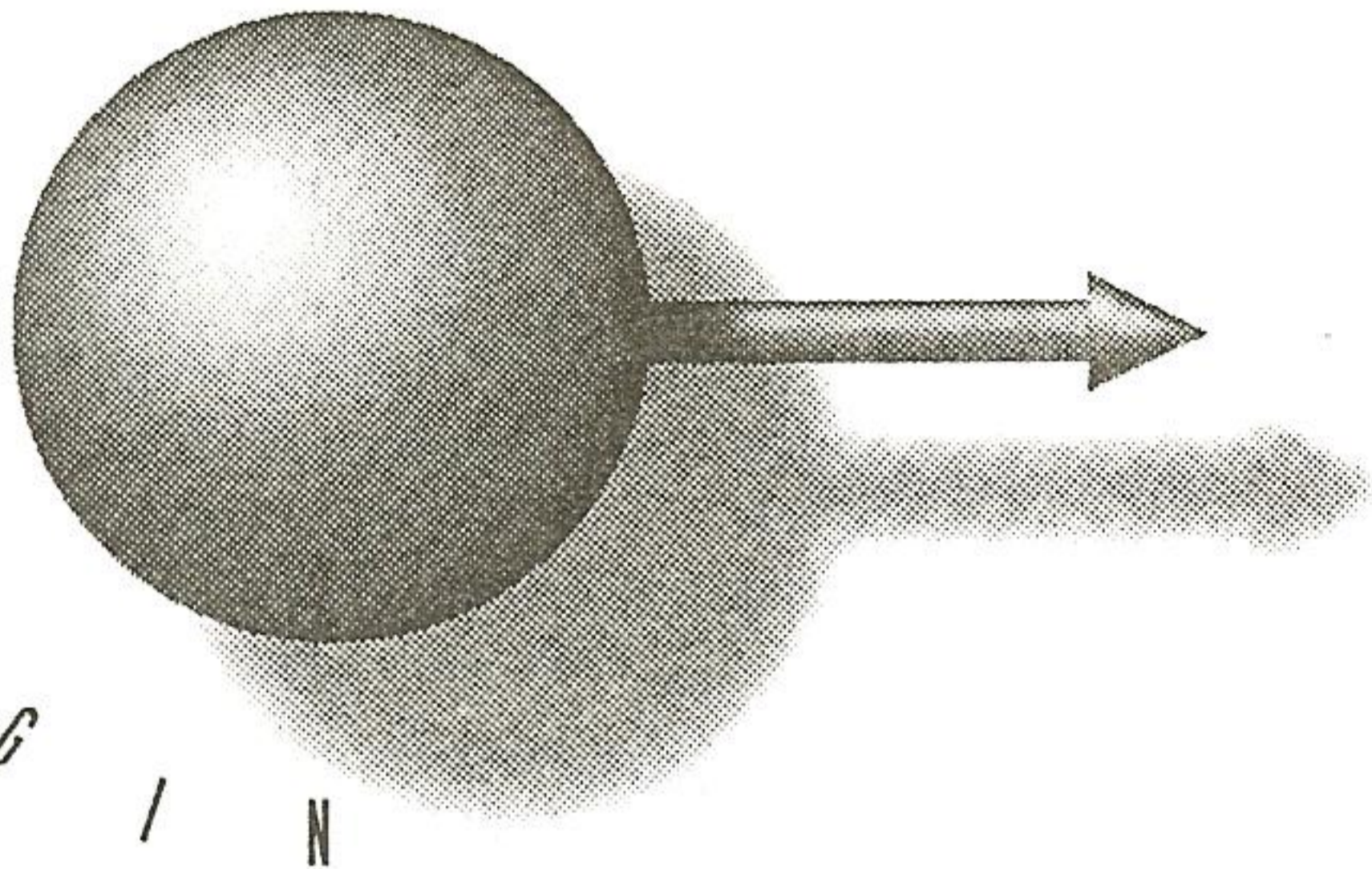


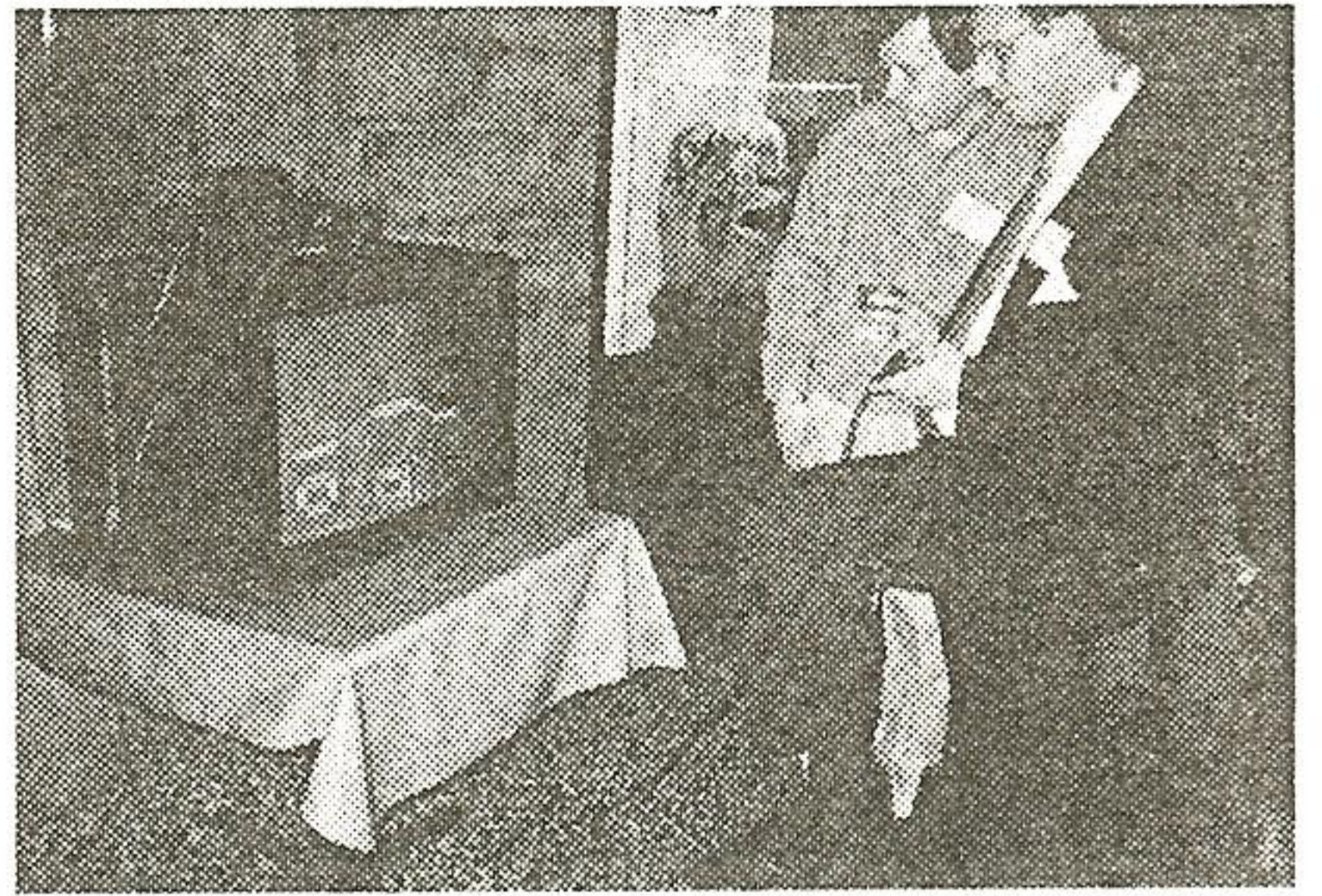
P o i n t



I n s i d e

Volume V, Number 1, January 13, 1995

Spotlight	1
In Ink	2
Point Man	3
Off The Clock	4
The Ratings Game	4
Employees of the Month	5
New Hires	6
The Future	6
Ticker	6



SUITS IN SPACE. Two stock analysts examine *Wing III* on the 3DO system at EA's Planet Hollywood CES party.

S p o t l i g h t



CES: Stocks and Bombs

(Las Vegas, NV)—Another Winter CES has come and gone, and truth be told, nobody really noticed. There were no “sure things” being demonstrated, at least on the show floor. In fact, many titles were carry-overs from prior shows, victims of slipped ship dates.

ORIGIN did have a presence at the 3DO booth with *Wing 3*. Initial impressions were that this will be one of the top titles—if not *the* top title—for that machine. More good news is that the demand for 3DO players was strong through Christmas, with many stores actually selling out.

EA held an exclusive invitation-only reception/demo at Planet Hollywood in Caesar's Palace. The vast majority of attendees were stock holders and analysts, with a few trade and consumer press guys sprinkled in. *Wing 3* for PCCD and 3DO garnered more praise there, as the prehistoric car from the *Flintstones* movie dangled above.

The biggest media hoopla of the show centered around “Bob,” the cutesy name for Microsoft's new suite of Windows home applications. Its home-office room GUI includes a calendar, checkbook, word processor, address book, e-mail, financial guide, a “geo-safari,” and household manager. It also has little, animated characters basically replacing the F1 key any time you don't understand what to do. “Welcome, Bob” was everywhere: on bumper stickers; on walking billboards; on flying banners; on shopping bags and buttons. It would have been especially cool had someone thought to scam the free marketing by printing “Hi, I'm Bob” t-shirts. Oh, well ...

An extensive, company-by-company report on the show is in the works and will be posted on the Company Notices BBS as soon as it's ready.



Let's see – where do I begin. How about three of the best reviews of an ORIGIN product in quite some time. Tom McDonald reviewed System Shock for PC Gamer and gave it a rating of 96%. Tom wrote, "This is an exciting, entertaining, wholly unique game, so fully realized in all its diverse aspects and so completely immersive that it unquestionably raises computer gaming to a new level. A landmark achievement. Simply put, there has never been anything like it." Needless to say, the game received an

Editor's Choice Award and the magazine's award as Best Adventure Game of 1994.

Computer Gaming World gave SS a rating of 4 1/2 out of 5! Paul Schuytema exclaimed in his review, "An absolutely stunning achievement. One hell of an immersion experience."

And Dave Gerding had similar reactions in his review in the January edition of Electronic Games. "It's better than Doom," he gushed. "In fact, System Shock is one of the best games in a long time. It's one of those rare

titles that's more like a lived experience instead of a game." EG gave SS an A- rating.

Strategy Plus was not to be denied. That magazine already has named its 1994 award winners and System Shock came away as the Single Player RPG of the Year.

Paul Hyman writes for Home and Office Technology magazine. He wrote about SS, "A mind-blowing experience unlike anything else on the shelves."

The applause is being heard from as far away as Slovenia. Sneta Sekira writes for Joker magazine in that country. His SS review went something like this, "Delo je tokrat opravljeno brez napak n poba v zameno dobi vmesnik ter pol leta zdravilnega spanca v posebni komori." Sounds good to me. He gave System Shock a score of 94.

Meanwhile the war between the humans and the Kilrathi continues and Wing Commander III appears to be everything that reviewers expected. In the latest issue of Computer Gaming World, Martin Cirulis gave WCIII a grade of five out of five. "A classic space combat game is mated with a competent movie – and a new breed of gaming beast is born," Cirulis wrote.

In its February issue that was out for the Winter CES show in Las Vegas, Computer Game Review graded WCIII at 94. "Wing Commander III is obviously the biggest release of the year for ORIGIN; it also happens to be its best," wrote Kevin Perry. Ted Chapman surmised it this way, "The acting talent is nothing shy of stellar, and the sound and

music are truly superlative. A must-have."

In the same issue the magazine named WCIII as the Simulation Game of the Year and also gave it an award for Best Full Motion Video of the Year. The only head scratcher came when the magazine named X-COM as its Game of the Year. Go figure.

In Europe the early reviews show that WCIII is starting to mop up on the competition. The magazines and their scores: PC Games (UK) 92%, PC Review (UK) 9 out of 10, PC Gamer (UK) 95%, Generation 4 (France) 93%, Games Machine (Italy) 96%, OK PC (Spain) 96%, PC Games (Germany) 96%.

Meanwhile, Wing III has been getting a lot of notice in the entertainment and general press in this country. It was included in a December 26 Newsweek article about new CD-ROM games. Adam Rogers wrote, "Even when the basic idea is to blow up bad-guy spaceships, as in the new Wing Commander III, the graphics still look better than the special effects on some current television shows."

USA Today listed WCIII third in its list of the "Most Wanted Software Titles." It was listed behind Microsoft Bookshelf and Grolier's Encyclopedia and stood ahead of Iron Helix, Journeyman Project and Myst.

WCIII has been no stranger to television in recent weeks. It's been featured on VH-1's Flix, Entertainment Tonight, and CNN's Tech Guide. A feature on the game will air on Sci-Fi Buzz, a special segment that can be seen on the Sci-Fi Channel. You can catch it when it hits the airwaves on January 22.

WCIII also has been featured in the New York Daily News, the San Diego Union-Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, Billboard Magazine and of course the Austin American-Statesman. Harley Jebens wrote in the XL Entertainment section, "It's \$4 million worth of interactive battles, stunning graphics and live action. Austin's computer game juggernaut is on the move again!" If they just could have done something better with the picture on the front.

A few weeks later XL came right back with another story on ORIGIN. This time they featured Crusader. Jebens spent some time with the Crusader crew while they were taping the live action scenes for the game at KVUE-TV studios. Jebens touted Crusader as the first interactive movie product to be filmed in Texas.

Let's hear it for Wing Commander Armada. Scott Wolf gave Armada a B+ in his review. "And the hits just keep on comin'," he wrote. "Multi-player is the option that kicks this baby in the butt."

Martin E. Curtis wrote about Armada in Computer Gaming World, "Armada is at least the graphical equal of any space action game on the market, if not the best-looking starfighter sim around these days. Beautiful to behold, a hoot to play head to head."

Dean Evans liked what he saw of Armada. He writes for



Dear Point Man:

*Is severance pay a right, or a privilege at ORIGIN?
Is it true that a document must be signed waiving
certain rights, before severance pay is received?*

*Signed,
On Thin Ice*

Dear Ice:

The response, from **Linda Powers** in HR:

A company does not have a legal obligation to provide severance pay. Severance pay is a consideration when there is an involuntary termination and it is intended to provide some financial security when a job is lost. At ORIGIN, each case is dealt with on an individual basis. There is usually a base amount of severance pay given to an employee that is not tied to signing a separation agreement, but even this amount is discretionary. Depending on the circumstances of a termination and factors like the employee's length of service and job performance, the company may offer additional pay above and beyond the base amount of severance pay.

It is true that in exchange for the additional amount of severance pay, an employee signs an agreement to release the company from any future claims. Separation agreements are not unique to ORIGIN. They are commonly used among companies that provide severance pay to terminated employees.

Dear Point Man:

Several months ago, ORIGIN was forced to switch over to MicroSoft Mail from cc:Mail. I think most people at ORIGIN agree that MS Mail is vastly inferior to cc:Mail. I have complained many times to our network staff about how poorly designed MS Mail is, but all they ever say is "We'll be getting a bulletin board upgrade for MS Mail real soon now", even though that upgrade is an unreleased product that might not ever come out!

Why doesn't ORIGIN management do the right thing and switch back to cc:Mail, so we can enjoy our email again?

Disgruntled E-mail User

Dear Disgruntled:

I put this one to network guru **Sean Kelley**. Here's his answer:

The mail issue is far more complicated than many people realize. Some people indeed say that MS Mail is inferior to cc:Mail. Perhaps it is. But this is generally from an interface/user standpoint (a very valid standpoint by the way). What most people do not realize is that our being on MS Mail solves many problems, including the following:

- 1) All of EA is now on the same system
- 2) Administration is simpler and changes on one site can be replicated automatically
- 3) File attachments are greatly enhanced
- 4) MS Mail is integrated well with Windows 95 and NT
- 5) World wide delivery is far more reliable

I am not discounting the good points of cc:Mail

- 1) It has better editing capabilities (fonts and colors)
- 2) It has a better BBS system
- 3) Nicer interface
- 4) Others that I cannot think of off the top of my head

Both mail systems deliver messages to the people you want pretty reliably (in this building, anyway). This is the real function of an e-mail system. However, MS Mail delivers them to others in EA reliably as well (something cc:Mail could not claim).

The BBS problem is a different question. To solve it, we are installing the TCP/IP protocol on everyone's computer and will be using NNTP (Internet News) to provide BBS services to everyone. This will allow you to do all the things that people are asking for:

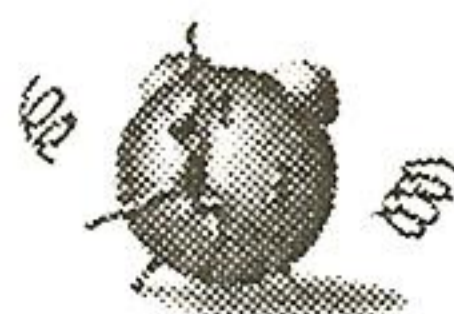
- 1) Subscribe only to the BBS's you are interested in
- 2) Know which messages you have read
- 3) Enclose files via uuencode

Additionally we will be setting up an internal WWW site for other services and we will be enabling other Originites to create their own WWW pages with links into the main system.

It is time to put cc:Mail to rest. We will not be switching back to it. However, we do recognize a need that MS Mail is not fulfilling. NNTP should fix the BBS issue and the font/color editing issue will be incorporated in later revisions. I feel we can wait for the fonts since they are 'nice' more than 'necessary'."

You can reach the old Point Man at his perfectly functioning MS Mailbox at "Point of ORIGIN." Cash contributions should be delivered directly to **Galen Svanas**.

O f f T h e C l o c k



THE RATINGS GAME

by John McLean

In an industry flooded with thousands of new products every year, there's a new game in town, one that impacts the release of every single other title – the ratings game.

Formed early last year as a result of the sudden and intense media scrutiny of the "upstart" computer game industry, the Entertainment Software Rating Board's agenda is to review and label every single piece of interactive software hitting the market. Contrary to popular belief, the purpose of the ESRB isn't to censor or ban computer games. According to Executive Director Arthur Pober, "We're here to make sure they don't ban or censor any games." He added, "We're not the enemy."

The rating system was originally inspired by the backlash from the media and even Congress about such titles as *Mortal Kombat* and *Night Trap* – which were widely demonized by people who for the most part had never played these (or any other, for that matter) computer games.

The ESRB was designed to provide parents and consumers with the information they need to make intelligent decisions when purchasing interactive entertainment. This consists of both a rating and a content descriptor. The rating categories include "C: Early Childhood", "K-A: Kids to Adults", "T: Teen", "M: Mature" and "A: Adults Only." In addition, descriptors such as "contains strong language", etc., are included with the ratings, as appropriate.

In theory, the ratings are strictly for informational purposes and not to tell anybody what to buy or not to buy. Retail outlets are under no obligation to enforce the ratings. (In other words, they can't refuse to sell any games to anyone based on the rating.) This is fortunate, since the ORIGIN Marketing and Sales departments expect that most of our games will carry a Mature rating.

The best part of the ESRB is their responsiveness to feedback and their commitment to making the process as painless as possible for entertainment software companies. "The system has to work for the consumer," Arthur Pober said. "But it also has to work for the developers. ORIGIN has been great to work with, especially in terms of their appreciation of our goals and their willingness to bear with us in the early days when we were still refining the rating process."

Since Electronic Arts/ORIGIN are signatories to the ESRB, every title we release must be rated by them. At ORIGIN, the responsibility for this process falls to the Director of Studio Services, **Kay Gilmore**, and the rest of her team.

Did you notice a familiar face last night when you tuned in *Wheel of Fortune*? What? You didn't recognize ORIGIN's own **Chris Primozich** as one of the contestants on the Pat and Vanna show? Don't laugh. That was Chris and he walked away from the show with a '95 Corvette convertible and more than \$6100. It was a dream come true for Chris, who says he watched *Wheel of Fortune* all the time while he was growing up.

Chris has been at ORIGIN seven months as a tester. He most recently tested ORIGIN's Super Nintendo and FM Towns products.

His chance at stardom actually began a year and a half ago. A *Wheel of Fortune* crew came to the University of Texas looking for contestants. Chris answered an ad, passed the test, made the final cut and was given a registration card to request a date on the show. On December 17th last year, his meeting with destiny finally arrived. He scheduled a trip to CBS Studios in Hollywood for the taping of the show.



Chris Primozich.
Sans babe magnet.

"They tape five shows in one day," Chris says. "You get there about 10 a.m., they talk to you about what's going to happen, then you have lunch. After that, the taping starts. My name came up for the fourth show. I lost the first game after having \$4,000 in the bank. Then I lost the second game. I came back, though, and won the third game."

Chris' winnings totaled \$4400, enough to give him the championship for the show and put him in the bonus round. That's where he won the Corvette. He came back for the fifth show, won another \$1700 dollars, but failed to retain the championship. "I think my head was too far in the clouds at that point," he says.

Now it's just a matter of waiting for his car and cash to be delivered. "They told me it can take up to four months," Chris says.

"It was a neat experience," he reflects. "Spending the day in a Hollywood studio with a lot of other people just like me, who are there on a lark. It's pretty wild."

By the way, you can catch Chris tonight once again on *Wheel of Fortune* which airs at 6:30 on KXAN-TV, Channel 36.



Jean Marc Chemla, who works in Chris Roberts' group, now has a better half. He and Emily Chou, from Dallas, were married on December 12. They were married in Austin and spent a honeymoon in New Mexico and Arizona. Jean Marc and Emily have known each other for several years and we wish them the best. Congratulations!!!!

POINT GOES ELECTRONIC!

Soon, gamers around the world will be able to share the beauty, the splendor, the wonder that is Point of ORIGIN. As part of our WWW site, we're going to be putting together an "external" Point, chock full of articles, pictures, profile pieces and puzzles.

Since this will be a living, breathing, ever-evolving electronic publication, we're throwing the writing net out to all ORIGIN employees. We're looking for full-length articles, story ideas, interesting trivia or news. All articles will feature full bylines, and regularly contributing writers will also get a photo credit (and boy, isn't that alone worth striving for?). Send info to the "Point of ORIGIN" MS Mail address.

FROM 2 **In Ink**

PC Games in the UK. "Not just split-screen, but network, modem and serial cable options. A round of applause for ORIGIN at last."

Finally, some awards and honors. Wing Commander II was rated 13th among the 36 top entertainment CD-ROM titles according to CD-ROM World magazine, and the editors of Games magazine listed Privateer among their top 100 board and electronic games. We've already mentioned the award for System Shock from Strategy Plus. That magazine also gave runner-up status to Ultima VIII for Single Player RPG of the year, Pacific Strike for Flight Sim Game of the Year and Armada for Fantasy Simulation Game of the Year. So who cares what some editors think, it's the readers and gamers who really count. That's exactly what PC Gamer thought, so they asked their readers for their 40 top computer games of all time. ORIGIN came in with four titles in the list. Ultima VII: The Black Gate was 38th, Ultima VIII: Pagan was 28th, Ultima Underworld II was voted 15th and Wing Commander came in as the 4th favorite game behind Wolfenstein 3-D (3rd), X-Wing (2nd) and Doom (1st).



DECEMBER

Mark Chandler was the well-deserved recipient of December's Employee of the Month award in thanks for his immense contributions in getting Wing Commander III built and shipped on time, a Herculean task! Mark worked tirelessly to manage the process of building 165,000 units of Wing III, which was the first time ORIGIN has ever simultaneously shipped multiple editions of a game (premiere edition, SAM's club, and regular), some of which shared components. Mark was responsible for coordinating the entire worldwide shipping of Wing III, and has done a fantastic job of getting the game into the retail outlets within one or two days of the ship date. Mark was also a key force in developing ORIGIN's very successful relationship with Starpak, the company that builds and ships out all ORIGIN and Electronic Arts games. Thanks again, Mark, for a job well done!

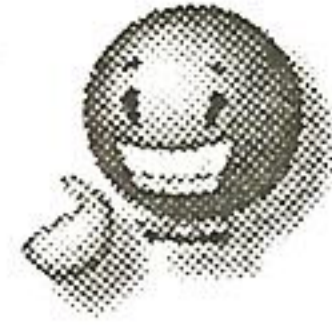


JANUARY

Our newest Employee of the Month is Kirsten Vaughan, ORIGIN's new Translations department manager. Kirsten has worked at ORIGIN for the past 2 1/2 years as a writer, translator, and now as a department manager. She was responsible for the first foreign-language dubbing ORIGIN has ever done on a game, with the French and German versions of Wing Commander III. Kirsten had to pull together the very new translations department while working on the Wing III translations under tight deadlines, and has done a terrific job in getting everything done on schedule. She and her staff of 6 have already completed translations of System Shock and Wings of Glory, as well as Wing III, and are now gearing up to produce translated versions for at least 6 more ORIGIN and EA titles. We congratulate her on a tough job well done - keep up the good work, Kirsten!



New Hires



Since late November, there have been 10 (count 'em) new victims who have unwittingly signed up with ORIGIN! **Gary Stottlemeyer** joined us in late November as a Senior Software Engineer II, working for **Andy Hollis**. Gary formerly worked for Spectrum Holobyte over in California, but he has wisely moved out of mudslide land and joined us here (in tornado land!).

Rick Campbell joined ORIGIN in early December, and is working as an Advanced Software Engineer, also in **Andy Hollis'** group. Rick came to us from IBM, and is crazy about gaming. Rick, you're definitely in the right place! Welcome on board!

Graham Wood has taken the plunge and moved to the U.S. after having worked in our EAUK office for 1 1/2 years as a Customer Service rep. He has already adjusted to life in Austin, as he has astutely observed that one must never cut off the nice gentlemen riding around in pickup trucks with gun racks here ;-)! Graham is working as a Product Support Tech. in **Kay Gilmore's** department, and is a big fan of Janet in Strike Commander (nudge, nudge, Say No More!).

Also joining our merry band is **Reece Thornton**, who also has been working as a Product Support Technician. Reece is a big paintball fan, so look out when you're coming down those dark corridors—Reece may be waiting!!

We also welcome **Cheryl Russell**, who also has been working as a Product Support Technician. Cheryl has confessed to being an Aggie (class of '88), but we still like her! Welcome to ORIGIN, Cheryl!

And last but not least, our new hires in January. **Kris Pelley** moved here from California and has joined up with **Chris Roberts'** group as a Software Engineer working on the new Privateer II game, and **Rodney Brunet** has also joined **Chris'** group as a Graphic Designer, working on Wing IV. Congratulations to you both, and welcome to ORIGIN!

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to three regular part-time employees who are new to ORIGIN: **Brandon Williams** and **Chris Dutton**, our newest Runners, and **Craig Duff**, who is a Purchasing Assistant.

We wish all the best to those who have left ORIGIN over the past few months. Good luck and farewell to **Kevin Potter**, **Maty Martin**, **Jeff Powell**, **Sharon Miller**, **Art DiBianca**, **Bernadette Pryor**, and **Chris Todd**. ●

The Future



January

17-18	Worldwide Marketing Conf.	San Mateo
27	Product Review	Detention Hall

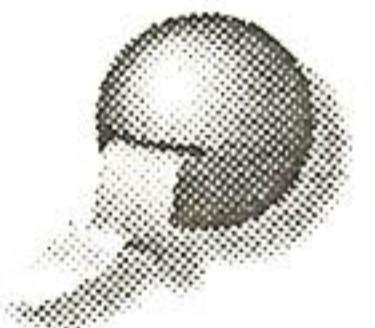
February

6	Company Brown Bag Lunch	Cafeteria
10	Company Happy Hour	TBA
24	Product Review	Detention Hall

March

6	Company Brown Bag Lunch	Cafeteria
10	Company Happy Hour	TBA
10-16	SXSW Film & Multimedia Festival	Hyatt Regency
31	Product Review	Detention Hall

Ticker



The latest from Wall Street at 1:00 pm, 1.13.95.

	LAST	CHANGE
ERTS	18.000	+0.187
THOO	11.000	+0.250
SGI	32.375	+0.250
SIER	30.500	+0.375
BROD	49.250	+1.250

