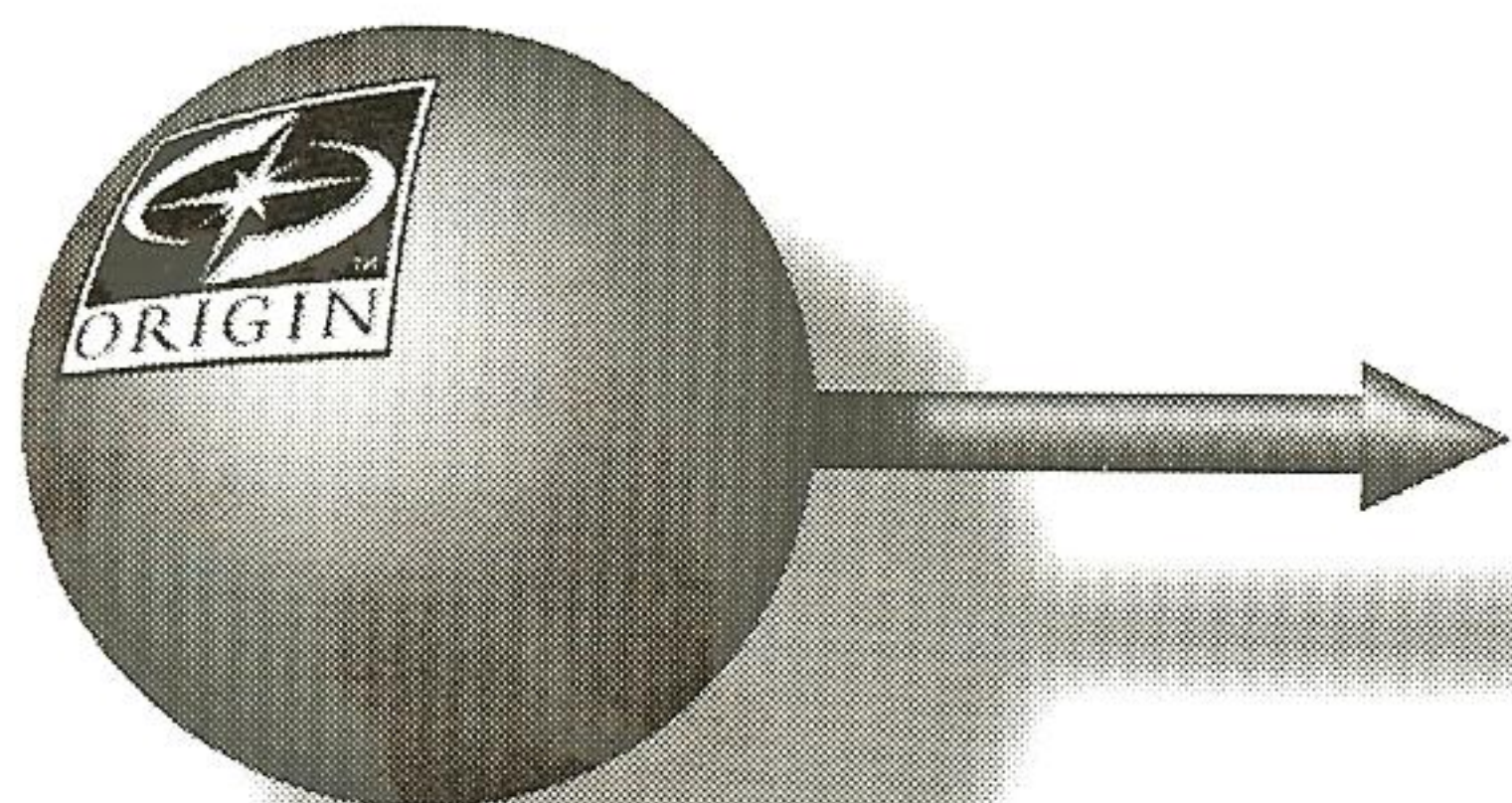


# Point



## Inside

IT'S NICE TO BE SEEN.

Volume VIII, Number 1, February 20, 1998

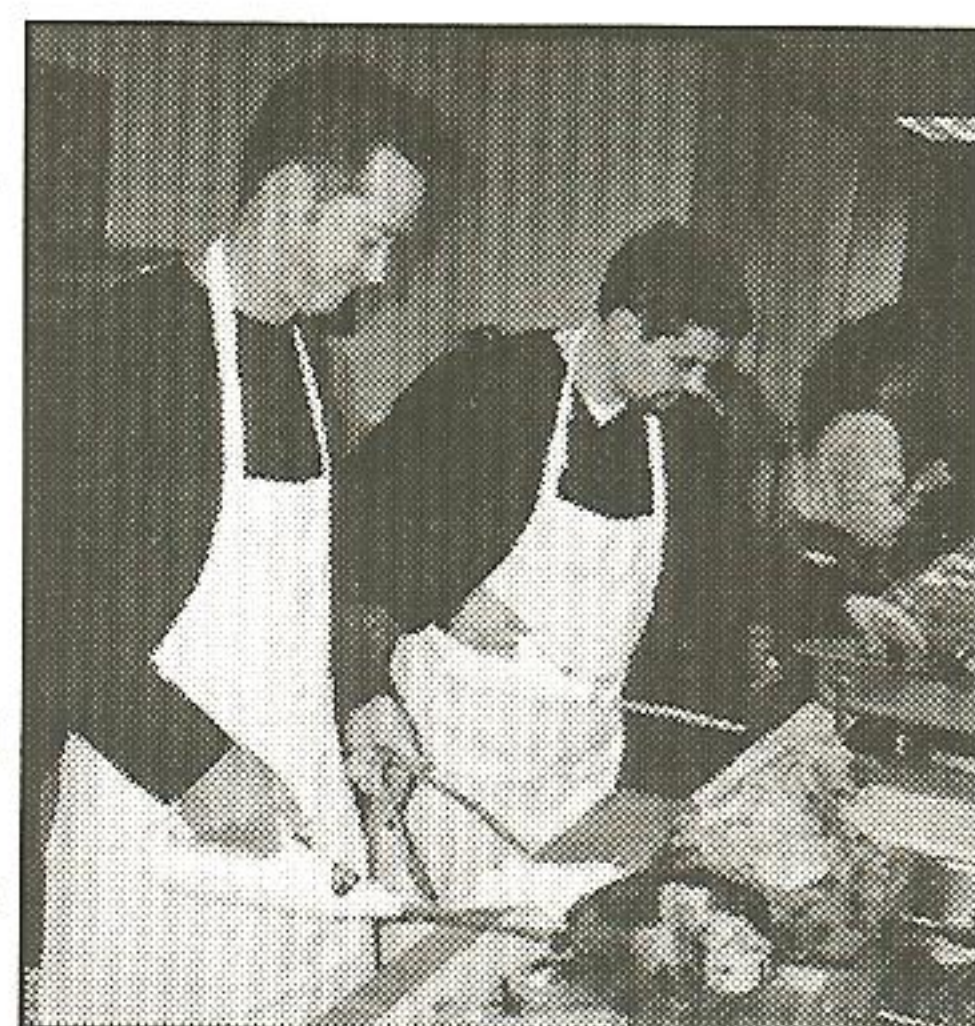
Spotlight .....	1
In Ink .....	3
F-15 Update .....	4
Holiday Party '97 .....	4
Picture Pages .....	5
Top Ten 1 .....	5
Privateer 3 Update .....	6
ORIGIN's Grand Prix .....	6
More Pictures! .....	7
Top Ten 2 .....	8
Calendar .....	8

## Spotlight



### The POINT Presses Those Two New Suits

**Neil Young and Christopher Yates** officially joined ORIGIN last June as General Manager and Chief Technical Officer, respectively. Together, they bring a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to ORIGIN. But who are these guys? And what have they been doing since they've been here? The POINT was curious to find out.



**I'd like white meat, please. Neil and Chris demonstrate their carving skill last Thanksgiving.**

Neil began his career in the industry nine years ago at Imagitec, a small UK development company. He began as a programmer, and later became a producer, and worked on platform conversions for EA, ORIGIN, Microprose and Mindscape. In 1990, Neil joined Probe Software as a senior producer, and worked on titles for Acclaim, Sega, Hudson, USGold and Virgin. He joined Virgin in 1992, eventually serving as VP, Product Development. During his tenure he provided business and production leadership in both the internal and external title development and publishing units.

Chris started in the industry at Westwood in 1988 as a programmer and over the course of six years rose to the position of VP, Research & Development. During his time with Westwood, Chris worked on several titles including *Eye of the Beholder*, *Lands of Lore* and *Command & Conquer*. When Westwood was acquired in 1992 by Virgin, Chris began to take a broader role in the parent company and in 1994 joined Virgin as VP, Technology & Operations. He provided technology leadership for internal development, and was responsible for running Virgin's online business unit.

**POO:** Well, it's been about eight months now. How are you liking Austin?

**Neil:** Austin's great! Of course, I was expecting a flat terrain with lots of cowboys, cacti and horses, so I was pleasantly surprised. One of the best parts of living here is that Austin is a city that feels like a town, and that's



# S p o t l i g h t

FROM 1

very refreshing coming from California. People are really passionate about being here.

**Christopher:** Things are good, my wife and I just bought a house. I really enjoy all the lakes and greenery in Austin. I'm originally from Las Vegas, which is very barren, so it's very different for me.



**Looke here! Richard with no whiskers! Last time you'll ever see this.**



**You be the judge. Is that really a beard on Chris?**

**POINT:** Are there any particularly memorable moments from your tenure here?

**Neil:** Let's see, watching people hurl pumpkins from the top of the parking garage onto a bull's eye resembling my face, that was interesting. Having Wing Commander Prophecy ship the highest number of units in EA-Germany's history was exciting, as was rehiring **Rod Nakamoto**. But the most memorable moment has to be standing on a stage for two hours in front of the entire company dressed as a woman. And then, having to kiss **Starr Long** on the lips for shipping Ultima Online in the quarter!

**Christopher:** Dressing in drag was definitely a classic moment. Turning on Ultima Online as a service and watching those first customers log on was really exciting. Also, as part of a bet with the UO lead team, I enjoyed watching **Richard Garriott** shave his face for the first time since he was seventeen. (Editor's note, the other part of the bet was that Chris had to grow a beard, which is still the subject of great debate as to whether or not he fulfilled his end of the deal.)

**POINT:** Moving on to a more serious side, should we be concerned if F-15 doesn't make the quarter?

**Christopher:** It's important to remember that all titles contribute to our success as a company. With specific regard to bonuses, we'll have to add up the numbers at the end of the quarter to see how it works out..

**Neil:** And, whether or not F-15 makes the fiscal year, ORIGIN has dramatically improved from last year's performance and we should all be proud of that.

**POINT:** What are you most looking forward to in FY '99?

**Christopher:** I think we'll be able to continue to improve the development and overall quality of our products, and the opportunity to take advantage of the market based on those products.

**Neil:** ORIGIN's continued success and growth.

**POINT:** How do you plan to raise revenue without killing everybody?

**Neil:** We plan on rolling out the business plan to everyone at the next company meeting. It's not an unrealistic plan, but it does have its challenges. We feel it's a good blend of franchise execution and sequels.

**Christopher:** The sku plan, goals and business model are all achievable. Good management and planning will be the key in making that happen.

**POINT:** Are you doing anything specific to encourage long term employment?

**Christopher:** We are committed to investing time and energy in our key performers at ORIGIN. Ultimately, that ties back to us creating great products, and people wanting to stay with the organization.

**Neil:** Our hope would be that ORIGIN's continued success will encourage people to stay with the winning team.

**POINT:** Along those same lines, what advice would you give to prevent burnout?

**Christopher:** Ask yourself if there is a way for you to work more efficiently. Finding ways to work 'smarter' so we don't all have to live here is where we should be driving as an organization. We want everyone to be happy and balanced.

**Neil:** That's a great point. It's very important to set priorities in your life. Of course, there are times that require you to extend yourself in your work. Ultimately though, you need to have balance in your life. If you don't, you won't be at your best, and we won't be successful.

**POINT:** Other than ORIGIN titles, what is your favorite game right now?

**Neil:** Parappa The Rapper

**Christopher:** Tanarus

**POINT:** Neil, how often do you wear that outfit from the Awards party?

**Neil:** How did you find out?

**POINT:** Chris, is there a particular grooming product that you recommend?

**Christopher:** Personally, I recommend Paul Mitchell gel. It works great and I've used it forever.



**Lest we forget what stunning women these guys made — here's handsome Christopher Yates and his ugly sister...**



**...and the distinguished Neil Young and his alter-ego. Try not to look too long; it will burn your eyes.**

The Point of ORIGIN is published whenever we get around to it, usually coinciding with the Company Happy Hour. **Deadline for Submissions is the Friday before publication. Contact the editor for more details.** Managing Editor: Teresa Potts. Editor-in-Chief: David Swofford. Copy Editor: Kristen McEntire. Staff Writer, Photographer and Clip Art Queen: Teresa Potts. Contributing Writer: Kristen McEntire. Contributing Photographer: Robin McShaffry. Layout and Production: Robin McShaffry. Movie of the week: Titanic.





# And the winner is . . .

Hollywood will be handing out its best of '97 awards at the Oscars next month, but we already know who the winners and losers are for gaming's best of '97 honors. Several magazines (both print and online) are already out with their "Best Of" awards and ORIGIN reeled in it's fair share.

*Longbow 2* was named Sim of the Year by *PC Gamer*, *Computer Gaming World*, *Computer Games Strategy Plus*, *Online Gaming Review*, *Gamespot* and *Cnet Gamecenter*. *Computer Gaming World* called LB2, "A textbook example of how to make a successful sequel. A benchmark sim far beyond its award-winning predecessor." Editors at *PC Gamer* had similar praise, "*Longbow 2* promised a lot, but it delivered even more, making it the best combat sim you can buy for your PC."

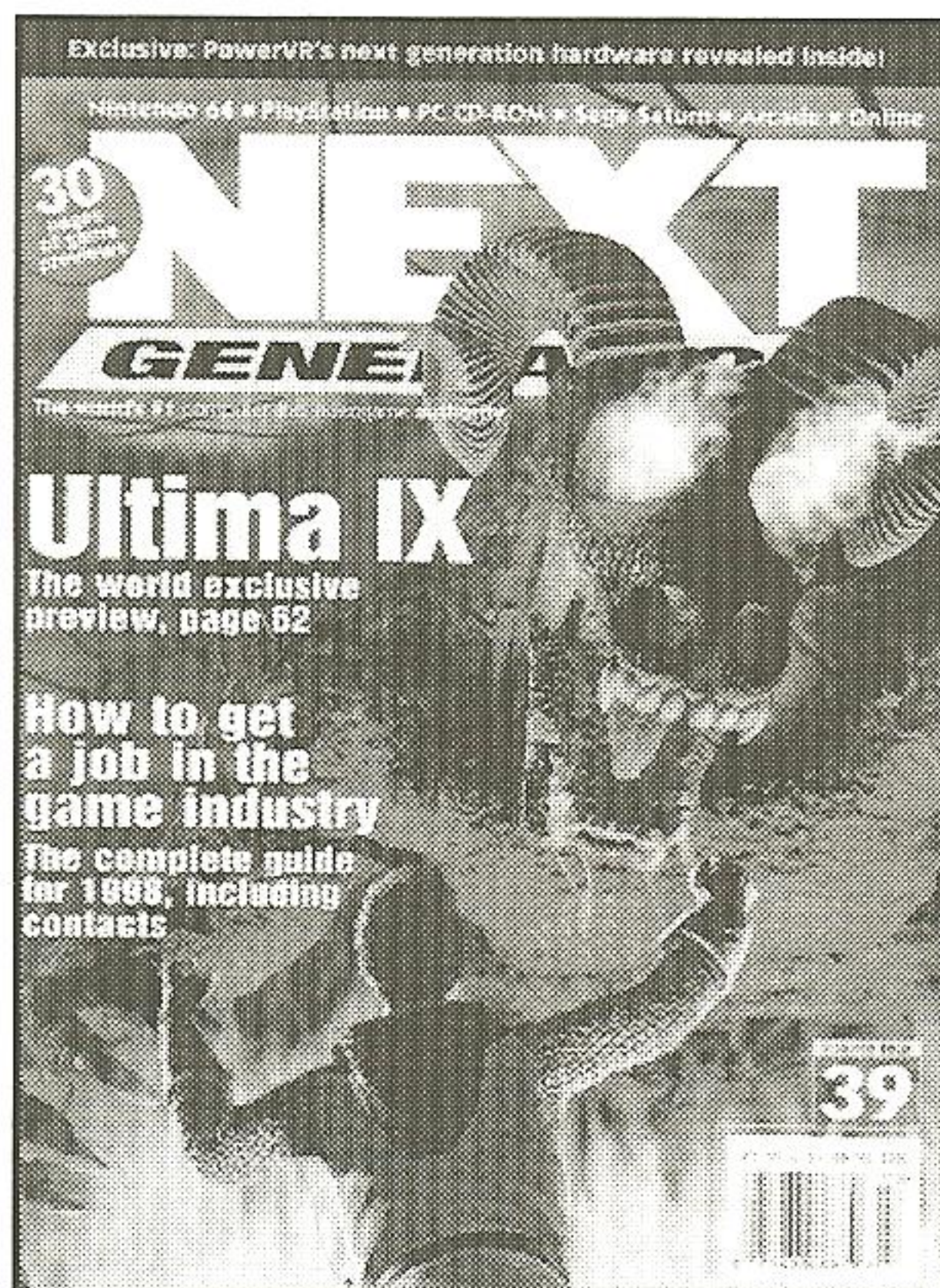
Meanwhile, *Wing Commander: Prophecy* is racking up its own share of honors. *Computer Gaming World*

awarded WCP Space Sim of the Year. "The in-flight action looks better than the cut-scenes in most other games. With 3Dfx support, you'll hardly believe your eyes," CGW said. *Gamespot* added two awards — Best Action/Simulation and Best Graphics for 1997. "From the varicolored lighting effects in the numerous locales to the amazing green ripple effect of an explosion, *Prophecy* sets a new standard for computer game graphics," *Gamespot* wrote.

Not to be outdone is *Ultima Online*, which received Online Game of the Year from *Cnet Gamecenter*. "For its social interaction and its groundbreaking steps in creating a persistent world, *Ultima Online* deservedly wins the category." The game also won Online-Only Game of '97 from *Online Gaming Review*. "Despite the well-documented shortcomings and problems ORIGIN has struggled through, we at OGR firmly believe that *Ultima Online* is one of the most significant computer game releases ever."

Speaking of *Ultima*, if you haven't seen the latest issue of *Next Generation* magazine yet, you've got to check it out. The March issue features *Ultima: Ascension* on its cover and UA dominates the inside of the magazine. Counting the cover there are 12 pages of coverage on *Ascension*. Editors call UA, "The most technically

advanced RPG to date. *Ascension's* 3D engine is absolutely top notch." There's a one-page Q&A with **Lord British** and a chronology of all the *Ultima* games from *Akalabeth* to *Ultima Online*. UO, in fact, received a nice plug from *Next Gen* which noted, "The most ambitious, highest-profile 'persistent online world' in existence, UO is staggering in its complexity and attention to detail."

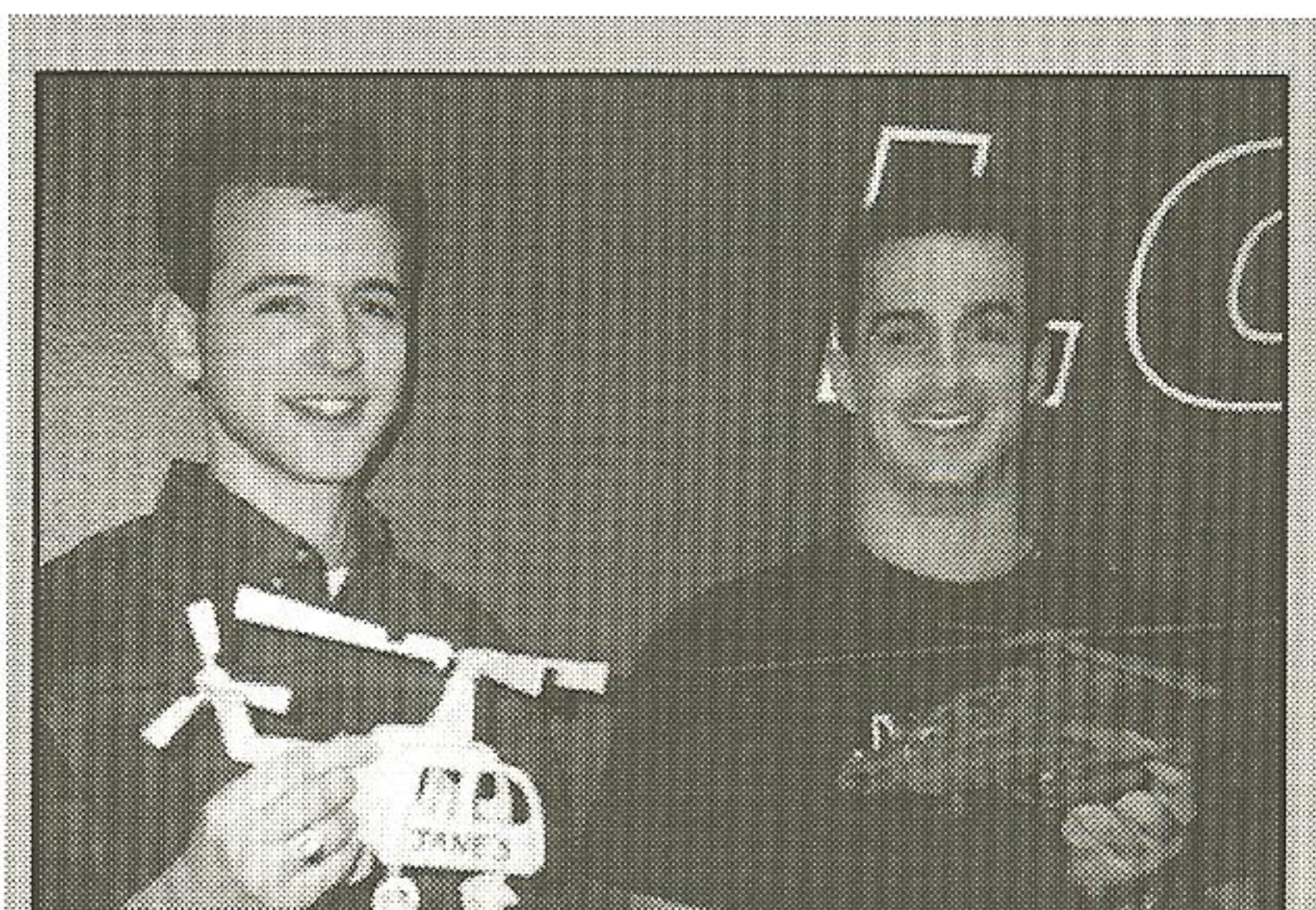


What can you expect from the press in the days to come? *Strategy Plus* magazine is planning a cover feature on *Privateer 3* for its May issue.

Expect that article to hit the magazine rack during the first week of April. Expect coverage on *F-15* to soon start appearing online and in the April issues of several print publications. In fact, Denny Atkin at *Computer Gaming World* already has posted his article on CGW's online site. "*Jane's F-15* will not only satisfy hard-core flight-sim fans, it will blow them away with its realism. *F-15* is poised to dogfight *Falcon 4.0* for the title of Top Gun." And last week, Marc Dultz, writing for *Cnet's Gamecenter* traveled to

ORIGIN/Baltimore to research his article. His *F-15* preview should be posted in the next few days. "It's a very nice looking game," Dultz said at the conclusion of his extensive demo. "I'm very impressed."

Of course, there will be many pages of coverage from ORIGIN's presence at E3 in May. You'll hear more about that next time.



ORIGIN Skunkworks team members Todd Fiala and Brent Oster ham it up with their toys.



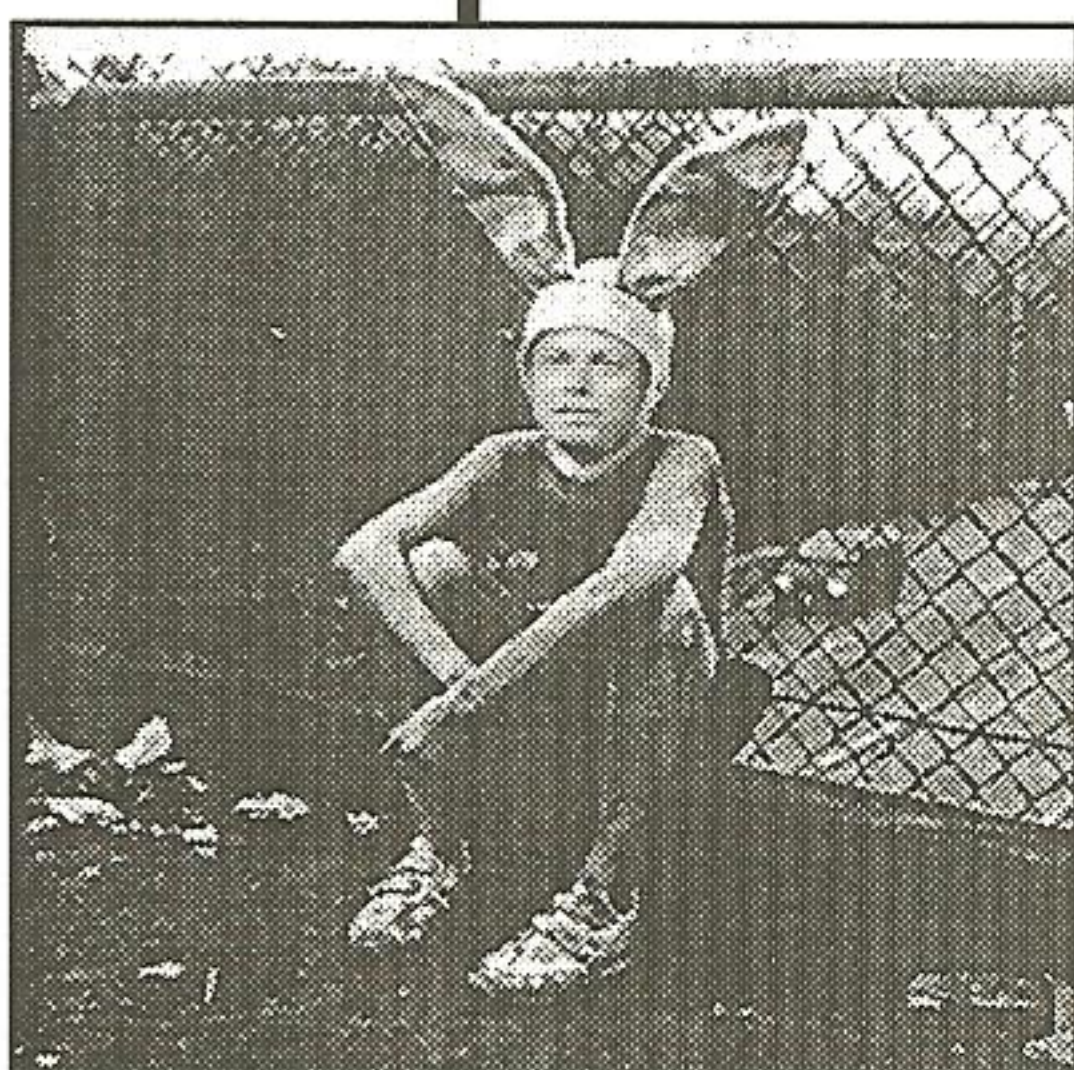
# F-15

THE DEFINITIVE JET COMBAT SIMULATOR

## F-15 UPDATE:

### F-15 Team Proves Everybody Loves an Easter Egg

The F-15 team is definitely "in the zone" and visitors



Thanks Easter Bunny! Bok Bok!

witness it the second they set foot in the ORIGIN Baltimore offices. The product is scheduled to ship at the end of March so the team is working day and night to hit their deadline. The blinds are pulled, the lights are off and PopTarts are known as "dinner".

In fact, there are two food groups in Baltimore: the sugar group and the caffeine group. Sr. Software Engineer **John Paquin** has been known to down three Mountain Dew's during a 30 minute meeting. Assuming that Paquin is working 6/10 hour days per

week (a conservative estimate) he will consume 360 cans per week and over 22,560 ounces of the syrupy yellow beverage before this is all over.

The F-15 team has not forgotten the humor in all of this. They were quick to point out the accompanying photo of **Andy Hollis'** alter ego developed several months ago. The question remains, according to Producer **Greg Kreefle**, just exactly where this will appear in the game. It's most literally an impressive Easter egg.

Not to worry, guys. The glorious product reviews and numerous awards will make this all worthwhile. ●

## ORIGIN's Holiday Awards Ceremony and Festivities

We could put more pictures of Chris and Neil here, but do you really want us to do that? We can, however, cover the winners. Congratulations to the following: **Jeff Hillhouse**: The Eternal Flame, **Starr Long**: MVP of the year, **Angela Lyons**: Unsung Hero, **Jeff Grills**: Left Brain Award, **Stretch Williams**: Right Brain Award, **Michelle Latson**: Manager of the Year, **Peter Jarvis**: Firefighter of the Year, **Kerry Miller**: Rookie of the Year and **Brian Wachhaus** and



**Rand Van Fossen** received humorous awards. ●

So instead, we give you pictures of Richard and Starr with peanut butter in their armpits...



...and Alex putting his hands where Chi Chi wants them.



**Brian Allen** shares his opinion with his date.

**Ed Del Castillo** and **Bren Wilson** troll for prizes.



Look! **Evan Brandt** has sleeves on!!

**Angela Lyons** tells **Richard** and **Neil** to be less obnoxious.



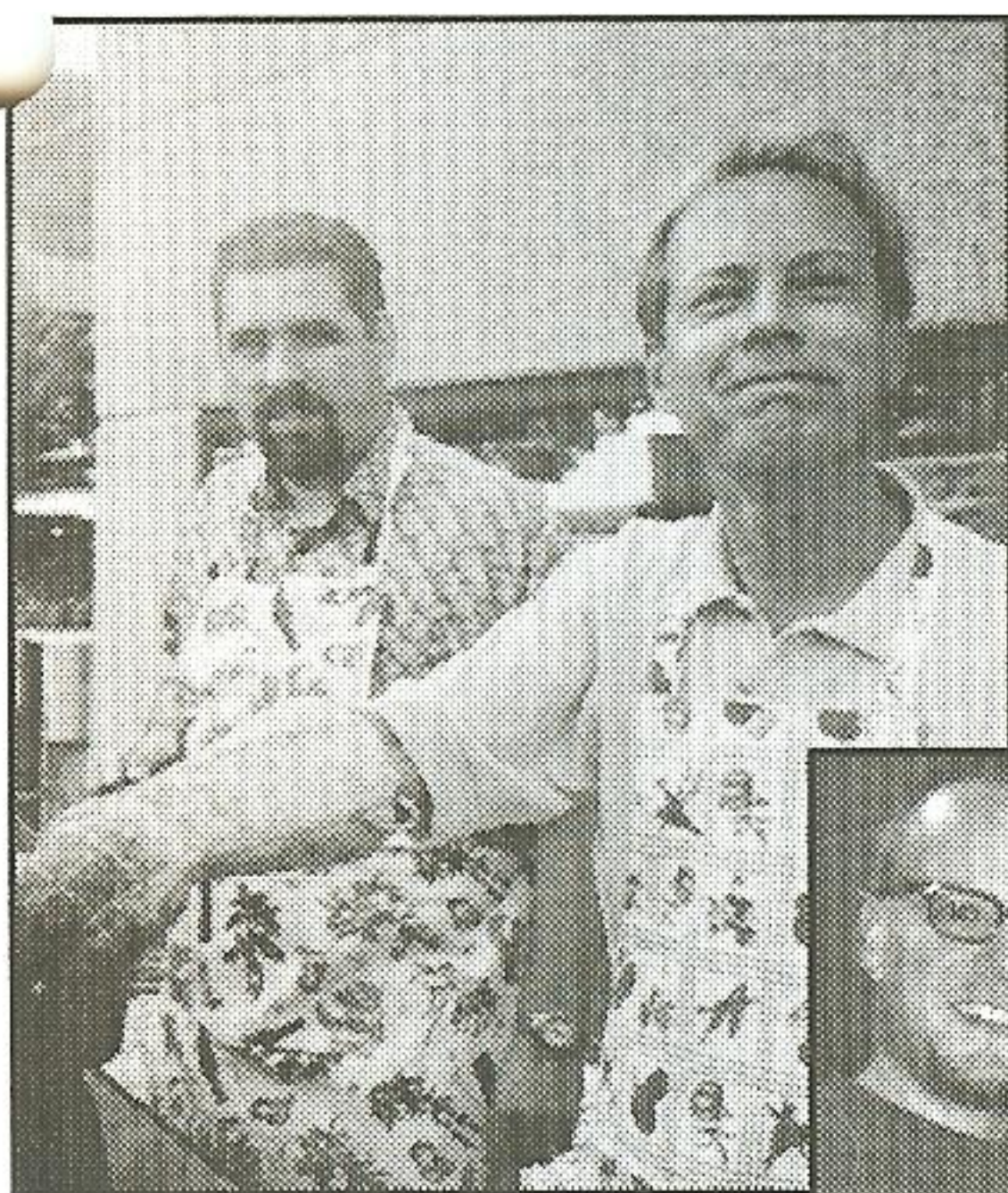
**Jeff Grills** and **Frank Roan** pose for the camera with their dates



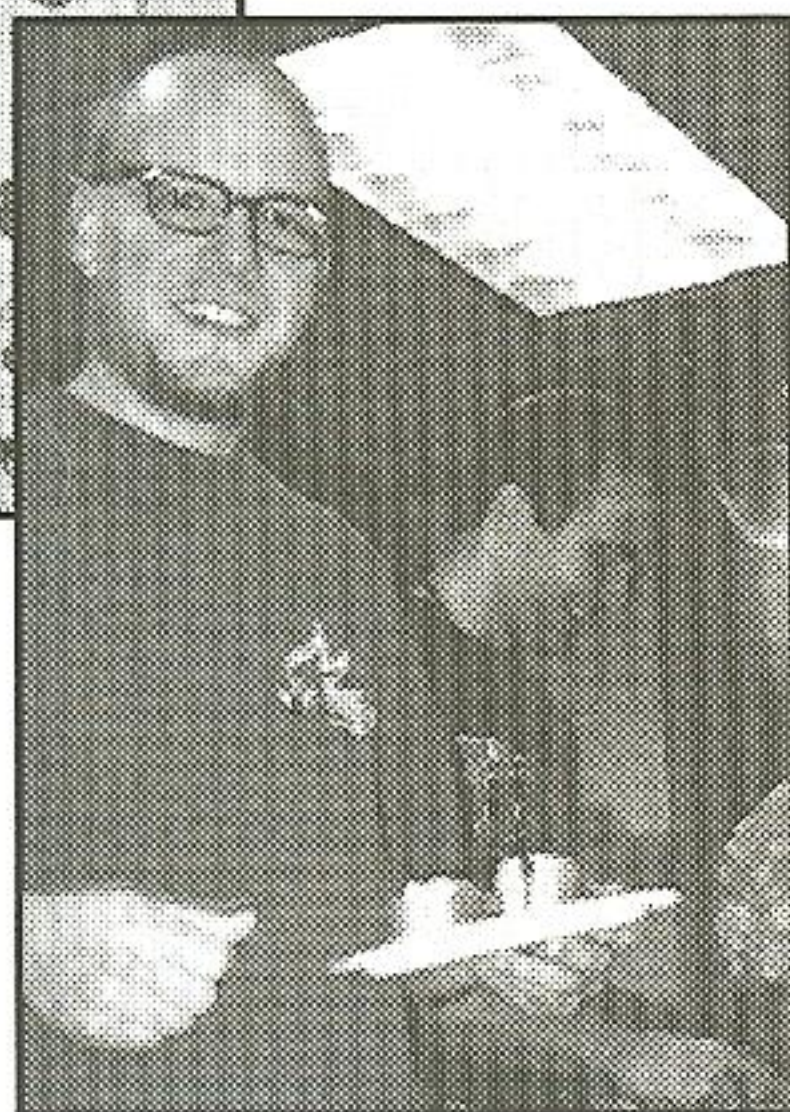
The stunning, gorgeous **Kay Gilmore** and her husband **Bruce Gilmore**



# ORIGINites love to eat!



Andy Hollis and Mike Grajeda — grillin' em up for your dining pleasure at the last cookout.



Mark Franz and Tyson Culver are diggin' those dogs.



ORIGIN ushers in Turkey Day with an impressive spread. Below, Dan Rubenfield enjoys his turkey.



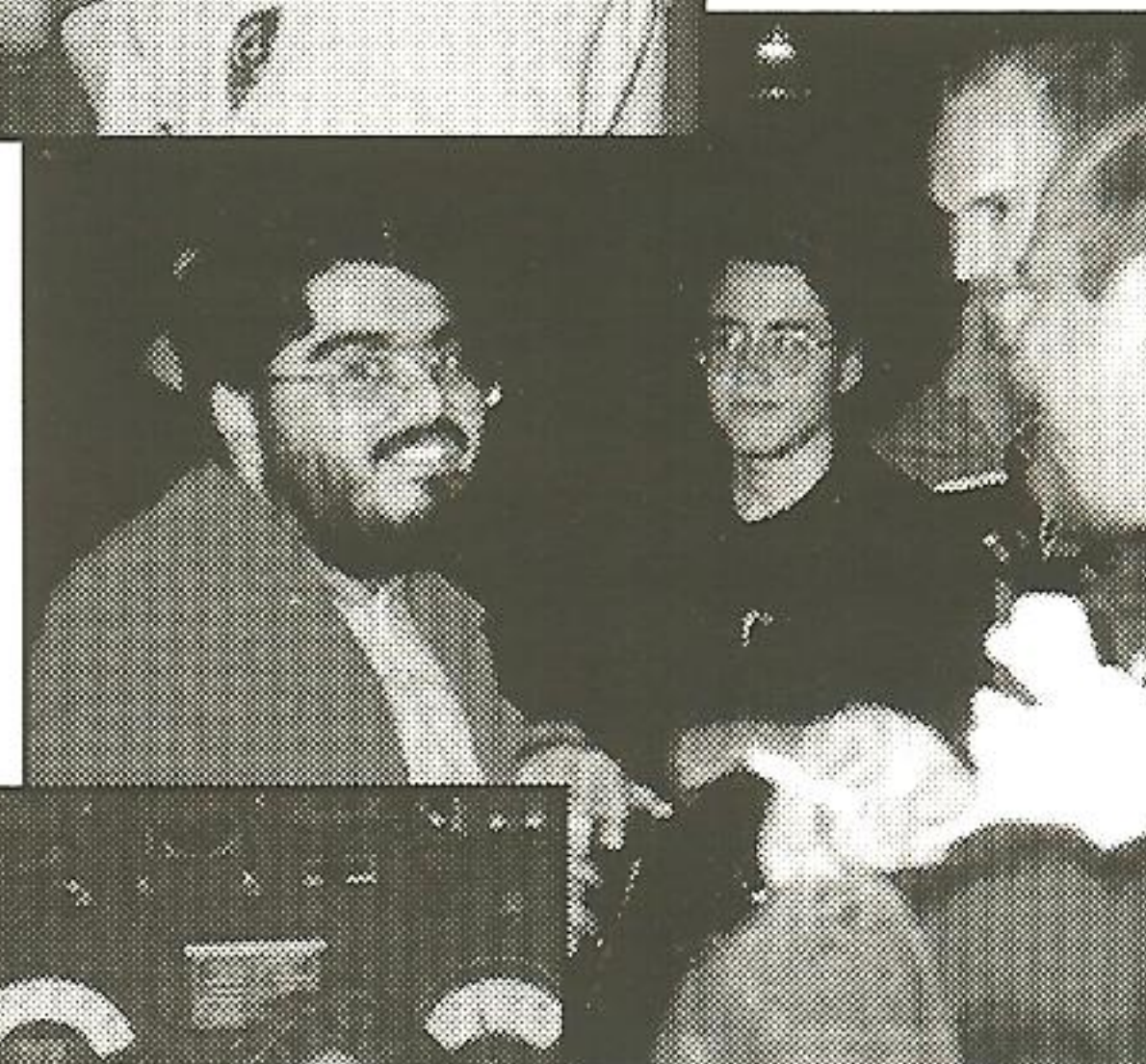
## 10 Ways to Tell You are Addicted to Ultima Online

1. You walk into a store and say to the manager, "Hi, sell."
2. You see someone taking a pen off your desk and you yell, "GUARDS! GUARDS!"
3. Driving by a cemetery, you slow down to see if there are any skeletons or zombies wandering about.
4. You go into a clothing store and ask for plate leggings.
5. You go to a travel agency and ask for a first class ticket to Nujel'm.
6. You wear the fluorescent purple cape from the Halloween costume store to your sister's wedding.
7. You fill out forms with your profession at the end of your name: Bob, Adept Office Manager; Mary, Novice Receptionist; Joe, Grand Master Garbage Man.
8. You follow animals around saying, "Here birdie, birdie. I've always wanted a birdie like you!" and get unusually upset if it wanders too far away.
9. You've actually tried to sell a bunch of sticks to a store vendor.
10. Your boss says, "Good morning," and you respond,



Even Lord British loves his Binky. Chris Launius gets a hug from Richard.

Raph Koster and his adoring fans at the UO Paradox party.



It's Ruben Cortez, Mark Rizzo and Brandon Williams — the guys who keep UO up and running. And look at the cool machine they get to use!



## Privateer 3 Team "In Full Tilt"

Welcome Back...to the Wing Commander universe! Privateer 3 is "in full tilt development" according to Executive Producer **Rod Nakamoto**. Scheduled for ship in the fall of 1998, *Privateer 3* takes gamers back to the Wing Commander universe and lets them take on the rebel persona they loved in *Privateer 1* and 2.

The team was given a clean slate in a familiar universe. They could incorporate the best elements of the first two Privateer titles and build in their own ideas to make it the best yet.

"We're happy to have the opportunity to bring Privateer back to ORIGIN," Nakamoto said. "ORIGIN's people like to have control over their own destiny and we'll do our best not to disappoint!"

A recent brainstorm session with development and marketing generated a long list of reasons it's fun to work on the P3 team. The group cites great chemistry within the team as well as great working relationships among development, QA and marketing.

"What I like about this team is that they're very self-motivated," Nakamoto said. "They have a great understanding of this product and they know what kinds of products the ORIGIN consumer likes to play."

The team faces several challenges in development; the most ominous is probably the multiplayer aspect. The press and the customers are eagerly anticipating a multiplayer action game within the Wing Commander Universe and it is a challenge to deliver it well.

"We're addressing the challenges with multiplayer by doing the hardest parts first. If we can get multiplayer up and running for E3 we'll have plenty of time for play balancing before we ship," Nakamoto said.

Nakamoto has faith in the team and credits their ability to fit in to a new environment and work as a team.

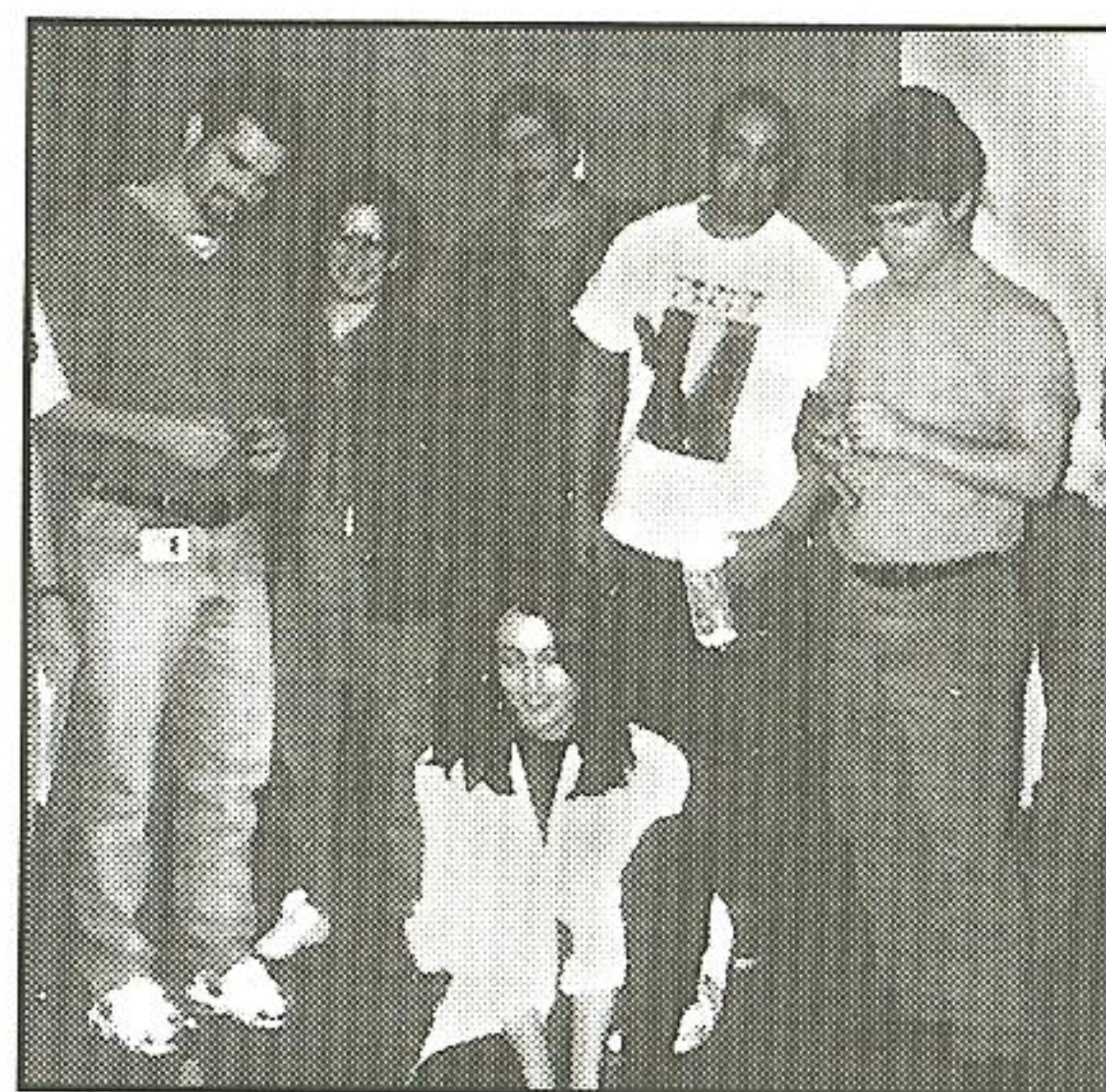
"This is one of the tightest teams I've ever worked with. The people who came over from Sega have integrated very well with the existing team to become one tight, very focused development team," Nakamoto said.

By brainstorming with designers, artists, producers and marketing team members, PR has identified a number of "key messages" or selling points that will put Privateer 3 in a class by itself. Among them are the extensive exploration, the unpredictability of the gameplay and the 2000 locales the player can visit. Also, everyone is asking about multiplayer. When the multiplayer aspects are playable, the media will be impressed.

Marketing and PR are planning a comprehensive promotional effort including preview coverage in all of the major gaming magazines, an extensive online program and even a couple of consumer promotions like contests and events. *Privateer 3* is also slated for a major presence at E3 in Atlanta in May.

### ORIGIN's First Annual Hot Wheels Grand Prix

Top right photo: Jayson Shaw, Michelle Martinez, David Russ, Mark Leon, and Damon Waldrip watch Teresa Potts catch cars. Bottom right photo: Chris Yates, Alex Carloss, Neil Young, and Mike Grajeda are the definition of boys with their toys. Below: Meg Curtis, Dee Starns, Paul Stankiewicz and Rick McNeeley were the finalists from the four floors. Inset: Paul and his car won the Grand Prize!



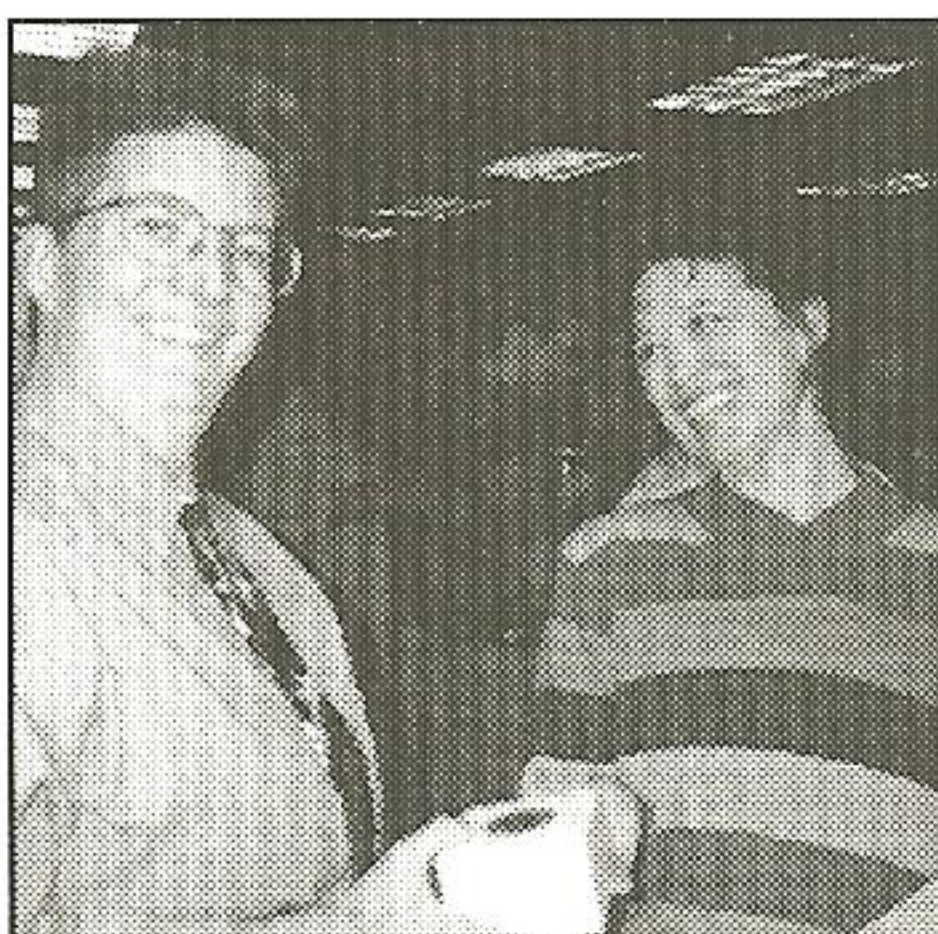


## HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN, SO LET'S TAKE THE DAY OFF!

Recently, ORIGIN celebrated all of the great news we've had in 1997! ORIGINites received Holiday presents from EA and had cakes and champagne at 11AM! Here are some pictures from the party.



**Starr Long and Marcia Harelik**



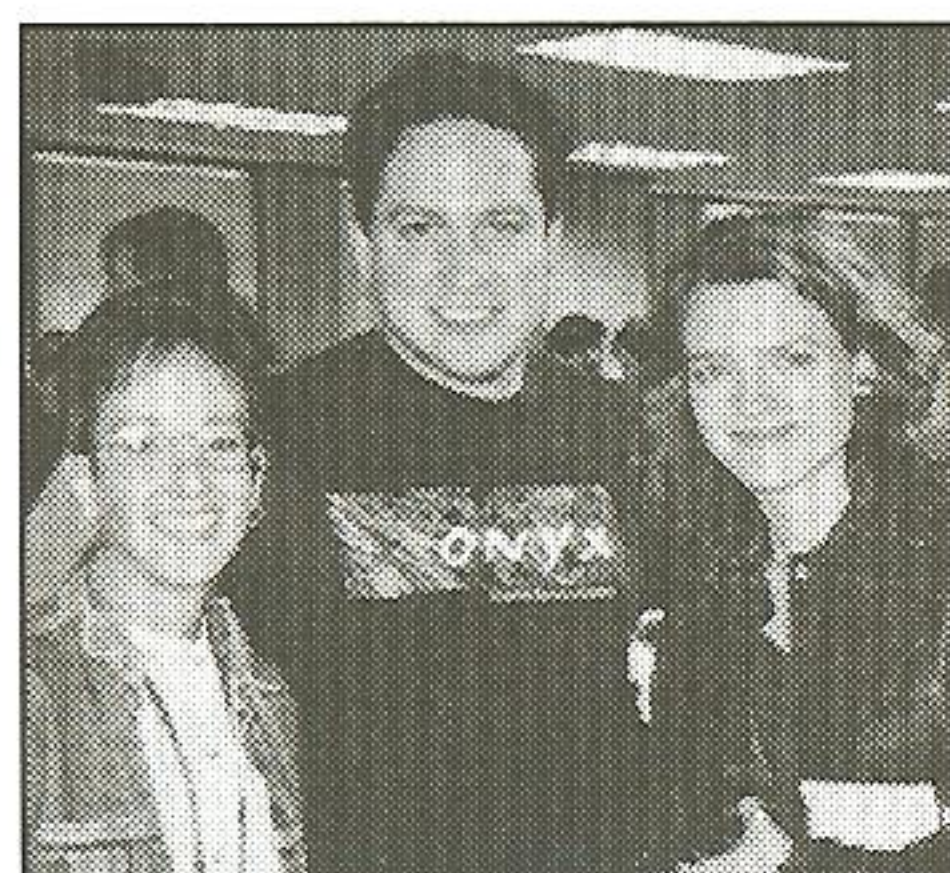
**Shane Whalley and Linda Powers**



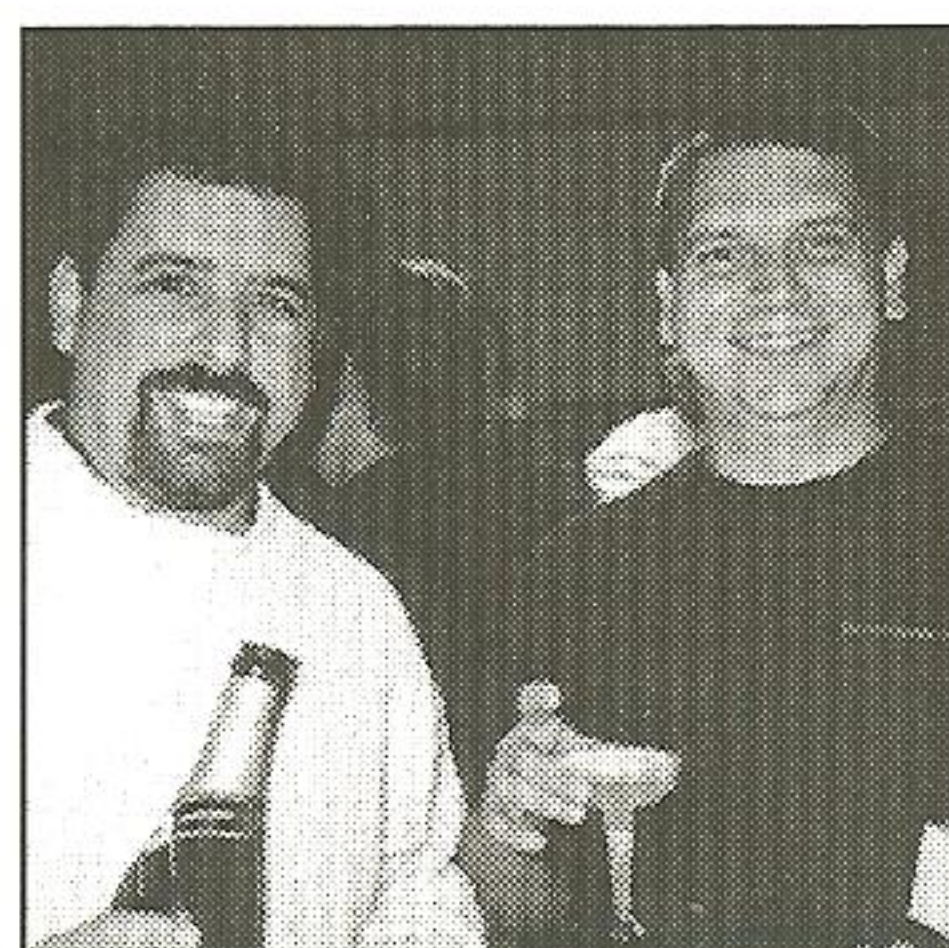
**Angela Lyons and Kathy Fisher**



**Frank Dietz and Will McBurnett**



**Patricia Bouressa, Christopher Yesh, and Amy Goodwin**

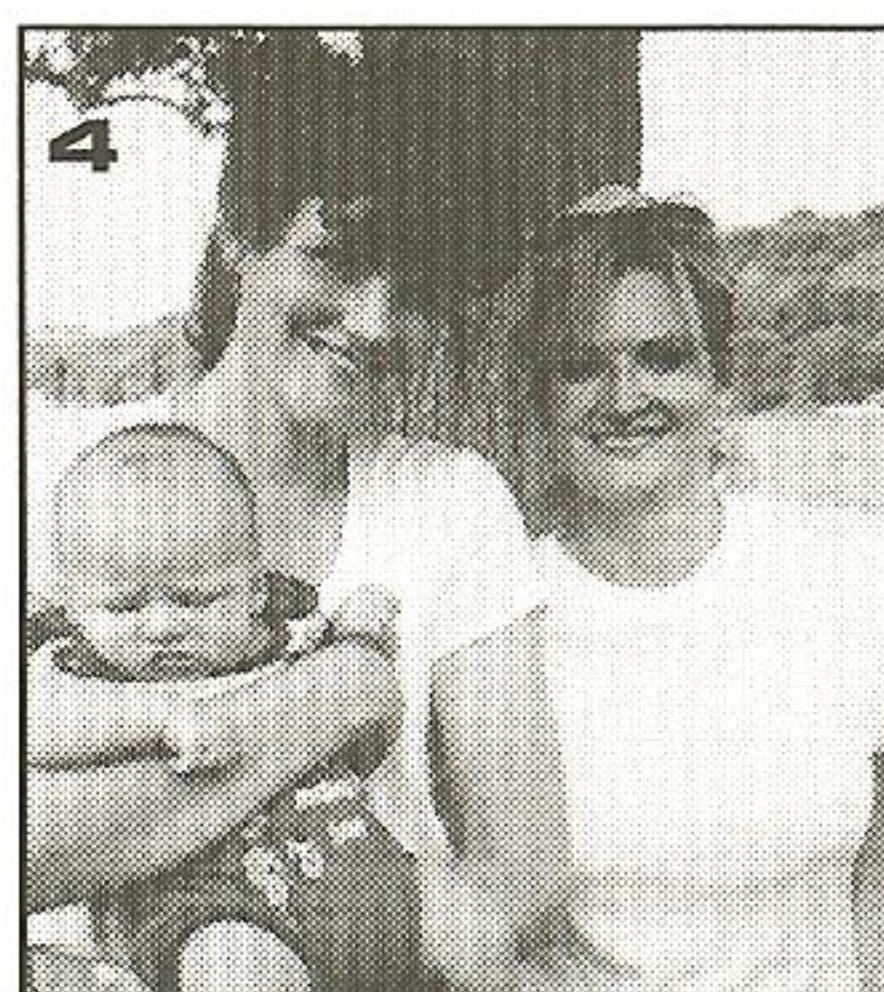
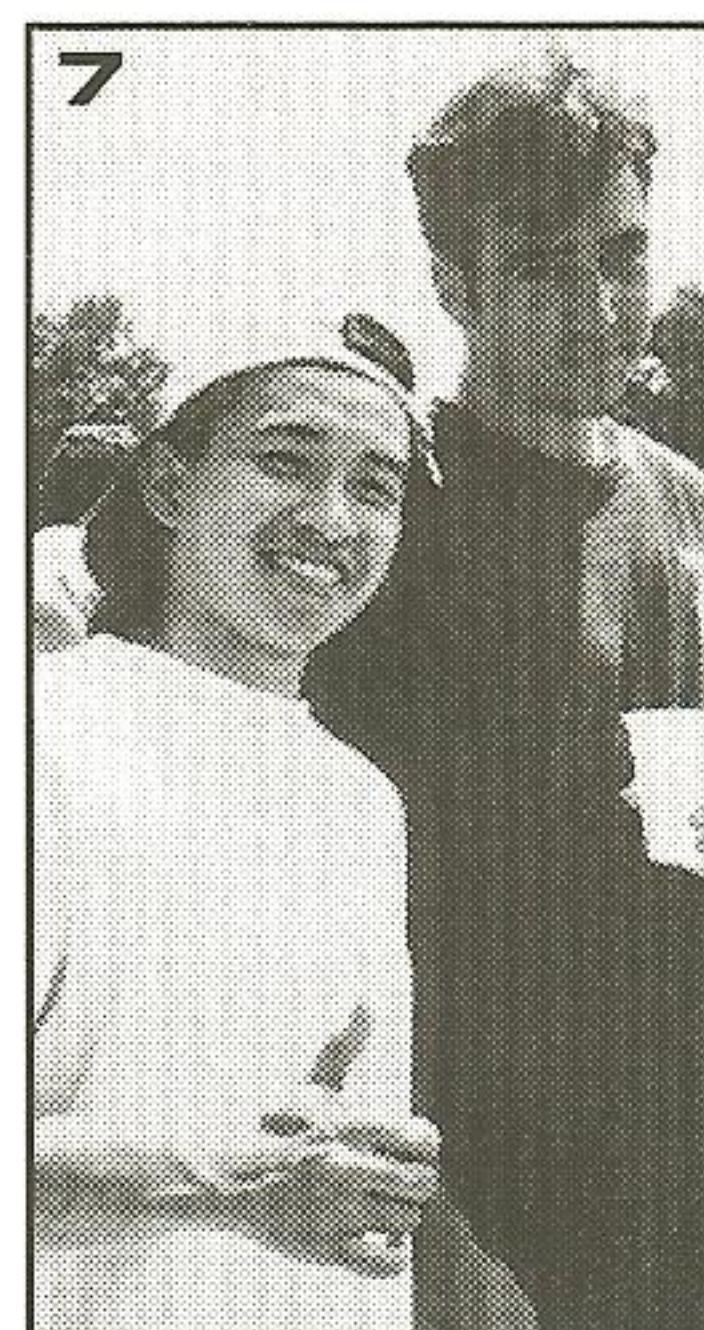
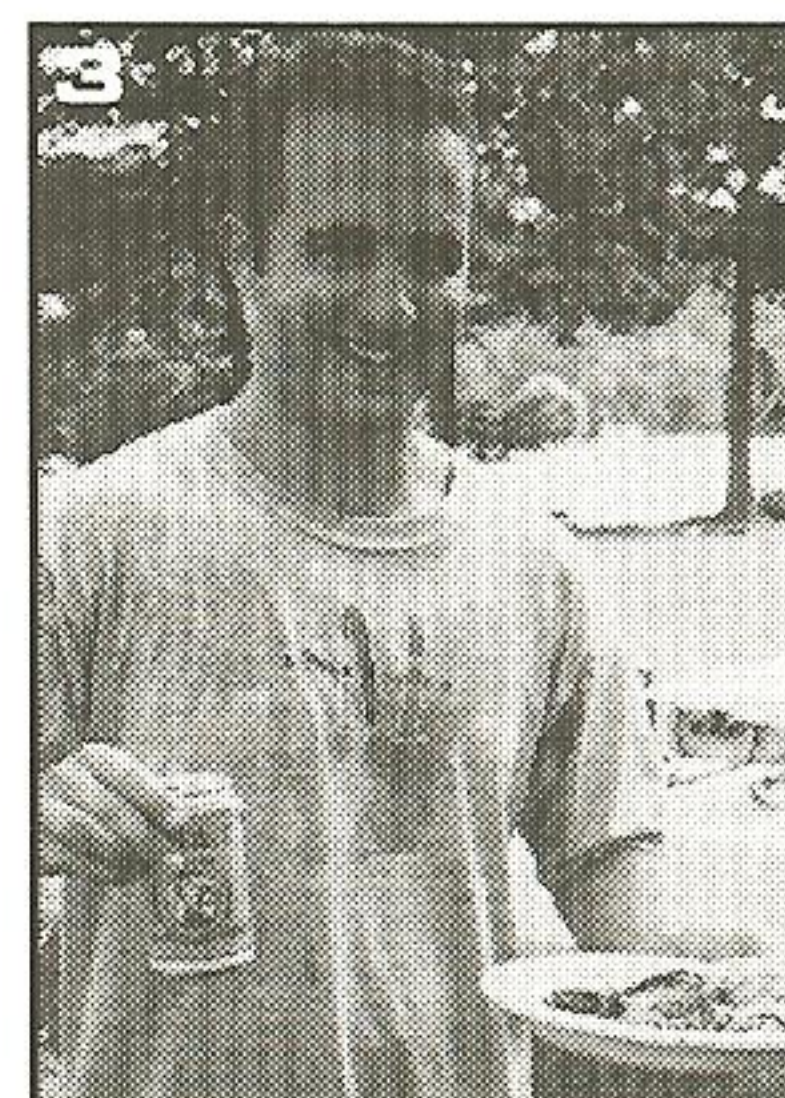
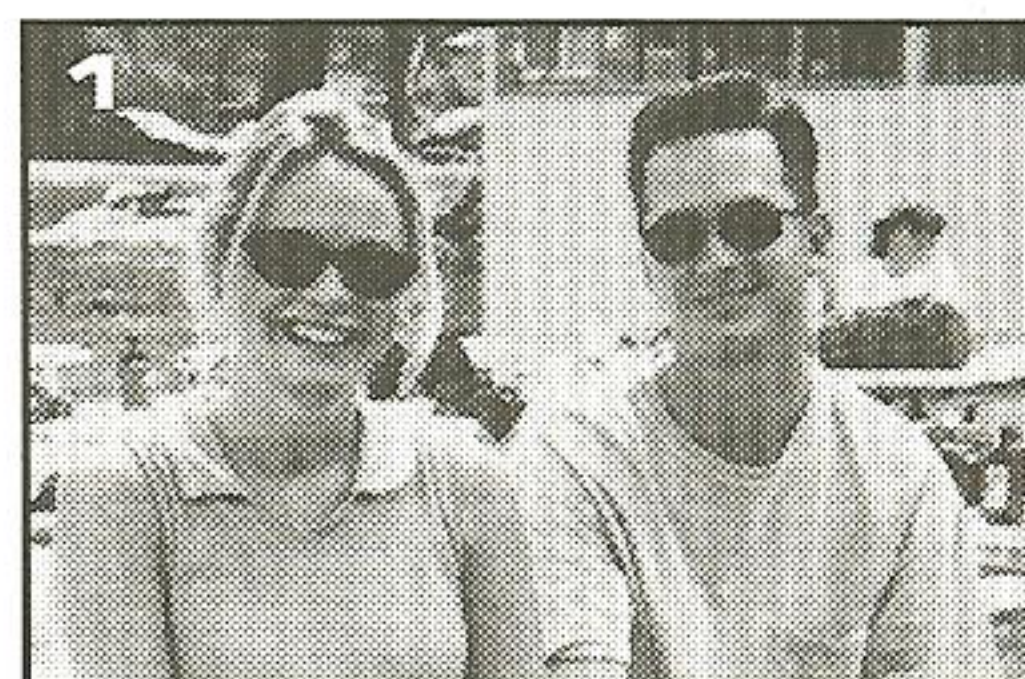


**Mike Grajeda and Steve Muchow**



**Rand Van Fossen and Rich Vogel**

## Pics from Picnic '97



Clockwise from the top left: (1)Chris Yates and his wife. (2)Carol Roberts and Gary McElhaney were on the picnic committee. (3)Tyson Culver, with food. (4)Tammy Johnson, her new baby, and Alison Rogers brave the heat. (5)Mighty Catherine Cantieri. (6)Bob White and his family: proof that genetics works. (7)Art Wong and David Russ give the picnic a big thumbs up. (8)Robin McShaffry and her husband Mr.Mike grin for the camera.



## Ten Signs that you are addicted to Wing Commander Prophecy:

1. Keep hitting "C" key to talk to people.
2. When using your Dustbuster, you pretend it's the Marine LC.
3. You "autoslide" when walking.
4. When you see a roach, you start looking for its wingman.
5. You make afterburner noises when passing cars.
6. When pulling into a parking garage, you wait for the "auto" light on your dash.
7. You use the power mirrors in your car like turrets.
8. You get upset when you can't get a torpedo lock on the truck in front of you.
9. You think Mark Hamill is a darn fine actor.
10. You end every conversation with "break and attack!"



Our own Stretch Williams performs with his band at a Happy Hour last year. Right, Billy Cain sits in on a blues tune.



## t h e F u t u r e



### February

26th

ESPP Purchase

### March

17th

St. Patrick's Day

### April

1st

Fiscal Year '99 begins  
Quarterly Sales Meeting at EASM

8th

Spring Egg Hunt

15th

Company Meeting (tentative)

24th

Tax Day!  
Building Happy Hour

### May

4th-8th

CGDC in Long Beach, CA

10th

Mother's Day

15th

Company Happy Hour

[the next Point of ORIGIN won't be until after E3!]

25th

Memorial Day Holiday

28th-30th

E3 in Atlanta

## P o i n t M a n



The POINT Man wants you!

Submit your questions to the POINT Man, and he'll find the answers, whether you want them or not. What was the question you really hoped Billy Cain would ask at the last Company Meeting, but he didn't? Come on, all you ML PS Goofball guys ... we know you have a smart-alecky question you've been dying to ask someone who can really get you an answer!

Send your questions to [POINTman@origin.ea.com](mailto:POINTman@origin.ea.com) and he will print your question anonymously, and find out the answer!

