

# Point of ORIGIN

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Austin, TX



## The Silver Seed Team

Left to Right: Warren Spector, Marshall Andrews, Lisa Smith, Bruce Adams, Brian Adams, Dave Beyer, Phil Sulak and Starr Long

## AND THE WINNER IS...

The Silver Seed hasn't won any awards yet, but with its title, *Ultima VII Part 2: Serpent Isle The Silver Seed*, it should at least get one for longest name. Our creative services department managed to fit this entire title on the cover so that it's actually legible. "Any longer, and we'll have to go with a horizontal layout on our packaging," said Creative Services Manager, **Craig Miller**.

The Silver Seed is ORIGIN's second add-in disk for a game and will sign off later this month. Its producer is **Warren Spector** with assistance from writer **Lisa Smith**, programmer **Phil Sulak**, and TDA's **Bruce Adams**, **Brian Adams** and **Dave Beyer**. Silver Seed QA members are **Marshall Andrews** and **Starr Long**.

Remember:

July 5th is a Holiday

Have a Great Weekend!

### In this Point...

RC Racing  
Off-the-clock page 2

Who's new at ORIGIN  
New Hires page 5

What's best about ORIGIN  
Human Resources page 6

## Action Items

by Sharon Miller

We have compiled all the Action Items that were identified by the individual focus groups to present to Robert. Robert and Fred are consolidating all the departmental items to a master list by July 2nd that Robert will submit to Larry Probst at EASM the first week in July. Then it will be up to all of us here at ORIGIN to take action on the plan we have submitted. We will monitor our progress against our action items through additional focus groups throughout the year. There will be another Employee Opinion Survey in 12 to 14 months that will give us a read on how well we have done. If anyone is interested in browsing through the compilation of action items — containing excellent feedback and suggestions from departments and employees throughout the company — a couple of copies will be made available for checkout via the ORIGIN General Library next week sometime.

We have already taken steps toward addressing some of the suggestions that came to light from the meetings:

\*A "Security Council" has been formed of Managers and Employees.

\*Robert is continuing his lunches with employees when he is in town.

\*Dallas and Fred have made it a point to be more involved in meetings with employees.

(see "Action" on page 3...)



# Pulse Check

by donner and marie

Always on the move, always looking for ways to make things better, our CS/QA dept. has performed another feat of magic over the weekend. If you haven't managed to cruise by the CS/QA scene lately, you should, as you just wouldn't recognize the place. We've lowered walls, rearranged cubicles and generally made the place look bigger and better. Come and see us and then get the hell out of there; we don't want to be bothered by your ugly face!!! Just kidding, kids...

Marie took an interesting Serpent Isle call. Her customer had found the cheaters' room from Mad Mage Isle, and in that room he found the Philanderer's Friend, a wand that restores a key character from stone back to a living NPC. Of course since he hadn't played the game properly, he didn't know how the wand was to be used, so he tells Marie, "I thought a philanderer was someone who goes around having sex with people, but this wand doesn't look like a condom...." Oh really? What was your first clue sir??? (makes ya wonder what's in HIS medicine cabinet...maybe not...)

The QA side of the world has been busy, with 5, count 'em 5 games in test right now...We've gotcher U7 SNES, yer Runes of Virtue SNES, yer Wing Commander Academy, yer UW1 and 2 CD and the ever present and wondermuss Silver Seed add-on to Serpent Isle. Bugs are being smashed left and right and these puppies are lookin' good! Come by and see what we're doin', and I bet Starr would be happy to speak to you about an interesting new band and their music that's available....

That's what's pumpin' in the real world. Next time we'll tell ya about things that you never knew...bet ya can't wait!!!

## Off-the- clock: And in the parking lot

Remote control racing, "RC racing" to experts, is a hobby that has been around for a few years and is steadily gaining participants. When ORIGIN's first, and biggest, EA profit sharing checks were handed out, Phil Brogden immediately joined the ranks of RC hobby enthusiasts. Don Derouen and Eric Brown followed suit about a week later.

Although many people think RC racing is for children, "there are actually people who make their living from it," says Phil. There are different car styles and racing categories that make up this well-balanced sport. There are magazines, clubs and stores that specialize in RC.

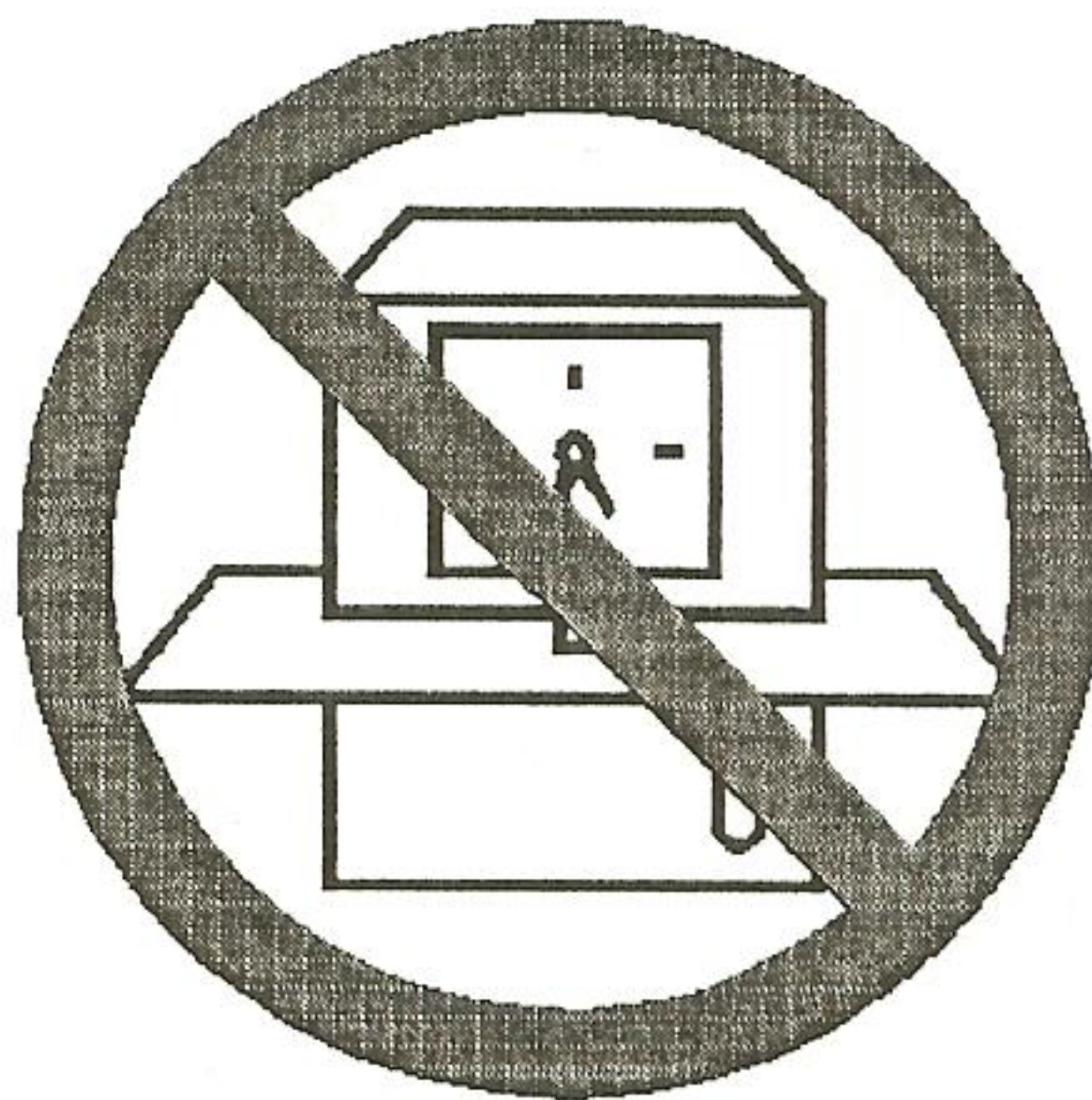
Even the races are big events and usually last all weekend. Trophies are awarded to winners and Phil has won a few races but he says he competes for the fun, the competition and the adrenaline. Don agrees as he discusses what knocked him out of the professional circuit. "I was going around a corner and if he [Phil] hadn't knocked me into the wall, I would have won the 3rd place trophy. Instead, I came in fifth. I haven't raced since, but I break his car every time we practice, so I guess it's okay," Don says with an evil laugh.

The cost of this sport can be prohibitive and is the reason Eric Brown hasn't been racing lately. "Other expenses usually get in the way," explains Eric, "and RC racing is also very time consuming." (As we all know, ORIGIN workloads compete heavily.) RC cars typically cost about \$500 and maintenance and racing fees can average \$10-\$20 a week depending on your personal modifications and racing style. Phil usually

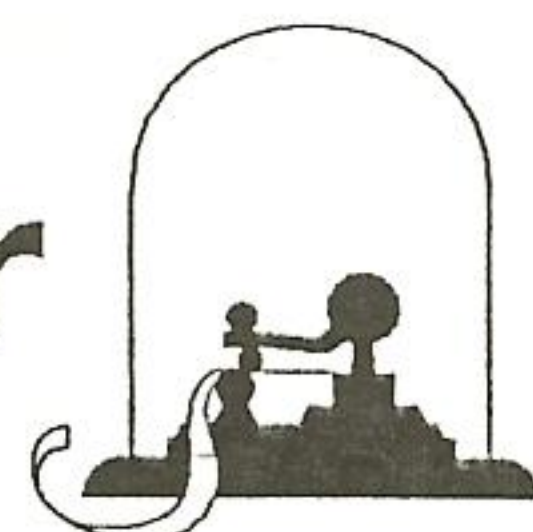


Phil "RC" Brogden shows off his prize winning car

spends 5-8 hours a week RC racing and even more when there's an official race. *But for off-the-clock time, I'm sure this cost and time is justified.* People interested in RC racing should see Phil, Don or Eric. Don has some great magazines that he'll probably let you borrow.



## Ticker



Stock prices at press time (2:45pm)

ERTS	29.5	-1
BROD	32.125	-.875
SIER	11.625	-.125
MPRS	5.75	-.75
SIER	10.25	



## ...Action

\*ORIGIN University has been resurrected with scheduled in-house classes in C++ and DOS, with more in the works.

\*Management is making a more concentrated effort to make Happy Hours more informative to employees by:

1. Giving researched information on our competition.
2. Playing music created by our own audio department.
3. Giving sales, and market status of ORIGIN's games along with our competitors.
4. Giving current information about EA worldwide.
5. Planning to show demos on our current projects.
6. Announcing any current policy changes that may have been put in place.
7. Planning to recognize special achievements by employees, or projects.

\* Project planning meetings that are open to anyone in the company.

\* Game idea plan is in the planning stages.

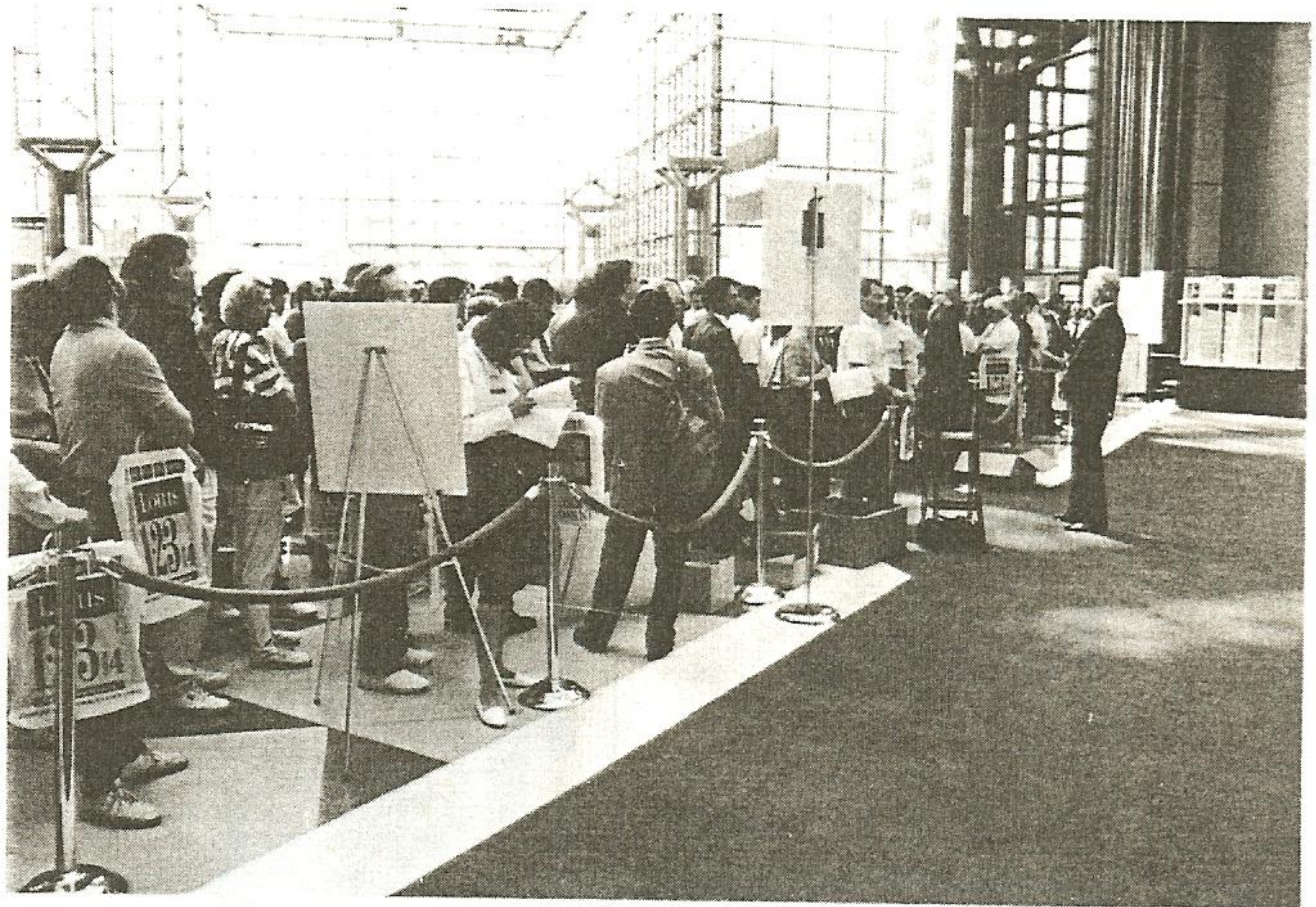
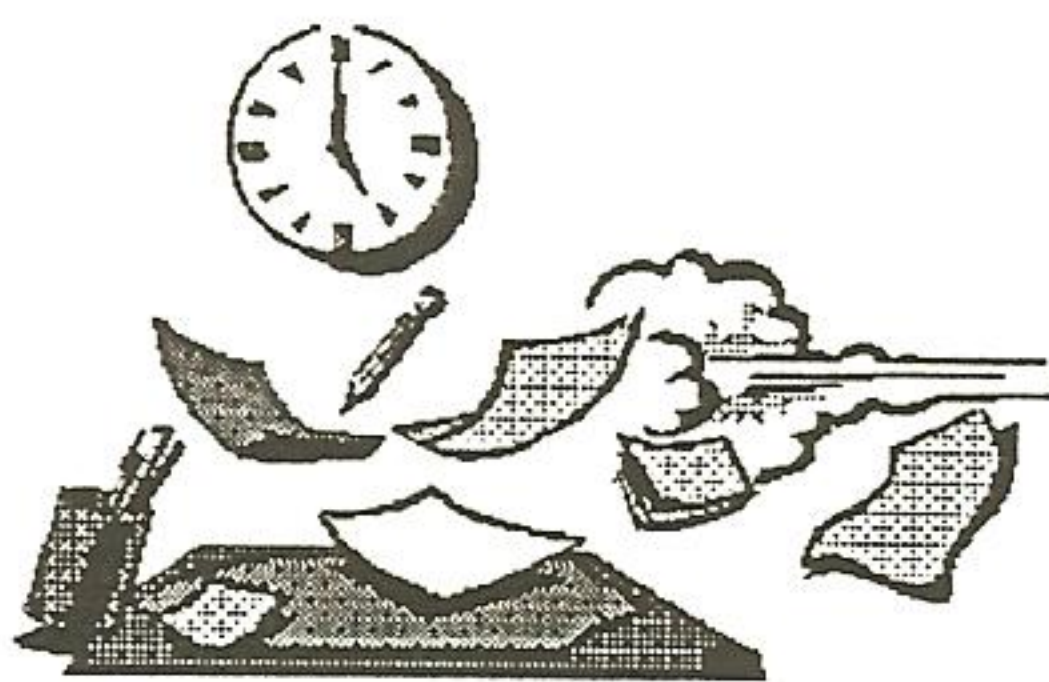
\* HR is in the process of scheduling management training in the 2nd quarter.

\* "Review of the Review Committee" has been formed consisting of management and employees to create evaluation forms and an evaluation process that will provide better feedback more effectively on a regular quarterly basis.

\* Communication of the "Compensation Plan" to managers and employees in July.

\* HR is making an effort to put more information into Point of Origin.

\* Ongoing meetings are taking place with Execs, managers, and producers concerning "Employee Favoritism" and other issues.



*The crowds surge to get into PC EXPO*

## Strike Sizzles at Summer Show

(New York) - Just when you thought it was safe to go back to trade shows, you hear that familiar voice: "I'm a fighter pilot, not a murderer."

About 85,000 of the computer industry's major movers and shakers are in the Big Apple for the summer PC Expo, and many of them could sign up as witnesses to a marriage made in heaven: Strike Commander and the Pentium.

ORIGIN is here as the guest of Houston-based Compaq, which has just begun shipping its own long-awaited 5/60M system (starting price around \$7K). When Compaq asked gamers on CompuServe what would be the best game to show off the power of the almighty "P," the response was Strike, by a 9 to 1 margin.

The obvious question is: "So how does it look?" It looks great. It's not a quantum improvement over a 4/66, but it is a testament of what is going to be possible in the future. Frame rate is as smooth as you've ever seen, and the mission data loading period has (seemingly) been cut about in half. The Compaq system also fea-

tures a spectacular 20-inch SVGA monitor with 2 MB of VRAM. Throw in a Pro Audio Spectrum 16 (for some reason, the Roland has an uncorrectable conflict) and you're loaded for bear.

At first, the Compaq gang seemed a little uneasy as bigger, more powerful speakers came out of the ORIGIN cargo, but those worries disappeared the first day of the show.

In its tried-and-true fashion, Strike drew a crowd from boot-up. The Compaq booth is in an incredible location right inside one of the main exhibition hall entrances. As the hordes flow in, many never make it past the door. The Pentium is definitely the star of this show in every booth using it.

Since most of the attendees are corporate buyers, Strike is a whole new world. Phrases like "Well there's a good reason to buy a Pentium: to play this game," and "Where can I get my hands on a copy of that?" are not uncommon.

That hasn't escaped the notice of

*(...see "Strike" on page 4)*





## Industry News

### W Industries signs virtual reality strategic joint venture with Sega

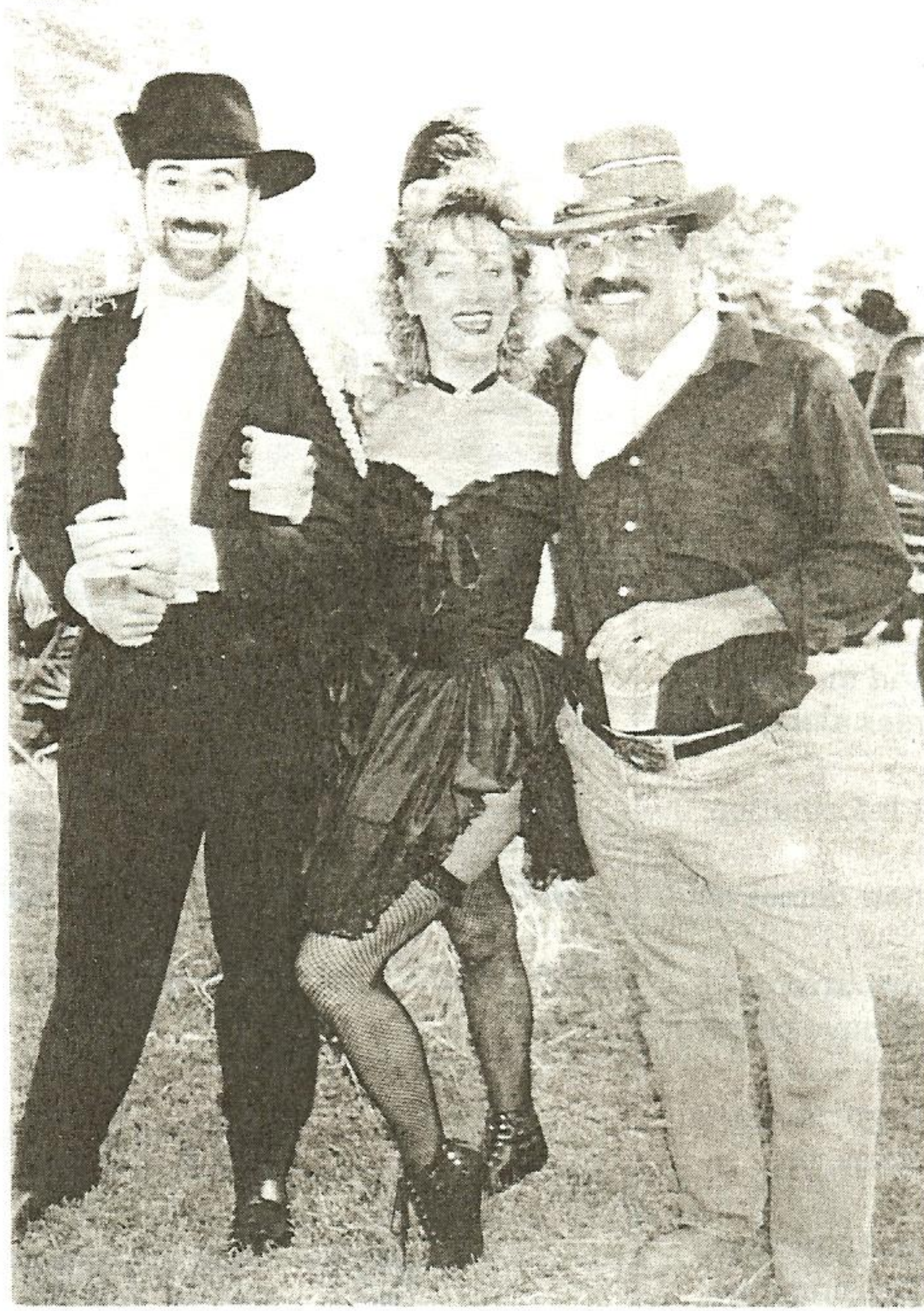
LONDON (JULY 1) PR NEWSWIRE - Sega Enterprises Ltd. of Japan, the world leader in the coin-operated industry, and W Industries in the UK, the world leader in virtual reality (VR), yesterday announced the signing of a strategic joint venture to develop virtual reality hardware and software. This joint venture will harness W Industries' pioneering technologies in VR developed over the last five years with Sega's commitment to advanced computer graphics hardware and software technology for interactive virtual reality.

Both companies express the hope that this venture will mark the beginning of a long term creative and mutually beneficial relationship. It is expected that the first Sega VR arcade game will be launched in the market in early 1994. Sega projects sales in excess of 2,000 units per

(...see "Industry" on page 5)

### ...Strike

both Compaq and Intel. Both are now very interested in possibly using Strike in cross-marketing campaigns for the Pentium systems and Over-drive chips. The message to retailers and the public should be simple: with Strike Commander, the fuse has only been lit, and it looks to be a long and steady burn.

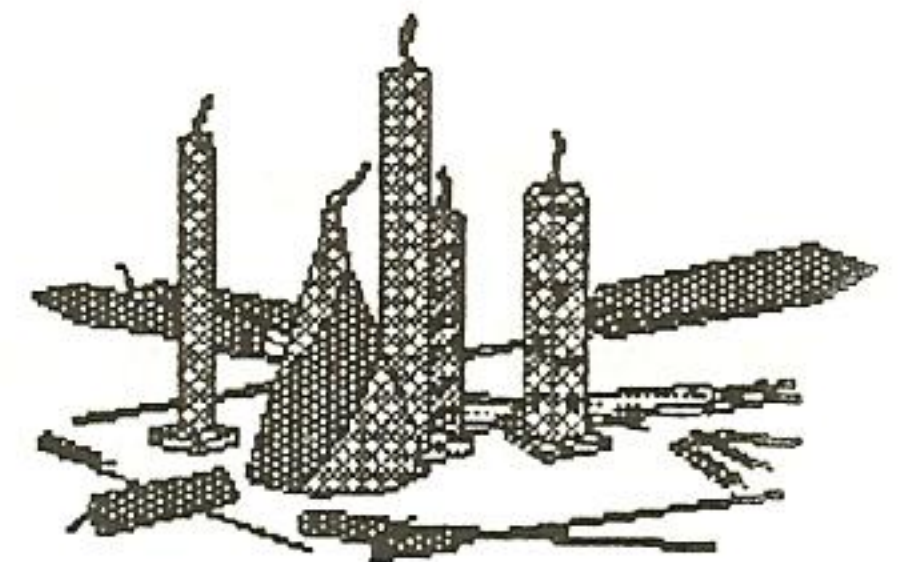


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### Last Year, This Time...

Dallas Snell, his wife Terry and Marten Davies had no trouble getting into the spirit of things at Richard's Birthday/4th of July Bash last year. This year's theme is a Po Mahina Luau. Get your invite at the front desk.



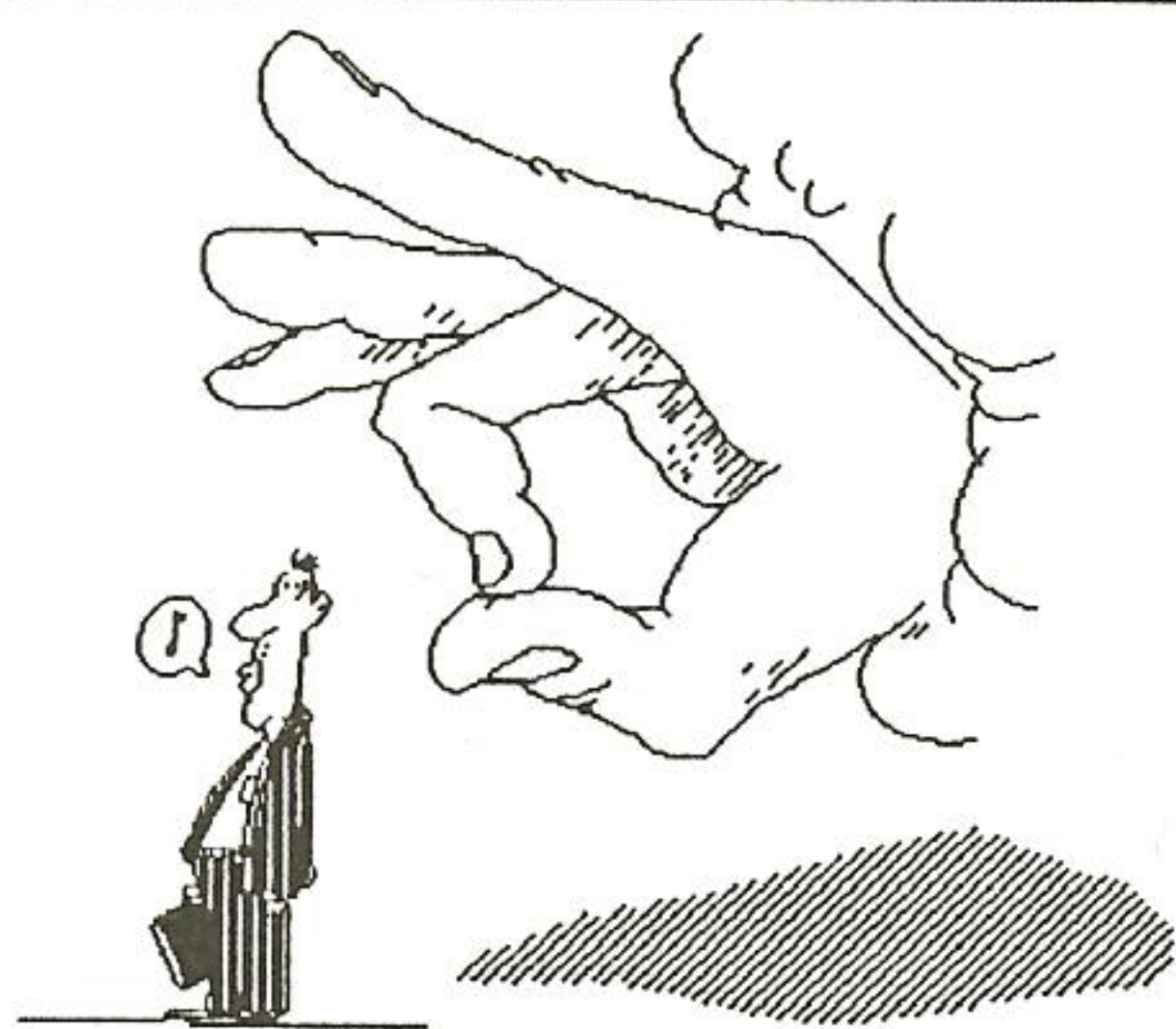


## ...Industry

annum.

The joint venture between the two companies will use Sega's graphic board and original cabinet as principal hardware components. W Industries will license its operating system and will develop and license the VR software concept. Sega will retain the worldwide distribution rights for this first arcade game.

The culmination of Sega's R&D power and W Industries' VR technologies will be introduced at Sega's High-Tech Amusement Theme Parks scheduled to open in early 1994.



Ooops!

It seems that in the last Point we missed **Kirk Winterowd's** nuptial announcement. He will be getting married to **Dawana Prescott** on July 10th and they will be traveling to the Grand Cayman's for their honeymoon. Congrats!



(5)

## New Hires



Not since August 1992 has the Marketing Department had a new employee, so **Melissa Mead** is a much appreciated addition. Melissa's official title is Publications Writer and she will be writing marketing copy, cluebooks and other documentation for our games. Melissa received a degree in English from U.T. although she spent one year in Japan with the JET program, Japanese English Tutors. She's into theme movie parties and seasonal hobbies like Ukrainian Egg making.



**Lance R. Grooms** claims to be an "optimistic cynic" who has joined us as an Advanced Software Engineer. He previously worked for London House, a Macmillan-McGraw Hill Company, and if given the opportunity at ORIGIN, would begin a Philosophical Reader's Club and Discussion Group. This all seems to tie in. Besides, his hero is C.S. Lewis.



If you see **Jeff Powell** running up and down the halls, it's because he's our new Administrative Runner. Jeff comes to us from Westwood High and DELL Computers. He plays guitar and appropriately views Randy Rhoads and Stevie Ray Vaughan as his heroes. I'm sure we'll keep him busy.



**Rick McNeeley** has just begun, but I know he's already quite popular. As a Senior Systems Support Specialist, Rick's job is to keep us all going. I'm sure we'll do the same for him. Rick worked for CompuAdd for six years and it looks like he got out just in time. Rick enjoys muscle car restoration.

by Dicko Mather





*The HR Gang: Sharon Miller, Kai Stringer and Cindy Meier*

## Human Resources R Us

In the never ending overall ORIGIN expansionism, new departments are continually coming to life. One of these is Human Resources. Sharon "I can do it" Miller is the manager of this energetic department which has a staff of 3, including Cindy Meier and Kai Stringer. Their primary purpose, besides the obvious, is to ensure that everyone at ORIGIN is on track.

Often, an employee's first contact with our own HR is through Kai. She places the ads and baits the hook to lure great employees in. She also arranges the billions of interviews needed to hire someone and reads through the tons of applications that we get every week. "We are a popular place," says Kai. "Generally we receive fifty applicants a week, although we only hire between three and five new people during normal times." Obviously, a freeze isn't a normal time, but it gives Kai a chance to catch up.

The next HR person a new employee typically meets is Sharon. Her duties are on a list longer than Santa's, beginning with new hire orientations and ending with exit interviews. In between, she has responsibilities such as the company store, entertainment committee, training, ORIGIN U, labor laws, and company policies and procedures. So, if you haven't met Sharon yet, there is a probability that you will get that chance at least once while you are here.

Cindy Meier's practical HR legal experience seems to wrap it all up. Cindy helps Sharon with everything but is usually easier to find. Cindy counsels managers on how to better supervise their employees and assists when things get tough. She is the keeper of most employee records at ORIGIN and administers our group insurance claims, unemployment claims, paytrax, 401K, stock plan, EAP, and knows at all times who works here and what they do.

Our HR department is knowledgeable, friendly and helpful. The quote of the day is simple enough: "If you have a question, then just ask." The HR department is a great place to start.

### *It hasn't gone unnoticed....*

*A BIG thanks to all of you who have been asked to complete various forms to update your personnel file. We understand how valuable your time is and appreciate that you let us have some of it! Our sincere apologies go out for any confusion or inconvenience that was caused to you in regards to a Proprietary Agreement.*

*From under our mounds of paperwork,  
Human Resources*

(6)

## Librarian's Alcove

*by Miles Lewis*

The following are the policies and procedures for the ORIGIN General Library. These are for your benefit and for everyone who uses these services. Enjoy!

The Origin General Library is located on the third floor between Customer Service and Sales in the ex-conference room called the "Worm Hole." The hours are from 12 to 6 pm Monday through Friday. Materials may be checked out for an initial two week period, although a two-week extension may be granted by the librarian. All materials, excluding periodicals, have a library card within a card-pocket. To check-out these materials, remove the card from the pocket and make sure that all materials listed on the card are with the materials to be checked out. (This is to ensure that you get a complete copy and so that you won't be accused of losing anything.) Print your name and the date on the card but do not put the card back in the pocket. Place the signed and dated card in the wooden file marked "Recent Check-Outs." If an item has no card, notify the librarian and simply check-out the item via the clip-board located on top of the wooden file. Periodicals are checked out via this same clip-board. When using the clip-board, be sure to write down your name, the date, and the access number of the item you are checking out.

When returning materials, make sure that all items originally checked out are returned. You are responsible for any lost or damaged materials. Place all returns on the return shelf near the door leading to Customer Service.

The ORIGIN General Library is for all ORIGIN employees to use. If you have a question or want something that the library doesn't have, simply ask the librarian.