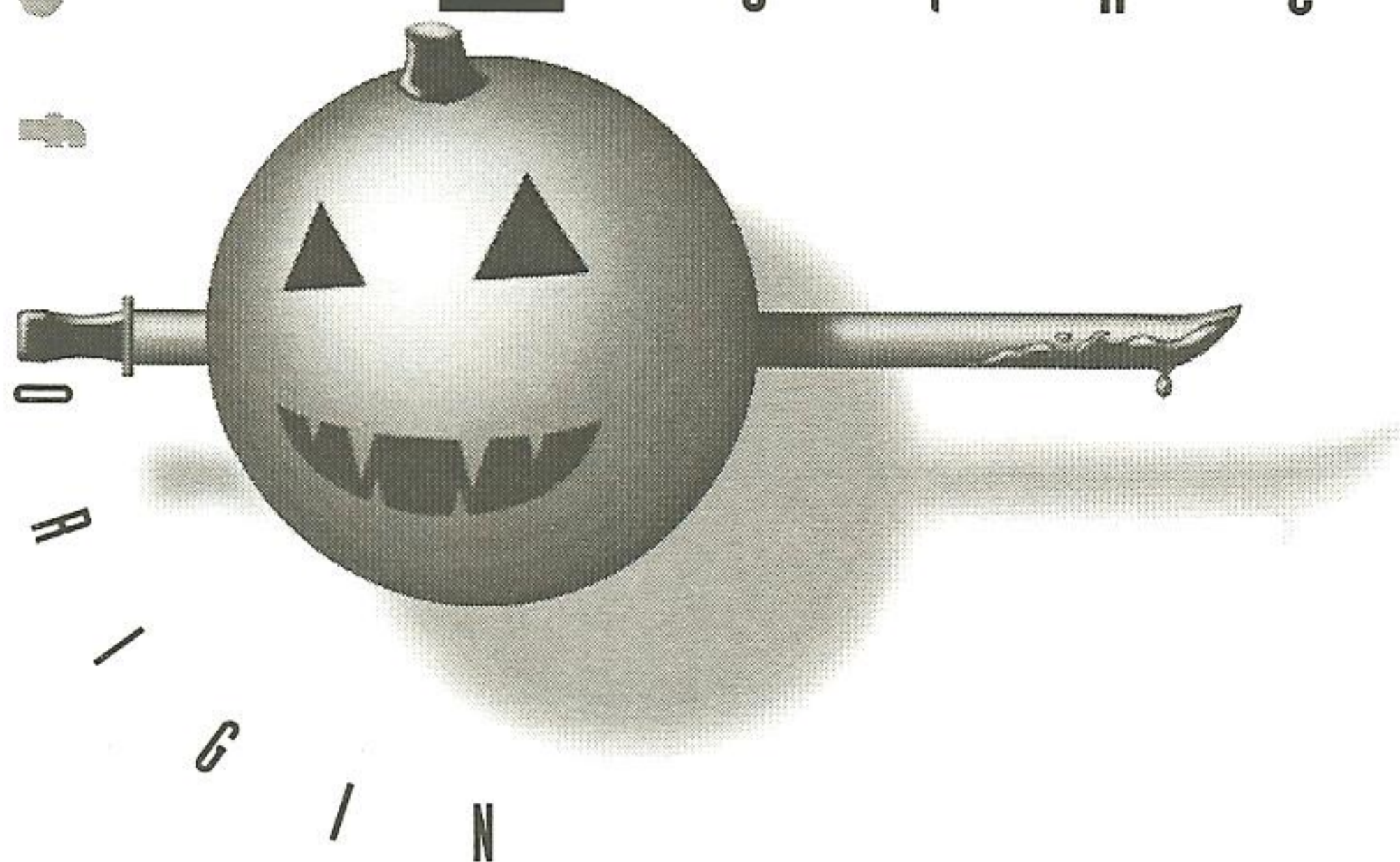


t h e P o i n t



I n s i d e

X - R A Y   B E F O R E   E A T I N G

Volume VI, Number 8, October 31, 1996

Spotlight .....	1
Mr. Smarty Pants .....	2
On the Road with the Skunks .....	3
In Ink .....	4
Oktoberfest Pics .....	5
New Hires .....	6
PS Spotlight Letter .....	6
EOM .....	7
Prankster Pics .....	8
The Future .....	8
Ticker .....	8

S p o t l i g h t



WHAT THE HELL...?!



Care to explain this, Gary?

... is up with Product Development?

This month, *The Point* checked in with Product Development to see what everyone was up to.

**Loose Cannon:** Can you say, "multi-player?" How about, "Crusader: No Rest"? Staff are busy at work on Crusader: No Remorse rebuilds for PlayStation and Saturn, due to ship in December or January. If that weren't enough, they are working on a new multi-player game now named "Crusader: No Survivors" due to ship next September AND they plan to do a company-wide pre-alpha test this coming April. There's also going to be a PlayStation port of Crusader: No Regret due to ship in June that will contain tons of changes from the PC version, including a multi-player option. They're shooting to ship Crusader 2 in September 1998. And let's not forget the recent posting of the Crusader: No Regret demo on the company's external web site — it's only had more than 3,015 accesses since it went up last week (let's hope they were all successful downloads).

**Lord British:** The majority of the energy here has been focused on Ultima Online, which has reached alpha. Some of the Ultima IX team have switched to

FROM 1

Ultima Online temporarily, including none other than **Joye McBurnett**. The public beta test is mere weeks away and the software is currently being tested in Product Support. There's a tie for Bug of the Week. Bug number one involves the moat around Lord British's castle, which seems to fill up periodically with animals. Bug number two involves monsters; when you talk to them, they reply, "Doorydoor" for no apparent reason. Oh yes...Ultima IX has a new, cool-looking avatar!

**Maverick:** Under the new leadership of Executive Producer **Rodney Nakamoto**, Maverick Productions is cranking away furiously on a variety of exciting new projects. **Dave Downing** is leading the charge on the highly anticipated Wing Commander V. The game will feature a new, Windows 95-based spaceflight engine with numerous enhancements over previous versions. A "reasonably priced" Interactive Movie Shoot featuring some familiar and some new faces is scheduled for Spring of 1997 in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, **John McLean** and **Jeff Everett**, fresh from shipping The Kilrathi Saga, are preparing a super-secret project for a late 1997 release. *The Point* sent spies to learn the exact nature of the product, but the best we could come up with is that their new project is an action game, similar in style to Dark Forces, set in the Wing Commander Universe. "I'm excited to be here," said Rodney Nakamoto. "But I was expecting hot, sunny weather. What's up with all this fog and rain?" On a sadder note, Jason Bernard, the actor who portrayed Capt. William Eisen in Wing Commanders III and IV recently passed away at age 58.

**Ninth Life:** Technosaur is on schedule and just four months away from alpha! TCP/IP networking is shaping up — so far the team can connect eight computers together a la Quake, where anyone can jump in or out at any time. The design staff has begun crude playtesting, tweaking weapons/projectile ranges, weapon damages, unit hit points and speeds. The game's sound effects editor is complete and **Jason Cobb** has begun work on linking sfx to animations.

**Skunkworks:** Flash Point Korea just signed off and went to duplication — hurray! Now the team is getting the jump on Longbow Gold, a new sku that will include multiplayer and Windows 95. Skunkworks Baltimore is keying up for a key properties meeting in January where they will do the first demo of the upcoming jet sim. ●

## Mr. Smartypants goes origin

The terrain maps used for Flash Point Korea were actually taken from a 50-kilometer-by-50-kilometer area in Wisconsin. The reason: detailed maps of Korea weren't available.



Old Ultimas are a hot property. According to one fan, a copy of Ultima III just sold for more than \$120. And currently, a copy of Ultima II (with a crushed box) holds a top bid of \$400.

Even **Mike Grajeda** thinks the new audio studio on the first floor is "cool."

Weekly World News articles on **Bob White's** door include "Real Life Demons Will Stalk Our Children This Halloween," "I Was Shot in the Face By a UFO," "Five Easy Steps to Make Yourself Invisible," "Ancestor of Jesus' Killer Slapped With Wrongful Death Suit," "Fat Folks Are Cracking Earth's Crust," "Killer Vultures Headed Toward U.S.," and "Bring Your Guns To Work Day is Dec. 15."

**Sean Kelley's** shoe size is 7<sup>1/2</sup> or 8. ●



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, October 28. Contact the editor for more details.** Managing Editor: Richard Steinberg. Editor-in-Chief: David Swofford. Staff Writer, Photographer and Clip Art Queen: Teresa Potts. Contributing Writer: David Kozlowski. Contributing Photographers: Maddie Fox, Tuesday Frase. Layout and Production: Al Carnley. Proofreader: Catherine Cantieri.

# On the road with the Skunks



**Is Andy your co-pilot?  
(Don't grab that, Andy!)**

and friends get to see first-hand the equipment used by the unit. The Longbows were on display as well as combat support hardware, such as the Mark-19 grenade launcher, which can spray a landing zone with up to 300 rounds per second of baseball-sized high-explosive ordnance. First Lieutenant Donny Lee was our primary escort, showing us the inside and out of the attack choppers. Free to roam about, the team crawled under, over, and through each of the Longbows, posing on occasion for the odd photo.

Not to squander the opportunity, we demonstrated Longbow: the simulator to the pilots. Grand exception was taken with the Flash Point: Korea intro, where a Bell Kiowa scout helicopter takes it in the pants from a couple of Soviet Hinds. The pilots cheered as one. As far as these guys are concerned any helicopter not a Longbow has no business in the same sky. We watched as one after the other gripped the joystick and throttle control to put the computer model through its paces; which they repeatedly crashed into the ground. Well, Flash Point: Korea is still a beta, we told them (whatever).

Gaining insight, a lot of notes, and more than a couple of handshakes, we departed from Fort Hood that same afternoon. It was a safe trip and no one broke anything, though we were all just a little embarrassed when Andy Hollis was asked to empty his pockets at the door of the hangar. ●

— David Kozlowski. Web guy. Polish American.



**Andy gets some combat tips.**

"Jane's Combat Sims builds more 3D models before nine o'clock than most people do ... well, ever." And when the subject matter at hand is the AH-64D Longbow, sometimes you have to go to the source. For the Skunkworks team, that means our military neighbors to the north at Fort Hood, just outside Killeen. Recently, our military liaison, Mike Francis, arranged for several members of the team, including Andy Hollis, Brent Oster, Paul Stankie (fellow Polack), Tuesday Frase, TK Kawahito, and myself, to get within arms reach of 2 of the only 6 Longbows in existence.

We arrived at the 4th Infantry Division's Task Force 21 Hangar facility (for all you civilians: that's where they keep the helicopters) and met with the actual pilots of the AH-64D's. Task Force 21 was celebrating their annual organizational day, where family members



**The Skunkworks gang with an AH-64D Longbow**



**What ... another party? You bet! Flash Point Korea has signed off — what a great excuse to celebrate another success.**



The first reviews for *Crusader: No Regret* are beginning to trickle in and the early returns are looking good. *Computer Games Strategy Plus* gave *No Regret* 4 out of 5 stars and a CGSP Stamp of Approval. "No Regret is an amazingly good game and leaves the player wanting for more," writes Steve Wartofsky. "I hope the Silencer has a long, glorious history ahead of him."

In *PC Gamer*, *No Regret* picked up an Editor's Choice honor and a final score of 88%. Todd Vaughn wrote, "If action, adventure, and a little multimedia hamminess is up your alley, look no further than *Crusader: No Regret*. Some of the most brutal and addictive gameplay around."

It will be next month before we see how *Computer Gaming World* rates *No Regret*. However, this month a short review is out in *CGW* and Elliott Chin gave us a hint of what we might expect. "If you like to see things blow up, and you love to flame, freeze, disintegrate and otherwise obliterate your foes, then you should definitely reserve a spot on your hard drive for *Crusader: No Regret*."

Speaking of *Crusader*, *No Remorse* continues to rake in the good copy. Last month, *PC Magazine* rated its Top 100 CD-ROMs of the year and *No Remorse* was one of them. "Although it's a shoot-'em-up at heart, this DOS CD-ROM is unusual enough to stand out in this crowded genre."

Another ORIGIN title getting *PC Mag's* Top 100 attention was *Wing Commander IV*. "Wing Commander IV virtually explodes, with six CD-ROMs of pulse-quickenning action."

*Wing Commander IV* Macintosh got a thumbs up from *The Mac*, a Macintosh publication out of the UK. Editors gave *WC IV* Mac 4 out of 5 stars. "Exactly what makes this game so engrossing is the seamless way it has melded an action movie and a shoot-'em-up. A stunning experience and it stands as powerful monument to the potential of multimedia. This game is simply on a different planet."

Speaking of honors, there are quite a few to mention in *The Point* this month. Let's start with *AH-64D Longbow*, which received a score of 5 out of 5 stars from *Next Generation* in the September issue and was listed at number 73 in *Next Gen's* listing of the top 100 video games of all time. "An unbeatable marriage of graphics, gameplay and armor-blasting fun."

Also rating in the *Next Gen* top 100 was the *Ultima* series at number 55. "While the graphics and playing style change with the technological leaps of the day, ORIGIN's *Ultima* series has been the most consistent source of roleplaying excitement in history."

Check out this month's *Computer Gaming World* and you'll see that *Ultima* games are all over the mag's 150 Best Games of All Time article. Coming in at number two was *Ultima IV*. "If all RPGs were half as richly filled out as this, role-playing games wouldn't be in such a state of decline," wrote editors. Other *Ultimas* listed were *Ultima VI* (No. 44), *Ultima Underworld* (No. 68) and *Ultima III* (No. 144). Other ORIGIN titles listed in the big list were *Wing Commander* (No. 7), *Crusader: No Remorse* (No. 38), *Wing Commander III* (No. 54), *System Shock* (No. 98), *AH-64D Longbow* (No. 100) and *Ogre* (No. 130). By the way, the number one game of all time, according to *CGW*, is Sid Meier's *Civilization*.



**The Wide World of Geeks.**  
Soft World Magazine Monthly in Taiwan was recently here at ORIGIN to take a tour for their latest cover story

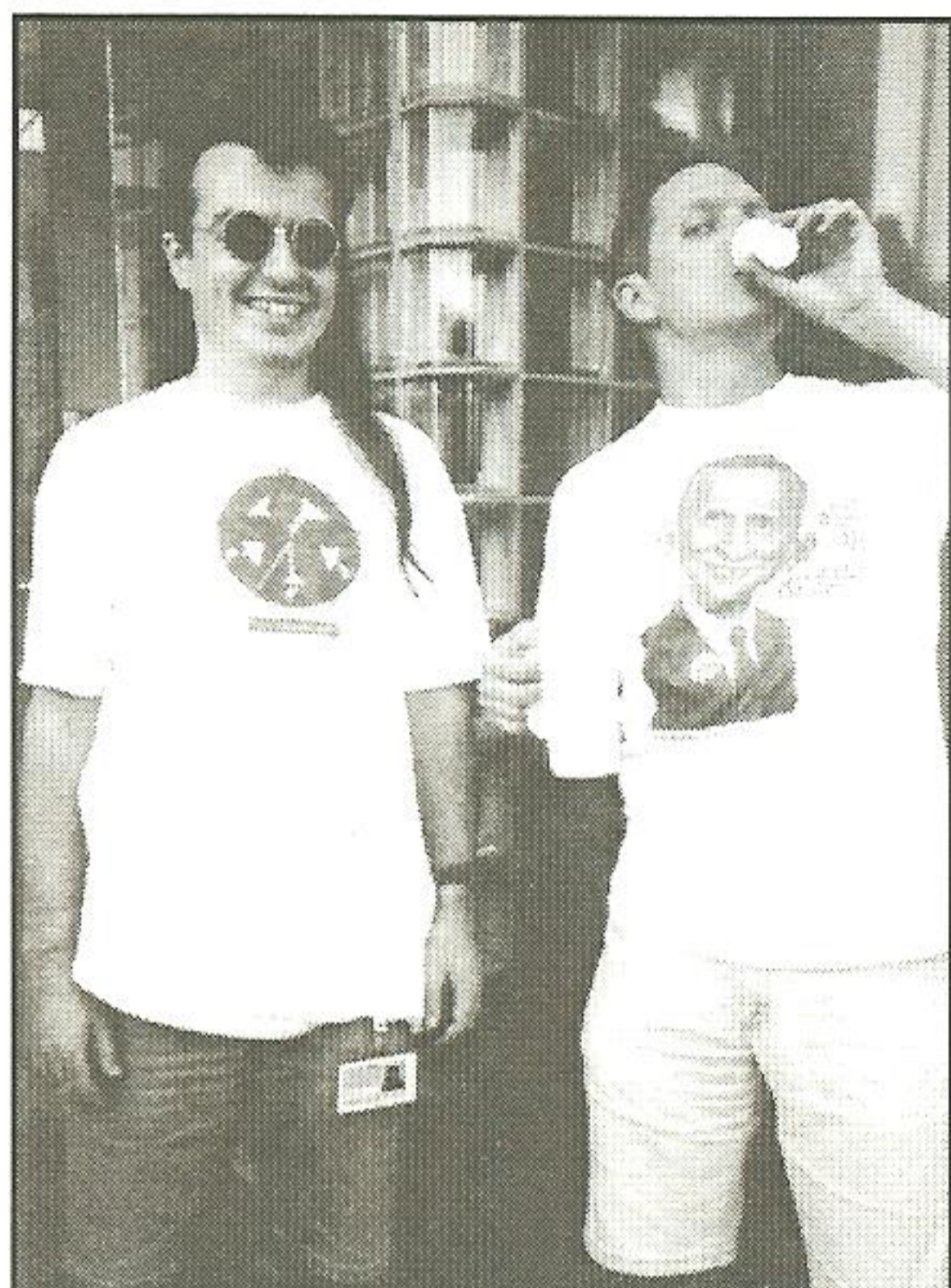
Meanwhile, *Privateer 2* continues to grab its share of headlines as a November ship date looms on the horizon. The October issue of *Computer Player* has a three page preview on P2. Jeff Tschiltch wrote, "Never before has a PC game looked so much like a Hollywood special-effects extravaganza. P2's attention to detail and state-of-the-art space-combat simulator will no doubt impress."

And believe it or not, P2 already has been reviewed by a magazine in the UK. *PC Zone* has scored *Privateer 2* at 94. Chris Anderson gushed, "The Darkening is by far and away the best space combat sim ever to grace the PC. Not only outrageously good-looking, but also incredibly addictive to boot." Hey, that works for me. Let's hope American editors are ready to agree. Stay tuned.



# Oktoberfest Fun

[or — an excuse to take a break and drink some beer]



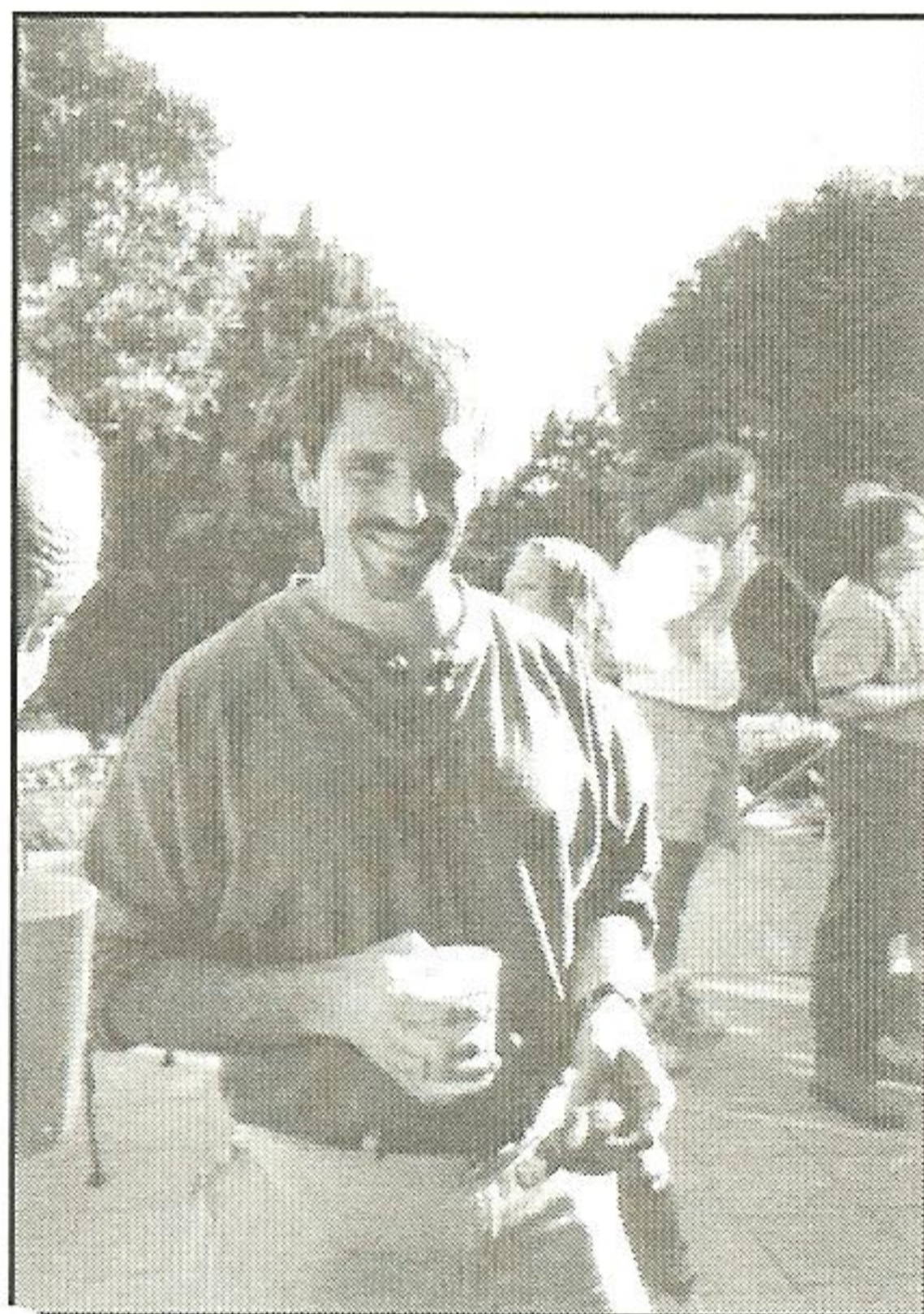
Steve Pietzch enjoying a drink.  
Axel Brown enjoying, uh ... well, he's just happy.



Is that David Ladyman?!

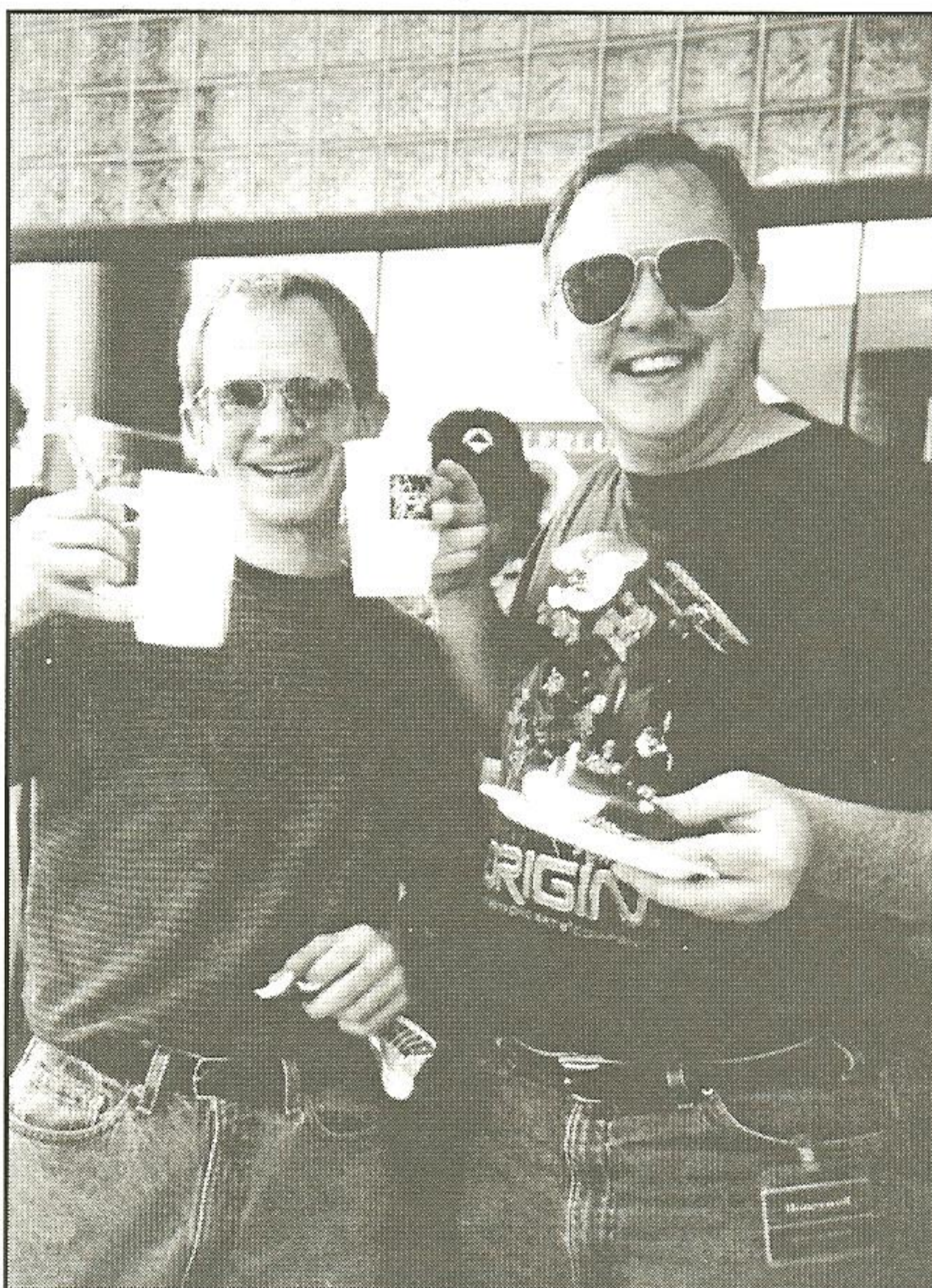


**OH BOY!  
THIS IS  
GOOD BEER**



Strike a pose, Hermi!

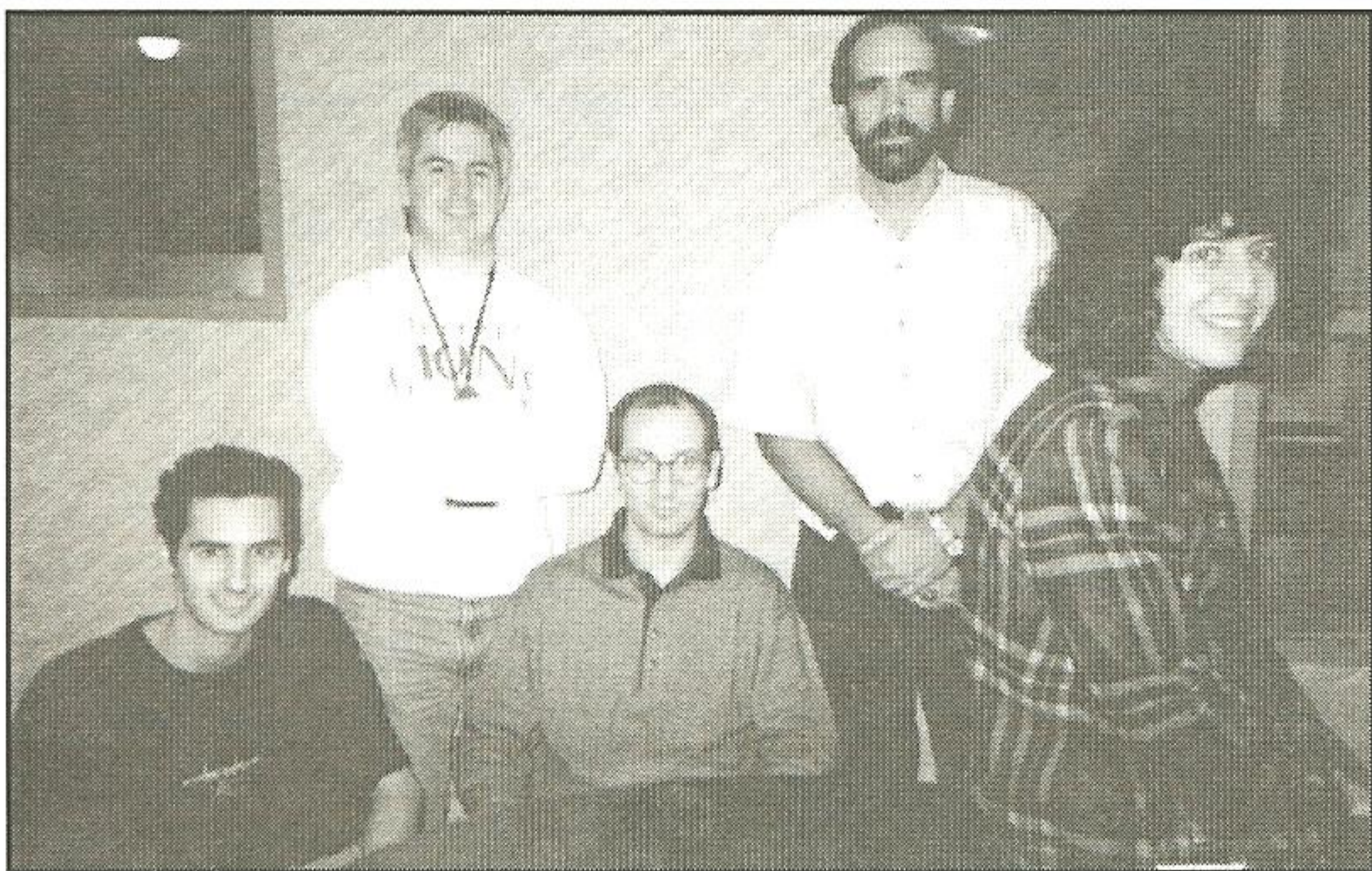
Beers aloft, George and Paul wait anxiously for Ringo.  
John was not expected anytime soon.



Uh, Jeff ... don't you think he's a bit young for beer?



## New Hires



From left: Dan Rubenfield, David Kozlowski, Jean-Luc Chabrier, Rick Ponds and Michelle Latson

### Halloween brings us ghosts and goblins...and new hires!

The new accounting manager in the building, who actually keeps her check book balanced "to the penny," is **Michelle Latson**. Michelle really enjoys living in Austin, after moving from Houston with her husband in January. She fondly remembers her favorite Halloween costume when she was Penelope Pitstop, and got to wear a very cool racing costume.

You might recognize Bullfrog's new associate publicist, **Rick Ponds** from his 15 years as a sportscaster in radio and television. Though he still manages to do play-by-play for local high school football on the side, Rick is excited about his new venture promoting Bullfrog titles. Rick didn't have a favorite costume as a kid, but does remember he and his friends toilet papering the neighborhood in wild abandon. Hopefully, he's outgrown that phase.

**David Kozlowski** packed up and moved from Kalamazoo, Michigan to be the Jane's online communications specialist. In a strange twist of fate, his previous employer asked him to research jobs on the Internet, when he came across the ORIGIN/Jane's posting. Besides his knowledge on HTML and web design, David enjoys practicing martial arts. David remembers an embarrassing Halloween moment when he dressed in army fatigues and camouflage makeup, which didn't wash off for days!

New to Lord British Productions is **Dan Rubenfield**. Prior to joining as an associate designer, Dan was an assistant manager for Babbages, though he says it sounds more fun that it actually was. If you aren't into hiking or biking, you might enjoy joining Dan in his proposed new club, "Sit around, drink coffee and smoke cigarettes club." Dan actually remembers dressing up as a Smurf, but he eventually graduated to a classic vampire.

Joining Translations full time is **Jean-Luc Chabrier**. Prior to relocating to Austin, Jean-Luc lived and worked in several beautiful cities in his native France. He has a MBA in marketing, and is also an amateur rallye pilot. While he didn't celebrate Halloween growing up, he enjoys all of the festivities, and is looking forward to doing a little trick or treating with his son, Jean-Baptiste.

Welcome aboard, everyone! ●

### No Tricks Here.... Just Promotions!

<b>Todd Bailey</b>	Product Support Tech II
<b>Susan Bednar</b>	Assistant Creative Services Manager
<b>Tom Godsey</b>	Product Support Tech II
<b>Allen Jackson</b>	Software Engineer Apprentice
<b>Andy Sommers</b>	Software Engineer
<b>David Swofford</b>	Director of Communications

Congratulations, everyone! ●



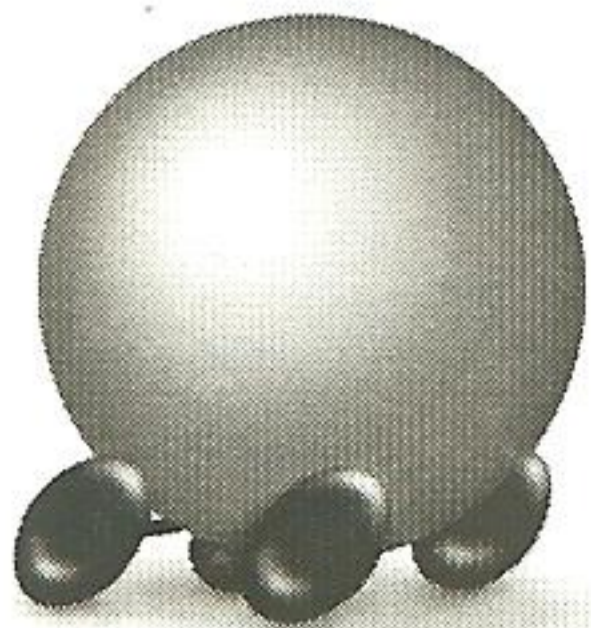
## PRODUCT SUPPORT SPOTLIGHT LETTER

### Product Support Letter of the Month

Dear Ms. Williams,

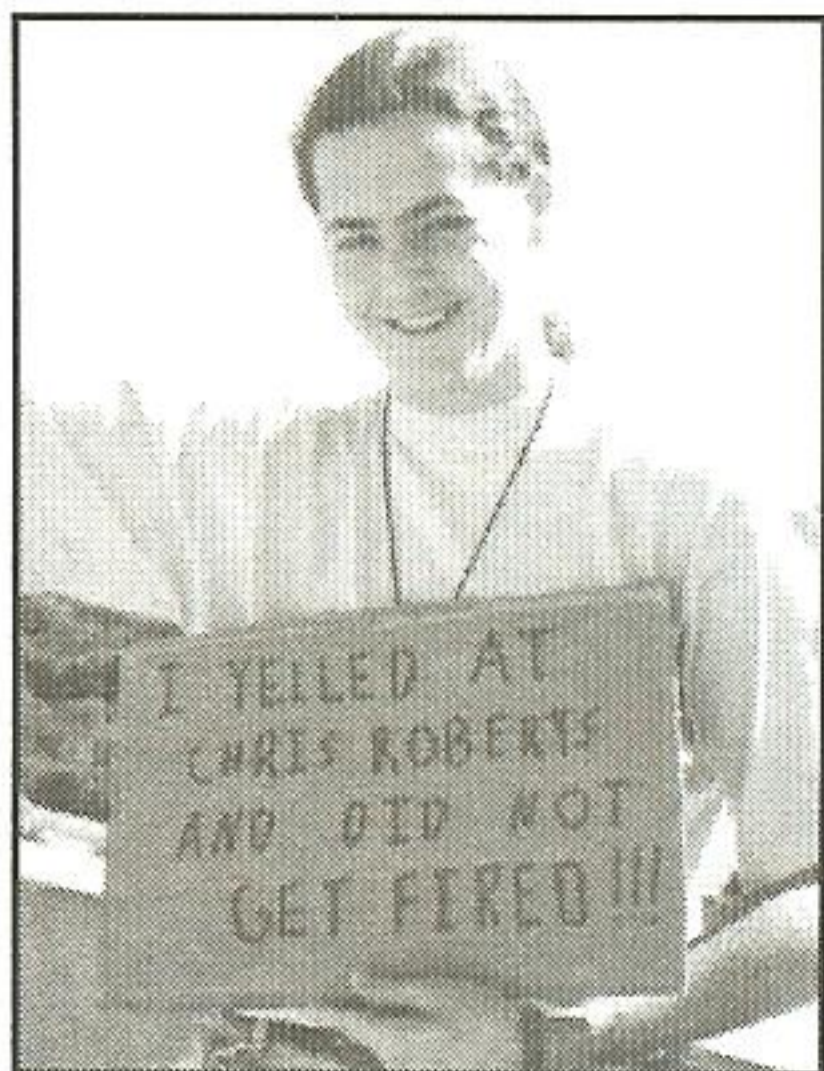
I felt compelled to contact you regarding the tech support I received this evening from **Mackey Fair**. When I called, I was very unhappy with the fact that both programs I purchased last weekend, ATF and Wings of Glory, would not run after installation. Mackey started off by assuring me by the end of my call, both would be up and running. True to his word, they are. He was understanding and patient, and because of that, two children, and in turn their father, are very happy. I thought you should know. Please extend my thanks to Mackey.

Best Regard,  
Gene R.  
Lancaster, NY





## November — J. Allen Brack



"I've played games forever," says November's employee of the month, **J. Allen Brack**, "beginning with the Pong machine my dad brought home when I was around six." In fact, J. Allen played all sorts of games before discovering the one that eventually would have a major influence his in

life. "The first time I played Wing Commander, I felt my life was complete and it just couldn't get any better. Then came Wing Commander II, and Privateer, and I eventually realized that there was a direct correlation between ORIGIN, **Chris Roberts**, and my happiness."

Then one day, to his great surprise, J. Allen was offered an opportunity to be a tester for Wing Commander III. Although he was going to school at the time, he decided that while school would wait, Wing Commander III would not! Although he believed this was definitely his "dream job," he was riddled with fear on how he could prove himself "worthy" of working on a project of "the man, the myth, the legend, **Chris Roberts**." What he did was throw himself into the project to the point of being perhaps being overzealous. In a memorable moment, J. Allen delivered what he refers to as "an impassioned speech" about a potential problem with the game to his idol. Unfortunately, his emotions got the best of him, and he will forever be remembered for yelling at **Chris Roberts**, "THREE POSSIBLE PATHS!! THREE POSSIBLE PATHS!!!"

Nonetheless, it's that tireless drive for excellence and quality that earns the respect of his peers. As the project leader for Privateer 2: The Darkening, J. Allen has indeed proven himself "worthy." Said one co-worker, "Through is verve and inexhaustible esprit, he has concurrently maintained high morale among his testing team." Added another, "J. has gone above and beyond what anyone would be expected to do." And finally, "His devotion is unquestionable, and his dedication unmatched."

It's a very good thing that you weren't fired by **Chris Roberts**, J. Allen! Congratulations, and keep up the good work!



Going that extra mile is never a problem for October's employee of the month, **Melissa Tyler**. A tireless worker, Melissa's been working in publications for three years, and still manages to find time to do those "extra" things that make everyone else's life a little nicer at ORIGIN. Those balloons on your door for your birthday? She put those there. The yearly blood drive? She organized that. Melissa loves working at ORIGIN, and she'll be the first to tell you that the grass isn't always greener somewhere else. For a little perspective, we asked Melissa to share some insight on other places she's worked.



"I told **David Ladyman** once: if you ever want to fire me, you're going to need a couple of strong guys to drag me out of the building, and one of them had better be fast. ORIGIN is one of the greatest places to work I can imagine.

Of course, I've seen the outside world. I've worked in a place where a woman used her lunch break to call the doctor and recite her blood pressure and other symptoms of stress, and was told by her physician to get up and leave — that she should phone from home to say that she'd quit. I've been in an office where the manager inspected her employees' rolodexes, charging anyone who wrote down their friends' numbers with "misuse of state property." I've known a woman who kept a "decoy" purse beside her desk, so that if she up and quit one day, she'd have a couple of hours to relate her side of the story to management before the boss figured out she wasn't coming back and blackballed her. There are places in our fair city where you can get reprimanded for clipping one binder clip to another. There are bosses, I can vouch, who will wait until the day after Christmas to fire you, just so you can't go home for the holiday.

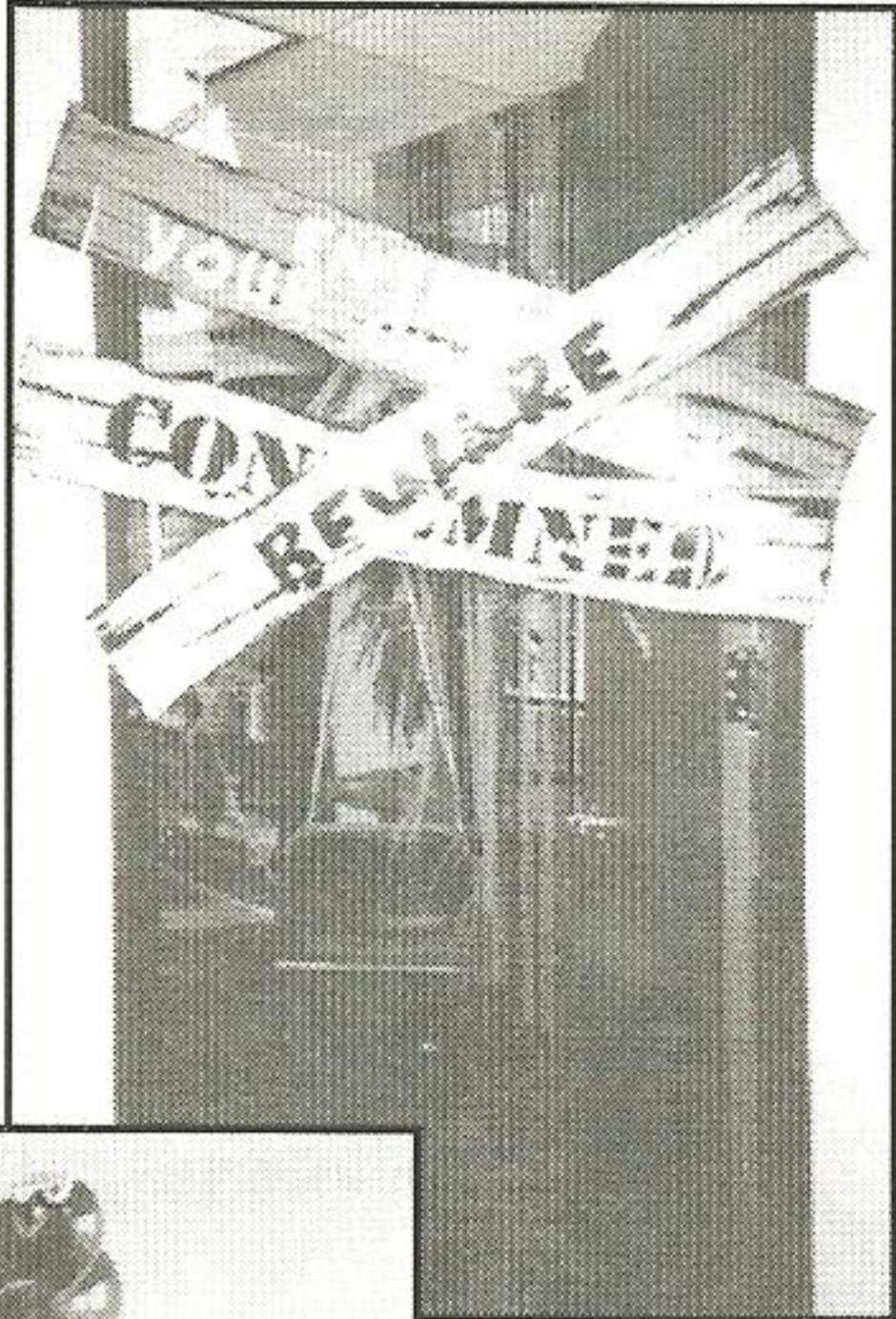
I like it here. People don't have the glazed look that comes from a job that will never, ever accomplish anything. Folks are funny, have interesting hobbies, different outlooks on life, and I can always find someone who's got an opinion of the latest episode of *Babylon 5*. I've found that working at ORIGIN is genuine hard work — grueling at times and sometimes frustrating — but take it from me, it beats working anywhere else for a living."

*Melissa Tyler, Birthday Balloonist*

We're really lucky to have you, Melissa. Thanks for everything!

Playing around in  
Mike Grajeda's  
office again.

The ghosts of titles past?



**T** h e **F** u t u r e



November

13	Review	
13	Fireside Chat	Mosh Pit
27	Thanksgiving Potluck Lunch	12:00, Mosh Pit
28-29	Thanksgiving Holiday	

December

7	Kids Holiday	1-3pm
13	Annual Awards Presentation & Movie	
14	ORIGIN Holiday Party	7pm, Driskill Hotel
25-Jan. 1	Christmas Holiday	

**T** i c k e t



The latest from Wall Street at 9:25 am, 10.31.96.

	(Electronic Arts)	LAST	CHANGE
ERTS	(3DO)	37.750	+ 0.438
THDO	(Microsoft)	6.500	+ 1.000
MSFT	(Broderbund)	136.750	+ 0.500
BROD	(Netscape)	27.000	+ 0.250
NSCP	(Sierra Online)	43.625	- 2.500

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



From the World of P. T. Barnum ...



Damon Waldrip and friends?