State of Consumer Software" seminar. But software versus hardware standards were a point to debate. Jeff Braun, the president of Maxis who last year brought us the catch-phrase "teledildonics," came up with a new one this time around—"co-opetition." Braun's vision of the future is of software companies sharing technologies and making different products work together, even on a cross-platform basis.

As an example, Braun offered the idea of sharing his own technology with Microsoft, so that consumers could build a SimCity and then fly over it in Microsoft's Flight Simulator. Or linking Compton's Encyclopedia with Carmen San Diego. With co-opetition, Braun said, smaller, independent developers would also have a chance to participate in the marketplace by coming up with ways to enhance other, more successful products. Braun seemed a little silent

when your humble editor asked how he planned to convince a company that just spent more than a million dollars developing new technology (no names needed) to give that technology away to every developer who wanted to support it.

Rounding out the panel were the guys with the "hardware standard" idea: Jack Heistand, Vice-President of Marketing for EA, and Rob Faber, Vice-President of Sales and Marketing from 3DO. Get the idea yet?

Heistand said he believes the television monitor will be "the conduit for the interactive experience" in the future, a theme which worked well with Faber's suggestion that 3DO become the new standard. "PCs just don't have enough animation power

to create the realism that consumers want," Faber said, "and the price is prohibitive from making the PC a legitimate home platform. Video games have done a good job of penetration, but they suffer in memory and they'll always be rel-

egated to toy status: toy prices and toy margins." The obvious answer, according to Faber, is 3DO—a multi-developer, multi-vendor, multi-licensed platform. He said open licensing is the only way to insure a level playing field and at the same time develop a standard.

Heistand echoed that and said that 3DO's marketing prowess was one reason that EA decided to support it. In fact, he said that software and hardware developers could learn a few things from the packaged food industry when it comes to brand identity and name recognition, both of which 3DO is building. Heistand said you have to ask yourself one more question before signing up with a hardware developer: "Do you like them? After all, this is somebody you're going to have to work closely with in the future."

If you'd like to hear more on the State of the Consumer Software Industry, a tape of the session is available in the ORIGIN Library.



The Week in Reviews

Forget the SPA awards; the editors and readers of gaming mags are more than happy to slide a few trophies our way. Electronic Games, the newest of the bunch, held its first Readers' Choice Awards and the results are in the current (April) issue. Ultima VII gets the nod for 1992 Adventure/RPG Game of the Year. "Lord British's newest earned praise" from gamers, according to the editors. In the same issue, Wing Commander II is named 1992 Computer Game of the Year. (If only our fiscal year calendars worked the same way...) "ORIGIN's high flyer shot down everything," the editors write.

Okay, now, dig back through your Point of ORIGIN archives to issue 31. You'll see where PC Entertainment dropped by our booth at CES to drop off a trophy for Underworld. The editors there chose UW as Best Fantasy Role-Playing Game of 1992. The write-up is in print now: "Setting a new visual standard, Underworld does a great job convincing you that you're really moving through corridors."

Underworld's even managing to wedge its way into *other* product reviews. The best comes from the April issue of PC Games, where Peter Olafson reviews Legends of Valour. He notes that comparisons to Underworld are inevitable: "Above all, Underworld is consistent...it finds its tone, sets its rules, and sticks to them. You come away with the impression that it's a real place. Although I've *lived* every minute I've spent down in the Stygian Abyss, I've only *played* Legends of Valour." Ouch!

UW2 is getting its first real press surge now. Computer Game Review gives it a rating of 87%. The editors write: "Great graphics and the sound is, as always from ORIGIN, great." This magazine has a tendency to give slightly lower ratings to sequels. One of the more bizarre notes, though, is that it gave UW1 one of its highest ratings in history, and in the review of UW2, the editors talk about what a



Aren't you glad that we don't use goofy clip art like this on a regular basis?

groundbreaking, hallmark game UW1 was. But in last month's issue, UW1 is not even mentioned in the editors' awards. Go figure.

If Bernie Yee ever gives up his day job (as a New York City lawyer), we'll be happy to hire him as a writer here. He has UW2 reviews in two, separate magazines this month. In PC Entertainment, he gives it four-and-a-half out of

**"I've *lived* every minute
I've spent down in the
Stygian Abyss, I've only
played Legends of Valour."**

five and says, "There's no other product capable of doing what Underworld 2 does. It is a stunning (and still seminal) dungeon crawl, one that defines the experience." In PC Games, Bernie gives UW2 a nine out of ten (the ratio even works out!) and says, "Underworld 2 reminds us that the competition is still a few rungs down the evolutionary ladder. It is clearly the most graphically dazzling role-playing environment around." The check's in the mail, Bernie.

Abroad, France's Joystick says technically, UW2 is "scrumptious." England's PC Format calls it "a game and a half." The reviewer even goes one step further, saying all the other game developers might as well give up.

ORIGIN FX gets a nice mention in the March issue of Computer Game

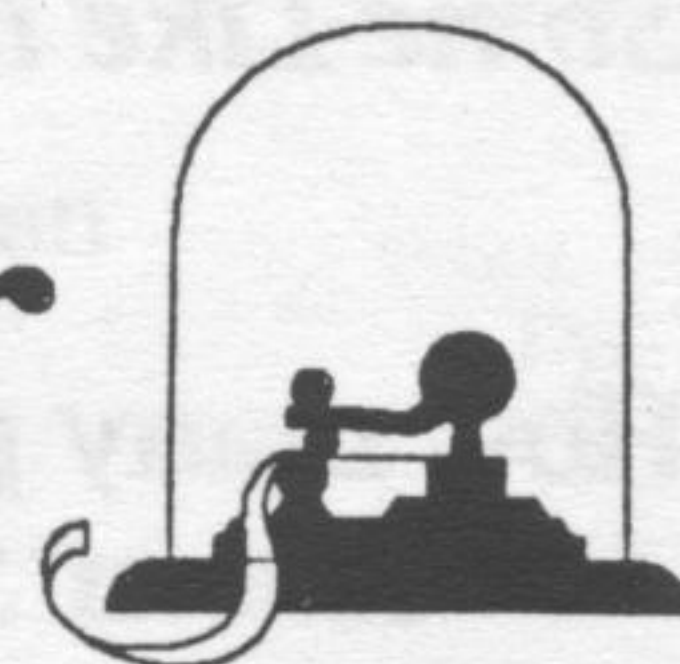
Review: "ORIGIN's already established reputation for high-quality games has allowed them to produce a high-quality screen saver."

Strike's lingering effects from CES can still be felt. Computer Gaming World says its terrain graphics "are even better than Comanche." A journalist with PC Format says, "Take a glimpse at the game and you are sure to be astonished at the graphic detail. See it in action and you are left dumb-founded."

Keep an eye out for the Today Show piece on the Ultima line in the near future. The latest guesstimates are that it could run sometime during the week of March 22. Since it is what's known as a "shelf piece," it could be grabbed for use at any time and we might only get a 24-hour notice. If there's enough warning, we'll send an e-mail to everyone.

Also, the next issue of Texas Monthly will feature a blurb about our poster artists as a result of the reception ORIGIN sponsored. It should be on newsstands within the next couple of weeks.

Ticker



ERTS	28	-.875
MPRS	8.5	+.375
SIER	11.75	+.5
BROD	45.75	+1.5



The perpetual party machine known as the Entertainment Committee is cranking up a new and hopefully regular effort—the Point Contest. Every issue, there will be some type of tourney with fabulous prizes. This week, it's movie trivia, and the prize is, of course, a movie pass for two to the Presidio Theater.

Here's how it works: answer the questions below, cut out the convenient entry form and drop it in the Point suggestion box near the back door of the building by next Friday (March 19). In the unlikely event that more than one person correctly answers every question, a drawing will be held under tight security and the supervision of the firm of Taylor and Davis.

...Point Man

Dear Point Man,
Is ORIGIN making a profit from the vending machines? If so, where does the money go?

Signed,
No Diet Here

Dear No Diet,
ORIGIN toyed with the idea of managing the machines, but it started to look like more of a headache than a moneymaker. First of all, while ORIGIN would have reaped the profits of all the sales, it would have suffered the losses as well. Contrary to popular belief, those tuna salad sandwiches don't stay in there forever. Not only that, we'd need somebody in charge of ordering, purchasing, stocking, bookkeeping, repairing the machines, etc. In the end, ORIGIN decided that vending is not an area where we want to diversify our product line. So the machines are completely owned and operated by the vending machine company.

Help Wanted

C, C++ Programmers
Audio manager
Audio Software Tools Programmer
Art Software Tools Programmer
Sega/Nintendo Programmer
(68000/65816)
Programmer Manager
Technical Liaison
Administrative Assistant
Account Manager (Sales)
Technical Design Assistant
(TDA)

Keep an eye out for some artist positions coming up just as soon as we can come up with a job description (I don't know what an artist is, but I know who I like).

There's never been a better time to become an ORIGIN employee. We're always in demand, and we make good money. Anyone interested in these positions should contact **Kai Stringer**.

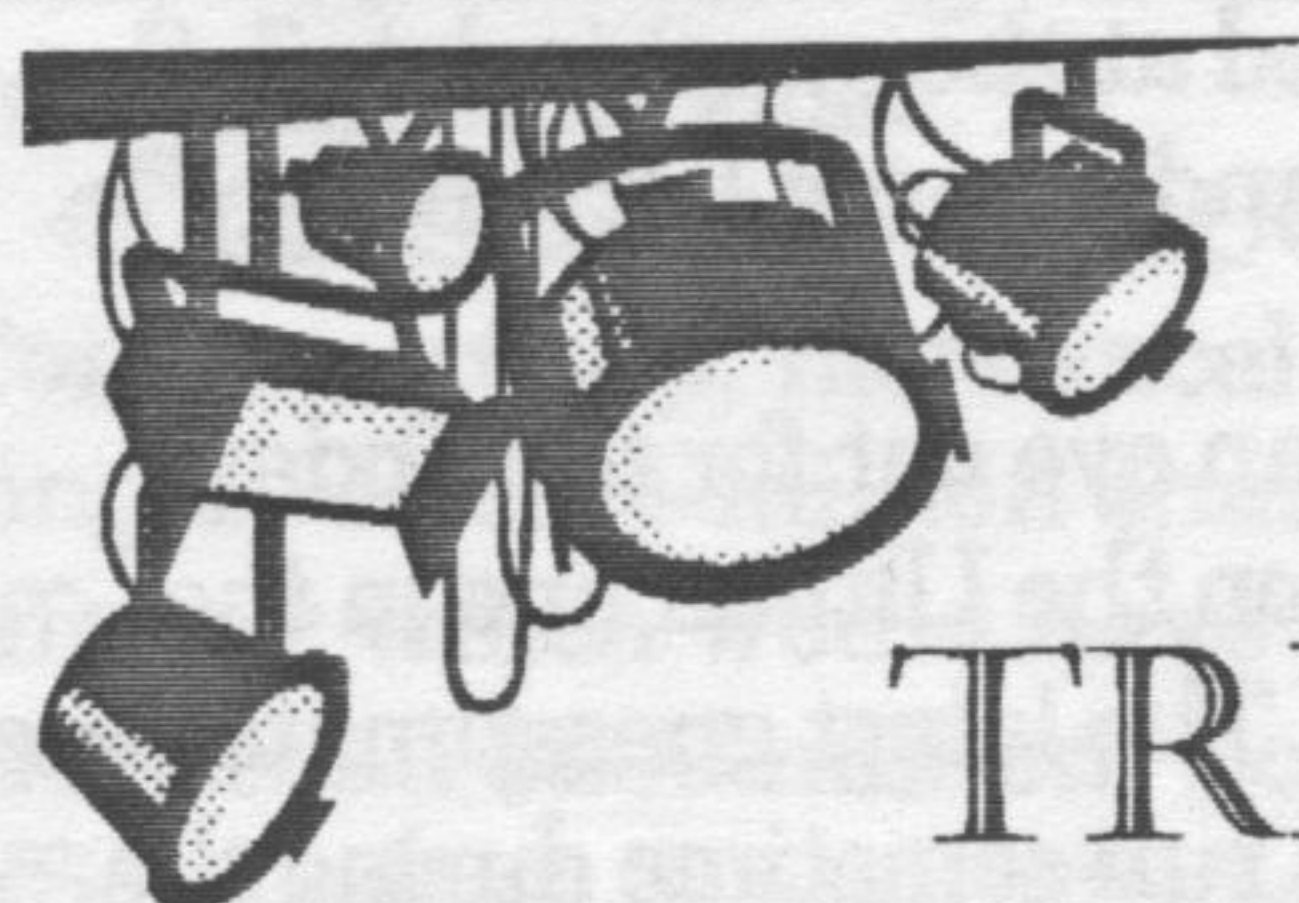
Still Counting

The ranks have now swelled to 183 full-timers. Grab your notebook and your Polaroid. Here are the latest.

Mike Grajeda joins us as Director of Finance. He has good references; Mike was Manager of Corporate Accounting at EASM for the last three years. Before that, he was with one of the "Big 8" firms, KPMG Peat Marwick, and with the \$1.5 billion Long Drug Stores chain. He's already hip-deep in ORIGIN's FY94 budget. God help him.

John Tipton is hardly a new face around ORIGIN. He's been one of those "permanent temps" in the Art Department for some time. But now, he comes aboard as just a regular guy (with full benefits).

Wendy White is helping to dispel the myth that programming is an all-male field. Wendy is working on one of **Thomas Blom's** new projects. She has a bachelors degree in computer science and was working in physics at UT when she heard about ORIGIN from her boyfriend, **Prem Krishnan**.



EC MOVIE TRIVIA CONTEST

1. In *American Graffiti*, what was John Milner's license plate #?
2. In *Aliens*, what was the military designation number of the rifle the Space Marines were using?
3. Who did the music for Franko Zeffirelli's movie, *Hamlet*?
4. *Some Like it Hot* was released in what year/which studio?
5. How many people did it take to operate the puppet of Jabba the Hut in *Star Wars*?
6. Name two (out of three) movies in which John Wayne died.