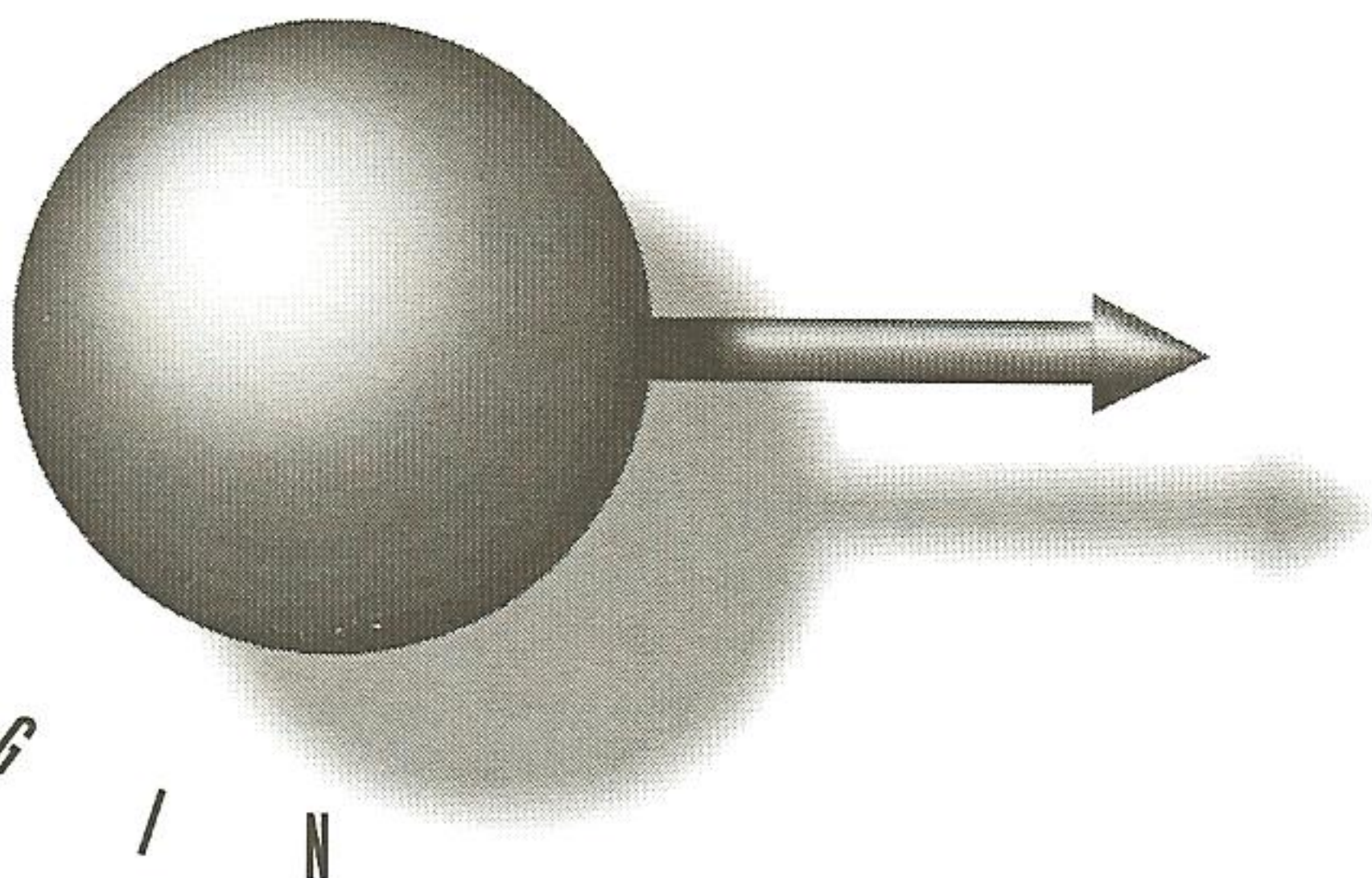


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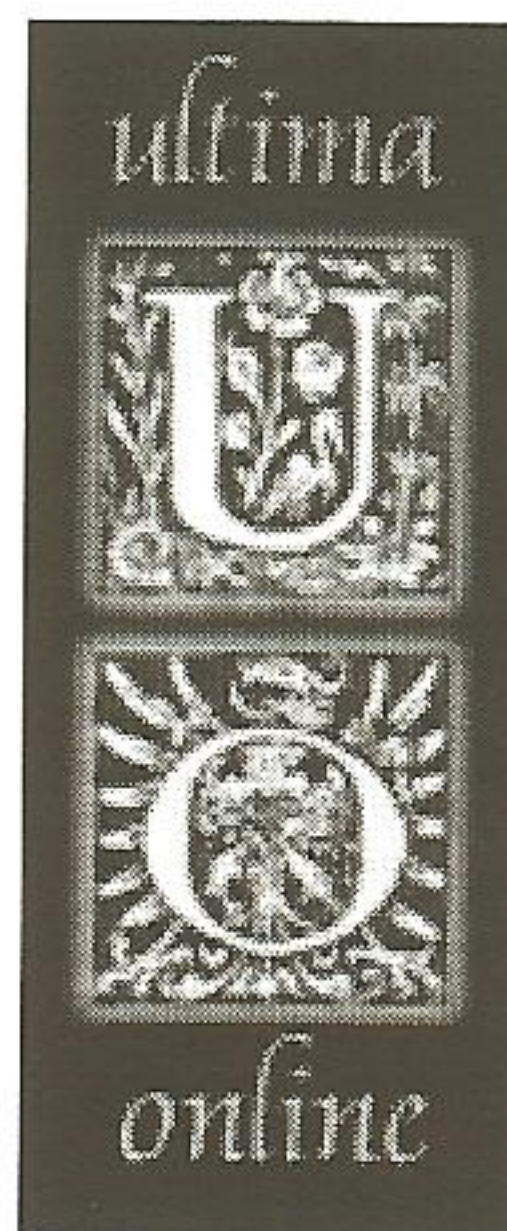


I n s i d e

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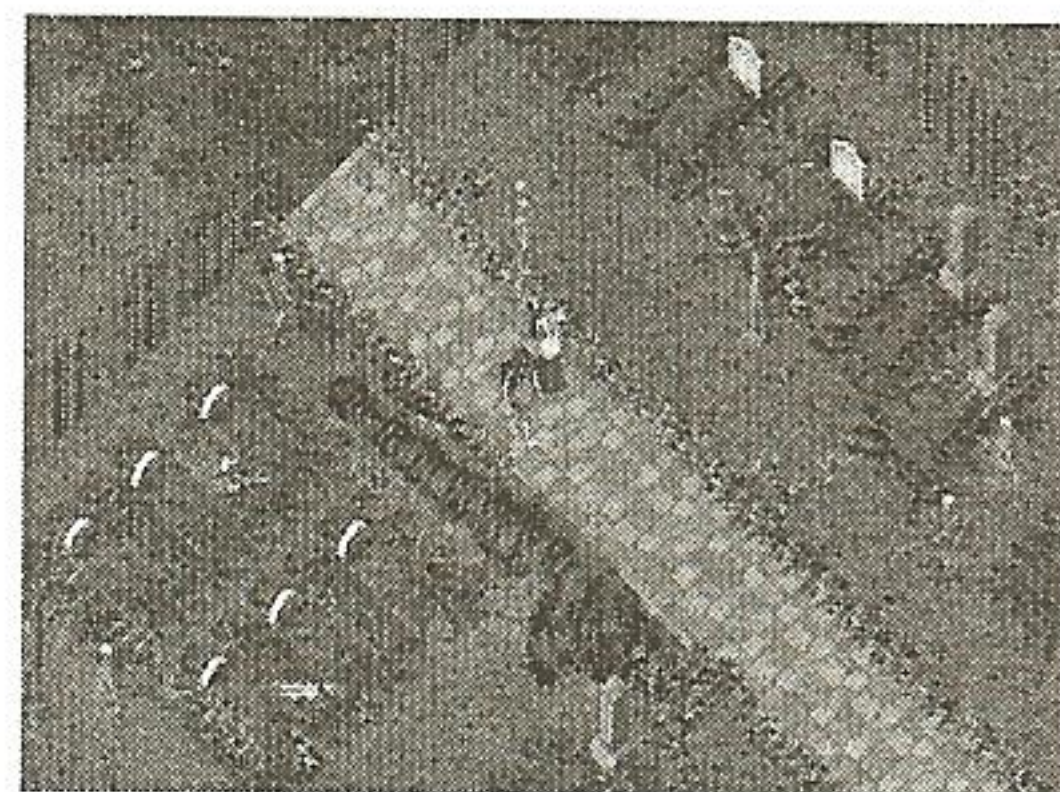
*Ultima
Online is a
Hit with
Pre-Alpha
Testers!*

S p o t l i g h t



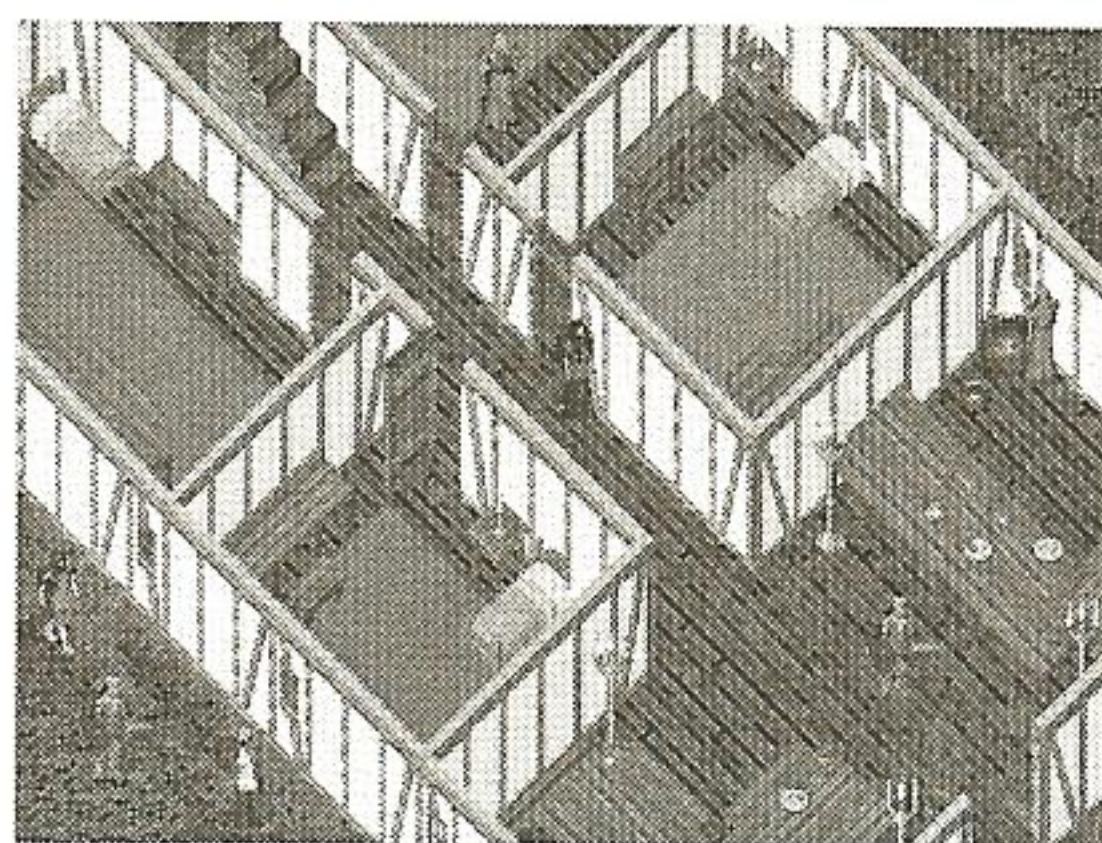
ORIGIN has done it again! We've created a world. Except this time, we invited the whole world to join in with us at the same time. Welcome to the pre-alpha test of Ultima Online.

The test, which began at 10 a.m. Monday and runs through 10 a.m. April 8, has literally taken the world by storm, involving thousands of testers from more than 30 countries. Since being made available to the public, the response has been incredible.



"This will be damn awesome when it comes out!" said one tester. "We ran into LB! THE REAL THING!!" said another who posted to ORIGIN's web chat area. "So what, I went adventuring with him to kill monsters," responded another.

In fact, **Richard Garriott** has quite enjoyed holding court and answering questions of his loyal subjects including important issues for Britannia such as pricing structures and Ultima IX availability.

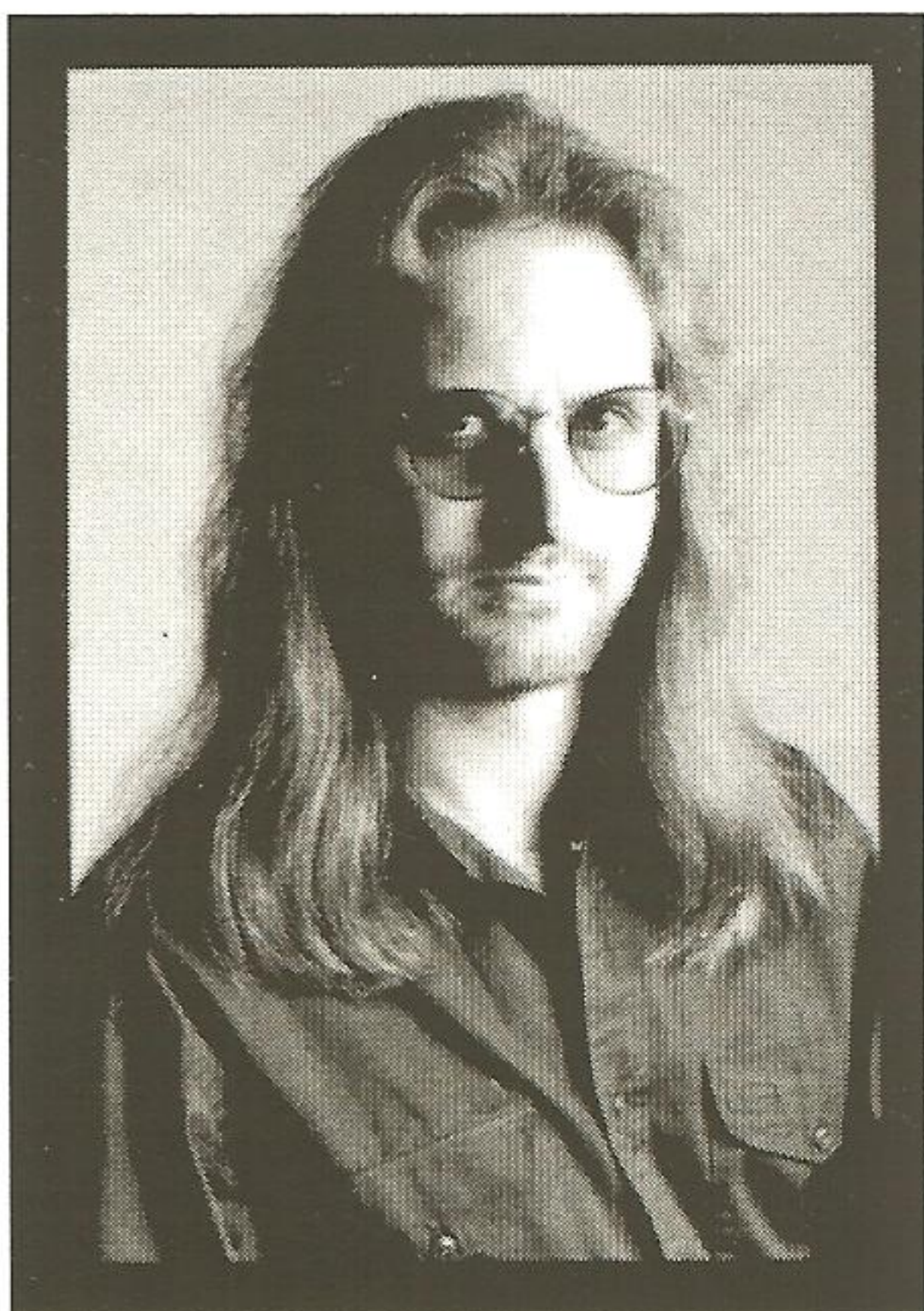


Of course, Richard isn't the only ORIGIN staffer online to answer questions. There are the team members, too. And then

when the NPC guards aren't around to help players, several QA staff are logged on the game playing in "God mode" to keep peace, answer questions, teach

What the hell is up with . . . Maverick?!

Have you seen a strangely familiar long-haired man with shades wandering around the 4th floor lately? It could have been **Billy Cain** doing his infamous Rich Hilleman impersonation.



Rich Hilleman, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Renaissance Man, and stunt stand-in for Bill Nye the Science Guy.

More likely, however, it's actually been **Rich Hilleman** in the flesh because he's been here in Austin.

Formerly general manager of what was known as EA's Entertainment division, which included ORIGIN, Rich has been in town just about every other week for the last couple of months. His mission: To find someone to run Maverick Productions on an ongoing basis. After recent talks between **Chris Roberts** and EA, the question of the team's leadership has been in a state of limbo.

"Maverick needs a morale boost and ORIGIN needs staff to carry out the day-to-day management of the team," said Rich. "Since Chris' capacity with ORIGIN has changed, I've been called in on a temporary basis. I don't know how

long it will take, but it's been hard to fill Chris' shoes. What I want to do is replace myself as soon as possible."

Company sources reveal—and you know who you are—that contract negotiations with Chris Roberts continue, things are expected to be settled very soon, and his future role will be new properties.

Rich said he'd like there to be some middle management in the Maverick team and/or a director of development. "I also feel like Maverick's members should feel like they have the ability to work on other ORIGIN projects if they want to. Most of all, I want ORIGIN and Maverick to be happy with whatever decisions are made."

No stranger to the Wing Commander universe, Rich is a zealous interactive movie supporter, and was instrumental in getting funding for Wing Commanders III and IV. He is looking forward to leaving Austin with confidence that Maverick and ORIGIN will be happy and Wing Commander V will reach new technological heights.

"Right now, there are seven story ideas being considered for Wing 5," he said. "Once we have that settled, we'll seek a writer who we think can work it all together. Rather than design Wing 5 based on the storyline, we're basing it on the gameplay technology, which is being completely rebuilt. The Ace Engineering Group, which consists of Maverick's tools group, has recently been renamed to build a new central technology and tool base."

Other future titles for the team include Maniac Missions, Wing Commander V for PlayStation, which will have custom designed gameplay but will share linear content with its PC counterpart, and Wing Commander Universe. "Wing Commander I and II are unplayable on current systems," said Rich. "We want to fix them—not recode them—so they can launch out of Windows 95 and will release them as part of the Wing Commander Universe package. When we really get back to redoing Wing Commanders I and II, we may redo them with live action footage."

In other Wing Commander-related news, Rich said The Darkening is in the process of being reworked to be Privateer: The Darkening and the title which has tentatively been called Darklight may become another Wing Commander Academy title in conjunction with the release of the Wing Commander Academy cartoon on the USA Network this fall. The cartoon, being produced by Universal/MCA, will star the voices of Malcolm McDowell, Mark Hamill, and Tom Wilson, who already have begun doing some of the work. Although it will appear on Saturday mornings, the cartoon won't be the typical low-tech Saturday morning animation, but instead will have high end production values similar to the FOX Network's "Batman" series. Stay tuned to future POINTs for the latest information on this and other juicy topics. ●



Don't fall down! Mark Leon spins around with the woman who really keeps Maverick running — Maddie Fox.

The Point of ORIGIN is published every six weeks, coinciding with the Company Happy Hour. **Deadline for Submissions is the Monday before publication, or for next time, May 13. Contact the editor for more details.**

Managing Editor: Richard Steinberg. Editor-in-Chief: David Swofford. Staff Writer, Photographer and Clip Art Queen: Teresa Potts. Layout and Production: Robin McShaffry. Pin Up Girl for this issue: Catherine Cantieri. Pin Up Boy: Clay Hoffman.



Alex Carloss is the new VP of Marketing, and he most recently served in a similar position for Warner Home Video in Los Angeles. Prior to that, Alex worked for Disney/Buena Vista in Australia and England. After all that traveling, Alex is glad to have landed in Austin, and is excited about being at ORIGIN. He's also just bought a beautiful new house and plans on adding a great big pool. We're lucky to have you, Alex, and let us know when the pool party is!

Weston "Let me spell this for you," **G-i-u-n-t-a** is now a full time Visual Arts Supervisor on the Maverick team. Prior to joining ORIGIN, Weston worked in San Francisco as a motion control camera operator. In his spare time, Weston enjoys brewing his own beer, so we'll be sure to invite him to Alex's big blowout. Congratulations, Mr. Guinta, Junta, Junta.... whatever!

New up in **Kay Gilmore's** group are **Hal Milton**, **Artie Rogers** and **Mike Pickett**. Hal tested CyberMage and Wing Commander IV and is trained on Customer Service phones. Artie claims he saw his future in bubbling hamburger grease and is currently testing Ultima Online. Mike is trained on the phones, and is a key hardware trainer for our Customer Service reps. Congratulations, y'all!

Lord British has some new members in his group as well. A fan of woodworking, music and his wife, **David Biggs** is a new Associate Designer. David cites Mark Twain and his cat, "Spoot," as his heroes. (Not sure if there's a connection there or not.) After a couple years of computer science at UT, and a lot of database programming, **Jeff Posey** is glad to be working as a software engineer. In his spare time, Jeff practices Tae Kwon Do. Will that be a new feature for the Avatar? **Todd** "I once dated the Governor of Washington's daughter" **McKimmey** joins in the Ultima Online team as an Associate Designer II. Todd's an avid billiard player and may one day start a "9 Ball Junkies Anonymous Club" here at ORIGIN. Of course, it would help if we had a pool table. Welcome aboard, everybody!

Stephan "I have so many degrees, I don't know what to do" **Lips** officially joins the Translations department. A former musician, Stephan says the best advice he ever got was "get a haircut, and get a real job." So, he did, and we're certainly glad to have him on board. In case you're a musician as well, talk to Stephan about starting up the "ORIGIN Houseband." (And maybe you can play at Alex's big party!)

In need of a new lamp? Then check out the newest member of **Warren Spector's** group, **Victor Meinert**. Besides his duties as a Graphic Specialist, Victor dabbles in furniture, architecture and making these really groovy lamps... Welcome, Victor!



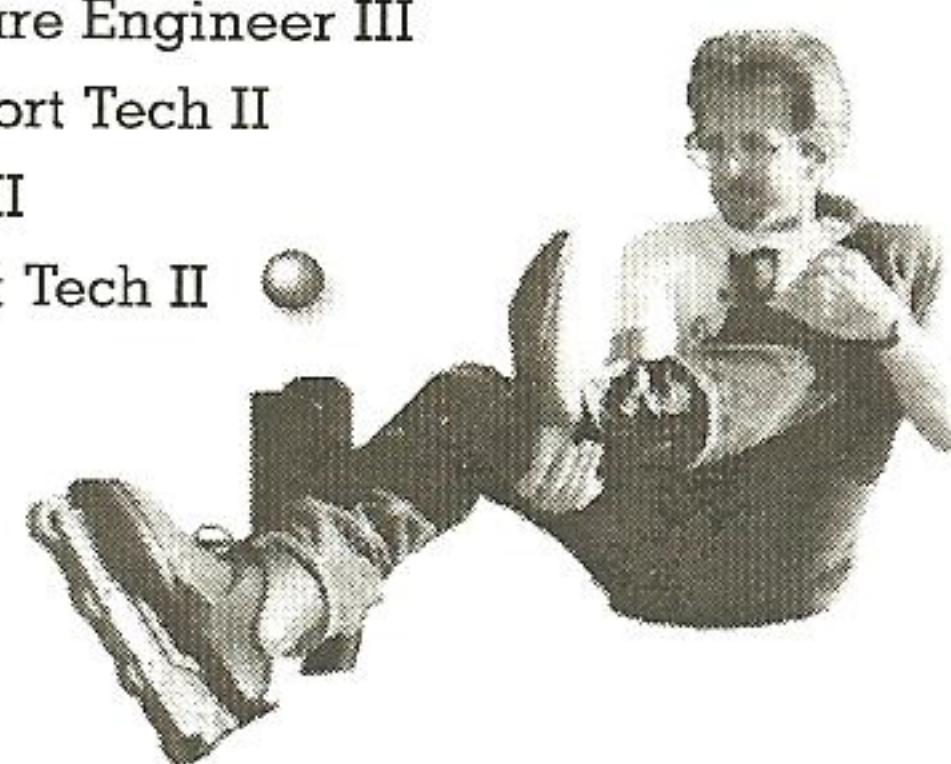
New Guys! Clockwise from lower left: Hal Milton, David Biggs, Stephan Lips, Jeff Posey, Todd McKimmey, Victor Meinert, Westion Giunta, Artie Rogers, and Mike Pickett. Not pictured are Hugh David and Alex Carloss (Probably planning that party...).

And, last, but certainly not least, **Hugh David** is now working as a software Engineer with **Billy Cain**. Though he's new to us, he's actually a transfer from our EAUK office. Hugh is especially happy to be living in Austin because of the great weather and the fabulous music scene. (Now if we could just get Billy to let him out of the building occasionally.) Cheers, Hugh!

MOVING ON UP

Congratulations to the following folks and their new titles:

Scott Jones to Advanced Graphics Specialist
Stretch Williams to Advanced Audio Designer
Paul Isaac to Project Director III
Dave Downing to Associate Producer III
Ben Potter to Associate Designer III
Jason Yenawine to Senior Software Engineer III
Chris Primozich to Product Support Tech II
Tony Morone to Project Director III
Chuck Lupher to Product Support Tech II





If the early reviews are any indication, Wing Commander IV is well on its way to megahit status. Here is what the scribes are writing about the latest success story in the WC line.

Scott May with Computer Gaming World gave WCIV a score of 4.5 out of 5 in the April issue. "A groundbreaking cinematic experience," he wrote. "Curious about so-called interactive movies? This is one of the few that works, and it works well."

Some of the major national consumer magazines also are getting on the WCIV bandwagon. In Newsweek magazine, N'Gai Croal wrote, "The game skillfully integrates live-action video with computer-generated graphics and sophisticated gameplay. Has saving the universe ever been this much fun?" And from Entertainment Weekly, Bob Strauss wrote about WCIV, "A movie game that takes CD-ROM warfare into the next generation." EW's report card for WCIV was an A-.

And the good press doesn't stop there. The major newspaper dailies are starting to sing WCIV's praises. Kim McDaniel writes for The Salt Lake City Tribune. She gave it 4 out of 4 stars in her review. "A cast that would make any TV-movie director jealous—and more than a few feature-film directors as well. While many games tout themselves as interactive movies, Wing Commander IV is truly deserving of the title—a pure joy to watch and to play."

Vox Day writes for The Pioneer Press in St. Paul, Minnesota. His final score for WCIV was 4.5 out of 5. Day said, "With the Dolby surround sound on, it really is like watching a movie. It's nice to know that in a fast-changing world, you can still count on good games from ORIGIN."

Also weighing in was Mike Floyd, who writes for The Detroit Free Press. "At times, it was like watching an episode of a science fiction show."

And it goes on and on. Here are even more comments

from writers who are impressed with what they've seen of WCIV:

"The best outer-space shooting game I've seen."—3.5 out of 4, Mike Langberg, San Jose Mercury News.

"Graphics and sound have always been ORIGIN's forte, but Wing Commander IV goes above and beyond the company's standard."—Peter Bartholow, Dallas

Morning News.

"ORIGIN's simulator remains the best on the shelves."—Andy Grieser, Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

"Wing Commander IV delivers an arcade-style experience—razzle-dazzle space-flight graphics on a color monitor and gratifyingly percussive explosions on stereo speakers."—Joseph Gelmis, New York Newsday.



"To Joe: Good luck with all the girls. Best Wishes, Chris." Mark Hamill and Chris Roberts scribble all over the front of Wing Commander IV boxes at Incredible Universe at Long Island, NY.

The game's also getting tons of coverage from the electronic press. A press tour in New York City last month saw Mark Hamill interviewed on CNBC,

FX Breakfast Time and more than 10 morning drive programs at many of the top radio markets in the country.

Meanwhile, WCIV isn't the only ORIGIN game getting hyped in the press these days.

CyberMage received a 4.5 out of 5 score from Tom McDonald at CD-ROM Today magazine.

"CyberMage has the feel of an interactive comic book," McDonald wrote. "If you think you never want to see another 3D shooter, this game just might change your mind." The game received the magazine's Critic's Choice award.

PC Entertainment's Peter Olafson graded CyberMage at 4 out of 5 for gameplay. He wrote, "The game practically reaches out and taps you on the shoulder,

telling you, 'We know you're here.' Varied game play and a compelling storyline make CyberMage much more than your average Doom clone."

Computer Gaming World scored CyberMage at 3.5 out of 5 in its review. Martin Cirulis called CM "a slick, enjoyable action game. A great looking first-person combat game with a good story."



"And, coming up next on WCIV, your traffic report for mid-town Manhattan. But first, a word from our sponsor...." Mark does the morning radio circuit.

FROM 4

The Washington Post, Bernie Yee had this point of view on CM. "Even Doomers will find CyberMage addictive, as you uncover the extent of alien conspiracy, gleefully perforating anyone in your way." While in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Jack Warner exclaimed, "An excellent first-person shooter. It comes with an excellent manual."

Nevertheless, there were still some less than upbeat returns for CyberMage including Steve Bauman's lukewarm review in Strategy Plus and the less than 70 score turned in by the editors of Computer Game Review. Otherwise, the reviews on CM haven't been bad.

Last month we told you about Crusader reeling in PC Entertainment's award for Best Action/Adventure Game for '95. This month, it's the same song, second verse. Strategy Plus has awarded Crusader as the Best Action/Adventure Game for '95. "This is a superb 'kill everything in sight' sort of game. Definitely the game with the most explosions of 1995."

Meanwhile, Zach Meston with Computer Player gave a thumbs up to Crusader in that magazine's February issue. "Crusader's graphics are abso-tootly stunning. An excellent strategic combat game with solid gameplay and graphics far beyond other games in the genre." He graded Crusader at 8 out of 10.

Finally, Dan Whitworth seems to be having trouble balancing his work schedule with his play schedule. He wrote this comment in his review of Crusader in Axxess magazine. "This deadly game did more than consume countless man-hours that could have been better spent searching for misaligned tabs in our last two issues. It also turned everyone who played it into a heartless killing machine."

Oh well. ●



ORIGIN To Use Real Spacecraft in Wing Commander V

(Editor's note: With the spirit of April Fool's day in the air, Computer Gaming World recently ran the following article describing ORIGIN's plans for Wing Commander V. Reaction has been mixed, ranging from light chuckles to frantic fans wondering how long it'll be before they can blast Mark Hamill into orbit....)

With Wing Commander IV barely a month old, ORIGIN has already announced incredible plans for the next game in the highly successful series. In another first for a computer game company, ORIGIN says it will design small working models of highly maneuverable drones which can be launched into space, piloted remotely and filmed. The craft will enable Wing V to have "unprecedented space flight realism and true 'star appeal,'" says a company spokesperson.

Although the next game in the SF series sounds more like fiction than science, ORIGIN's Chris Roberts says it's the next logical step for his six-year-old creation. "If you think about it," he says, "Wing Commander was the game where we learned the mechanics of space fighting. We made lots of changes and improvements to the overall design in Wing II. With Wing III, we raised the bar considerably with better graphics, more realistic action, full-motion video and big name stars in video segments. In Wing IV, we upped the ante again with real sets, more video, and, in my opinion, a much better story. We've reached the point of using real stars and real sets—now it's time to take our act on location: real space."

Analysts say it's nearly impossible to estimate the cost of such an undertaking. Some put figures at between \$100 million and \$10 billion, just to deploy a small number of remotely piloted vehicles beyond Earth's atmos-

phere. Despite this, ORIGIN's Lord British (Richard Garriott) claims that he has much of the necessary financial support from investors. Says Garriott, "When we told [investors] what we wanted to do for Wing Commander V, they were amazed. We're talking about one of man's deepest desires—to break free of the bonds of Earth.... We know it seems costly in comparison with other games, but this is unlike anything that's ever been done. I don't see any problem getting the financial backing for this project, and we expect to recoup the investment in the first week. You're going to see a worldwide release on eight platforms in 36 countries—it's going to be a huge event. It'll dwarf even Windows '95."

For those who still remain planted on terra firma, Garriott counters that ORIGIN doesn't have to create everything from scratch.

"There are now six separate countries which can launch satellites into space, and we're talking with all of them. We're also engaged in ongoing discussion with NASA, whose aeronautical engineers have been sharing a great deal of technical information with us in exchange for our latest releases."

Both Roberts and Garriott declined further questions, but they did say that most gamers don't have the necessary hardware for such a game. Leaving the press conference, Garriott flashed a quick aside. "If you haven't already," he said with a smile, "now's the time to start thinking about that upgrade to a super-cooled mainframe."

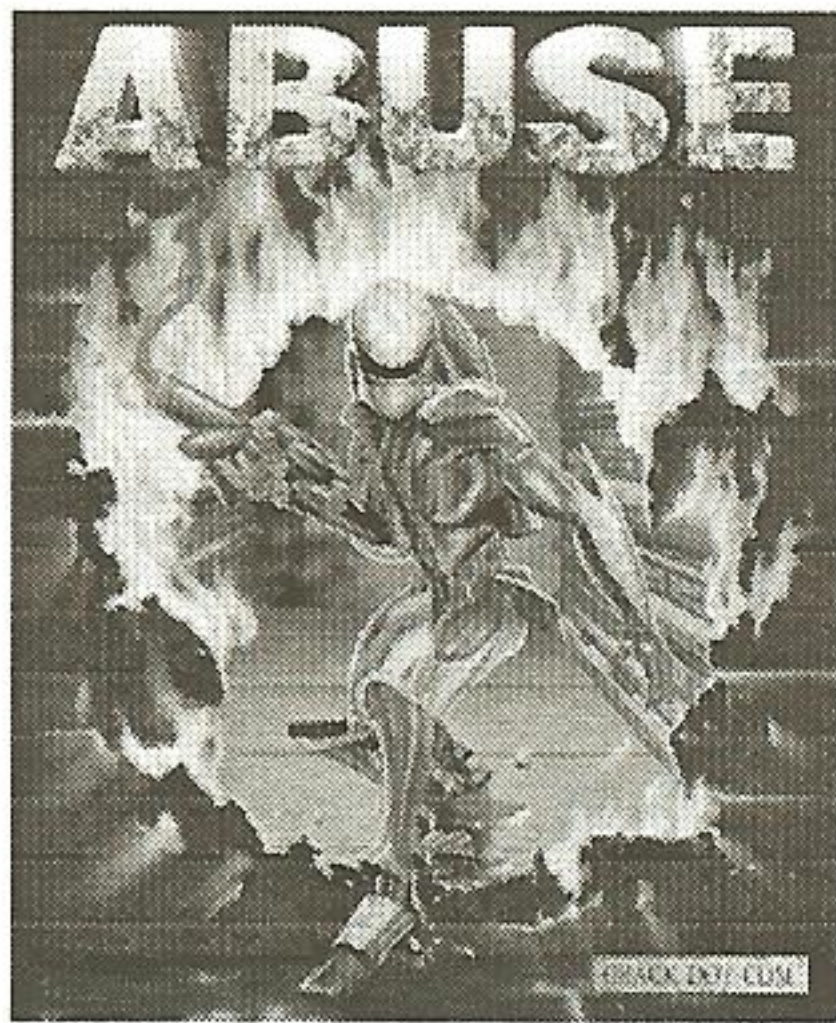
Reprinted by permission from "The Fool," (April, 1996). ●



Artist's rendition of the launch vehicle that would put Wing Commander in space.

B i t s & B y t e s

Abuse Ships!



Last week, Abuse shipped. As a result, all hell has broken loose and you're up to your ass in it!

For those of you who haven't heard, the game, which is by Crack dot Com, is being distributed by ORIGIN. Crack dot Com is based in Austin, and has signed a world-wide distribution agreement with ORIGIN.

Created by Dave Taylor, Jonathan Clark, Murray McMillan and Duong Nguyen, Abuse has previously been available as

a 4-level shareware version. The retail version of the game includes 21 single-player levels, 8-player network capabilities with 12 multi-player specific levels, and an in-box level editor promotion.

Abuse already has rave reviews—88% in PC Gamer, 4 out of 5 stars in Next Generation, and a finalist in Arcade of the Year category in Strategy Plus. In fact, the only major negative feedback according to product manager **Brian Allen** has been from a retailer who objected to the use of the word "ass" on the poster.

Congratulations to everyone who helped get this puppy out the door!

Play Ball!

It's time to power up and get yourself in gear 'cause ORIGIN staff are organizing for sports!

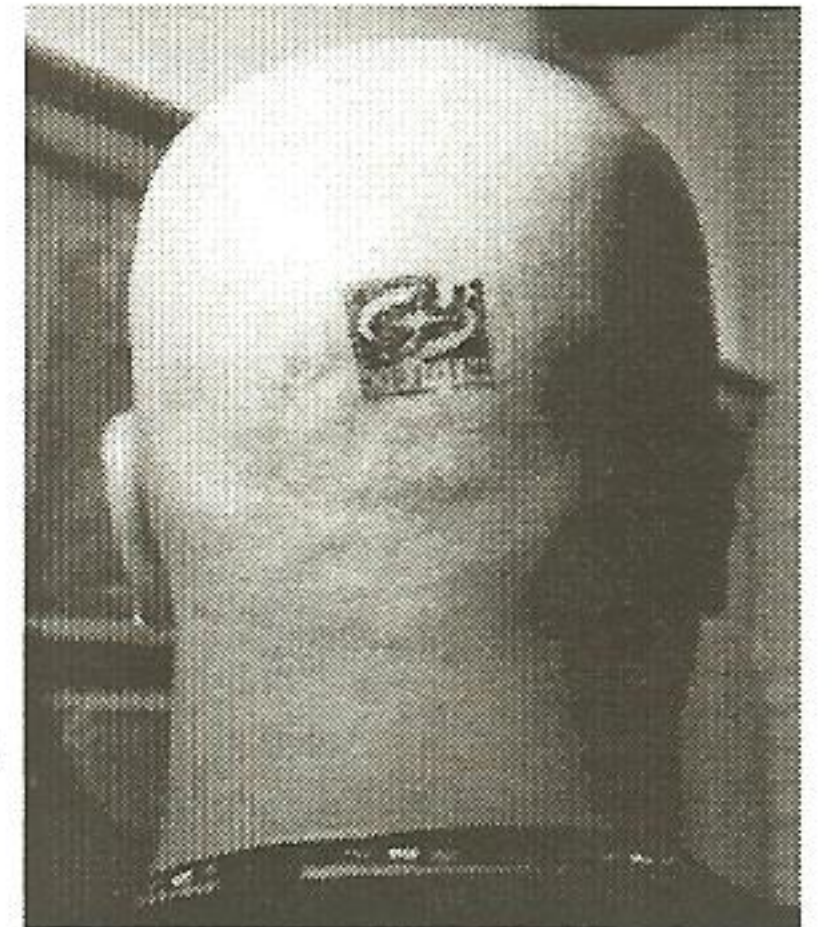
Interested in basketball? Hopefully, ORIGIN is going to have its own team soon, according to **Chris Primozich**. He says a league is starting April 16, 17, and 18 depending on what division we play in at the Givens Rec. Center at 3811 East 12th St. The season will last until the week of June 20. Games will be at 7, 8, and 9 p.m. If you are interested, please e-mail Chris.

Longbow wins ADDY award

Paul Stankiewicz entered the AH-64D Longbow intro in the Austin Advertising Federation's annual awards program, where it won 1st Place (GOLD) in its category. Paul was the main visionary and creator of this state-of-the-art piece, with able assistance from sound men **Barry Leitch** and **Stretch Williams**. The intro can be viewed in the lobby in one of the video kiosks or in QA where Longbow is currently being tested. Check it out! ●

Industry party a success!

On Sunday, March 10, ORIGIN hosted the first annual computer game industry party at The Copper Tank brew pub downtown. More than 480 people from companies such as Crack dot Com, Simtex, Human Code, and Gogo Studios, as well as the press, attended the event, which was held in conjunction with the SXSW Multimedia Festival. Entertainment for the evening was performed by two bands—The Borrowers and



Ladies and Gentlemen, Evan Brandt and his incredible cranium.

Hush. High End Systems provided the lighting and The Copper Tank catered. The party's organizing committee comprised **Mike Grajeda, Richard Garriott, Warren Spector, Jennie Evans, Linda Powers, Angela**



Lyons, and Norma Vargas.

According to one committee member, everyone is looking forward to next year's bash. ●

"It's a full-contact, interactive, haunted experience! Oh, wait..."



Free beer draws a crowd of folks from game companies all over town, including a few ORIGIN alumni.



Once upon a time there was a boy named **Bob White**, who lived on the NASA base in Houston. He had a friend named **Richard**, whose father happened to be an astronaut. Bob and Richard spent a lot of time playing Dungeons and Dragons, hanging out, and doing various Webelo activities. Many

years and a degree in astrophysics later, Bob was working at the Fusion Research Center when government cutbacks eliminated his job. Lucky for ORIGIN, Bob is now using his knowledge to design for the Ultima IX team.

Bob's a really great guy, just ask any the folks that work with him. Or you can just read some the things they've said about him:

Bob unwaveringly exhibits an enviable work ethic that has him well focused on the job at hand and yet still an active contributor to a strong team culture. His work is always of the highest quality and his output is often twice the pace of others, and he exhibits a unique blend of strong technical as well as creative skills. (former Webelo cohort, **Richard Garriott**)

Bob has always been responsible, punctual, productive, enthusiastic, and has set the standard for quality in town design as well as work ethic for the Ultima IX team. (**Brian Martin**)

His familiarity with the realities of writing conversations in the usecode system, combined with his exceptional ability to grasp new technical concepts and programming constructs, helps considerably when considering changes and improvements that will affect many of the designers. (**Ragnar Scheuermann**)

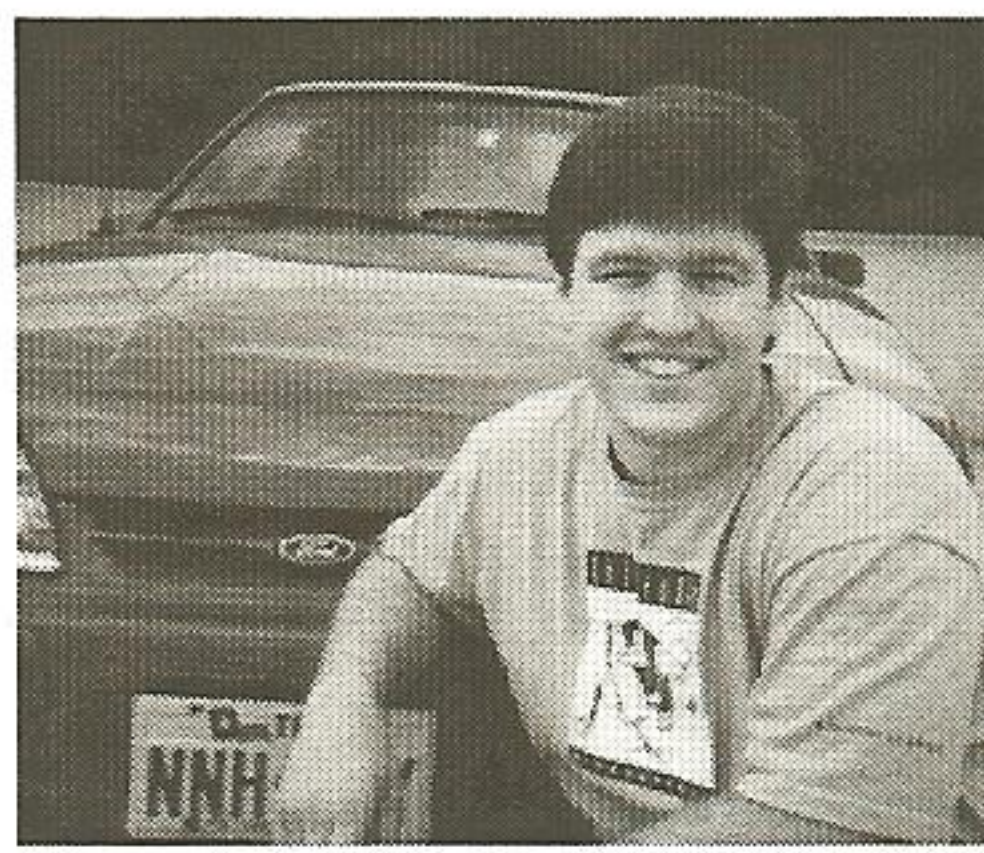
He seems to handle, particularly well, on-the-fly assignments and sudden changes in plan that result in the need to quickly change his personal work schedule to fulfill the needs of his teammates. (**Scott Jones**)

I have heard that since the project began he has not slipped a task—an amazing feat, especially at ORIGIN. (**Joye McBurnett**)

Bob serves as an example to us all—I wish we had more Bobs. (**Mr. Mike**)

(We would have included some additional quotes from his mom, but we didn't want to embarrass him.) In the little spare time that he has, Bob enjoys spending it with this wife of 14 years, Donna, and their son, Merlin. He also enjoys astronomy and spelunking, and on occasion, playing some Dungeons and Dragons.

Thanks for adding so much to our world, Bob. Congratulations! ●



Friendly. Upbeat. Prompt. Always giving 110 percent of himself.

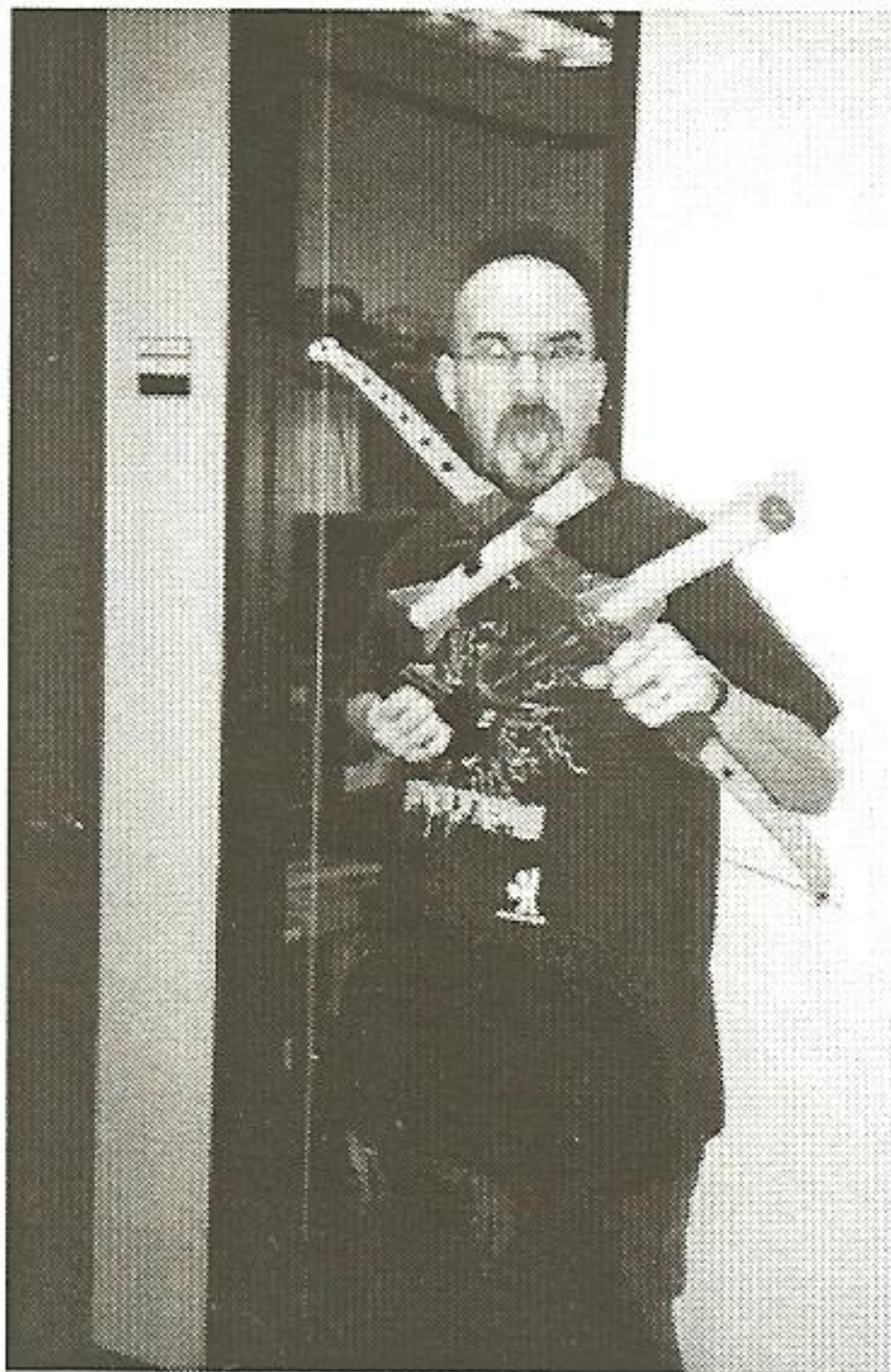
Those are just a few of the words staff have used to describe **Brandon Williams**, ORIGIN's employee of the month for April.

A runner here for the last year and four months, Brandon really enjoys his job. "It's great working here and I am very fortunate," he said. "And being a runner is wonderful because I feel more or less like I'm part of all the groups here. I see what's going on all over the company and get to contribute in some way."

When he's not working, Brandon likes tubing or jet skiing on Lake Travis, visiting his dogs, who live with parents in Kingwood, near Houston (oh yes, he visits his parents, too), or spending time driving or working on his 1992 Mustang. He also finds time to go to college at Southwest Texas State University where he is earning a computer science degree. "I don't exactly know what I want to do, but hopefully, I'll be able to work my way up in the computer world," he said. Brandon also enjoys his position of catcher on ORIGIN softball team, Swing.Bat.

Brandon also finds time to be an innovator. At the company's Christmas Party for children, Brandon's quick thinking led to his "invention" of hanging plastic, which prevented all the tykes from coming into contact with scissors and other sharp objects in the Mosh Pit. More notably, Brandon also put together the internal web page for the company store. "It seemed like a good way to make things more convenient not only for staff who want to buy things, but for the people who work at the store. If you haven't visited it yet, point your web browser to http://internal/co_store/default.htm

Congratulations, Brandon! You really deserve it! ●



Starr Long is part of the fearless leadership of Ultima Online. Here he is arming himself for the trip to San Mateo.

S p o t l i g h t

FROM 1

about how to form groups, and pass out gifts. They are Monty Kerr, John Moreland, Michael O'Reilly, Artie Rogers, Paul Sage, Todd Wacchaus, and Richard Zinser.

Starr Long spent the week in San Mateo presenting Ultima Online to EA staff, who are also enjoying themselves online. "There are lots of people around here playing it and finding it quite addictive. In fact, we're having a hard time getting any work done," said one EA staffer who wished to remain anonymous.

Way to go team!



Warren Spector skated away this week on his 7-week sabbatical — good money says he won't make the whole 7 weeks without showing up here at least once.

T h e F u t u r e



April

- 9-13 Quarterly EA Sales Meeting Vancouver, BC
- 10 Exec Product Review
- 18 Fireside Chat Mosh Pit
Special guests: Don Matrick and Larry Probst

May

- 3 Show and Tell TBA
- 8 Exec Product Review
- 11 Company Picnic, 1-7 pm Volente Beach
- 16-18 E3 Los Angeles
- 17 Happy Hour TBA
Admin

- 27 Memorial Day (Employee Day Off)

- 31 Fireside Chat Mosh Pit

June

- 12 Exec Product Review
- 14 Show and Tell TBA
- 28 Company Happy Hour TBA

T i c k e t



The latest from Wall Street at 9:12 am, 4.5.96.

	LAST	CHANGE
ERTS	27.250	-0.125
THDO	8.875	+0.125
MSFT	104.375	-0.125
NSCP	45.625	+2.375
SIER	34.125	-0.375

What stocks would you like to see listed here? Let us know! E-mail Richard Steinberg with your picks.

