

the **POINT** of **ORIGIN**

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Trade Show Maverick Wayne Baker demonstrates Strike Commander at the FOSE show in Washington, D.C.

Cover to Cover

"The Future Is Here," proclaims the front cover of the premiere issue of PC Gamer magazine and it's an ORIGIN game, editors claim, that will transport gamers into a new age. The first issue of the revamped publication (formerly called PC Entertainment) is out on newsstands and Lex, the main character in BioForge, is gracing the cover.

Stephen Poole and Matt Bielby flew down from North Carolina to Austin just to see what Origin's first Interactive Movie is all about. They were clearly impressed by what they saw and it looks like these editors believe ORIGIN has correctly defined what an Interactive Movie should be. "For perhaps the first time," writes Poole, "a company actually thought long and hard about all the components needed to make up an Interactive Movie, rather than releasing a product and slapping the IM label on it."

But Poole didn't just like the concept, he liked the eye candy in BioForge. "The texture-mapped, 3-D characters in BioForge...are state of the art," he said, "and the smooth, lifelike animations make it easy for you to suspend your disbelief. The stage is set for something incredible. Now all that's left to do is wait for the curtain to rise."

The magazine itself looks very nice and is a giant step ahead of its predecessor in terms of layout. You'll find the cover already hanging on the wall in the lobby.

And BioForge isn't the only product PC Gamer liked when it stopped in Austin. There is a wonderful write up on System Shock. Bielby wrote, "Origin's recent track record makes any release from the company worth checking out, but this latest collaboration with LookingGlass might be one of the year's best games. Every trick in the book has been used to make this as intense an audio-visual experience as possible."

Wings of Glory and Wing Commander Armada also received praises in short previews in PC Gamer. "It looks like this could be one that flight-sim fans will be flying, and talking about, for a while," the editors wrote concerning Wings of Glory. As for Armada, both Bielby and Poole were obviously blown away by Origin's first head-to-head/modem-to-modem game. "Considering the

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On the Road

(Ed. Note: Wayne Baker was the point man for ORIGIN at two major trade shows during the month of March. This is his report.)

Like someone with a split personality, the SXSW (South-by-Southwest) Multimedia Show in Austin was part exhibition and part job fair. There was the flash of The Fat Man and his decked out area like an expensive leather living room, a couple of virtual reality demos, a POWER PC running Quark Express in its native mode and a lot of local people and companies networking themselves into a frenzy. The buzz words to this conference were "multimedia," "information superhighway" and "virtual reality;" all spoken as passwords to some great and secret society.

The ORIGIN booth consisted of two tables with CES posters hung on the curtains separating the aisles, a VCR playing the 1994 Works in Progress Tape, a 3DO demo of Super Wing Commander and a PC loaded with the Strike CD, Pacific Strike, Pagan and the BioForge CES demo. Ninety-nine percent of the people who visited the ORIGIN booth had never before heard of ORIGIN or ULTIMA or played anything we produced and were just vaguely familiar with Electronic Arts because of their cartridge titles. Brian Wachhaus and I both answered questions about our entire product line

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and watched as visitors become addicted to Ultima VIII and Strike Commander. Super Wing Commander also attracted people to witness the "best looking campaign of the Confed-Kirah wars" as one player said. A few people mentioned that we were the best booth because we were actually fun.

After Hal Josephson's speech on the 3DO, they all had to see the 3DO in action,...

After each of the lectures in the various rooms nearby were over, people would swarm into the demo room to test the speakers' knowledge of the topics just discussed. After Hal Josephson's speech on the 3DO, they all had to see the 3DO in action, but were disappointed that: we only had one game; that we couldn't explain why it cost \$400; and that 3DO technology was proprietary (like IBM's microchannel architecture, someone said). They also inquired why someone would want to buy a peripheral to play 3DO games on their PC's when the software could be created originally on the PC at a much cheaper price. They were also strangely amazed that a TV could look better than a high resolution SVGA monitor. We also dealt with the usual customer service questions, for which I was prepared with a live Product Support Rep. One guy felt we needed to get into location based-entertainment (for which his startup company could provide a cheap answer). A woman thought that we should create more feminist games. I gave the first guy my card and told him about **Robert Garriott** and to the other I eventually suggested that she write the script and find a talented programmer and artist. They both left a little more informed and pleased that we were there to talk with them. For the rest, I passed out a document I pasted together which not only told people about Origin and how to find out more about employment opportunities, but also where and how to contact our product support department.

The following day I packed up what I could and headed to the FOSE (Federal Office Systems Equipment) Show in Washington, D.C., where I literally flew the Strike Commander CD on a Pentium System for COMPAQ Computer Corporation. This show

was for government buyers who enjoyed the Strike demonstration because it was a break from the usual boring demos. On more than one occasion, someone walked up who knew a lot about F-16's, their fuel consumption, at what speed and altitude the Vulcan cannons would properly function, and how to perfectly execute a bombing run. These experts said that our

game would make a terrific simulator, but that we would have to charge about a million dollars per package more for the government to its value. After all, we'd have to give them what they were used to, and nothing good comes cheap. The FOSE show lasted three days and about 80,000 people from government agencies participated.

Bulldog Bytes from Marten Davies

Hi Gang,

Just wanted to share with you some news that I believe speaks volumes for Origin's (and EA) efforts during 1993. PC Data conducts exhaustive data tracking of the market through the following accounts: Babbages, Circuit City, CompuAdd, CompUSA, Electronics Boutique, Elek Tek, LDI, Software Etc., Staples and Waldensoftware. This is a thoroughly representative cross section of accounts that carry and sell software. They get feedback on the number of units sold through these outlets and then roll them up on a monthly basis. THE INFORMATION BELOW IS BASED ON THE ANNUAL ROLL-UP.

Here's the news all of which is a significant accolade to every member of the company.

Market Share by \$ and Units

1. Microsoft	19.4%	12.3%
2. WordPerfect	5.4%	1.8%
3. Lotus	4.3%	1.3%
4. Sierra on Line	3.6%	4.7%
5. Borland	3.1%	1.5%
6. Broderbund	3.1%	4.0%
7. Intuit	3.0%	3.3%
8. Symantec	2.1%	0.9%
9. Microprose	2.0%	2.5%
10. Lucas Arts	1.6%	1.9%
11. ORIGIN	1.5%	1.8%
12. 65S.S.I.	1.5%	2.1%
(This line of product is sold by OSI Sales Team)		
13. Virgin	1.4%	2.0%
14. ELECTRONIC ARTS	1.4%	2.0%

Electronic Arts Companies alone accounted for 6.0% of Market \$ and 7.8% of Unit Sales. This places EA in a solid 2nd place behind Microsoft.

In the GAMES category ORIGIN is in 4th place with a 5.6% market share by \$ and a 4.6% market share by units, and EA in 7th with a 5.1% market share by \$ and a 3.5% market share by units. Combined figures would give EA companies a 2nd place behind Sierra.

In the EDUCATION category BRODERBUND is the outright leader with 17.6% market share by \$ and 14.6% by Units

Additional interesting facts:

Top 200 Games of 1993 by Dollars
6. STRIKE COMMANDER
8. PRIVATEER
11. ULTIMA VII
28. UNDERWORLD II
48. WING COMMANDER
Plus other OSI products in the Top 200

Top 200 Games of 1993 by Units
8. WING COMMANDER
9. STRIKE COMMANDER
22. PRIVATEER
26. ULTIMA VII
49. STRIKE COMMANDER SPEECH PACK
Plus other OSI products in the Top 200

OUTSTANDING RESULT!!

A Note From Down Under (EA-Australia)

Well Tejas, probably like everywhere in EA (Under)World the Pagan is doing it big time with stores sold out and crying for stock over this Easter long weekend. It's so far No.1 that who ca what's next.

Congratulations to Lord Brit and everyone at Project Pagan. Move over Nintendo—you're about to be sh**kicked!

Cover...

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popularity of the Wing Commander series, Armada may be one of the year's biggest hits."

The only downer to the premiere issue was the review of *Ultima VIII*. Writer Trent Ward criticized what he called the "arcade" aspect of the latest Lord British game and claims that hard core fantasy roll playing fans will be turned off. However, there were aspects of the game he was sold on. "The storyline is deep, full of twists and turns, and well-written from start to finish." He added, "Ultima VIII's artwork and animation are nearly perfect."

"System Shock sets a phenomenal new standard of gaming by immersing the player in a supremely believable 360 degree, 6-D world."

Once you're finished glancing at PC Gamer on the magazine shelf, look right next to it and you'll probably find another leading magazine with an Origin game gracing its cover. The June issue of Strategy Plus features a preview of System Shock. Editor Marc Dultz

took a trip to LookingGlass Technologies to get a face to face look at the game. He came away impressed. "The game looks absolutely marvelous," wrote Dultz. In referring to the main character's ability to crawl, crouch, peer around corners and look over walls in a first person perspective, Dultz exclaimed, "SS sets a phenomenal new standard of gaming by immersing the player in a supremely believable 360 degree, 6-D world." He added, "The game is every bit the rollercoaster ride of the mind and eye its billing purports."

And the Origin juggernaut continues at other magazines. The June issue of Computer Gaming World will feature Wings of Glory on the cover. Editor Chris Lombardi and writer Paul Schuytema were in last month for a two day look at ORIGIN games. Warren Spector and Bill Baldwin gave Schuytema a complete tour of the game and Schuytema, a self-avowed flight sim junkie appeared to like what he saw. Expect some mentions of BioForge, Ultima VIII and Pacific Strike in coming CGW issues.

Future releases are getting play in other major magazines. Compute's Scott May is another of the believers in ORIGIN's Interactive Movie concept. In an article examining developing technologies in computer gaming, May pointed out, among other things, the "Flock of Birds" hardware and software being used in BioForge. He went on to write, "Origin, which recently built a Hollywood-style sound studio, has positioned itself to become a leader in CD-based computer moviemaking."

And if that isn't enough, how about May's review in the same issue on Shadowcaster. Big Shad was chosen "Entertainment Choice" of the month for April. "Dazzling first-person graphics are the game's hallmark feature," May proclaims. "Sensational visual effects. The shape-shifting graphics are mesmerizing."

ORIGIN graphics are also getting hyped by another publication. White Wolf magazine is finally getting around to reviewing Privateer. Better late than never, they say. "The graphics and sound match, and sometimes even exceed, anything done by Origin to this point," exclaims the writer. "Privateer is as close as you'll get to a true roleplaying experience."

And finally, not everyone who's writing about ORIGIN these days is on an editorial staff. We found these quotes from Joe Folley in Hanford, California, who decided to take issue with the editor of Computer Game Review in a debate over "the best" in computer games. In a previous issue, Editor Steve Honeywell apparently couldn't say enough good things about X-Wing to his readers. In a letter to the editor Folley countered with this, "Wing Commander II is by far one of the best games EVER to be put out on the PC. A game that was the foundation of games today, the father of simulations, the mother of action, this was the game that had me itching for more. Thank you, Chris Roberts, for one hell of a game."

Thank you Joe Folley!

SEARCH and FIND, SHOW and TELL

(Ed. Note: Kai Stringer, who oversees ORIGIN's recruitment dept. put together this report on the new efforts underway to bring some of the best creative talent into the ORIGIN fold.)

The effort of building recruitment networks with colleges and vocational institutions is beginning to pay off in a BIG way. Due to the contacts, phone conversations and promotional paks (including Galen's ORIGIN demo) sent to the schools, we are beginning to get good video demos as well as some knock 'em dead portfolios from such places as The Art Center in California, Ringling School of Art and Design in Florida, The Dallas Art Institute in Big D, Sheridan College in

Canada, University of Texas and Texas A&M.

And the effort is creating a trickle down effect. Interest in jobs at ORIGIN is coming in from friends and contacts of students attending these colleges who are artists or programmers. Others are hearing from a friend of a friend who saw a flyer on the college bulletin board. You get the picture. The value of maintaining a good networking relationship and not burning any bridges, so to speak, with schools and students from the schools is invaluable. I even got a referral from a guy that accepted another offer in Dallas after he interviewed with ORIGIN!

Future goals for recruitment include presentations to some of these colleges by invitation and some on-site tours of ORIGIN aimed at pending graduates. One key selling point (and I use it to the fullest!) in recruitment is the fact that once a candidate SEES what we do and meets some of the wondrously talented people here, they want to work here even more for the opportunity to learn from our gang.

Fine tuning is still in process. Rome wasn't built in a day. ORIGIN is a state of mind.

E.O.M.

APRIL



Through thick and thin, **Maty Martin** has held her own as ORIGIN Systems' Production Worker / Disk Duplicator has been with ORIGIN for a little over 2 years, although she probably holds the record for very least job security. Her first year here was spent on a temporary basis, not knowing even from one week to the next if she would be needed. Obviously she was, and is still, needed and appreciated. In the nomination for this award, Maty received the following glowing compliment:

"I would like to bring special recognition to the efforts of Maty Martin and **Jeff Powell**, who ... were able to contribute 91,000 disks duplicated, labeled and packed in-house, ahead of the schedule needed. They have worked flex hours, early and late, and weekends to accomplish their tasks while bringing compliments from the PD teams for their cooperation in mastering the many versions. Their efforts, expertise, and ownership of the project resulted in savings of almost \$12,000 over the cost of out-of-house duplication. These people work largely unnoticed in the warehouse but I would like to highlight their excellent attitudes and efforts with this message. It is my honor to work with them" (Curtis Wood).

After hours, Maty has time for ACC classes in basic studies and Tahitian / Hawaiian dancing, when she's not taking Lamaze of course. Congratulations, Maty!

MAY

Frank Savage, Project Director for Wing Commander III, is our Employee of the Month for May. He has been at ORIGIN since September of 1991 and



came here because of his love for Wing Commander I. (He even had vanity Illinois state license plates that read "WNGCMD 1" to prove this devotion.) That was while he was working in Chicago in the Handy Andy (a midwest hardware and lumber chain) corporate offices performing straight programming tasks while working pretty normal hours dressed in a, hold your breath, suit and tie every day of the week. He met Warren Spector at GenCon and was hired soon after to perform tasks on Strike Commander. On this project, he wrote a bug tracking system and spent most of his time tracking bugs. These efforts paid off and he's devoted his time since then developing the Wing III Engine. Most recently, Frank traveled to the U.K. to help ex-ORIGIN-patriot **Erin Roberts** set up the Wing Commander III engine for Privateer II. In addition, something new for our games that Frank is working on, is code that allows the player to affect game morale by giving certain responses to other characters. For instance, a negative response in a conversation is more likely to elicit negative behavior and poor teamwork to destroy the enemy later on. This way, you don't have to actually lose missions to change how the AI reacts. Alas, Frank's major goal as director of Wing III, however, is not only to create a really great game, but "to get it out on time." Good luck, and congratulations!

Pulse Check

Well, once again the world seems to be spinning in greased grooves. After the frantic fiscal year end, the numbers are rolling in. "Ultima 8 is going gangbusters and everyone's waiting with bated breath for Pacific Strike," reports **Marten Davies**. In fact, U8 came in at #2 on Software Etc's March sales charts, following SimCity 2000. On the same chart, Righteous Fire clocked in at #5.



And what about Pacific Strike? It signed off last Friday and is duping as you read. The stage is set for a worldwide ship date of May 9. Both the team and testers deserve double thanks for all the effort they put forth: first, in a push to make the fiscal year; and second, for the wrap-up work these last few weeks. Moles calling in to the Micro-Spec hotline report that reps there are telling customers that 1942 "is at least three weeks away" (and we all know what that really means). So Pacific should have a great chance to find—and hopefully capture—the market. Plans now call for a Pacific Strike CD (full digitized speech, playable from the CD, no additional missions) to come in before the end of this quarter.

The Privateer CD is signing off and should be duping, too. Get this: Product Support says it plays pretty well on single-spin drives and on 386/33's. Plus, it only takes about 1.2 MB hard drive space. Could be another winner.

Next up on the developmental food chain is Wing Armada, currently in Beta. "Testers love it," according to **Kay Gilmore**. It only has about 150 bugs and the modem/network stuff is running great. Marketing has produced a video demo of Armada that's being sent to the

worldwide offices and sales staff, but it could never do the game justice; it's really that much fun. Doom has met its match for lost productivity. Kudos to **Jeff Everett** and team. Current plans call for a June ship date.

System Shock is just about Beta, only waiting for 4 MB playability. Product Support is getting two 28.8 modems—one for ORIGIN and one for LookingGlass—to cut the download time for new versions in half. Should go out the door in late June.

New entries into testing: BioForge and Wings of Glory. It's still a little early to tell on either of these, but testers say they're enjoying what they can do so far. WOG's looking at a June ship, BioForge in August. (All we really need is to move Christmas to Summer).

Finally, PC Data has compiled the top-sellers for 1993 based on units sold from 10 retail chains representing 1,300 stores. Strike Commander is in there at #8, edged out for the #7 spot by....Wing Commander, the product that keeps on going. The rest of the list: Micros. Flight Simulator (#1), X-Wing (#2), 7th Guest (#3), SimCity (#4), Spear of Destiny (#5), Links 386 Pro (#6), Comanche (#9) and Rebel Assault (#10).

New Hires



Jennie Evans joins us "from across the pond," as our Brit friends are fond of saying. She's our new Director of Marketing. Jennie has experiences in the software entertainment industry ranging from an Advertising Sales Manager for Future Publishing (now the publisher of U.S. based PC Gamer Magazine), Mindscape (ORIGIN's previous European distributor), ORIGIN Systems (as we were expanding our own distribution in Europe) and Electronic Arts (after they

purchased us). She's into photography, dancing and aerobics, and already she's teaching an aerobics class on Tuesday nights. Jennie's greatest claim to fame is selling more copies of Strike Commander than any other PC floppy title in EA's entire history in Europe.

Self proclaimed "Esoteric Programmer Extraordinaire," **Ray Renteria** got tired of having a "real" job at Dell and decided to sign on at ORIGIN. (I'm sure Ray will get the chance to learn just how "real" it gets here.) Ray's into virtual reality and he once wrote a 24 player game called Vaxwars.

Eric Willmar is a new T.D.A./Usecoder for Crusader. He went to college in Michigan, worked in various "gutter" jobs, gained his fame as the "Laugh of the Changeling" in Pagan, and now joins us in the height of his career. Welcome aboard!

Our new Video & Film Production Manager, **Steve Hemphill**, claims to know the AVATAR personally. Steve attended North Texas State and has 15 years of video production and management under his belt. His great lead to ORIGIN was through the making of Richard Garriott's 1992 haunted house video.

Meg Curtis is a new Jr. Accountant with an attitude. On her new employee form, she claims to be "a pushy broad with a great sense of humor." Her last job was at McNeil Consumer Products, manufacturer of Tylenol, and she likes playing golf and going to the lake with her dogs.

French translator **Dominique Poumeyrol-Jumeau** began at ORIGIN as a temp. in Q.A. and she liked it so much here that she was determined to come on full time. Dominique holds a master's degree from U.T. in French Literature and she'll be working in our revitalized translation department.

Tammy Parkhurst is our newly hired Human Resources Rep. Her last employer was CarboMedics, makers of heart valve implants and components, and she attended Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas. She will primarily be responsible for benefits and insurance.

April Atwood is a Runner (Administration Assistant) under the newly organized department headed by **Sharon Miller**. April is studying Environmental Science at ACC which is a starting place for career choices such as marine biologists and botanists.

Another runner to join our rank and file is **Sabrina G. Watson**. Some of you should recognize the last name in relation to **John Watson**, who just so happens to be Sabrina's husband. Actually, after attending UT for a double major in English and Anthropology, one of Sabrina's motivations was to work where John was spending all of his time. (All the other significant others should be so lucky.) Her claim to fame is the fact that she is the only person around who has been able to fit into **Richard's** Russian purchased space suit. (We should all be so lucky.)

One new employee who seems to have been with us forever, but who was actually a contract hire, is **Susan Williamson**, our Environmental Engineer. She was with us in the Wild Basin building, keeping our work areas neat and clean while we continued to track in mud and make bigger and bigger messes. How does she do it? She says that she had a big family and we're just like an extension of it. (250 children? Egads! How *does* she do it!?!)

Chris Lane starts with ORIGIN as an Advanced Graphic Designer. He has a background in films, from making them at Crespi High to watching them. He even wants to start a Film and Game Club at ORIGIN.

Another French transplant, **Dominique C. Iyer** is already fitting in as our Senior Financial Analyst. Dominique like to ride horseback and fence, as in "en garde!", so if you make any mistakes on your SKU number, watch out! One of her claims to fame is the ability to explain Einstein's Theory of Space "in my own special way, [such that] some people actually believe me," she says.

Since the last Point, the following people have made the transition from temporary to permanent employee: **Harvey Smith, Kevin Kushner, Mark Franz, Evan Brandt, Darin Henley, Ed Ball, Lisa Acton** and **Lori Ortiz** in Product Support. Congratulations on making it through your introductory phase to ORIGIN!

Finally, as always, we recognize those who are no longer with ORIGIN Systems but are making their own waves on other shores. Farewell to **Curtis Wood, Lori Wiley, Brent Poer, Richard "Dicko" Mather, Francine Gertz, Shelly Schmid** and **Mark Holley**. They will all be greatly missed.



Sharon on Email Etiquette

(Ed. note: Sharon Miller, ORIGIN's Organization Development Mgr. has these words of wisdom on how to incorporate a little courtesy when using Email. GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?)

Email has been available at Origin for about three years now. I realize that many of you know the positives and the pitfalls of this wonderful communications tool and may not be interested in this information.

But, since there are many new employees at Origin that may never have used Email before (and a few of us that could use a refresher course), I thought that I would share some wisdom that was given to me by Steve Morris when I first came to work here.

Your Email messages convey more than just words or images. They also suggest a lot about you, the author of the message. The message structure, the tone, and the clarity of thoughts are all part of the message.

Then, too, there is probably no networking feature more potentially hazardous than Email. Your computer may serve as an interpersonal buffer, allowing you to say things electronically that you would never say to someone's face. Email of this sort (written in haste and full of emotion) is generally referred to as "flaming". There's no way to retrieve a "flaming" Email message once it has been sent.

Which brings me to the subject of "Email Etiquette". Nothing complex or confusing, just a few common-sense rules-of-thumb for using Email:

1. Ask yourself, "Would I say this to the person's face?" before you post a message. Ask yourself this question, and keep editing until the answer is yes. Then your message may accomplish something. Otherwise, your message will probably be ignored, or worse, you could create a "flaming" and destructive Email war.

Refrain from writing something about someone else that you wouldn't want them or others to read. If you must be critical, provide specific incidents on which you base your opinion.

If you intend for the message to remain private, state that clearly in the message. But don't assume that a message sent to one

person will never find a wider audience. No matter how casual the message, there's always a chance that it will turn up in unexpected places. "Joe, that wrenched XXXXXXXX project is almost history" may be a lovely sentiment, but what if Joe forwards the good news to management? It's happened many times!!!

Never do anything on the network that requires anonymity. If you would be embarrassed to have your name attached to a certain action, don't do it.

2. Give your Email recipients cues about what you really mean. In person-to-person communication, you provide many cues such as your facial expression, voice tone and volume, and body stance. Imagine the difference between reading a message that says "You're a lousy <whatever>" and a face-to-face conversation in which a person says the same thing and then smiles. It's possible to communicate these cues on Email through the use of Email symbols and abbreviations (combinations of parenthesis, colons, and other keyboard characters). See box below.

Examples of Email Etiquette		
:)	—	smile
;)	—	wink
:(—	frown
:(o	—	yelling
\$-)	—	just won the lottery
:D	—	laughing
:*	—	kiss
:X	—	lips are sealed
[:)	—	wearing a walkman
:P	—	sticking out tongue
[]	—	hug
LOL	—	laughing out loud
OTF	—	on the floor (laughing)
ROTFL	—	rolling on the floor laughing
/	—	Vulcan greeting

You can also indicate a facial expression or attitude by enclosing it in angle brackets <grin>, <smile>, <sigh>, etc. Interspersed with your message text these can provide much needed emotional indicators.

So when you get good at using symbols, you can be rude without being, well, rude.

3. DON'T SHOUT UNLESS YOU MEAN IT. Some people claim they save time by turning on the Caps Lock key because they don't have

to capitalize words properly. However, a message that is entirely capitalized suggests shouting. SAVE THE SHOUTING FOR WHEN YOU MEAN IT.

Of course, the other extreme is no capitalization at all. This style may not include punctuation either. This is laid back, casual conversation. It also suggests a rather random processcool if it works for you; hope your reader is cool, too.

More next issue!4. Keep it short. Keep it simple. For everyday use, Email should save time, not waste it. Rule of Thumb No. 1: No routine message should be longer than 100 words. Rule of Thumb No. 2: A response should be a fifth as long as the inquiry (for example, 100-word inquiry, 20 word response).

Email is GIGO: Get in, get out. Ask your question, get your answer.

5. For normal, routine communications, don't spend a lot of time on stylistic and grammatical considerations. Using Email saves time because careful editing and proofing is not necessary or appropriate. Email is supposed to be fast, tit-for-tat communication. You ask. I answer. You ask. I answer. You're not supposed to watch the sun set, listen to the surf pound the sun-bleached sand, and sip San Miguel beer as Paco dives for abalone while you craft your Email.

6. Avoid using return receipts — messages the Email system generates to inform the sender that the recipient has read their mail. Return receipts are insulting. You are saying to the recipient: "You're a lazy schlub who never reads his Email. I receipted this message so that I know you read it. Now you have no excuse not to answer, because I know you received the message." (see #7)

7. Respond as quickly as possible to a message. If you can't supply a complete response, at least let the sender know you are working on it and that you can send it by a certain date or time. Then stick to that promise.

8. If you don't include a copy of the original message in your reply, at least summarize the discussion in the opening sentence. A response to a message like "I agree with that idea" provides the receiver with no clue about the original discussion. The receiver may be

having several different Email discussions at the same time. Expand the message to: "I agree with your plan to expedite your work. Let's go with your ideas."

9. Before you send a message to a large mailing list, consider how important the message is to everyone. If it's not essential that everyone see the message ASAP, you should post it on a bulletin board instead.

10. Keep critical copies of messages in folders or archive files. Make sure that the SUBJECT: line contains enough information to help you find that message again.

11. Sending Email to Macintosh recipients:

PLEASE set your text pen to Black characters on a White background. Any other combination is rendered nearly illegible on the Mac's black & white screen.

One last note:

If you receive unwanted e-junk messages, you can provide a gentle reminder to the sender that you don't want to get that kind of mail. Rather than immediately deleting the message, use "Reply" and attach a note to the bottom of the message. It need not be harsh — just a polite suggestion that the sender consider sending this kind of message to a bulletin board instead. Even if only a few people

respond, the sender should begin to understand that these kinds of messages are not well received.

Naturally you take a risk when responding this way. Not everyone is familiar with Email etiquette. By providing a gentle reminder, you help everyone learn. And, in turn, if you receive such a message, don't take the response personally. Instead, consider this type of response the Email equivalent of a yawn to the audience <grin>.

I hope this helps.....Sharon.

Lights, Camera, Kilrathi...

(Ed. note: Adam Foshko gives us his first hand account of how the Wing III shoot is faring after one week.)

(Los Angeles)—In an immense arena of stone, there is something evil afoot; a single razor-sharp talon caresses the young woman in the battle-worn fatigues. It removes a single blonde hair from her face, and plays dangerously close to her blue eyes. She remains frozen. The Kilrathi prince peers at his captive like a hungry cat stalking a mouse. He salivates at the thought of blood. She remains defiant, spitting in his face. After a moment of surprise, he regards his prize with renewed lust..his eyes dilate in anticipation and with a great roar, he strikes...

"Cut..." is heard from the mass of people, huddled around the playback monitor. **Chris Roberts** removes his headsets and has a word with his Director of Photography, Virgil Harper. After conferring for a moment, a light is refocused on the character of Angel, (Yolanda Jillot). She smiles and nods as Chris adds a few more comments for her character. With that, Chris returns to his monitor and the Assistant Director, Harry Carvis, again calls to roll tape.

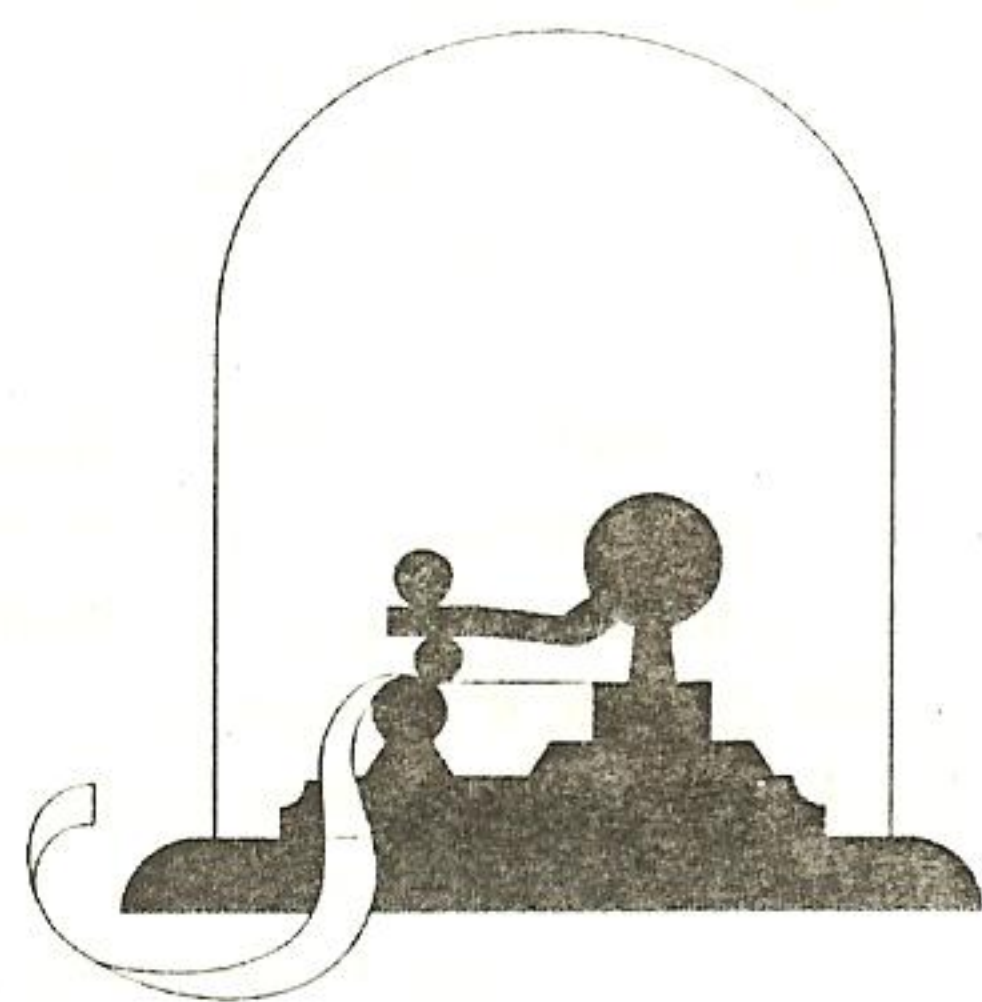
Elsewhere in the large soundstage in Los Angeles, there is more activity; Blair, played by Mark Hamill, is sitting under

the shade of a large umbrella running lines with one of his costars, Ginger Lynn Allen, who plays Rachel. A call from wardrobe comes down to them; it's time for them to change into their costumes for the next scene. They retreat back inside the facility, joined by Jennifer MacDonald (Flint), who also must change for an upcoming scene.

The editing room (from where this account comes) is a bustle with the cutting together of segments from the days shooting. Roberts comes in for a moment to look at some newly assembled footage on the AVID. He likes it and makes a couple of suggestions for pacing. With that he is gone. He has to get back to the stage for a rehearsal. Donna Burkons, Line Producer, steps in to see how we are doing, followed by Pam Auer, the Production Manager. "The footage looks great", says Phil Gessert (Editor), I have to agree. We stop for a moment to check a technical background question with **Mark Verrier** (who, with **Chris Douglas** is supervising the SGI rendering for compositing on set). **Richard Johnson**, in the company of Mark Day from EA, also stop in on their way to the stage. We show another clip, during which another roll comes in fresh and hot from the set to be digitized and cut.

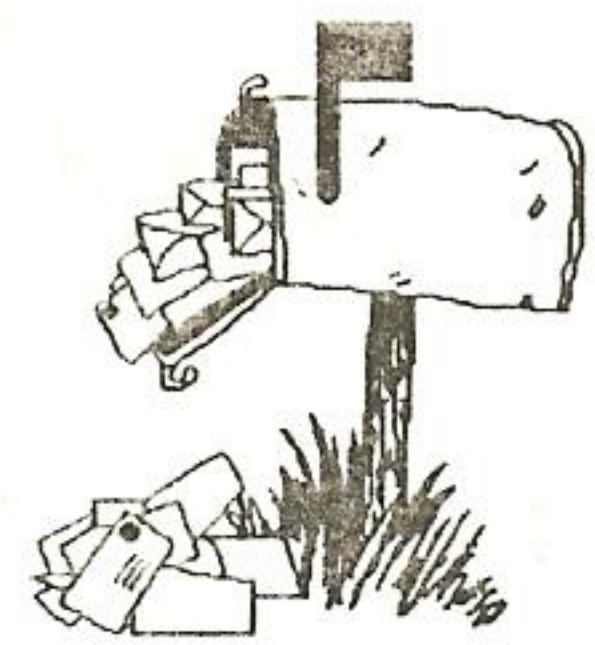
There is lots of action going on here, soon we are to expect other cast members;

Tom Wilson (Maniac), John Rhys-Davies (Paladin), Malcom McDowell (Tolwyn) and others to arrive. With 18 more shooting days planned and another stage for second unit work to address, we have a lot to do. However for now, as Michael Hood from Precision Effects (who built the kilrathi creatures for the shoot) reminds me with one beclawed index finger, "That's show business..". Wrong Michael, that's the interactive business.



Ticker

ERTS	18.000	+0.250
THDO	17.500	-1.250
BROD	40.875	-1.375
SGI	24.250	-0.750
SIER	25.000	-1.375



Dear Point Man,

Dear Point Man,

Why are we (programmers, artists, designers) forced to "bunk-up" two, three, and four to an office when some people (namely some of the producers) have large one-person offices all to themselves? If everyone in San Mateo has a cubicle, even Rich Hilleman, Bing Gordon, and Larry Probst (correct me if I'm wrong), then why can't our management work in a cubicle and leave the big offices to put 2-3 people into? Also, why are we reserving a nice, large office with a window for Robert when he's hardly ever here?

Sincerely,
Anonymous Sardine #319-C

Dear Sardine,

I went to the God of All Things Building for this one, **Jeff Hillhouse**. Here's his answer:

"When this building was designed, we had plenty of space. It was decided in the programming and design phase that programmers and some other positions work best in 'twos', while others work best in 'teams of four,' thus the two-person offices and 4-up workstations. It was also decided at that time that we could cut down significantly on our number of conference rooms by giving Producers a larger office with a small conference table to hold their team meetings in. We have learned a lot since that time. Many of the decisions we made then are really paying off and making this building far more efficient and a better work environment than we had at Wild Basin. Others, however, simply are no longer practical. If the two programmers in one office concept is not the way things should be, or if the modular furniture workstations are not conducive to a team working environment as we originally thought, it's definitely something we need to know now as we look forward to the programming and design of our new facility. I would encourage every employee to talk with their Producer or manager about their concerns."

So there's one answer, at least. Are you producers ready to talk about giving up your offices?

Dear Point Man,

It seems that Electronic Arts is slowly chipping away at our structure, which had always been lean and hungry, to be more like them, big and clumsy. (I feel a poem coming on.) Is Electronic

Arts' takeover of ORIGIN different from the way you originally perceived it to be?

Thanks,
Culture Shock

Dear Shock,

No, I knew exactly what the acquisition would be like. I also foresaw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the rise of fitness guru Susan Powter. What I'm trying to say in an annoyingly sarcastic way is that none of us really knew what the new world order would be like, and we still don't. Take, for instance, the latest re-org, which placed a lot of emphasis on the Broderbund deal. What will happen with EA Kids now? Who knows?

I have the advantage of being able to make regular trips to the Mother Ship in San Mateo, and I can tell you that ORIGIN has not cornered the market on anxiety. Every employee wants to know how change will affect him/her, and for good reason—it's our livelihood. It's how we eat, clothe and house ourselves.

One person who is not surprised (not surprisingly), is **Richard Garriott**, who says it's not really *us* becoming *them*. "We, the Austin team, are largely re-directing the reorganization of the entire EA corporate structure into what we believe are leaner, meaner modules to make the global organization more competitive," he says.

If you want some cocktail-napkin advice, it's this: change is inevitable for ORIGIN. We would have changed even without the EA deal. Take it from someone who's been there—things are still one hell of a lot better here than in 90% of corporate America. Is there room for improvement? You bet. But at this point, it's useless to try to imagine what ORIGIN would be like if it were still 20 employees...or 60...or 110...or 200 (place yourself at the appropriate timeline).

Dear Point Man,

When someone is hired at Origin, they get all kinds of special stuff (stock options, a free Genesis, and so forth).

But if someone is hired as a temp, and is later made permanent, they don't get any of these special items. (Unless they negotiate for it, that is.) Not only does this not seem fair, but it also seems to create some bitterness among the former-temps-who-are-now-permanent. Why is it this way?

Signed,
Long-timer

Dear Long-Timer,

There seem to be some crossed wires here. Temps-turned-former get all the goodies: stock options, Genesis, etc. There is no need for negotiation, according to **Norma Vargas**. They're all an automatic part of the package. There may be some confusion, though, about the famous "Welcome Waste Baskets" containing things like a stapler, disk holder, tape dispenser and the like.

"The only time somebody does not get a bucket is when they are actually replacing somebody that had the entire desk already fitted out and all they had to do was move in," Norma says. (Are former employees taking staplers with them?)

In any case, Norma's cube door is open for employees who feel there's something missing in their professional lives.

Hey, kids, after a couple of months in publishing limbo, it's great to be back in the proverbial saddle. Point of ORIGIN will resume its monthly schedule now, under the watchful eye of Editor **David Swofford**. The Point of ORIGIN e-mail address will remain the same, though, and will be open 24 hours for those nagging questions. And, as always, anonymity and animosity will be respected.



"Hey, these are neat sunglasses." Media Relations Mgr. David Swofford dons virtual reality headgear demonstrated at ORIGIN in March by Kaiser Electronics.