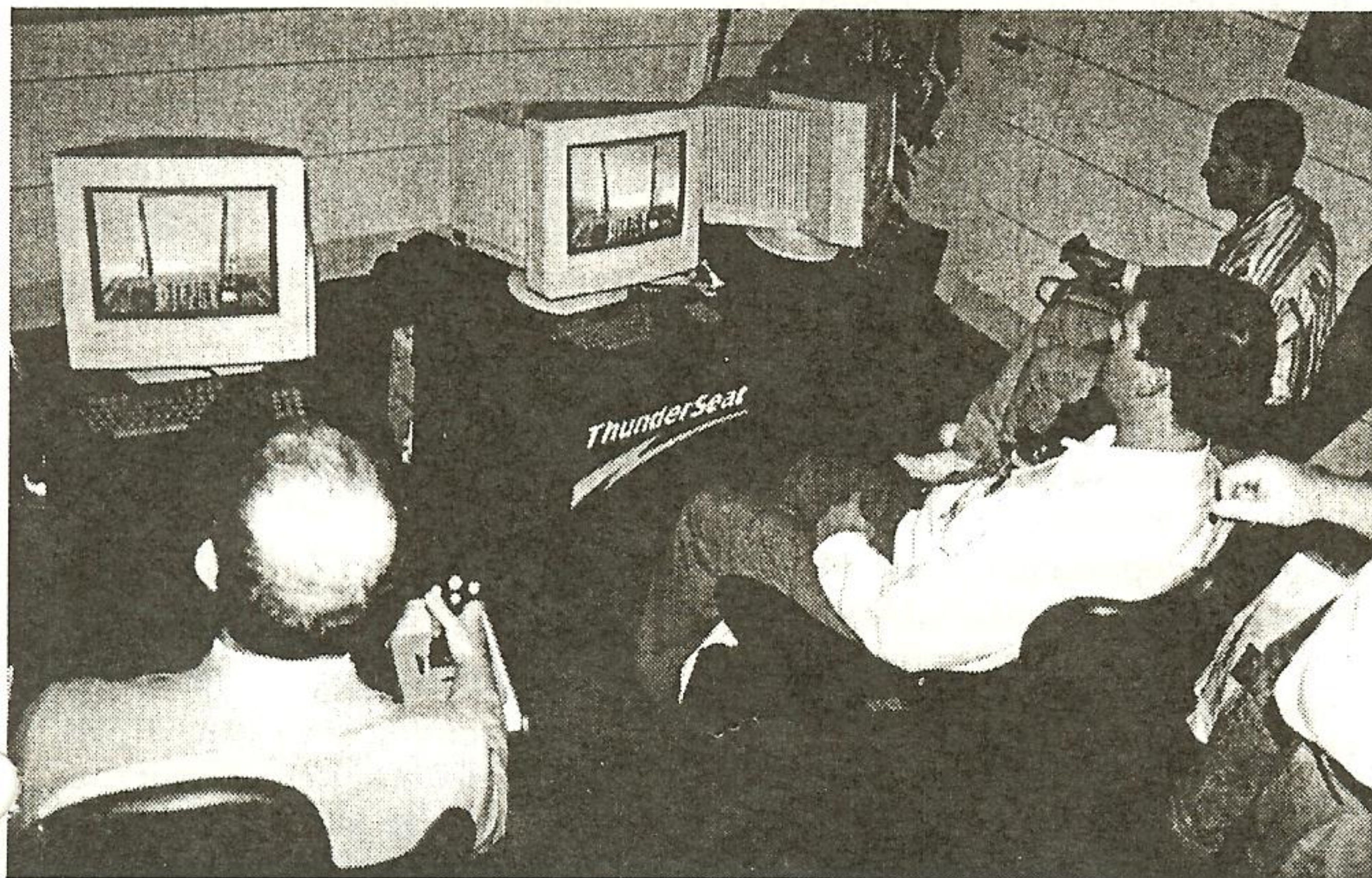


# Point of ORIGIN

Volume III, No. 51

December, 1993

Austin, TX



## Strike three...

*COMDEX attendees strap in for the Toshiba Strike Commander CD Challenge*

## Viva Las COMDEX!

*(Ed. note: After much fear and loathing, Karl Kabler has returned from Las Vegas with a wrap-up of the big Fall COMDEX show. More than 170,000 of the computer industry's biggest wigs were in attendance.)*

You may have noticed that during the week of November 15-19, the Sales Team and our Public Relations department were not in the office (and then again, you may not have noticed). In any case, it was because we were at the monster COMDEX show in Las Vegas showing the Strike Commander CD in the main convention hall, courtesy of the Toshiba Corporation, and showing Privateer in Yamaha's booth, also gratis.

The setup from Toshiba was spectacular; Toshiba literally gave ORIGIN a 12x12 space in which to work. It had 3 ThunderSeats, 3 Toshiba double-speed CD drives and 3 Flight Stick Pro flight sticks. The premise of the show was to give the attendees the opportunity to actually fly the Strike CD. In preparation for the show Galen "Captain" Svanas used our new studio equipment to produce a videotape featuring General Marten Davies explaining the whys and hows of flying.

Shelly Schmid now continually repeats "Have you watched the tape yet?" in a zombie-like mode, but a full recovery is expected. She would make people form a line to view the video before they could play. Galen and I would

*Continued on page 6*

## Print and Prizes

First, the honors. Tilt, one of France's big game mags, held its annual "Tilt d'Or" (Gold) Awards, and Serpent Isle walked away with Role-Playing Game of the Year! Congrats to that team (and the original U7 team as well) for an award well deserved. Other EA-ish games picking up trophies: FIFA Soccer for Sport Videogame, and Jordan in Flight for Sport Computer Game.

PC Entertainment has come out with its Ultimate PC Gaming Guide, an XMAS special. Three of our titles make the Editor's Picks List. Bernie Yee says Privateer has a "state-of-the-art soundtrack, and the graphics are

*Continued on page 2*

## In this Point...

The Strike CD takes to the air  
*Viva Las COMDEX Pg. 1*

Serpent Isle the toast of France  
*Print & Prizes Pg. 1*

An ORIGIN Chute-Out  
*Leap of Faith Pg. 3*

How do they figure profit sharing?  
*Point Man Pg. 4*

Michelle gets prime parking  
*EOM Pg. 5*



## In Print...

Continued from page 1

up to ORIGIN's high standards." Forge of Virtue is called "a solid addition to a wonderful game." UW2 is referred to as "3-D dungeon crawling at its best." Trent Ward even writes up Shadowcaster as a sneak preview, saying it "successfully blends the disparate elements of arcade-action and fantasy role-playing to create a unique—and thrilling—game experience." Mike Harrison's Wing Commander Strategy Guide shows up on a list of Top-10 hint books.

Japan's Pop Com has an ORIGIN product update in which reviewer Toren Smith begins: "ORIGIN, in my opinion, has never produced a dud game." He tells all Wing Commander fans that they must have Wing Academy. He calls Shadowcaster "fast and furious." And, from what he's seen of Pacific, "the graphics look stunning."

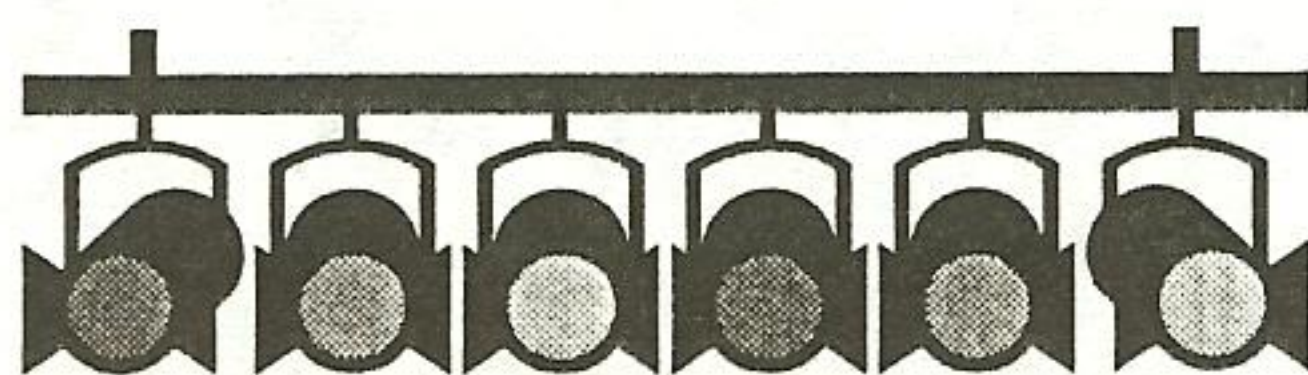
Back home again, Privateer gets a good review (89%) in December's Computer Game Review. Editor Steve Honeywell takes to the high board to go off the deep end. "Privateer is awesome," he proclaims. "It's one of those rare games you could see yourself playing years into the future and for twelve hours at a time. Truly cool!" In the same issue, though, Wing Academy gets a lukewarm review (80%). The writers basically say it's old technology and really best suited for already-hooked Wing fans.

Academy fares a little better in the premier issue of Electronic Entertainment (formerly PC Games). "The Wing Commander juggernaut rolls on," Bernie Yee writes, but he laments the lack of storyline and new technology. Usually, Bernie is a good reviewer, but this time, he just doesn't get it. The former editor of the former PC Games, Greg Keizer, includes Academy on his Christmas buying list in the December issue of Penthouse, cementing his reputation as a quality reviewer and solidifying our need to renew our subscription.

While we're on the subject of Buying Guides, Shadowcaster makes the grade in Computer Gaming World's December issue as "a 'must-

play' for every hack-and-slasher" with "some of the most fascinating monsters to ever grace computer screens." Next month, look for a Shadowcaster review in CREEM—the magazine, not the hair gel.

Wrapping up with the Ultimas, Silver Seed is called "a must for Serpent Isle fans" in PC Entertainment, while Serpent itself gets a nod in PC Magazine's After Hours section. "Enhanced sound and speed make this the best Ultima yet." Good show!



## EA Hollywood

In case you didn't see it on the Company Notices BBS, the Public Relations department in San Mateo wants to know about all EA employees who have worked in the entertainment industry—in Hollywood or elsewhere—on movies, cartoons, in the record industry, or in television production, etc. They'd like to have detailed information on your background—the companies for which you've worked and the major productions in which you've played an important role.

Also, EA wants to know how you're using your entertainment industry/Hollywood expertise to enhance EA products. They plan to use this information to pitch stories about the important role EA is playing in the intersection that is developing between the entertainment industry and Silicon Valley.

Below is a list of possible talent areas. Send this information via e-mail or fax (415-513-7040). They'd appreciate receiving it at your earliest convenience. If you feel it will help, please include a bio or resume.

- Animation
- Audio
- Music/Record production
- Movie/Video production
- Casting/Directing
- Special effects
- Cinematography/editing
- Script writing
- Licensing

## 3DO News

Game reviewers found they had a slight problem trying to look at the new 3DO releases: they wouldn't load. It turns out that products in development will only run on special debugging stations and not off-the-shelf players. So 3DO is providing key press with the special units and the PR department has another 5 or so to send out as loaners in a pinch.

A second stock offering is in process and placement is expected to be complete by Christmas.

To build consumer loyalty, 3DO is starting The 3DO Club. It is the source for fun information aimed at consumers or would-be consumers who are willing to spend \$19.95 per year to learn more about 3DO. Members can expect a quarterly newsletter with information about new 3DO products, behind-the-scenes previews, and profiles of those who have licensed 3DO's technology. Contests, special events, and sweepstakes will also be a part of the club.

According to the gang in San Mateo, Toi Cook, Keith Taylor and Jimmy Spencer, all defensive backs with the New Orleans Saints, were at EA before their big showdown versus the Niners—playing 3DO Madden Football. They really loved it and had to be torn away from it, since they needed to get back to the hotel for the traditional lunch spread & nap prior to game time. They play Madden-Sega religiously, but were really wowed by the 3DO version.

Super Wing Commander figures to be a decent chunk of 3DO's CES plans. We're placing a SWC3DO press release in the 3DO press kit and providing an array of screen shots for reviewers who need them. Right now, there's still a dearth of titles for 3DO, so Super Wing could get a good bump in visibility.







***Excuse me while I kiss the sky...***

*Kathie Lambdin drops in on Skydive San Marcos.*

# Leap of Faith

(Ed. note: Correspondent Wayne Baker took a leap of faith for this article, joining the latest freefalling fad for ORIGIN—skydiving.)

The Saturday morning after Thanksgiving I woke up, turkey still heavy in my gut, and proceeded to get dressed so I could jump out of an airplane for the very first time. The air was cold, but warm compared to what it would be at 10,000 feet, so I dressed warmly for the drive to Skydive San Marcos. The local drop zone (or "DZ," as it's known to seasoned jumpers), is about 14 miles east of I-35 on Route 80 to Lulling. I was wrought with pangs of excitement...and indigestion.

Once I got to the DZ, I felt slightly ill scribbling a dozen signatures and initials on a document which stated, in effect, that if anything unfortunate happened (i.e., death or dismemberment), then I—or or my heirs—would have to pay all legal costs and damages. Convincing. I then watched a 20-minute video which explained everything I would possibly need to know, including how to back out if I was too frightened to continue.

At the end of the video there's a welcome from Steven Van Buren, President of Skydive San Marcos, who also turned out to be my Tandem

Master. A Tandem Master is someone who controls the entire dive experience. As a participant, I was little more than an observer. I was shown how I would be securely fastened to Steve, who wore the parachute and guided me through the crucial steps of suiting up, boarding and bailing out of a perfectly good 1963 Cessna single-prop airplane.

At a little under 10,000 feet, Steve clicked our harnesses together with primary and safety fasteners, checked out the zone and instructed our seasoned Gulf War pilot to throttle back. (No, they actually don't cut the engine all the way like I thought.) Steve turned the crank on the door and pushed it up and open but the wind grabbed it first and it slammed upward. Suddenly the moment of truth hit me in the face with a gust of 42-degree wind. I saw the ground like I had never seen it before—10,000 feet below—straight down. On the strut of the wing, a bumper sticker in bold type read "SHUT UP AND JUMP!" which told me that I was not the first to feel panic.

Almost immediately, another jumper climbed out onto the step, grabbed the strut and was gone. Steve hit my arm and yelled above the wind, "We're next!" He then stepped

out of the plane and instructed me how to stand and situate myself. I had to hold my arms over my chest, lean my head back and arch my legs so that I wasn't even touching the plane. "Ready?" was all I heard as we jumped backwards, rolling over and over, ground, sky, ground, sky, ground, sky, horizon. Then we swung East, South, West, North, and then again starting from the East. I held my arms out and enjoyed the freefall (much like Kathie Lambdin in the photo to the left) until Steve looked at his altimeter and told me to cross my arms when he pulled the rip cord.

The experience was a lot like when you hit your brakes on your car and the seat belt grabs you. The handles to guide the parachute were ready, so I put my hands in them and in a moment I was spinning the parachute to the left and right to the point of nausea. We practiced flaring, which is the way we would land. The trees started getting bigger and our landing, only about 40 seconds after we fell from the plane, was no more harsh than jumping out of bed in the morning. I walked away exhilarated, with a new experience to talk about and a certificate to proudly show my friends.

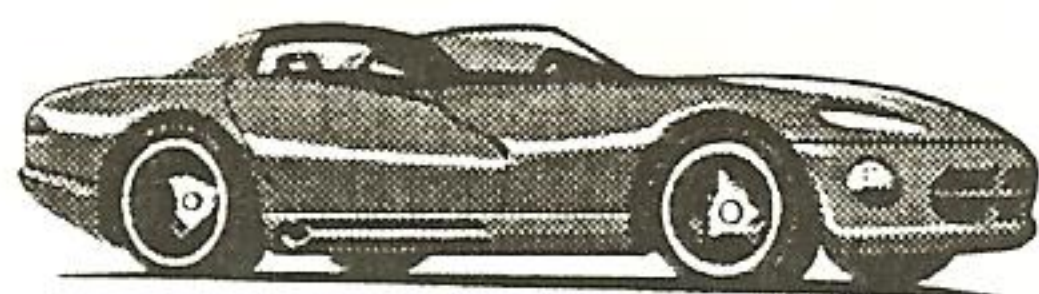
Overall, I would rate this as a *great* experience. It cost \$135.00 to make the jump, although I could have spent an extra \$60 for a video and 35mm photos. If I were to continue with the program (90% of the first time jumpers don't return), it would cost about \$1000 for the training and then around \$30 each jump after. Kathie Lambdin was jumping that day and she bought a log book to record her jumps. It was her second time, and from the look on her face, it won't be her last. Other notables at ORIGIN who have taken the plunge include **Richard** and **Robert Garriott**, most of the U8 team, and anyone else Richard has convinced to try it. EA San Mateo has a group of adventure sports enthusiasts and their lead diver is **Dany Brooks**, who invites ORIGINites to jump with her any time we're in town.



# Dear Point Man,

Dear Point Man,

As another Texas-size storm rolls in, my blood pressure is rapidly rising with the thought of possible tennis-ball-size hail pulverizing my precious auto. How hard would it be to get some covered parking available at Origin as an extra-cost option to employees who want it? I would be interested in a reserved, covered space like the old Wild Basin building had. I would be willing to pay maybe 30-50 bucks a month for this. I sent e-mail to management about this and got no response. Can the Point Man address this issue?



Signed,  
Hail on Wheels

Dear Hail,

Actually, carports were explored as a possibility last October. Research indicated the cost of each carport would run anywhere between \$800 and \$1,200, depending on many factors—namely, type (galvanized metal or aluminum would be the two top contenders) and quantity. UM is still tossing it around. We'll keep you posted.

Dear Point Man,

We watched eagerly as EA's quarterly profits were reported, and waited expectantly as EA's stock prices continued to climb. Yet, despite the fantastic figures released, most of us found our profit sharing checks far less than we anticipated. Could you explain how the profit sharing is calculated? We've heard that the third quarter, which we are currently in, is EA's largest. Can we expect a larger check in January?



Signed,  
Fiscally Confused

Dear Confused,

There's no way I can explain it, so I found someone who can: our own pinto inventory manager, Mike Grajeda. Here's what he says:

"At the beginning of the year, EASM Finance calculates total worldwide salaries for the year. It then takes this number and multiplies it by 4% (the target P/S payout). This gives the annual profit sharing pool. This number is then divided by budgeted profits to arrive at the percentage of annual profits to be distributed. This percentage is constant throughout the year. Thus, in the third quarter, which is the most profitable, a larger payout is made than in the first or second quarter.

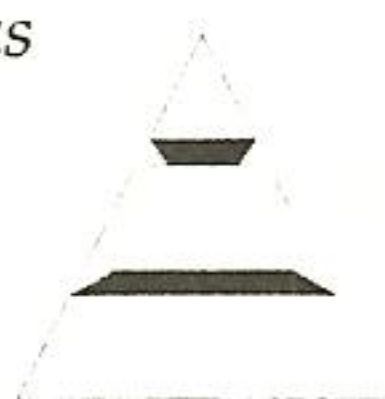
There are two variables which can affect the amount of the payout. First, and most obvious, is the amount of profits the Company generates. Any excess over planned profits is doubled for the purpose of calculating the profit sharing payout to provide additional upside in good times. The second is worldwide headcount. While the P/S pool remains constant, the amount of people who get a piece can be more or less than budget (fewer people-bigger slices of the pie)."

Dear Point Man,

Once upon a time there was a rumor that said something about an Origin organization chart being prepared. The only thing that ever came of it was one of extreme upper management (which everyone already pretty much knew). Is there ever going to be a complete org chart?

Signed,  
Curious!

PS. It would be a good thing to have around. If I have an observation that I want to pass on to someone's supervisor (positive or negative) it would be nice to be able to find out who that person's supervisor is.



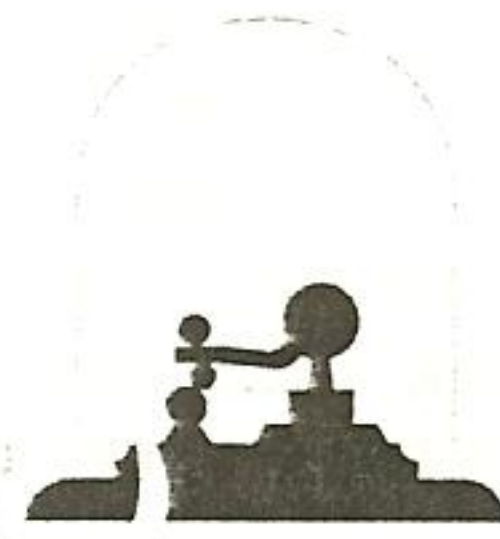
## NEWS.TXT

Intel Corp. and General Instrument Corp. have demonstrated high-speed modem technologies that are 1,000 times faster than present modems. The effort is aimed at providing faster data transmission through what is known as "broadband" communications used in the cable television network. Both companies are contributing technologies and expertise from their respective fields to enhance the home PC using the cable network as the data pipeline to the home. According to market research, cable TV is present in more than 60 million homes.

Canon is holding a conference today to demonstrate software from its new subsidiary formed to develop interactive, three dimensional (3D) software for the Microsoft Windows graphical environment. Canon is claiming that its new software will provide interactive 3D graphics at one tenth the cost of current workstation-based products and will not only work with Microsoft Windows, but with the Motorola microprocessor-based Macintosh and with Sun's workstation hardware as well.

Atari Corp. has sued rival Sega of America Inc., alleging patent infringement by Sega's video game products. A statement from Atari's Sunnyvale, Calif., offices says its claim of infringement "concerns the manner in which Sega scrolls the displays in their video game products." Atari seeks injunctive and monetary relief.

## Ticker



The latest from Wall Street at press time.

ERTS	33.500	-1.000
THDO	29.000	-1.625
BROD	42.125	-5.125
SIER	23.500	+0.250
MPRS	14.000	-0.250
MSFT	85.000	+2.125
SGI	44.750	+0.625

Don't miss the exciting answer on page 6



## Employee of the Month

November's Employee of the Month is **Michelle Caddel**. In fact, she was ORIGIN's first Austin employee. Michelle has run the gamut from receptionist to LB's executive assistant and everything in between since coming aboard seven years ago. Michelle says the people here have always been the most important part of her job—and if she's ever helped you out of a jam, you know it.

Michelle says that "although some of the warmth at ORIGIN has disappeared with the merger, it still feels like a family." One person whose life wouldn't be the same without Michelle is **Richard Garriott**, who has been heard many times saying that he couldn't live without her. He's even needed her help at the bi-annual Haunted House, making Michelle's most bizarre "task" at ORIGIN that of



**Michelle Caddel**

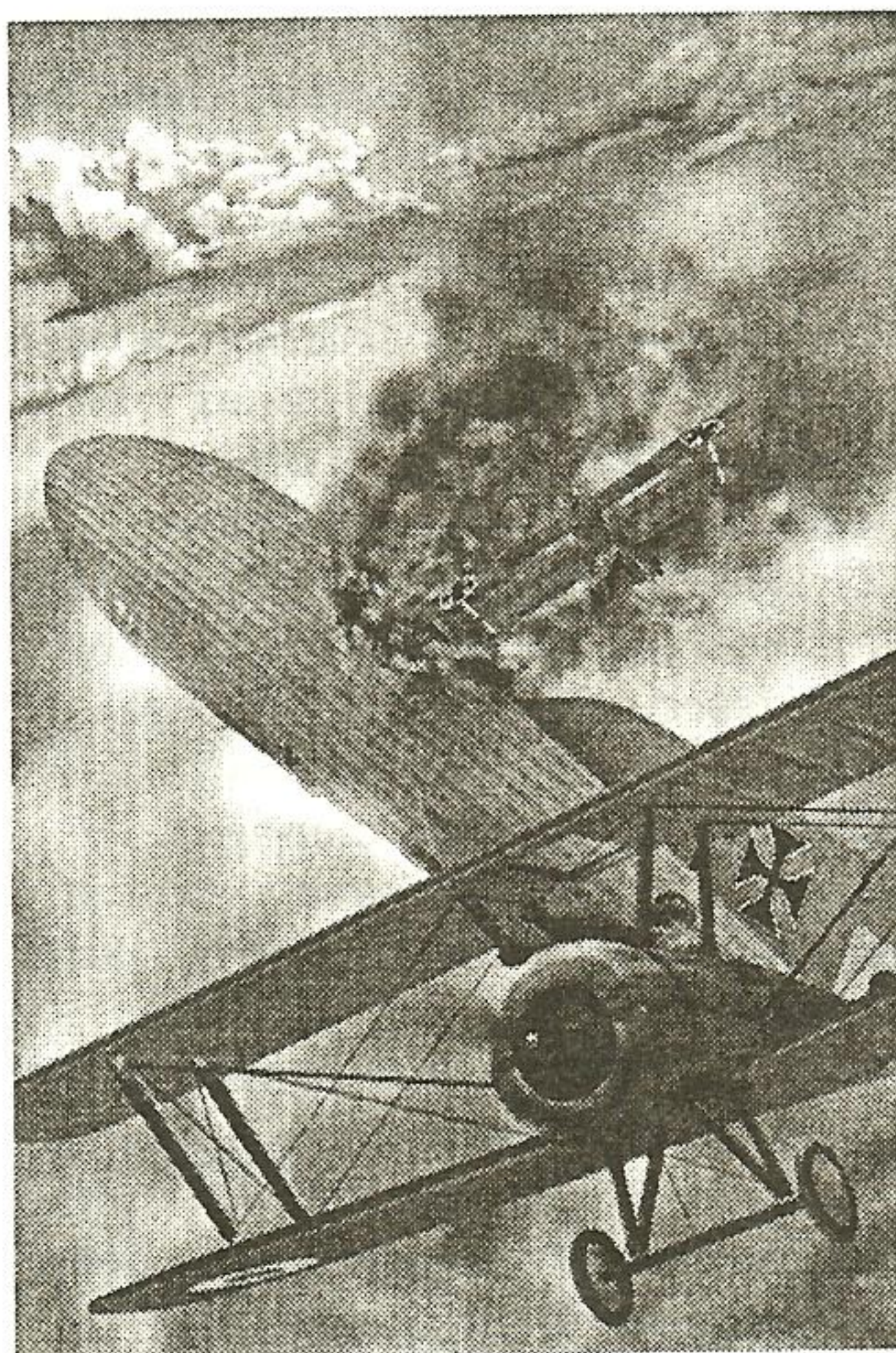
hanging off a steel cable in a spider costume. In her spare time, Michelle enjoys raising dogs and spending time with horses.

Congrats, Michelle, we love you!

## Most Popular CompuServe Cheat Programs

1. Universal Hint System Reader Civilization, Unit & City Improvement
3. Crusaders of the Dark Savant
4. Ultima Underworld II, Character Editor v 2.4
- Ultima Underworld Char. Editor
6. Ultima VII, Cheat Mode Enabler & Items List
7. Ultima Underworld, Manna/Vitality Editor
8. Prince of Persia II, Mega-Trainer
9. Civilization, More Money
10. Ultima Underworld II, Super Character File

Figures compiled by the editors of PC Entertainment magazine, based on the number of download/accesses from the Gamers's Forum. List does not include text files containing hints, such as those for Serpent Isle and Wing 2, each with more than 1,000 downloads.



### Wings of Glory...

Here's your first look at the cover art for *Wings of Glory* (formerly *Flying Circus*), the result of a collaborative effort. Whitney Ayres provided high-res 3D Studio renders of the planes and zeppelin. Jennifer Davis in Creative Services composed the layout and added touch-ups, terrain and sky. Great work!

## New Hires

**Sean Kelly** is our new Network and Technology Services Manager. He comes to us from Xetel Corporation and is related to Stonewall Jackson. (Jackson, by the way, was killed by his own men.)

**Carol Roberts** is an Advanced Graphics Specialist who joins us because she missed doing 3-D animation in her previous job. She's on **Andy Hollis'** team. If anyone plays Mah-Jong, give Carol a call.

**Lawrence E. Ball** is a brand new Customer Support Representative who happens to be a "nice guy," or so he claims. He's seen the game market from the consumer viewpoint as an employee of Best Buy and Office Depot, which should make him empathetic to the woes of computer failure.

**Barry Leitch** is an imported Advanced Composer and Arranger. He's worked at Ocean and Imagitec (much like a few other Brits walking the halls) and is still getting used to our accents. *Our accents?*

If you've been here for a few months, then you already should know **Roswitha Shoemake**. She worked here once before as a German translator. Her current capacity is checking the German Ultima VIII.

**Lori Ortiz** was attracted to ORIGIN's ad which was "tailor made to [her] desire." (Hey, what are we saying about this place anyway?) Lori is a Product Support Tech and will appear on *Wheel of Fortune* on December 22. If you miss it, we found out from our crystal ball that she will win \$2,000 and parting gifts, which we're told are slightly better than the usual Rice-a-Roni.

One of **David C. J. Taylor's** heroes is an ancient ORIGIN character called **MOEBIUS**. He's been hired as a Graphic Specialist for *Bounty Hunter*. Something that makes David stand out is the fact that a close friend of his from college now plays "the big floating head on the *Mighty Morphing Power Rangers Show*."

Farewells go out to **Richard Lane**, **Edwin Herrell**, **Rebecca Heidt**, **Anthony Nichols**, **Nance Payne**, **Jim Franklin**, **Brian Heard** and **Erin Roberts**, our first transfer to EAUk.



## COMDEX...

Continued from page 1

then shuffle in 3 people at a time to fly. Each person had 3 minutes to play, and every player who scored a minimum of 1,000 points received a Strike Commander T-Shirt. In addition, we gave away rain checks for the soon-to-be-released (hopefully) Strike CD to players who scored high scores in the morning and afternoon sessions.

Toshiba was gracious to give the high scorer for each day their very own Toshiba double-speed CD drive (retail price between \$500-600). The crowds were unbelievable. Many people would play, stand in line again, and play over and over. Many COMDEX veterans were overheard commenting that they hadn't seen crowds like this in a long time. In fact, it was so busy that Galen, Shelly and I were actually unable to take any time off to see the rest of the show. We were turning people away at the end of each day. Over at the Yamaha booth, Lee "Oh Why Did I Have Foot Surgery a Week Before COMDEX?" Moore was wooing the crowds with Privateer and Strike Commander utilizing the Yamaha speaker system. Yamaha was to provide us with its new General MIDI sound card, but it was still in development right up to the first day of the show (sound familiar?), so we just used our standard sound cards. Yamaha didn't mind, since Lee was being bombarded with people trying to see Privateer, which in turn drew larger crowds in the Yamaha booth.

Over at the Logitech booth, they were showing Shadowcaster using their new mouse system. So you can say that ORIGIN had quite a presence at the COMDEX show.

One other note: tomorrow (Saturday), CompUSA will be opening a new store just down the road at 183 and 360 (near the Sam's Club) and Lee will be there in the morning giving product demos. If you've ever wanted to see what happens at one of these events, now's the time to check it out!



## Return of the Guardian...

Bill Johnson reprises his role for Ultima VIII, the first use of the all-new ORIGIN recording studio.

## Point Man...

Continued from page 4

Dear Curious:

Dallas and Francine are still working on the schematic chart, but Sharon says job descriptions and chains of command have been established. Mindy has updated three "master" job description books with all 108 job descriptions which will reside in Sharon's office, Francine's office, and Mike Grajeda's office. Each of the producers will have a binder with all the job descriptions of PD (i.e., Art, Programming, Design, Audio, & PD Management.) Each manager, outside of PD, will have a copy of the job descriptions in their departments.

If an individual wants to discuss his/her job description, or see what it will take to move up the matrix in his/her group, they need to first go to their producer or department manager. They are also welcomed in HR for additional help or information.

These books will be "totally" completed and out to the producers and department managers. In the meantime, anyone is welcome to go to HR to see their description, or the levels above in their specific group.

Keep those questions coming in! Remember, you can e-mail them to the Point of ORIGIN address, or just drop them by Galen Svanas's office on the second floor.

## Changes in Store for Point of ORIGIN

The new year will bring some changes to Point of ORIGIN, the company's most widely-read (and only) insider rag. We are abandoning the maniacal bi-weekly publishing schedule in favor of a slightly less insane monthly turn. After all, the news doesn't change *that* much in 14 days.

Also, due to a re-structuring in the Creative Services Department, your Humble Editor (Galen Svanas) has been bumped up to the newly-created position of Product Marketing Manager (see the EA World BBS for details). That means the search for a new Media Relations Manager is underway, and that person will inherit the weighty responsibility of the Point. As we like to say here, we'll "keep you posted" as to when that changing of the guard takes place.