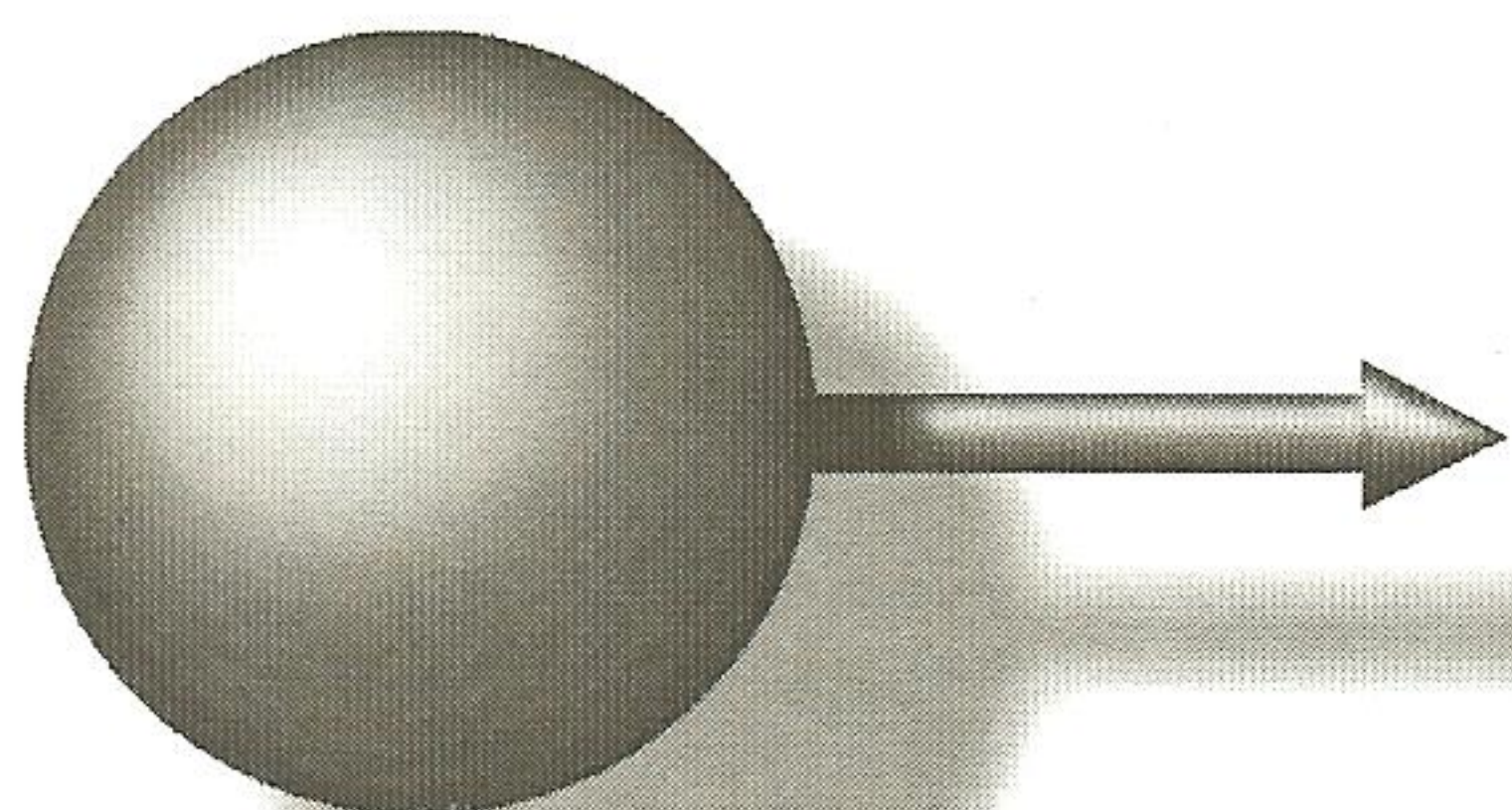


# P o i n t



## I n s i d e

THE CODE HAD TO BE GRAMMED TO FIT

Volume VI, Number 4, May 17, 1996

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Sean Kelley, Rick Delashmitt and Joye McBurnett at the Ultima Online display.

## Newsflash! Straight off the E3 Show Floor!

### S p o t l i g h t



*The Point of ORIGIN is happy in this day and age of technology that we can present the following feature, by Special Correspondent David Swofford, straight from E3, which is going on even now:*

It's big. It's busy. It's "the" place to showcase software.

Welcome to E3, the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles.

Now in its second year, E3 is featuring more than 1,700 titles by more than 400 companies. ORIGIN's titles for the convention, which began yesterday and winds up on Saturday, are *AH-64D Longbow*, *Abuse*, *Crusader: No Regret*, *Privateer: The Darkening*, *Ultima Online*, and *Wing Commander IV for Macintosh*.

"E3 is wonderful," said **Jorg Neumann**, "but to give you an idea of how busy it's been, I did 6 interviews in 3 hours. Generally, there's been very positive response to *Crusader: No Regret*. So far, there's only one complaint--a war vet who objected to the napalm bomb."

**Joye McBurnett** heard only compliments while demoing *Ultima Online*, and got lots of oohs and ahhs from onlookers who got to see screen shots from *Ultima IX*. "E3 is tiring and hectic, but it's a blast." On the first day, Joye even got to do a video interview from a French Canadian



## WHAT THE HELL IS UP WITH . . . WING COMMANDER 4 MAC ?!



The Wing Commander 4 Mac team is populated largely with bald guys. Members of this diverse team pose for our cameras outside ORIGIN.

Wing Commander IV for Macintosh is off and running!

And hopefully, this port of the popular PC title should prove to be one of ORIGIN's best Mac titles yet.

**Ana Moreno**, the game's Associate Producer, is very pleased by all the support

ORIGIN and EA are giving to the title. "We're seeing more marketing and sales support – in fact, this is the most support I've ever seen for a Mac title," she said. "There has been increased internal support from people like **Rich Hilleman**, **Alex Carloss**, **Patrick Bradshaw**, and **Teresa Potts**. We have a good working relationship with the out-of-house programming source, Lion Entertainment, which is here in Austin. The staff at Lion, who also did the Wing 3 port, have been very reliable in that they've actually met their software deadlines."

Ana said that because of differences in the way Mac products are marketed (most are through catalog sales) there will be some challenges ahead, but she is encouraged. "It'll be really interesting to see what happens," she said. "Advertising in catalogs can get expensive, but we have a lot of factors in our favor, such as strategic placement in specific accounts like Mac Warehouse. The software ship date is closer to the WCIV PC release and we released demos in a timely manner – a 50MB version for compilation CDs and a 7MB version for online. WCIV Mac will be featured in one of ORIGIN's meeting rooms at E3. Best of all, as far as competition goes, there is nothing comparable to Wing Commander IV on the Macintosh market except for Wing Commander III."

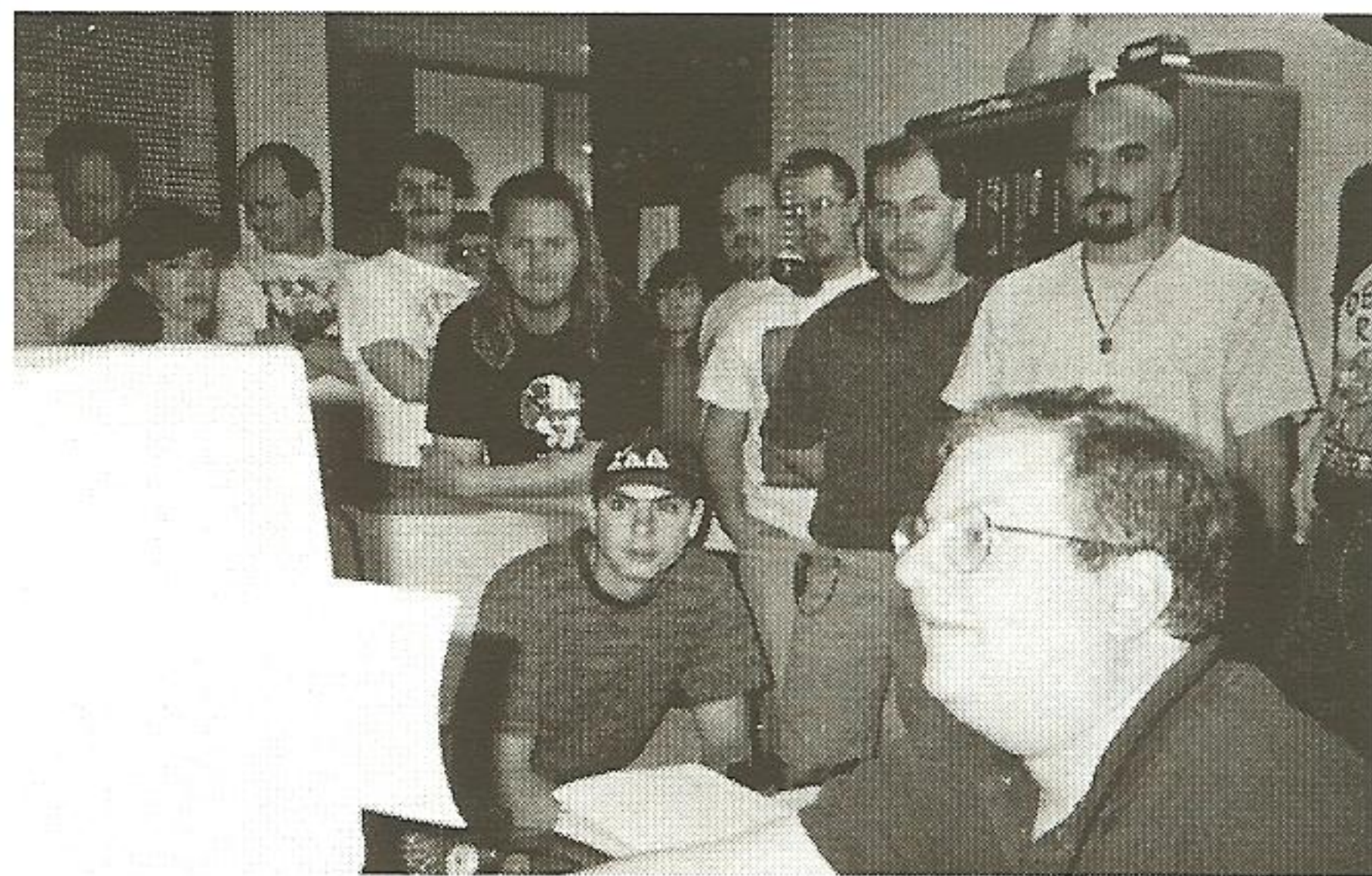
QA Supervisor **Evan Brandt** assigned seven testers to the WCIV Mac project: **Chris Primozech**, Project Leader; **Tom Godsey**, Assistant Project

Leader; **Bryan Hill**, Hardware Tech and Tester; **Todd Bailey**, Lead Tester; **Lee Gibson**, **Paul Sage**, and **Richard Zinser**, Testers.

According to Chris, the team was given a really solid Alpha version to work with, which helped speed things right along. "The main difficulty with the Mac version was memory," he said. "WCIV for PC was slated for 8 megs of RAM. The Mac operating system takes up 2 or 3 megs, which meant the code had to be crammed to fit. Players with memory problems will be prompted to use virtual memory, which is an easy check-box item."

On the other end of the coin, Chris said the Mac version had a couple of advantages over the PC version. "The frame rate is much better on the Mac, if you're using a comparable PC machine. The Mac version will allow players to custom define any buttons on their joysticks. Also, players will be able to load any saved games or change their options from any place on the carrier, while in DOS, players have to be at the terminal."

At the last Product Review, **Richard Garriott** gave WCIV Mac two thumbs up. This summer, we will find out if the public agrees. ●



And everyone crowds into Steinberg's office to see the Apple Quicktake Camera work.

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 month, June 24. Contact the editor for more details.**  
Managing Editor: Richard Steinberg. Editor-in-Chief: David Swofford. Staff Writer and Clip Art Queen: Teresa Potts. Contributing Writers: Kathie Beagle, Billy Cain. Layout and Production: Robin McShaffry. Powered by Shiner Bock.





New in the Audio Department is **Stan Neuvo**, also known as Steve Albers (it's a long story). As an audio specialist, Stan works his magic on the background sounds in all our games. In addition to his duties at ORIGIN, Stan keeps busy playing with various bands around town, including Dickie Dunkin and the Dunkineers, who just released on CD "Bud Good and the Goodbuds." Check it out next time you're in the Mosh Pit. Glad to have you around, Stan!

There's a Rabbit loose in Loose Cannons! Actually, it's **Joe Rabbit** (sorry about that, Joe) who joins the Crusader team as a Graphic Specialist. Joe always dreamed of working at ORIGIN while he spent time as a janitor in a meat packing plant in Indiana. Finally, after three years of writing letters, sending his resume and keeping his fingers crossed, Joe finally landed an internship and is now full time. See, dreams do come true. Congratulations, Joe, and welcome to ORIGIN.

Skunkworks has two new Graphic Designers in the Baltimore office. An avid Bob Marley fan, **Erroll Roberts** most recently worked at Microprose. When he's not working, Erroll enjoys mountain biking, painting and reggae music. Also new to the Baltimore office is **Todd Brizzi**. Todd's also a Microprose defector, and does double duty as the team's lead coffee brewer. Todd's claim to fame is his 1988 Camry station wagon with a "rat fink" sticker on it, and cites **Andy Hollis** as his hero. Gee, no sucking up there, Todd! Welcome on board, y'all!

And just back from a quick trip out west, **Brian Wachhaus**. Glad you came to your senses, Brian!

Congratulations to the newest members of the "Promotions" gang:

**Patrick Bradshaw** to Product Manager I  
**Jeff Grills** to Senior Software Engineer II  
**Dominique Iyer** to Translations Manager  
**Chris Plummer** to Product Manager I  
**Chris Primozich** to Project Leader  
**Dave Reeves** to Supervisor, PC Network  
**Mark Rizzo** to Administrator, Multima servers/network

**Frank Roan** to Project Director II  
**Jason Yenawine** to Senior Software Engineer.



**Stan Neuvo (left) and Joe Rabbit (right) fitting right in at ORIGIN.**

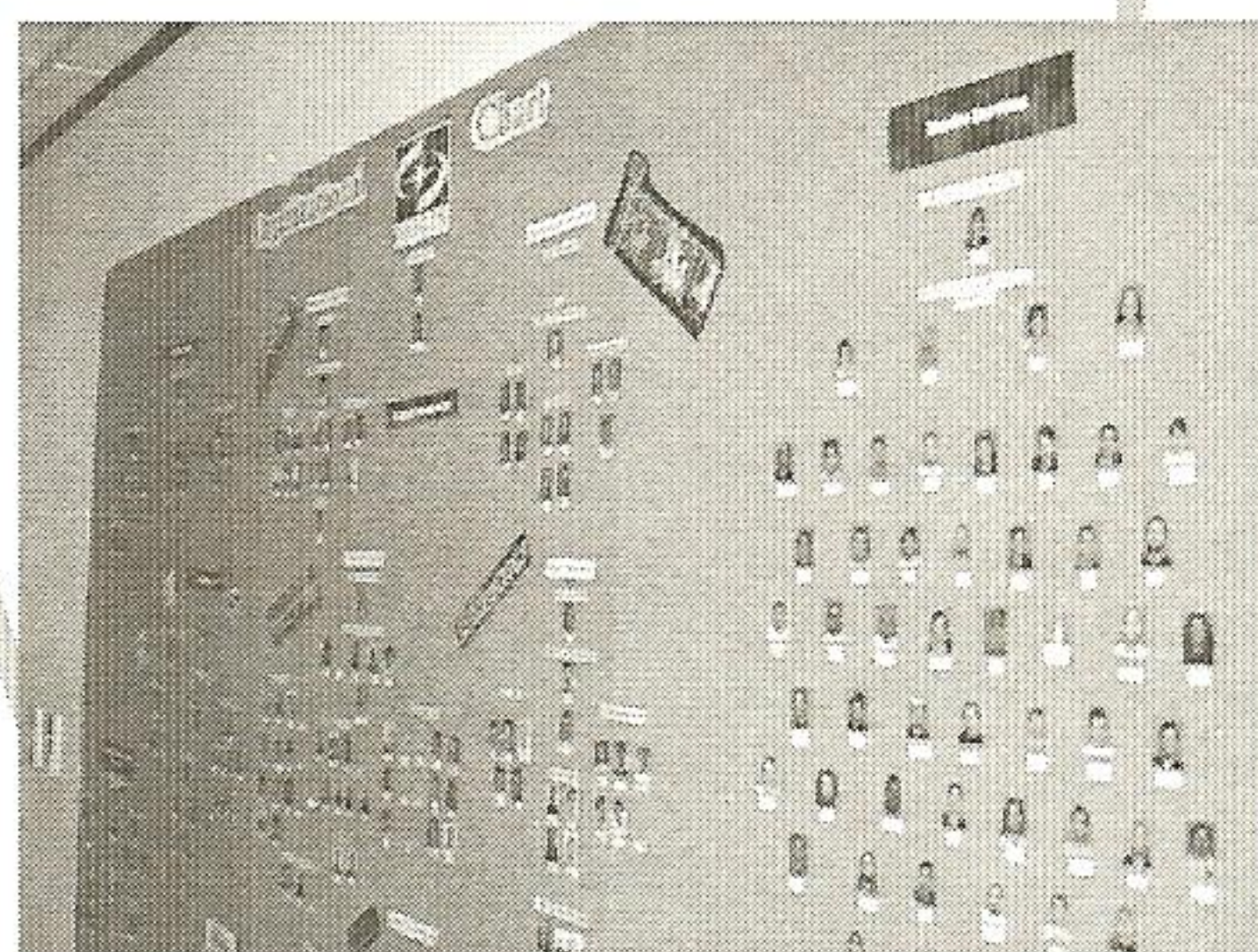
## HR Update!

### Moving, Moving, Moving

Please be sure to notify Human Resources of any address and telephone number changes. If you aren't sure that we have the correct information on file, just check your most recent pay stub.

### Check out the Org Chart

If you haven't seen it, there's a new org chart as you enter Human Resources, featuring pictures of just about everyone in the company. Now you can pair those faces you've seen roaming the halls with actual names. It's fun—go on, give it a try!





# **Shiver me timbers.**

Another ORIGIN company picnic has come and gone.

This year's festivities, held at the lovely Volente Beach, took on a pirate theme. There were even search expeditions to unearth golden doub-loons on an uncharted – OK partially charted – island.

Food was catered by Volente Beach and entertainment was provided by Vallejo.



Denis Loubet



The inimitable Micael Priest



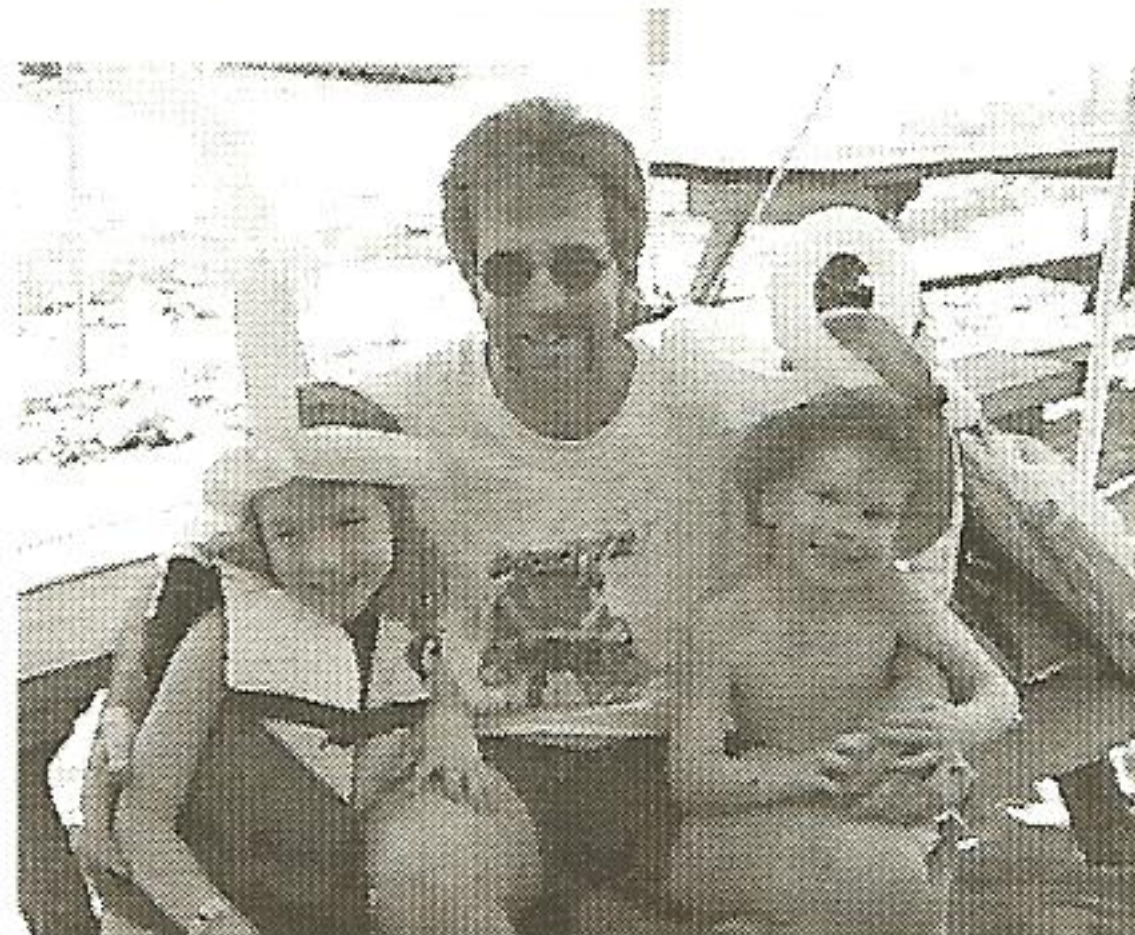
The Dave Beyer #23 Musical Revue draws participants and onlookers.



Billy Cain, so attractive.



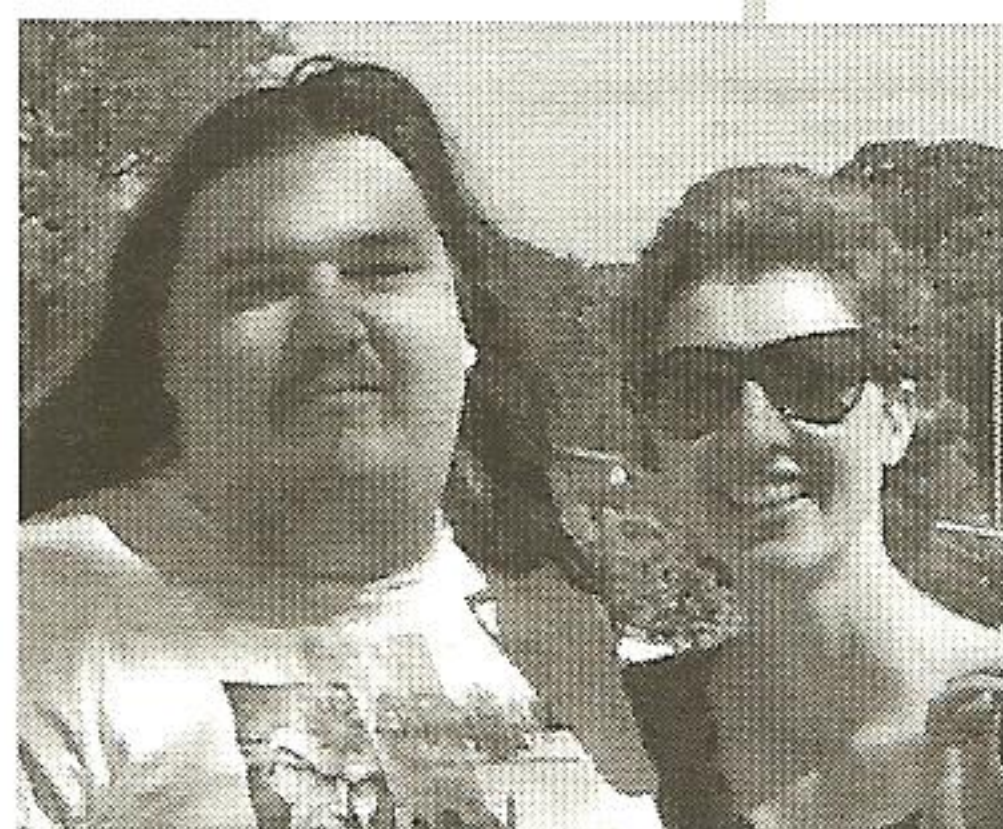
Mike Grajeda and family



Dave Downing and kids. Cute!



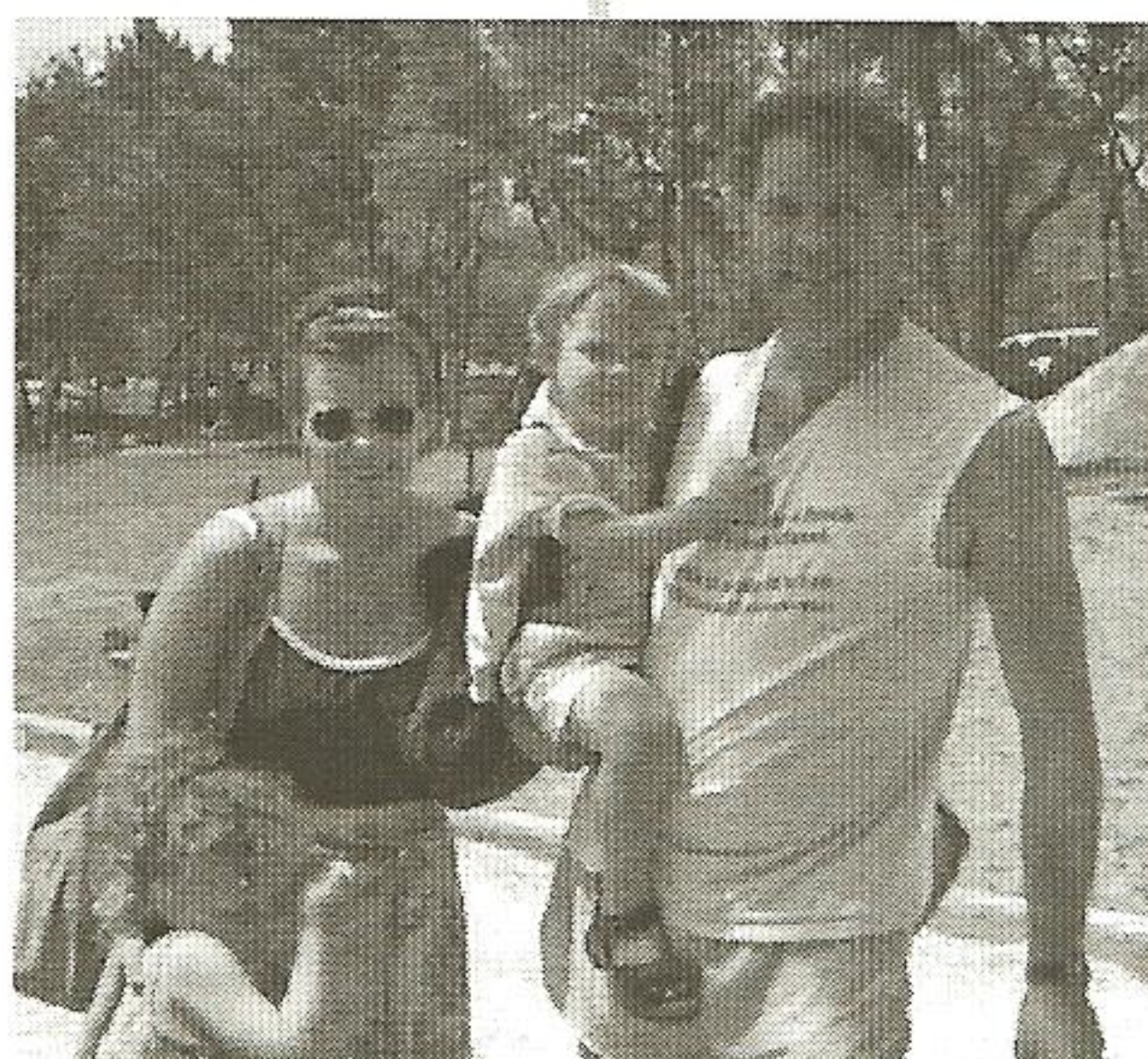
Mr. Mike and his doubloon



Chris & Lynette McCubbin



On the way to hunt treasure with David Wu and Richard



The McLean Family



Teresa Potts and Chris Primozich



# Go with the Flow .....

## **FLOW - What it is and why it's important to ORIGIN**

*What is "flow"?*

How many times have you walked by programmers' offices and seen them sitting at their computers 'zoned out' while writing code? It's almost certain they were in flow. Flow is a state of deep, nearly meditative involvement. In this state, you have a gentle sense of euphoria, and you're largely unaware of the passage of time. Certainly you've been in this state before. (Remember the last time you net-surfed?)

Flow can happen when you're writing, coding or drawing and, when you look up, three or four hours may have passed. Although every job at ORIGIN doesn't require flow to be effective, certain focused tasks such as writing, drawing, or coding need the meditative state of flow to be highly productive.

The biggest trouble with flow is that it is not easy to turn on. It tends to take fifteen minutes or so to get into flow, and any interruption can ruin your attempt to achieve flow. During this 'immersion period' you are particularly vulnerable to interruption. A disruptive environment can make it difficult or impossible to achieve flow.

*"I can't get anything done around here during work hours."*

When was the last time you heard "I can't get anything done around here unless I stay late or come in early" at ORIGIN? Understanding flow is the first step to removing that phrase from our building.

Here are some ideas to help ORIGIN become a flow-conducive environment.

*How can I get in flow during the day?*

- Simply telling your teammates not to interrupt you if you look busy can do wonders.
- Don't face the door of your office. When people pass your door, you'll inevitably look up and lose your concentration.
- Tell people (especially those on your team) to email you, unless it cannot wait.
- Close your door when you're busy, and leave a sign on it saying, "Email me unless it's an emergency."
- If you don't have a door, get some headphones and some relaxing music (even if that means Black Sabbath). Earplugs work, too, if you're used to them.
- Turn the New Mail notification sound effect OFF.
- Turn the ringer off on your phone during working hours. That's why we have voice mail.
- If you can't turn the phone off, open the phone and stuff the speaker/ringer with tissue so it doesn't seem like an emergency.



- Turn your pager to vibrate instead of beep.

ORIGIN's understanding of flow is imperative. When you see someone in flow, think twice before interrupting them. Remember, you can always send an email, if it's that important.

*How can I help others get into flow?*

- Keep your office area quiet. (e.g., turn your radio down.)
- Don't interrupt people that are in flow, or look like they might be.
- Send emails instead of calling.
- When someone complains about noise, do something about it.
- Encourage people to shut their doors, or to leave them almost shut when they're trying to achieve flow.
- Realign your office to minimize visual distractions.
- Set up times with your team when you cannot be interrupted. (I'm going to be unreachable from 1 till 4 every after noon.)
- Respect signs that say "Email me unless it's an emergency."
- Don't have meetings in hallways outside of offices. Take it somewhere else.
- Suggest meetings in rooms without phones. (This one is for group flow.)
- Turn the ringer on your phone to the quietest setting. (This one's for your office neighbors.)

*Will anyone at ORIGIN respect this flow idea?*

That's really up to you and the team you're working with. As an ORIGINite who needs flow to get your job done, you'll have to be championing the concept almost on a daily basis until your team understands you're serious about it.

Certainly there are things you can do that your team won't even have to approve of (such as facing your chair away from your door) that will help you achieve flow more often. After your team becomes more accustomed to the concept of flow, you'll be able to get into it more often, and get more actual work done in a shorter period of time.

*So what - I don't code, write OR draw. Why should I care?*

There are jobs here at ORIGIN that don't require flow to be effective, but we should all be aware of the concept, so we can learn to respect the power of flow. Managers - are you listening?

*Recommended reading for every ORIGINite*

To read more about the concept of flow, read *Peopleware* by Tom DeMarco and Timothy Lister, Dorset House Publishing, 1987. This article was heavily inspired by the chapter "Brain Time Versus Body Time." ●





*Wing Commander IV* is drawing most of the headlines from reviewers these days, so let's jump right in to what they're writing. Let's start with PC Gamer, which gave WCIV a 90% rating and an Editor's Choice award. "ORIGIN's latest science fiction spectacular is even more impressive than its predecessor," wrote Dan Bennett. "WCIV looks and sounds incredible."

PC Entertainment gave WCIV five out of five for gameplay, graphics and value. Shane Mooney wrote, "Not only is it likely to be the biggest game of the year, but Wing IV will undoubtedly become a benchmark for future games of this sort."

Computer Game Review graded WCIV at 95. "One of the best space combat/flight sim games I've ever played," gushed Scott Gehrs. In the same mag, Ted Chapman wrote, "The ORIGIN production team has done a superb job developing the game around a storyline that would be fraught with disaster in the hands of lesser developers, and the balance of sweat vs. fun is nearly unmatched in the gaming world to date."

In the Washington Post, John Payne said about WCIV, "Plot, acting, scenery and effects rival, and even exceed films made for the big screen. Incredible space combat coupled with a complex interactive plot makes this one of the best games since, well, *Wing Commander III*."

And from the land down under, another great review of an ORIGIN product from Hyper Magazine. Julian Bures and Jason Serda scored WCIV at 95. It was on the cover of the magazine and received the editor's "Big Stamp of Approval." "The most stunning action, combat, mystery and interactive movie magic ever put together," wrote Bures and Serda. "This is the jewel in the crown of the *Wing Commander* series. If you don't play it then you don't really own a computer."

There was a nice article on the WCIV music and sound team in Mix magazine last month. A 4-page article featured interviews with **George Oldziej** and **Stretch Williams**. Writer Chris Michie said, "The latest (*Wing Commander*) is a series that has set new standards in production values for the PCCD format."

And finally congrats to several members of the *Wing Commander* team, which carried home some hardware from the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences awards. **Chris Roberts** won for Best Director and Best Producer. Editor **Phil Gessert** won for Best Editor and **Terry Borst** and **Frank DePalma** won in the Best Writer category.

Speaking of *Wing Commander*, the *Macintosh* version of *WCIII* continues to get some notice. Paul Boone in *Mac Home Journal* wrote, "Everything is so well rendered it will fool you into thinking you're in a Star Wars-style sci-fi film." Boone gave *WCIII* a score of 4 out of 4. Bob Levitus, in *MacUser*, gave *WCIII* a 4 out of 5 rating. "A grand and epic drama on four CDs, it combines live-action video with one of the most enjoyable simulators I've every flown."

Another game under the spotlight is *Jane's AH-64D Longbow*, which received its third magazine cover when it was highlighted on the June issue of *Computer Games Strategy Plus*. Ben Chiu, who flew into ORIGIN for a personal preview of *Longbow*, had more than a few good things to say about the soon-to-be-released product. "He (**Andy Hollis**) is again taking the phrase 'leading edge' to new heights. *Longbow* is an ambitious project that is clearly out to set a new standard of flight sims for the rest of the industry to aspire to."

There's also a nice preview in the May issue of *Intelligent Gamer's Fusion*. Jon Daughtridge joined the growing caravan to Austin recently to catch a glimpse of *Longbow*. After seeing it for himself, Daughtridge exclaimed, "With the incredible resources of *Jane's*, *Longbow* may redefine the category of helicopter sims. Keep an eye out for it; this title looks to be one of the hits of 1996."

*Fusion* didn't stop there with its previews of ORIGIN products. The magazine also took an early glimpse of *Crusader: No Regret* and *Ultima Online*. **Tony Zurovec** was featured in a question and answer session on *No Regret* as was **Starr Long** on *Ultima Online*.

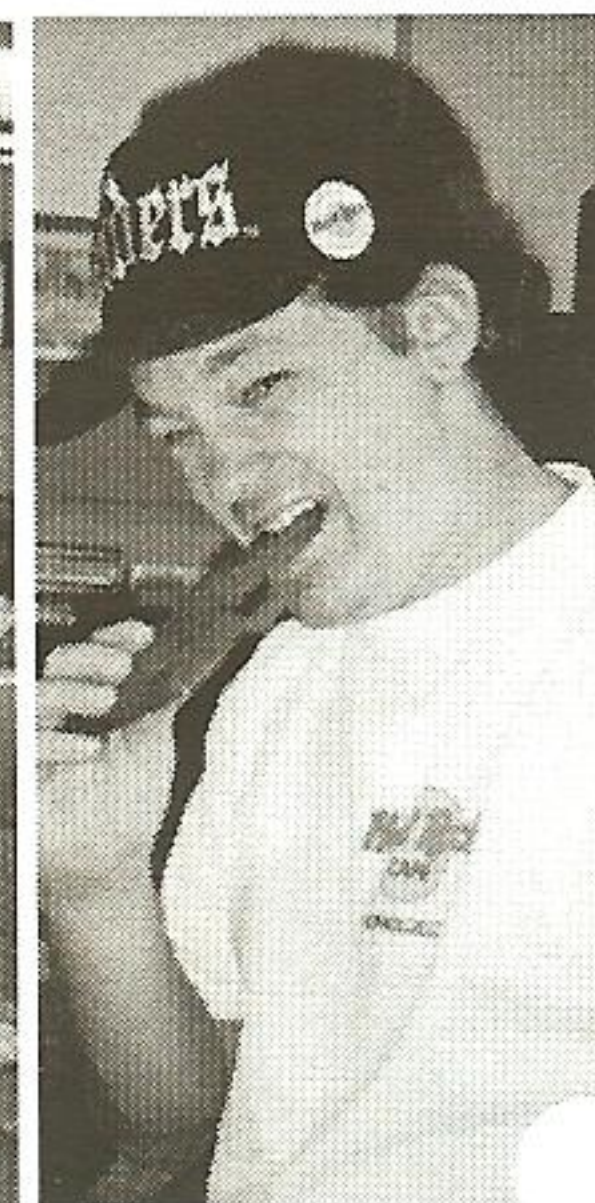
### The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, at Easter. You decide which is which.



**Mark Leon and Maddie Fox** are good at collecting Easter eggs!



**Jennifer Davis** made a good Easter Bunny - Thanks, Jen! (Bok Bok!)



**Chico Marvici** collected a good prize and ate it!





## KAT'S KORNER OF PHUN PHONE PHACTS

- Forget what number to call when you're trying to retrieve your voice mail messages from outside the building? You can now retrieve them by calling your own number and pressing \*, then # once your voice mail has started to answer your phone.
- If you're in one place and can hear the phone ringing at your desk in another place, we can arrange it so that you will be able to pick up your phone from any other extension in your area. If you need a testimonial, ask **Robin McShaffry**.
- Say someone comes to your office to talk to you while you're listening to voice mail. Rather than hang up, you can pause listening to your messages by pressing 2 – the pause lasts 10 seconds. To start listening again, press 2 again. To continue pausing after the 10 seconds are up, press 2 then 2 again.
- There were more than 175 phones moved during this latest building-wide shuffle. All were completed within 3 days.
- Congratulations and thanks – directory assistance calls are down!
- The name of the woman on the Octel phone system is named Marsha, although it's not **Marsha Petit**.
- The folks working for Skunkworks in Baltimore now have their very own ISDN line.
- Thanks to U.S. West Communications, **John Talley** is now communicating with ORIGIN via ISDN (he's working for us in Minnesota).
- Many people don't know that their voice mail can be used like their email. It has features such as distribution mailing list, return receipt, and private messaging.

For further information on any of these features, please contact **Kathie Beagle**. () :> ●

# E O M



Congratulations go to May's employee of the month, **Will McBurnett**. As the project director for Skunkworks, Will has put in many, many hours helping to get AH-64D Longbow out the door. Co-workers credit his professionalism and humor in helping to keep the team on track. "He never asks for more from the people who work for him than he is willing to give of himself, and he has a good eye for balancing what needs to be done and making it happen when it needs to happen," said one team member. Says **Andy Hollis**, "Will has helped cement the team into a unified force which has taken on any and all of the challenges of completing a piece of cutting edge entertainment software and produced a magnificent product." Adds another, "Will is absolutely the best we have. Heck, I could go on, but he asked me to do something for him and, of course, I said 'how high.'"



A San Antonio native, Will was a senior at Trinity University when he approached ORIGIN about converting Ultima VI to the Macintosh for a group project. That initiative paid off when he began working here as a programmer in July of 1991. Although he left briefly for a stint at another game company in California, Will eventually returned to ORIGIN as the project director for Pacific Strike, where he says he learned the basics of flight sims.

Will is especially proud of Longbow because of the nature of the project. "What makes Longbow such a big undertaking is that it's the pinnacle of product development. It pulls together all the aspects of all the genres of games." Will also takes great pride in the people he works with, "Of the fifteen people on the team, only two had ever worked on a game before. Everyone came into their own. I couldn't be more proud."

Although he thinks having free time might take some getting used to, Will plans on spending it with his lovely wife **Joye**. And, since they both enjoy friendly rounds of paint ball, things could get pretty colorful around the McBurnett household.

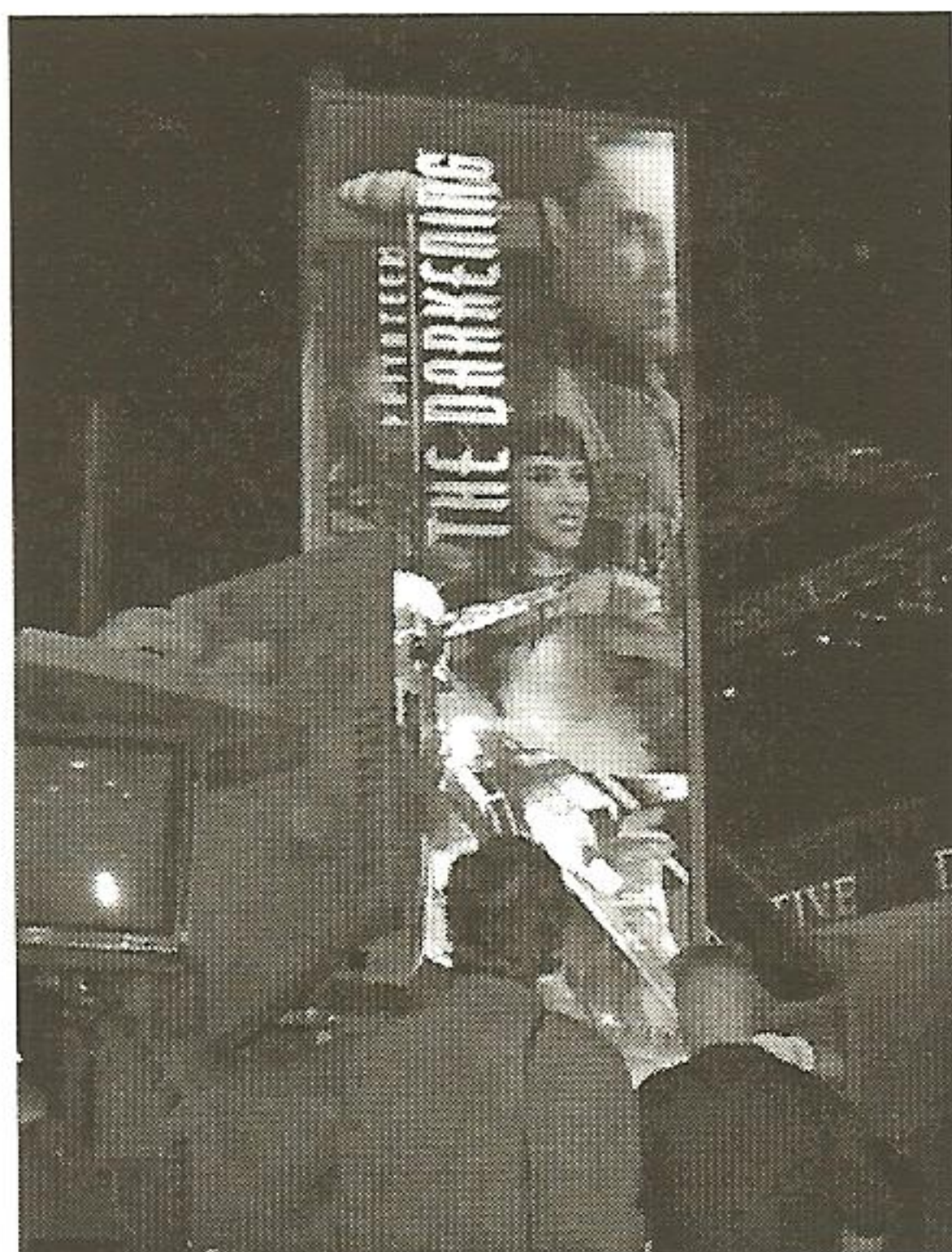
Keep up the great work, Will. ●



radio station--yes, you read that right, but at E3 you can always expect the unexpected.

According to **Sean Kelley**, the hardest problems so far have been getting the T1 line working, waiting for 11th hour software to arrive, and contending with a general power failure that hit the hall about 15 minutes into the first day's festivities. "We all would have had an easier time on the first day if the power had only stayed off another nine hours," he said.

Show attendees gawk in amazement at the backlit, 18-foot display signs. Privateer: The Darkening and AH-64D Longbow, as well as Bullfrog's Dungeon Keeper received similar displays.



Jeremy Dombroski, Will McBurnett, and Kevin Schlipper look for food in the Longbow meeting room at E3.



Jorg Neumann and David Downing give demos in the ORIGIN meeting room at E3



## May

- 27 Memorial Day [company holiday]
- 31 Fireside chat with Mike and Richard

## June

- 2 Construction starts on ORIGIN Raft Custom Creation — See Mr. Mike for details
- 14 Show and Tell
- 18 Mike Grajeda's Birthday
- 28 Happy Hour

## July

- 4 Richard Garriott's birthday [company holiday] Also Fourth of July
- 12 Fireside Chat
- 20 KHFI Raft Race
- 26 Show and Tell

Town Lake

## Ticker

The latest from Wall Street at 10:45 am, 5.17.96.

	LAST	CHANGE
ERTS (Electronic Arts)	33.625	-0.812
THDO (3DO)	11.012	-0.625
MSFT (Microsoft)	116.225	-0.625
SNE (Sony Ent.)	64.750	-0.225
NSCP (Netscape)	72.000	+3.250
SIER (Sierra Online)	46.000	+0.000

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